

Emigration Canyon Township Community Vision

Visioning is simply a process by which a community envisions the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it. It brings people together to develop a shared image of what they want their community to become. Once a community has envisioned where it wants to go, it can begin to consciously work toward that goal.

The Emigration Canyon Township Community is one of the most pristine and desirable areas to live and visit in Salt Lake County. The Canyon allows residents and visitors to enjoy a natural setting while being relatively close to the Salt Lake Valley, and its increasingly urbanized areas. A few minutes drive up into the Canyon brings one worlds away from the metropolitan area. The goal of the Plan is to identify, preserve and protect those elements of the Canyon that make it a desirable place to live and play, so future generations may continue to enjoy them.

How is that best accomplished? What steps are necessary to make this happen? How do you plan for the future with all of the changes occurring in the community? These questions are ones that Canyon residents and professional planners alike have been asking. The problem with many communities in the Salt Lake Valley, as well as all of America, is that most communities are so busy with trying to cope with and adapt to change, that they can never get ahead of it. Getting ahead of change allows tremendous control over how that change will occur. Once you establish the ability to affect the changes of the future, you must then know where to direct them. In order to manage and direct future growth and changes in the community, it is necessary to picture what you would like the Canyon to *become* in the future. In other words, establish a community vision.

Establishing a community vision is more of a process, than a one time action. The visioning process answers four basic questions about the community: 1)Where are we now (as a community)?, 2)Where are we going?, 3)Where do we *want* to be (in the future)?, and 4)How can we get there? These questions and the process of providing answers to them make up the visioning process. The concept of developing a community vision is not new, and has been implemented in other cities and towns. There are certain elements in visioning projects that are consistent throughout. They include building consensus among community members, establishing community values, and communicating the vision.

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Building consensus, and establishing community values are ongoing efforts, that began with a public open house held for Canyon residents, property owners, recreational users, and other interested parties. On February 26, 1997 people were invited to attend a meeting to openly discuss what they valued in the Canyon, and would like to see addressed in the General Plan. This forum allowed ideas to be expressed, concerns to be voiced, and have those thoughts put to beneficial use. This meeting enabled Planning staff to determine the Canyon's priorities concerning the issues raised. The issues and ideas raised at the public meeting, as well as through other contacts, were reviewed, recorded and prioritized with the help of the Emigration Advisory Committee. This

steering committee, comprised of a group of residents, property owners, community leaders, utility company representatives, and planning staff, volunteered their time and efforts to organize the issues and ideas raised through public comments into prioritized lists. This information was compared to the 1985 Emigration Canyon Master Plan, and its goals and policies, to evaluate what has happened in the Canyon since the Master Plan was completed.

A review of the growth and changes that have occurred in the Canyon since the 1985 Master Plan was completed, as well as how those changes occurred, provided the information to help answer the question of “Where are we now?” In addition, an analysis of the information collected regarding Canyon growth and development indicated current growth trends, which also helped answer “Where are we going?” Perhaps the more formidable question of all those needing to be answered deals with “Where do we want to be?” This question merits considerable thought. The Canyon will continue to change, as people move to or from the Canyon, buy or build homes, or use the Canyon in various recreational ways. Without direction, the patterns of development, or non-development, and Canyon use, will continue to cater to varying ideals, and the very face of the Canyon may be altered as growth trends develop unchecked. The future appearance and visual quality of the Canyon may or may not appeal to the general population without a coherent idea, or vision of what that appearance should be. Without a vision statement, those who make decisions that affect the future of the Canyon have no cumulative idea of where to direct their goals or base their decisions.

The importance of visual and environmental quality in the Canyon is evidenced by the responses of those involved in both the 1985 Master Plan and this updated General Plan. There is overwhelming sentiment to identify and protect the sense of being close to nature that brings people to the Canyon. Equally as important to the quality of life that Canyon residents enjoy is the protection and improvement of water quality and supply. Emigration Canyon stream is currently one of the worst streams in Salt Lake County, as far as stream quality measured in coliform levels. The residents and property owners are very informed, involved and concerned about the stream quality. Since the entire canyon, with the exception of the Emigration Place P.U.D., gets its water from wells, this is a

major factor to consider for the future well being of the Canyon. Through public involvement efforts, beginning with the public meeting, these and other issues were identified to form a consensus as to what the Canyon should become in the future. The formal expression of this idea is known as the vision statement. The vision statement for Emigration Canyon is as follows:

The future of the Emigration Canyon Township Community will be:

- A community with a population of approximately 2,000, nested in a beautiful natural setting.
- A visually pleasing, naturally pristine canyon.
- An historical venue.
- An environmentally aware community with distinctive open space and natural features, protected habitats, a trails system, and outdoor recreation.
- The location of a clean water supply, with sufficient natural recharge.
- A safe transportation route for both residents and recreational users.
- A desirable recreational site, where Canyon users exercise good judgment and respect concerning the fragile environment, to preserve its beauty.
- A home.....a good place for people to live and to lead happy, healthy, productive lives.

Once established, this vision statement represents the beginning, not the end, of the process of directing the future towards achieving the vision described above. The final question of “How do we get there?” begins with the communication of this vision to residents, property owners, policy and decision makers, and any and all interested people. Once this vision is known and communicated to all, collective efforts can be geared towards making the desired outcome a reality. By knowing the vision statement and constantly bearing it in mind, ideas, decisions, and developments will cater to the common goal and vision.

The Plan and its specific implementation recommendations are to be used as a tool when making land use decisions. The policies of the Plan are based upon and reflect the community vision, and are designed to support it such that if they are followed, that vision will be realized.