

Eastern Summit County General Plan Engagement Update

January 2025

OUR SUMMIT & THE GENERAL PLAN

Our Summit was a county-wide visioning exercise with very high levels of participation. *Our Summit* is vital to informing County policies, including the General Plan update.

From *Our Summit*, we learned that the communities in Eastern Summit County greatly value **Open Space**, **Affordable Housing**, **Transportation Options**, and **Rural Character**.

For example, when the community was asked “*If you left Summit County for 10 years, what would you want to see when you return?*”, the most popular response was **Open Space** and the second most popular was **Affordable Housing**. The community also said that they would like to see **less Traffic**.

However, results from *Our Summit* left remaining questions.

When the community was asked about their desired level of housing growth, **over 50%** of all responses indicated that they would like only a **Little Growth** or **No Growth at All**.

But in separate questions, **63%** of South Summit participants and **47%** of North Summit participants indicated that there needs to be **More Attainable Housing** and **62%** of South Summit participants and **52%** of North Summit participants indicated that there needs to be **More Single Family Housing**.

Additionally, the community was asked: “*What is the most important thing to protect in Summit County?*”. The most popular response was the **Conservation of Open Space**. Open space conservation and housing can obviously work together, but understanding the types of open spaces, where each type should exist, and how open space should interact with developed areas was unclear.

Following *Our Summit*, **additional engagement has helped bring more clarity to how the General Plan might find balance between the community's values and the challenges we face**. The following pages include a snapshot of the feedback we have heard so far.

GENERAL PLAN FEEDBACK

From two community surveys and open house events, we learned that the community mostly values open space because they want to **preserve natural ecosystems** and also have spaces for **recreation and agriculture**.

For example, when asked about *why* the community values open space, **79%** of responses indicated that **open spaces are important for the health of our natural ecosystems and can protect native plants, wildlife, and water bodies**. About **65%** of responses to the same question indicated that open spaces are important because **agriculture is a viable industry** in Eastern Summit County, while **43%** of responses stated that having open spaces to in which to **recreate** are important for **mental and physical health**. And in a different question that asked *what types of open space there should be more or less of*, nearly **56%** of all responses said that there should be **more places for passive recreation** like bird watching, walking, or admiring views. Places for **active recreation** and **wildlife preservation** were the second and third most popular responses, respectively.

Interestingly, over **49%** of responses indicated that **development** of all kinds **hurts** open space and the **natural environment**, but, when asked *what the community considers "development"*, **only 2%** said **their own home**.

When asked about what types of housing should be generally available and affordable, **53%** of respondents indicated that community members should be able to **rent an apartment or condo** unit. Community members also indicated a preference for reexamining how existing housing is being used. **75%** of respondents **agreed or strongly agreed** that the County should **limit the number of short-term rentals** allowed in certain zones or neighborhoods.

When asked about strategies that could be appropriate to help develop new housing, nearly **65%** of respondents indicated that **incentivizing redevelopment** in strategic areas near public facilities, transit, trails, and other services was an **appropriate or very appropriate strategy**. Similarly, **65%** of responses in a separate question indicated that **new housing is most appropriate near existing commercial areas**, and **40%** said that **existing commercial areas should be redeveloped to include more housing**.

Regarding commercial opportunities, we learned that the community would like to **discourage national and regional chains** and instead be known for being friendly to small businesses, particularly **agricultural and sustainable tourism businesses**. Beyond having a variety of stores, when asked what makes a commercial area enjoyable, **66%** of responses said that the **architectural style** is most important.

The community also indicated that variety of **employment opportunities** is **missing** in the community, which correlates with responses to another question in which **34%** of responses indicated that they do **not believe** the region's **economy** is sufficiently **diversified**.

87% of respondents indicated that when they access areas within the community, they **drive by themselves**.

But, there seems to be a desire have other transportation options. **47%** of respondents indicated that, ideally, they would like to **walk**, **43%** said that they would like to ride a **bike**, and **34%** said they would like to take **public transit** to places within the community. When asked about the role cars would have in an ideal community, the most popular response was that people might drive to the community space, but **cars and car infrastructure take up little visual space**.

We have known that many community members highly value the **rural character** of Eastern Summit County. When asked what contributes to the rural character, the most popular responses were that the area feels rural because there are **active farms**, but also that the area is **intrinsically rural because of the geography**. The **large yards** and mostly **single family homes** were also noted as contributing to the rural character. And when asked what elements maintain the community's **quality of life**, **79%** of responses included the **small-town atmosphere**.

HOW IS FEEDBACK USED?

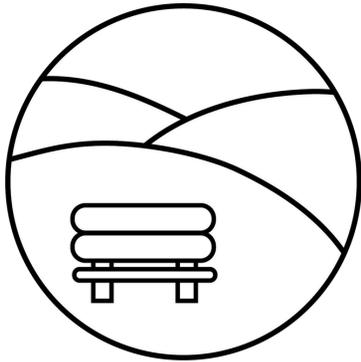
A **General Plan** is a **guiding document** that helps direct how a community should adapt, change, and grow. General Plans consider many topics and strive to find a **balance** between a **community's values** and **needs**, like housing for its workforce, economic opportunities, and transportation options.

While reading through the new feedback, you might have noticed that there are still some contradictions in the responses. Even so, the engagement results are specific enough to help more accurately update the goals and policies in the General Plan. The General Plan will direct change in ways that closely align with the **community's aspirations**.

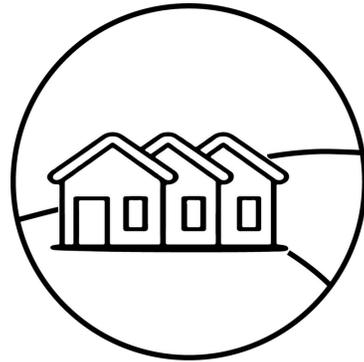
NEXT STEPS

The Summit County Planning Department will use this feedback to prepare a **draft General Plan** with the Eastern Summit County Planning Commission, under the the guidance of the Eastern Summit County General Plan Advisory Committee, and with assistance from other County Staff. The **Planning Commission** will review the draft, hold **public hearings**, and then ultimately recommend a **refined draft to the Summit County Council for additional public hearings and eventual adoption**. Preliminary drafts are expected to be publicly available in the late Spring to early Summer 2025. Additional engagement is likely to occur to further clarify the community's thoughts.

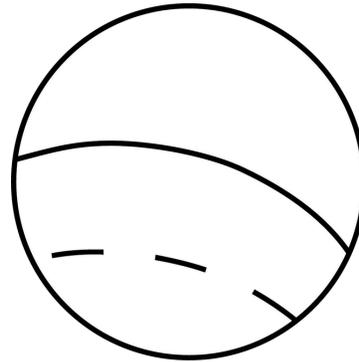
To submit general comments regarding the updates to the General Plan, or for more information about the update process and purpose of General Plans, **please visit summitcounty.org/GeneralPlans**. For copies of more detailed engagement summaries, send your request via email to Jennifer Leslie at jleslie@summitcountyutah.gov. Full engagement summaries will be included as appendices to the Eastern Summit County General Plan.



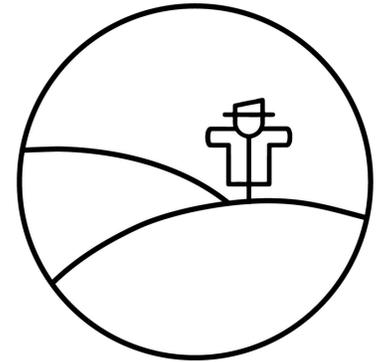
Open Space



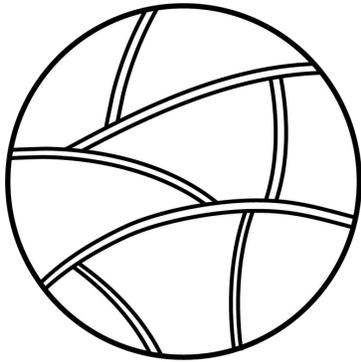
Housing



Transportation



Rural Character



Land Use