



# City of Wendover General Plan

## 1.1. PLAN INTRODUCTION

The Wendover City General Plan, referred to herein as the "Plan," is the vision of both short and long-range goals to guide the growth and development of the City. It contains goals, policies, and action plans for Wendover's future direction, community character, land use, open space and growth management, as well as the quality of life of the citizens.

The Plan is intended to be an effective working tool employed by the City in making community decisions and achieving planning goals. The City Council and Planning Commission should refer to this General Plan before making decisions regarding changes to ordinances or zoning. Coordination with other regional government agencies on local land issues is key to the effective implementation of this plan.

Utah State Code, Section 10-9a-401 requires that "each municipality shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long range general plan for: (a) present and future needs of the municipality, and b) growth and development of the land within the municipality." Three elements are required by the state to be included in the general plan: 1) Land Use, 2) Transportation, and 3) Moderate Income Housing. Additional elements are also allowed, and "the municipality may determine the comprehensiveness, extent, and format of the general plan."

In addition to the above mentioned three required elements, this plan includes planning for Economics, Parks and Recreation, and Public Services.

***The value of the General Plan is only as good as the support that it gets from the leadership and the citizens of the City.*** This Plan utilizes some elements from the previously approved plan and was created using input from the public, City staff, and members of the Planning Commission and the City Council. Even with this input, the



### Key Points:

- Introduction
- Implementation
- Amendments
- History of Wendover
- Our Vision
- Physical Description
- Population
- Overall Goals

*The purpose of the General plan is to provide a blueprint to guide the growth and development of the City.*



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ultimate long-term support and success of the Plan must come from the community as a whole.

## Plan Update

The process to update the Wendover City General Plan began in the fall of 2014. The objective was to provide an updated document that will continue to serve as a guide and reference for the community in the future.

Assisted by Utah Community Planners, the City held a community and stakeholder planning workshop, to allow an opportunity for citizens and leaders to provide input to the community planning process.

Key issues garnering interest and support through the various community groups and public participation included the need for:

1. Increased efforts in economic development
2. More recreation facilities and programs
3. More street improvements
4. Improved health and medical services
5. Community beautification
6. More affordable housing options
7. Increased development of tourism opportunities

*(See Appendix A, General Plan Work Meeting Minutes)*

## Plan Update Adoption

Following review and revisions, public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council were held. The Plan, as presented here, was adopted by the Wendover City Council on October 1, 2015.

## **1.2. IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of the Plan comes through working documents, such as the zoning and land use codes, capital improvement programs, City budgets, and other ordinances, resolutions and studies deemed appropriate by the City Council.





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## Chapter 1: Introduction

*The General Plan shall receive a comprehensive review at least once every five years to keep the policies and programs consistent with changing trends and conditions.*

### 1.3. AMENDMENTS

To preserve the integrity of the Plan and to ensure that it reflects the changing needs of residents, it is City policy that the Plan shall receive a comprehensive review at least once every five years to keep the policies and programs consistent with changing trends and conditions. All re-zones, improvement programs, and ordinance changes concerning development shall be in harmony with the Plan. Any amendments to the Plan should:

- Be in harmony and consistent with City land use ordinances,
- Be in the best interest of the City,
- Promote the general welfare of the community, and
- Maintain or improve the quality of life for the citizens of Wendover.

### 1.4. HISTORY OF WENDOVER

University of Utah archaeologists estimate that human presence has been in the Wendover area since 9,000 BC. The Goshute Indians were able to forage a living from the harsh environment by hunting and gathering. Area plants provided grass seeds, tubers, berries, and roots while animals ranging from rats and rabbits to antelope and bison were hunted. Tools were fashioned from materials such as flint, bone, and wood for use in hunting and gathering activities.

In 1845, explorer John Fremont was the first white man to pass through the Wendover area. Passing just north of present day Wendover, he named Pilot Peak because its prominence in the salt flats vista was able to provide guidance, as well as marking the end of the unforgiving flats. The Salt Flats continued to be a barrier to westward settlement, whether it is scorching heat in the summertime, snow in the winter, or the mud conditions in the spring. In 1846, the ill-fated Donner Party trekked over the flats, where scores of oxen died and all but the essential cargo was abandoned. The tracks left by the wagons of the Donner Party can still be seen in the flats today.



The Western Pacific Railroad commenced construction of the railroad across the Salt Flats from Salt Lake City in 1900. In 1907, the Railroad pumped water from the springs at Pilot Peak to establish a steam engine relay station, which later became the town of Wendover (it is believed that the town was named for the railroad surveyor Charles Wendover). The town became the home of railroad workers and their families and a supply center for ranchers within a 50-mile radius of the



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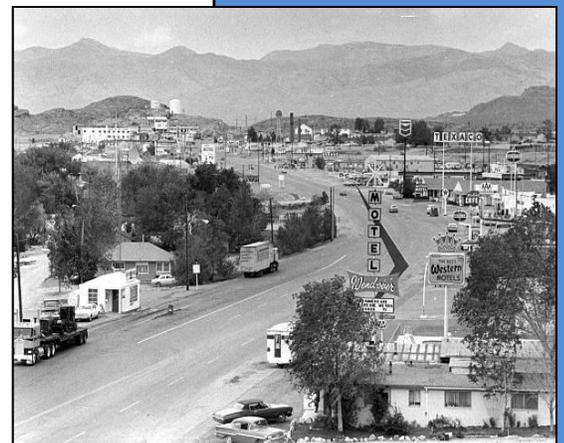
settlement. Wendover later became the site of the completion of the first transcontinental telephone line in 1917. Linking New York with San Francisco, the line was later replaced with a weather-resistant buried cable in 1942.

Wendover, in many ways, was crucial to the United States in surviving and ending both World Wars. During World War I, the world's potash industry was mainly concentrated in Germany, who ceased to be a trading partner at this time. Potash was mined from the flats by an evaporation method in which water was run through a series of channels and evaporation ponds. Because of this extraction method, the United States was able to develop a domestic potash resource.

With World War II came the establishment of the Wendover Army Air Base in 1941. Operated as a sub post to Salt Lake City's Fort Douglas, the base carried out an important mission in the War. It was home to over 5,000 Army Air trainees, and served as the top-secret training center for the atomic bomb drops on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The tests were conducted entirely at the Wendover base; the base was also home to the Enola Gay, the famous plane that dropped the first bomb on Hiroshima.

The base also fed the local economy during the war. Marguerite McQuinton, a schoolteacher from Ely who served as Army Hostess to the base, observed how "government pay found itself into the nearest place to spend it." Especially prosperous was William "Bill" Smith, who ran a Hotel/Bar/Casino/Cafe establishment on the Utah/Nevada border. Since gasoline was rationed during the war, Smith's business was able to take advantage of the curtailed travel brought on by gasoline rations.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the Wendover Army Air Base was closed. It was reopened in 1954 as a jet-training base, but never regained its status before it was turned over to the City of Wendover as an airport in 1974. It now functions as the Wendover / Tooele County Airport.





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In the late 50's and early 60's, Wendover once again gained world-renowned notoriety by being home to the world's highest speed records. The salt flats near town became the site of the Bonneville Speedway, and until the invention of jet engines and aircraft, the 400mph speeds set at the speedway were unequaled anywhere in the world. A prominent figure in the Bonneville Races was Wendover resident Ab Jenkins, who was a safety engineer for Studebaker and set many of the endurance records at the Bonneville Speedway. The Speedway is still used for auto racing today.



Wendover today mainly functions on tourism from the gaming industry in West Wendover. It is one of the most diverse cities in Utah and retains many other strong community character traits. It has many advantages over other Utah towns in that it possesses an extraordinary transportation infrastructure: it is home to a modern airport, is served by Interstate 80 and U.S. Highway 40, and the Union Pacific Railroad.

### 1.5. OUR VISION

In Wendover, we are a community, that values our history, our community pride, and our small town atmosphere. Our vision is to emphasize these values as we become a thriving, healthy community that preserves the past while integrating the best of new and beneficial improvement plans and programs.

The Vision for Wendover encompasses goals that:

- Promote a vital downtown for commercial activities and employment.
- Foster commercial development at the I-80 interchange.
- Develop an improved employment base involving the airport, proximity to I-80 and the railroad.
- Maintain the small town atmosphere.
- Encourage development patterns that make the best use of public facilities and services.
- Preserve open spaces and create City parks and recreation areas.
- Expand opportunities for tourism based on the historic Wendover Air Force Base, Bonneville Salt Flats, and the natural resources of the nearby mountains and deserts.
- Increase the availability of affordable housing in Wendover.



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## 1.6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Wendover lies at the foot of the Toana and Silver Island Ranges, where the shimmering salt flats come to their western edge.

Wendover's most striking, and most famous landmark, the Salt Flats are world-renowned and have provided the city with a unique place in the world's geography. The crystalline flats cover about 200 sq. miles and are estimated to contain nearly 500 million tons of salt. Because they are so flat and so vast, the earth's curvature can actually be observed from perimeter vantage points.



The Toana Range is part of series of mountains in the basin-and-range system of the Great Basin. Located on the Nevada side of the state line, the Toanas frame the western edge of the Wendover community. Wendover itself sits at 4,240 feet above sea level, although the elevation varies throughout the town, especially the north end of town, which is built on the foothills of the Leppy Range. The Leppys come directly into town from the Northwest, giving Wendover an interesting topographical profile. Coming into town from the east, the first thing that one notices is the striking hill that rises up between I-80 and Hwy. 40 that gives Wendover a distinguished natural landmark.

### Climate

Wendover lies in a continental steppe climate zone, which means the area experiences the climatic extremes characteristic of high desert areas. Seasonal temperatures range from an average of 27 degrees in January to 80 in July. It is not uncommon to see daytime temperatures of nearly 100 degrees during the day drop to around 50 degrees the very same evening. In the summertime, the extreme heat generated by the salt flats causes almost-daily thunderstorms in the Great Salt Lake Desert east of town.

## 1.7. POPULATION

In 2015, the estimated population is 1,436. Population projections by Tooele County have been based on a 2.6% annual growth rate for estimating population growth in the City of Wendover. In that several

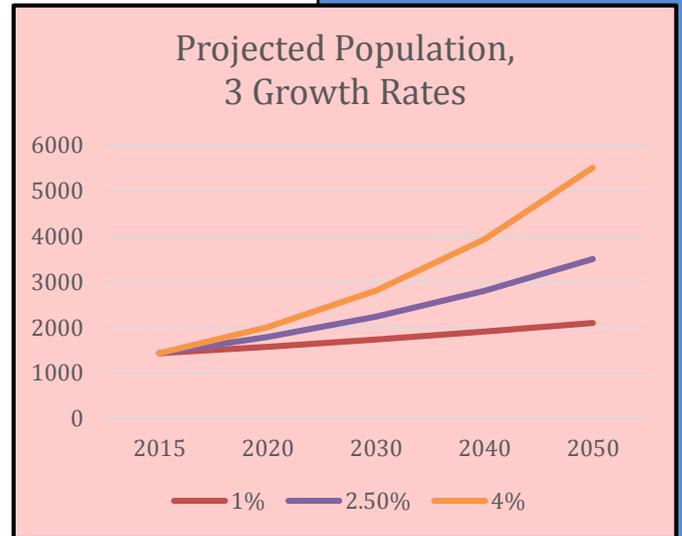


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variables will determine how the city grows into the future, the projections are shown here using three potential growth rates, at 1%, 2.5% and 4% per decade.

The most recent demographic data available from the U.S. Census 2010 in most categories is represented below (see census data at [www.factfinder2.census.gov](http://www.factfinder2.census.gov)). Although some increases and changes have occurred since the year 2010, the demographic profile from that census still offers a good representation of the Wendover community in many categories.



### Population Demographics

- 56.9% of the population graduated high school or have a GED. 11.9% have Bachelor's degree or higher.
- The races making up the largest parts of the population are: White, 44%, Hispanic, 43.6%, and two or more races, 12.4%.
- Residents are 51.5% male and 48.5% female.
- 66% were born U.S. citizens, while 34% were born outside of the country.
- Average household size is 3.56
- Median age is 29.9

### Economy

- Of workers, 96% commute under 20 mins, 4% travel over 25 mins.
- 60% are employed in service occupations.
- Recent census estimate of the unemployment rate is 4.8%.
- Median household income \$29,565.

Historical Population		
Census	Pop.	%±
<b>1920</b>	180	—
<b>1930</b>	205	13.9%
<b>1940</b>	272	32.7%
<b>1950</b>	814	199.3%
<b>1960</b>	609	-25.2%
<b>1970</b>	781	28.2%
<b>1980</b>	1,099	40.7%
<b>1990</b>	1,127	2.5%
<b>2000</b>	1,537	36.4%
<b>2010</b>	1,400	-8.9%
<b>Est. 2015</b>	1,436	2.6%



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### **1.8. OVERALL GOALS** *(See associated chapter for more detail)*

1. Maintain a good balance of land uses and zoning. *(Chapter 2)*
2. Provide for community improvement and beautification. *(Chapter 2)*
3. Preserve historic structures and elements of the community. *(Chapter 2)*
4. Preserve open spaces for recreation and wildlife. *(Chapter 2)*
5. Update and pursue plans to annex outlying areas to the east. *(Chapter 2)*
6. Provide more opportunity for more jobs, including new and local expanding businesses. *(Chapter 3)*
7. Create and follow an Economic Development Plan for the city and the airport. *(Chapter 3)*
8. Promote tourism to the city and the region, including improved attractions. *(Chapter 3)*
9. Update the Transportation Master Plan, including goals for road improvements, lighting, street signs and addressing. *(Chapter 4)*
10. Provide improved opportunities for affordable housing. *(Chapter 5)*
11. Maintain and update the Housing Master Plan. *(Chapter 5)*
12. Prepare and maintain a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including new and improved recreation facilities. *(Chapter 6)*
13. Plan for and maintain public improvements and facilities. *(Chapter 7)*
14. Provide adequate storm water drainage throughout the community. *(Chapter 7)*
15. Support the improvement of health and emergency services. *(Chapter 7)*
16. Develop new sources of water supply. *(Chapter 7)*
17. Develop programs to achieve greater involvement and more diverse participation in City programs and issues. *(Chapter 7)*