

Green River City

Housing Element of General Plan

To be included in the Green River General Plan in accordance with UCA
10-9a-403

GREEN RIVER HOUSING PLAN

Demographics

The population of Green River has declined slightly over the past ten years; dropping from 973 in 2000 to 952 in 2010 Table 1. In contrast the Hispanic or Latino population of the city has grown, increasing from 191 individuals in 2000 to 204 by 2010. The demand for housing is driven by changes in the number of households. An increase in the number of households typically generates a one-for-one increase in the demand for new housing units. In the case of Green River the number of households increased by only four in the past ten years. Consequently the demand for new housing has been limited. However, many residents are living in sub-standard conditions. Housing options do not exist in Green River.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Green River

	2000	2010
Total Population	973	952
Hispanic or Latino	191	204
Not Hispanic or Latino	782	748
Total Households	329	333

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 2
Expected 10 year Growth Projection

	2010	2020
Population Projection	973	1152

Source: GOPB State of Utah

It is expected that in the next eight years there will be a total growth of 179 new residents. For the purposes of this analysis it is assumed that this is equivalent to about 61 new households needing a place to live based on the average household size of 2.89.

The lack of growth in population and households has resulted in little net in-migration of younger families. Consequently the population base has been very stable and has continued to age over the decade. In 2000 the median age was

28.8 years by 2010 the median had increased to 34.7 years, a remarkable increase in the median age Table 3.

**Table 3
Population by Age for Green River**

	2000	2010
Under 5 Years	88	76
5 to 9 years	107	88
10 to 14 years	104	76
15 to 19 years	85	72
20-29 Years	119	114
30-39 years	144	100
40-49 years	104	137
50-59 years	81	107
60-64 years	32	46
65 years and more	109	136
Total	973	952
Median Age	28.8	34.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The four age groups of the population from under five years to 19 years have all decreased in their share of the population Table 4. Most notably was the drop in the 10-14 year age group. In 2000 10.7 percent of the population was in this group. By 2010 it dropped to 8 percent. The number of individuals in the age group dropped from 104 to 76. The aging of the population has implications for the housing market. With fewer young people the need for housing units with three and four bedrooms is reduced.

**Table 4
Green River: Share of Population by Age Group**

	2000	2010
Under 5 Years	9.0%	8.0%
5 to 9 years	11.0%	9.2%
10 to 14 years	10.7%	8.0%
15 to 19 years	8.7%	7.6%
20-29 Years	12.2%	12.0%

30-39 years	14.8%	10.5%
40-49 years	10.7%	14.4%
50-59 years	8.3%	11.2%
60-64 years	3.3%	4.8%
65 years and more	11.2%	14.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Special Needs Housing

Green River has a limited number of persons with special needs. There are very few homeless persons in Green River and there are likely a few household at risk of becoming homeless, although the number is not known at this time. Victims of domestic abuse are able to find emergency housing in the community in connection with the Emery County Sheriff and the Green River Positive Action Community Team or PACT.

There are 141 persons with physical disabilities, 45 of which are over the age of 65.

Table 5
Persons with Disabilities current and projected 10 years

	2010	% of Population	2020
Persons with physical Disabilities	95	9.7%	104
Persons with mental Disabilities	46	4.8%	49

Source: US Census Bureau

Persons with special housing needs must be included in overall housing planning in Green River. There is a current need for at least 2–3 new accessible units now and at least 3–5 accessible units built over the next 5 years in connection with the production of multi-family rental property projected to be built over that period. Persons with physical disabilities can be accommodated by insuring that some new or rehabilitated housing is constructed or reconstructed with consideration of accessibility and visitability especially in the rental housing suggested in this plan. The rehabilitation of older motels must include the construction of new units with wider doors throughout units including interior bathrooms and ease of access throughout the units. Fully accessible units must designed and built into the structure from the onset of the rebuild. This design must include parking access, access with no steps into both the ground floor units and any common areas like playgrounds,

management offices and other like areas. Compliance with all HUD Fair Housing requirements including Section 504 should be implemented.

In the aggressive rehabilitation associated with this plan those administering the program need to be sensitive the needs of individual families. In families where physical disability is present rehabilitation should take into account the disability and build in accessibility improvements for the disabled family member. Ramps and door widening as well as bathroom and kitchen accessibility should be built into the rehabilitation.

Although there are a limited number of persons with mental disabilities these individuals need additional housing options in Green River. Coordination with Four Corners Mental Health must be accomplished and a projection of needed housing determined overtime. Most persons with these disabilities are not housed locally depending upon the severity of the disability. Some persons are housed with their family with limited specialized care. However, housing managed by trained professional caretakers in an assisted living arrangement may be necessary. It is the recommendation of this plan to coordinate with not only the mental health agency but also with Active Reentry in Price, Utah.

Single Female Heads of Households

According to the 2010 census there are 20 single female heads of households in Green River currently and this is likely to grow over time. Special consideration of the needs of these households is built into this plan.

Employment, Wages and Income

Total nonfarm employment in Green River has been around 450–500 over the past few years (Table 6). The level of employment, which is about half the size of the population, indicates that most people in the local community live and work in Green River. The most important employment sectors are retail and government but these two sectors are on very different trend lines. Government employment has fallen significantly over the past 20 years; declining from 199 in 1990 to 117 in 2009. In contrast retail employment has increased from about 100 workers in 2000 to 138 in 2009. Typically, employment growth should provide some support for the local housing market but in the case of Green River it's clear that the job growth did not induce net in-migration and population growth and the subsequent demand for new housing. New job opportunities were apparently filled by underemployed or unemployed Green River residents rather than by individuals migrating to the local market.

**Table 6
Nonfarm Employment in Green River**

	Total	Retail	Hospitality & Leisure	Government	Other
1990	422	128	71	199	24
1995	372	72	48	198	54
2000	256	98	36	101	21
2003	306	78	84	117	27
2006	461	143	177	116	25
2008	495	149	186	116	44
2009	469	138	173	117	41

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

Green River is a low wage job market. The average wage in 2010 was \$21,456 or about \$10.50/hour. Over the past ten years the nominal wage has been very consistent; ranging roughly between \$18,000 and \$21,450 Table 7. In real term, adjusted for inflation, the average wage rate in Green River has dropped from \$26,245 in 2000 to \$21,456 in 2009. Low wages increase the need for affordable housing.

**Table 7
Average Nonfarm Wage in Green River**

	Nominal Income	Real Income (2010 \$)
2000	\$21,168	\$26,245
2001	\$20,772	\$25,041
2002	\$21,120	\$25,065
2003	NA	NA
2004	\$18,108	\$20,466
2005	\$18,756	\$20,504
2006	\$19,704	\$20,867
2007	\$16,920	\$17,426
2008	\$20,196	\$20,018
2009	\$21,456	\$21,456
% Chg.	1.3%	-18.1%

*Source: Utah Department Work
Force Services.*

Unfortunately the 2010 Census does not provide income estimates and the margins of error for American Community Survey estimates are too large, making the estimate useless. However, from the 2000 Census, which did collect income data, we know that Green River was a low income city. The income data from the 2000 Census provided an estimate of \$28,000 as the median household income. The median household income statewide was \$45,726. Green River's median income was only 61 percent of the state median. If that relationship held in 2010, which may be an optimistic assumption given the weakness of local wage rates, the median income in Green River would be \$33,621.

Another measure of income is provided by the Utah State Tax Commission which publishes median household adjusted gross income (AGI) by city. In 2009 the median household AGI for Green River was \$29,902, which ranks 280th out of 309 cities in Utah. The AGI median household income is also reasonably close to the \$33,621 estimate derived by the relationship of Green River's median income to the statewide median.

Both the income and wage data indicate that Green River is a low income community. Low income raises the probability of households having housing cost burdens, defined as paying more than 30 percent for housing. And in a housing market where there are very few alternatives; due to lack of new construction, households are often left with low quality housing at relatively high prices.

Blue Castle Holding's Nuclear Power Plant – Blue Castle has been working on siting, engineering and planning for a 3,000 megawatt nuclear power plant located just north of Green River. In a discussion with Reed Searle, senior vice president of business development for Blue Castle Holdings, he stated that there would be no housing need created by their project prior to 2016, when they expect to have the “permit in hand”. Until that time all of their efforts are confined to consulting and planning, which does not require any local housing.

Housing Needs Statement

Green River continues to have limited housing options available for the residents currently living in substandard, overcrowded or cost burdened housing (spending more than 30% of income on housing). The data generated by a windshield survey conducted by Epicenter demonstrates that fully 46% of all housing is deteriorated or dilapidated. Most of the dilapidated housing is pre-1976 trailers both in trailer parks or on individual lots. The need for

rehabilitation is critical. Included with this plan is an analysis of the current housing stock in terms of actual units and housing listed by type and condition.

**Table 8
Housing Quality Analysis in Green River, Utah (Windshield Survey 2011)**

Housing Units (listed by Type)	Quantity	Condition New	Condition Sound	Condition Deteriorated	Condition Dilapidated	Percent in need of Rehabilitation
Total Number of Housing Units 476						
Traditional Construction Homes	301	12	209	44	36	24%
Modular Homes	30	3	22	5	0	16%
Single Wide Trailers	23	0	0	23	0	100%
Pre-1976 Trailers	110	0	0	0	110	100%
Rental Apartments	12	0	12	0	0	0%
Total	476	15	243	75	146	46%

There is an important need in Green River for extensive rehabilitation. As demonstrated in the previous table 221 units are in need of some kind of rehabilitation and replacement in the case of single wide mobile homes that make up almost 28% of the entire housing stock in Green River. Most of these units are pre-1976 vintage trailers and most are in need of removal and replacement and cannot be rehabilitated. Some are in trailer parks and some are on individual lots. People live in them only because they are less expensive based on limited housing availability and very low incomes.

There are very few apartments available in the community (12). Residents do not want to live in apartments due to the general lack of units and lower incomes available for housing. Apartments force persons to live in closer proximity to each other. Trailers allow for lower rents and less concentration and more freedom. However, utility costs are considerably higher. The market study for the area shows that there is a need for the construction of only about 3 to 4 new rental units annually in the area. The apartments might best be

developed by utilizing existing motels that are vacant and rehabilitating them into apartments for long term rental housing.

Stakeholders Interviews

There are a variety of stakeholders in the community that feel strongly about the housing situation. In preparing this analysis approximately 20 stakeholders were consulted to find out their needs for housing for themselves and employees. The need for housing was confirmed by these interviews. Priorities were rehabilitation of both single family housing and a limited number of new or rehabilitated rental housing annually. There appears to be some available capacity within the existing infrastructure to support some additional housing. Business leaders are interested in housing especially for lower salaried employees in the service/tourism and agricultural based businesses in Green River.

Public Meetings

A public meeting was held with general public invitations and notification. There was more than two week notification of the meeting and flyers distributed throughout the city. There were approximately 25 participants in attendance. They represented business owners, employers, contractors, residents of trailer parks and the general public along with elected officials. The findings of the stakeholder outreach and the windshield survey were presented. Suggested needs and priorities were presented with open communication about the priorities, how they were determined including the Bureau of Business and Economic Impact market study. The public agreed generally with the suggested outcomes of the planning process and suggested that the city council adopt the suggested plan and begin developing the suggested solutions and filling the housing gaps in the city.

Regulatory Environment

Green River has not created significant regulatory barriers to housing for moderate and low income families. There are only limited suggested changes to the ordinance base after completing the following analysis.

**Table 9
Regulatory Barriers Analysis**

Barriers Questionnaire	No	Yes
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#1. Active and Adopted Moderate Income Housing Plan? If the answer is no go to question #4 Response: Current plan was created and adopted in 2002 and is being newly written and will be adopted in 2012.	X	
#2. Has your community updated your moderate income housing plan with the last two years?	NA	NA
#3. Does your housing plan provide estimates of the projected housing needs for a 5 year period or longer?	NA	NA
#4 Do your housing needs projections specify the type and density of housing needed as well as recommended locations based on zoning? Response: This new housing plan will identify these needs with locations and deal with density that is not a significant barrier based on the type of housing that is needed currently. The city will also be looking at optimal locations for moderate-income housing.		X
#5. Prepare a comparison of zoning ordinances and development and subdivision regulations. Response: Green River manages density based on the area for each unit in three residential zones. R-3 is the zone with the greatest density allowance. The zone allows for one unit on 7500 sq. ft. and 600 sq. ft. per additional unit for a total of 6 units per acre maximum density. It is suggested that additional density be allowed in the R-3 zone allowing up to 12 units per acre with conditional use approval.		X
#6. Do your current ordinances set minimum lot and building size stipulations? Response: Yes, the code establishes a minimum lot sizes of 7500 sq.ft. and 70' ft frontages (80 ft for corner lots). Historic lots in the city are only 25 ft wide. It is suggested that the city allow for waivers for pre-existing in-fill lots to be utilized where they exist. The code also sets a minimum size of 850 SF for multi-family dwellings and each additional unit must be a minimum of 600 SF. This size restriction could cause limitations to smaller unit developments in association with the redevelopment of motels to multi-family rental properties. It is suggested that the minimum be reduced to 650 for rent restricted units tied to affordability. There is also a height restriction of 25' and two stories. These ordinances are being reviewed in the context of moderate-income housing.		X
#7. Are impact fees calculated based on actual capital investment directly related to the type of project proposed especially moderate-income housing projects. Response: The town does not have impact fees allowing affordable housing to built at truly affordable levels (See tables 10 and 11)An evaluation of project type will be applied in the project review process and fees will be evaluated based on project type.	X	
#8. Do you provide waivers of impact fees and/or other fees for projects that provide moderate-income housing consistent with this plan? Response:	NA	NA
#9. Rehabilitation Projects – does the application of building codes make allowances to encourage different levels of rehabilitation to be performed on a voluntary basis? Response: The city currently allows various levels of rehabilitation to be accomplished without restriction opening the door for significant rehabilitation efforts in the town.		X
#10. Is manufactured housing allowed in residential zones and is subject to the same standards as other housing types? Response: Yes		X
#11. Has a review been conducted in the past two years of the regulatory barriers currently existing? Response: Green River does not see significant barriers in the way of affordability. Some additional density is suggested along with a flexible height restriction.	X	
#12. Do you provide allowances for the modification of infrastructure standards or new technologies to decrease these costs for moderate-income housing projects? Response: The city will consider alternatives on a case-by-case basis in the conditional use stage of development.	NA	NA
#13. Has the city adopted an expedited application and approval process for moderate-income housing projects? Response: Green River will evaluate amending its ordinance base if it faces significantly increased requests for housing development but this is currently not a problem.	X	

#14. Have you adopted a time limit for the review and approval of moderate-income housing? Is there a penalty attached?	X	
Response: There is no current need to create time limit, projects will be expedited as much as possible. Demand is low currently and delays are unlikely.		
#15. Have modified parking requirements been adopted for affordable housing projects?	X	
Response: Parking requirements are reasonable and only require about one stall per unit in R-3.		
#16. Have special public hearing requirements been adopted to educate the public and to expedite the approval process for affordable housing developments.	X	
Response: Hearings are not a barrier under current statutes.		

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ANALYSIS

With incomes increasing, unemployment remaining unchanged throughout the planning period staying at about 7% in Emery County (Utah Workforce Services May 2012). There may be some significant economic changes coming for Green River during the next 10 years including a proposed nuclear power plant and up to two oil refineries. With this growth the economy of Green River should grow at a faster rate in years 5 through 10 and will likely remain static over the next 5 years. (Economic Baseline Study of Green River, BUREAU OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH) The income of households in the area drives the affordability of housing. The legal definition of “moderate income” in the Utah State code is 80% of the area median income as reflected in table 10. Incomes of 50% and 30% of the area median are also listed and are referenced in this plan.

*Based on 2000 US Census Bureau numbers

Table 10
Emery County Income limits for 2012

	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons
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30% of Median	12150	13900	15650	17350	18750	20150	21550	22950
50% of Median	20300	23200	26100	28950	31300	33600	35900	38250
80% of Median	32450	37050	41700	46300	50050	53750	57450	61150

HUD 2012 Income Limits, HUD.Gov

Affordability means that housing costs, either rent or mortgage payments (including principal, interest, taxes and insurance costs or PITI), cannot exceed 30% of income on a graduated scale based on family size.

Table 11
Housing Affordability for Income Classifications based on Household Size

	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7 Persons	8 Persons
30% of Median	304/mo.	348/mo.	391/mo.	434/mo.	469/mo.	504/mo.	539/mo.	574/mo.
50% of Median	507/mo.	580/mo.	653/mo.	724/mo.	783/mo.	840/mo.	898/mo.	956/mo.
80% of Median	811/mo.	926/mo.	1043/mo.	1158/mo.	1251/mo.	1344/mo.	1436/mo.	1529/mo.

A typical family of four at 50% of the area median income would make \$28,950 annually in Green River. That family could pay up to \$724 per month for rent or a mortgage. For truly affordable housing, housing available for a family living in poverty, rents would need to be less than \$434 per month. Rents appear to be higher than these affordable rents under the legal definition in Green River currently.

Implementation Strategy

Priority I: Single Family Rehabilitation

Develop a comprehensive rehabilitation program for all deteriorated and dilapidated owner occupied housing units first and second, interested, motivated owners of rental properties willing to rehabilitate and rent to low income Green River residents or current occupants.

Develop a close working relationship with the Southeastern Utah Association of Local

Governments staff to manage a comprehensive housing rehabilitation program. The goal will be to rehabilitate at least 5 units per year, with a budget of at least \$100,000 per year. Epicenter staff will identify units, contact homeowners and help arrange for financing in partnership with SEUAOG. Units will be identified and evaluated for structural integrity and a rehabilitation plan prepared for each home based on the cost and income of the homeowner. For homes not structurally stable for rehabilitation, replacement housing will be arranged utilizing either stick built or modular housing.

Responsible parties: Epicenter staff and assistance from RCAC working with the Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments.

Milestone: Rehabilitation to begin in earnest by April 2013

Priority II: Multi-family Rental Property Rehabilitation

Multi-family rental property development or rehabilitation of 3 to 4 units per-year utilizing multiple sources of financing including HUD (HOME and 202/811 funding, Olene Walker Housing Loan Funding, LIHTC from UHC, private bank CRA funding, etc. Existing motels along Main Street in Green River would be a priority starting point.

Identify owners of vacant motels, especially those along Main Street Green River and focus on those motivated to either rehabilitate units into rental housing or demolish units and build new units of housing.

Responsible parties: Epicenter staff and assistance from RCAC,

Milestone: A project pipeline priority list will be created identifying properties and owners who are motivated to rehabilitate their properties into rental housing units. According to the BBER study there is a need to create 3 to 4 new units annually. It is the objective of this plan to construct on new rehabilitation every two to three years for a total of 9 to 10 units every three years.

Project Number 1: project will be identified by March 2013 by Epicenter and RCAC with up to 10 units scheduled for rehabilitation.

Identify a development partner to assist in this project with assistance from RCAC

Lender partners will be identified by June 2013 and design and construction will begin by September 2013.

Project Number 2: project will be identified by March 2015 by Epicenter and Green River City.

Priority III: Prepare in advance for Impact Mitigation for proposed major developments for the Green River Area

Develop a strong regulatory environment to support increased planning for proposed nuclear power plant and oil refinery plant for the Green River area.

Work with developers of both the nuclear power plant and the oil refinery projects to determine their true impacts on the community including the need for and creation of affordable housing options for temporary workers and for permanent plant workers living in Green River. Create "impact zone" for location sites for the nuclear site and oil refinery locations that require conditional use approval including a list of conditions for local zoning approval and annexation consideration. The conditions should specifically state that impact mitigation is required by the developer for all impact anticipated by the developer in partnership with Green River City.

Responsible parties: Green River Staff, city council and planning commission with TA from Epicenter staff and RCAC,

Milestone: An planning meeting will be held with all participants in April 2013 including the Green River City, Emery and Grand County, Southeastern Association of Local Governments, State Division of Housing and Community Development, USDA Rural Development, Epicenter, RCAC and the Blue Castle Development.

A draft plan for impact mitigation to be prepared by Dec. 2013 by Epicenter. Zoning changes and conditional use requirement changes made by March 2014.

Priority IV: Increase Capacity of existing housing agencies in the area and act to rehabilitate existing housing and construct new housing as available

Capacity building of existing housing providers including PACT, EPICenter and the Housing Authority of Southeastern Utah, Emery County Housing Authority and the Southeast Utah Association of Local Governments in support of managing housing development of both single family and ownership and development of multi-family rental properties. RCAC will assist Epicenter by conducting a strategic planning session by May 2013.

Create an improved working partnership with the Housing Authority of Southeastern Utah (HASU) Goals:

1. Rehabilitate all existing Crown homes in Green River.
2. Create a UHC Crown home project of 2 to 3 units of new housing every 4 years.
3. In partnership with HASU and USDA RD, Green River and Epicenter will conduct an evaluation of the potential of developing 4 to 5 Mutual Self Help housing units with families in Green River. If families can be found then Green River could evaluate funding sources including CDBG for land purchase assistance. A 4 unit MSH project could be completed every 4-5 years.
4. Epicenter will create a renewed relationship with Habitat for Humanity to construct new or replacement housing at a consistent rate of 1 unit per year.

Responsible parties: Epicenter staff and assistance from RCAC and USDA Rural Development, HASU staff and Habitat for Humanity Staff

Milestones: Official beginning of new Habitat Home construction Spring 2014. This project could begin earlier if additional matching funds could be found.

Begin initial discussions with HASU February 2013
Crown Rehabilitation Project to begin in April 2013 in partnership with HASU
Potential MSH Project evaluated in fall 2013 and project to begin in spring of 2014 if feasible.

Create an improved working partnership with the Southeastern Utah Association of Local Government (SEUALG) Goals:

1. Create an efficient housing rehabilitation program with SEUALG to rehabilitate at least 5 homes annually.

2. Include SEUALG in planning efforts to address housing planning, removal of regulatory barriers and assistance in impact mitigation for any high level developments including nuclear power and oil refining.

Priority V: Regulatory Barriers Adjustments

As suggested in the plan some minor adjustments in the zoning ordinance of Green River are necessary. The town will evaluate the merits of the changes and will make adjustments as necessary including allowing greater density in R-3 Zone, allowing up to 12 units per acre of multi-family rental housing, adjusting the height limit to three stories or 36 ft..

Responsible parties: City Staff and Planning and Zoning Commission

Milestone: Evaluation of ordinance by June 2013 and adoption of changes by planning commission and city council by September 30, 2013.