

Regarding the Workforce Housing Zone Proposal

Town Council Members:

We should not lose sight of the fact that Springdale is not a typical small or even mid-size town, when it comes to the workforce/housing/citizen/business dynamic. In most towns, people who work there, live there or live nearby, and there are basically two demographics: the people who live there & the services they want or need. This is not the case for Springdale. Here there are three demographics: the people who live here, services (businesses) and visitors. And a huge percentage of the town business is supported by these visitors. And there are times when Springdale citizens are at the bottom of priority list when making land use decisions. Here are some considerations that I think support denial of this proposed Workforce Housing Zone.

Land Dynamics

- A common development theme is that Washington County is one of the fastest growing counties in the US, growing 30% in the last 10 years and that the population of St George has doubled in that same 10-year period. And as a result demand for housing and land is high;
- Springdale has been 'discovered' and has self-advertised to preeminence: people visit, then want to live here, creating a demand for housing and land, which drives prices up;
- It is now easier for people to work from home, even if their company is based in other parts of the US, increasing the attractive quality of living in Springdale;
- Springdale is locked between three box canyons and there is no way to build 'up', unless we allow that to happen;
- The amount of buildable land in Springdale is finite and no one is selling or will sell at below market rate;
- Competition for limited land increases prices;
- The only way a developer can make a profit is:
 - If land is purchased at well below market rate and no one will sell at those low prices, or
 - Density increases are permitted;
- ALL land in Springdale is 'beachfront' property; Springdale is the 'Laguna Beach' of Utah, without the the ocean and a lot more sand;
- The cost of development is also exacerbated by some of the Town Codes which, by virtue of their requirements, add to the base cost of construction;

Regarding the basic tenet of workforce housing.

- What defines the 'need' for workforce housing? Is this really 'need' or is it 'want'?

- If we 'want' WFH, why do we want it? What is the actual and specific driving force?
- What is the actual 'need' for WFH? Numbers?
- Do we know actually how many workers in Town live outside of Town?
- How many, currently occupied, WFH units do we have now?
- How much employee housing do we want?
- There are claims that workers will make their permanent homes in Springdale if provided the opportunity, but do we know actually how many current workers have been long term employees as opposed to seasonal hires?
- Is this plan based on demographic facts?
 - A survey of what some people want (not need), might not translate to an urgency to install a codified solution;
 - Is there a way to determine when sufficient workforce housing has been accomplished;
- To whom does the term 'workforce housing' apply?
 - One example might be how a definition of workforce housing would differentiate between a restaurant server and a lawyer who works from home;
- Does Springdale plan to install housing for the ~1,100 employees who commute to Town each day (if that number is correct)?
 - If so, providing housing for all of them would increase the base population of Springdale to over 1,600 residents;
 - Has the Town considered utilizing the properties they own to build workforce housing?
 - Has all the promised workforce housing construction in Town been finished?
- If employee housing is a problem for a specific business, couldn't that business provide housing for its employees?
 - Could that business pay a more competitive wage?
 - The fact is many employers are doing a great job and pay a living wage and address this problem;
- Why do some employers have difficulty getting & retaining workers? There are usually only a few factors governing this issue:
 - Wage;
 - Benefits;
 - Low hours;
 - Seasonal work;
 - Conditions;
- Why is a 30 mile or 30 minute commute a problem when this is about the average of the typical commute for workers in the US?
 - If the cost of commuting is an actual problem, couldn't employers pay

- mileage for those employees?
- There has been talk about a shuttle system from St George. If this comes to fruition perhaps businesses and the Town could contribute to free bus passes for employees, as some other municipalities have done;
 - As a side note, Moab's workforce problems and solutions are sometimes used as a model for a workforce housing solution in Springdale. However, Springdale is different than Moab in many respects, including the fact that the the closest towns to Moab, from which a non-resident workforce could be drawn, is 75 miles away (i.e. Blanding, UT)
 - Springdale can draw employees from Towns that are closer than 6 of the 8 closest towns to Moab;
 - Springdale has the ability to draw from just two population centers with a combined populace of over 126,000 people within ~53 miles of Springdale;
 - Including Moab and all the towns within 109 miles of Moab, there are only ~12,700 people from which Moab could draw a workforce;
 - Clearly Moab has a specific set of issues regarding workforce availability that Springdale does not have.
 - **See chart below.

With limited land and no shortage of interested buyers, prices will increase, and the market will govern the outcome. Individual employers, in need of workers, should be directly responsible for employee housing, or increasing the base wage and benefits.

Also consider that developers/builders may find the restrictions involved in this Workforce Housing Overlay Zone to be onerous. Some developers in town might not apply for a workforce housing zone because they are too many strings attached. And those business owners & developers who would use this zone probably already own properties, in residential zones, and are anxious to see this zone approved.

Finally, what happens if a developer/investor cannot fill the 75% quota with employees? Does that void the entire zone? That investor might simply come to Town Council and ask to decrease the percentage of employee housing to 50% or 30% to make up for lost revenue. What would Town Council do?

Once all of these questions and issues have been addressed then the Town could develop a system to address any actual problems that remain.

I urge Council members to vote against this Zone addition to our Town Code until a more thorough and fact-based determination defines what Springdale actually

needs and what more prominent financial role businesses and Zion National Park will play in solution.

**See Above Reference

Town	Population	Distance from Moab (Miles)	Drive Time (hrs)
Moab	5,366	0	0
Green River	847	51	:51
Monticello	1,824	54	:57
Castle Valley	347	22	:33
Blanding	3,394	75	1:22
Bluff	240	100	1:44
Hanksville	158	109	1:41
Spanish Valley	529	9	:14
Total Population	12,705		
		Distance from Springdale (miles)	Drive Time (hrs)
Springdale	514	0	0
Hurricane	23,077	30	:22
St George	102,519	53	:45
Total Population	126,110		

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