

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION



BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Tooele County is currently growing in population and facing increased growth pressure. The county residents enjoy a rural lifestyle and an open scenic landscape. Much of the county has a very small population due to isolated terrain and large land holdings of the federal government. The county residents would like to accommodate the inevitable growth in a way that does not detract from their desired, rural lifestyle. The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for Tooele County to guide decisions about future development to support their goals.

Tooele's Place in the Region



Tooele County is important to its region in every respect: for its natural resources appreciated by industries and military reservations; for environments suited to agriculture, recreation, and comfortable living; for its diverse and educated citizens; for its part in transportation systems of the state and nation; and for its cultural contribution to the state.

Tooele County is the combination of environments including Great Salt Lake, western deserts, fertile valleys, and rugged mountains. These rural and rugged environments are attractive to newcomers to the County and State. Tooele Valley is a short commute to Salt Lake City and other areas of the Wasatch Front and functions, in part, as a bedroom community for residents who commute to work outside the County. Rush Valley is an attractive residential location within commuting distance to Salt Lake or Utah Counties. This commuting lifestyle makes Tooele County desirable for residential development growth and subsequent commercial and industrial development growth. Tooele County should determine at what levels it would encourage or discourage commuter residential growth.

Many areas of the county are undeveloped and somewhat isolated. Most land in Tooele County is under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management and the military. Unique geology and environments in Tooele County are seen as ideal for federal and military land uses (at Dugway Proving Grounds, the Utah Test and Training Range, Tooele Army Depot North and South Areas) and for hazardous waste incineration and storage (at USPCI, Aptus, and Envirocare facilities). Mineral extraction interests are active near the Great Salt Lake and in mountain areas of the county. The military and hazardous waste industries come into the county from across the nation, as do mineral extraction interests. In these ways, the county is of major significance to the State and nation.

Interstate 80 ("I-80") passes through the northern half of Tooele County connecting Nevada with Salt Lake County and the rest of Utah. It is heavily used by automobiles and as a trucking route. The provision of fuel and lodging along the route are of great importance to trucking and automobile travel, although these are not of major economic importance to the county.

Just north of I-80 are the Bonneville Salt Flats and International Raceway which are unique in all the world. The salt flats site (an endangered resource) is visited by automobile racers from around the world. Due to decreasing salt pan levels, the raceway course has shortened over the years. The county should try to reduce negative impacts on this unique resource.

Tooele County's importance to the region as a recreation destination is emerging. Recreation uses include camping and hiking, cross-country skiing, bicycling, off-road motorized vehicle driving, and scenic driving. Wonderful "Old West" mountains and deserts lend themselves to the romance of primitive desert camping, hiking and rockhounding. The Pony Express Trail passes through the southern half of the county, the Donner-Reed Party passed through Tooele Valley and the Great Salt Desert, and many other



parties traveled through the county during the nation’s westward expansion. Tooele County’s history is rich with Pony Express riders, gold seekers and boomtowns, early military, railroads, and pioneers.

