

**The General Plan
for
The Community of Winchester Hills
2010 - 2011**

**A part of the Washington County General Plan
2010**

Prepared by
The Washington County
Planning Department

WINCHESTER HILLS COMMUNITY

Introduction:

Winchester Hills is an unincorporated part of Washington County. Residents and others should take time to review Section I of the county General Plan which discusses planning in general, the basis for planning, and the purpose of planning. Many of the things mentioned in the beginning of Section VII are relevant to residents of this part of the county. The Winchester Hills General Plan provides guidelines for the future for this particular part of the county in addition to those things that are applied county wide in the other sections of the General Plan.

The Winchester Hills Development is one of the more recent community developments in Washington County. The first phase of 9 phases was recorded on April 7, 1980. The community celebrated its 30th anniversary in April, 2010. It was originally started by a group of partners including, Russ Walter, Pete Tolman, DeMar, and JEL. It was developed in phases over a period of several years.

At the time the project was developed, Washington County did not require paved roadways. The developers determined to pave the roads in their development as an incentive to purchasers, which proved to be true. Unfortunately the county did not require curb and gutter either at that point of time. The only real drawback to the paved roads was that curb and gutter, along with the paved streets, would have eliminated many of the flooding problems that have existed since the development began. Overall, however, it has been a very desirable development.

The development consisted of 9 different phases and 347 lots of approximately one acre in size. In addition some larger lots have been divided into two lots creating a total of somewhat in excess of 366 lots in the development.

Geology and Geography:

Winchester Hills is located in the south/central portion of Washington County. The main access to Winchester Hills is from two exits on State Highway 18 between St. George and Enterprise. The community is located about six miles north of the center of the City of St. George and is bounded by St. George on the South, Bureau of Land Management land on the East, Institutional Trust Land on the North, and Snow Canyon State Park and additional private land in the City of St. George on the West.

The soil in Winchester Hills is essentially a blow sand layer situated above the Navajo Sandstone aquifer from which most of the culinary water in the county is produced. Most of the land to the north and north-east is steep hillside. A portion of the Institutional trust land to the north is adjacent to Highway 18, and extends eastward on the steep bluff area. In terms of community expansion, there is probably some of the trust land that could be developed adjacent to the community. Otherwise, Winchester Hills is very near "build out" as far as future growth is concerned.

Population and growth:

In considering future build-out, the 366 lots in the community currently contain dwelling units on one acre lots. Based on an average family size in Washington County of about 3.2 persons per household, and lacking actual census data at this point, the General Plan would estimate the current population of Winchester Hills to be approximately 1,022 residents. The current 34 vacant lots could account for, based on the same estimated family size, an additional 108 residents for a total number of residents approximating 1,312. Assuming that the buildable portion of the Institutional Trust Land parcel north of Winchester Hills should develop along the same pattern as the rest of the community, it could be possible to add some 100 lots and 300 plus additional residents to the community. The State Trust Lands could add another 300 or more residents giving the community perhaps as many as 1,600 or more residents.

Land Use:

There are essentially two categories of land use in Winchester Hills. One of these is low density residential development which includes the subdivision areas in which lots were subdivided into 1 acre lots. The other land use category is open space which includes the steeper hillside areas which are undeveloped, as well as the trust land areas, a part of which could be developed.

The subdivision was developed with lots large enough to allow the keeping of livestock, and is presently zoned for animal use. In its early stages of development, a race track was proposed as a part of the development, but was never constructed.

Open Space

The land to the east and north of the Winchester Hills subdivision is owned by the State Institutional and Trust Lands organization. Much of the land is too steep to permit a significant amount of development. One goal of the Winchester Hills community is to retain the steep hillside areas in an open space land use category. The policy of the community is to oppose development on the BLM land adjacent to the community.

One of the goals of the Vision Dixie project is to "guard our signature landscapes," and to "provide rich, connected natural recreation and open space," which to residents of Winchester Hills, includes much of the State lands east and north of the community.

There is some of Trust Land in the south-east corner of the Winchester Hills subdivision that is flat enough that lots could be developed. However, there is no access to this land from the subdivision. The only access would be from the land that has been incorporated into the City of St. George. Development of this land could come through annexation to that city.

There is another similar pocket of State Trust Land in the north-east corner of the subdivision that could be developed similar to the parcel in the south-east corner of the subdivision. Again, access to this parcel would be difficult except by accessing this land from the same access point in St. George City as would be needed for the land in the south-east corner of the area. Much of the other State land lying north of the Winchester Hills subdivision would appear to be too steep for good development, the same as the Trust Land lying east of the subdivision.

There is additional State Institutional and Trust Land lying parallel to State Highway 18 and running north of the Winchester Hills subdivision. This parcel is several thousand feet in length and varies in width from about 500 feet to perhaps as wide as 1,500 feet. This parcel of land could support development before the hillside becomes too steep, after which it should be preserved in its present condition in order to meet the Vision Dixie recommendation to protect steep hillside areas and view areas.

The General Plan would submit that the parcel is generally too narrow to support significant residential development. Its location parallel to the Highway further negates the desirability for residential development.

Because it appears as a narrow strip of land along the State Highway, it could possibly support some type of commercial development. However the General Plan has never supported a strip commercial development along any major highway. There would appear to be no reason why commercial development would be successful in this location between Winchester Hills and Diamond Valley.

However, the original developers of Winchester Hills still retain water rights in the water company and storage rights in the Winchester Hills water storage tank. Perhaps the alternative is:

1. Would it be preferable to support development on the State Trust Land property where there could likely be some 100 lots added to the community, and over which the community would have some voice in the type and character of development, or;
2. Let it annex to the City of St. Gorge, over which the Winchester Hills community would have no voice in its development. In this case the water that is currently owned would most likely be deeded to the City of St. George, giving them some ownership of the Winchester Hills Water Company.

These constitute decisions that the community of Winchester Hills will some time have to face and deal with. The BLM land adjacent to the State Trust Land is not likely to contain development and could reasonably be expected to remain as open space.

Agricultural Land

Other than the keeping of livestock animals in Winchester Hills, there is no other significant agricultural development on the one acre lots in the subdivision. Not all lot owners maintain livestock on their property. However, one goal of the community is to

maintain the right to have and to maintain agricultural uses on the lots in the community. Obviously, the best way to allow this use to continue is to maintain the current zoning on the property which will preserve this right.

Residential Development

The residential character of land in Winchester Hills is what it is. The development of this subdivision was conceived as a low density development of essentially one acre lots to allow residents to enjoy the open space feeling of the area and to allow, if desired, the keeping of a limited number of livestock animals on their property. Because the subdivision is literally at build-out with only 34 vacant lots remaining at the present time. There are no large areas of undeveloped land that could support any other type of development except for the State Trust land discussed above. The Vision Dixie process suggested as one of the development principles, that there be areas with a "broad range of housing types to meet the needs of all income levels, family types, and stages of life." Under normal conditions, and in the development of a "new" community of significant size, this principle should be considered. Unfortunately, Winchester Hills does not fit this pattern. It is currently at build out, no provision for this Dixie Principle was employed in the original concept, and at this time, it simply does not fit. The low and moderate income housing plan of Washington County is included as a county wide plan in Section VII of the General Plan.

Another problem with the vision Dixie Principle listed above, in Winchester Hills is the waste disposal problem, which this plan discusses in a later section, could not have been accommodated in the Winchester Hills community development.

The residential goal in this community is to continue the character of development that was put in place by the original developers. In order to accomplish this goal, the following policies could be useful:

1. Maintain the current zoning in the subdivision.
2. Retain the open space character of existing and surrounding properties.

Even though the Vision Dixie project recommended developing a walk-able commercial or mixed use community center within 3/4 mile of all homes, it would not be possible in Winchester Hills unless there was a group of vacant lots near the center of the project that could be converted to commercial development. In fact, about the only possible commercial land in the area of Winchester Hills would be on the trust lands to the north of the community. Strip commercial development on the trust land adjacent to Highway 18 would not be beneficial to the community or to the traveling public.

Commercial Development

There is no commercial development in Winchester Hills. In fact, aside for a few vacant lots in the area, there are no parcels of property where commercial development could take place. Winchester Hills is essentially a "built-out" community. The comments from the residents indicate that no commercial development is desired here. Originally, the

developers set aside land on the west side of Highway 18 for commercial use. That land was annexed to St. George City. Whether or not it ever becomes commercial in nature is out of the hands of the residents of this community and the county. Once the ledges development to the south, located in St. George City develops, there could be commercial development as a part of that development plan. Commercial development in the Ledges would not meet the Vision Dixie recommendation for Winchester Hills, but would probably be as near, or nearer, than most Winchester residents would desire.

There are a few home occupations in Winchester Hills that could be classified as somewhat commercial in nature. These are cottage industries where most of the business is conducted over the internet or else somewhere away from the community. These types of businesses will likely continue. They do not involve employees working on the site, and they require little customer parking, they do not advertise on site, and do not change the residential character of the neighborhood.

Industrial Development

The residents of this community are not opposed to more manufacturing or industrial development in Washington County, just not in, nor adjacent to Winchester Hills. With only about 34 vacant lots in the subdivision, there is not a parcel of land in the area that could support industrial development.

Vision Dixie Principle summary

1. Plan regionally; implement locally - This General Plan for Winchester Hills is a local plan and part of the County General Plan.
2. Maintain Air and Water quality, and conserve water - air and water quality in Winchester hills is very good. In conserving water, it is noted that most of the lots in the development, except for a little landscaping immediately adjacent to a home, and some livestock facilities, the balance of each lot is covered with native growth, which requires no additional outside watering. Conservation of water is very high in Winchester Hills.
3. Guard our signature landscapes - covered in the discussion of open space areas.
4. Provide rich, connected natural recreation and open space - also covered in the discussion of open space, which surrounds the community.
5. Build a balanced transportation system - really does not apply to this community by itself. The county has developed a county-wide transportation plan that includes the dedicated roadways in Winchester Hills as well as other necessary roads throughout the county. Refer to Section III of the General Plan to review the overall transportation plan for the county.
6. Get centered by focusing on growth on walk-able, mixed-use centers. Mixed use centers cannot apply to Winchester Hills, the community is generally quite walk-able as it is.
7. Direct growth inward - this was a stand alone subdivision. It has virtually reached build out at the present time. There are no plans for additional development outside the current subdivision.

8. Provide a broad range of housing types - has been discussed in relation to the residential section of the plan.
9. Reserve areas for industry - discussed in the section dealing with industrial development.
10. Deals with public land conversion - none is proposed nor needed for the build-out or future growth of the community.

As an existing community prior to the Vision Dixie Plan, the community has met as many of the planning principles as it is possible to meet under the current situation.

Public Services:

The public services in the unincorporated areas of the county are discussed at the beginning of Section VII of the General Plan, dealing with public services throughout the entire unincorporated area of the county. There are some of the services that should be mentioned specifically in most of the communities, including Winchester Hills. These are discussed as follows:

Water:

The water company in this community is a mutual water company. That means that each property owner is also the owner of a share in the water company. As part of the original development, a large storage tank was constructed on the hill above the community. It has sufficient capacity to supply the subdivision if there was a home on each and every lot in the community.

Should it become necessary to acquire supplementary water, it is proposed by the General Plan that the Water Conservancy District run a water line up Highway 18 to serve areas north of Winchester Hills, in which case Winchester Hills could arrange to acquire water from the District during any period when the present system was down for repairs.

Liquid Waste:

Winchester Hills is served through the use of septic tanks. Septic tanks, if properly maintained, can be a successful means of sewage disposal. The General Plan supports the recommendation of the State Department of Environmental Quality which recommends that septic tanks should be checked on an annual basis, and pumped whenever necessary.

The largest concern in Winchester Hills is the fact that the community sits on a blow sand base located over the top of the Navajo Sandstone formation. This is the formation from which most of our culinary water is produced that serves the county. Geologists have plotted the direction of the flow of water under Winchester Hills. It generally flows in a southeastern direction. This means that if pollution should show up in the underground water supply, it may first become noticeable southeast of this area, somewhere in the vicinity of the City of Washington. There are a number of wells above the city, as well as additional wells belonging to the City of St. George. According to geologists, these

sources would be the most likely to show initial contamination from the Winchester Hills area.

In July of 2000, a waste water study was completed for most of the unincorporated subdivisions in the county. In Winchester Hills, the study was based upon 311 total building lots which have been exceeded by over 50 lots at the present time. If any more lots were proposed to be subdivided using septic tanks for waste disposal, it would likely require that they would be served by an on-site waste disposal system in order to gain approval for development. This could include any of the State and Institutional Trust Land that might be proposed for development unless the soils condition on the Trust Lands along the foot hills, proved to be different than that found on the valley floor.

Electricity

Electrical service is provided to Winchester Hills from the Rocky Mountain Power Co. Citizen comments indicate that there is a degree of dissatisfaction with the electrical needs of the community. The General Plan recommends Rocky Mountain Power evaluate its service to the community and plan for whatever corrections or additions need to be made.

The use of cellular phone is another area in which citizen dissatisfaction was evidenced through the citizen comments that were given to the county. The General Plan recommends that the cellular providers look at the Winchester Hills area in terms of providing the highest quality service possible to this area. If additional facilities are needed to be constructed, companies should work through the county to achieve a higher degree of service. The General Plan would support an additional cellular tower in the Winchester Hills or the Ledges area which location is currently under discussion by the developers of that project.

Other services provided in the community received high ratings through citizen comments. These services include ambulance and emergency medical services, fire protection, garbage collection, law enforcement, postal service, and school transportation.

Roadways are generally satisfactory on the existing local road system. The OHV use of the roads in Winchester Hills has not caused significant local problems that cannot be resolved locally. There is not an influx of people from outside the community that come there to ride their OHV's as there is in some other communities in the counties where the use of OHV's by "outsiders" creates a significant problem.

Recreation facilities in Winchester Hills are minimal at the present time. There does not appear to be any great desire for the development of parks and recreation areas, walking trails, or specific bicycle routes outside of the present roadway system. One reason for these feelings is because of the open space character of the community and the accessibility of open space recreation opportunities adjacent to the community on the public lands.

One of the areas of citizen concern involves the ability of the county to notify citizens of county activities and programs, particularly meetings, involving residents of the community. Currently, the most useful method is by word of mouth from one resident to another. Several other methods have been recommended which include the following:

1. Posting on the county website, or county submitting of advertising to individual computer E-mail systems.
2. Posting at the mail boxes
3. Posting with large lettering at the entrances to the community.
4. Newer posting suggestions for posting methods include such things as through cellular advances such as facebook, twitter, and any other newer communication methods.

Annexation / Incorporation

Winchester Hills was given the opportunity to annex to St. George City a number of years ago when the ledges property became part of St. George. At that time the citizens determined to remain as a part of the unincorporated area of the county even though the St. George City annexations abutted Winchester Hills on the south and west sides.

If annexation should become desirable in the future, annexation to St. George City is still an option. In addition, should the community of Diamond Valley incorporate, Winchester Hills could consider becoming part of a new Diamond Valley city.

Two other options are also available and will continue to be options. One is to remain unincorporated in the same situation as presently exists. The other option in this case would be for Winchester Hills to incorporate itself into its own city or town. There are other incorporated towns in the county that are about the same size or smaller than Winchester Hills would be. There are also other cities in the county that are essentially land locked including such cities as Ivins, Santa Clara, and the town of Springdale and Hildale in the eastern part of the county.

The decision as whether to follow any of the above options, with the exception of remaining as an unincorporated community, requires action on the part of the residents of Winchester Hills. No one, except those living here and owning the property here, can affect any of the possible options. They are totally local options for the residents of the area to consider. They are identified as a part of the General Plan for the purpose of making citizens aware of what possibilities exist, without making any specific recommendation on the part of the General Plan.

Winchester Hills, as it currently exists, is welcome to continue to remain unincorporated. This may be the most comfortable option inasmuch as the strengths and weaknesses of being part of the county are known factors, and are least likely to cause change in the community. The county is in the position of supporting any other option that the area may want to consider now, or at any time in the future.

Winchester Hills turned down the opportunity to annex to St. George City a number of years ago, and determined to remain as a part of the unincorporated area of the county.

Since that time, the city has annexed land immediately south and west of this area. Should annexation become desirable at a future time, the only obvious choice would be to become a part of the City of St. George. If Diamond Valley to the north incorporated, that could also be an option as would incorporation as a "stand alone" town. Any decision as to whether or not Winchester Hills should or should not annex to another entity, to incorporate, or to remain unincorporated, is a local decision to be made by the residents of the community.

**WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY
FOR
THE COMMUNITY OF WINCHESTER HILLS
2010-2011**

On August 3, 2010, staff members of the county planning department met with citizens of the community of Winchester Hills at the fire station. The group was rather small, but those present entered into a healthy discussion of the Winchester Hills community. Following is a summary of the questions and comments that were responded to by those present.

The length of time that the community members had lived in the community ranged from a low of 3 years to a high of 18 years, providing a good cross-section of the community.

The size of family ranged from 3 up to 8. The average family size was about 4, which is a little higher than the average for the county as a whole.

All of the residents were home owners with at least 1 owner having an additional vacant lot adjacent to their home.

The agricultural use of land was negligible inasmuch as lot sizes are, for the most part, 1 acre lots. What small amount that might exist should be maintained.

A large number of reasons were given for living in Winchester Hills. These included such things as being born or raised in the area, close to family, friends, or neighbors, close to the mountains and the forest, and State or National Parks, because of the open space feeling in the community, recreational opportunities, the ability to have livestock animals, particularly horses, a quiet community life, a safe environment (in spite of mountain lions being seen), the small town atmosphere, and a dark night sky.

All respondents to the questionnaire agreed that the rural character of the community should be preserved. Some ways to do this included, the continued keeping of livestock, maintain the lot sizes, remain unincorporated.

A few of the respondents were in favor of developing a trail system in the area; the majority was not in favor of a trail system.

Relative to roadways, most respondents were quite satisfied with the existing condition and maintenance of roads. Most have no serious concern relative to the use of off highway vehicle riders in Winchester Hills.

While more industrial or commercial business may be good in Washington County, none should be located in the Winchester Hills area. St. George and Veyo were suggested areas for such development.

Public Services getting high ratings in the community in terms of satisfaction of service include Ambulance service, drinking water service and quality, fire protection, garbage collection, law enforcement, the postal service, school transportation and telephone service. Less than high rankings went to electrical service, and cell phone service.

Relative to local recreation facilities, residents were mostly satisfied with existing facilities.

Most respondents did not participate in the Vision Dixie program. One comment however indicated that it was good that they attempted to involve the public in the Vision Dixie project.

Being made aware of things going on in Winchester Hills is important to all participants in the questionnaire form. Solutions to this problem receiving the most support include word of mouth, notice posted at mail boxes, plus a bulletin board at both entrances to the community posted at the entrances with large print posters. One resident offered to make the bulletin boards available.

A few citizen comments not specifically related to the questions asked:

- A connection between Hwy. 18 and I-15 in this area would be nice.
- No commercial development
- No industrial development
- Bathrooms in the current park would be nice
- Maintain home occupations
- No more wilderness
- Keep State land open
- Keep the area rural
- No annexation
- Not happy with the federal policy on fires and grazing

**WASHINGTON COUNTY - COMMUNITY SURVEY
2010 / 2011**

1. Residency status
 - a. How many years have you lived in this location? 15 yrs. average.
 - b. Number in your family 4 average.
 - c. Home owner 100% yes Yes
 - d. Land owner only (no home) 1ot - also homeowner on adjacent lot
 1. Approximate number of acres owned 1 ac. average.
 2. Percent acres currently farmed 1.25 ac.- one owner
 3. Percent open space, vacant, or grazed .5 ac.

2. Please mark characteristics that you value the most or that help you choose to live or own property in this area
 - 12.5 % Born or raised in the area - family roots
 - 33.3 % Close to family, friends, or neighbors
 - 75.0 % Close to the mountains, National Forest, and the National Park
 - 87.5 % Like the open space
 - 75.0 % The opportunity to have animals - horses, etc.
 - 87.5 % Quiet community
 - 62.5 % Recreational opportunities
 - 75.0 % Safe environment
 - 75.0 % Small town atmosphere
 - Others low light pollution

3. Should the rural character of the community be preserved? 87.5 % Yes
If Yes, How do you propose to do this? Keep horses, keep lot size as it is, Minimize government involvement, Keep the city out.

4. Should any existing farm land be preserved? 75 % Yes
If yes, how should it be done? Allow it to continue

5. Would you favor developing a system of walking / bicycle trails throughout the community? 42.8 % Yes or No 57.1 %

4. Please rank (on a scale of 1 - 5, your concerns on each of the following: traffic, safety, street and road issues. Most concerned = 5, Least concerned = 1, No problem = 0

- a. Off-Highway vehicles on streets and roads 0 = 50%, 2 = 25 %, 4 = 12.5 % , 5 = 12.5%
 - b. Speeding vehicles / traffic control 0 = 50%, 2 = 25%, 4 = 12.5%, 5 = 12.5%
 - c. Road and street condition 0 = 12.5 %, 2 = 12.5%, 3 = 12.5%, 4 = 50%, 5 = 12.5%
 - d. Unlawful/unsafe behavior by OHV riders 0 = 50%, 2 = 12.5%, 3 = 12.5%, 5 = 12.5%
 - e. Dedication of presently undedicated roads 1 = 37.5%, 2 = 25%, 3 = 25%, 5 = 12.5%
 - f. Other Issues
7. List commercial businesses, or industrial/manufacturing businesses, if any, that you think are needed, or desirable, to serve the residents and visitors to this community.
- a. None = 100 % (This is not saying there should be no industrial development in the county, just none in the Winchester Hills area)
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
8. Where should businesses or industries identified above be located? In St. George or Veyo. On existing commercial land, not in Winchester Hills.
9. Please rate on a scale of 1 to five your perception or experience with the following local services as they relate to the area. Excellent = 5, Poor = 1, No Experience = 0
- a. 3 = 28.5 %, 4 = 38.5 %, 5 = 42.8% Ambulance/emergency medical
 - b. 4 = 42.8%, 5 = 57.1% Drinking water service and quality
 - c. 1 = 28.1%, 2 = 14.2%, 3 = 57.1% Electrical power service
 - d. 4 = 71.4 %, 5 = 28.5 % Fire protection
 - e. 3 = 14.4%, 4 = 14.2%, 5 = 71.4% Garbage collection
 - f. 2 = 28.5%, 3 = 28.5%, 3 = 42.8% Law enforcement
 - g. 3 = 28.5%, 4 = 28.5%. 5 = 42.8% Postal Service
 - h. 3 = 50%, 5 = 50% School transportation
 - i. 3 = 14.2%, 4 = 28.5%, 5 = 57.1% Telephone service
 - j. 1 = 42.8 %, 2 = 14.4%, 3 = 28.5%, 4 = 14.2% Cell phone service
 - k. _____ Other - list -
10. Should the community consider providing recreation facilities/opportunities for residents of this area? 28.5 % Yes or No 71.4 %

11. If the answer to #10 was yes, list up to three community facilities that you think are desirable?
- a. Existing park bathrooms, add a park, add trails
 - b.
 - c.
12. How can you best be informed about meetings, times, agendas, events, issues, etc. affecting the community? Check all that may apply.
- a. 33.3 % Word of mouth - neighbors and friends
 - b. 11.1 % Notices posted at fire station
 - c. _____ Notices posted at a store, if existing
 - d. 44.4 % Notices posted at mail boxes
 - e. 11.1 % Posting on the Internet
 - f. _____ Other - List
13. Did you participate in the recent Vision Dixie planning program?
16.6% Yes/No 83.3%
14. If you did participate, what two or three things did you find valuable about the study, or about things that the community should do to comply with the study?
They listened to the public, it was good that they were trying to involve the people.
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15. Any final comments relative to concerns that you would like to have considered in the General Plan study?
a connection from Highway 18 to I-15 would be good, do not annex to St. George, no commercial in Winchester Hills, do not change our way of life.
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16. Name of community:

Thank you for your participation! Results of this questionnaire will be provided at a future community meeting.