

**Envision Huntsville Town Survey  
Executive Summary  
May 1, 2007**

**Prepared by the Weber State University, Dept. of Geography,  
Land Use Planning class (Geogr 4420)**

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**Contents**

Section I: Growth and Future Huntsville Town Development  
Brian Parker and Mike Moseman

Section II: Use of Huntsville Town Property  
Sean Lewis and Mike Clark

Section III: Sewage and Water Issues  
Justin Ryan and Michael Andersen

Section IV: Animal and Nuisance Control  
Heber Lefgren and David Sanford

**Please see Power Point presentation file for detailed graphical display of survey results**

**Introduction/methodology**

In January of 2007, the Land Use Planning class (Geography 4420) volunteered to assist Huntsville officials with a survey of Huntsville Town residents. The course instructor and students worked closely with one of the town council members, Ron Gault to draft a survey. The goals of the survey were to 1) assist in revisions to the Huntsville Town General Plan (current version dated December, 2000) which describes the long range planning for the community and 2) survey property owners on several major issues in Huntsville Town that will affect what goes in ordinances that are currently being revised. Since these issues are specific to Huntsville Town, only Huntsville Town property owners were surveyed on a voluntary basis.

During the first week of April 2007, the survey was administered at the Weber County Library branch located in Huntsville. Resident status was verified and all responses were kept confidential so that results would be anonymous. Notes were provided for some of the questions to give a brief explanation of the issues. Approximately 270 surveys were completed giving a representative sample of 90 percent (there are approximately 300 residents in Huntsville). Survey results were compiled to determine the percentages of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the survey item (more detailed percentages were also compiled to show how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed. Respondents comments were also summarized and final recommendation were made under each section of the survey. Finally, survey results were presented to the community at the Huntsville Town Council meeting on Tuesday, May 1st at 7:00 pm in the Huntsville branch of the Weber County Library.

## **Section I. Growth and Future Huntsville Town Development**

### **Questions 1-5:**

Survey respondents strongly agree that the rural town feeling should be maintained by keeping the ¾ acre requirement, maintaining the 30ft-building setback, by establishing ordinances and a historic preservation committee, limiting the maximum size of new homes being constructed, and by not installing sidewalks and gutters.

### **Questions 6-7:**

Survey respondents strongly agree that the park should be used for local activities such as family reunions, group picnics, youth sports, elementary school events, and town-sponsored 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities. Residents agree to allow small non-town sponsored events such as the balloon festival, but disagree in allowing large non-town sponsored events. Town residents strongly agree that town chimes are wanted and many respondents commented about the LDS church chimes.

### **Questions 8-10:**

Respondents disagree with rezoning Huntsville Town property from residential to commercial. The town is close to a split but barely disagrees with annexing property into Huntsville. The town also disagrees with preserving open space by grouping houses close together.

### **Recommendations:**

Huntsville Town should keep the rural feeling of the town by using ordinances and a historic preservation committee.

The town park should be used for local activities and some small non-town events.

The town should reinstitute the ringing of chimes.

## **Section II: Use of Huntsville Town Property**

There are no clear-cut mandates in this section, the following are recommendations based on the survey data and ideas gleaned from the written comments on the surveys. – Sean Lewis and Mike Clark.

### **Questions 11 – 14:**

The residents of Huntsville are clear that something needs to be decided concerning the verge. We feel that a spirit of compromise should prevail. To that end, the verge should be cleared of all man made objects such as, arbors, berms, large rocks, etc. Low lying landscaping such as, flowers, shrubs, small trees, and rocks no larger than a person can lift should be allowed. Well maintained mailboxes, made of stone, brick, or wood, should also be allowed.

### **Questions 15 and 16:**

The residents of Huntsville were split concerning pathway use through town. There was no consensus on whether or not horses should be allowed to walk through town on the verge.

### **Questions 17 and 18:**

Concerning the alleyways there is a strong mandate that the alleyways should be cleared for public easements and utility work. The residents feel that existing structures such as fences should be allowed to stay to denote separation of property.

### **Section III: Sewage and Water Issues**

#### **Question 19: Hunstville Town should only allow culinary water system hookups outside of Town if analysis shows there will be a continuing surplus in the source of water supply.**

Summary: 68% of respondents agree that if analyses show a continuing surplus, culinary water system hookups outside of town should be allowed. We recommend that analyses be conducted from more than one credible entity. If the results show a projected substantial continuing surplus supply then Hunstville Town should allow culinary water system hookups outside of town.

#### **Question 20: Hunstville Town should base decisions on future growth towards avoiding the need for a Town sewage treatment plant.**

Summary: Based on the results from the survey, 86% of the town supports decisions on future growth to avoid the need for a Town sewage treatment plant. We recommend retaining the minimum lot size requirement and continue to use proactive planning and ordinance measures to avoid the need for a Town sewage treatment plant.

#### **Question 21: Hunstville Town should investigate the possibility of hooking up to planned potential sewage treatment facilities.**

Summary: 68% of the Town opposes the investigation into the possibility of hooking up to the planned potential sewage treatment facilities. Based on the results, we recommend that at this time Huntsville Town not consider plans or the possibility of hooking up to the planned sewage treatment facility.

### **Section IV: Animal and Nuisance Control**

#### **Questions 22 & 23:**

72% of survey respondents feel that there should be a limit on the number of horses on a residential lot. Furthermore, 74% of survey respondents think that ordinance guidelines should be established to control animal hardship on neighboring properties .

Many feel that the smell of large animals and the damage caused to surrounding areas is too much to deal with. Those who disagree with limits and other guidelines feel that in rural areas, these are things that you should expect to deal with.

With both questions receiving a 70%+ agreement vote, it is recommended for the town of Huntsville to establish some laws or guidelines to enforce the number of animals that can be kept on a single property and also to keep animals from becoming a hardship on other residents.

#### **Question 24:**

70% of survey respondents agree that the town of Huntsville should increase its efforts to enforce the dog leashing ordinance (see Figure 2 and Figure 5). Many comments referenced loose dogs attacking children or harassing those who are not comfortable around dogs. Most respondents feel that dogs should be leashed when walked, not allowed to run freely around town.

Whether local law enforcement is the answer or if animal control needs to get involved, someone needs to be appointed to enforce the dog leashing ordinance that is currently in effect. It is animal control's responsibility to pick up stray animals.

**Question 25:**

75% of survey respondents want a nuisance ordinance to be enacted to require minimum maintenance standards for all lots on town property. Respondents mostly just want to have abandoned vehicles and other eyesores kept out of sight. If people took pride in their possessions, then ordinances wouldn't be needed. The residents of Huntsville want a clean town and the sight of abandoned vehicles and noxious weeds are not what the residents want to see everyday.

An ordinance needs to be enacted to penalize those residents who do not care for their property and/or vehicles. Punishments may start with warnings and escalate to tickets and other financial penalties. Who is put in charge of enforcing the ordinance will be left up to city officials. A homeowner's association could also be an answer to eliminate nuisance problems.

**Question 26:**

A 60%-40% split is a very close margin to determine if an Ordinance Control position is necessary. While previous questions show residents willing to accept new animal control ordinances, they are more fearful of added public costs that might be needed for a new control officer. According to many respondents, the assignment to enforce current and future ordinances is the job of local law enforcement and should require a new position. In addition, many feel that if people police themselves, then there won't be any problems. It is therefore recommended that town officials identify if a new position is actually needed enforce the animal ordinances or if the task can be done by an already existing town officer.

**Recommendations:**

From the response of the survey questions found in this section, it is observed that residents generally want to see town ordinances established and enforced that limits the number of large animals on residential properties and provides guidelines for their care. In addition, residents want. In addition, residents feel increased enforcing effort is both needed and desired. However, residents ask that town officials remember to keep Huntsville Town a rural setting by not creating ordinances too strict and limiting. According to the responses, most opposition came from fear that the new ordinances would divert Huntsville from its traditional rural heritage. Therefore, any new animal control ordinances should be established to accentuate the rural feel while keeping added public costs low.

## Appendix 1: Comments from Surveys

### Part I Comments:

Small local business wanted such as grocery, restaurants, auto repair and wash, medical facilities, and entertainment.

Keep the rural town feeling.

The LDS church chimes are going to be or need to be fixed.

If town does want small local business, town needs commercial zoned property either by rezoning or by annexing land.

To help keep rural feeling of town, annexing potential commercial property would allow city to control development of land.

No subdivisions.

Design review for new homes.

Want banking facilities.

More Family Oriented Businesses.

More mixed-use retail.

Keep  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre lot minimum.

Cluster Homes are unwanted.

Facilities that retain rural atmosphere.

Address water issues before annexation occurs.

Annexation would allow Huntsville to have more control over development in the valley.

Auto repair facilities wanted.

Annex east of Highway 39 for commercial development.

No commercial development.

Maintain and preserve the rural character.

Locally owned cafes or restaurants wanted.

With growth comes air pollution.

No franchises or chain stores.

Bookstore wanted.

Grocery store / food mart wanted.

Regional Growth is inevitable.

Support walking and biking.

Protect water resources.

Avoid developing wetlands.

Liquor store wanted.

Locate commercial development downtown.

Growth is going to happen. We need a prudent plan to accommodate the growth. Need to treat everyone the same when it comes to building, not the way it is now, keep rural setting please.

I would like to see Huntsville as an island of protected growth and development.

Lots should be kept at 1-acre lots, not to turn us into a city.

Any annexation should have a post bond for improvements for the town of Huntsville.

Keep town as is.

No annexation, keep it small town feel.

The town commercial zone should be in the center of town.

1988 construction of pressurized irrigation systems maximum usage for the system did not include additional acreage to be annexed into the system. Therefore, the resources should not be expanded.

Car Wash, Repair Services, Grocery Store, Fast food restaurant (i.e. burgers, ice cream,), Skate Park, bookstore, small gift shops, small businesses, meat markets, bank, Movie Theater wanted.

We don't need more services, no restaurants.

LDS church already has a chime system in place. Is in need of repair.

Need opportunity for low-moderate income housing, shouldn't cater to out of state commercial development should stay east of town. No new structures in historic district.

Less commercial the better. Expect to leave valley to shop. Should bring public safety (fire/police) post office and health care clinic.

No commercial development.

Each commercial development should be considered on an individual basis.

Setback in alley should be 3 feet.

Reduce zoning to 2 acres per home annex a lot of land to preserve and maintain positive development create a vision for 20-30 year outlook of growth.

Commercial development should include a local bank, coffee shop to read newspaper, bakery, and good restaurants.

Eateries such as a drug store or soda counter wanted.

Athletic/sports facility including pool or golf course/country club wanted.

Place a limit on how large homes can be built.

Don't give any water away.

Don't let valley become "east Ogden."

Pizza place and auto mechanic wanted.

#### **Part IV Comments**

"Please increase dog leashing ordinance – my children will not walk home from school because of being harassed by dogs – Whether on foot or bike!"

"Pigs should not be allowed in the town. The lots are too small as the smell is not pleasant. Cows should also not be allowed as they attract flies & eat all the neighborhood's bushes."

"Are you going to put clothes police in next? People will usually do the right thing and will usually do better without your interference."

"Enforce leash law."

"I don't like see horses on a lot that be small and not enough feed. I tried to keep my dog fence in and it not safe to walk like by when other dogs are running loose."

"I have had a recent encounter with our animal control officers and was never treated so disrespectful. I was yelled at and hung up on twice by Ron. I am in the process of trying to reach his supervisor with no avail. I hand reported some neglected horse. I don't' fell I can call animal control now if I see something that doesn't look right. The town was all complaining but left it up to me to call. Both Scott and Ron need to apologize to me."

"See Rulon Jones Elm herd in Liberty to get an idea how bad it can get. It stinks. Waste literally flows in the street. Oh, and where is Mr. Jones today? Gone. But his scourge goes on."

"Keep it like it has always been."

"My wife and child have been attacked by loose dogs; No covenants should be established. Ticket owners of loose dogs."

“I know how difficult it can be for homeowners to control pets. But we need to be more respectful of others and their property.”

“This is the ‘country.’”

“There are many residents in our community who feel the leash law ordinance does not apply to them. Their dogs are allowed to roam the town leaving their “deposits” in our beautiful park, harassing people eating lunch, and children in play areas who are terrified of dogs.”

“The small town feel will be lost if the controls are too tight. Current ordinances are sufficient.”

“We are the country”

“How would they enforce Ordinance violations? There are residents that need to be enforced with junk and old items in the yard that need to be removed-would this help with that??”

“Use common sense, of how many you can feed and have enough room for the animal.”

“I feel that people need to walk their dogs but they need to clean up after them.”

“Again – Rural means variety – that’s what creates the atmosphere.”

“Would like to see stated how many feet Barns –pig pens- chicken coops, etc. can be built to neighboring property.”

“If we want to a rural area you have to accept farm animals and their smells.”

“Its okay with me that dogs are not on a leash. But that they come on my property and mess with my animals. We’re in the country not inner city.”

Concerning Question 23: This can be a matter of opinion. “Utahns” feel differently about what these are then “Californians”, per se. Have to be careful here if we want to remain “Country.”

Concernign Question 26: “We have enough bu8ireaucracy- citizen complaints should be enough....

“There are more problems along town boundaries then there are inside. The argument for annexation \would be that the town might have more regulation over these problems. “

“If you do not like horses, cows, dogs, or any animals –leave- We love Huntsville for the small farming, country community. Please let it stay that way!!”

“Clean up the mess coming into town by the post office and 5<sup>th</sup> south and all other messes.”

“We should not hire a part time enforcer when we already are paying \$40,000 + for law enforcement. It would seem a simple thing to have the deputy enforce our ordinances just like it does all over the country.”

Concerning question 22: “I don’t’ want any large animals, but I have them all around me. I love them!! I love to see them run and hear their sounds. There should be a limit, but what the limit is, I don’t know

Concerning question 23: “Animals make noise, cause dust and odor. That’s the way it is. This goes along with what should the limit be.

“In my opinion, there is no animal nuisance. I moved to this valley to raise my children in a beautiful rural valley with animals and animals noise. My kids stink sometimes and make a lot of noise. are we going to put an ordinance on them?”

“The leash law is not enforced. There are only certain streets you dare walk on.”

Aggressive animals should be on a leash

Concerning Question 26: “We don’t need Barney Fife.

“Farm animals should be allowed. They are what makes Huntsville, Huntville”

Concerning question 23: “If you don’t like it, don’t come here. If there are really bad situations, we have rules already on books to deal with it.

Concerning question 24 & 25: “Is there really a problem?”

“Our town is has a country setting. If you don’t like animals, don’t move here!!! If there are situations that are really bad, deal with them with current ordinances.”

“That micromanaging every aspect of town residence’s life by appointing somebody on a power trip isn’t a very good idea. Problem dogs over the years have been dealt with by the dog catcher. A semi rural atmosphere is people having dogs and walking them with or with a leash responsibly. The meanest dogs in this town are the ones tied up or on a leash.”

“Drive Down to my place any day after the spring thaw and look at the 7-9 (varies) horses corralled on a ¼ acre in paddocks that have not been cleaned in ten years. They are up to their hocks in slop. Take a wiff, of the manure and urine. Come back in July and smell the clouds of dust.”