



Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority
723 Railroad St. * Elko, NV 89801 *775-738-2100
www.eceda.com

City eyes five areas for growth potential

September 15, 2012 John Rasche, *Elko Daily Free Press*

ELKO — The City of Elko is currently thinking of ways to make vacant land more appealing to prospective developers.

Development Manager Scott Wilkinson presented a Development Feasibility Report and Implementation Plan during the City Council Meeting on Tuesday.

The report addressed portions of the city's annexed property with available, open land: areas near Exit 298, Errecart Boulevard, North Fifth Street, Ruby Vista Drive, and Jennings Way.

"We have a lot of vacant land that has been annexed into the city and we need to service it for the near future," Wilkinson said.

The feasibility report was designed for two purposes, Wilkinson said.

First, to help the utilities department with its five-year capital improvement plan and where best to focus its resources.

Secondly, to give the City Council enough information to make educated decisions when receiving proposals from interested developers.

Wilkinson estimated there are approximately 1,878 acres of developable land within the city's annexed territories, but even more in adjoining areas not yet annexed.

"We can put this all in place," he said, "but we don't develop buildings, homes or anything like that. We open land up so that development can occur."

These undeveloped properties require much more than a handful of carpenters and landscapers. The parcels of land need water, sewer and other utility connections before anything can be built.

Wilkinson said his plan would provide a backbone needed for the water and sewage infrastructure to the vacant lands in order to help its chances of being developed.

If a developer is interested in setting up shop in Elko, he or she would probably not want to spend an additional several million dollars to hook up the utilities. So, the city is trying to find ways to pay for the necessary connections before the developers start submitting proposals.



But installing water wells and placing sewage lines isn't cheap. All six areas, including a small portion of an existing 5-acre parcel, would cost the city approximately \$37 million.

"This is a multi-decade type project," Wilkinson said. "Probably between three to four decades."

Each area comes with its own positive and negative aspects, so the city must determine which areas would take priority.

City Council did not adopt Wilkinson's plan at the meeting in order to allow more time for changes and considerations.

"It's the citizens who really need to look at this," Councilman Richard Perry said. "We need to digest this and let others digest this, too."

The council suggested that the project's documents and statistics be posted on the city's website in the near future to allow public viewing and engage discussion.

Once the project receives the necessary adjustments, it will be proposed again to the council — a process that could take several more weeks.

During the meeting, the council also:

- Agreed to solicit bids for roof repair of the Water Shop.
- Authorized the engineering department to purchase a 2013 Ford Explorer from Nevada State Purchasing.
- Authorized staff to solicit bids for the Bullion Road Fencing Project.
- Approved a request from the Elko Police Department to hire one additional employee from the current recruitment process.
- Allowed the Elko Police Department to apply for a grant from the Union Pacific Railroad for \$19,200, which will be used for night vision tactical equipment.
- Denied Communities In School's request for a waiver of park equipment use fees for the Scarecrow Festival.