

Wasatch Choice 2050: Feedback from the Community

Report from Community Organization Workshops

On April 18 and 27 the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) held two community meetings in Salt Lake and Weber counties. The purpose of these meeting was to receive input from diverse advocates on three draft growth and transportation scenarios. The goal of the discussion was to learn how these scenarios might increase the quality of life and opportunities for all people who live in the region. The meetings allowed representatives from diverse organizations and communities to share existing transportation challenges and ideas to improve access to jobs, services, and educational opportunities.

This report summarizes the main findings of the meetings, which were led by Andrew Gruber, WFRC’s Executive Director, and facilitated by Fraser Nelson, Managing Director for Strategic Partnerships, at the Sorenson Impact Center.

Participants

A total of 30 community members were in attendance, representing 22 organizations along the Wasatch Front. In addition to the community members, staff from Utah Transit Authority (UTA), Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) and WFRC were on hand to listen to the discussion. A full list of attendees is provided in the Appendix.

The community members were asked to select their primary interest. The sole area with no representation in either group was economic development.

Populations and issues represented:	
Salt Lake County	Weber Davis
Services for ethnic minorities – 29%	Education – 38%
Services for low income people / families – 21%	Services for low income people / families – 25%
Affordable housing – 14%	Social services – 13%
Services for seniors – 14%	Homelessness – 6%
Education – 7%	Affordable housing – 6%

Transportation and/or mobility – 7%	Services for seniors – 6%
Services for people with disabilities – 7%	Services for people with disabilities – 6%

Populations and issues sought but not represented:	
Salt Lake County	Weber County
Economic development	Transportation and/or mobility
Homelessness	Economic development
Social services – hunger, domestic violence, etc.	Services for ethnic minorities

Participants were shown how the Wasatch Front will change in the future as the population almost doubles in size, as well as maps which display the current transit plan overlaid with access to employment. Initial reaction to this information stressed the difficulty many communities have accessing public transportation and the importance of transit to equity and quality of life.

- People with disabilities have a challenging time accessing transit, and thus employment, necessary goods and services, etc. This creates a barrier to community integration.
- Access to transit is important both at the neighborhood and regional levels.
- We must increase use of and access to transit to reduce the negative air quality impacts caused by vehicle emissions. A significant barrier to adoption is long time it takes to reach destinations.
- The northwest part of Salt Lake County has poor access to transit. The frequency and service coverage is not equitable.
- Inequity is reinforced by the concentration of low-income housing in certain areas. Affordable housing and economic opportunities must be distributed throughout the valley in order to impact intergenerational poverty.

Feedback on the current transit system

Participants used an immediate polling instrument to select their top, second and least important choices for a series of questions about the current transit system. (See Appendix for detail)

Participants were asked what they see as the greatest barrier to connecting people to jobs, services, and educational opportunities. **In both communities, the vast majority of participants say transit routes don't go where we need to go, nor run during the time needed in order to get to work/school.**

- Minority communities need education about routes and how to navigate the public transportation system.
- Current transit hours do not meet the needs of individuals who work early or late shifts, especially in

industrial parks in both Weber and Salt Lake counties..

- The 'first and last mile' is a barrier for the elderly.
- Locate affordable housing near fixed transit stops, as this is reliable, quick service.
- The current focus is too driver-centric. Congestion can create an incentive for people to take transit, but this won't happen if we continue building roads and easing congestion.
- Parents find it difficult to participate in services offered by Weber Area Association of Human Services because services are too far from transit stops, or do not run when needed.
- Victims of sexual assault / domestic violence need more safe transit options (a private car is the safest option).
- Weber County lacks bus routes to behavioral health or family/community centers. The people who need help to deal with challenges are often dependent public transit dependent.
- Homeless individuals in particular are dependent on public transit for work, but in both counties, it is not a good option because of a) the amount of time it takes to get to a job, and b) the timing of shifts makes transit often unavailable.
- In Weber County, transit does not run during the times the food bank is open, and the closest bus stop for the Lantern House emergency shelter is 4 blocks away.

Participants were asked what [mobility] outcomes would most benefit the communities they serve. Here, Salt Lake and Weber Counties had slightly different priorities. **In Salt Lake, increasing the number of job opportunities within a reasonable commute was the top or second choice for the majority, while in Weber county the top or second choice was to increase transportation choices.** Also of high concern in both communities was reducing time spent on public transportation.

- Low income individuals and families need transit that meets their timing and route needs because they cannot afford to maintain poor-running vehicles. Reliable, accessible transit would free up income for food, healthcare, etc.
- In minority and low income communities, the motivation for riding transit is inherently different and cost is a significant barrier to taking transit.
- Weber County's dial-a-ride service should be made available to more populations in need.
- Transit options need to be such that more citizens simply have a choice not to drive or own a car.
- In the future, economic development will be more tied to transit options. Millennials are making employment and housing decisions based on access to transit.
- In both counties, much of the public transit is focused on the downtown area, and this needs to change to reach populations outside the downtown core.
- In Ogden, too few bus stops have protection from the elements and feel unsafe.
- For people who have mobility needs, it is sometimes more safe and comfortable to roll a wheelchair or stroller in the street than it is on the sidewalk.

"We keep building freeways and accommodating the driver, so why would anybody take transit?"

"The timing of transit takes opportunities to work swing shifts and/or within industrial industry off the table. People who are just starting off in their careers don't have access to this huge employment opportunity if they don't own a private vehicle. "

"The resources [for assistance] exist, but people have a hard time getting to them."

"We need well-lit, walkable neighborhoods."

- Accessing paratransit services remains difficult. In Weber County, a group found 48 residents of a low-income housing unit qualified for paratransit. UTA would not come to the location so each had to individually to UTA for assistance. This is not only a barrier, but inefficient.
- One participant shared her concerns with Ogden’s redevelopment efforts. There 3 new multi-family housing complexes that don’t accept Section 8 and rents are increasing. Walkable, transit friendly communities should be available for all people, regardless of income or status.
- The visibility of routes is important – overhead catenaries are cheaper than fixed routes.

Participants were asked what the greatest need in order to improve transit service in their part of the county. **Improving bus services were the highest priority in both communities.** In Salt Lake, more frequent bus services on existing routes was the top or second choice a significant majority, with additional bus routes a clear second. Amenities like shelters at bus stops, desired in Ogden, were least important. In Ogden, providing additional bus routes was the top or second choice for the majority of respondents, with more frequent service a significant desire.

Participants were asked to identify where resources should be spent for bicycle and pedestrian networks. **In both communities, completing missing sidewalk connections was the top priority.** In Salt Lake, bicycle connections to transit stops and stations was the second choice, while in Ogden on-street bicycle routes with greater separation from traffic was the second priority.

Finally, participants were asked about the greatest need with regards to driving patterns, **In Salt Lake and Ogden over 90% of participants chose reducing necessary travel distances as the top or second priority,** with improved road network connectivity a critical second need. In Salt Lake, the lowest priority was adding lanes on the freeway, while in Weber county, widening roads was the lowest priority.

Continuing Engagement with Wasatch Choice 2050

Ongoing engagement with those communities most impacted by the access to public transit is critical to the success of Wasatch Choice 2050 The participants were shared ideas about how to engage with others and continue the receive input as the plan is further developed.

- Distribute information about the online comment tool through school districts.
- Place information at bus stops.
- Meeting with boards and members of organization
- Hold hearings and meetings when it is convenient for people who work, in the communities.

Summary of Map Comments

Salt Lake County

- We need a greater density of transit options in northwest Salt Lake County.
- Greater east/west transit service would benefit minority and low-income groups.

- There is a need for more transit stops and transfer sites in more neighborhoods (specifically west Salt Lake County).
- Develop an intuitive, visible core bus route on a defined grid pattern.
- We should work to educate residents, especially minorities, on the use of the transit system.
- A dispersion of smaller centers throughout the region leads to better equity outcomes, as long as there is a diversity of housing and employment choices incorporated throughout.

Ogden / Weber

- There are a number of social and human services not currently being serviced adequately by transit, such as the food bank and Head Start in Ogden, Davis Behavioral Health, and the Family Connection Center Food Bank at Highway 193 and Fairfield Road.
- Transit is needed on 3500 West to service industrial areas.
- Bike/ped and transit access needed to and from Freeport Center and Job Corp in Clearfield.
- Transit service on Sundays is needed.

Appendix

Meeting attendees:

April 18, 2017 meeting held at the South Salt Lake Columbus Center | 2530 South 500 East, Salt Lake City

Ryan Hackett, Development Coordinator	Western Region Professional Pediatric Home Care
Linda Johnson, Board Member	Breathe Utah
Richard Jaramicco, President	Utah Coalition de la Raza
Maria Garcia, Executive Director	Neighborhood Works
Afton Janway, Special Projects Manager	Utah Community Action Program
James Toleco, Program Manager	Utah Division of Indian Affairs
George Mesa, Editor	El Periodico de Utah
Elena Viteri, Representative	El Periodico de Utah
Kathy Van Dame, Policy Co-Chair	Breathe Utah
Marion Willey, Director	Utah Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Brian Garvey, Intern	Breathe Utah
Nate Crippes, Attorney	Disability Law Center
Nels Holmgren, Division Director	Utah Aging & Adult Services
Roger Borgenicht, Member	Utahns for Better Transportation

April 27, 2017 meeting held at Ogden Union Station | 2501 Wall Ave, Ogden, Utah

Karyl Chase, Director SCP	Weber Human Services
Angela Choberka, Assistant Director	United Way of Northern Utah
Paula Harper, School Counselor	Weber School District
Adrienne Zubiller	Citizen
Ella Mitchell, 2-1-1 Manager	United Way of Northern Utah
Judy Doud, Executive Director	Ogden Rescue Mission
Yaeko Bruner,	Citizen
Mercy Jacabo, Prevention Specialist	Weber Area Association of Human Services
Melinda Thornton, Director	Ogden Weber Community Action Partnership
Jim Smith, Davis County Commissioner	Davis County
Helyse Turnor, Community Director	Clearfield Job Corps
Julee Smith, Executive Director	YCC Family Crisis Center
Lauren Andersen, Prevention Specialist	Weber Human Services
Diane Jonega, Health Specialist	Weber Human Services
Joyce Kim, Supervisor	Health Choice
Taylor Knuth, Community Impact	United Way of Northern Utah
Fraser Nelson, Managing Director – Strategic Partnerships	Sorenson Impact David Eccles School of Business

Utah Department of Transportation Staff

Jeff Harris, Planning Director	Salt Lake County meeting
Walt Steinworth, Planning Manager	Salt Lake County meeting
Charles Hill, Preconstruction Engineer	Salt Lake County meeting
Jordan Backman, Transportation Planner	Both meetings
Kris Peterson, Region Director	Weber County meeting
Dave Adamson, Preconstruction Engineer	Weber County meeting
Jordan Backman, Transportation Planner	Weber County meeting
Darin Fristrup, Traffic Operations Engineer	Weber County meeting

Utah Transit Authority Staff

Cherissa Alldredge, ADA Compliance	Salt Lake County meeting
Andrew Gray, Civil Rights Compliance Officer	Salt Lake County meeting
Ryan Taylor, Mobility Manager	Salt Lake County meeting
Levi Roberts, Strategic Planner	Both meetings
Trevan Blaisdell, Service Planner	Weber County meeting
Kerry Doane, Strategic Planner	Weber County meeting

Wasatch Front Regional Council Staff

Andrew Gruber, Executive Director	Both meetings
Ted Knowlton, Deputy Director	Salt Lake County meeting
Jory Johner, Long Range Planning Manager	Both meetings
Sam Klemm, Public Information Officer	WFRC
Heather McLaughlin-Kolb, Communications Specialist	WFRC
Callie New, Transportation Planner	Both meetings
Scott Hess, Active Transportation Planner	Weber County meeting
Val John Halford, Transportation Planner	Weber County meeting

Raw data on choices

What do you see as the greatest barrier to connecting people to jobs, services, and educational opportunities?			
Salt Lake County		Weber County	
Top choice:	<p>Transit routes don't go where we need to go. (71%)</p> <p>Transit doesn't run during the time needed in order to get to work/school. (21%)</p> <p>Transit fares are not affordable. (7%)</p>	Top choice:	<p>Transit doesn't run during the time needed in order to get to work/school. (50%)</p> <p>Transit routes don't go where we need to go. (19%)</p> <p>Transit fares are not affordable. (19%)</p> <p>It isn't safe to walk or bike (13%)</p>
Second choice:	<p>Transit doesn't run during the time needed in order to get to work/school. (36%)</p> <p>Transit routes don't go where we need to go. (29%)</p> <p>It isn't safe to walk or bike. (21%)</p> <p>Transit fares are not affordable (7%)</p>	Second choice:	<p>Transit doesn't run during the time needed in order to get to work/school. (36%)</p> <p>Transit routes don't go where we need to go. (29%)</p> <p>It isn't safe to walk or bike. (21%)</p> <p>Transit fares are not affordable (7%)</p>
Last choice:	<p>It isn't safe to walk or bike. (36%)</p> <p>Child care is located too far from work/school. (21%)</p> <p>It takes too long to get places because of traffic. (21%)</p> <p>Transit fares are not affordable. (14%)</p> <p>Transportation is not accessible to people with disabilities. (7%)</p>	Last choice:	<p>It takes too long to get places because of traffic. (38%)</p> <p>It isn't safe to walk or bike. (19%)</p> <p>Transportation is not accessible to people with disabilities. (19%)</p> <p>Child care is located too far from work/school. (13%)</p> <p>Transit doesn't run during the time needed in order to get to work/school. (6%)</p>

What [mobility] outcomes would most benefit the communities you serve?			
Salt Lake County		Weber County	
Top choice:	<p>Increase job opportunities within a reasonable commute (43%)</p> <p>Reduce the time spent on public transportation (36%)</p> <p>Increase transportation choices (14%)</p> <p>Reduce transit fares (7%)</p>	Top choice:	<p>Increase transportation choices (67%)</p> <p>Increase job opportunities within a reasonable commute (33%)</p>
Second choice:	<p>Reduce transit fares (29%)</p> <p>Increase job opportunities within a reasonable</p>	Second choice:	<p>Increase job opportunities within a reasonable commute (47%)</p>

	commute (29%) Increase transportation choices (21%) Reduce the time spent on public transportation (14%) Reduce the time spent driving (7%)		Reduce the time spent on public transportation (20%) Increase transportation choices (7%)
Last choice:	Reduce the time spent driving (71%) Reduce transit fares (21%) Reduce the time spent on public transportation (7%)	Last choice:	Reduce the time spent driving (53%) Reduce transit fares (13%) Other (13%) Reduce the time spent on public transportation (7%) Increase job opportunities within a reasonable commute (7%) Increase transportation choices (7%)

If transit service is improved in your part of the county, which of the following do you see as the greatest need?			
Salt Lake County		Weber County	
Top choice:	More frequent bus services on existing routes (46%) Additional bus routes (38%) Additional fixed-guideway transit routes, like TRAX (8%) Amenities like shelters, information kiosks (8%)	Top choice:	Additional bus routes (54%) More frequent bus services on existing routes (31%) Additional fixed-guideway transit routes, like TRAX (8%) More frequent service on existing fixed-routes (8%)
Second choice:	More frequent bus services on existing routes (38%) Additional bus routes (31%) Additional fixed-guideway transit routes, like TRAX (15%) More frequent service on existing fixed-routes (15%)	Second choice:	More frequent bus services on existing routes (33%) Additional bus routes (25%) Additional fixed-guideway transit routes, like TRAX (25%)
Last choice:	Amenities like shelters, information kiosks (46%) Additional fixed-guideway transit routes (38%) More frequent service on existing fixed-routes (8%) Additional bus routes (8%)	Last choice:	More frequent service on existing fixed-routes (42%) Amenities like shelters, information kiosks (25%) Additional fixed-guideway transit routes (17%) Additional bus routes (17%)

Regarding bicycle and pedestrian networks, where should the funding resources be spent?			
Salt Lake County		Weber County	
Top choice:	Complete missing sidewalk connections. (38%) Multi-use paths or trails separated from traffic. (15%) On-street bicycle lanes adjacent to traffic (15%) Bicycle connections to transit stops and stations. (15%) Wider, multi-use sidewalks (8%)	Top choice:	Complete missing sidewalk connections. (38%) Multi-use paths or trails separated from traffic. (15%) On-street bicycle lanes adjacent to traffic (15%) Bicycle connections to transit stops and stations. (15%) Wider, multi-use sidewalks (8%)
Second choice:	Bicycle connections to transit stops and stations (31%) Wider, multi-use sidewalks (31%) On-street bicycle routes with greater separation from traffic. (23%) Multi-use paths or trails separated from traffic. (8%) Complete missing sidewalk connections. (8%)	Second choice:	On-street bicycle routes with greater separation from traffic. (30%) Complete missing sidewalk connections. (20%) Multi-use paths or trails separated from traffic. (20%) Bicycle connections to transit stops and stations (20%) Wider, multi-use sidewalks (10%)
Last choice:	Multi-use paths or trails separated from traffic (31%) On-street bicycle lanes adjacent to traffic. (23%) Wider, multi-use sidewalks. (23%) On-street bicycle routes with greater separation from traffic. (15%) Bicycle connections to transit stops and stations. (8%)	Last choice:	On-street bicycle lanes adjacent to traffic. (50%) Wider, multi-use sidewalks. (30%) Multi-use paths or trails separated from traffic (10%) Complete missing sidewalk connections. (10%)

Regarding driving patterns, what approach do you see as the greatest need?			
Salt Lake County		Weber County	
Top choice:	Reduce necessary travel distances (mixing homes and jobs, TOD, etc.). (62%) Improve road network connectivity. (23%) Widen a few roads. (8%) Widen many roads. (8%)	Top choice:	Reduce necessary travel distances (mixing homes and jobs, TOD, etc.). (56%) Improve road network connectivity. (22%) Add lanes on the freeway. (22%)
Second choice:	Improve network connectivity (54%) Reduce necessary travel distances (mixing homes and jobs, TOD, etc.). (31%) Widen a few roads. (8%)	Second choice:	Improve network connectivity (50%) Reduce necessary travel distances (mixing homes and jobs, TOD, etc.). (40%) Widen a few roads. (10%)

	Add lanes on the freeway. (8%)		
Last choice:	Add lanes on the freeway. (46%) Widen many roads. (31%) Widen a few roads. (23%)	Last choice:	Widen many roads. (60%) Add lanes on the freeway. (30%) Widen a few roads. (23%)