

Summary of Small Group Discussions

Wasatch Choice for 2040 Consortium Meeting

During the first *Wasatch Choice for 2040* Consortium meeting, held on September 26, 2011, approximately 300 attendees divided into small groups to discuss regional housing, *Envision Tomorrow Plus* (an innovative land-use software being developed), zoning challenges, financing transit-oriented development, six catalytic sites in Utah, and transportation planning. The following summary tries to capture the diverse concerns and suggestions raised at each table. These issues have generated additional discussion and recommendations to the *WC2040* Management Team.

Regional Housing

Concerns

- Political constraints to fair housing choice is a challenge (NIMBYism, Implementation and Integrated neighborhoods)
- Economic viability needs to be addressed
- Adequate housing a barrier
- Lack of mobility
- Developers with a lack of knowledge

Suggestions/Main Points

- Affordable
- Integration of housing, transportation, and economic development
- Demonstrate benefits of a diverse housing stock - "My kids can't live where I live."
- Eliminate zoning barriers
- Resources:
 - Financial tools
 - Zoning language
 - Resources for mixed-use development
 - Affordability for all socio-economic classes
- Fix the inadequate appraisal process which currently skews the value of properties
- Education
 - Educating policy makers and members of community
 - Know what people want/need and share this with the public
 - Not enough good projects to show examples of good high density housing
- Need more tools in the toolbox – i.e. land trusts for affordable housing or transfer of development rights
- Promote diversity in mixed-use communities
- Environment
 - Housing choices based on environment
 - Transportation choices

- Clean air – people making housing choices based on accessibility to clean air for themselves and their children
- Housing design sustainability over time – long term
- Think about the cultural issue – Ex – Polynesians don't like the idea of senior housing

Envision Tomorrow Plus

Concerns

- People may have their own area of expertise – how do you deal with everybody tweaking scenarios?
- What if everybody does the same analysis with ET+ but gets different results?

Suggestions/Main Points

- Coordinate data between agencies
- Expand social/demographic/ equity indicators
- Baseline asset inventory to ET+ - how does the site relate to its surroundings?
- Use ET+ to educate policymakers/legislators
- Track existing and needed social and civil resources in communities
- Include financial sustainability of development investments
- ET+ should have the ability to incorporate natural hazards – ex floodplains
- Ability to integrate policy decisions – changes in state tax allocations
- Results should be described in very simple and clear terms
- Each file should have a string of how results were obtained – decision log

Zoning/Land use

Suggestions/ Main Points

- Density is not the problem, design is - need more creative design work
- Be cognizant of scale – A TOD in one community may be very different than a TOD in another (one size does not fit all)
- Have developer accountability upfront – more public education and buy in
- Stop spread of new commercial zoning to encourage re-use of existing zoned parcels
- Make it market based
- Ordinance provision should regulate impact rather than perception
- Collaboration needed (City – City; Cities – UDOT; Land Use – Trans.; City – County – State)
- Avoid Jargon
- Be more aggressive in our zoning – we're all in this together
- Show parking in matrix
- Education planning commissioners and councils
 - Stuck in the past, not thinking about future

- Sustainable codes initiative - What do you want? Not what do you want to avoid.
- If business as usual, farmland will disappear – (open space preservation/cost of sprawl)
- Increased education about form-based codes

Money/Financing

Suggestions/Main Points

- Finance:
 - Encourage public and private partnerships
 - TOD's need to demonstrate real value to owners/developers – no data to support
 - TOD entitlement timeline too long –needs a TOD entitlement “box”
 - Need Real TOD specific and well-defined government support and incentives i.e. CDA/RDA/Private Activity Bonds/LIHTC, E46
- Financial Toolbox:
 - Toolbox should include methods for developing split financing tolls
 - Housing funded by one source
 - Retail funded second source
 - Identify other sources that can take first loss position to catalyze entity to initial community development
- Mixed-used developments must be small business oriented
- Create state-driven entity to catalyze community development
- Need to demonstrate REAL value to developer
- Need good balance of funding
- Redevelopment agency constraints – other legislative issues – how do we influence legislature?
- No dependable data to support real value – RDA to a developer – i.e. doesn't translate real value to a pro forma.
- RDI is significantly negatively impacted by the approval/timeline – need TOD Box from Government.
- Need TOD govt. incentives well defined – CDA/RDA/LIHTC – new tax credits – private activity.
- Financial Summit Case Studies – get/give feedback. What are financiers looking for?
- Parking – banks requirements – other infrastructure.
- Incentivize market forces
- Collaboration among regional cities/county
- Unite level of reward among cities to not compete with one another
- What type of information?
 - All relate to value.
 - Need to change to get a tangible value
 - What alternative financing is available? Need to package it up
- Alternative to traditional financing
 - UTA grant from FTA for infrastructure
 - Developer/community/UTA

- city bonding
- CNA/RDA funding
- Impediments
 - non-income generating projects
 - recession
 - parking
 - no infrastructure
 - density
 - public/private partnerships
 - There is no data to include in a pro-forma that demonstrates real value to the developer

Six Catalytic Sites

Concerns

- How do we make the vision a reality?

Suggestions/ Main Points

- IDENTITY: Incorporation of authentic sense of place, with high use space for existing and future generations
- FLEXIBILITY
 - Flexibility at inception of building and over time
 - Flexibility for markets, demographics, uses over time, and infill over time
 - Inclusive
 - Holistic approach between government, business, and public
 - Partnerships/collaborations
 - How to make it financially viable –incentives?
 - Society creating demands
 - Needs must be met
- SUCCESSES:
 - Sense of place, community, comfort, basic needs
 - Destination and connectivity as well as home
- BARRIERS
 - Financial
 - Educational
 - Failed Developments
 - Demands
 - Fragmented Landowners
 - Secluded/"island" communities
- Create complete community – diverse attractions and walk to daily needs/wants
- Ensure safety and walkability -- seamless—connectivity
- What elements can be transferred to other sites? Which are custom? Site specific?

- Needs to fit into the bigger city and compliment
- What works will be spread across the region organically
- Has to sell in the private sector
- Education and outreach: municipal, developer, financial, and consumer
- Private property rights
- Us versus Them
- Mixed-use zoning incentives
- Collaboration
- Need working examples, with ALL pieces for both study and exposure

Transportation Planning

Concerns

- Who is using the system and will it be viable?
- Local lagging behind regional
- Lack of public involvement in planning
- Population growth may not be the same as current projections. Planning could be caught short - especially the use of limited resources such as water.
- What barriers to RTP? What can be done to overcome barriers?
- Hard to buy in on big vision

Suggestions/Main Points

Community Outreach and Education

- Engage all parts of the community about the WC2040
- Better education about transportation options for citizens and especially decision makers
- Keep the “positives” focused in messages – (what is best and how you benefit)
- Social media and statistically valid survey to educate or gauge public perception
- Bring the private sector into the decision making
- Educate public to push politics > measure success of public ROW by how many people are moved.
- Public perception and understanding and support of changes land use

Policy

- Fiscal policies/practices need to be overhauled to reduce local competition and focus more on regional needs –mode tax sharing throughout region
- Mileage-based and alternative gas tax
- Maximizing connectivity – support regional transportation system by employing local and best practices
- Incremental commitment and risk sharing between land use and transportation policymakers within regional context

- Re-evaluate development standards, planning policies and regulation and environmental evaluation
- Incentives to give up personal cars
- Zoning regulations need to be overhauled.
- Biggest obstacles are the politicians. They need to face the future with a new mind set.

Land use plan decisions written into code

- Change/improve development standards to show “complete streets,” for example

Funding

- Break down the funding barriers at the local, state, and national levels – more flexibility
- Prioritize funding

Planning and Implementation

- Better planning for mixed-use
- Earlier integration of transit options
- Need clearer vision of how people can get around an urban center when distances are too long for walking
- More champions needed to innovate transportation and share new ideas throughout the region
- Better use of public transit – get people out of the car
- UDOT needs to incorporate transit with each highway project.
- More mixed-use and PUD.
- Make the Wasatch Choices for 2040 a binding document complete with responsibilities
- Have transportation conversions and coordination at a different, smaller scale and communicate that the plan can and should be done in phases (bite size)
- More transit options
- Federal agencies are bifurcated into transit and highway administration
- Connections are currently in place. Finer connections to regional centers are needed. Connect all the roads.
- Connect east-west to the central corridor. Good north-south possibilities, but more is needed for the east-west.
- Shorter term transportation modes. Need a clear image in our minds of how to make the 1.5 mile trips. Look at developing countries for some possible solutions to this problem.
- Collective corridor planning system
- Creating opportunities for telework - another example of “non-transportation” interest
- De-centralize services so that they are near where people work and live
- Prioritization Process
- More inclusive - all infrastructure
- State “environmental process,” like NEPA