

Wasatch Choice 2050: Feedback from the Community | Spring 2018

Report from the Community Organization Workshop

On March 22, 2018, the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), in coordination with Utah Transit Authority (UTA) and Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), held the Wasatch Choice 2050 Vision Community Organization Workshop at the Salt Lake City Public Library. Community organization participants represented various agencies within Salt Lake, Box Elder, Weber, and Davis Counties that work, in particular, with low-income, minority, and elderly populations, as well as those who need social services. The purpose of this meeting was to build upon and continue efforts to receive feedback from diverse groups across the region regarding the Wasatch Choice 2050 Draft Vision and 2019-2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

In the spring of 2017, WFRC met with these organizations to understand existing barriers to access to opportunity, and the ways in which transportation and land use strategies can improve the needs of the communities these groups serve. The goal of the 2018 meeting was to reflect on the input received last year, and to continue dialogue on the ongoing growth challenges we face as a region. WFRC described the strategies the Draft Vision contemplates to address these challenges, and provided maps to show the future land use and transportation plans developed with cities, counties, and transportation partners. The meetings allowed representatives from diverse organizations to provide input on these land use and transportation changes, as well as share ideas to improve access to jobs, services, and educational opportunities.

This report summarizes the main findings of the meeting.

Participants

A total of 25 community members were in attendance, representing 23 organizations along the Wasatch Front. In addition to the community members, staffs from UTA, UDOT, and WFRC were on hand to listen to the discussion. A full list of attendees is provided in Appendix A.

Feedback on growth challenges and strategies

A presentation was given by WFRC Executive Director Andrew Gruber, who provided examples of some of the growth challenges we face now and in the future as the region's population increases by approximately 60 percent by the year 2050. Future growth challenges discussed include more time stuck in traffic, poor air quality, crowding in parks and recreational areas, a decrease in access to opportunities due to congestion generated by sprawl and

segregated land uses, and rising housing prices due to demand outpacing supply. Participants were asked if they could relate to any of the growth challenges. Several noted that housing affordability is currently an issue and must be addressed.

WFRC then described the key strategies that are contemplated in the Wasatch Choice 2050 Draft Vision, which are to provide transportation choices, support housing choices, preserve open space, and link development and transportation decisions. Participants emphasized that we must create strategies to increase the share of non-automobile trips throughout the region, and underscored that poor air quality continues to be a public health and economic development issue residents face throughout the Wasatch Front region.

“Does access to transit alone generate ridership? How many additional vehicle trips will we see in the future? We need to create strategies to increase the proportion of non-automobile trips.”

-Stan Penfold, Executive Director of Utah AIDS Foundation

Lastly, WFRC rolled out maps and provided an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the Draft Vision and Regional Transportation Plan. A summary of this feedback follows.

- There is a need to expand local bus routes.
- How does WFRC encourage and support transit-friendly development? There should be educational resources and guidelines available for suburban communities as they anticipate and facilitate new growth.
- Davis, Weber, Box Elder, and Salt Lake Counties need transit service to job areas in the western portions of the counties. Are there innovative transit solutions that could be implemented in these areas?
- There is a need to get people with disabilities from the outskirts of cities to employment in the central areas.
- Centers need a blend of choices to support affordable workforce housing.
- Bicyclists need safe, separated facilities so they are not forced to compete with traffic.
- Transit fares need to be adjusted for low-income populations.

In reviewing this feedback, WFRC makes the following recommendations to address the needs expressed by this group.

- Work with communities via WFRC’s Transportation and Land Use Connection Program to assist in implementing changes to the built environment that reduce traffic on roads and enable more people to easily walk, bike, and use transit. Additionally, through assisting local communities in their visioning and planning for growth efforts, affordable housing strategies can continually be considered and incorporated into the community’s goals.
- Develop the definition and integration of “Core Route” transit service, which is an improvement to local service. Core Route service is imagined to be high frequency bus (15-minutes or less), early and late service, and seven days a week. Routes utilize the street grid by operating in end-to-end north/south and east/west service. This enhances familiarity of the route and eases wayfinding. Bus runs in mixed traffic and has enhanced stations and operational improvements.
- Continue to work with communities to build safe, connected bike paths and sidewalks, as well as

continue discussions about “innovative mobility solutions,” both of which can help to bridge first/last mile gaps between fixed-transit stations and residential and job areas.

Continuing Engagement with Wasatch Choice 2050

Ongoing engagement is critical to the success of the Wasatch Choice 2050. Ongoing plans are in place to continue to receive input as the plan is further developed.

- Distribute information through the online comment tool, both in Spanish and English formats.
- Respond to and share comments with city and county elected officials and staff.
- Provide standing offers to meet with boards and members of organizations.
- Continue engagement as WFRC financially constrains and eventually adopts the 2019-2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

Appendix A

Meeting attendees:

March 22, 2018 meeting held at the Salt Lake City Public Library | 210 East 400 South, Salt Lake City

Linda Johnson, Board Member	Breathe Utah
Ken Naegle, AED	Davis School District
Kevin Keyes, Chief Compliance Officer	Columbus Center
Minerva Garcia, Project Specialist	United Way, 2-1-1
Adina Zahradnikovaz, Executive Director	Disability Law Center
Ryan Hachett, President	Desert Ridge Investments
Stan Pendfold, Executive Director	Utah AIDS Foundation
Nicole Zinnanti, Designer	Assist, Inc.
Nels Holmgren, Division Director	Department of Aging and Adult Services
Penna White, CED	National Tongan American Society
Jim Smith, County Commissioner	Davis County
Kris Bradley, WDD Supervisor	Department of Workforce Services
Helen Hochson, Manager	Department of Workforce Services
Dwight Rasmussen, Manager	Salt Lake County Department of Aging
Patricia Garcia	United Way, 2-1-1
Marion Willey, Director	Utah Non Profit Housing
Chris Stout, President	Utah Transit Riders Union
Jordan Pieper, Intern	Assist, Inc.
James Toledo, Program Manager	Utah Division of Indian Affairs
Shawn Beus, Economic Development Manager	Davis County
MerriAnn Growther, Director	Davis County Learning Center
Ken Perko, Assistant Director	Salt Lake City
Julie Buchholz, CRA Officer	Comenity Capital Bank
Emma Houston, Director of Diversity & Inclusion	Salt Lake County
Kathy Bray, President & CEO	Volunteers of America
<i>Utah Department of Transportation Staff</i>	<i>Utah Transit Authority Staff</i>
David Alger, Planning & Technical Engineer	Andrew Gray, Civil Rights Compliance Officer
Fred Doehring, Engineer	Levi Roberts, Strategic Planner
Christopher Chesnut, Long Range Plan Manager	Kerry Doane, Strategic Planner
<i>Wasatch Front Regional Council Staff</i>	
Andrew Gruber, Executive Director	Ted Knowlton, Deputy Director
Jory Johner, Long Range Planning Manager	Val John Halford, Transportation Planner
Katie Gerard, Senior Administrative Assistant	Callie New, Transportation Planner
Heather McLaughlin-Kolb, Communications Specialist	