

THE WASATCH CHOICE FOR 2040:

The Greater Wasatch Area's Map to the Future

The Greater Wasatch area is one region, stretching from Weber County to Utah County and Tooele County to the Wasatch Back. We compete economically as one unit, are one job and housing market and share the same air and water. Where and how we shape tomorrow's neighborhoods, communities, and economic centers within our region will dramatically affect the quality of our lives, including how much time and money we must spend getting around, the quality of the air we breathe, and the choices we have available to live, work, shop and play.

And, we will grow. Over the next 30 years, the Wasatch Front urban area of Weber, Davis and Salt Lake Counties will add 1.1 million new residents, a 70% increase. Morgan and Tooele counties will see even higher growth rates. The Wasatch Front Regional Council's mission is to develop transportation plans that cost effectively meet the mobility needs of these existing and future residents while enhancing the quality of life in the region. Hence, this draft 'Vision' is now being presented to the Regional Council and the general public.

WHY WFRC DEVELOPED A VISION

Cities and Counties are charged with managing contemporary development and planning into their individual futures. But, there is no group better able to consider and predict the overall future of our five county region than the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) – led by 18 mayors and elected county officials. WFRC has developed the long-range transportation plans for our metro area for almost four decades. The Council decided in 2005 to precede the transportation planning with a Visioning process called Wasatch Choices 2040. Based on the largest and most significant citizen participation ever in the region, WFRC began thinking about how different growth patterns and the transportation systems they plan can help maintain quality of life through the year 2040. Since that time, WFRC staff has refined that Vision in consultation with city and county planners, engineers and local elected officials.

THE VISION WILL LEAD OUR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

The Wasatch Choice for 2040 is the Vision renewed, being released as a draft in January 2010 to begin the public discussion about how the region should develop. This discussion will include a formal public comment period from February 1st through March 12th with the Vision being available on WFRC's website at www.wfrc.org.

This “Choice” points the way forward for us to focus growth in a variety of activity centers across the region, many of which are coordinated with our existing and near-term transportation system: freeways, rail lines, rapid busways and key boulevards. While these centers are coordinated with *today’s* transportation system, *tomorrow’s* new transportation investments will be planned to *serve* these activity centers, areas of growth, and our region’s special districts – like the Airport and the University of Utah.

WASATCH CHOICE’S CENTERS AND THE MARKET

The Wasatch Choice’s centers are located where regional destinations have grown, economic activity has clustered, or in strategic locations that are pointed in this direction. The Vision suggests that these centers should expand to provide ever-broadening choices for residents to live, work, shop and play; a mix of all of these activities is welcome. Centers should work with the long-term market, helping provide opportunities to residents that want to live close to work, walk or bike to shop, and have both great transit and road access – desperately needed as our population ages, gas prices and congestion increase, and the cost of transportation for work and play inches upward and available land shrinks

CITIES SHOULD EXPLORE WHAT’S ON THE MAP

WFRC encourages cities to explore a mix of activities and walk-able development to help reduce the need for long drives, enable more people to use public transportation, create viable options to walk and bike, and to reduce the need for our region to grow more at the suburban edge. Over the coming years, we encourage cities to support Salt Lake’s Metropolitan Center; large Urban centers, like downtown Ogden; Town Centers, which can be the center of one or two cities; Station Communities near transit stops; pedestrian-friendly Main Streets; and Boulevard Communities that take advantage of economic activity and transportation choices on livable in-town arterials.