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# The Utah Model: Lessons for Regional Planning

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*“Inclusive, political tact, and its appeal to values makes Envision Utah an intriguing model for regional governance.”*

# The Utah Model: Lessons for Regional Planning

BRENDA SCHEER

## Summary

Utah has become an unlikely leader in regional planning through a voluntary partnership of key leaders, agencies, local government, and the general public. Given that regional planning efforts around the nation have generally evoked strong reactions from residents concerned about losing local control, the success of Envision Utah—the organization that emerged as a key driver of regional planning in Utah—in building a consensus around regional growth management holds lessons for other regions.

Envision Utah adopted several strategies that have distinguished Utah’s regional planning efforts from other regions and given rise to what can be called the “Utah model” of collaborative planning. Envision Utah found success by not only tapping into people’s shared values and aspirations, but also because of its significant public engagement, use of convincing, unbiased data to demonstrate the need to work regionally, and ability to garner broad buy-in from important stakeholders in the community.

As more is learned from Envision Utah’s success in regional coordination, a number of takeaways appear relevant for other regions:

- Pay attention to the sustainability and capacity of the leading organization
- Arm the public with clear data and analysis, skillfully marketed
- Package all proposals and principles to appeal to the values of the community
- Spend time initiating and maintaining the right political setup

## I. Introduction

Utah may be the last place that comes to mind when one thinks about national innovation and leadership in regional planning. As a highly conservative state, Utah boasts a staunch property-rights faction, along with a true western disdain for all things related to government control. With its strident skepticism of

global climate change, and jealous regard for local control of all land use decisions, it would be surprising if Utah surpassed more liberal locales in its progress on regional cooperation and its adoption of quality growth ideas.<sup>1</sup> And yet that is what has happened.

Regional planning in this country has had a checkered history. There is overwhelming consensus among planning advocates that most local planning issues (for instance, land use, water and air pollution, transportation, affordable housing, taxation, and infrastructure) would be best tackled at the regional scale, where the solutions can encompass the territory that actually matches the scale of the problems.<sup>2</sup> The conceptual framework of regional planning assumes a governance model that would have the authority to affect important decisions at the local level, to bring them into congruence with the greater good of a regional plan. The greater good has several parts: one is a resolution of the greater affluence of suburban and exurban settlements that results in a weakening of cash-poor central cities and uneven access to education, housing, and jobs. The second greater good tries to solve the problem of land expansion (sprawl), which has significant economic and quality of life costs to the region, including traffic congestion, air pollution, water pollution, reduction of farmland, damage to delicate landscapes, and higher infrastructure and municipal service costs.<sup>3</sup>

With a regional governance model, individual communities can come together to solve these problems, which theoretically would benefit everyone. Historically, however, traditional local jurisdictions and local real estate interests have vigorously pushed back against the creation of a regional government or even an effective regional governance overlay.<sup>4</sup> Many regional efforts, as a result, are either ineffective or short-lived.<sup>5</sup>

In light of these difficulties, Utah's success is remarkable: The Salt Lake metro region has an extensive and rapidly expanding light rail and commuter rail system that is the envy of much more populous regions. The Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a Salt Lake regional consortium the largest of its highly competitive Sustainable Communities Grants.<sup>6</sup> The two metropolitan planning organizations of the region have cooperated to prepare a long-range transportation plan based on land use aspirations that include higher density.<sup>7</sup> One of the largest "smart growth" planned developments in the U.S. is taking shape on 95,000 acres on Salt Lake's west side. Cities all over the region are developing plans for transit-oriented development and dense town centers, along with the policy and zoning changes needed to support them.<sup>8</sup> City planners from eleven jurisdictions in Salt Lake County have come together to share data, maps, and forecasting information, with the expectation of assembling a coordinated county plan.<sup>9</sup> Parts of that plan have already been published and adopted in individual jurisdictions. Even smaller regions are exploring quality growth ideas.

Most intriguing, data suggest that Salt Lake County is growing with more compact development and a pronounced tendency for denser housing and new jobs to locate near transit throughout the region.<sup>10</sup> A recent study noted that Salt Lake metropolitan area performs very well on a combined score of transit coverage and access to jobs via transit, which goes to show that the region is doing well in coordinating its regional planning efforts with its transportation investments.<sup>11</sup> Arguably, successful regional planning has transformed the image of the region from a peculiar backwater to a prosperous and sophisticated metropolitan center.

All this suggests that the “Utah model” of regional planning works. But what is that model exactly? This paper describes the Utah model as the specific techniques of consensus based regional planning initially created by leaders of Envision Utah—a non-profit organization started in 1997 to deal with growth-related challenges facing the region—and which now permeate most of the state’s regional planning efforts.

The Utah model rejects regional governance of even the mildest stripe, and even after years of building consensus does not depend on inter-local agreements for implementation. Instead the model has used a combination of political savvy and public education to affect a shift in the attitudes that people have about sprawl. Instead of being on the receiving end of a regional authority, most public entities have voluntarily, and on their own timetable, adopted new zoning or other regulation that encourages choice in the housing market, including affordable housing and multifamily housing, denser and more connected neighborhoods, as well as transit-oriented development coordinated with the construction of the transit system.

This sea change in attitude is coming from the public as well as the professional planners, is backed up by support from many developers, and has been incentivized by pre-existing state and regional transportation planning entities: the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) and the two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) (the Wasatch Front Regional Council and the Mountainland Association of Governments).

In other words, without any form of government coercion, somehow most actors in the region just decided to do the right thing, or almost the right thing, in a time period that stretched from the start of regional visioning 20 years ago and continues today. This can only be attributed to a cultural consensus on ideas about appropriate development. It is not just the planning cognoscenti that support “quality growth,” it is virtually the entire cohort involved in real estate development, economic development, and planning, supported by broad political acceptance from the public.

Of course this consensus is not universal: There are some jurisdictions that are holdouts and many detractors. Some cannot accept the idea of quality growth, and

some still interpret it idiosyncratically. Nevertheless, this model has been, arguably, as durable and successful as any form of regional growth management in the U.S.

Can other regions match this success in their own planning efforts? Although there are many different forms of regional planning and governance, the lessons that transfer most clearly to other places are applicable in all of them:

- **Pay attention to the sustainability and capacity of the leading organization.** In Utah’s case, the longevity of Envision Utah has accorded with the length of time that it takes to gain the trust of the public on tough regional problems. Unlike some regional authorities or agencies that depend on the blessings of a single politician or are weakened by real estate development pressure, Envision Utah has managed to stay on target for almost 18 years by continuous organizational capacity building.
- **Arm the public with clear data and analysis, skillfully marketed.** The continuous public engagement and public knowledge about the quality growth advantages builds durable, inclusive consensus over time. This requires effective ongoing public relations and sophisticated representation of reliable, complex, and convincing data.
- **Package all proposals and principles to appeal to the values of the community.** Envision Utah conducts a professional survey of the local values before beginning any particular project. The results are used to tailor the language of the public process and frame the proposals and principles so that they are widely acceptable.
- **Spend time initiating and maintaining the right political setup.** Although the Utah model is known for its inclusive processes, getting the buy-in of key “brass roots” players before starting the process has been a formula for minimizing resistance in the long run.

Although these transferable lessons have clear applicability for other regions, it has to be noted that Utah developed its model of regional planning in the face of some unique circumstances—a western ethic of strong property-rights and local control tradition, a dominant religious culture, and a landscape constrained by natural boundaries. The resulting conflict between the urgent need for regional action and the political reluctance to adopt regional governance in any form was skillfully handled by Envision Utah and holds additional lessons for other regions.

In particular, Envision Utah’s emphasis on neutrality, inclusiveness, and its non-governmental voluntary nature enabled the organization to successfully navigate the state’s regional planning agenda.

Envision Utah represented a non-governmental group that was concerned about regional growth, but did not have an agenda for advancing particular solutions. It was not led by a “coalition” of environmentalists or community development advocates with similar attitudes. Instead neutral leaders reached out to the public to discuss ideas about the place they wanted to leave for their children, not the problems of sprawl. The neutral stance created the correct impression that the agenda for developing ideas of regional growth was malleable and heavily dependent on citizen input and values. Those values, rather than the “planner-speak” of limiting sprawl, curbing inner city decay or advancing “smart growth,” drove the strategy that was promoted.

Although public input was extensive, success was very dependent on the delicate political sensibility of the early leadership of the organization and the inclusion of virtually all the highly visible parties that could affect and interpret growth, including wary developers, political leaders, builders, planners, and environmentalists. No one was left out. No one voice dominated. Everyone worked toward a “win-win” situation, with the important realization that powerful real estate interests could usually benefit from enlightened growth strategies.

The Quality Growth Strategy (QGS), the initial and primary product of Envision Utah’s planning, was never applied in any community that did not invite it. Communities basically had to voluntarily adopt their own interpretation of the QGS, using visually rich, easily read, and very clear “toolkits” that provided many options. Envision Utah staff and important powerful volunteer board members made sure that the QGS was given a hearing in most places. The implementation never depended on inter-local agreements, regional planning authorities, statewide regulatory incentives, or any other framework typically suggested by regional planning advocates.<sup>12</sup>

And finally, Envision Utah’s success with the public and political elites empowered the pre-existing regional authorities, not the other way around. Regional players were relatively quiet during the early public phases of the process, in some cases simultaneously struggling to get traction on issues like transit and water quality. As the effort broadened beyond Envision Utah, regional authorities, like the MPOs and the UTA, were key to implementation, but from early on they sat at the same table with everyone else. Likewise, the largest landholder in the region (Rio Tinto, with over 95,000 acres) waited until later to follow the lead of Envision Utah. In other words, these organizations did not insert their authority, but leveraged the goodwill and the general consensus to gain acceptance for their own quality-growth related plans.

To summarize, Utah through the efforts of Envision Utah has become an unlikely leader in regional planning developed through a voluntary partnership of key leaders, agencies, local government, and the general public. Lessons drawn from

Envision Utah's regional visioning process can inform and guide the efforts of other regions as they work towards implementing regional policies that will support the economic vitality and livability of their regions.

## II. History of Utah Model

The primary impetus for the regional visioning activity at the heart of the Utah model has been the non-profit organization, Envision Utah, which began in 1995 as a project of a civic group, the Coalition for Utah's Future (CUF). Despite its national reputation, most people are surprised to learn that Envision Utah is, even now, a small, non-government organization with a limited budget and less than 10 staff.

CUF was initially organized in 1988 to deal with a *lack* of economic and population growth in the state, which turned out to be a short slump coterminous with a national turndown.<sup>13</sup> CUF leaders included political, business, and civic leaders concerned with the loss of population to more prosperous states. Most activities focused on bringing stakeholders and leaders together to discuss issues of quality of life that might enhance Utah's economic attractiveness.

A short time later, the state and the national economy rebounded and Utah resumed its growth trajectory, which, except for those few years in the late eighties, has been steady and explosive for over 40 years.<sup>14</sup>

Still concerned with quality of life issues, but wary of the potential slippery nature of the process, CUF started a massive civic project, known as "Envision Utah," and intended as a once-in-a-lifetime chance for leaders to address growth.<sup>15</sup> When the Envision Utah project started, the urbanized area along the Wasatch Front (a linear urbanized area stretching about 50 miles from Provo to Ogden) was already feeling the effects of explosive growth: new housing developments expanding into farmlands and deserts or threatening mountains and canyons, highway traffic increasing, and air pollution getting visibly worse. Growth projections in 1995 showed the Wasatch Front growing from 1.6 million to 2.7 million in 2020 and 5 million in 2050.<sup>16</sup> The impending, multi-year construction of I-15—the main transportation corridor through the state—rang alarm bells among leaders and citizen alike regarding sprawl, congestion, and decline of central cities. Activists began agitating for more substantial conversations about the changes already apparent and those yet to occur.<sup>17</sup> But CUF was wary of past efforts to manage growth, which had been soundly rejected at the state.<sup>18</sup>

The political territory then was similar to what it is today—a staunchly Republican state with a very clear attitude about local control and property rights. CUF's Envision Utah project chairman Robert Grow spent months talking to individual leaders and eventually assembled a 100-person public-private steering

committee, specifically selected because of their influence over public policy. He recruited high-visibility players, including influential businessmen, philanthropists, and politicians, to give the effort credibility. Then-Governor Mike Leavitt was an enthusiastic supporter publicly, but quietly kept a tight rein over the process through the use of his staff as the main generator of data and analysis.<sup>19</sup>

Once the steering committee, funding, and leadership were in place, the project commissioned a study of community values related to quality of life.<sup>20</sup> The study revealed two strong values: First and most important, residents viewed Utah as a “safe haven, where others shared their common sense of honesty, morality, and ethics.” This set of values was strongly related to raising children and strengthening families. The secondary set of values had to do with “Utah’s scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.”

The committee and its consultants, John Fregonese and Peter Calthorpe, at first planned to use a comparative scenario process that had already been used in several other regional planning efforts such as Portland and Denver. But even as the cumbersome process of collating data to develop the scenarios was happening within the state government, Envision Utah’s powerful steering committee agitated to begin working with the public so that residents and leaders could be consulted before the scenarios were created.

In 1998, the process began in earnest with the “chip game” where participants placed chips on maps, representing housing for all the projected population. By struggling with the parameters of the simulation, the participants soon came to realize that housing all the projected growth in low-density sprawling patterns was both challenging and antithetical to their stated values.<sup>21</sup>

As in many processes, alternative scenarios were eventually developed including one that was a “business as usual” or current trends, one that was a baseline, and two that progressively modeled the results of increasing density and providing transit.<sup>22</sup> These were widely reviewed in committees, workshops, and media outlets. A few members of the Steering Committee balked at what they saw as radical scenarios, but most leaders and the public strongly supported a high-density scenario, if not the highest density one. The public, in this case, was a relatively large number of people—2,000 in public workshops and 17,500 responses over the internet and in a mail-in newspaper survey.<sup>23</sup>

The results of the Envision Utah project were widely disseminated in 1999 as the “Quality Growth Strategy.” The QGS focused on community values, the scenarios, and the “Quality Growth Principles,” rather than a conventional plan for land use, transportation, or open space. The principles set out seven goals: improving air quality, promoting housing options, creating transportation choices, encouraging water conservation, preserving critical lands, supporting efficient infrastructure, and



exploring community development. The elaborate two-year process thus ended where many regional planning efforts begin—with a statement of goals. But the difference here is that the goals were very broadly advertised and the public understood them to be generated from community values.

Leadership in the Envision Utah project then began a long, slow effort to engage local planners and local government, which was the only acceptable method of implementation. Envision Utah staff and consultants created a number of "toolkits" for local jurisdictions who took up the effort to implement the principles at their own pace. Over time, initial hesitation by local governments was overcome by friendly pressure from Envision Utah's Steering Committee, which continued to stay involved. Envision Utah staff conducted hundreds of visits to local planners and politicians, and conducted multiple workshops explaining the QGS. Regional authorities entered the game in a supportive way. By 2003, there was nearly universal awareness of the QGS by planners in the region, and a surprising number of jurisdictions had begun to consider policy changes that would allow higher density housing.<sup>24</sup>

### III. Highlighting Successes of the Utah Model

The Utah model includes more than just the projects of Envision Utah, although all the offspring of its regional planning efforts use a similar strategy, work in partnership with the organization, and take advantage of public awareness of the quality growth principles. Most also benefit directly from the education of leaders that takes place in the extensive processes.

For example, at nearly the same time that the Envision Utah project was getting underway, the UTA was engaged in a heated controversy over the construction of the first two lines of new light rail line system, which would serve downtown and connect to the University of Utah (only 5 miles away) and Sandy City (a large suburban city more than 15 miles away). As in many places, the actual existence of the transit lines and their overwhelming popularity soon quelled resistance to transit in the region, but the legacy of the QGS also had an impact in encouraging transit-oriented development. By 2006, residents were so enamored of transit and its land use benefits that they voted an increase in taxes to accelerate the construction of new lines, including new commuter rail, one leg of which was completed in October 2008.<sup>25</sup> Today, the region-wide transit system is a national exemplar.

### ***A Transit Success Story: Utah Transit Authority***

*It's hard to believe now, but ten years ago transit was a highly controversial idea in the Salt Lake valley. The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) had been operating buses for many years when it saw an opportunity to develop light rail. There was resistance from the beginning, but UTA officials were particularly good at lobbying for federal transportation dollars, and landed some big grants that made the transit line inevitable.*

*Senator Robert Bennett, an advocate of sensible planning, was instrumental in that effort. He lobbied hard for transportation funding to get the lines built, despite strong initial resistance from many key leaders in the region. Bennett later confessed that he used the "Olympics card" (Salt Lake City hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics) to gain traction for the funding. Over the objections of many highly visible leaders and considerable public protest, two initial lines were completed in time for the opening ceremonies but ironically could not be used for that event due to security after 9/11.*

*With the assistance of leaders in Envision Utah, the UTA also acquired a significant chunk of abandoned right of way in the region from Union Pacific. The right of way purchase made it much easier to pursue later extensions to the Transit Express (TRAX).*

*As the first lines opened, and ridership soared past projections, resistance melted down to a few cranks. Cities began lobbying for TRAX lines, and Daybreak funded a large study to see if a line could be built to serve the massive development (it opened in August 2011). The UTA also began planning for commuter rail, which would serve the long north-south corridor that defined the Wasatch Front, from Provo to Ogden and beyond. The first Frontrunner took its maiden voyage 45 miles north of Salt Lake City in 2008. The extension south is 50 percent complete.*

*In 2006, an initiative backed by the Chamber of Commerce was put on the ballot. The initiative called for an increase in sales tax to fund an accelerated build-out of the planned TRAX system. It was passed without significant organized opposition and the five new lines are now scheduled to open between 2011 and 2015 instead of the initial plan calling for them to open on a much slower pace. .*

*This was a tribute and a referendum on the quality growth mantra in the region. Cities now routinely plan high density mixed use projects to coincide with existing or planned transit stations. Although the initial transit lines were not addressed by Envision Utah, the growing recognition of transit's role in quality of life has made the intimate relationship between density and transit clear. The sea change in attitudes brought about by the implementation of the quality growth strategy has been important for the acceptance of transit everywhere in the region. UTA officials are critical members of most Utah model coalitions and they play a critical role in gaining federal funding. In the reciprocal work of the Utah model transit is a big player.*

Another result of the success of the Utah model is the massive planned development underway on 95,000 acres of land on the west bench of the Salt Lake Valley. The land, acquired for mining over a one hundred year span, is owned by the mining conglomerate Rio Tinto.

The first phase of development, Daybreak, will eventually have 20,000 homes in a mixed-use, transit-oriented environment (about 3,000 have been built). The project could easily have been a series of disconnected subdivisions, but inspired by the quality growth lessons he learned working in the leadership structure of Envision Utah, Peter McMahon, a mining engineer, became a visionary.<sup>26</sup> "Peter assembled a team of *believers*," says Daybreak's long-time design director, Stephen James. "He wanted to use the Rio Tinto land to contribute to the long term regional goals articulated by Envision Utah, while also providing a model to transform the market."<sup>27</sup>

The professional planning community, once all but checkmated by real estate lobbies, also gained wider respect as a result of the Utah model. One sign of this is the remarkable growth of the University of Utah's new City and Metropolitan Planning Department in the past nine years. From only one professor and a handful of students in 2002, it has garnered the resources to attract a world-class faculty and hundreds of eager students, mostly by capitalizing on the public interest and national recognition in Utah's regional planning activities.

### **Quality Growth in Action: Rio Tinto's Daybreak Development**

*Daybreak—a master-planned community built by Kennecott Land, a division of the multi-national mining corporation Rio Tinto in South Jordan, Utah—has emerged as the poster child for large scale sustainable planning and transit oriented development. Just eight years into a decades-long development plan, the project is today recognized for its effort to build a more sustainable community with an entire network of walkways, bike paths, streets, and light rail intertwined with residential, retail, and commercial development.*

*When the initial Envision Utah project was completed, there were no plans for and little acknowledgement of the 95,000 undeveloped acres on Salt Lake County's west side. This land was privately owned by the giant conglomerate, Rio Tinto, and mined for copper and other minerals. In envisioning the Daybreak project, Kennecott Land not only sought to follow the vision for the region created by Envision Utah but also to make a bold statement that a mining corporation can leave a green footprint.*

*Peter McMahon, a mining engineer with Kennecott Land, contributed to the Envision Utah project and was its steering committee member. Tasked with creating a long-term development strategy for the land, McMahon hired Peter Calthorpe to create a 15-year development plan that emphasized a hierarchy of town centers, open reserves, multiple density configurations, mixed uses, and transportation choices.*

*When the project is completed in 18-20 years, Daybreak will include upwards of 20,000 homes and 14.5 million square feet of commercial space. This ongoing development will be supplemented with a variety of transportation options promoting a "walkable" community and encouraging residents to leave their cars at home. The Mid-Jordan light rail line already connects Daybreak directly to downtown Salt Lake City and the University of Utah. This makes it the first new master-planned community in the country to include an extension of light rail service.*

*As a mining company Rio Tinto is especially sensitive to accusations of damage to the environment and has gone to considerable efforts to create a significant green impact on the future of the Salt Lake Valley through this project. Daybreak was recently conditionally certified as a Three Star National Green Building Standard™ Green Community for its east side which will eventually contain up to 10,000 homes. A new LEED platinum eight-story office building for Rio Tinto is the flagship of the new downtown for Daybreak. Low energy housing, groundbreaking site development, and landscaping strategies combine with walkable neighborhoods and local schools.*

*The project has won multiple awards, but more than anything, its planners consider the satisfaction of residents as the real reward.*

The department is graduating a cadre of young planners well versed in quality growth and ready to fill the local agencies.

Although the leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) were not initially enthusiastic, they also eventually accepted the tenets of the QGS in their own commercial developments—most notably in a \$1.3 billion investment in downtown Salt Lake, the City Creek Center. Demolishing two internal shopping malls, the redeveloped center, which opened in March 2012, boasts a generous mix of housing, offices, shopping, and entertainments uses, all supported by transit. Remarkably, the LDS church, which has very large land holdings around the world and in Utah, now regularly works to plan its developments using quality growth and sustainable principles that leaders became aware of in Utah.<sup>28</sup>

The success of the Utah model can be seen in many other subtle changes around the state. The Wasatch Choice 2040 plan—initiated in 2004 to find a more effective approach to transportation and land use planning coordination in Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah counties—is perhaps the most remarkable spin-off of the Utah model.<sup>29</sup>

The plan was created using the same process and including most of the same constituents as the initial QGS, but this time it was sponsored by the two dominant MPOs who channel federal dollars for transportation. Working directly with representatives of the local jurisdictions, alongside other key leaders, the

plan developed land use and density aspirations that mirrored quality growth principles. The two MPOs have quietly planned to limit highway expansion and are working hand in hand with local jurisdictions to help them adapt their land use plans to the land use aspirations that informed the transportation network plan. This is a slow process and not all communities are prepared for some of the necessary changes. At present, all sizable cities (Salt Lake City, Sandy, Layton, West Jordan, and West Valley City) are developing mixed-use town center plans around their existing or planned transit stops, some of which will be population and employment centers with impressive density.<sup>30</sup> All but a few jurisdictions in the region have adopted regulations that loosen the grip of large-lot single-family housing hegemony and single-use districts.

Given all this, it is not surprising that there is strong national interest in Utah's success story. Leading newspapers and magazines have published features about it.<sup>31</sup> Utah's unique model has become a classic planning case study, appearing in textbooks on regional planning.<sup>32</sup> More than 80 regions and 14 international cities have invited Utah leaders to explain the model, and it has been consciously copied in at least 10 other regions.<sup>33</sup>

#### IV. Transferring the Utah Model

Can this success be transferred to other regions? The original scenario and chip game process can and has been adapted in multiple regions outside of the state, including Envision Missoula, Building the Wyoming We Want, Envision Central Texas, Louisiana Speaks, Superstition Vistas, and many more.<sup>34</sup>

Visioning and elaborate, multi-level public processes have become quite common and have been used in several different contexts and scales too, from neighborhood plans, to corridors, rural areas, and natural resource plans. Envision Utah staff and board members entertain a steady stream of visitors that come to learn more. Consultants in and out of Utah have duplicated many of the actions and processes of the Utah model. Other places, however respectful of the methods, often fail to match the success or longevity that occurred in Utah.

Utah is of course unique and harbors a somewhat peculiar political culture. To be sure, the Beehive State is staunchly Republican and dominated by the religious culture of the Mormon Church. And yet—even while it is rapidly changing—Utah has remained a relatively homogeneous place compared to most regions. Such homogeneity results in relatively homogeneous values that make it easier to find consensus.

Likewise, while the western ethic of strong property rights values extends to Utah, competing values of community and cooperation permeate at the local level. This is also the legacy of Utah's history and an artifact of the continuing influence of the

LDS church. Brigham Young was the quintessential planner, founding almost 300 towns in the west and laying them out according to strict principles.<sup>35</sup> Although Utah is around 60 percent Mormon, that number is likely to decline. Urban areas of the Wasatch Front are far less homogenous, so the effects of communal traditions are probably residual rather than enforced by doctrine.

Utah's interesting landscape also contributes to the uniqueness: Much of the state is publicly owned, and suitable developable land lies in relatively narrow bands or valleys that are constrained by natural boundaries. What is more, the landscape is not only constrained but also spectacular in its beauty and variety. Visitors are invariably struck by the unexpected and transformative scenery, which natives behold with both pride and reverence. Ted Knowlton, a former planning director for Envision Utah, points out that Utahns tend to identify with their region, rather than with a particular town or city, due to natural geographic boundaries, so that a regional way of thinking is more common than it is in other places.<sup>36</sup> Of course, many mountain west regions also have similar limiting geographies.

All of which begs the question of whether these unique attributes so determine the success of the Utah model as to render it non-transferable? Or are there lessons that other regions can learn?

A look at the history of Envision Utah and the regional planning process in Utah makes clear that there are several factors that are both critical and transferable. These lessons pertain more to matters of process and approach and amount to elements of a possibly transferrable methodology. At least four key takeaways can be discerned:

- Pay attention to the sustainability and capacity of the leading organization
- Arm the public with clear data and analysis, skillfully marketed
- Package all proposals and principles to appeal to the values of the community
- Spend time initiating and maintaining the right political setup

**Pay attention to the sustainability and capacity of the leading organization.** In Utah, Envision Utah has played the lead role in developing and continuing to promote a politically acceptable growth strategy. In other places it can be different organizational entities that play a similar role, such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization in Portland and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. Regardless of the actual structure, organizational capacity and leadership are essential both to productive dialogue and to the longevity required for meaningful regional action.

To that end, Envision Utah adopted key organizational principles and techniques that made it successful:

- **Leadership and resources.** In Utah, the very idea of regional planning would seem to have been a non-starter from the very beginning. Key to the initial acceptance of the Envision Utah effort was that it had excellent, volunteer leadership from respected business people and civic leaders. One man, Robert Grow, provided the kind of charismatic leadership that focused the efforts and guided them over time. Grow, a land use attorney and the former president of Geneva Steel, was initially recruited to chair the project by CUF because of his knowledge of planning issues like transportation and air quality. As a businessman, a Mormon, and a Democrat, he was essential in reaching out to many different kinds of groups and calming the fears of many. He was also instrumental in gaining the financial support of foundations like Hewlett Packard and the local Eccles Foundation, which provided the kind of neutral funding platform needed to achieve consensus and stability in the project. Over time, Grow refreshed the leadership in the organization by continuously inviting new people to take part, make presentations, and contribute.

Grow's long-term volunteer devotion to the organization and his skill at enfolded so many different kinds of people in the process are cited by most people as the single most important element of Envision Utah's success. Grow himself, who regularly consults for visioning projects around the US, cites the importance of charismatic local leaders, whom he calls "champions." Non-governmental fiscal capacity and charismatic leaders are prerequisites to the long-term success of any place desiring to follow Utah's lead.<sup>37</sup>

The longevity of the Utah model is probably the result of both continuous leadership and a concerted effort to broaden the leadership base.<sup>38</sup> The Envision Utah organization is constantly on the move, completing one or two large visioning projects in different regions every year, and starting one or two new ones. Each project can take up to two years, with new and diverse people constantly being added to boards and various committees spawned during the visioning projects. The vision process and its leadership roles involve extensive volunteer time commitments.

This leadership pyramid scheme yields person-to-person commitments across boundaries of jurisdictions, functions, and time. Very few people involved in development, planning, and public infrastructure in the region can escape being involved in some way.

By incorporating a wide and highly varied group within the steering committees, local political and development interests are able to slowly understand that apparently risky moves, such as building higher density, mixed-use town centers, is much more widely acceptable to the public than they had realized. The success of this political gathering-in, which is more critical than the actual public process, is what often sets Envision Utah apart from regions that simply mimic its public processes and scenario work.

- **Avoidance of controversy.** A second hallmark of the Utah model is its avoidance of controversy. In this connection, Envision Utah has consistently avoided taking a stand on the immediate and controversial planning issues that are a constant in any community. This tactic was clear from the beginning, when all but one of the future scenarios included the Legacy Highway, a very controversial project that went through eight years of litigation even after the QGS was completed.<sup>39</sup> During that time, the leaders of Envision Utah declined to engage in the controversy, to the disappointment of anti-highway activists, who could not understand how "quality growth" leaders could placidly accept a sprawl-inducing new highway.

Envision Utah has also delicately stepped around other controversies, like arguments about specific transit station locations or the recent hot-button issue concerning the LDS church's proposed remediation and development of a large landfill near wetlands and the airport.<sup>40</sup> In all cases, the Utah model dictates that leadership get out in front of a developing issue, or approach it obliquely through a larger visioning effort. In Washington County, in southern Utah, a controversial proposal to develop school trust land was subsumed within another of Envision Utah's two-year visioning projects (Vision Dixie) and the larger growth principles developed in that process. There, it is yet unclear what might happen to the school trust land and its development proponents, but Envision Utah's role in educating the public and especially public officials will probably have significant impact down the road. Far from being platitudes, the process and the principles actually expose many people to growth impacts they would never have examined and allow a consensus to build without making any specific judgments about one project or another.

Gliding along above the sharply controversial points of development battles has kept Envision Utah aligned with its many different constituents and allowed it to avoid alienating either the public planning officials involved or the powerful development interests. Notes Alan Matheson, a former executive director of Envision Utah: "By focusing on



long term trends, we help people focus on their values (what kind of world do I want for my grandkids) rather than immediate politics or financial interests.”<sup>41</sup>

- ***Outreach and assistance, to local governments, multiple regions, and developers advancing regional planning.*** Once the initial QGS was developed, Envision Utah went to work to advance adoption in the multiple jurisdictions of the region. Recognizing that lack of capacity can often hamper the best intentions of local officials, Envision Utah has been proactive in imparting training, seminars, and technical assistance around model plans and projects. Over 1000 local officials have been trained to use its well-illustrated and clear “toolboxes” through all-day and three-hour seminars. By 2003, a University of Utah survey of government planners, administrators, planning commission members, and elected officials in the affected region revealed that 100 percent were aware of Envision Utah, 96 percent were aware of the QGS, and 93 percent had sent staff to Envision Utah for training.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to training and political persuasion within its original Wasatch Front region, Envision Utah also deployed its small professional staff in projects in other regions, special districts, and smaller jurisdictions throughout the state using similar processes and leadership-building techniques. These projects have engaged the public in developing their own growth strategies tailored to the specific place, while also building even greater support for the idea of local, values-based choices. Vision Dixie (Washington County), Envision Cache Valley (straddling two states, with Cache County in Utah and Franklin County in Idaho), Bear Lake Valley Blueprint, the Jordan River plan, and the Wasatch Canyons plans are among multiple successful regional visioning projects carried out by Envision Utah, which has helped by initiating, fund raising, publicizing, and managing these projects to completion.<sup>43</sup>

In 2001 Envision Utah began to publicly recognize and reward development projects that best embodied the concepts of quality growth, in the process developing relationships with supportive developers and enlightened local jurisdictions. The annual Governor’s Quality Growth Awards provide tangible examples of completed developments that prove that quality growth can be economically sound as well as attractive. By 2011, 94 awards have been given, including some that also recognize exceptional government planning efforts.<sup>44</sup> The Envision Utah board’s deliberation on the choices, the excellent public exposure of the award winners, and the recognition and involvement



of the Governor have all enhanced the award's prestige and effectiveness.

**Arm the public with clear data and analysis, skillfully marketed.** Envision Utah has taken advantage of available and up-to-date data and analysis—rigorous, transparent, and well represented—to convey its work and, more importantly, provide convincing evidence for its consensus building strategy. Providing the public with solid data is also a way for the ideas to have long-term impact, as they slowly become accepted practice.

- **Data and analysis for scenario planning.** Scenario planning is not unique to Utah, but Utah and a few other places, like Portland, led a regional practice that “kicked off a decade of similar studies in more than 50 metropolitan areas.”<sup>45</sup> In developing the analysis that eventually became the QGS, the State of Utah and Envision Utah began by asking the public groups to propose various scenarios before they were finally developed and analyzed. Envision Utah created four “scenarios” for the future of the Salt Lake region. Two of the scenarios (A and B) showed what the region would become if current development patterns remained unchanged, while the other two (C and D) showed the results if development was made more compact and walkable.

Using available analysis techniques at the time (which did not account for interactions between land use and transportation) they compared the impact on travel patterns, infrastructure cost, and water consumption costs of the four scenarios and found a staggering \$16 billion difference in the cost of public infrastructure between scenario A (\$38 billion) and scenario C (\$22 billion).<sup>46</sup> The study also showed a breathtaking difference in the amount of new land consumed by development: 409 square miles for scenario A, and only 85 square miles for scenario D.<sup>47</sup> Armed with a data-driven forecast of how the region would look in 40-50 years if current trends continued, Envision Utah was able to query people's level of satisfaction with the region's future. Just as important as the use of reliable data were the simple diagrams and clear charts that were used to inform and poll residents, which has been a hallmark of all subsequent projects of Envision Utah.

- **Smart public relations campaign.** Complementing the trend lines and projects has been smart public relations. One of the hallmarks of Envision Utah's many regional projects is that they are always promoted as once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for a particular place to define itself, not as a normal plan update. Each is designed to create hooks that

encourage regular local media attention throughout the duration of the project. During the initial project, for example, Envision Utah co-opted the media as partners.

It used targeted advertising to keep the public engaged in its process. A public survey appeared as an insert in local newspapers, and media outlets were enjoined to inform the public of community meetings and opportunities for public participation and feedback. Local publishers and television managers served on the initial project steering committee and Envision Utah staff made sure to include media managers and owners in their meetings. All this had the effect of increasing the visibility of issues championed by Envision Utah and helping to engage and educate the public. As the organization matured, these same techniques were used in subsequent projects, creating the same kind of once-in-a-lifetime excitement.

At the same time, Envision Utah made public relations an important and continuous effort resulting in regular national and local media exposure, which increased the value of the brand and the credibility of the organization.

**Package all proposals and principles to appeal to the values of the community.**

Another part of the success is what Robert Grow calls the “values” message. Envision Utah explicitly worked within and even played upon widely held civic, religious, and political values, and so overcame the state’s early fears of planning. In the Utah model, those with a specific agenda (e.g., no growth, uncontrolled growth, or smart growth) were not the sponsors of the project, as they are in many places. There was no agenda driving the process, no “right” answers on the table before the talking began.

The political neutrality extends to today: Envision Utah avoids the everyday confrontations over land use issues. The organization never uses immediate land use controversies or public disagreements as springboards to participation and political action, as many grass-roots organizations do. Urgent issues and specific plans would only contaminate the lofty goals and aspirations for long-term quality growth, and more importantly, they would drive away some of the parties who must agree.

The language of long term values replaced more urgent “take your medicine” messages that might have turned people away. For example, higher density housing options were promoted as opportunities to allow young families to stay near relatives, while the older generation could buy a condo in their own community rather than being zoned out of it. People responded very positively to this reasoning, although in many cases it was a matter of rewording old ideas to match up with the

identified values—“high-density housing” becomes “housing choice” for young families and aging parents.

The plan also appealed to the strong, family-oriented culture of Mormonism by stressing that the population growth was not driven by, as suspected, an invading force of Californians, but instead reflected the benign growth of large families. Therefore, the “quality growth” that might result from the plan would largely benefit the children and grandchildren of existing residents. It seemed natural to leave a legacy of clean air and water for your own children.

The economic development card was not neglected: The QGS was often promoted as creating “good quality of life” that would attract companies and jobs to Utah. It also played upon the general desire for frugality in public investment and good public management by pointing out the lower costs of infrastructure in quality growth scenarios. The Governor’s office determined that over 20 years the QGS would save \$4.5 billion in infrastructure costs, result in 171 fewer square miles of land being developed, and reduce air pollution and water use.<sup>48</sup>

Landscape reverence was another key value. For most people, it is disconcerting to see the fragile mountain and desert landscape eaten up by housing tracts, big box retail, and highways. According to the first public processes, a strong contingent of the population—including both large Mormon families and young urban singles—desired to maintain the excellent access to recreational areas and to protect the mountain and desert landscapes just on the edge of the city. Contributing to this desire is geography: The Wasatch Front is a continuous urban valley stretching more than 50 miles, squeezed between mountain ranges and the Great Salt Lake. The narrow band of development made sprawl more visible and more disconcerting than in most places.

The initial values study, which identified these issues, provided the playbook for how the QGS would be marketed. Matheson argued for the continuing importance of a value-based strategy: “Values analysis shows us that what we have in common is greater than what separates us. We were able to communicate more effectively at the values level and build plans that give residents what they most want.” In this regard, the common, homogeneous values of Utah make the growth principles much easier to create and promote.

On the other hand, most regions do have strong common values and pride of place. Most of these can be situated in religious and/or historical traditions of a place, and some are clearly related to the physical geography. Some values transcend place: Utah is not alone in relating to pioneer independence and love of the land. Whether the history is civil war battlefields, religious settlements, seafaring economy, the industrial revolution or the great western migration, place history is tied to values that people hold with great pride.

**Spend time initiating and maintaining the right political setup.** Most people who encounter the Utah model recognize the importance of the initial and continuing political buy-in. Even the most perplexed conservative state legislator is loath to criticize an organization with such a clear record of success. Achieving that buy-in took years but the initial setup of the regional effort was key.

The key insight was the realization that any plan or set of principles could only be implemented at the local level, given the fear and distaste for any form of regional or state governance of traditionally local land use decisions. In this connection, the Utah model deferred fully to the supremacy of local land use control and so flourished in the conservative political environment of Utah. Without this deference, early successes may well have led some to advocate a regional form of governance, which would have taken considerable energy to implement and might have been less effective.

The initial plan included many of those who were against planning in the first place: rural legislators, developers, extraction industries. In Utah, Robert Grow not only encouraged this kind of participation, he sometimes persuaded these same folks to fund the work. The Envision Utah project was specifically “brass roots” in order to attract the right people to work together, but it also took care to listen to the public discussions.

As the project proceeded through scenarios, the choices seemed reasonable and defensible: There were options showing the sprawl that would come with business-as-usual, as well as choices that were far more dense than Utahns were likely to tolerate. The choices were generated not abstractly, but from the discussions in the public meetings, and the public and leaders were able to see their ideas translated. The general feeling was that the process was honest and not tuned to a particular point of view.

Bowing to the fear of planning, the QGS did not constitute a “plan” in any accepted sense: There were no definitive maps, no transportation plans, no land use plans, not even a suggestion of specific open spaces to preserve. The most important part of the plan were the principles themselves, which were suggestive of more transit, open space preservation, mixed uses and so on, but in no case pinpointed locations for any of these.

The initial project was time consuming and expensive, and clearly set apart from the usual planning exercise. It generated extensive and continuing media coverage, partly because of publicity tricks (“Brigham Young” showed up to the first public meeting, exhorting the governor to fix the mess we had made of his state) and partly because of the interest of brass roots supporters. The project made use of the internet and newspaper surveys, which made public awareness inescapable.

Finally, the timing of the initial efforts was especially propitious for success: The initial project keyed into the fears people had about becoming another Phoenix. Spectacular growth was the catalyst for these efforts and without this growth, the activities may well have stagnated. There was increasing dissatisfaction and unhappiness with the effects of growth, which arose from the I-15 corridor reconstruction. Those accustomed to the beauty of the place were appalled at the traffic congestion, air pollution, and rapidly growing exurban development. Leaders strategically framed these emergent issues around local common values and political priorities like economic development to create a sense of urgency.

The political setup allowed Envision Utah to evolve slowly over time to an organization that can safely suggest policy, implementation, model ordinances, open space proposals, specific transit-oriented development locations and other unheard-of ideas in Utah. Yet, the political set up may be the most difficult element to duplicate outside of Utah, not because of Utah's peculiarity, but because it is just difficult, period. While leadership, funding and values can be identified in a regional effort, it is much harder to prepare a neutral and non-controversial ground while taking advantage of propitious timing that makes a big project seem urgent.

## V. Conclusion

In sum, the regional planning process initiated and facilitated by Envision Utah has made the regional vision for a sustainable development a reality in Utah. While very few regional organizations in the country have been able build consensus around growth management, Envision Utah has been able to strike the right notes. This has been made possible due to several reasons that other regions should closely consider, obviously keeping in mind their local and regional politics.

Envision Utah has facilitated an inclusive process from the beginning. By being open to all potential stakeholders, even those who oppose quality growth efforts and planning, Envision Utah has been able to find common ground among the different groups and create dialogue on growth issues in a state where the overriding political climate is heavily pro-property rights and distrustful of government efforts including planning.

Many regional planning efforts founder on the issue of long term sustainability. In Utah, the planning effort was a conscious fit to the political exigencies, the timing, and the values of the people. That fit, in fact, was more important initially than the results of the planning itself. As the organization has changed over time and the Utah model has had many successes, many more players have joined in. Because of its inclusive process and conscious effort at leadership building,

Envision Utah has been able to forge long-term partners over the course of its work, especially the UTA, the MPO's, the County governments, the highway department, Rio Tinto, the City of Salt Lake, the Chamber of Commerce, the media, and the University of Utah. All of these organizations owe their successful implementation efforts to the public awareness campaigns of Envision Utah, but they have all taken up the banner and contributed back as well. These organizations are represented by individuals who have, through Envision Utah, developed strong personal relationships with each other, so that meaningful coordination and discussion becomes much more immediate than in most places.

Perhaps the most important element of sustainability for regional quality growth is in the heart of the public, which has come to accept and even desire a different kind of living as a viable option. The public adores transit, even though most people do not ride it. The public swarms into mixed-use projects to shop, and condos have become a respectable housing choice at all income levels. With the economic downturn, the outer fringe of the region is suffering far more than the center, while transit-oriented projects capture more jobs and more affordable housing. It was probably not predictable that this would be the most significant outcome and most important key to success. And it is certainly not a strategy that the literature on regional planning recommends as significant or likely to succeed. But the lessons here are intriguing if not definitive for any other region.

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## ENDNOTE

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<sup>1</sup> In an example of how terminology can be critical, in Utah we do not use the term “smart growth,” as that is understood as planner-speak for limited population growth and/or strong government coercion.

<sup>2</sup> See Ethan Selzer and Armando Carbonell, “Planning Regions,” in *Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect* (Cambridge MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> There is a large literature evaluating the economic and social costs of sprawl. See, among many others, H.V. Savitch and Ronald Vogel, “Paths to New Regionalism,” *State and Local Government Review* 32(3) (2000). See also, Cameron Speir and Kurt Stephenson, “Does Sprawl Cost Us All? Isolating the Effects of Housing Patterns on Public Water and Sewer Costs,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 68(1) (2002); John Carruthers and Gudmundur Ulfarsson, “Urban Sprawl and the Cost of Public Services,” *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 30 (2003).

<sup>4</sup> See Henry Richmond, “Metropolitan Land Use Reform: The Promise and Challenge of Majority Consensus.” In Bruce Katz, ed., *Reflections on Regionalism* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> See Savitch and Vogel, “Paths to New Regionalism.”

<sup>6</sup> Salt Lake City received a \$5 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant to create a Regional Housing Plan that will integrate housing recommendations with regional transportation plans. See [portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/utah/news/HUDNo.2010-10-15](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/utah/news/HUDNo.2010-10-15). The award recognized the long-term regional partnership comprised of local governments, MPOs, transit authority, the University of Utah, private enterprise, and Envision Utah itself. The team of individuals that had been working together and teaching each other cooperatively for many years was able to mobilize quickly to respond effectively to the highly competitive grant process. On a recent visit, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan recognized the unusual longevity of the loose coalition, saying: “Salt Lake City has not only been a leader, it’s also been a model for the entire nation with smart planning.” See Lee Davidson, “Housing Secretary Praises Utah Growth Vision,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 2, 2011

<sup>7</sup> For more information see Wasatch Choice 2040, [www.wasatchchoice2040.com/](http://www.wasatchchoice2040.com/).

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Ted Knowlton, Director of Sustainable Programs at Wasatch Front Regional Council and adjunct professor at University of Utah.

<sup>9</sup> The Cooperative County Plan is a multi-year project designed to strengthen inter-county relationships by linking regional planning efforts such as transportation corridors, utilities easements, and data collection. For more information see Salt Lake County Cooperative Plan, [gis.rbf.com/slco/](http://gis.rbf.com/slco/).

<sup>10</sup> According to a study by Arthur Nelson and Matt Miller of the *Metropolitan Research Center at the University of Utah*, the total acreage of the half-mile buffers surrounding pre-2010 Trax Stations is 9148 acres, which is 1.8% of the 516,428 acres in Salt Lake County. The total household growth in that area was 3420 households, which is 7.00% of the total household growth of 48,488 in Salt Lake County. The half mile 'buffer' near TRAX is getting denser than the county average, with more HH per acre: An increase of .374 HH/acre within the half mile buffer, compared to 0.093 for the county average. No Trax buffer lost HH from 2000 to 2010.

<sup>11</sup> See Adie Tomer, Elizabeth Kneebone, Robert Puentes, and Alan Berube, “Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America,” (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> See Kathryn Foster, “A Region of One’s Own.” In Ethan Selzer and Armando Carbonell, eds., *Regional Planning in America* (Cambridge MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> See Envision Utah, “History of Envision Utah,” (2003) at [www.envisionutah.org/historyenvisionutahv5p1.pdf](http://www.envisionutah.org/historyenvisionutahv5p1.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Pam Perlich, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah.

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- <sup>15</sup> Bowing to branding superiority, the Coalition for Utah's Future was renamed "Envision Utah" in 2007.
- <sup>16</sup> See Envision Utah, "History of Envision Utah." As of 2010, the region's population was 2.1 million, a little behind those projections.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with Stephen Goldsmith, City and Metropolitan Planning, University of Utah.
- <sup>18</sup> See Xavier de Souza Briggs, *Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity Across the Globe*, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2008).
- <sup>19</sup> Christopher Beynon, *Navigating the Currents of Power: Envision Utah and the Quest for a Regional Development Consensus*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2000).
- <sup>20</sup> See Envision Utah, "History of Envision Utah." Envision Utah had Wirthlin Worldwide—a nationally recognized polling firm—conduct an in-depth study and a broad survey of area residents. Wirthlin used a specialized research method to determine the values of Utah residents and to find out what they most wanted to preserve or change in the face of Utah's rapid growth.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> See Keith Bartholomew and Reid Ewing, "Integrated Transportation Scenario Planning," Final report summary, FHWA-HEP-10-034, (July 2010).
- <sup>23</sup> See Envision Utah, "History of Envision Utah."
- <sup>24</sup> See Center for Public Policy and Administration, "Envision Utah Planning & Zoning Survey Report," (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2003).
- <sup>25</sup> In November 2006, Utah County residents voted to increase their sales tax by \$0.0025 to fund accelerated work on four light rail projects and the FrontRunner South line. These projects were initially part of the Wasatch Front Regional Council's 2030 Long-Range Plan. The additional funding accelerated the delivery of these projects 15 years earlier than projected. For more information see Utah Transit Authority's FrontRunner South website at [www.rideuta.com/mc/?page=Projects-FrontLines2015-FrontRunnerSouth](http://www.rideuta.com/mc/?page=Projects-FrontLines2015-FrontRunnerSouth).
- <sup>26</sup> Interview with Stephen James, planning and community design manager, Kennecott Land.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Interview with Robert Grow, president and CEO, Envision Utah and attorney, Grow and Bruening.
- <sup>29</sup> For more information see the Wasatch Choice for 2040 website, [www.wasatchchoice2040.com/](http://www.wasatchchoice2040.com/)
- <sup>30</sup> Interview with John Jansen, Utah Chapter, American Planning Association.
- <sup>31</sup> See, for example, Alec McGillis, "More Cooperation Sought on Area's Future," *Washington Post*, June 21, 2006; Elizabeth Daigneau, "Utah Envisions a Sustainable Future," *Governing Magazine*, January 2012; Casey Newton, "Utah's Grass-Roots Effort a Model Ariz. Can Follow," *The Arizona Republic*, February 7, 2010; and Alan Best, "Utah's Secret: Changing with the Times is Part of It," *Planning Magazine*, October 2010.
- <sup>32</sup> See, for example, chapter four in Xavier de Souza Briggs, *Democracy as Problem Solving: Civic Capacity Across the Globe*. See also Gerrit Knapp and Rebecca Lewis, "Regional Planning for Sustainability and Hegemony of Metropolitan Regionalism." In Ethan Seltzer and Armando Carbonell, eds., *Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect*, (Cambridge MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2011).

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<sup>33</sup> Correspondence with Kevin Fayles, public relations director, Envision Utah.

<sup>34</sup> See John Fregonese and C.J. Gabbe, "Engaging the Public and Communicating Successfully." In Ethan Seltzer and Armando Carbonell, eds., *Regional Planning in America: Practice and Prospect*, (Cambridge MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Leonard Arrington, Dean May, and Feramorz Fox, *Building the City of God: Community & Cooperation Among the Mormons*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1976).

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Ted Knowlton.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Robert Grow.

<sup>38</sup> Jon Huntsman, later Utah Governor, took over as board chair when Robert Grow was called away by the LDS church to serve a three-year mission. Greg Bell, now the Lt. Governor, succeeded Huntsman. Envision Utah has had great leadership and, in a real sense, has been an incubator for state leadership. Email correspondence with Alan Matheson, former executive director, Envision Utah and now Energy Advisor to the Governor of Utah.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Stephen Goldsmith, City and Metropolitan Planning, University of Utah. Also see Beynon, *Navigating the Currents of Power*.

<sup>40</sup> Katherine Biele, "This is the Place: The LDS Church Eyes Barren Wetlands as a Future City within Salt Lake City," *City Weekly*, March 10, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Correspondence with Alan Matheson, former executive director, Envision Utah and now Energy Advisor to the Governor of Utah.

<sup>42</sup> Center for Public Policy and Administration, "Envision Utah Planning & Zoning Survey Report."

<sup>43</sup> Alan Matheson, "Envision Utah: Building Communities on Values." In Carleton Montgomery, ed., *Regional Planning for a Sustainable America: How Creative Programs are Promoting Prosperity and Saving the Environment*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> "Envision Utah Honors Quality Growth," *Standard-Examiner*, November 10, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> Bartholomew and Ewing, "Integrated Transportation Scenario Planning."

<sup>46</sup> Scenario D is more expensive than scenario C because of transit investments.

<sup>47</sup> Quality Growth Efficiency Tools (QGET), "Scenario Analysis: Executive Summary," Salt Lake City, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (1998).

<sup>48</sup> See Envision Utah, "Quality Growth Strategy," 1999. An updated version is available at [www.envisionutah.org](http://www.envisionutah.org).

# BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

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## About the Author

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