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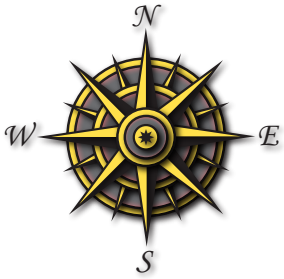
A Continuous Process

Regional transportation planning, to be effective, is a continuous process. The transportation system needs to be constantly monitored to determine its condition and operating efficiency. Short term measures to keep the system operating as effectively as possible need to be pursued. Projects recommended in the 2040 RTP need to be refined and evaluated for environmental and social impacts. Funding sources to implement the recommendations need to be identified and programmed. Finally, the Regional Transportation Plan needs to be updated every few years to consider changing development patterns, new technologies, and evolving goals and vision for the Wasatch Front Region. This chapter will describe how the recommendations of the 2040 RTP will be implemented and the work needed to update the Plan in the future.

Chapter 9

Photo at Left: City Creek Center in downtown Salt Lake City is Utah's latest transit oriented development. A decade in the making, City Creek Center has revitalized Salt Lake City's downtown core by infusing it with urban mixed use development featuring office, retail, and condominium/apartment space. Additionally, the development incorporates open air plazas providing striking downtown vistas.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation of the 2040 RTP is a cooperative effort of local, state, and federal officials. The Wasatch Front Regional Council has established a process to continuously monitor on-going development and the progress in implementing the recommendations of the Wasatch Front Regional Transportation Plan: 2011-2040. The WFRC also works with other agencies to address short-range congestion, pavement preservation, and bridge replacement and rehabilitation needs through management systems. In addition the WFRC helps conduct corridor and environmental studies for major highway and transit projects and assists local communities in master plan updates. These efforts help refine the recommendations in the 2040 RTP and encourage implementation.

Municipalities and counties of the Wasatch Front Region, UDOT, and UTA are responsible for the implementation of the projects in the 2040 RTP. The WFRC works with these agencies to encourage them to pursue the facility capital improvements recommended in the 2040 RTP and incorporates these projects in the short range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Each of the components of this continuous process is discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

System Monitoring and Management Systems

The WFRC annually publishes a *Surveillance of Land Use and Socioeconomic Characteristics* report, which includes current population and employment data for the region. The development and adoption of the Wasatch Front Urban Area's TIP each year allows the WFRC to monitor the implementation of recommended 2040 RTP projects and to reevaluate the needs of the Wasatch Front Urban Area. The Utah Department of Transportation's highway traffic surveillance data, published every two years, along with periodic Utah Transit Authority ridership updates, also contribute information needed to update the 2040 RTP. In addition, as part of the continuing planning process, the WFRC and the Salt Lake and Ogden - Layton Area Transportation Advisory Committees will continue to identify and respond to issues which impact the Wasatch Front Regional Transportation Plan: 2011-2040.

The *Wasatch Front Regional Transportation Plan: 2011-2040* addresses the need to provide increased capacity to meet the growing travel demand in the region. Because of financial and other constraints, the recommendations of the 2040 RTP Update will not meet all of the demand in the year 2040. Travel demand management and transportation system management strategies will be needed to mitigate some of the continuing traffic congestion anticipated in the future. In addition to meeting increasing travel requirements, the transportation system needs to be maintained and preserved in order to provide current users with safe and secure travel. The WFRC addresses these congestion, preservation, and safety needs through several management systems developed in cooperation with, UDOT, UTA, and others. Funding to pay for the recommendations of the management systems is included in the Financial Plan for the 2040 RTP.

SAFETEA–LU requires that a Congestion Management Process be established in all Transportation Management Areas. Since October 1997 the Regional Council has had fully operational CMPs (congestion management plan) for the Salt Lake and Ogden - Layton Areas. The purpose of a CMP is to recommend actions to maximize the efficiency of the existing and future transportation system. The Salt Lake and Ogden - Layton Area Technical Advisory Committees work with WFRC staff to refine and implement the CMPs. The subcommittees monitor and provide input to implementation of congestion mitigation strategies on both a regional and a site-specific basis.

For all projects in the TIP that increase single occupant vehicle (SOV) capacity, the WFRC develops site-specific system management and demand management strategies that should be incorporated into each project. For all widening and new construction projects, the CMP also demonstrates that system management and demand management strategies by themselves will not meet the travel demand on a particular facility or, in other words, that additional SOV capacity is needed.

The Utah Department of Transportation uses a Pavement Management System and a Bridge Management System to develop its recommendations for pavement and bridge projects to include in the TIP. These systems identify the maintenance and preservation projects necessary to maintain

the existing system. WFRC has worked with UDOT to develop a pavement management system for the Salt Lake and Ogden - Layton areas that recommends cost-effective and timely treatments. These recommendations have begun to be considered in the development of the TIP.

Safety and security are of increasing importance. UDOT also has established procedures for identifying high hazard locations and selecting cost-effective projects for the use of federal safety funds. UTA and UDOT are working with other state and federal agencies to address security needs.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN REFINEMENT

In addition to preparing the long range transportation plan, the WFRC works with UDOT, UTA, and local communities on alternatives analyses, environmental studies, corridor studies, and master plan updates to help refine the recommendations of the long range transportation plan as well as to assist in implementation of the Plan's recommendations. These studies help achieve several goals by better defining project scopes; identifying needed rights-of-way for projects to allow UDOT, UTA, and local communities to pursue corridor preservation; and identifying transit facility alignments and station locations, so that communities can begin planning for transit oriented development at specific locations to make the projects more competitive.

For many major highway and transit improvements, the WFRC in cooperation with state and local engineers and planners prepares an alternatives analysis or corridor study. The purpose of an analysis / study is to provide input when refining the long range transportation plan and allow for decisions to be made on the scope of the improvement(s) during the planning process, which is prior to project development and engineering. Several major corridor studies and / or alternatives analyses have been completed or are currently underway in the Wasatch Front Urban Area, for both highway and transit corridors. Each of the corridors for which an alternatives analysis is needed or underway, or for which a corridor study is completed is discussed below.

Downtown Ogden to Weber State University Transit Needs Analysis – The 2040 RTP recommends a BRT facility to connect the downtown Ogden Intermodal Facility to Weber State University. Ogden City, along with UTA and the WFRC, completed a study to identify the need for transit improvements in the corridor in 2005. The study recommended an alignment and either streetcar or BRT as the preferred mode to serve this corridor.

Ogden / Weber State Alternatives Analysis – The 2040 RTP shows as a place holder an Enhanced Bus (BRTI)/Bus Rapid Transit (BRTIII) transitioning to Streetcar within the alignment and with the guideway characteristics recommended by the Draft Alternatives Analysis. A feasibility study has been completed and an Alternatives Analysis has been drafted for this corridor. The studies have identified Streetcar as the preferred mode. The community has agreed upon the northern and southern segments of the alignment. The Draft Alternatives Analysis recommends a primary and secondary alignment for the central portion of the corridor.

Davis Weber East - West Transportation Study – In 2007 the Utah State Legislature appropriated funding to study east-west highway needs in several counties. The Davis – Weber East / West Study evaluated a wide range of options for improving east-west mobility in these counties and subsequently recommended a number of improvements to address these needs. The 2040 RTP includes many of the recommendations developed as part of this study.

US-89 from I-15 to Harrison Boulevard – The 2040 RTP recommends US-89 be upgraded to an expressway with interchanges. The recommendations are that a general-purpose lane be added in each direction to this section of US-89 and that interchanges are constructed at major cross streets. The recommendations were developed through a corridor study and an EIS.

I-15 from Layton to I-84 (Weber County) – The 2040 RTP recommends additional lanes be added in each direction, to this section of I-15. A corridor study completed in 2005 for this section of I-15 recommended these improvements along with some short term projects to improve traffic operations on I-15.

West Davis Corridor – SR 67 Highway (formerly the North Legacy Highway) from US-89/ Legacy Parkway/ I-15 in Davis County to I-15 in Weber County - The 2040 RTP

recommends that a divided highway be built from US-89/ Legacy Parkway/ I-15 to 4000 South in Weber County. For the near term portion of this corridor from 4000 South to 12th Street the 2040 RTP recommends a four-lane arterial be constructed. However, the 2040 RTP recommends a project be constructed from 4000 South (Weber County) to I-15 near the Box Elder County line. This project could be either a divided highway or an arterial improvement, depending on future needs. At this time, the 2040 RTP recommends corridor preservation along the corridor identified in the 2009 Weber County North Legacy study and adoption into local municipal and Weber County Transportation Plans. Efforts to preserve the corridor are being made by the local municipalities, Weber County, UDOT, and WFRC.

SR-108 Environmental Impact Statement – The FHWA issued a Record of Decision regarding the SR-108 EIS on October 28, 2008, identifying the selected alternative from the environmental analysis as the five-lane section, which included two lanes in each direction with a center turn lane or raised median in some areas. However, because funding was not immediately available for the complete five lane project, UDOT proceeded with a three-lane expansion (one travel lane in each direction with a center turn lane) during 2009. This expansion was expected to provide some immediate relief to the growing congestion on this heavily used roadway from 1900 West and Midland Drive in Ogden to 1700 South in Syracuse. UDOT hopes to be able to complete the approved five-lane reconstruction project in the next 5-8 years.

South Davis County Transit Needs Analysis – The 2040 RTP recommends a BRT facility to connect downtown Salt Lake City to the South Davis County communities. The six cities in South Davis County (North Salt Lake, Woods Cross, Bountiful, West Bountiful, Centerville, and Farmington) along with Davis County, Salt Lake City, UTA, and the WFRC, completed a study in 2005 to identify the need for transit improvements in the corridor. The study identified BRT and Street Car as possible transit modes in the corridor and selected an alignment for the project. An environmental impact study for this project is currently underway.

South Davis Transit Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (see above paragraph) – The 2040 RTP recommends Bus Rapid Transit (BRTIII) and Enhanced Bus (BRTI) on the alignment recommended by the Alternatives Analysis. A feasibility study and an Alternatives Analysis have been completed for this corridor. These studies have identified an alignment for the project, as well as its guideway and station characteristics. Enhanced Bus (BRTI) has been selected for the northern portion of the project. The transit mode on the southern portion of the corridor has been narrowed to Bus Rapid Transit and Streetcar. Six cities in South Davis County (North Salt Lake, Woods Cross, Bountiful, West Bountiful, Centerville, and Farmington) along with Davis County, Salt Lake City, WFRC, UTA, and the UDOT are study partners in this corridor.

1800 North Environmental Impact Statement – The 2040 RTP recommends the widening of 1800 North in northern Davis County from 2000 West to Main Street, a railroad overpass on 1800 North, and a new interchange on I-15 at 1800 North. An environmental study of this corridor and the potential interchange was initiated in 2010. Several alternatives will be evaluated during 2011, with study completion anticipated in 2012.

SR-193 Extension – A draft environmental study on the extension of State Road 193 in Clearfield has been completed and is awaiting approval. The proposed improvements would begin at the intersection of 2000 West (SR-108) and 200 South and extend east to the intersection of 700 South and State Street (SR-126), connecting to the existing SR-193. The planned extension is a five-lane roadway (two lanes in each direction with a center turn lane) with a grade-separated railroad crossing over the FrontRunner and Union Pacific rail lines. Construction would take about a year to complete and could start as early as Fall 2011.

North Legacy Connection Study – An extension of Legacy Parkway into Weber County is included in the WFRC Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). A study was undertaken in 2001 to determine an alignment for this planned extension in North Davis County. However, a consensus on the proposed alignment could not be reached in Weber County. This study serves as a supplement to the WFRC 2001 Study and identifies an alignment to be preserved in Weber County for a planned extension of Legacy Parkway.

West Salt Lake County Transit Study – The Utah Transit Authority, Salt Lake County, Suburban Land Reserve,

Kennecott Land Corporation, and the Wasatch Front Regional Council completed a study regarding future transit in August 2009. The study limits were from Bangerter Highway to the West Bench area and from the north to the south boarder of Salt Lake County. The study intended to provide supporting technical analysis for a future transit system, provide a basis for recommendations in the RTP, and provide information to the local land-use planners on how alternative development scenarios could affect public transportation usage in Salt Lake County. The study identified key Light Rail Transit projects, Bus Rapid Transit projects, and Interurban Rail projects. The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan currently includes many of these identified projects.

East Salt Lake County Transit Study – The East Salt Lake County Transit Study was a continuation of the West Side Study including many of the same stakeholders. Major stakeholders included the Utah Transit Authority, Salt Lake County, Suburban Land Reserve and Wasatch Front Regional Council. The study limits were from 2700 West to the East Bench and from the north to the south boarders of Salt Lake County. The purpose was to identify transit corridors in the eastern portion of Salt Lake County to complement the recommended transit plan for the west side, and to provide transit candidate corridors for consideration in the next RTP update. Following extensive review of municipal and county current and future land use patterns, the study identified numerous major north-south (State, 900 E. Van Winkle Ft. Union Blvd, 1300 East, I-215 Foothill and Redwood Road) and east-west (3300-3900 S., 5400 S., 9400 S. and 10600 S.) corridors that could be used for high capacity transit. Recommendations from this study were reviewed and evaluated in the development of the 2040 RTP with many of the projects included in the Plan.

Southwest Salt Lake County Transit Feasibility Study – Riverton City, Herriman City, South Jordan City, Draper City, the Utah Transit Authority, and the Wasatch Front Regional Council sponsored a study which included Bluffdale City, Property Reserve Inc., Rio Tinto, Salt Lake County, and the Utah Department of Transportation as stakeholders. The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to identify a realistic and suitable high frequency / high-capacity transit project that could serve the communities in the Southwest Salt Lake County. The project would also connect the end of the Mid-Jordan TRAX line at the Daybreak Subdivision in South Jordan City to the FrontRunner Station in Draper. The Draper Extension, from the Draper FrontRunner station to the future Draper TRAX station at approximately 14800 South, was also studied. The steering committee selected Bus Rapid Transit as the preferred alternative and connected the Herriman Towne Center, 3600 West and 12600 South. The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan currently lists most of this project in Phase 2, of the Plan, a portion in Phase 3, and some of the project in the Unfunded phase.

Taylorsville - Murray Transit Alternatives Analysis – A Draft Alternatives Analysis for this project has been completed and adopted by the community. The 2040 RTP follows the findings of this study.

West Davis Corridor Environmental Impact Statement – UDOT is now in the process of preparing a full environmental impact statement on the West Davis Corridor from the US-89/ Legacy Parkway/ I-15 in Davis County to 12th Street in Weber County. It is anticipated that the EIS will be completed by the end of 2012 with a record of decision (ROD) in the early part of 2013.

Draper Extension – An Environmental Impact Statement completed by UTA and WFRC has been adopted by the community and approval by FTA. The 2040 RTP follows the findings of this study.

Sugarhouse Transit Corridor Study – UTA and Salt Lake City have begun a study to look at the feasibility of a major transit investment in the corridor from UTA's Central Point TRAX station to Sugarhouse. UTA purchased a rail line in this corridor from the Union Pacific Railroad several years ago. The RTP recommends a streetcar system be implemented in this corridor. In addition, the Federal Government recently awarded UTA a grant to complete the project.

Sugarhouse Environmental Assessment – An alternatives analysis has been completed and an Environmental Assessment is underway for the Sugarhouse Streetcar. The Locally Preferred Alternative developed by the Alternatives Analysis is reflected in the 2040 RTP.

5600 West Transit Environmental Assessment – The 2040 RTP recommends Bus Rapid Transit (BRTIII) in this corridor.

This recommendation is consistent with the findings of the Mountain View Corridor Environmental Impact Study. FTA has requested that an Alternatives Analysis and Supplemental Environmental Analysis be completed for this project. These analysis are underway.

Salt Lake County East-West Transportation Study – The objective of the Salt Lake County East-West Transportation Planning Study stems from House Bill 108, adopted by the Utah State Legislature in 2007, that required UDOT to study the need for east-west transportation improvements in Salt Lake County. The study area runs from the Salt Lake County/Utah County boundary north to the SR-201 (2100 South) freeway; and from SR-111 east to the I-15 Corridor. The project focused on three primary goals: determine current and future east-west directional, transportation needs; Identify and evaluate possible transportation system improvements; and recommend transportation system improvement scenarios. The study team used data analysis, a considerable public involvement process with stakeholder input, and public feedback to identify options for improving transportation on the west side of the Salt Lake Valley. The study team analyzed the current transportation system, identified system improvement options, considered challenges related to those options and suggested a timeline coordinated with other planned transportation improvements.

The study proposed potential improvements beyond those already identified in the Wasatch Front Regional Council's 2030 Regional Transportation Plan. These improvements include capacity enhancements to nine east-west arterials, additional transit service, and near-term improvements of initial construction of continuous flow intersections at specific location along Redwood Road and the Bangerter Highway. Recommendations form this study were reviewed and evaluated in the development of the 2040 RTP with many of the projects included in the Plan.

Downtown Salt Lake City to the Salt Lake City International Airport – The WFRC completed the DEIS / FEIS for a light rail transit line from the Salt Lake International Airport to the University of Utah in 1997. With the east segment of this line already in place, construction of the segment going to the airport began in 2010 and is scheduled for completion in 2012.

West Valley City Corridor – Based on the approved EIS for the light rail transit project in this corridor completed by UTA and WFRC, UTA commenced construction in 2009. Construction will be complete and the line will be operational August 7, 2011.

Mid-Jordan Corridor – Based on the approved EIS for the light rail transit project in this corridor completed by UTA and WFRC, UTA commence construction in 2009. Construction will be complete and the line will be operational on August 7, 2011.

Salt Lake City Downtown Transportation Master Plan – UTA and Salt Lake City recently completed a master plan for transportation in the City's downtown area. This study made recommendations for bus and rail transit circulation, major transfer points within the downtown area, for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and for roadway improvements.

Foothill Drive Corridor Study – The–UTA, UDOT, Salt Lake City, and the University of Utah sponsored a study of the Foothill Drive Corridor in Salt Lake City from the University to I-80. This study was completed in July 2008.

The purpose of the study was to develop recommendations for accommodating future travel demand in the corridor, with an emphasis on the greater use of transit and other high-occupancy modes. The study recommended an increase in express bus service to the University from South Salt Lake County; the implementation of a bus/HOV lane; intersection improvements, especially at the Sunnyside Drive intersection; bike and pedestrian improvements; and the continuation and expansion of travel demand management programs at the University and other major Foothill Drive area employers. The study also suggested that there is potential for bus rapid transit service in the corridor, if it is developed as part of a regional system.

600 West Bangerter Environmental Impact Statement – This study is in its alternatives selection phase. Three alternatives remain under evaluation. All three are variations upon the interchange recommendation made in the 2040 RTP.

5400 South / Interstate 215 Interchange – In 2010, UDOT launched a transportation study of the 5400 South and I-215 area to address traffic congestion and freeway access issues. The study is being conducted in two phases. The first phase of the study started in spring, 2010. This phase included scoping, determining project context, developing the purpose and need statement, and undertaking a high level assessment of potential solutions (alternatives). The first phase of the study was completed and submitted to UDOT for review in late fall, 2010. The assessments from phase 1 will help UDOT determine if it should move the study forward into Phase 2 of the EIS process.

Mountain View Corridor from I-80 to the Salt Lake / Utah County Line – Based on the completed Environmental Impact Statement, the 2040 RTP recommends the Mountain View Corridor (formerly the Western Transportation Corridor) be built as a freeway with HOV lanes from I-80 to the Utah County line. The portion of the highway from the Redwood Road connection in Bluffdale to 5400 South is under construction in a phased approach. The road will be built as an arterial in Phase I and upgraded to a freeway in Phase II.

Transit Development Program – As part of the 2040 RTP the Utah Transit Authority and the WFRC prepare on a regular basis, a five year, short range plan for service, operation costs, and capital facilities improvements.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Continued funding is needed to implement the recommended highway and transit projects in the 2040 RTP. The WFRC works with UDOT, UTA, and local communities through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to program funding for RTP projects. The WFRC, as the MPO for the Salt Lake and Ogden-Layton Urbanized Areas, is responsible for preparing and approving an annually updated TIP for the Wasatch Front Region. An MPO-approved TIP is required by federal legislation for a region to receive federal highway and transit funding. The purpose of the TIP is to list transportation projects for which funding will be sought over a four-year period. The TIP should reflect the region's priorities, represent a consensus among state and regional officials, show a direct relationship to the regional transportation plan, be financially constrained, and conform with federal air quality regulations as they relate to transportation. Finally, the TIP must be subjected to thorough public review during development and prior to adoption.

The WFRC develops the TIP, in cooperation with UDOT and UTA, for all highways, transit, and other transportation related projects in the Salt Lake and Ogden-Layton Urban Areas. The WFRC, UDOT, and UTA have worked together to develop methods and procedures for evaluating, selecting and prioritizing projects to be included in the TIP. The WFRC has also developed policies to guide the approval of the TIP and the project selection process, as required by TEA-21 and reemphasized with SAFETEA-LU. SAFETEA-LU allows for four funded years in the TIP. The WFRC TIP includes four funded years plus two years of projects in concept development for a total of six years.

The WFRC staff is continuously reviewing and identifying methods to improve the evaluation and ranking of projects eligible for the urban Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation / Air Quality (CMAQ) programs. Criteria have recently been revised, so that the prioritization of urban STP projects consider system efficiency, benefits and costs, congestion relief, safety needs, economic benefits, system preservation, environmental impacts, and system and demand management strategies. The prioritization for CMAQ projects considers air quality benefits in terms of

Image by James Belmont

emission reductions, congestion relief, cost benefits, length of effectiveness, and degree of congestion.

For other federal aid and state highway funds, a series of workshops are held annually in each UDOT Region to review the progress being made on projects in the current program and to identify projects to add to the program. In preparations for these workshops, each region holds a monthly Pavement Management or Roadway Management committee meeting to discuss the needs, concerns, and priorities of the roadway network throughout their region. Pavement preservation and maintenance needs, safety, traffic operations, and new capacity needs are among the criteria UDOT uses to recommend priorities. WFRC staff members participate at the meetings and provide the regions with information and priorities for new capacity needs. UDOT's Programming Section and the Transportation Commission consider the recommendations of their regions in development of the programs.

The WFRC staff works with UTA to identify transit projects to include in the TIP. Projects are selected, based on the priorities and needs established in the Transit Development Program and the Regional Transportation Plan. The WFRC also compiles lists of projects funded by local governments and includes them in the TIP. Once the TIP is compiled, the WFRC conducts an analysis to determine if the TIP conforms with state air quality plans. This conformity analysis is made available to the State Division of Air Quality and the public for review and comment. The FHWA and FTA must concur in this finding.

A TIP, containing the recommended programs along with the conformity determination, is submitted to the Transportation Coordination Committee for the Regional Council annually for its review. The county councils of governments also have an opportunity to review and comment on the TIP. Appropriate adjustments are made and a final TIP is developed. The final conforming TIP is then recommended to the WFRC for its approval. Following the Wasatch Front Regional Council's approval, the Executive Director of UDOT, as the Governor's designee, must review and approve the TIP. Following UDOT's approval the Utah State Transportation Commission must include the TIP without modification in the Statewide Transportation Program.

FUTURE PLAN UPDATES

As mentioned above, transportation planning is a continuous process. Changing development patterns resulting from continued growth in the region, fluctuating economic conditions, and shifting energy and environmental concerns all impact transportation needs in the Wasatch Front Urban Area and the types of improvements required to meet those needs. In order to keep the Plan current, the WFRC reviews the recommendations in the long range transportation plan at least every four years and updates it as necessary. The next revision to the RTP will occur by May 2015.

During the next four years, the WFRC will build upon the work completed in development of the current Regional Transportation Plan. This process will include continued emphasis on understanding land use-transportation relationships and using that information to refine the future vision for the region. The WFRC will monitor changing land use patterns and major new developments. Future financial projections will depend on the action of Congress, the Legislature, local officials and voters. As always, the WFRC continues to update its planning capabilities through improvements to the Region's travel models. Incorporating National Environmental Protection Act provisions into the planning process will be another area the WFRC will pursue more fully during the next four years. Finally, the Wasatch Front Regional Council will continue to update the process used to develop the long range transportation plan and anticipate addressing new issues in future updates.

Visioning

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Wasatch Front Regional Council made a significant effort during 2010 to work with local officials and the general public to develop a refined vision for the future of the Region and to adopt growth principles to help guide future development. This effort included workshops, open houses, and meetings with municipal councils, planning commissions and county commissions and councils. These were the first steps to better understand the relationship between land use and transportation in the planning process.

Over the coming years, the Regional Council, in collaboration with key stakeholders, business and government officials and other interested parties will work to refresh the dialogue and increase the outreach effort with planning partners to support implementation of the Wasatch Choice for 2040 Regional Vision. The WFRC will work with its partners to convene workshops, community meetings, and other forums and develop tools and approaches to provide for greater discussion of how to implement the regional vision, and to determine how the transportation system can support local and regional development.

Changing Growth Patterns

The Wasatch Front Region will continue to grow, and the transportation system will need to address the consequences of this growth. Over the next few years, new development and redevelopment will take place that will need to be considered in future plans. Among the factors that will have the greatest impact are the redevelopment of downtown Ogden to promote employment as well as residential uses, the expansion at the Business Depot Ogden, Hill Air Force Base's plans to allow commercial and office development on the west side of the base, Weber State University's Davis County campus in Layton / Clearfield, redevelopment in downtown Salt Lake City, and Kennecott Land Company's planned development on the west side of Salt Lake County. In addition to these activities, new development is likely to occur around the light rail and commuter rail transit stations in the region.

Funding Sources

The WFRC will continue to monitor funding levels for transportation improvements. Over the past two years, the Utah Legislature has significantly increased state funding for highway improvements. In addition, the Legislature has authorized new local option sales taxes and vehicle registration fees for highway, transit, and airport improvements. These funds can be used for congestion mitigation, new capacity, and corridor preservation.

With the adoption of the 2040 RTP, members of the Wasatch Front Regional Council will work to make state and federal lawmakers aware that a significant need still exists for preserving and expanding the Wasatch Front Region's transportation system. The WFRC will also work with state and federal officials to pursue new, as well as increased funding sources for highway and transit projects.

Travel Demand Modeling

The WFRC uses travel forecasting models to project future highway traffic and transit ridership based on proposed transportation networks and forecasted land use characteristics. These travel forecasts are used to identify needed highway and transit improvements. These models are data intensive, and are recalibrated each RTP cycle based on the latest traffic counts, speeds, transit boardings, and travel behaviors.

The coordination between the land use model and the travel demand model is a critical link in the forecasting process. Over the next several years, the WFRC will be evaluating the current land use modeling process, and determining if there are enhancements that can be made to the current UrbanSim model, or if a different model may be more appropriate.

Because the travel demand model forecasts the travel behaviors of a variety of households, the WFRC must occasionally update and verify the assumptions used in the model. This is typically done through a household travel survey. The last full household travel survey was conducted nearly 20 years ago. Accordingly, the WFRC will be conducting a new household travel survey in the coming year(s). These surveys are performed by selecting a statistically significant sample of households throughout the region, and tracking their travel behaviors throughout a particular day- understanding each trip purpose, by time, how they traveled (car, bus, walk) and the start and finish points for each household. In addition to being used for the 2040 RTP, the WFRC staff uses the travel demand model to provide support to the sponsors of a variety of roadway, transit, and other projects of regional significance.

NEPA and Planning

By addressing National Environmental Protection Act issues in the planning process, the WFRC hopes to streamline the project development process for project sponsors. To address inherent issues, the WFRC will make a greater effort to identify and evaluate multi-modal alternatives in major transportation corridors, increase public involvement opportunities regarding these major corridors, address environmental factors in the evaluation process, and prepare a draft purpose and needs statement that could be used as a basis for the preparation of the necessary environmental studies. The WFRC hosted a workshop of state and federal transportation and resource agencies in 2005 to address NEPA and planning issues. The workshop developed an action plan with strategies for considering environmental issues in the planning process which was still valid for the 2040 RTP update. The WFRC, UDOT, and FHWA plan to pursue these strategies in the next four years.