

“Community Building” Starts with *Community*
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As published in the September 2007 Sugar House Valley Journal

2007 marks the 10-year anniversary of *Envision Utah*. Over the past decade, thousands of stakeholders—representing neighborhoods, businesses, and governments—have taken part in surveys, town meetings and strategic planning workshops aimed at raising awareness of and finding solutions to the growth challenges our region is experiencing.

Over the past 10 years, we have expanded a regional public transportation system that is the envy of many metropolitan areas that are two or three times our size. We have witnessed the completion of the Sandy to Salt Lake City TRAX light rail system, with subsequent expansion to the University of Utah. Three new lines—to the Salt Lake International Airport, to West Valley City, and to Daybreak in South Jordan—along with an extension of the Sandy line to Draper will all be completed in the next five years. The FrontRunner commuter rail line from Salt Lake to Ogden will begin operation in the next year, with an expansion from Salt Lake City to Provo scheduled for completion by 2015. We also have studies for localized rail transit service underway in Downtown Salt Lake City and Sugar House.

Over the past 10 years, we have seen a great increase in awareness and participation in resource conservation, including water and energy. Municipalities and utility companies have adopted conservation pricing structures and numerous incentive-based programs. Many home owners and business owners have taken steps to reduce water and energy use, greatly reducing the demand on expensive supply and distribution systems, and increasing the efficiency of public infrastructure.

Over the past 10 years, we have seen changes in patterns of development resulting in more walkable, mixed-use and compact neighborhoods. Although not yet a predominant trend, this re-emergence of traditional neighborhood development patterns recognizes a growing interest in safety, health, and increased efficiency in the delivery of public services.

There have been many successes in this regional initiative, but there are still many challenges we face. Even with major expansion of a regional public transit system, we are experiencing declining bus service in our neighborhoods, resulting in a major loss of mobility for many of us who rely almost exclusively on bus service for our transportation needs. Air quality is becoming an increasing health threat—over 350 individuals die each year from health problems directly attributable to poor air quality—and our building systems and transportation systems are the major culprits. Even with considerable focus on energy conservation, we face the expansion of coal-fired power plants that will further exacerbate health risks from the air we breathe.

One of the biggest lessons I’ve learned from participating in the *Envision Utah* process, is that no one person has all the answers, but by combining the many voices and

perspectives of an entire community, we can collectively find solutions. Solutions, in my opinion, are more important than compromises as we work to solve the challenges that face us and future generations. Our collective efforts to tackle the impacts of growth in the valley will have great results. Thanks Envision Utah for pointing us in the right direction, and thanks to each person who contributes their time, energy and resources in leading the charge to keep our community safe, healthy, sustainable and beautiful.