



Envision Cache Valley Plans for 2040

Population, home acreage expected to double by then

By Karen Lambert, Staff Writer

Envision Cache Valley's steering committee got a glimpse of a possible future on Monday evening. The picture of 2040 included twice as many people and more than double the acres covered in homes in Cache and Franklin counties. At the same time, new infrastructure costs alone, not counting schools or maintenance, could cost an average of \$4,000 a household if current trends continue.

The rough predictions, based on statistics from the governor's office and figures provided by the counties, were meant to help the steering committee determine what questions it wants to explore now as it plans for the future, said Gabriel Epperson, a project manager with Envision Utah. The planning entity conducted much of the meeting for Envision Cache Valley.

Numbers will be further refined as more data is collected. In addition, future projects will be created to show alternative scenarios, based on residents' own visions for their communities.

Dozens of community representatives from Utah and Idaho sat at the table, many offering their feedback as the future of the two counties was discussed.

"Today's presentation was kind of the harsh reality," said Shauna Kerr, a leader with Trust for Public Lands.

However, Lewiston Mayor Kelly Field said while he's a strong proponent of the regional planning effort, he's waiting for more refined numbers. "In my mind the key to it is getting good information for the baseline," he said. "It's not there yet."

Field said he has written several city newsletters informing his residents of the importance of participation in Envision Cache Valley.

Franklin Mayor Wayne Priestley expressed similar sentiments, as did Dayton Mayor DeeVirile Christensen. Christensen said he was interested in further discussions about mass transit — especially between Utah and Idaho. "Why can't light rail come into effect?" he said.

Utah State University professor Nat Frazier said he wanted more analysis of impacts of growth on the school districts. Several others in attendance wanted to discuss ways to develop business in order to bring more money into the communities to pay for growth.

The group also planned a kick-off meeting Feb. 25 and community workshops to be held in the week or two afterward. They hope to get hundreds of Utah and Idaho residents to attend.

"This is not our vision. This is their vision and we want it to reflect local values and local dreams," said Alan Matheson, director of Envision Utah.