

THE MORGAN COUNTY NEWS

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Guest Editorial: Envision Morgan Preliminary Results

by Christie Oostema, Envision Utah Project Manager

Based on the input of more than 500 Morgan County residents, Envision Utah is releasing preliminary results from the public visioning process, Envision Morgan. In general, survey results show that over 65% of county residents find the pace of recent growth to be “fast” or “too fast.” At the same time, they are quite divided on the impact of future growth: thirty five percent see it as “somewhat negative,” while 34% perceive it as “somewhat positive.” Only about one quarter of respondents cite growth as either “very negative” or “very positive.”

Residents provided input to Envision Utah staff through three public workshops, presentations, and an on-line survey. These results will be refined at additional public meetings in September.

The initial analysis indicate the public’s interest in exploring some significantly different growth patterns as part of the year-long public process, facilitated by Envision Utah and led by a Steering Committee of local community leaders.

Eighty nine percent of the workshop maps identified new resort centers, and most maps included mixed-use town centers (where housing and commercial development are very near to each other) as part of the future growth in Morgan and Mountain Green. These “centers” corresponded with the identification of large conservation areas in the mountains, along the Weber River, and encompassing agricultural land on the valley floor.

Residents identified mountains as their top conservation priority and would discourage future development on them because of their grazing importance as well as for environmental and recreational values. Seventy-nine percent of residents also sought to conserve the valley floor, primarily for agricultural uses.

Ultimately, what we’re seeing is a tendency to locate future growth areas in existing growth centers, new resort areas, and otherwise near existing roadways. When people pictured future growth in the valley, it tended to be along the “seams” – the edges where the valley meets foothills and mountains. People almost uniformly let the lower and agricultural sections alone. Except in concentrated resort centers, people tended to stay off the mountains.

The data is being used to create three alternative growth scenarios – or “snapshots” – that explore a range of plausible growth patterns for the county. Components of the scenarios will be used to craft a regional vision for future growth. Envision Morgan’s goal is to create a vision document that reflects community values and hopes for the future.