

Meeting Notes

Economy System Group Meeting #1

March 4, 2014

This first meeting of the Economy System Group included an introduction to the Mountain Accord effort, the system group roles, process and schedule, and a presentation and discussion of Existing Conditions relevant to economic considerations and the Project Area. The meeting was co-chaired by Jeff Edwards, President and CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of Utah; and Natalie Gochnour, Associate Dean of the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah. A list of meeting attendees is available on the Mountain Accord website (www.mountainaccord.com).

Presentation Summary

The PowerPoint presentation from the Economy System Group meeting is available on the Mountain Accord website. The presentation was initiated by a project introduction outlining the purpose, goals, schedule, partners, decision-making process, and other details of Mountain Accord. Following this introduction, the Technical Lead articulated the Project's overall economic goal: Strengthen the Regional Economy, and provided thirteen slides with information on current economic conditions that affect the project area and some suggestions for indicators and metrics of economic success.

Survey #1:

Following the presentation, System Group meeting attendees were asked to identify their single most significant concern with the conditions and future of the central Wasatch Mountains. Grouped by general topic, concerns identified included the following:

TRANSPORTATION

1. The challenge of safe transportation in/out of Little Cottonwood Canyon
2. Effective transportation planning on corridors adjacent to and connecting to canyons
3. Parking: very heavy vehicle use that gets worse each year (especially in the Park City area)
4. Automobile congestion (employee parking & tourist travel)
5. The need for transportation infrastructure investment
6. The need to create a year-round transit solution that helps/works for everyone
7. Maximizing the use of existing infrastructure (including Olympics infrastructure)
8. Need for better transportation to/from destinations
9. Driving safety and parking
10. Public safety - interconnect canyons, eliminate dead-ends, think about bicycles

11. A limited ability to get and retain employees at businesses in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Park City

RECREATION

1. The need to maintain the attractiveness of the resource.
2. Allowing for more skiing and outdoor recreation with low environmental impact
3. Facilitating access without creating an overall negative experience
4. Preserving the overall recreational experience - especially access
5. A desire to grow dispersed recreation opportunities while limiting development
6. The lack of organized recreational activities in the summer in Little Cottonwood Canyon)

ECONOMY

1. Need for comprehensive planning for land use/economy/workforce
2. Balancing economic activity with a quality experience
3. The brand perception of SLC – people come here for reasons other than leisure or travel
4. Need to enhance the regional and state brand – focus on natural resources, mitigate negative perceptions (Suggested message: “Blessed by mother nature”)
5. Desire to protect entrepreneurship and avoid heavy government regulations
6. Need for better immigration management
7. Balance conditions (development and preservation) in the canyons so that cities’ economic potential can be realized.
8. Should acknowledge that economic impacts and opportunities are grounded in protection of the resource
9. Concern that sprawl has negative impacts on economy
10. Need for economic diversity– summertime economic inputs lag behind wintertime; too winter recreation dependent.
11. Effective balance between preservation and economic growth
12. Balancing growth with the quality of life (transportation and air quality are key)

ENVIRONMENT

1. Providing for smart growth; protect against crowding/congestion
2. Balancing diverse and increasing demands on the Wasatch Mountains
3. How do we keep “getting golden eggs without killing the goose”. Nothing else works if we don’t protect wild and natural values.
4. Maintaining/improving environmental quality - air quality in particular
5. Preserving natural resources to protect the quality of life
6. The danger of "loving the place to death"
7. Providing for responsible development that respects natural conditions

COLLABORATION

1. The need for better compromise among the interests - do give and take.
2. Need to see systems from other perspectives

3. Need to reduce conflict about land use between private/special interests

Survey #2

Based on the suggestions for economic system indicators suggested in the PowerPoint presentation, attendees were asked to identify possible additional factors or indicators of the relative health of an economic system that could be useful in the Mountain Accord effort. The group discussed the economic aspects of both the project area (the central Wasatch Mountains) and the larger areas that will have economic effects from and to activities in the project area at three geographic scales; national, regional and local. Grouped by general topic, suggestions from the group included the following:

NATIONAL

1. Market share of skier days nationally - national trends
2. Baseline trend in skier days from 10 years ago to present
3. Tourism dollars per day – Number of visitors and trends (at Local, Regional, National, and International scales)
4. Airline improvements (airport capacity) and airline trends (who's coming to Utah and from where?)
5. The economic impact of dispersed recreation and non-skiing activities
6. Aside from being a recreation destination, how is Salt Lake City perceived? What is the "attraction value" of the Wasatch Mountains?
7. How does the Utah economy trend compared to national measures?
8. We have the 2012 report on total recreation outdoor product sales – we should look back if possible
9. Levels of energy consumption and generation within vs. outside our economy
10. Water supply; How do we compare?

REGIONAL

1. Seasonal trends for competitive events - recreation outdoor retail show etc.
2. Why are others (Boise) succeeding better in some ways? Who do we compete with for conventions, business recruitment, etc.?
3. Transit in SLC vs. other western metro areas - can we do more new transit development for less investment because of how advanced our infrastructure already is?
4. What infrastructure investments did our competitors make? Did they work?
5. Compare our NAICS breakdown against other western metro areas - Boise, Denver, Albuquerque, Reno, others. What job sectors are growing?
6. Olympic assets and how to keep them relevant – who are our potential competitors for another winter Olympics?
7. What competitors were where SLC is now 10-20 years ago? What techniques did they use? Were they successful?
8. Visitor/Brand Perception surveys - are there any?
9. Competitive surveys - why are people choosing us for business locations or to move here?
10. Compare visitor days for the WCNF to forests in surrounding states.

LOCAL (Includes the Project Area and a larger 4-county Study Area)

1. Are there quality of life metrics?
2. What do we use to attract business, tech, medical, other industries?
3. Ask the last 20 companies recruited here “Why did you choose to come here?”
4. Ask the last 5 companies that didn't choose the Northern Utah area why they landed elsewhere.
5. Public vs. private land inventory may be a factor in economic success
6. Where can or should growth occur?
7. What do we know about public transit trends in canyons? We added bus transit - did it add skier days?
8. Data on per person daily expenses by recreation type for local users vs. destination visitors would be useful
9. Is there data on the value of destination users and visitors statewide?
10. Where is increased visitation coming from? Local (4 counties) vs. regional vs. national
11. Is there a way to establish a valuation of ecosystem services? How do these add quality of life? (Suggestions include high-quality and low-cost water, recreational opportunities, etc.)
12. A traffic congestion analysis by location and time of day would be useful
13. An analysis of the jobs and housing balance in some areas would be useful (How many workers need to commute versus reside near where they work?)

New Information Discussion and Requests:

Several sources of information were suggested by the group, including looking at primary and secondary residence property tax information. It was also suggested that RCC Company be contacted. Envision Utah has used them for special economic studies in the past.

Decisions

No decisions were made at the first Economy System Group meeting. However, the follow-up schedule for the next meeting was established: April 2 in the UTA Promontory Room from 1:30-3:30pm.

Action Items

No.	Action Item	Responsible	Note
1	Summarize meeting notes and prepare the presentation slides for posting on the Mountain Accord website	Logan Simpson Design	Due March 19 th
2	Identify five key indicators of economic system health for consideration by the System Group at its next meeting – 3-5	Logan Simpson Design	Due March 21 st

	page Existing Conditions summary		
3	Preliminarily identify key trends relevant to the economic system for consideration by the System Group at its next meeting	Logan Simpson Design	Due March 21 st
4	Collect additional reports and studies for existing conditions and trends by March 13	System Group Members	Due March 13 th