



Group discusses long-term Cache Valley Growth

by Jared Price

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Gov. Gary Herbert speaks at the Envision Cache Valley meeting Tuesday at the Logan Tabernacle.

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert and members of Envision Cache Valley unveiled a long term plan for Cache Valley and encouraged citizens to be proactive and anticipate growth in order to create a better future for the valley at a meeting Tuesday at the Logan Tabernacle.

Dirk Bowles, Franklin County commissioner and co-chair of Envision Cache Valley, said the population of Cache County is projected to double by 2030.

Herbert said the Envision program has seen success in other parts of the state that have faced the challenging issue of growth that now faces Cache Valley. Herbert said Utah and Washington Counties have benefited greatly from the planning program.

“We have one chance here to get ahead of the curve and make sure what we’re doing in anticipation of growth is the correct thing,” Herbert said.

Herbert said this project is unique because it cuts across state lines to create a dialogue among all of those in the valley. Herbert said things such as air and water quality pay no attention to borders and that working across these borders is crucial to the betterment of the valley.

Herbert said, “This is an exciting opportunity for us to bring people together and talk about those issues that are important to this valley.”

Idaho Rep. Marc Gibbs also spoke at the gathering. Gibbs said the old adage, “If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail,” applies to this situation and that planning now is crucial to building the ideal future of Cache Valley.

Gibbs also said Idaho is “pleased and honored” to have been invited in this process.

Tom Jensen, Envision Cache Valley co-chair, presented a draft of the vision for Cache Valley the group put together.

“This is what the people of Cache Valley, in their responses, have said,” Jensen said.

According to Jensen, citizens said to “keep the city, city and the country, country.”

Jensen said, “Now what this means is let’s not mix our soup with our dessert.”

Feedback from the public said the community wants to invest in towns while protecting agriculture and natural lands.

Jensen said, “Living close to where we work, shop and play” was another hope from citizens. Jensen said preserving existing neighborhoods along with creating diverse new neighborhoods within walking distance of services is a part of the plan.

Another statement from the report stated citizens wish to “create good-paying jobs close to home” and to “create a balanced transportation network” that increases transportation options and makes travel more efficient.

Developing efficient infrastructure is another facet of the plan. Jensen said making the most of the existing system is crucial to facilitate the coming growth.

Citizens expressed desire to “protect, preserve and improve our natural resources and working farms.”

Jensen said this entails preserving and improving air and water quality, preserving wildlife habitats, agricultural land and scenic views.

“Connect local trails with nearby parks and a regional trail system” was also a desire expressed by those citizens surveyed.

Jensen said the report also stated that it is necessary to cooperate to achieve these goals.

Cache Valley Regional Council Chair Gary Anderson said when implementing the plan, maintaining a balance and staying focused on the big picture are necessities. Anderson also said the implementation should be inclusive and not a “heavy-handed mandate.”

“The challenge is ours. It’s not necessarily easy but it’s necessary,” Herbert said regarding the plan for Cache Valley. “If we all pull together, what we come up with here is going to be something that we’ll be proud of.”

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