



To: Co-Chair Lowry Snow
Co-Chair Val Hale

From: Natalie Gochnour

Date: October 31, 2019

Subject: Point of the Mountain Development Commission Research

At the request of the co-chairs of the Point of the Mountain Development Commission, the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute interviewed several commission members and individuals with key roles with the Point of the Mountain Development Commission. These interviews were completed between December 2018 and April 2019. Institute staff also reviewed the regional vision and near-term recommendations. This memo provides a “framing” of this review and these discussions, including themes, decision dimensions, and potential options for the future of the Commission. The memo also provides a proposed decision rubric and summary of the methodology.

Themes

The outreach identified seven broad themes, some that complement and others that conflict with one another. These themes, along with supporting statements and notes from the interviews, provide helpful background in framing next steps for the Commission.

1. Generational decision– Interviewees affirmed the significance and importance of the Commission and the value of a shared vision for transportation and land use.

Key Points

- Consensus that major development will continue
- Broad recognition of the value of a shared vision
- Significant opportunity for the state...don't miss it

2. Praise for the vision– Interviewees expressed support for the vision, even though many details are missing.

Key Points

- Envision Utah did a great job
- State headed in the right direction
- More detail is needed

3. Confusion and apprehension about the authority– Interviewees expressed confusion and concern about the role of the Point of the Mountain Land Development Authority and how it would uphold the Commission's work.

Key Points

- The Commission has not completed its role
- The Commission should continue to provide planning coordination and regional leadership
- Acknowledgment that the Commission creates friction points, particularly with MPOs
- Need for greater clarity

4. Concern about short-term bias–
Several interviewees expressed concern about short-term thinking.

Key Points

- Concern about quick or rash decisions
- Biggest fear is short-term decisions
- Concern about a lack of state planning
- Worry that the combination of these decisions may not support the larger vision

5. Conflict between local and regional–
Interviewees expressed conflicting views about local v. regional/state roles.

Key Points

- The Commission adds regional perspective that otherwise would not be there
- Regional thinking should prevail

6. Significance of transportation–
Interviewees expressed strong agreement about the importance of transportation decisions. Transportation is viewed as the mega-issue.

Key Points

- The regional transportation vision is paramount
- Concern about funding capacity

7. Continue Commission, but refine role–
Interviewees believe the Commission should continue but with a refined role. The details of this still need to be worked out. Several interviewees expressed concern about a lack of clarity about the roles of the Commission and the Point of the Mountain Land Development Authority.

Key Points

- The roles of Commission and Authority confuse people
- The Commission concerns regional interests; the Authority concerns state-owned land
- Concern that the prison feels like a “state island”
- A signed document between the Commission and Authority would provide clarity

Decision dimensions

In addition to these themes, several interviewees shared insights helpful to the framing of next steps. We refer to these attributes as “decision dimensions.”

Decision Dimension #1 – Create clarity...don't add more confusion or bureaucracy

Interviewees were often confused about the difference between the Point of the Mountain Development Commission and the Point of the Mountain State Land Authority. They expressed concern about adding more complexity and bureaucracy to next steps.

Decision Dimension #2 – Continue to be transparent...don't serve hidden agendas

Interviewees expressed the value of proceeding with transparency. They view this work as the people's work and their roles as public service.

Decision Dimension #3 – Promote state/regional leadership and support local responsibility

Interviewees understand the land use and regulatory role of local government, but also recognize the need for state/regional leadership. Interviewees desire to honor local control, while also realizing state/regional objectives. The Commission must find the proper balance between state/regional objectives and local control.

Decision Dimension #4 – Executive branch support

Several interviewees commented on the value of enhanced executive branch involvement in the next steps with the Commission.

Potential options

Interviewees were asked for feedback on three options for the Commission. These options include: 1) sunset the commission, 2) continue commission in a communication/leadership role, and 3) institutionalize the commission. Each of these is described briefly below.

Option #1 – Sunset the Commission

This option contemplates the sunset of the Commission once phase three has been completed. Once this is completed, the Commission would formally adopt the vision and encourage voluntary implementation. State agencies/authorities/commissions, the metropolitan planning organization (MPOs), cities, and others would implement the vision. The Commission would cease to exist, and a handoff would occur to the Point of the Mountain Land Development Authority and the MPOs. Legislative funding would end.

Option #2 – Continue Commission in leadership and communication role

This option contemplates creating and signing a formal charter and passing of resolutions in state and local government in support of the regional vision for the Point of the Mountain. The Charter and resolutions would demonstrate commitment from the relevant entities to use their leadership and regulatory authority to support the implementation of the vision. The Commission would then continue in a leadership and communication role, with staffing provided by state government with stronger executive branch involvement. Key components of this leadership include the following:

- Provide an ongoing forum for communication, collaboration, and implementation.
- Help coordinate regional transportation plans.
- Help protect transportation corridors and ensure street connectivity.
- Work with cities to refine general plans.
- Complete planning and help secure funding for transportation improvements.

This scenario would require legislative funding for another two or more years and could be reviewed on an annual basis. The work of the Commission would continue to be advisory.

Option #3 – Continue Commission in a formal institutionalized role

This option contemplates longer-term legislative support and funding for the Commission. The Commission would hire an executive director, retain appointed commissioners, and be part of an executive branch or local government entity. The Commission would work closely with the Authority to implement the vision for jobs, environment, community design, transportation, and prison site redevelopment. This option would likely include the creation of something akin to an “innovation district” to oversee long-term governance. The work of the Commission would be more than advisory, although it’s not clear what authority it would have. The Commission would enter into a formal agreement that defines the roles and responsibilities with the Authority.

Key elements would include the following:

- Establish a formal governance and planning structure for the prison site and adjacent state-owned land.
- Influence regional transportation plans.
- Protect transportation corridors and ensure street connectivity.
- Create a refined regional plan for the prison.
- Explore and secure a university/research presence.
- Coordinate closely with local jurisdictions to refine general plans.
- Help secure funding for transportation investment.

Decision rubric

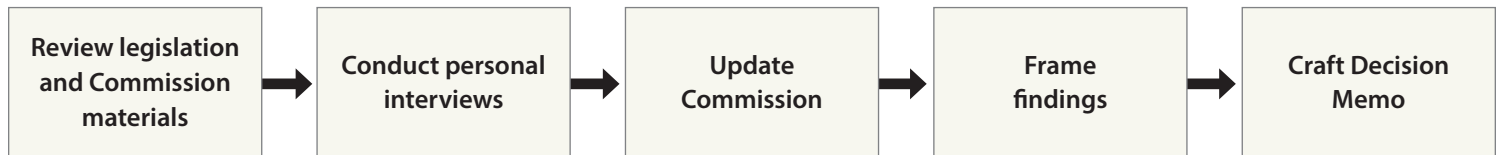
Several of those interviewed suggested that the Commission would benefit from a decision rubric to assist with the decision process. The decision rubric would include high-level, all-embracing criteria important to the success of the preferred vision and a rating schedule. Then for each criterion, Commissioners would assign a ranking ranging from unsatisfactory, to limited, to exceptional. For example, how will each option rank in terms of its potential to realize the vision, ability to realize long-term benefits to the region and state, capacity to benefit localities, and fiscal practices? Other criterion could also be considered. A potential decision rubric may look like this:

Criteria	Unsatisfactory	Limited	Exceptional	Total
Potential to realize vision	0 points	1 point	2 points	
Long-term benefit to state/region	0 points	1 point	2 points	
Long-term benefit to localities	0 points	1 point	2 points	
Fiscal responsibility	0 points	1 point	2 points	

Methodology

The Gardner Institute conducted one-on-one scoping interviews with select members of the Commission and others with significant roles. Members were asked whether the Commission had completed its statutory mission, to identify potential remaining tasks, to assess the role of state and local entities, and to recommend whether future engagement of the Commission is desirable.

The Gardner Policy Institute followed this methodological process.



Those interviewed included:

- Co-chair Lowry Snow
- Former Co-chair Chris Conabee
- Carolos Braceros, Utah Department of Transportation
- Carlton Christensen, Utah Transit Authority
- Val Hale, Governor's Office of Economic Development/Valley Visioning Co-Chair
- Darrin Casper, Salt Lake County
- Mayor Walker, Draper City
- Mayor Johnson, Lehi City
- Andrew Gruber, Wasatch Front Regional Council
- Andrew Jackson, Mountainland Association of Governments
- Ari Bruening, Envision Utah

The Commission was also briefed at its January 24, 2019 meeting.

Appendix I: Point of the Mountain Development Commission Phases

Phase One – Stakeholder input and public outreach to identify the existing assets, challenges, and opportunities in the Point of the Mountain region and a review of best practices.

Phase Two – Scenario development and additional public and stakeholder outreach in order to determine which scenario best fits the region.

Phase Three – Funding the implementation of the vision, breaking down the costs of implementing the vision and exploring public and private funding options.

Source: State of Utah Point of the Mountain Development Commission, Phase Two: The Preferred Vision

Appendix II: Point of the Mountain Development Commission Vision Elements

The twelve signature elements of the vision include the following:

1. A deep, diverse, and highly-trained workforce
2. Improved air quality and natural resource use
3. A connected network of trails, parks, and open space
4. Vibrant urban centers
5. Jobs close to where people live
6. A variety of community and housing types
7. A new north-south boulevard
8. A connected street network
9. World-class public transportation
10. North-south and east-west throughput
11. A catalytic job core & urban center at the prison site
12. A nationally-recognized research and university presence

Source: Envision Utah