

Measurements that Matter: Modeling What Relates to Community Values and Issues



Example: Cache Valley (Utah/Idaho Border)

Context: Rural/urban interface experiencing rapid population growth

Scale: Region (20+ municipalities, 2 counties, 2 states)

Values: In Utah, statewide values research helps regions understand core values. Two core value orientations influence a large part of feelings toward and decisions relating to the quality of life in Utah. These include:

- Safe and secure communities from shared values and low crime lead to a sense of personal security and peace of mind.
- Time and opportunity for personal priorities lead to a sense of accomplishment, personal enjoyment, and peace of mind.

People seek a future and a place where nature is preserved so that families and individuals are able to experience the outdoors and provide a healthier and relaxing life. These people want more time to do the things important to them personally and resent barriers—like traffic—that get in their way.

Value orientations for personal and community enrichment, and financial security follow the top two.

Issue Statement: If we double our population and don't change our growth patterns, we will lose the character and quality of life of our valley.

Measurements that Matter

The project stakeholder committee developed a list of community attributes or goals related to identified values and issues. Community members were asked: *How important is it to you that Cache Valley works toward the following goals?*

Respondents rated the following goals on a scale ranging from not important to very important. These goals included:

- Keep housing reasonably priced
- Reduce drive times/alleviate traffic congestion
- Provide more opportunities for walk/bike commutes
- Reuse underutilized land and buildings (infill and redevelopment)
- Build neighborhoods with larger yards
- Provide convenient and reliable public transportation
- Retain viable agricultural land
- Provide access to outdoor recreation
- Maintain/expand strong downtowns or centers
- Conserve water
- Preserve wildlife habitat
- Maintain/improve air and water quality
- Preserve scenic beauty
- Have development grow contiguously
- Allow dispersed development

- Create high quality jobs in Cache Valley
- Expand trail network
- Coordination of local governments to address growth issues

The community response told the stakeholder committee what community attributes were important, and helped them understand what to measure as a scenarios planning process unfolded. Subsequent modeling and research measured indicators related to top goals (listed in bold below).

Top Goals	Measurement and Modeling
1. Maintain/improve air and water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicular emissions • Residential energy consumption • Impermeable acres • Storm water flows
2. Conserve water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential water consumption (acre feet, excluding lots over 5 acres)
3. Retain viable agricultural land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of prime agricultural soil developed
4. Preserve scenic beauty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of land impacted by development
5. Keep housing reasonably priced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of road construction (passed on to home buyers—cost per new home) • Cost of road maintenance (passed on directly and indirectly through taxes—local, state, national—cost per new household) • Average housing cost (today’s dollars, based on current prices per housing type)
6. Create high quality jobs in Cache Valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative about relationship between quality community and quality jobs
7. Preserve wildlife habitat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acres of land impacted by development • Acres of key habitat areas impacted
8. Reutilize underutilized land and buildings (infill and redevelopment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of developed acres that is infill and/or redevelopment • Percent of developed acres that is greenfield
9. Provide access to outdoor recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of population within ½ mile of regional trail
10. Reduce drive times/alleviate traffic congestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of vehicle travel (VHT) • Vehicle miles traveled • Public transportation ridership • Bicycle ridership