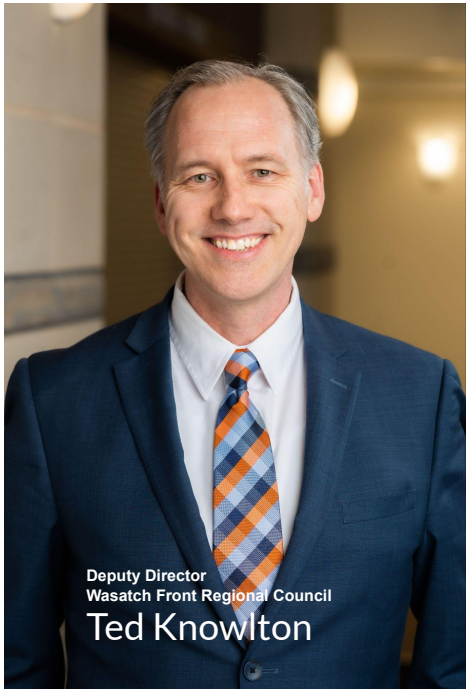
Sustainability Planning

and Building Consensus in a Hyper-Partisan Environment

Team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Agenda

Overview of Sustainability in Planning

Perspectives on Sustainability

Communication Approaches

Engagement Opportunities

Open Discussion

Perceptions Matter

Sustainability has traditionally been seen as a cost, a hardship, and an agenda rather than an opportunity.

Problems to solve

1. Sustainability is seen as a liberal or left-leaning political agenda

2. Sustainability is perceived as having a high upfront cost and being a burden for the community and individuals

3. It is complicated, and folks feel like it is too big to deal with individually, or at a local scale

Let's Reframe the Discussion

It's not about less, it is about more and better

Perspectives on Sustainability

the ability to endure

Meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their needs.

Traditional sustainable planning focus

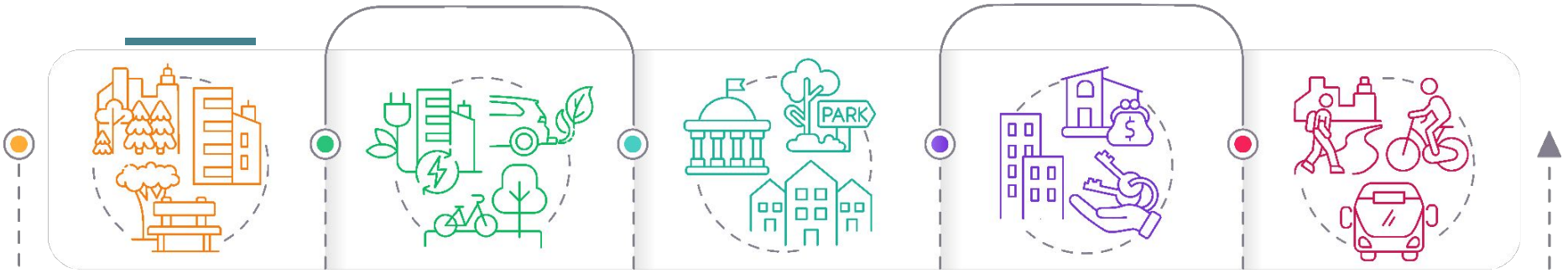
Environmental and Social Impacts Drive Decisions

Future sustainable planning focus

Economic Opportunities Drive Decisions

Environmental Solutions Meet the Need

Social Impacts are a Benefit



Public Infrastructure

Effective community systems and amenities benefit everyone

Integration of Nature

Preservation and restoration of natural ecosystems improve resilience and add character

Varied Land Uses

Convenient access to daily needs builds community and reduces the cost of living

Affordable Housing

Attainable and effective housing improves stability and add value

Transportation choice

Diverse transportation options support community health and prosperity

Public Infrastructure

Maintaining and enhancing infrastructure supports community sustainability by…

- Distributing the cost burden
- Enhancing community resilience
- Supporting accessibility
- Improving safety and security
- Enhancing health and wellbeing

Integration of Nature

Preserving and re-introducing natural landscapes in the built environment…

- Reduces the cost of infrastructure
- Supports ecosystem preservation
- Provides valued public greenspace
- Improves air quality and water quality
- Supports local food production

Varied Land Uses

Providing a diversity of land uses and services near homes improves the quality of life for residents by….

- Reducing cost of living and improve quality of life by reducing driving
- Improving access to daily services and amenities
- Increasing social interactions of residents
- Improving health outcomes by increasing exercise and time outdoors

Affordable and Diverse Housing

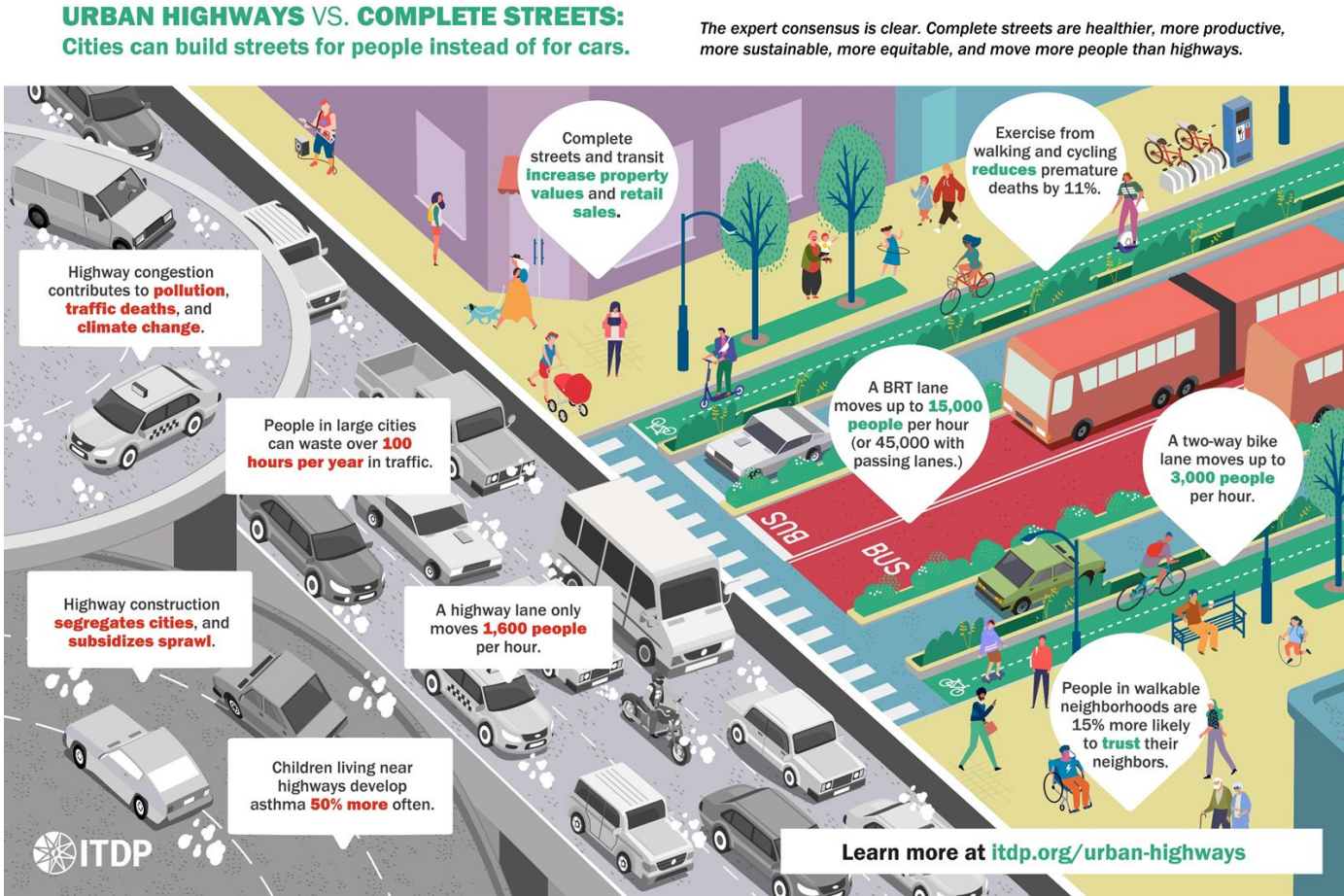
Access to housing within a family's budget increases livability of a community by….

- Ensuring residents can remain in a community through all life stages
- Allowing families to live in the same community or neighborhood
- Utilizing public infrastructure and services consistently over time
- Increasing home and community value through permanence

Increasing Transportation Choice

Providing complete streets and supporting active and alternative transportation improves quality of life by…

- Reducing car use and fuel costs
- Improving physical and mental health
- Supporting resilience to economic shifts



Communication Approaches

Look for ideas to:

1. Tailor communications to your key audience
2. Communicate to common ground
3. Engage the community in advancing sustainability

Who is your target audience?

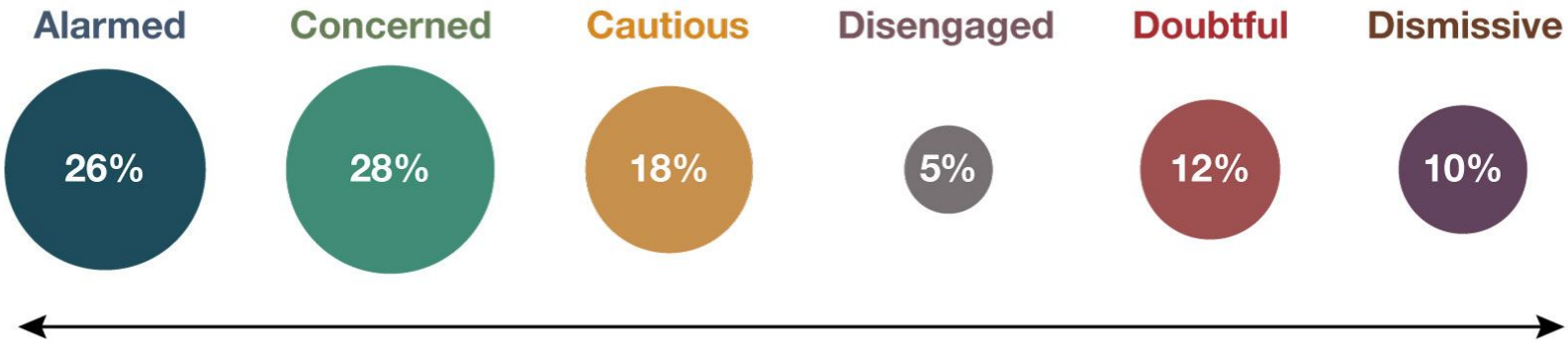
pick one

1) Those that are already supportive

2) Those that are undecided

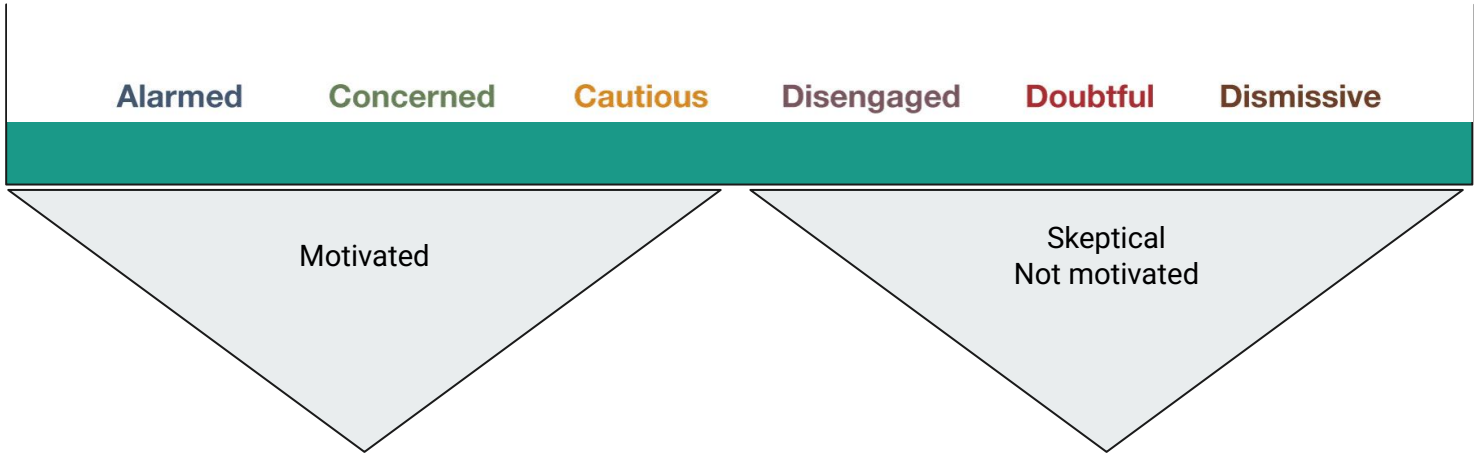
3) Those that are skeptical

Global Warming's "Six Americas"



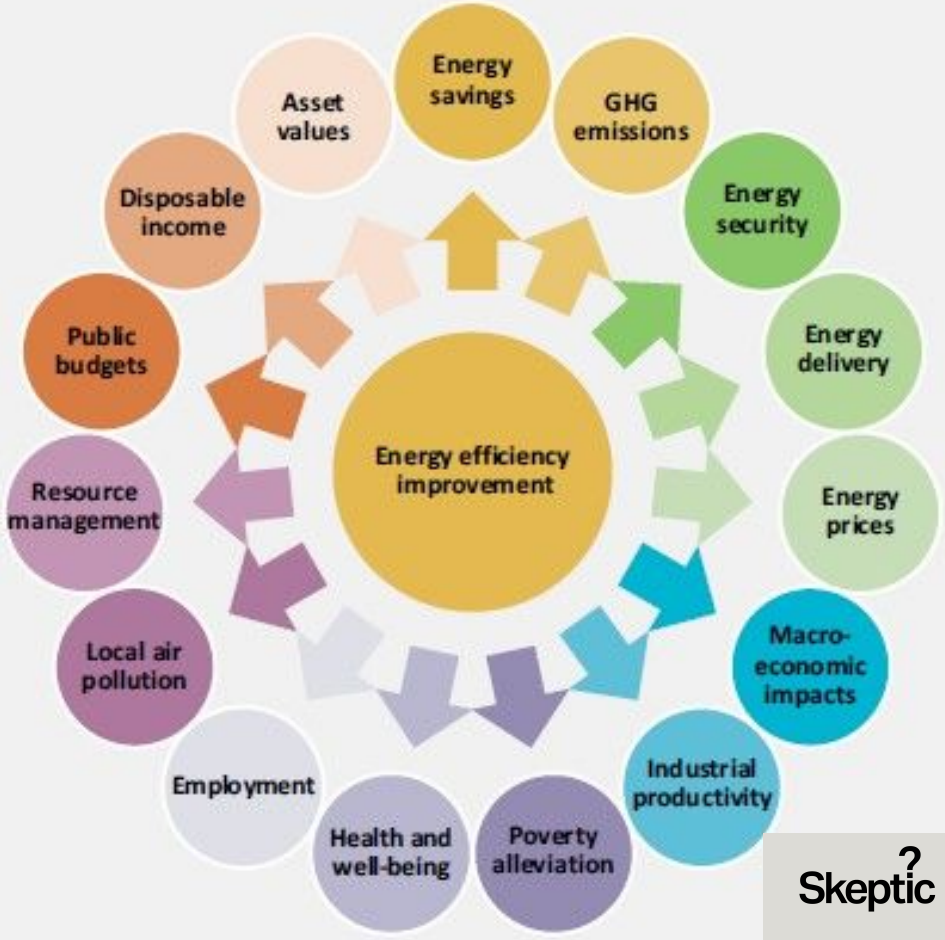
Global Warming's Six Americas, December 11–22, 2024
Base: 1,013 U.S. adults
Source: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication;
George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication

Global Warming's "Six Americas"



Speak to broadly enjoyed benefits of potential strategies

The multiple benefits of energy efficiency improvements



Skeptic ?

Convey benefits for an individual

“public health”
= more opportunities for us to stay fit

“lower vehicle miles of travel”
= more time at home or being productive

“better connected streets”
= easier for you to walk or bike to get there
= Better routes for you and your kids

Tailor communications to your audience

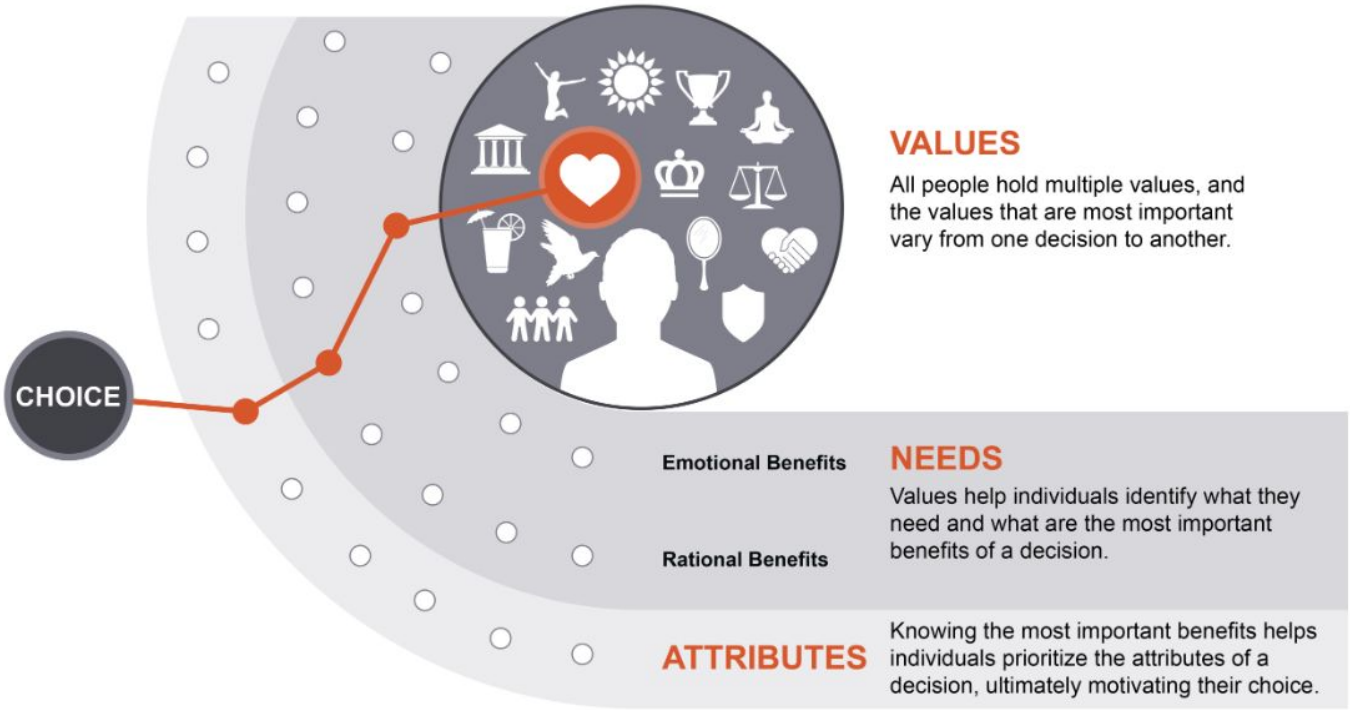
Hyper-partisan?

Find Common Ground and Underlying Values

Values are the foundation of personal decision making

Values Laddering identifies how individuals decide whether attributes of an urban environment satisfy their fundamental human needs

Three basic levels to the “Values Ladder”

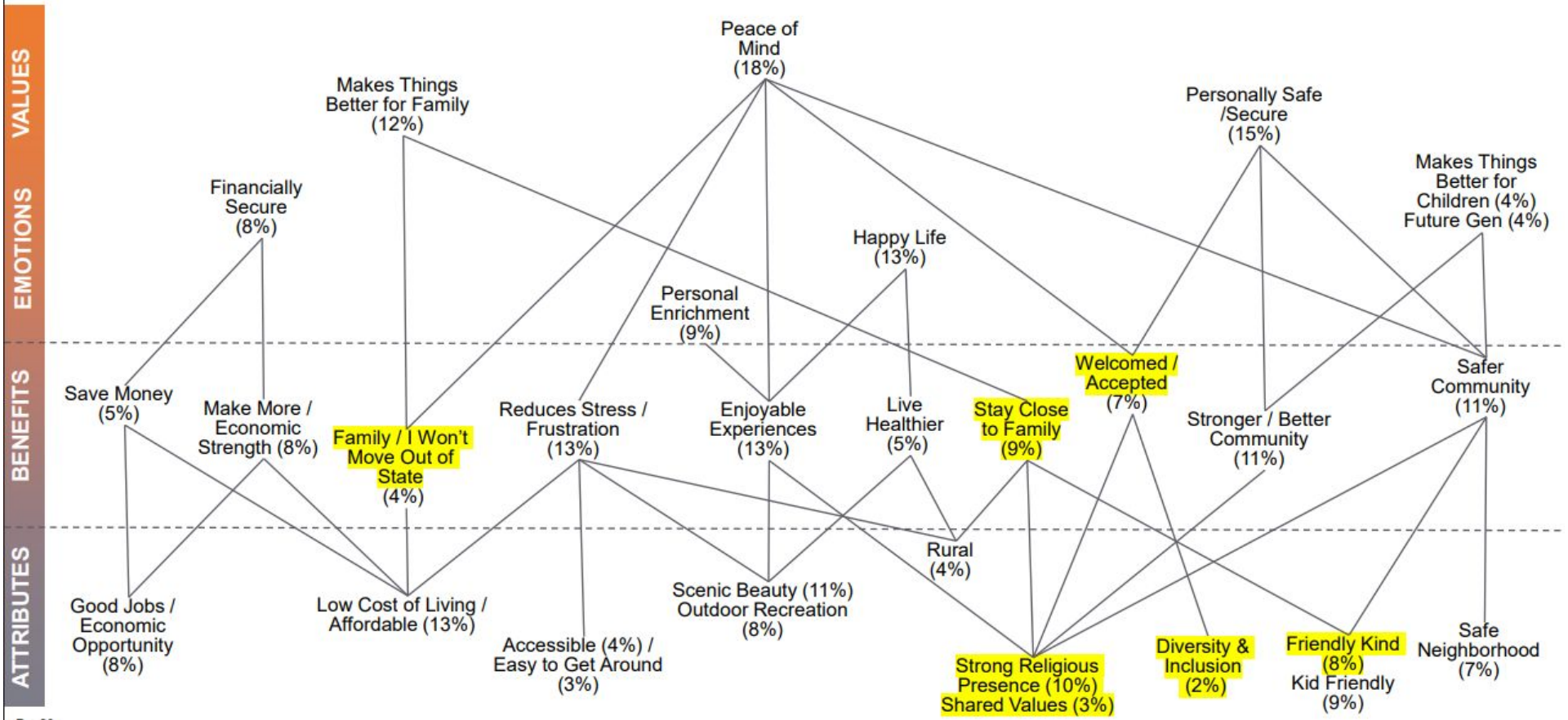


A Values laddering Process

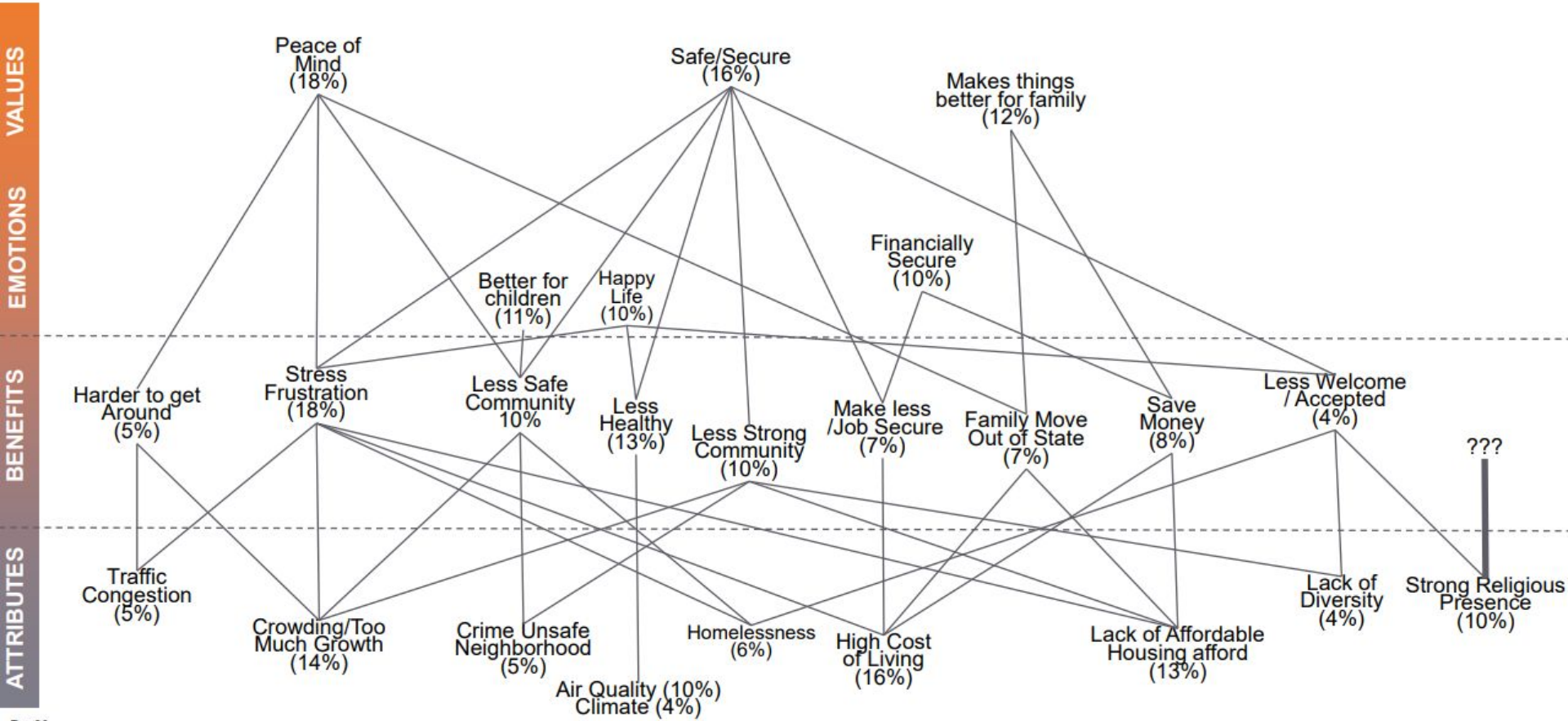
LOGIC	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
VALUE	Why is it important for you to be more at ease?	"Security and love as a parent" (Family Love)
PERSONAL CONSEQUENCE	What is the benefit to you when you can raise your son in a safe environment?	"Less worry - more at ease" (Less Worry)
FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCE	Why is that important to you?	"Raise son in a safe environment" (Feel Safe)
	Why are the "friendlier people" important to you?	"Better place to raise family" (Good place for family children)
ATTRIBUTE	Why did you rate the quality of life in Utah so high?	"People here just seem to be friendlier" (The People)

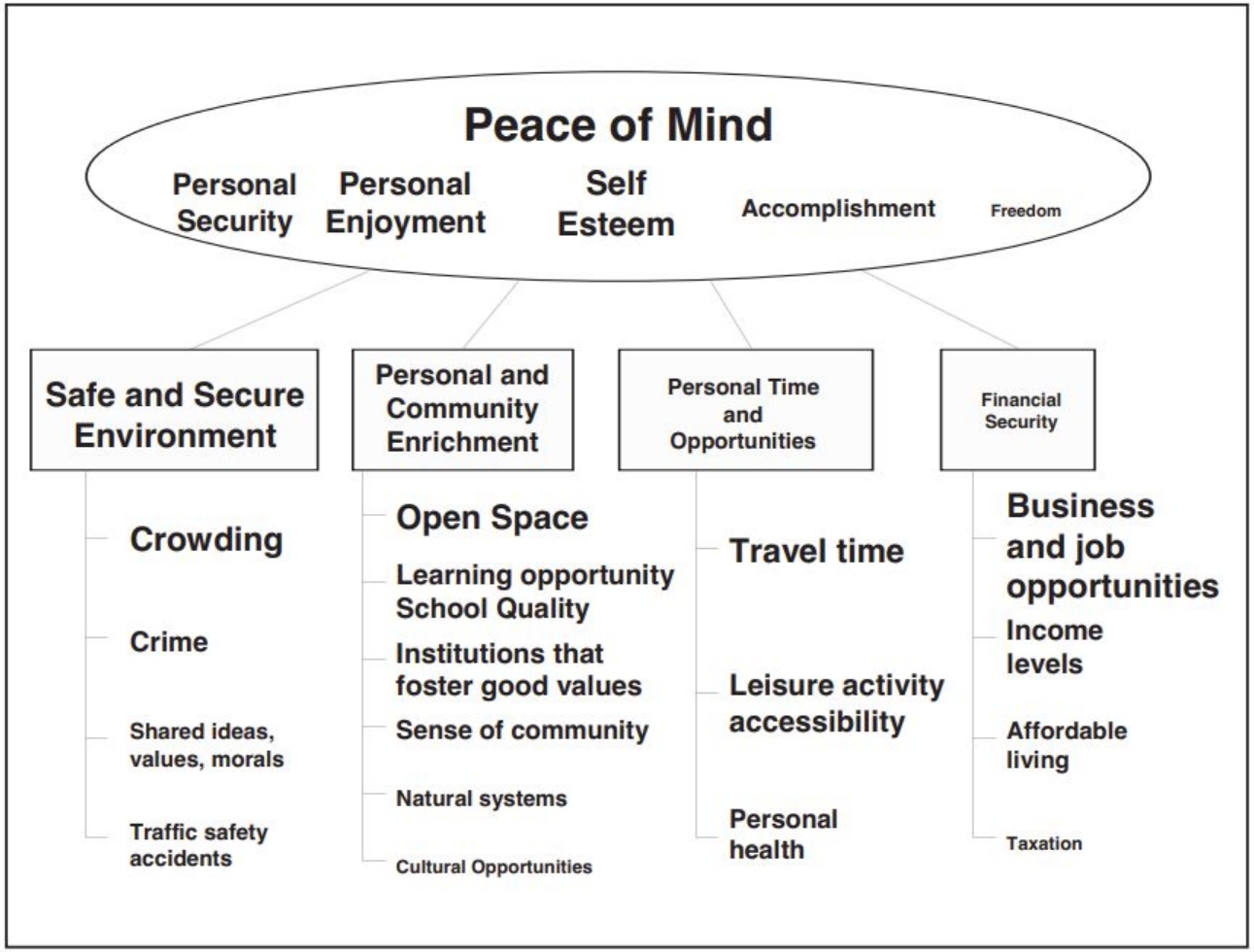
Positive Values Map

NOTE: "values and morals of the people that live here" was dropped this year and a few new items added



Negative Values Map

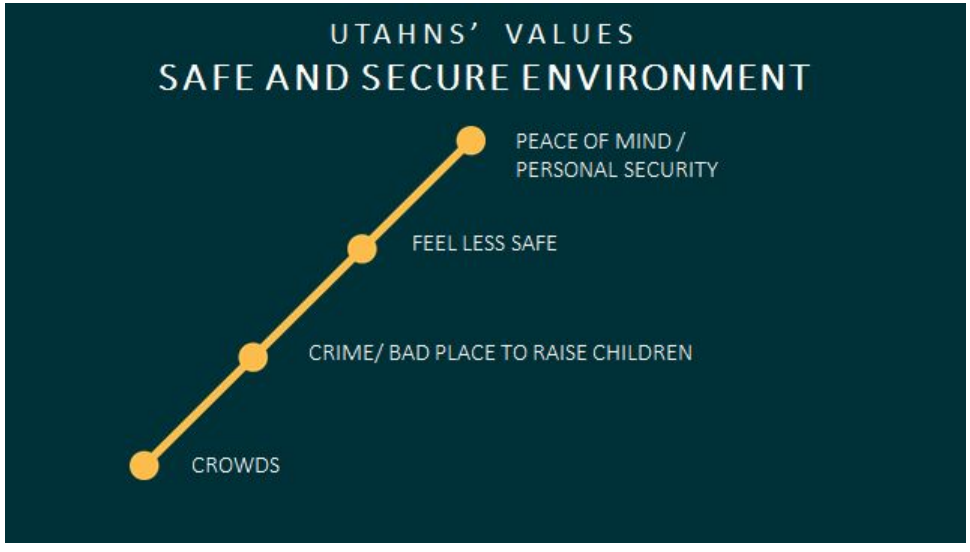


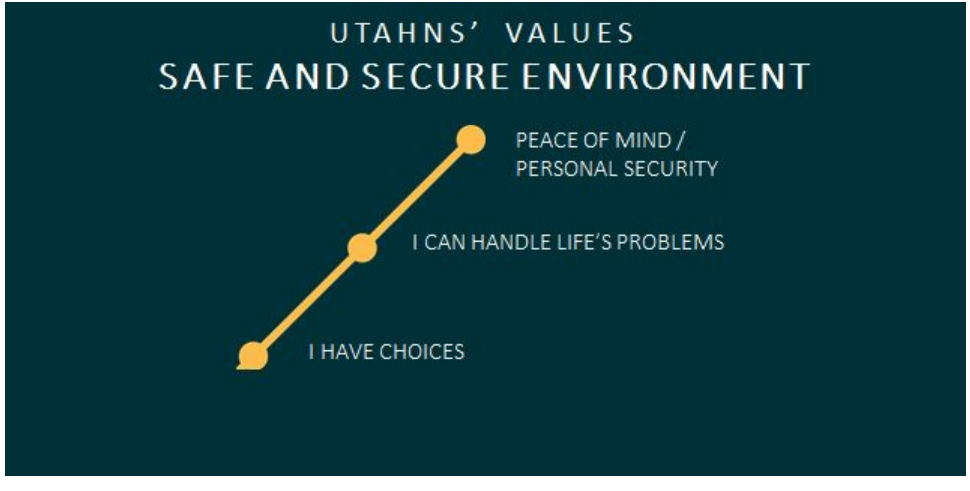

Peace of Mind
Personal Security
Personal Enjoyment
Self Esteem
Accomplishment
Freedom
Safe and Secure Environment
Personal and Community Enrichment
Personal Time and Opportunities
Financial Security
Crowding
Crime
Shared ideas, values, morals
Traffic safety accidents
Open Space
Learning opportunity School Quality
Institutions that foster good values
Sense of community
Natural systems
Cultural Opportunities
Travel time
Leisure activity accessibility
Personal health
Business and job opportunities
Income levels
Affordable living
Taxation

Housing

“DENSE” =
“Stupid” or “Crowded”

“CHOICE” =
I have control,
My children have more control

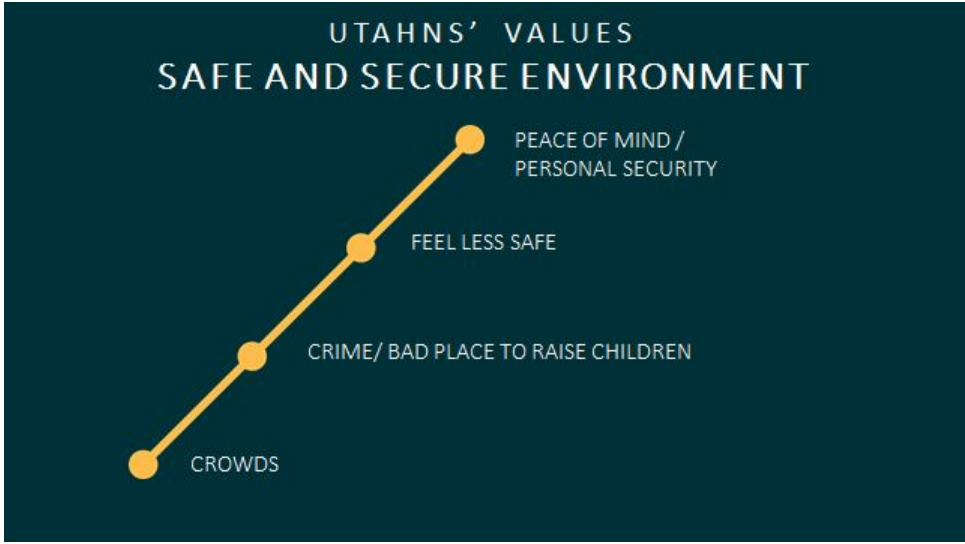




Transit

“MASS” Transit = crowded

“PUBLIC” = us all



"Some people think it's controversial to take away a lane from cars and to put in a bike lane. I think it's controversial to only have one way of getting around," said Joe Cutrufo, a cycling advocate in Houston. "We have choices in all other parts of our lives, but when it comes to transportation, we only have one option."

Cutrufo said he knows where he stands.

"If you want to change the transportation culture in a place, you have to change the infrastructure," he said. "The infrastructure tells people how to behave."

Key Value Ladder Take-aways

Speak to:

a. Choices (freedom)

b. Families

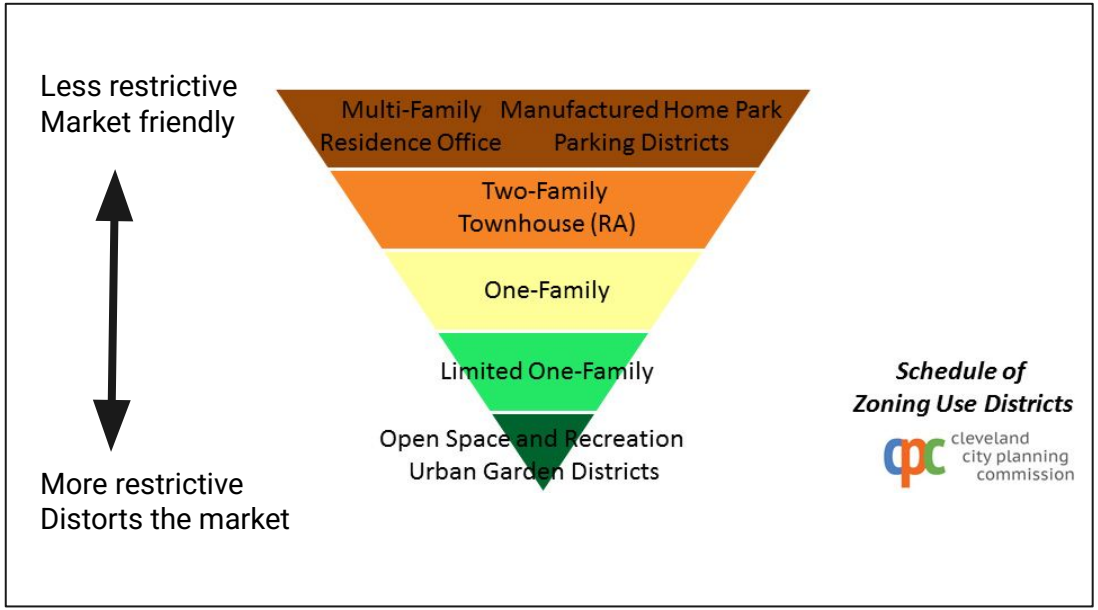
c. Avoid “crowding”

d. Personal opportunity

e. Affordability

Planning and Freedom

Speak to “more freedom” rather than “more regulation, more control”

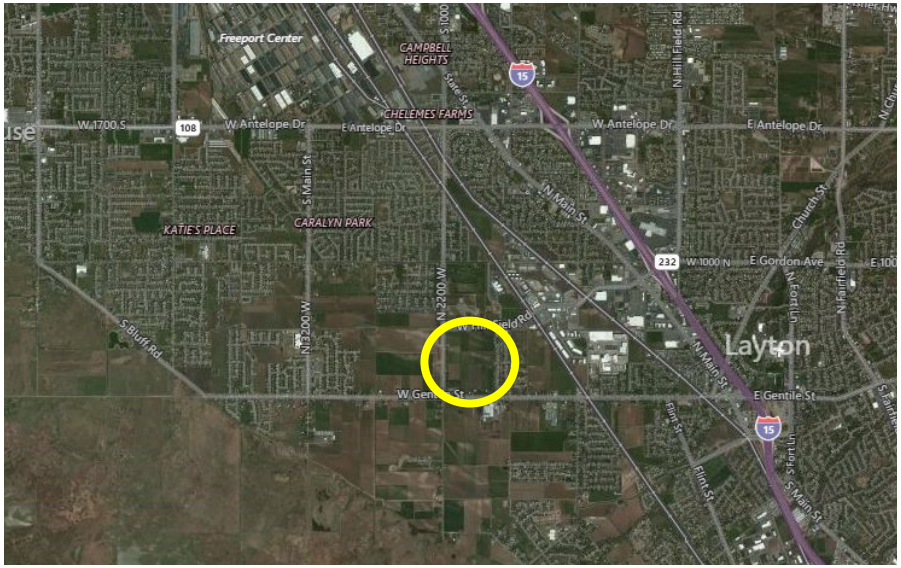


Engagement Opportunties

The Sustainability Blind Spot of Local Land Use Decisions

West Layton Village Proposal

"A vibrant, walkable community that offers a healthy mix of homes, shops, businesses, trails and parks"



SECTIONS

Deseret News Utah

Group of Layton residents challenge plans for West Layton Village

By Jared Page
Published: May 21, 2012 12:00 a.m.

2 Comments

1 of 2

AERIAL VIE
Looking southeast from West H

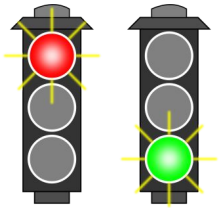
WEST LAYTON

"an urban nightmare of crime, pollution, traffic jams, overburdened schools, the loss of family farms and the end of the area's rural feel"

Referendum Results

- For 48%
- Against: 52%

West Layton Village Impacts



Discussion that informed voting

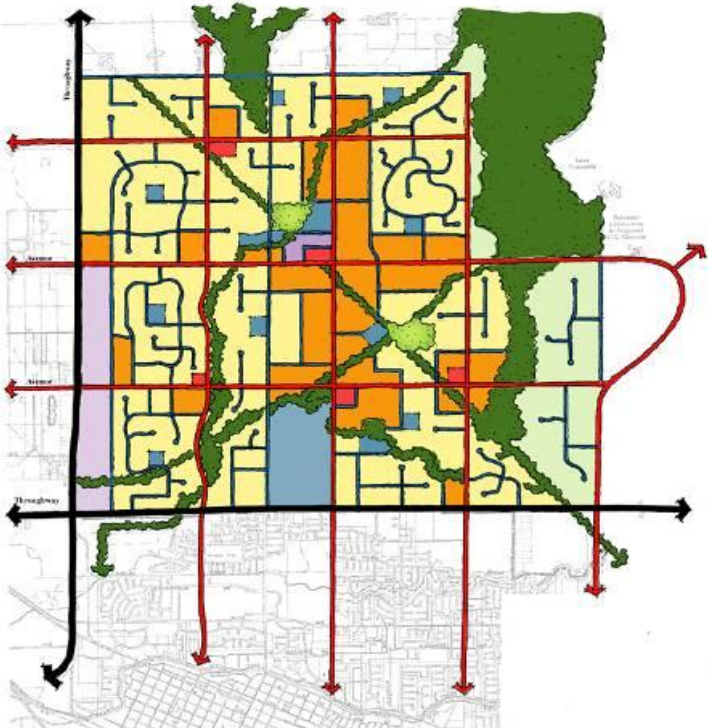
LOCAL	REGIONAL
Change from the norm	Housing affordability
Local traffic	Reduced driving distances
School impacts	Cleaner air
People not like us?	Transit supportiveness
Places to shop	Less impact on farmland elsewhere
Lifecycle housing	Reduced Greenhouse Gases

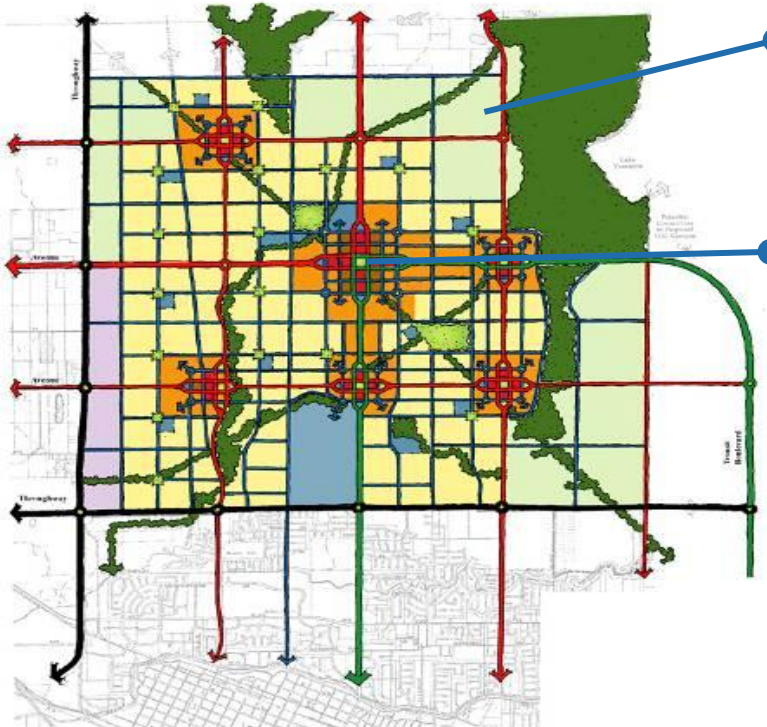
Sustainability is long term thinking:
Relate potential short term decisions to long term outcomes

- Lean into your general plan!
- Discuss policy approaches on a citywide basis
- Stretch out policy ideas temporally

Discussing where / how of growth citywide

Same number of homes
Same number of jobs
Same number of single family homes

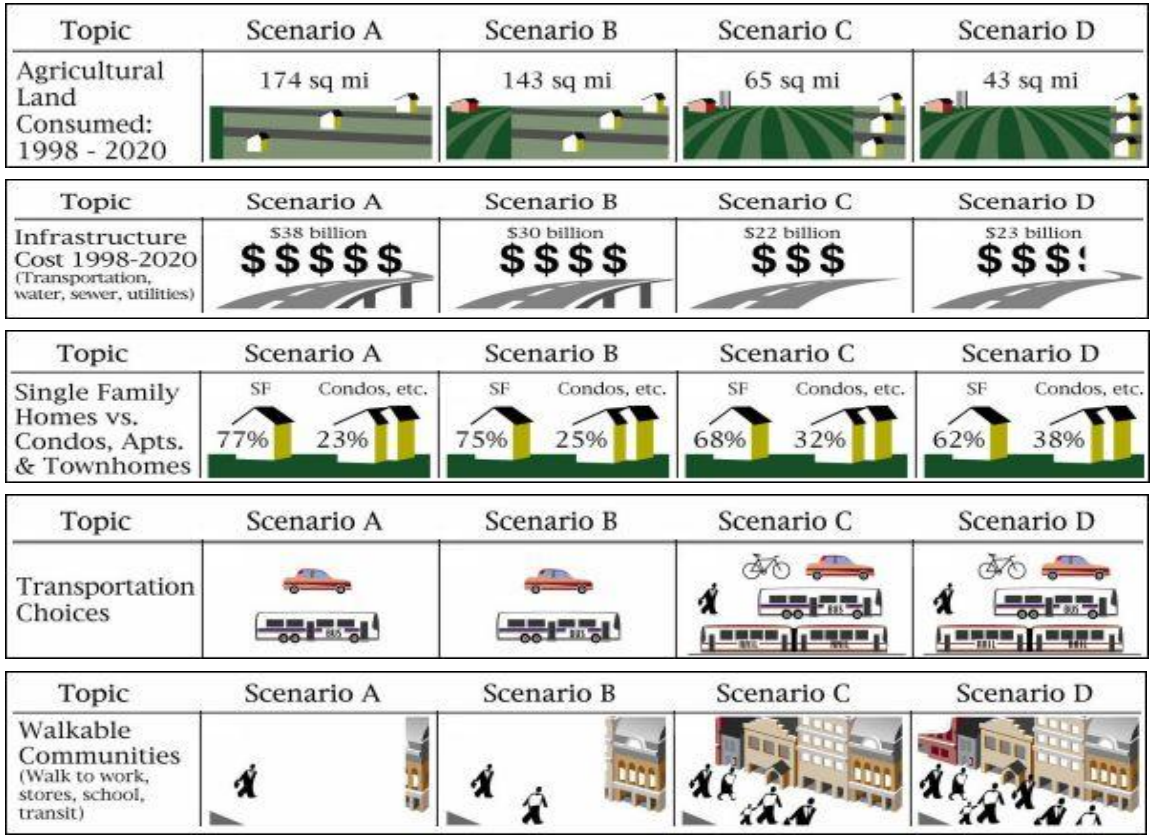




More land kept rural

The community has an identifiable heart

“What difference would each scenario make?”

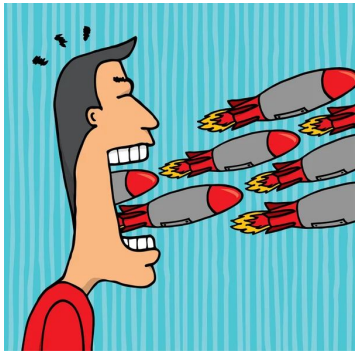


Three big takeaways

1. Speak to your audience. Focus on broadly enjoyed benefits of potential changes, not necessarily “sustainability”
2. Hyper-partisan? Communicate to the common ground of underlying values
3. Neutralize parochialism by exploring the long-term citywide outcomes of potential decisions

Grab Bag

- Avoid “you are wrong and here is why”, including moralizing/ guilting
- The problem with strident and alarming messages
- How to talk to the science
- The value of getting your “foot in the door”: (study, test, start small)



Engage at Every Chance!

Open and accessible planning engages everyone and reduces concerns

Uncertainty breeds mistrust and skewed narratives

Communicate early, often, and consistently

- Website - talk about the value of the city and services you provide!
- Social Media - share everyday wins
- Community Events - show up and share your work and efforts, talk about what is coming up
- Planning Workshops - invite everyone, make them accessible

By the time a strategy or plan is adopted, it should be old news

Questions?

Thank you.