

DESIGNWORKSHOP

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MEMORANDUM

To: Spanish Fork
From: Design Workshop
Project Name: Spanish Fork General Plan and Station Area Plan
Project #: 7361
Subject: Focus Group Meetings Summary
Meeting Date: January 22-23, 2024
Location: Spanish Fork
Copy To: File

Meeting Telephone Conference Call

The City of Spanish Fork and the Design Workshop team conducted four focus group meetings on January 22nd and 23rd to discuss the City's land use and future Front Runner station area needs. The four groups consisted of (1) business and landowners, (2) residents, (3) transportation specialists, and (4) developers. The objectives of these meetings were to initiate the project with insight into diverse interests, gain a better understanding of a variety of concerns, opportunities, and values related to growth and land uses, and lastly, gather input about what is working and where to make improvements for the next generation in Spanish Fork. Approximately XX participants attended the 1-hour sessions which also included participation from City of Spanish Fork staff.



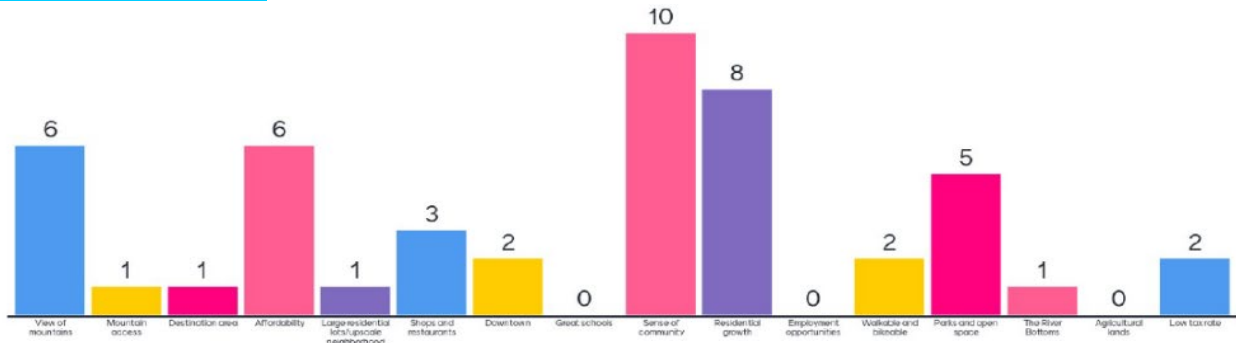
The planning team gave a brief presentation describing the purpose of the project, goals, and overall timeline. This was followed by a series of questions via Mentimeter (both multiple-choice and open-ended) before the participants gathered in smaller groups around a map where opportunities and areas of concern were discussed and indicated with colored dots and post it notes.

The Mentimeter questions gathered feedback on the following topics:

1. **Opportunities for Spanish Fork**
2. **Perceived threats for Spanish Fork**
3. **How will the station area plan contribute to Spanish Fork?**

The key overall takeaways from each focus group session are summarized below.

OVERALL TAKEAWAYS



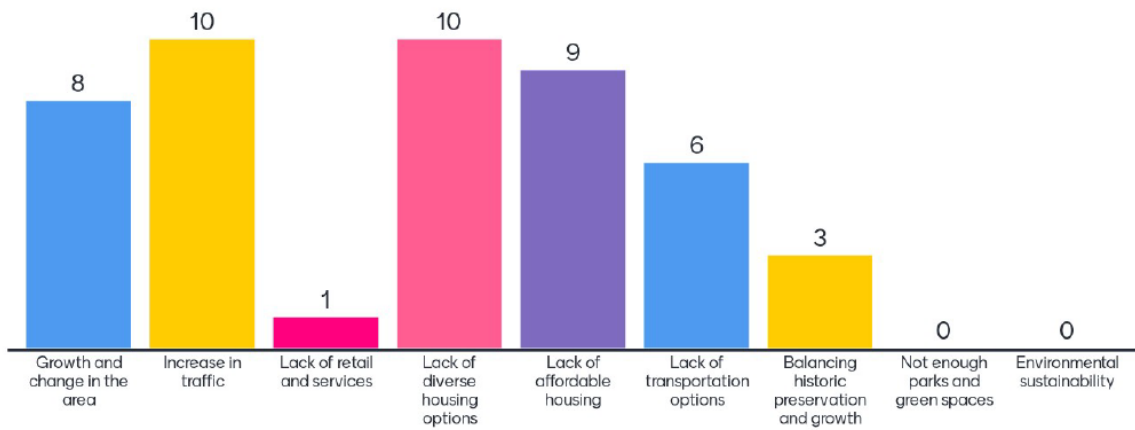
Value of Community

The participants were asked what characteristics they valued most about Spanish Fork today. All sessions put sense of community at the highest importance, followed by residential growth. Many participants spoke highly about Spanish Fork maintaining its community closeness while accommodating growth. Others also expressed praise towards the commercial centers, bringing in new residents and visitors to the area.



Opportunities for Growth

Overall, participants expressed excitement towards future growth in the area. With commercial centers like Canyon Creek, Spanish Fork has become a retail destination for the surrounding municipalities. Participants would like to see the destination aspect continue, especially with the station area plan. Participants also would like to see higher density mixed use development.



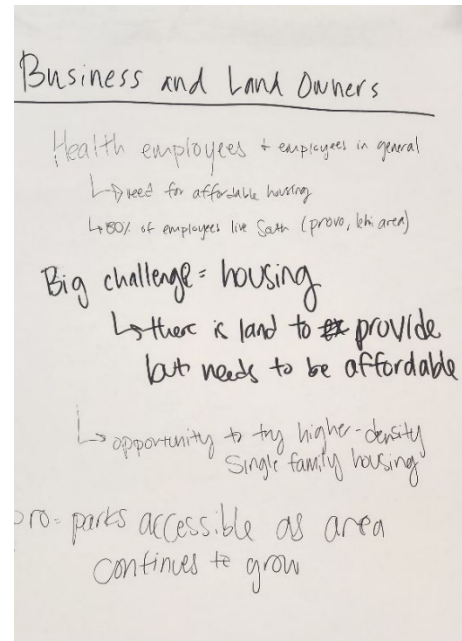
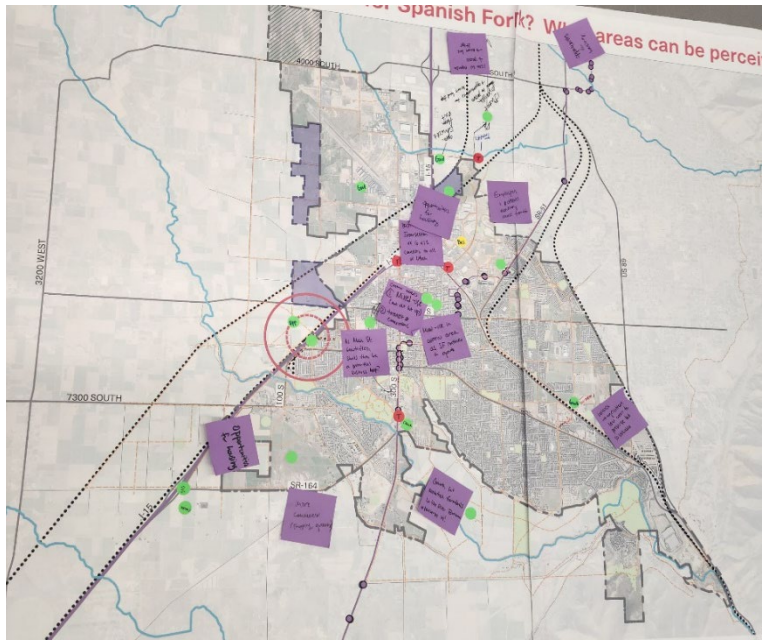
Concerns and Challenges

With growth, participants expressed concern that traffic increases may cause challenges. While the station area plan may bring light rail to Spanish Fork, there is still a lack of multi-modal transportation options in general. As development continues, participants expressed the need for diverse housing options and affordable housing.

[TABLE ACTIVITY SUMMARY](#) [Business Owners and Landowners](#)



Participants in this group consisted of various business owners and landowners. Business owners ranged from developers, tradesmen, and hospital board members.



Opportunities for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

As participants gathered around the map of Spanish Fork, they all agreed that within the city limits there are multiple opportunities for residential growth. Participants placed sticky notes in central and border areas of Spanish Fork to depict space for housing development. They discussed how these areas can also be developed at a higher density to accommodate affordable housing. In the central areas of Spanish Fork, there are opportunities to incorporate mixed-use commercial with residential development. Participants also discussed that as the upcoming project to beautify Main Street is implemented, an opportunity to create a business loop that goes throughout the downtown area may occur.

Perceived Threats for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

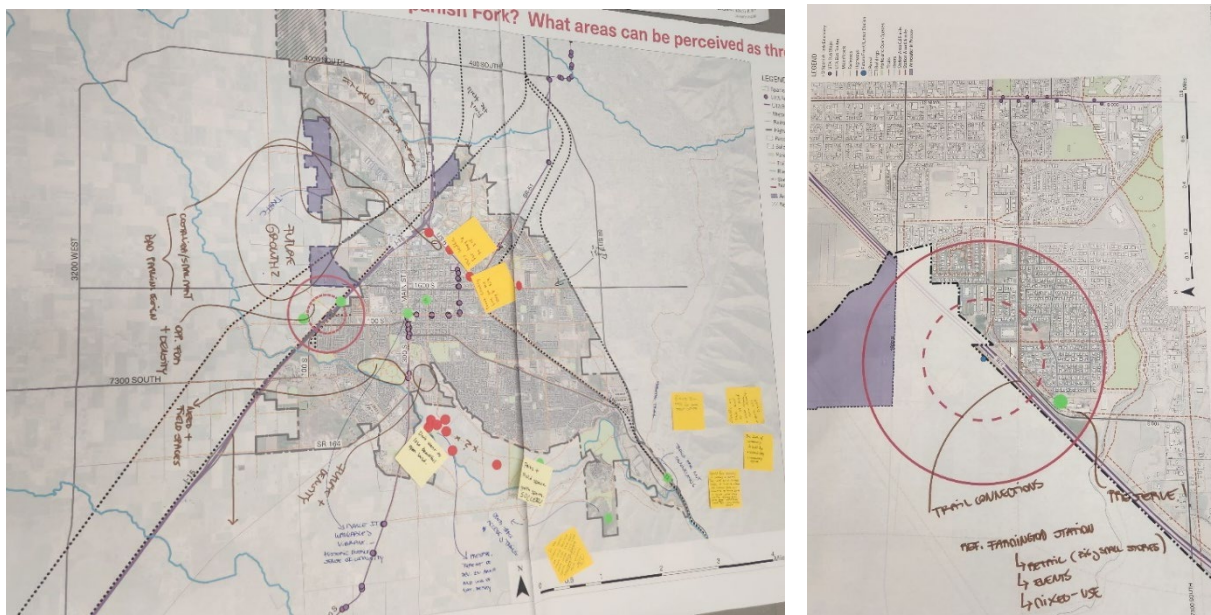
With the increased growth, affordable housing should be a top priority. One of the business owners who works with the hospital expressed concern there is a high need for affordable housing around the hospital to accommodate workers and patients. There is also a need to increase bus transit around the city. The business owners shared how many workers or patients have to walk at least 10 minutes to get to the closest bus stop. More stops and accessibility are needed for public transportation.

Landowners have had the challenge of wanting to preserve their open space with the increasing development pressures of their land and developers offering high financial incentives. It has been a challenge to find a healthy balance between continuing to preserve open space, like the River Bottoms, while also capitalizing on growth.

Resident Panel



Participants in this group consisted of highly involved residents in the Spanish Fork community.



Opportunities for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

Residents focused opportunities on maintaining a sense of community. Maintaining the downtown area and its unique characteristics will help bring identity and pride in the historic Spanish Fork area. The same was discussed for the agricultural character of the area, rodeo grounds and some iconic buildings like Sugar Beet. There are also opportunities for the downtown and Main Street areas to increase retail and create more pedestrian friendly areas. As development continues, there should also be opportunities to add parks, trails, and open space in Spanish Fork.

Perceived Threats for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

Similar to the Business Owners and Landowners focus groups, residents also prioritized affordable housing. Residents discussed how increased development would create traffic challenges. Although they like single family development, they suggested that a more compact and higher density development could help with alleviating traffic issues in the long term.

Residents want to maintain Spanish Fork's open spaces, especially in the River Bottoms area. While growth will continue, it is important that these spaces are not developed. In addition, there is a need for more trail connectivity throughout Spanish Fork and into the new upcoming developments around the future FrontRunner station.

[Transportation](#)



Participants from the transportation group included transportation planners, engineers, and members from UTA.



Opportunities for Spanish Fork and the future FrontRunner Station Area

Participants in this group were very excited about the station area plan. They viewed it as an opportunity for more mass transit to come to the area, along with higher volumes of visitors and incoming residents. The station area is an opportunity site for affordable housing and high density, especially considering HRTZ funding.

As development increases in Spanish Fork, there are also opportunities to increase transportation connections. Participants discussed connecting Springville's Main Street to Spanish Fork's via bus routes. With the increase development, there should be opportunities for higher accessibility to paratransit and flex routes. In addition, the US-6 expressway plans could potentially change the land use running along it, allowing for more development opportunities. There are opportunities for more active transportation by increasing the number of trails and bike lanes.

Perceived Threats for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

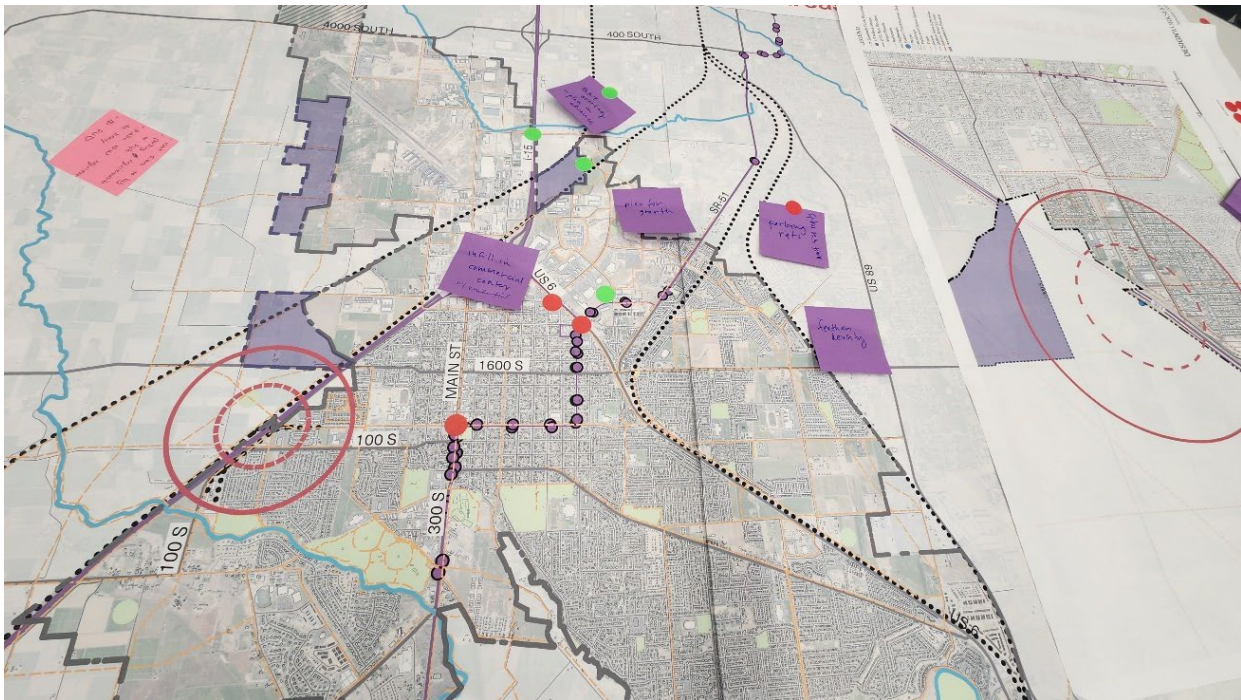
In regard to the station area plan, funding is needed. In order to receive funding, there needs to be proof of increased density. Proof would include ridership increases, so once the station area is planned, there needs to be a push for Spanish Fork to utilize the public transit options. Based on the station area location being close to the freeway, there is also a safety issue for bicyclists and pedestrians. One participant from UTA brought up that Lehi's station area plan ran into the same issue, so looking at that example is recommended. With increased density, there is the challenge of development pricing out the existing residents as new residents come in. Affordable housing and development should be a priority to maintain the balance of new residents and existing ones without compromising living costs. Traffic increases will also occur, causing problems in circulation around Spanish Fork.

One participant shared that Salem, which is just south of Spanish Fork, has plans to double in population in the next 15 years. Spanish Fork should keep this in mind for land use, traffic, and development planning.

Developers

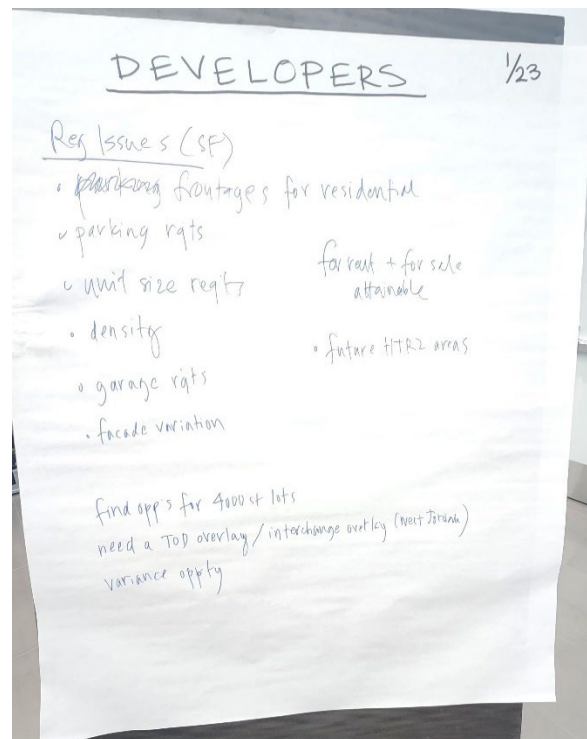
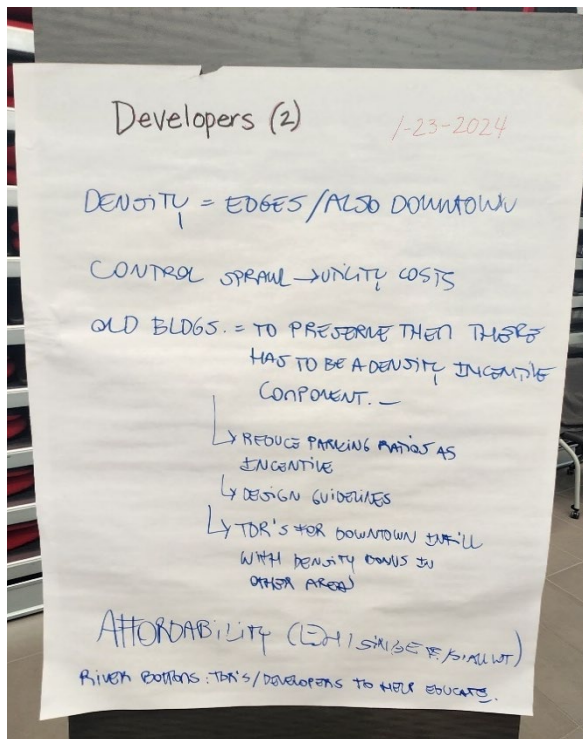


Developers had the largest number of participants. To ensure everyone's voice was heard, the developers were split into two smaller groups.



Opportunities for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

To address the need for affordable housing, participants think there are opportunities for diverse housing in Spanish Fork. On Main Street, where the space is not as available, they suggested starter homes at higher density and no garages. To utilize and develop existing parking lots in the downtown area, consolidating parking spots into parking garages should be considered. This way, it would free up space in the existing parking lots for future development. Infill development and retrofitting of historic and old buildings is also an opportunity for the downtown area. Beyond downtown, there are many opportunities on the edges of Spanish Fork for development.



Perceived Threats for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

As development increases, there will be the challenge to balance affordability. There will also be the challenge of balancing open space. Participants suggested areas like the River Bottoms and to explore transferable development rights (TDR). This would preserve open space while increasing density in areas like downtown.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following bullet points summarize overall key takeaways from the four Focus Group meetings:

Opportunities for Spanish Fork and the future FrontRunner Station Area

- Celebrating and maintaining the sense of community
- Incorporating more density in key areas to allow for residential growth
- Incorporating affordable housing around the future station
- Infill opportunities in the downtown area with potential density and parking incentives
- Maintaining the rodeo and fair grounds and agricultural character of Spanish Fork
- Increasing transit connections and trail connections
- Preserving open spaces and the River Bottoms area

Perceived Threats for Spanish Fork and the Station Area Plan

- Balancing new development pressures with open space preservation
- Incorporating more density while maintaining the character of the city
- Future growth in Salem and potential traffic impacts in Spanish Fork
- Increased development will create traffic challenges