

Best Practices Workshop

Riverfront Communities Stakeholder Workshop

Report & Analysis



JORDAN RIVER
OUR RIVER - OUR FUTURE

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW



The notification strategy was effective, resulting in attendance of a representative from nearly every city and county along the river corridor.



The Jordan River Commission (JRC), a partnership of local government officials and community leaders, has spent the past year working with stakeholders to develop draft best practices to care for the river corridor to increase its value — environmentally, economically, and culturally — for all of us. To obtain input on the draft best practices, the JRC held a stakeholder workshop on March 28, 2013, at the Utah Cultural Celebration Center in West Valley City.

This was the second workshop the JRC held for this project. The first workshop was held on August 7, 2012. The purpose of the first workshop was to have participants share perspectives and begin the development of the best practices. The project team took what they learned at this first workshop, continued obtaining input from stakeholders, and developed the draft best practices.

For the second workshop an invitation list was developed that included local government officials, planners, engineers, land managers, private landowners, developers, architects, builders, federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, utility and canal companies, storm/waste water managers, and the general public. A save-the-date email was sent out at the end of February and an invitation was emailed mid-March. In addition, a news release was drafted and distributed to local print and broadcast media.

The notification strategy was very effective. Approximately 75 people attended, consisting of mayors, city council representatives, planners, public works representatives, and federal and state agencies. Also in attendance were various club representatives, recreational users, and river advocates. The workshop had good representation from the river communities, including Bluffdale, Cottonwood Heights, Draper, Lehi, Midvale, Murray, North Salt Lake, Saratoga Springs, South Jordan, Salt Lake City, Sandy, South Salt Lake, Taylorsville, West Jordan, West Valley City, Davis County, and Salt Lake County. Participants were also very engaged with the workshop’s process and stayed for the entire workshop.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

The project team designed the workshop to accomplish four goals: (1) ensure stakeholders understood and felt part of the process, (2) listen to and document input from stakeholders, (3) secure support for the process and final best practices, and (4) brainstorm ways to help stakeholders implement best practices.



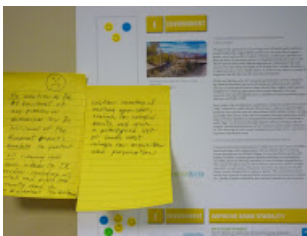
Upon arrival, attendees were greeted, asked to sign in, given a name tag, offered breakfast, and given the opportunity to view the draft best practices information boards set up around the room. The room was set up with four u-shaped tables, each set up with seating for 20 people; and each had signs indicating what group would be seated at each table (i.e., northern reach, middle reach, lower reach, and regional tables). Attendees were pre-assigned to sit at a specific table so that there would be a good cross section of attendees at each table, allowing for a discussion between participants.



The workshop began with a welcome from Corey Rushton, JRC Board Chair, and from Laura Hanson, the Executive Director of the JRC. Nancy Monteith, EPG Project Manager, then provided an overview of the project’s process and draft best practices. Attendees were then asked to provide input on the draft best practices by placing smiley faces next to the draft best practice(s) they liked best. Attendees were also asked to submit any comments or concerns they had regarding specific BPs on Post-it notes. (Stickers and Post-it notes were provided to attendees at their tables.) Attendees were given 10 minutes to complete this exercise, following which they were asked to return to their tables to fill out a ballot (shown at the left and included in the appendix). The ballot was used as a tool to start a facilitated conversation regarding best practices and their implementation. At each table there was a facilitator to lead the discussion and a scribe to take notes. This group discussion lasted approximately 1.25 hours.



Following the group discussion exercise, Matt Goebel and Paul Anthony of Clarion Associates reported on the top three discussion items from each of the tables and discussed planning tools and mechanisms for effective implementation. Laura Hanson then thanked everyone for attending, reminded people about the importance of the process and highlighted what had been accomplished since the first workshop. At the conclusion of the workshop, ballots were collected and the informational boards with smiley faces and Post-it notes were tallied and reviewed.



KEY FINDINGS

Attendees had the shared goal to make the river corridor better and found value in the conversation that took place and the project.

Attendees at each of the tables responded to the draft BPs, communicated information, shared successes and failures, and worked well together. It was clear that everyone had a shared goal to make the river corridor better and found value in the conversation that took place across disciplines and communities. They thought the exercise and BPs were useful and can lead to better uniformity and connectivity throughout the corridor. The workshop showed that the JRC can serve an important role by facilitating these types of communication activities between communities and stakeholders. It also became evident that all BPs should emphasize the importance of public buy-in.





Consistently the managing invasive species BP was identified as the most important, easiest to implement and would have the largest return on investment for the river as a whole and for individual communities.



Attendees stated that it is important to articulate a more symbiotic relationship between recreation and the river environment.

Attendees pointed out that recreation brings people to the river corridor, increases public awareness, and leads to funding for the management, maintenance, and enhancement of the river corridor. Attendees stated that there is a need to provide both physical and visual access to the river corridor to bring people to it. There is also a need to balance recreation and protection of the natural environment of the river corridor. There needs to be a balance of active (high volume/high intensity use) and passive (low volume/low intensity use) recreation, as well as recreation for the river itself and the surrounding buffer areas. Crime prevention and safety needs to be part of the river recreation discussion.

The most provocative BP was “clustered development.”

The “clustered development” BP elicited numerous comments for and against it. Many stated that it is important to cluster development to protect the rural characters. Others stated that clustering is synonymous with density and see it as detrimental to rural character. This suggests that the BP needs to better define what clustering is and what it can accomplish for communities.

Attendees would like to see a more thorough discussion of agricultural land use in the document.

The discussion about agricultural land uses in the river corridor should address its importance, as well as the particular challenges in protecting it.

Attendees were asked the following questions and the BPs that received the most votes are listed below.

Which BP is the most important to implement for the river as a whole:

- Manage invasive species.
- Enhance river buffer.
- Improve bank stability.
- Manage stormwater with alternative systems and design.
- Preserve habitat and hydrological regime.
- Improve and restore native plant diversity.

Which BP is the most important to implement for individual communities:

- Manage invasive species.
- Enhance river buffer.
- Improve bank stability.
- Integrate active recreation.
- Provide access where appropriate.
- Provide east-west trail connections.

Which BP would be the easiest to implement for the river as a whole:

- Provide staff to maintain stormwater best practices.
- Manage invasive species.
- Encourage green site design and management.



Which BP would be easiest to implement for individual communities:

- Provide staff to maintain stormwater best practices.
- Manage invasive species.
- Encourage green site design and management.
- Provide river access where appropriate.

Which BP would provide the largest return on investment for the river as a whole:

- Manage invasive species.
- Preserve habitat and hydrologic regime.
- Enhance river buffer.

Which BP would provide the largest return on investment for individual communities:

- Manage invasive species.
- Integrate active recreation.
- Provide river access where appropriate.



SUMMARY

The workshop proved valuable in engaging stakeholders. The workshop served a transparent process that provided opportunities to engage in open and honest discussions with project team members regarding the draft best practices and how to best implement them.