Sierra Club, Transit and Downtown Ogden
By Dan Schroeder

* Why does the Sierra Club care about improving America’s cities?
* How can we design cities for people rather than for cars?
* Does downtown Ogden have too little parking, or too much?
* Why is public transit an essential component of a functioning city?
* What are the strengths and weaknesses of Ogden’s mass transit system, and how can it be improved?
* Is the proposed Ogden streetcar line feasible and desirable?

These questions are all answered in our new “Transit and Downtown Ogden” web article, http://utah.sierraclub.org/ogden/transit. If you care about downtown Ogden, please take the time to read this article and inform yourself about good urban design and the role of mass transit. The article includes a dozen specific and achievable recommendations that you can make to city officials and the Utah Transit Authority, to help revitalize Ogden’s urban center and the transit corridors that connect to it.

Ogden’s old and new post offices exemplify the difference between pedestrian-friendly urban design and auto-friendly suburban design.

Don’t Miss Our Fall Social on September 21!
See Page 4 for details
Get Involved in Local Elections!
By Dan Schroeder

Municipal elections, for mayors and city council members, are among the best ways for ordinary citizens to make a difference. This year’s election will be held on Tuesday, November 5. Don’t forget to vote!

But voting isn’t the only way you can participate and be heard. Local officials are usually easy to reach by mail, email, and telephone–especially during campaign season! Ask them questions and let them know where you stand on the issues you care about. Here are some of the questions that the Sierra Club often asks of candidates for municipal office:

* Will you support more progressive water and sewer rates, to encourage conservation and discourage waste?
* Do you support curbside recycling?
* What will you do to make our neighborhoods safer for pedestrians and bicyclists?
* What will you do to make it easier for residents to use public transit?
* Do you support spending more taxpayer dollars on freeways, subsidizing long commutes and job growth outside our community?
* What will you do to support preservation of important open space within and near our community?

This list of questions is only a start, and you can probably think of more that pertain to your own city or town. But no matter where you live, your local elected officials are continually making decisions that affect our environment. So get to know them, and let them know you care!

By Any Other Name It’s Still a Freeway
By Ranee Johnson

For years, the Utah Department of Transportation has worked diligently on a public relations campaign to convince West Davis County residents, along with city and county leaders, that a new four-lane freeway is necessary to improve local transportation, and no other option will work. Their expressed intent is to set aside a corridor of land now so that it can be used for freeway construction at some future time. Despite numerous objections to this plan, they keep on planning and holding hearings, saying the project is one that is widely supported and badly needed.

Though called the Legacy Extension, the plan is for a four lane, high-speed freeway, elevated up to thirty feet high in some places, complete with bright lights, heavy diesel trucks, noisy pavement and billboards. Billed as a West Davis project, it will extend well into Weber County.

The eventual cost of this freeway is 600 million dollars and modeling data from The Wasatch Front Regional Council, which was supplied to UDOT, shows it will be vastly underutilized and will run, at most, 20% to 40% of capacity, during afternoon rush hour in 2040.

The freeway is neither supported nor needed, and it will only add to air quality problems and encourage more urban sprawl. The Sierra Club has partnered with organizations such as Great Salt Lake Audubon, Utah Physicians for Healthy Environment, Utahns for Better Transportation, and Friends of Great Salt Lake, in an attempt to convince UDOT to find a better solution, a formal request has been made to UDOT by Utahns for Better Transportation and the Sierra Club to undertake additional study of an “alternative-build solution” that does not include the proposed freeway and to give those alternatives the rigorous and thorough study that is required by NEPA. The Shared Solution includes walking and biking paths, peak hour dedicated van/bus/HOV lanes and boulevard configurations within communities. You can read the Shared Solution at www.utahnsforbettertransportation.org/.

The good news is that UDOT has extended the comment period on the West Davis Corridor because of a record number of comments received. You can review their plan and comment at www.udotutah.gov/westdavis.

LET THEM KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

You want your elected officials to know where you stand and why they should take your viewpoint. According to information on Sierra Club’s website (http://www.sierraclub.org/takeaction/toolkit/letters.asp), hand-written or typed letters or faxes are the most effective way to communicate your opinions. Here are a few tips from the website:

• One: One letter, one page in length, dealing with one issue.
• Identify the issue clearly, including the number of the specific bill, if there is one.
• Use polite, respectful language, and take a firm position on the issue. You may know more about it than the official, so provide information to support your view.
• Explain why this issue matters to you personally and to your community.
• Identify yourself as a constituent, and include your mailing address on both the letter and the envelope.
• Ask for a reply
• Thank the official if he/she votes the way you wanted.

Letter writing may be the only way an official knows how constituents feel about issues. Silence from us can be dangerously misconstrued.
Hiking Wheatgrass Canyon
By Larry Woolsey
Hiking the Wheat Grass Canyon Trail can be a rewarding experience any time of the year. The trail is used by hikers, horsemen and snowshoers. This trail is rated moderate, with the turn-around point being the four-mile mark. At that point the trail becomes hard to follow with the path being overgrown. The trailhead is located near the Boy Scout camp at the north side of Causey Reservoir, northeast of Huntsville. Cross the wooden bridge over the creek, turn left, and follow the trail to the north east as it goes uphill through a forested area at this point you will see the scout camp on your left. The trail crosses a small creek several times, but can be done without getting your feet wet.

Wheatgrass Canyon is narrow, surrounded on both sides by steep canyon walls. The west facing slopes of mixed conifer offer wildlife cover while the east slopes of oak brush provide good forage for big game. The creek runs year round and the path generally stays near the stream. It is home to deer, elk, mountain lions, and many other kinds of wildlife.

Wheatgrass Canyon is named for the fine tall wild wheatgrass growing in the area. It also holds the remains of an old mill site used in the late 1800’s. If you find the mill site you will also see the remains of an old car.

The fall is an excellent time to do this hike because the colorful autumn leaves are very beautiful.

Upcoming Ogden Group Outings
To see outing descriptions as well as the activities of other groups in the Utah Chapter, go to http://utah.sierraclub.org/content/calendar

Sat. 9/14/13 Sardine Peak Hike. Larry 801-690-4335.
Sun 9/15/13 Little Wildhorse Hike near Goblin Valley
Joanie 801-399-0034
Sun 9/22/13 Ice Box Canyon Hike Dan H. 801-479-1100
Sat 10/5/13 Hidden Valley Hike Jock 801-394-0457
Sun10/20/13 Ben Lomond Peak Joanie 801-399-0034
Sat 10/26/13 Elephant Head at Antelope Island Hike
Larry 801-690-4335
Sat 11/16/13 “Tour De Ogden” Walk Larry 801-690-4335
Sat 11/30/13 Antelope Island Mountain View Trail
Joanie 801-399-0034
Sat 12/7/13 Explore Weber River paved path
Joanie 801-399-0034
Thurs 12/26/13 Ogden Overlook Snowshoe
Larry 801-690-4335
Sat 1/18/14 Mill Creek Canyon Snowshoe
Larry 801-690-4335
Sun 1/26/14 Pioneer Trail Snow Shoe
Joanie 801-399-0034
Sat 2/15/14 Mine Trail in the Uintahs Snowshoe
Larry 801-690-4335

Bear in mind the consequences.
The Yellowstone grizzly bear is an irreplaceable part of America’s natural heritage, a symbol of the independence that defines the American character and an icon of all that is wild and free. The Bush administration set forth a proposal that would remove federal protection for the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Since it was first listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, the grizzly bear has made a strong recover, but there is still more work to be done. Help Sierra Club protect our forest friends; they prefer the woods than being on display.

Get grizzly and JOIN Sierra Club.
The Ogden Group Needs You!

Interested in the political process? Members are needed to interview local candidates on their positions concerning development, urban planning, transit and open space.

Love outings? New outings leaders are always needed. Training is available.

Do you enjoy meeting new people? The Ogden Group is in need of a membership chair.

If you like researching issues, your skills can be put to good use.

Are you interested in working on our newsletter?

Contact one of the Group’s officers to express your interest. Your participation will make our Sierra Club Group a more effective organization.