



Preserve and Protect the Area's Ecosystem and Meet the Community's Human Needs

Executive Summary

Jackson/Teton County is a unique and special place. The area is internationally recognized for its magnificent location on the southern boundary of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. The area is home to a diversity of wildlife including moose, elk, bison, and abundant aquatic and bird species. There are endless recreational opportunities with acres of National Forest and three world class ski resorts. The community has a rich social background steeped in Native American history, mountain men, and life on the western frontier. The present day community thrives because of its active and engaged population, accessible social services and socio-economic diversity.

In response to the blending of natural, human and wildlife considerations, community based comprehensive planning has been a part of this community since the early 1970s. Comprehensive Plans were officially released in the late 1970's and in 1994. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan was drafted by the Jackson/Teton County Planning Departments based on extensive community input and participation and is intended to be used by town and county elected officials, citizens, and staff as a long-range (15 year) planning document. The plan builds on earlier planning efforts and delineates a community vision, outlines policies, and provides maps that collectively serve as a "blueprint" for all future decision making including broad policy development and detailed site design.

This Plan reaffirms the community vision established in 1994 and builds on strategies from that plan in order to provide a level of land use predictability that is desired by the community. Specifically, this Plan:

- Addresses the prioritization of and relationship between community values;
- Maps areas appropriate for certain land uses and displays land use priorities to give landowners, developers, neighbors and elected official greater predictability regarding land use decisions and actions (Future Land Use Plan); and
- Includes measurable indicators in order to hold ourselves accountable as a community for the cumulative impacts of our decisions.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Jackson/Teton County community cannot be conceptualized outside of the unique natural environment. The roughly 2.6 million acres of federally protected and resource-rich land foster a strong ecosystem stewardship ethic in the residents of Jackson and Teton County. With only 73,000 acres (or 3%) of land in our county available for private development, there are limited resources available to meet the demands of the many people who want to live in and visit the area. Because of the sensitivity of the regional ecosystem, the community accepts a responsibility not to export our impacts to other jurisdictions within the ecosystem and to work with surrounding local, state, and federal jurisdictions

to develop regional solutions to meet our shared challenges.

VISION

The Community Vision was developed through an extensive public process. It evolves the priority of the community that was established in 1994 to be good stewards of the ecosystem and to balance the ecological, social and economic challenges of our community.

Vision Statement

Preserve and protect the area's ecosystem and natural resources and meet the community's human needs in a sustainable and predictable manner.

SUSTAINABILITY

According to the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In Jackson/Teton County, this concept is embedded in the community vision. The community's location within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, coupled with the high demand for limited private lands, magnifies the importance of instituting the principles of sustainable development in Jackson and Teton County. Sustainability is used as a guiding concept in this Plan because it provides the framework from which the community will realize its top priorities:

- *Stewardship of Wildlife and Natural Resources;* and
- *Responsible Growth Management.*

These two priorities are a reiteration of the priorities outlined in 1994 and are the first of seven community themes outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

THEMES

Stewardship of Wildlife and Natural Resources (Theme 1)

Preservation and protection of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the area's natural resources is the top priority of the community. The community appreciates that all future public and private decisions will have local and regional ecological impacts and wants to minimize these impacts. In order to preserve and protect the community's important natural and scenic resources and to honor the community's top priority all local decisions must be sensitive to ecosystem wide impacts.

Responsible Growth Management (Theme 2)

The community recognizes that growth must be managed in a responsible and sustainable manner in order to achieve the primary goal of Stewardship of Wildlife and Natural Resources. At the same time, the community recognizes that ecosystem preservation and protection does not preclude growth. In Jackson/Teton County infill and redevelopment that is focused on the provision of workforce housing and locally serving commercial development is the most sustainable type of growth. A nodal development pattern of town-level densities in Town, northern South Park, Teton Village, Wilson, and near the Aspens, allows for the provision of community needs while minimizing impacts to the local and regional ecosystem.

Maintain Town as the "Heart of the Region" (Theme 3)

The policies suggested in Theme 3 build on the foundation of Theme 2: Responsible Growth Management. The policies define the way in which community needs can be met through continued development of the Town of Jackson. The concentration of housing, commercial services, and civic and cultural centers in the Town removes growth pressure from crucial wildlife habitats and natural resource areas elsewhere in the ecosystem. The Town of Jackson

has the social, transit, and municipal infrastructure to allow for the provision of public services with negligible direct ecological impact. Encouraging future growth within town limits maximizes the likelihood that residents will walk or bike to work or to shop, which promotes a community that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Meet Our Community's Housing Needs (Theme 4)

Providing for our basic housing need in a sustainable manner is complicated in our community by the high demand for private land. Commuting from neighboring communities has negative ecological, social, economic, and transportation impacts in this community and throughout the region. A local workforce is more likely to walk or bike to work, and more likely to invest their time, energy, and money in our community. Local provision of housing is the most sustainable way to address our housing needs.

Provide for a Diverse and Balanced Community and Economy (Theme 5)

It has been a long standing principle in the community to be a community first and a resort second. Through this theme the community acknowledges that the resort characteristics of the community provide for a strong economy and the provision of a number of community services that would be otherwise unattainable. This theme also acknowledges that the community wishes to strike a balance between the marketing of natural resources and their protection. Ensuring the local provision of workforce housing and commercial businesses that serve the local population and a variety of local employment opportunities are all crucial to the community vision of a sustainable future.

Develop a Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy (Theme 6)

Reliance on transportation by single occupancy vehicle results in negative ecological impacts of higher traffic volumes, increased carbon emissions, and wider roadways that are more dangerous for wildlife and human traffic. Many

of the community's major roadways are approaching capacity and will require widening and other traditional traffic solutions if congestion is not contained. The most sustainable way to provide for community mobility is through alternate modes of transportation such as transit, walking, carpooling, and bicycling. Providing housing and employment opportunities in closer proximity to other services makes it easier for people to use alternative forms of transportation. A nodal development pattern and increased funding for transit and other travel modes is essential to realizing the goal of sustainable development.

Provide Quality Community Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (Theme 7)

The policies of this Theme address the ways in which the community will ensure its health, safety and welfare. Fire protection, medical service, water, sewer, schools, arts and culture, and social services are all required by residents and guests of the town and county. Defining acceptable levels of service, providing the necessary facilities and infrastructure, and ensuring adequate funding is essential to realize the community vision of adequately meeting its human needs. Appropriate service levels will help the community to better understand the ecological, economic, and social cost of development decisions and to ensure that development pays the costs that are attributable to growth.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan is the communitywide "picture" of how the community will look when the Comprehensive Plan is fully implemented. The Future Land Use Plan describes, in general terms, the conservation or development activities that are appropriate for certain areas in order to effectively realize community priorities and achieve the seven themes of this Plan. The creation of a Future Land Use Plan is the next logical step in the evolution of comprehensive planning and it represents the biggest change from the 1994 Plan. The primary critique of the 1994 Plan was its inability to predict land use in particular areas.

The Future Land Use Plan provides general guidance regarding appropriate locations for:

- open space,
- housing,
- office,
- retail,
- industry, and
- lodging

The Future Land Use Plan answers big picture questions in the community by creating 12 districts in the county and 13 districts in the town. By focusing on these defined areas, the districts provide prioritization and predictability to land owners, developers, neighbors, planners, and elected officials regarding site specific land uses. It is intended to be used as a tool when discussing specific proposals and issues. Specifically, the future land use plan:

- Visually depicts how the Comprehensive Plan themes, principles, and policies will be implemented in specific areas;
- Depicts those areas that are appropriate for conservation and development;
- Describes those areas in the community that must prioritize one theme over another in order to honor community-wide priorities; and,
- Informs future zoning and land developments, which provides land use predictability.

ADMINISTRATION

This chapter is the dynamic work plan required for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Although the community vision for the valley has not significantly changed over the past twenty years, the circumstances within which we implement the vision are in continual flux. We can not entirely anticipate future environmental,

social, and economic challenges as we seek to be stewards of wildlife and natural resources and provide for the needs of the community. Therefore, while the community remains consistent in its vision, we must be able to be dynamic in our implementation strategies. Through this Administration Chapter, the community commits to a proactive, honest, and consistent analysis of the strategies, actions, and programs intended to realize the community vision.

Each of the seven themes of this Plan contains a number of policies intended to guide future decisions. Each theme also contains a list of Strategies and Indicators intended to be used as an implementation guide. This chapter discusses implementation of those theme specific policies, strategies, and indicators within the context of the entire plan, specifically:

- Responsibility of the community, town and county planning departments, elected officials, and other local agencies and organizations in implementing the Comprehensive Plan;
- Annual review of indicators and prioritization of policies;
- Five year update of broader plan implementation; and
- Specific procedures for amending the Future Land Use Plan and Vision Principles and Policies

APPENDICES

Supporting documentation and analyses are included in Appendices A-M. This information contains 1994 Plan Analysis, survey results, travel demand modeling, build out analysis, Affordable Housing and Transportation Chapters from 1994 Plan, and public outreach summary, and statutory authorization.