



Purpose of this Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a long-range future planning document. It consists of a vision, policies, and maps that provide a “blueprint” for how a community should develop in the future. It explains a community’s preferred policies relating to land use, transportation, parks, open space, agriculture and rural issues, community facilities, community character and identity, housing and neighborhoods, and economic development, among others.

The Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan (this Plan) is the framework of the program that the Jackson/Teton County community will pursue to achieve our community vision over the next 10 to 15 years. It validates and builds on the vision and strategies of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan (1994 Plan) and reflects current community input and values. It also includes new guidance and strategies to increase the sustainability and predictability of land use decisions. However, it is not regulatory. The Land Development Regulations (LDRs) are the legal requirements of development and are the regulatory means by which this Plan is implemented.

Jackson/Teton County: Our comprehensive planning history

The 1970s

The first community based comprehensive planning effort took place in Teton County in the late 1970s. This first generation of land use planning focused on the natural resource carrying capacity of private lands. Since the beginning of land use planning in the 1970s, the community has prioritized stewardship of wildlife and natural resources. The community has always understood that the effects of any stewardship effort should not and will not be contained by jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, the community has planned land use activities with consideration for the implications to the Town of Jackson, Teton County, surrounding communities, and neighboring federal lands.

The 1980s

Teton County's popularity as a gateway community and destination resort skyrocketed during the 1980s, bringing with it dramatic increases in population and development. The 1980s marked the second consecutive decade of above-average growth, and residents feared that they were losing control over their future. Our quiet western community had begun to transform into a resort community, which despite previous comprehensive planning efforts, threatened to leave residents' needs and values behind.

The 1994 Plan

As the 1980s drew to a close, residents and community leaders in Teton County recognized the need to confront the community's concerns about unfettered growth. Rapid growth was diminishing the small town values and western heritage cherished by so many. Housing had become so expensive and scarce that it had forced some residents to leave the community; and development was beginning to disrupt open ranchlands and the natural resources that they provide. Existing land development regulations were proving inadequate to deal with these pressures and residents began to express the need for a system that would do a better job of managing the changes to the land use character of Teton County.

Coordinated efforts

In 1989 and 1990, the Town and County began independent but parallel information-gathering efforts to determine Teton County residents' vision for their collective future. The community and local officials understood that the impacts of growth and development, such as transportation, air and water quality, and wildlife habitat, did not stop at jurisdictional boundaries and a major cooperative planning effort was needed. Neither jurisdiction could hope to mitigate community-wide planning problems without the help and support of the other. A joint planning effort to develop a unified community vision was begun.



The backdrop of the natural resources and landscape was being affected by growth in the 1980s. Photo taken by H. Taylor



"Community first and resort second" was one of the guiding principles of the 1994 Plan. Photo taken by H. Taylor

The Community Vision

The community vision, adopted in 1994 and confirmed in 2008, was to guide and manage change and development by:

- Protecting scenic vistas and wildlife habitat for generations to come;
- Maintaining and enhancing environmental quality, including air and water quality;
- Supporting and promoting a diverse social and economic population , including provisions for a resident work force;
- Preserving the traditions and character of the Rocky Mountain West and Wyoming;
- Promoting economic sustenance independent of population growth;
- Maintaining outdoor recreation and adventure opportunities; and
- Offering a diversity of housing types, especially for resident workers.

The vision also included the goal of ensuring that development on private lands in Teton County was compatible with surrounding public land values and uses.

1994 Plan adoption and beyond

In 1994, the Town of Jackson and Teton County adopted the Comprehensive Plan and associated Land Development Regulations (LDRs). The Town and County subsequently adopted additional Comprehensive Plan chapters and implemented additional LDRs as necessary. Updates included an Affordable Housing chapter in 1995 and a Transportation chapter in 2000. (See Appendices J: Affordable Housing, and K: Transportation.)



The Transportation element was adopted in 2000. Photo taken by M. Henderson

Planning over the Past Decade

Development pressures in the late 1990s and early 2000s once again generated questions regarding the community's vision for the future and the way in which we might realize that vision. Studies and plans were completed with regards to single issues such as buildout, transit, employment, housing, wildlife, pathways, and various public and quasi-public services; however, these studies were not evaluated in the context of the community vision or incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. (See Appendix A: Plan and Policy Summary.)

The Plan update process (2007-2009)

In 2007, the town and county recognized the need for a Comprehensive Plan update to re-establish or reaffirm our community's collective land use vision. Although many people thought

that the vision expressed in the 1994 Plan still applied to the community, the majority believed that an increased focus on stewardship of the ecosystem and predictability in land use decisions would help guide implementation of the 1994 Plan vision. Specifically, the community recognized that this Plan should:

- Address the prioritization of and relationship between community values;
- Map areas appropriate for certain land uses and provide land use tools to give landowners, developers, neighbors, and elected official greater predictability regarding land use decisions and actions; and
- Include measurable indicators of success in order to hold ourselves accountable as a community for the cumulative impacts of our decisions.

The update of the 1994 Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan was initiated in the summer of 2007 as a joint effort between the Town of Jackson and Teton County. The respective Planning Departments and consultants (the Planning Team), developed a well-coordinated public outreach program in order to facilitate a community-driven update of the 1994 Plan. The Outreach program provided the public with ample opportunity to offer their opinions and suggestions with regards to the 1994 Plan. Appendix L contains a summary of the public outreach results.



The project website (www.jacksontetonplan.com) contained information and updates throughout the process.

Public Outreach Strategy for this Plan

The highlights of the public outreach strategy included:

- **A website** provided the opportunity to access and review draft documents and respond to survey questions and on-line polls.
- **Two advisory committees:** a Stakeholder Advisory Group (STAG) and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) met throughout process to assist the Planning Team.
- Regular meetings with **Town and County Planning Commissions and elected officials** occurred.
- **Three community surveys** invited citizen responses to specific questions about community values and growth management strategies.
- **Five community workshops** sought input regarding the proposed policies and the creation of a Future Land Use Plan.
- **Numerous neighborhood meetings** in various locations throughout the town and county provided opportunities for additional public comment

- Several outreach efforts were translated to **Spanish** to engage the Latino community.



A number of meetings and outreach events occurred in 2007 through 2008 to make this Plan a community-driven effort.

This Comprehensive Plan update was developed jointly with a coordinated effort between the Town and County that considered the relationships of land use patterns in each jurisdiction to the other. It also looked at decisions on a more regional level, understanding that while some decisions put solutions temporarily out of sight in neighboring communities, the implications of such decisions cannot be put out of mind if we are to act as responsible stewards of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.



The public worked together to determine preferred future directions for the plan.

This Plan's Organization

Introduction

This plan is organized in eleven chapters—ten in addition to this **Introduction**. Overall, the plan is organized around a vision and themes, leading with the high priority community values.

2009 Community Vision

The **2009 Community Vision** validates the 1994 Vision, but now it also incorporates the tools of sustainable and predictable development. The Vision chapter explains how the community's themes, or values, are prioritized and balanced.

Seven Themes

The seven **Theme chapters** follow the Vision Chapter, with each chapter identifying: policies, implementation strategies, and monitoring indicators. The first two themes address our community's primary values:

- **Theme 1: Promote Stewardship of Wildlife and Natural Resources, and**
- **Theme 2: Manage Growth Responsibly.**

The other five themes outline community values that are the underpinning of responsible growth management and sustainability:

- **Theme 3: Uphold Jackson as "Heart of the Region",**
- **Theme 4: Meet Our Community's Housing Needs,**
- **Theme 5: Provide for a Diverse and Balanced Economy,**
- **Theme 6: Develop a Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy, and**

- **Theme 7: Provide Quality Community Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure.**

The Future Land Use Plan

The **Future Land Use Plan** chapter paints a picture of how the community will look if this Plan is implemented. Specifically, it contains a map generally delineating where conservation and development are appropriate and depicting where the policies of the seven themes should be implemented. However, boundaries on the map are not exact and should not be used definitively. The chapter also contains a narrative description of how the map is to be interpreted and applied. Finally, the chapter contains twenty-five district sections for specific areas of the county and town.

Plan Administration

The **Administration** chapter identifies the process by which this Plan should be monitored and updated in the future through annual analysis and monitoring (i.e., "State of the Plan Report," based on indicators). The chapter also outlines how this plan will be periodically updated (i.e., every five years). It also establishes responsibilities for the implementation of this Plan to instill accountability after Plan adoption.

The graphic below illustrates the community vision and various chapters of this Plan and their relationship to site-specific regulations. Strategies proposed in this Plan that will follow its adoption include actions such as revisions to the Land Development Regulations (LDR) and Zoning Map. The LDR and zoning map are separate, more localized and specific tools to implement the land use and transportation policies of this Plan.



JACKSON/TETON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 1.1: Relationship of this Plan to Geography and Implementation

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