



# Jackson / Teton County Comprehensive Plan



# Table of Contents



## Vision/ Executive Summary ES- 1

Plan Framework .....ES-4

Vision, Common Values, Achieving the Vision, Illustrating the Vision ES-4

Process ES-6

Common Value 1. Ecosystem Stewardship (CV-1) ES-8

Common Value 2. Managed Growth (CV-2) ES-10

Common Value 3. Community Character (CV-3) ES-12

Plan Highlights.....ES-14

## Common Value 1. Ecosystem Stewardship .....CV-1-1

Section 1. Stewardship of Wildlife, Natural Resources and Scenery ..... CV-1-2

Section 2. Climate Sustainability through Energy Conservation ..... CV-1-12

## Common Value 2. Managed Growth .....CV-2-1

Section 3. Responsible Growth Management .. CV-2-2

Section 4. Town as the Heart of the Region - The Central Complete Neighborhood ..... CV-2-12

## Common Value 3. Community Character .....CV-3-1

Section 5. Housing Our Workforce ..... CV-3-3

Section 6. Provide for a Diverse and Balanced Economy ..... CV-3-10

Section 7. Develop a Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy ..... CV-3-16

Section 8. Quality Community Service Provision ..... CV-3-26

## Achieving Our Vision..... AV-1

Section 9. Growth Management Program .....AV-2

Section 10. Administration.....AV-10

## Illustrating Our Vision ..... IV-1

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# Acknowledgements

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# Our Vision/ Executive Summary





# Our Vision

Preserve and protect the area's ecosystem while meeting our community's human needs in a sustainable and predictable manner. A system of sustainable practices will ensure a healthy environment, community and economy for current and future generations.

As stewards of one of our nation's most treasured areas, we must see our plan through a different lens. Wildlife, natural and scenic resources draw both residents and visitors to this special place. As stewards of this area, we are required to protect and enhance the ecosystem in which we live.

Yellowstone (the world's first National Park), Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Targhee National Forest and the National Elk Refuge are testaments to the ecological richness and international significance of our valley home. These roughly 2.6 million acres of federally-protected lands foster a strong stewardship ethic in both residents and visitors to Jackson and Teton County.

Our commitment to the natural environment does not stop at the border of our public lands.

The Plan's vision extends this ethic to the private lands in Teton County, where most of the community lives and works, but comprises only 3 percent of our land area.

Each resident and visitor has a responsibility to use public and private lands in a way that preserves the function of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem so that it can continue to be enjoyed in its intact state for generations to come. The diverse population of the community thrives on a shared appreciation of the natural setting in which we are located and the quality of life it brings. The community's long-term environmental, social, and economic health share a common requirement - the preservation and protection of the area's ecosystem and natural resources.

**Our Plan will achieve its vision through adherence to a set of interdependent shared values - ecosystem stewardship, growth management and a commitment to community character.**



The Town of Jackson and Teton County are gateways to Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest and the National Elk Refuge. Our community plan focuses on private lands, which make up 3% of the land area in the County, or just over 76,000 acres.

# Plan Framework

## our vision

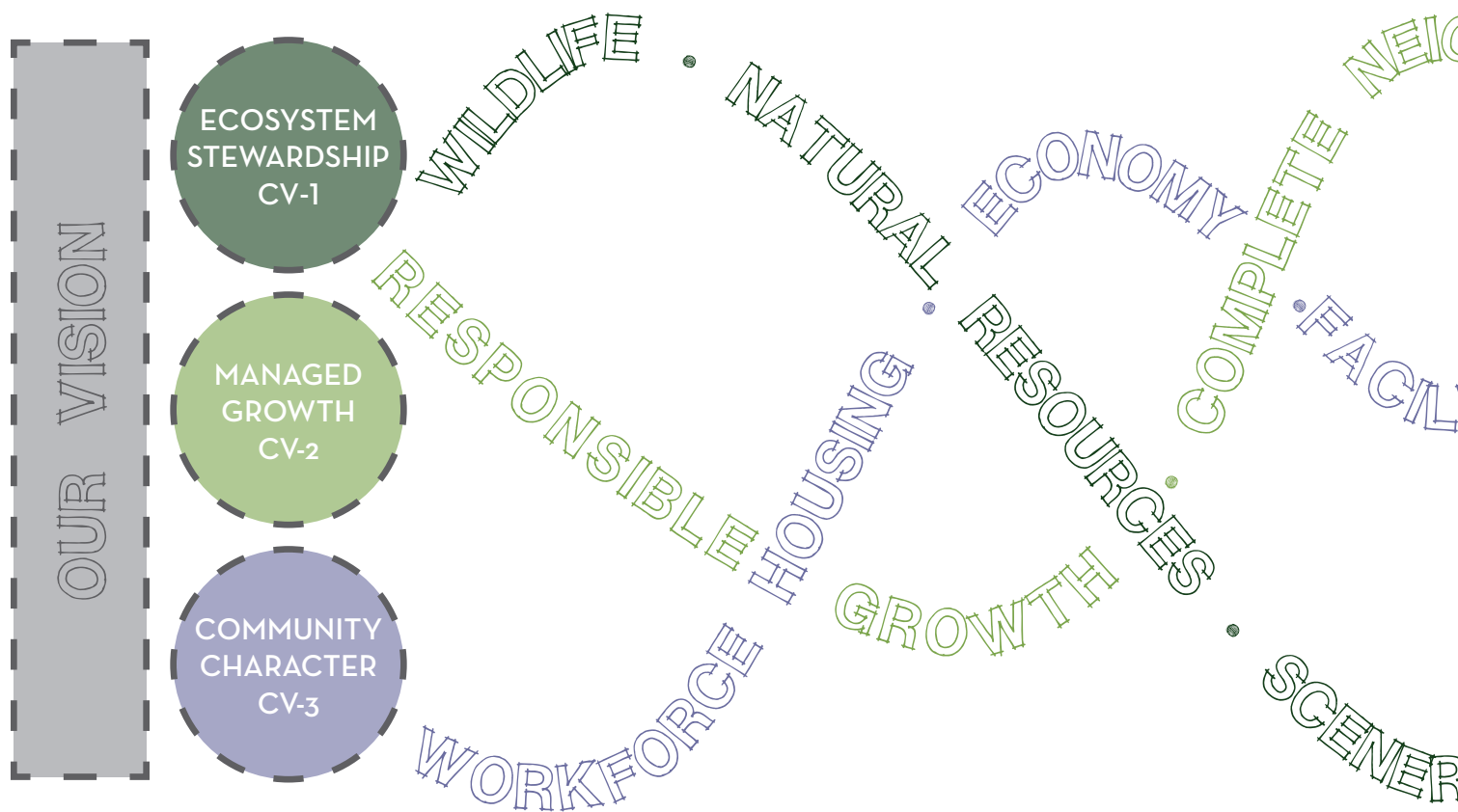
Preserve and protect the area's ecosystem while meeting our community's human needs in a sustainable and predictable manner. A system of sustainable practices will ensure a healthy environment, community and economy for current and future generations.

## common values

This Plan fulfills our community vision by adhering to our common values:

1. Ecosystem Stewardship (CV-1)
2. Managed Growth (CV-2)
3. Community Character (CV-3)

The strength of the plan is derived from a commitment to all three shared values, each in support of the others. Each common value chapter contains sections with a number of principles and policies that provide more specific guidance to ensure predictable and responsible decision-making when implementing our plan.



# achieving our vision

As learned from previous planning efforts around the country, a community set in a sensitive and dynamic natural environment must be able to evolve and adapt to ensure we achieve the vision the community has outlined. Otherwise, we may reflect ten years from now, during our next update, and only be able to speculate as to why our vision was not achieved. This is too big of a risk to take.

Based on a natural systems approach, our method to achieve our desired future conditions consists of one of the most robust growth management and monitoring programs in the nation. Existing entitlements and previous planning efforts could result in a doubling of our population. This program seeks to do more than achieve a desired community size. The program will shape the amount, location, type, and positive benefits associated with our future community form. The growth management and monitoring program contains a series of trigger

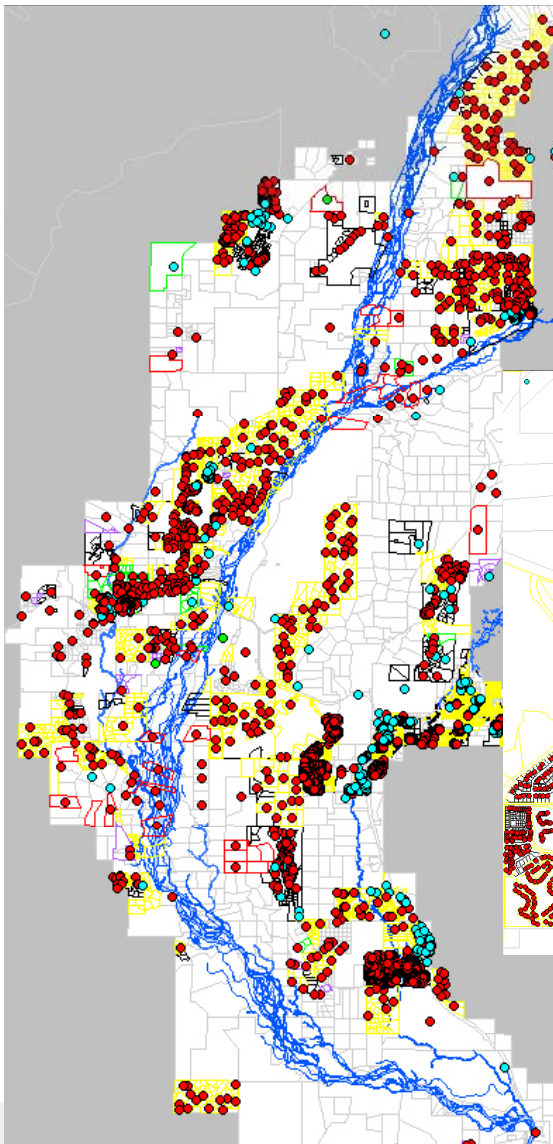
thresholds, triggers, feedback mechanisms, and corrective actions; all of which are linked to policy and management actions.

# illustrating our vision

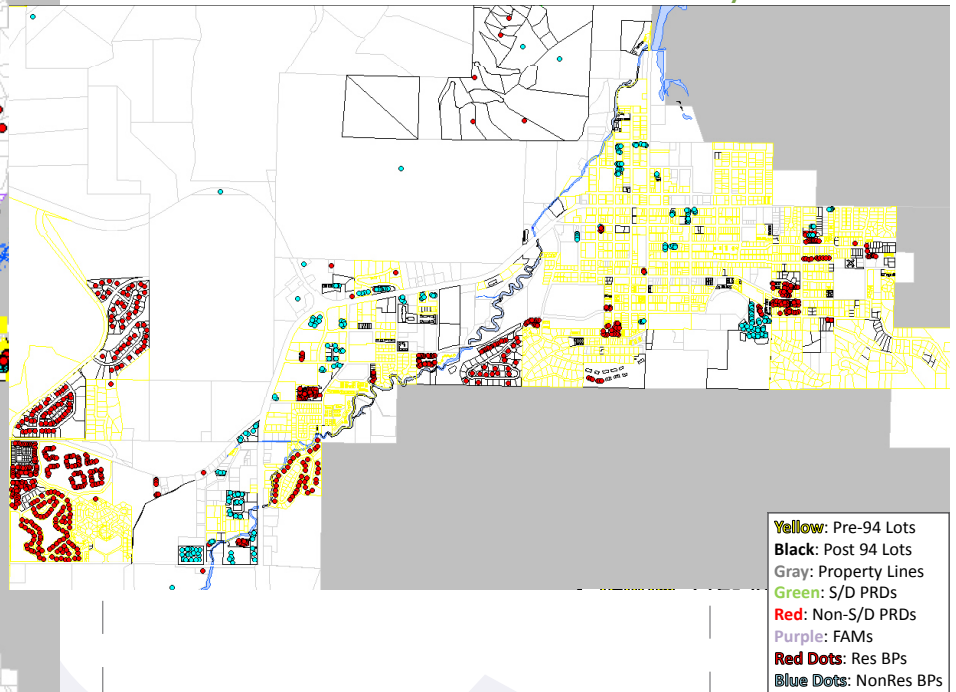
The realization of the community vision and the themes presented in this plan will require more focused planning in different parts of the Town and County. The values and themes presented in the following chapters provide guidance in support of the three common values and the overarching community vision. The Character District Plans provide additional discussion of priorities and guidance in specific districts in the Town and County. As implied by their names, the Character Districts focus on preserving the character of the Town and County while allowing appropriate development that meets our community values.



# Process & Lessons Learned



Over the last ten years, two-thirds of all new development was located in the County



## Issues/Inventory

*September 2007*  
Kickoff, Public, STAG /  
TAG Mtgs.

## Vision/Goals

*November 2007*  
Public, STAG/ TAG  
Mtgs.

## Choices/ Scenarios/ Surveys

*January 2008*  
Keypad, Online, Phone  
Surveys;  
STAG/TAG Mtgs.

## Land Use Plan/ Policies

*May - October 2008*  
3 Public Mtgs.; 3 STAG  
Mtgs.; TAG Mtg.; 4  
Town Workshops; 6  
County Mtgs.

## Draft Comp- rehensive Plan

*April -May 2009*  
JIM Rollout, JPC Rollout  
9 Public Presentations;  
4 STAG Mtgs.; 6 Open  
Houses

Process Timeline

2007

2008

2009

## Goals & Lessons Learned from the 1994 Plan

The 1994 Plan set the foundation for our vision and ethic found throughout this document.

### Pattern:

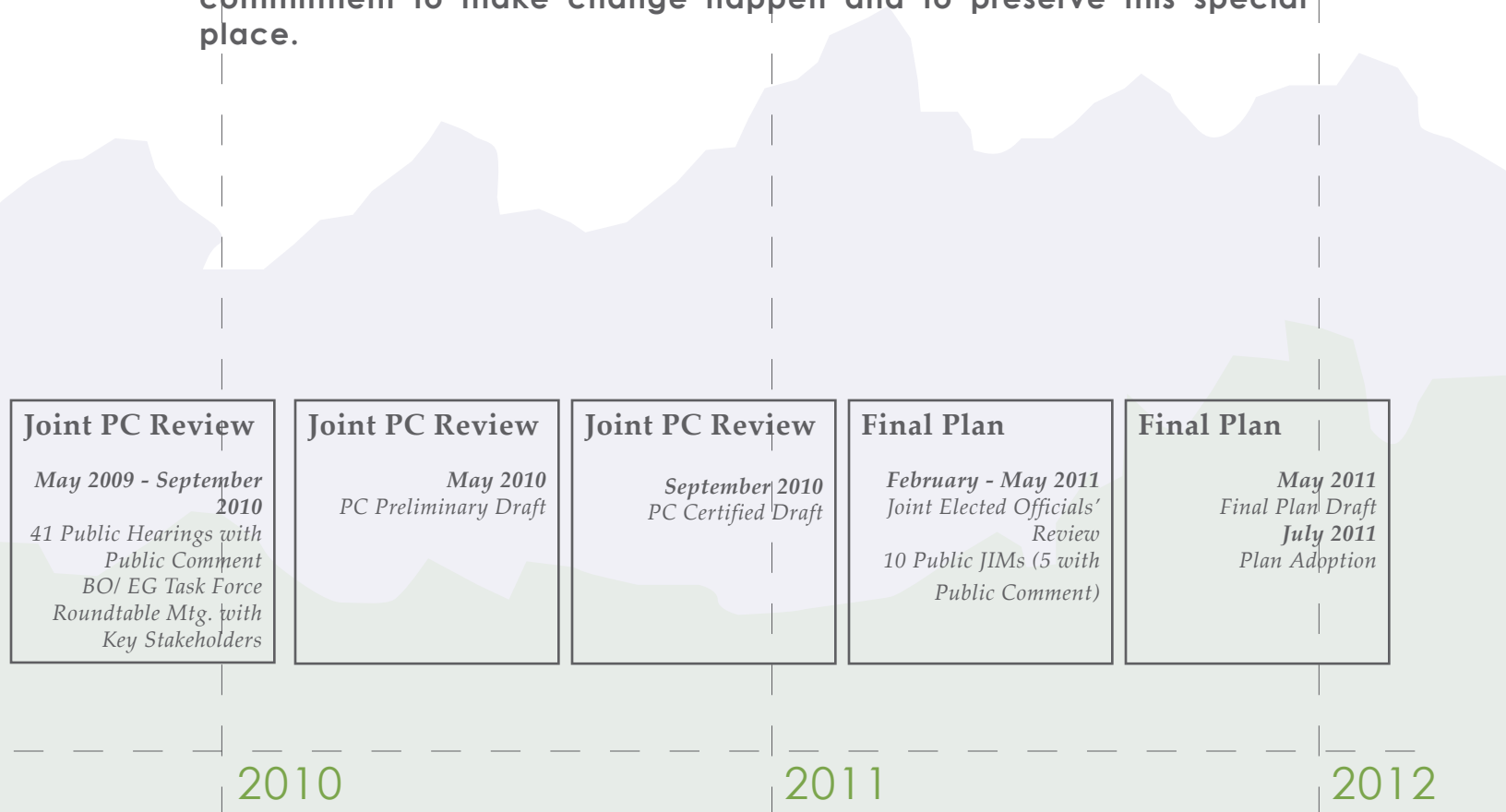
- Majority of entitlements and pattern of development created prior to 1994;
- Proliferation of homes in the rural County;
- Limited county clustering; and
- Town development and redevelopment limited.

### Lesson learned:

- Must proactively plan for amount, location, type of growth

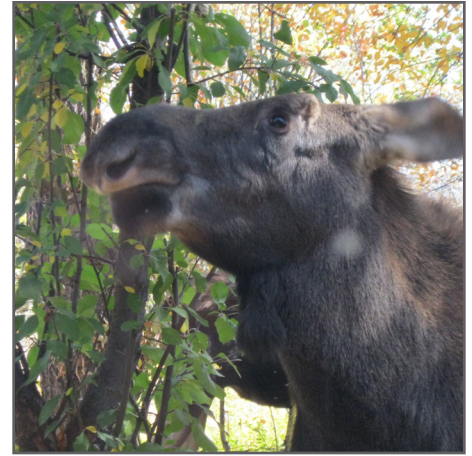
## Process

The following plan builds off the foundation and the lessons learned from the 1994 Plan. Nearly four years in development, the Plan takes the community's next steps from vision to reality. With over 100 public meetings, the Plan represents the community's dedication and commitment to make change happen and to preserve this special place.





# Common Value 1. Ecosystem Stewardship (CV-1)



The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem – the largest intact ecosystem in the lower 48 states – transcends the physical boundaries of Jackson and Teton County. Accordingly, stewardship of this ecosystem transcends all common values of our community. The quality of this ecosystem has attracted numerous visitors throughout the years and is the primary reason many residents moved to our community. The community's stewardship of this ecosystem has been and will continue to be our legacy to future generations. The community understands that our quality of life depends on many factors, but the primary factor is the continued health and viability of this ecosystem in which we live. With this Plan, the community recommits to responsible stewardship of the ecosystem that ensures the abundance of wildlife, natural resources and scenery that we experience today lasts long into the future. While our community's international popularity and location in an intact ecosystem heighten the importance of sustainable planning, they also provide the community with an opportunity to lead in the implementation of the concept of sustainability.

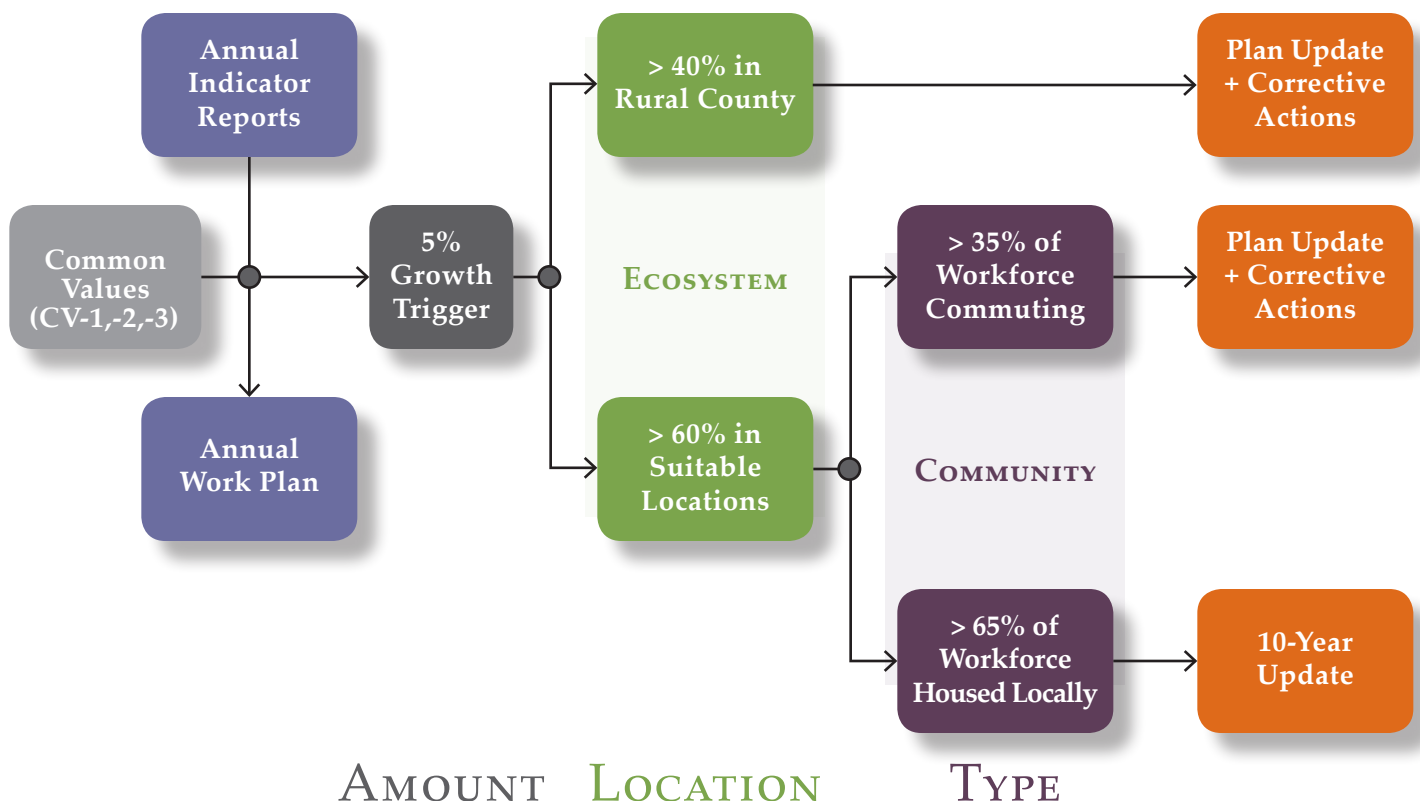
Our community must practice what we preach and integrate the concepts of sustainability into our daily lives. Our neighborhoods will become models of sustainability through design requirements, building retrofits and compact urban forms. Water and energy conservation will not be abstract concepts, but instead implementable renewable and conservation energy and water programs. We will consciously choose to move around in our community in a different way. The automobile and its inherent environmental consequences will be replaced with a preference for walking, biking and transit.



## Common Value 2. Managed Growth (CV-2)

Effective growth management will be essential to protecting our surrounding ecosystem (CV-1) from the impacts of development and reinforcing our community's character (CV-3). Attaining one of our common values does not preclude the other two; in fact, these three common values are interdependent and must work together in order for us to achieve our overall future vision for the community. Because these values are mutually supportive, the community must work to enhance our built environment into desirable places for residents, businesses, and visitors, in order to protect wildlife habitat, habitat connections, scenery and open space. Managed growth means proactively planning for what we want – high quality, desirable complete neighborhoods. Moving forward, the community commits to growth management (CV-2) so that we can achieve our common values for ecosystem stewardship (CV-1) in harmony with our desired community character (CV-3).

The growth management program outlined below defines a process for decision makers to evaluate where and how growth is occurring in our community and adjust course as necessary. The growth management program will work in conjunction with annual indicator reports, which will holistically monitor the entire community system by considering environmental, economic, transportation, housing, and other plan indicators. Build-out ranges and associated metrics bring predictability and means to monitor success and therefore will be key indicators used to monitor growth in the Town and County. A range of strategies and corrective actions may be necessary to ensure the requirements of the growth management program are met and the plan's vision is realized.





## Common Value 3. Community Character (CV-3)



The Jackson and Teton County community has always emphasized the importance of our local identity and character. Our natural character is protected through the stewardship of the surrounding ecosystem, and our physical character is guided by the way in which we manage growth. However, the more emotional aspect of our character – our quality of life – is equally important to our community. We have always been a diverse community that supports a variety of lifestyles and employment opportunities, and we welcome others to share in the enjoyment of our intact ecosystem and western mountain lifestyle. Our quality of life and a quality visitor experience depend not only on ecosystem protection and growth management, but also on preserving our community character that is so attractive to residents and visitors alike.

Retaining a stable spectrum of local employment and housing opportunities preserves our identity as a community of primarily long-term residents who steward our surrounding ecosystem and welcome visitors to do the same. Residents and visitors have become accustomed to high-quality transportation, educational, social, cultural, emergency and recreational services. Continuing to provide these services in a manner that better achieves our vision for ecosystem stewardship, growth management and creating complete neighborhoods will enhance the livability and appeal of our community. A community that offers a spectrum of housing and employment options and provides access to safe, efficient, and economical transportation and services is a desirable community to call home and an attractive destination to visit time and again.

Ecosystem stewardship, growth management, and community character are interdependent values that all contribute to our quality of life. Reinforcing the character and integrity of our community will not only improve our quality of life, but also help us achieve our vision for ecosystem stewardship and growth management.

# Plan Highlights

The Jackson and Teton County community have always been leaders in environmental stewardship, growth management and community character. A center for the environmental consciousness, the community has insisted on a Plan that puts the nation's best practices for planning into place.

Our commitment to these best practices are reinforced in a plan that:

- Is based foremost on a commitment to the preservation of the environment in which we live. All other policies tier from this steward-based vision.
- Is centered on three common values as a way to achieve this vision: Ecosystem Stewardship, Managed Growth and Community Character.
- Utilizes a Growth Management Program, annual monitoring and annual work plans to ensure the desired future conditions for our community are realized.
- Protects and promotes community character by defining desired community elements that promote complete neighborhoods and character preservation.



*This plan uses the most innovative planning tools in the nation to:*



#### *Protect the environment*

- Clustering and buffering requirements
- Natural Resource Overlay (NRO)
- Scenic Resources Overlay (SRO)
- Conservation easements and direct acquisitions
- Wildlife friendly design
- Sustainability program



#### *Effectively manage our community's growth*

- Defined growth areas in the Town and County for appropriate development
- A robust growth management program based on annual monitoring of indicators, establishment of triggers and thresholds, and corrective actions
- A transfer of develop-right program
- .12% of the County will handle the majority of future growth
- Defined lodging areas based in Town



#### *Ensure our desired community character*

- A multimodal transportation program consisting of the expansion of transit, pathways and complete streets
- Housing over 65% of the workforce locally
- Eco-based tourism and “better not bigger” philosophy
- Mixed-use and affordable housing incentives
- Incentive based tools for mixed use , parking and affordable housing