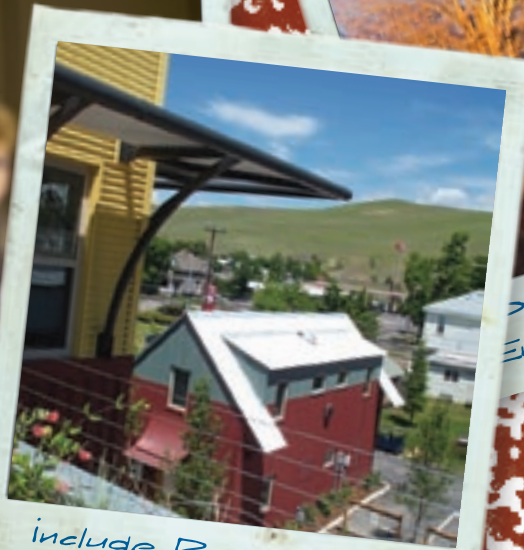


Developer's Handbook for Smart Growth



Preserve Critical
Environmental Areas



include Range of
Housing Choices



Seek input
neighbors

Why it works:

- Higher market demand
- Lower infrastructure costs
- Higher property values
- Community support

Introduction:

We at Valley Advocates for Responsible Development have produced this brochure in the hopes of showing how development projects can be economically viable, environmentally sensitive, and in line with the community's vision, as outlined by the county and city comprehensive plans.

This booklet examines the possibilities for development in Teton Valley through the lens of ten Smart Growth principles. Smart Growth is a national movement and school-of-thought based around the idea that development, when done well, can positively impact the economy, environment and public health, while also contributing to community vitality. Part of a developer's challenge is to make a profit but also to demonstrate to the community how development can be an asset.

The Smart Growth Principles:

- ★ Mix land uses
- ★ Take advantage of compact building design
- ★ Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- ★ Create walkable neighborhoods
- ★ Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- ★ Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- ★ Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- ★ Provide a variety of transportation choices
- ★ Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- ★ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions





Mixed Land Uses

Why it works:

- Reduced risk associated with investing in one kind of development.
- Fewer vehicle trips, shorter commutes, lower fuel costs for residents.
- Reduced noise and air pollution and lower road maintenance expenses.
- Easy access to amenities for people who can't drive.
- Cheaper for communities to service.
- Attractive to a wide range of buyers, including older people and young families who want safe, walkable neighborhoods.

A project can be considered “mixed” if it has any combination of housing, retail, office, commercial and public buildings. Such development allows residents to walk to shops, restaurants, work and community activities. Generally, this is most appropriate in Victor, Driggs and Teton.

Community Vision

Driggs encourages mixed-use development through mixed-use zoning designations. Policy 21 of the Transportation chapter of the Victor Comprehensive Plan states, “encourage mixed use development which locates commercial services and areas of employment within walking or biking distances from residences.”



This building located on Little Avenue in Driggs features retail space at ground level. The top floors incorporate a mixture of office and residential.



Creekside Meadows in Driggs utilizes a compact design.

★ Compact Design

Compact design uses space more creatively and efficiently to reduce the development footprint and to maximize space for parks, agriculture and wildlife habitat. Compact design is most appropriate in the core of Victor, Driggs and Tetonian where the county and city comprehensive plans agree density should be located. In the county, compact design may mean clustering development in a way that protects large tracts of meaningful open space. Additionally, density has to be appropriate for the sensitivity of the land.

Why it works:

- An equal or greater number of units can be built on smaller lots than in conventional subdivisions.
- More housing at a variety of prices is possible in the towns.
- More acreage of open space is conserved in the county.
- Open space and parks make developments more attractive to potential buyers, resulting in increased sales.
- Wildlife benefits from land conserved as open space.
- Lower infrastructure costs because it requires fewer roads and shorter lengths of sewer, water and utility lines.
- Usually more pedestrian friendly, which results in less traffic.

Community Vision

Policy 6 of Chapter 10 of the Victor Comprehensive Plan states, “encourage compact development in order to reduce the cost of providing public services.”

★ A Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

A range of housing opportunities and choices includes apartments, condominiums and single-family homes in various sizes and price ranges. Such a development also allows for various ownership and rental/lease options.

Why it works:

- Increased market value: “Communities that include a variety of house sizes and types command a higher market value on a per square foot basis than do those in adjacent conventional suburban development.”¹
- Broadened customer market for housing products, which reduces the financial risk to the developer.²
- High demand: the EPA Smart Growth Report found that the market can support a variety of housing types in each city. It further found that to tap into an undersupplied market, current housing targets should include prices ranging from “\$130,000 to \$202,000 to be affordable.”³
- Creates a more diverse community, enabling families and those on fixed income (like the elderly) to remain a part of the community.
- Enhances public safety by providing a place for public service workers to live in the community. This in turn reduces job turnover rates and reduces costs associated with high turnover. (In 2006, Teton County School District lost seven teachers to neighboring counties that offered more affordable housing options.)
- A local workforce provides for a strong local economy.

¹ <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles/principles.asp?prin=2>

² Victor and Driggs asked the US Environmental Protection agency to do an analysis of how Victor and Driggs could adjust their policies and design guidelines and ordinances to better attract the type of development they want. The EPA Smart Growth Team visited the valley the week of October 23, 2006, and spoke with a variety of stakeholders. The EPA Smart Growth Team completed their evaluation report in May of 2007. For a copy of the report go to http://www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org/resources_studies.php

³ Teton County Affordable Housing Study by BBC Research and Consulting, p. 115

Community Vision

Policy 2 of Chapter 16 in the County Comprehensive Plan states: “encourage opportunities for diversity in housing choices and affordable housing availability.”

This photo from the Sonoran Institute's publication *Building from the Best of the Northern Rockies* reflects the kinds of compact and affordable designs developers have successfully used in the West.





★ Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

Building a strong sense of place involves protecting viewscales and historic sites or buildings and working with existing natural features such as clusters of trees or unique rock formations. Additionally, it incorporates materials, landscaping, art and styles that are in keeping with the region's historic architectural traditions.

Community Vision

Chapter 8 of the County Comprehensive Plan states, "in the interest of character preservation, chain businesses and other development shall be required to design buildings and other facilities that blend with the local archi-



This preserved historic Driggs building reinforces a strong sense of place and community character.

Why it works:

- Higher property values. Studies have shown that developments where there is a unique community character that incorporates historic architectural and natural elements sustain their economic vitality over time.
- Projects that reflect the cultural and community values create community pride.

ecture." Chapter 10 suggests conserving and protecting "esthetic values including scenic open spaces, quiet neighborhoods, dark night skies, clean air, safe communities and accessible public lands."

★ Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas

Why it works:

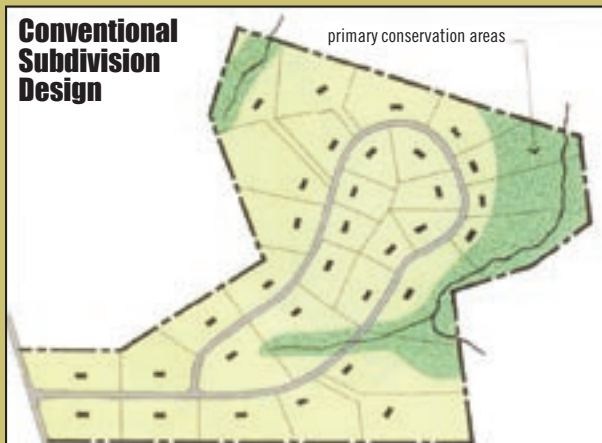
- Projects that preserve these attributes capitalize on the very things that make this such a desirable place to live.
- Increased property values.
- Public support. In VARD's experience, open space and conservation of natural resources are among the most frequently recurring concerns for neighbors of new developments.
- Numerous tax incentives make open-space protection desirable.
- Conservation easements protect land for future generations and create an amenity for a development.
- When meaningful studies are done ahead of time and the results are incorporated into the design, unexpected surprises are avoided and developments often progress more quickly through the planning process.

Teton Valley's natural resources are its most marketable asset. One of the best ways to achieve environmentally sound development that protects these valuable natural resources is to do the appropriate studies at the beginning and then to implement the development with those studies in mind. The difference between a development that truly preserves these natural amenities and one that doesn't is the quality of the studies. These studies might include a natural resources inventory and analysis, a traffic-impact analysis and a fiscal-impact analysis. Design, too, is critical to implementing this principle – design that takes into account the unique features of each piece of land and works in harmony with them.

Community Vision

Policy 3 of the Economic Development section of the County's Comprehensive Plan states that "One of the county's prime economic values is the attraction of a rural, small-town lifestyle, magnifi-

cent views, clean air and water, and abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities. Development and land use proposals that support and balance these values with growth should be encouraged."



LEFT: Conventional subdivision design with a loop road, large lots, no common open space, and lack of attention to landscape amenities—typically difficult for residents to maintain and fails to provide a feeling of openness or privacy.

RIGHT: A conservation subdivision design incorporates the same density with thoughtfully designed open space, conserves natural amenities while creating more natural space and privacy. Clustering the homes also

creates more sense of community for neighbors. A pathway network allows residents access to enjoy the natural areas. Smaller lots still provide diversity and privacy, but are also easier to maintain. Plats courtesy of Randall Arndt, Delaware County Regional Planning Commission, Delaware County, Ohio



The Driggs Community Association created these renderings of downtown Driggs featuring a more people-friendly design. Note the trees and the widened sidewalks that make the street more attractive to pedestrians.

★ Walkable Neighborhoods

One definition of a walkable neighborhood is a neighborhood that provides essential services within a half-mile radius of their residents. Walkable neighborhoods make it easy and safe for residents to get around by foot and are most suited for Victor, Driggs and Teton. Developments in the county can implement this principle by considering how to link up with the system of trails already present in the valley. However, trails in sensitive areas such as along creeks or streams should be avoided.

Why it works:

- Walkable neighborhoods are attractive to prospective buyers. “In a 2002 survey of recent home buyers, sponsored by the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Homebuilders, trails ranked as the second most important community amenity out of a list of 18 choices.”¹
- Housing values are higher in walkable neighborhoods. A study by the Urban Land Institute of four new pedestrian communities determined that homebuyers were willing to pay \$20,000 more for homes in walkable areas compared to similar homes in surrounding areas.²
- Walking is beneficial to people’s health, community vitality and the environment. A recent national study found that, “People living in counties marked by sprawling developments are likely to walk less and weigh more than people who live in less sprawling counties.” Furthermore, the study found a “direct relationship between sprawl and chronic disease.”³
- Reduces commuting costs for residents.
- A walkable community provides the most affordable form of transportation any community can plan, design, construct and maintain.
- Walkability attracts tourists and increases economic vitality.

¹Eve Lynes, John Borstelmann and Justin Park, *Pathways* (Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, 2007), p. 9

²*Economic Benefits of Walkable Communities, Focus on Livable Communities* prepared by the Local Government Commission. <http://www.lgc.org/about/index.html>

³Reid Weing, Tom Schmid, Richard Killingsworth, Amy Zlot and Stephen Raudenbush, *Relationship Between Urban Sprawl and Physical Activity, Obesity and Morbidity*, *American Journal* (September 2003)



Direct Development Toward Existing Communities

As with mixed-use and walkable neighborhoods, this occurs when development creates infill in the cities and when development in the cities is mixed and dense, while development becomes less dense and more rural in character further from the cities.

Why it works:

- Being close to town is an amenity, ensuring shorter travel times to services and allowing for multiple modes of travel including walking, cycling and skiing.
- Saves on infrastructure costs and improves the town's economy and vibrancy.
- Saves on providing services such as fire, police and infrastructure maintenance.
- Meaningful rural open space further out in the county is protected.

**HUNTSMAN
SPRINGS**
HUNTSMAN SPRINGS
MASTER PLAN

PLATTED PROPERTY	DESCRIPTION (FIRST PHASE)	NUMBER
	RANGE CABINS	24
	SINGLE FAMILY CUSTOM HOMESITES	40
	DRIGGS TOWN HOMES	20
	TOWN PLAZA COMMERCIAL	20
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT		
	STOCKED FISHING PONDS	
	FAMILY WALK & BIKE PATHS	
	WILDLIFE REFUGE BOARDWALK (1.5 MILES)	



Community Vision

Chapter 9 of the County Comp Plan calls for higher density development and most commercial enterprise to be concentrated in our existing communities and their impact areas. Policy 3 of Chapter 16 states that "high-density developments should be within the cities and city impact areas whenever possible."

Huntsman Springs set aside 240 acres of wetlands and wildlife habitat in a conservation easement with the Teton Regional Land Trust on the west end of the development, in the area furthest away from Driggs. The developers have concentrated the highest density along the eastern border of the property adjacent to Driggs.



Mountainside Village in Victor constructed a bus stop in preparation for a time when public transportation will service the neighborhood.
photo by Gabe Rogel

★ Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices

By building bike paths, walking paths and providing roadside stops where the START bus and other public transportation can easily pick up passengers, developers create alternative transportation choices for residents.

Community Vision

Chapter 13 of the county's comprehensive plan states that "to minimize traffic congestion, public transportation, trails and pathways and carpooling should be encouraged."

Why it works:

- Certain segments of the population prefer alternative transportation. According to the research organization Transact, "More than one in five Americans age 65 and older do not drive." Second homebuyers are often over 65 and may need transportation options that go beyond private vehicles.
- Transportation options minimize traffic and cut down residents' fuel expenses.
- Walking, cycling and cross-country skiing in such a stunning natural environment is one of the biggest draws of Teton Valley.
- When neighbors meet one another on foot, bike or bus, these interactions reinforce a strong sense of community.

★ Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective

Why it works:

- Developments that are designed in line with the relevant jurisdiction's comprehensive plan, ordinances and codes are more likely to progress quickly through the development process.
- A fair and consistent process ensures a level playing field whereby all developers are treated equally and pay their fair share of the costs to service new development.
- Proper planning and clearly stated community needs will result in new development that contributes to the community it joins.

Jurisdictional authorities are responsible in large part for implementing this principle. Nevertheless, developers can do their part by reading the city and county's comprehensive plans and ordinances and constructing developments with the community's vision in mind. Developers should familiarize themselves with the county codes and not ask for variances that are out of step with the community's vision. To be fair to the public, developers should only put options on the table during hearings that they intend to pursue implementing.

★ Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

In order to encourage community participation in development decisions, some developers hold charrettes, involving homeowners and stakeholders in planning for a development. Other developers prefer to meet one-on-one with specific stakeholders and community members. The key to successful collaboration is that developers incorporate some or all of the valuable input they receive into an improved design. When this happens, it is a true give-and-take process.

Why it works:

- Development that joins the community will be supported by the community. When developers ask current residents what they want to see, development can provide many important and valuable benefits.
- When included in the process, neighbors and stakeholders often will do valuable problem-solving that leads to creative solutions. Such solutions often make the development more attractive to potential buyers.

Example

At Victor's Open House on their proposed area of impact and Traditional Neighborhood Design Overlay, over 100 people turned out to see maps, hear about the potential changes and provide feedback.

Developer's Checklist

Does my development:

- mix land uses?
- take advantage of compact building design?
- create a range of housing opportunities and choices?
- create walkable neighborhoods?
- foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place?
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas?
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities?
- provide a variety of transportation choices?
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective?
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions?

Other Resources

Teton Valley Trails and Pathways www.tvtap.org
Friends of the Teton River www.tetonwater.org
Teton Regional Land Trust www.tetonlandtrust.org
The City and County Planners and Administrators

*Thanks to the Sonoran Institute for photography provided and to the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole for funding.
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Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

PO Box 1164, Driggs, Idaho 83422 208.354.1707 www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org

MISSION: To advocate for the private, public and civic actions that will result in the responsible development and sustainable use of natural resources (water, land, wildlife and air) in Teton Valley.