



Decoding the Code Issue Five:

**Proactively Planning for
Transportation, Recreation,
and Housing. Addressing
community issues before
they become community
problems.**

Planning for Future Roadway Connections.

Almost everyone has undoubtedly experienced the sinking feeling of getting home after running a slew of errands and realizing having forgotten that one thing. For many in Teton Valley, this involves having to get back onto Highway 33 — often during rush hour traffic — and utilizing a highway that is often crowded and has few alternatives in the valley. In Decoding the Code Issue 2, we discussed how subdivisions in Drictor & Dritonia were platted in a shotgun manner that chopped up the landscape and fragmented open space.



Neighborhoods like Fox Creek have few thoroughfares.

This is also the case with transportation, as road systems through many areas of the county are splintered and offer few alternatives to Hwy 33. Through-connections are rare, and when they exist, they often do not provide direct access to Driggs, Victor, or Teton. The Comprehensive Plan stresses the importance of connectivity and envisions the coordination of transportation, public spending, and access plans for existing and future subdivisions. This way, we know where future road thoroughfares will be located, and future subdivisions can be designed around future thoroughfares. Currently, the draft code simply requires a street connection adjacent to undeveloped land, otherwise known as a “stub.” Sometimes stubs are appropriate, sometimes not.

If we create a map of future thoroughfares, we will then know when stubs are needed and when it is best to close a subdivision off to outside access. By mapping future transportation routes along with open space and wildlife corridors, we can make better decisions about subdivision design, including the location of future streets and stubs. Incorporating these maps into the draft code and requiring design consistent with mapped open space, wildlife, and transportation corridors will ensure more cohesion and better connectivity in our neighborhoods. If future thoroughfares — and the requirement to design subdivision around them — aren't referenced in the draft code, then Teton Valley's road system will become even more chopped up, and existing thoroughfares like Hwy 33 will become more crowded.

Workforce Housing & Transit.

Many Teton Valley households — 52% to be exact — contain at least one Jackson Hole commuter. As commuting costs increase, traffic in Jackson becomes worse, and the physical and mental stress associated with long commutes take their toll, commuters will need transportation options that do not involve a daily drive over the pass. Fortunately, Teton Valley is served by a growing transit network, in particular START commuter service, which provides much needed transit service to Jackson Hole. START is poised to expand service, and integrating transit into future development is a good way to leverage this transit investment. By locating additional housing units near START bus stops, we not only increase access to transit, but as discussed in the next paragraph, housing becomes more affordable.

Teton Valley has a growing affordable housing problem. The median sale price of homes in Teton County is about \$400k, however the median household income is approximately \$55k. In other words, most valley residents cannot afford the most housing available in the market. In general, workforce housing is defined as housing with a mortgage or rental payment that does not exceed 30% of gross household income. However, many factors go into housing affordability, such as utility bills, maintenance, financing, and in particular, transportation costs. A housing needs assessment funded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development found that Teton County households with a Jackson commuter on average spends over \$1000 per month on commuting costs. If commuting households have access to START transit — a monthly pass is \$105 per month — then working folks are better able to afford hous-



Transit ridership in Teton Valley is growing

ing. The key to maximizing household savings afforded by transit is making plenty of housing available near transit stops.

Currently, all START transit stops are located within cities, and there are no plans to add bus stops in the unincorporated county. As such, it is up to the cities to create areas for multiple housing types (e.g. apartments, condos, townhomes) near transit stops. The county's role is to limit housing to low-density development in rural areas, while encouraging a variety of housing types in and near the cities. For the most part, the current draft code accomplishes this, and this approach will ensure that a variety of housing types are built in the appropriate location.

Pathways

Finally, it is imperative that we build a network of pathways to allow our valley to be truly multi-modal. Multi-modal transportation is where various modes of transport are made available, specifically walking and biking in addition to travel by car. The Comp Plan envisions a network of non-motorized pathways throughout the county that connect rural neighborhoods such as Drictor & Dritonia to the cities, so that getting to work, the store, or dinner at a friend's house can be achieved by walking, biking, or driving. Similar to the aforementioned discussion on future road thoroughfares, it would be wise to incorporate planned pathways into the code so that future subdivision proposals can provide pathway easements. Fortunately, the Comp Plan has taken an initial stab at mapping possible pathway routes, and subdivision requirements in the new code can be written to help make pathway possibilities a reality.



Conclusion

We hope that you have found our Decoding the Code series to informative. In addition to providing communications such this, we would also remind you that VARD is a free resource for homeowner's associations, landowners and developers, as well as any member of the public seeking information and resources on land use planning and growth in Teton Valley. VARD is supported by over 500 members dedicated to fulfilling VARD's mission of preserving natural resources, protecting agricultural character, and promoting vibrant communities in Teton Valley through civic action.

To learn more about VARD, or to become a member, please visit www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org.



Valley Advocates for
Responsible Development

Our Staff

Shawn Hill, Executive Director

With over 12 years of town and regional planning experience, Shawn possesses a deep desire to maintain Teton Valley's tremendous qualities and apply the lessons he's learned throughout his professional career to his role as director of VARD. Shawn obtained a BS in Urban Planning from the University of Utah in 2001 and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Wyoming in 2011. Shawn has worked in a variety of communities in the Intermountain West, including Jackson Hole.

He has served in governmental, private-sector, and volunteer capacities. Though a native of Kaysville, Utah, Shawn's family was one of the original homesteaders in Teton Valley. While working as a planner for the Town of Jackson, Shawn moved to Teton Valley, a place he loves and knows well because of his deep family roots and fond childhood memories. "Teton Valley is a community of lofty goals and enormous potential. I believe VARD will continue to be a catalyst for community aspirations, and I look forward to contributing in my new role," noted Shawn.





Anna Trentadue
Program Director / Staff Attorney

An Idaho native, Anna credits her ten years of experience guiding on rivers throughout Utah, West Virginia, California, Oregon, and Idaho as the cornerstone of her interest in resource management. After studying ecology in Nunavut and Nepal, she earned her B.A. in Biology, with a French minor, from Colorado College in 2000. After college, she worked in plant genetics and diabetes research for the U.C. Berkeley Plant Gene Expression Center and U.C. San Francisco Department of Medicine.

Anna then retired her petri dishes and went to law school, earning her Juris Doctor from the University of San Francisco in 2006. She specialized in land use and water law, interned with the Attorney General's Energy Task Force, and worked at a private water law practice focused on California Clean Water Act litigation. Upon graduation, Anna returned to Idaho to work for another private water law practice in Boise which focused on transactional work in the Snake River Basin Adjudication. She joined the VARD staff in 2007, focusing on program work in the cities and county. She is also a member of the Idaho Bar. Anna currently serves on the Driggs Parks Committee and has served on the Teton County Economic Development Steering Committee. She is also Pathways Chair for the Teton Valley Trails and Pathways Board of Directors, and has served on the Board of the Driggs Downtown Community Association.

Brendan Conboy
Program &
Development Associate

As an outdoor and winter sports enthusiast, Brendan was naturally drawn to Teton Valley, and his passion for natural resource preservation and community development drew him to VARD. A native of Ipswich, Massachusetts, Brendan earned a Master's degree in Regional Planning in 2015 from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he studied economic development and received a graduate certificate in Cultural Landscapes and Heritage Management.



Prior to joining VARD, Brendan worked with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in Springfield, MA, and with the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation in Ware, MA. Brendan holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Anthropology and Geography from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA, where he graduated in 2009. Before returning to graduate school, Brendan spent time living in Big Sky, MT, and Alta, UT, where he became enamored with the West. It was during this time that Brendan's interest in planning piqued as he sought a means to articulate and address the developments changing the landscape around him. Upon completing graduate school, Brendan was determined to take this knowledge and skill set back to the West as soon as possible. Needless to say, Brendan is extremely happy to join VARD as a Program and Development Associate and to call the remarkable and irreplaceable Teton Valley home.