



Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

Smart Growth for a Vibrant Economy

It is hard to find a Teton Valley resident who disagrees that in the face of rapid change we need to better manage growth. There is widespread concern that as we grow we don't lose the core of what makes this such a special place to live, work and raise a family. The lynchpin to quality of life in Teton Valley is the amazing natural resources which will either be enhanced or destroyed by development.

In this newsletter we'd like to share with you portions of a booklet produced by Valley Advocates for Responsible Development (VARD). *Developer's Handbook for Smart Growth* examines the possibilities for development in Teton Valley through the lens of the ten Smart Growth principles, a few of which we'll highlight in this newsletter. Smart Growth is a national movement and school of thought based on the idea that development, when done well, can positively impact the economy, environment and public health, while also contributing to community vitality.

VARD's mission is to advocate for private, public and civic actions that result in the responsible development and sustainable use of the natural resources in Teton Valley. Working directly with developers and providing responsible development resources to them is one way we do this. Research and experience from across the nation show that there are very real profit incentives for Smart Growth development.

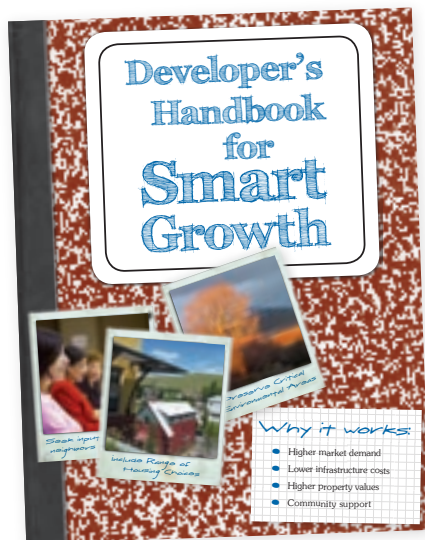
We also work with citizens like you and local decisionmakers for development policies and regulations that require and provide incentives for good development and protection of the things that

valley residents value: clean air and water, safe streets and roads, safe places for kids to play, abundant fish and wildlife, and a small-town community atmosphere – to name a few.

The county is currently in the last stages of a nearly year long process to update parts of the development code that deal with Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), the form of development that most large-scale developments in the county pursue. Developing a PUD is supposed to be a negotiated process whereby in exchange for providing community benefits, a developer is allowed additional density above their zoning and more flexibility in design. Unfortunately, the PUD ordinance in place since 2005 has created a sense of entitlement to incredibly dense development in the rural parts of the county, with no real teeth for requiring the intended community benefit: meaningful open space.

Citizen participation in the PUD revision process has been great – the P&Z received 80 letters in support of the revised PUD, as opposed to just two negative and seven neutral letters. At the June 11 public hearing before the Planning & Zoning Commission, even most of the speakers who spoke against the revised ordinance in its initial draft form agreed that the current PUD needs to be changed.

My hope is that *Developer's Handbook for Smart Growth* will be another tool to help this community on the road toward better development and a sustainable economic future. —Sandy Mason, Executive Director



in this issue

Handbook Introduction ...1
 Handbook Excerpts.....2
 Music Event a Blast.....4
 Donations Matched4



Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

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.

OFFICE HOURS—
 M-TR 9:00am-4:00pm
 Friday by appointment

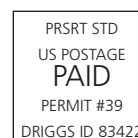
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HOT OFF THE PRESS! Developer's Handbook for Smart Growth

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

Read on for excerpts from *Developer's Handbook for Smart Growth* →

★ Mixed Land Uses

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.



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

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.

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.”



★ Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

Building a strong sense of place involves protecting viewsapes 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.



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.

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 architecture.”

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

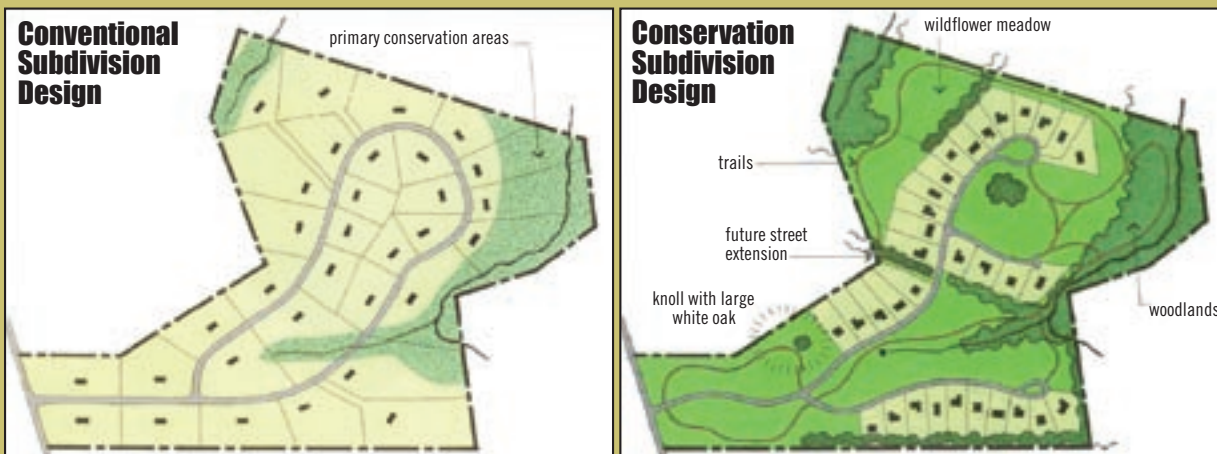
Why it works:

- 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, magnificent 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

★ 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.

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.

more Smart Growth next page →

★ 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.

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.

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.

Handbook Excerpts continued from previous page. To get a copy of the complete *Developer's Handbook for Smart Growth*, contact or stop by the VARD office.



4th Annual VARD Music Event was a BLAST!

It was great to see so many of you on June 13 at the Knotty Pine for VARD's fourth annual music event. Seeing all the kids playing, lively conversations and people rocking out to Jerry Joseph was a reminder of the fact that we live in an amazing community. Around 300 people attended the event which helped raise \$2600, and we signed up around 30 new and renewing members. Thank you for your support!

VARD

Tin Cup Challenge Donations MATCHED Through July 25

How exciting it is to be in the midst of the first annual Tin Cup Challenge, the community philanthropic event that is replacing Old Bill's Fun Run for nonprofits based in Teton County, Idaho. The festivities – breakfast, races, fun run/walk and nonprofit booths – will take place Saturday, July 19 in the Driggs City Park. Be sure to check out VARD's booth!

The Teton Valley Community Foundation is accepting donations to local nonprofits through Friday, July 25 at 5pm. The beauty of this opportunity is that you can give to your favorite Teton Valley nonprofits at the same time, online or with one check, and your donations will be matched.

Historically, VARD has relied on the funds raised through Old Bill's to cover a large portion of our annual operating budget. Although the Tin Cup Challenge is occurring earlier in the year than Old Bill's, we hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to have your dollars to VARD – and to



better growth management in Teton Valley – go further through the match. You can give online at www.tincupchallenge.org or use the form all Teton Valley box holders received in the mail. If you need a donation form and brochure we will be happy to mail you one; just give us a call at 354-1707.

VARD

Get Involved • Become a Member TETON VALLEY NEEDS YOU!

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 address _____
 city _____
 state _____ zip _____
 e-mail _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Member..... \$25-\$49/year
 Supporter..... \$50-\$99/year
 Friend..... \$100-\$249/year
 Patron..... \$250-\$499/year
 Sponsor..... \$500-\$999/year
 Benefactor..... \$1000+/year

Members will receive meeting invitations, regular newsletters and e-mail updates.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND YOUR CHECK TO: **VARD** P.O. Box 1164, Driggs, ID 83422

VARD IS A NONPROFIT 501 c3 ORGANIZATION. DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.