



Through the concept of **sustainability**, this Plan makes clear the singular importance of ecosystem and natural resource preservation and protection in the long-term achievement of all of the community's goals.

## ***What Does "Sustainability" Mean in Jackson/Teton County?***

***Sustainability is a system of practices that are healthy for the environment, community, and economy and can be maintained indefinitely.<sup>2</sup>***

The Jackson/Teton County community is integrally tied to the unique natural environment in which it is located. Yellowstone (the world's first National Park), Grand Teton National Park, Bridger Teton National Forest, and the National Elk Refuge, all of which are wholly or partially contained within Teton County, are testaments to the special ecology and international significance of our valley home. These roughly 2.6 million acres of federally protected and resource-rich land foster a strong ecosystem stewardship ethic in the residents of and visitors to Jackson and Teton County. The community's vision is to extend that stewardship ethic to the 73,000 acres (or 3%) of land in our county available for private development. The community realizes that 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 by the international community for generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Rec 64: (County 4-1, Town 7-0) Vision Statement: "Preserve and protect the area's unparalleled natural ecosystem while meeting our community's needs in an environmentally responsible manner that celebrates this significant and unique place on our shared planet."...

<sup>2</sup> Rec 34: (County 3-0, Town 4-0) Definition of Sustainable: Replace 1987 BCR definition with: A system of practices that are healthy for our community and the environment, economically viable and can be maintained indefinitely.

An ecosystem stewardship commitment has clear environmental benefit, but also protects the community's economy and social character.<sup>4</sup> The diverse population of the community thrives on the shared appreciation of the natural setting in which we are located and the quality of life<sup>5</sup> it brings, and the economy of the community is based upon the natural environment of the area. 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**<sup>6</sup>

**Sustainability** is the idea that the long-term health of the environment, community, and economy is dependant upon preservation and responsible use of natural resources. It is a concept that is especially resonant locally because of the international demand to vacation and reside on the limited private land of Jackson and Teton County. However, sustainability is a globally applicable concept that has been incorporated internationally into community planning efforts. While Jackson and Teton County's unparalleled natural setting and international popularity heighten the importance of implementing the concept of sustainability, they also provide the community with an opportunity to lead in the implementation of the concept of sustainability.<sup>7</sup>

## Balancing and Prioritizing Community Values Through Sustainability

Throughout the history of comprehensive planning in the community, the Jackson/Teton County community vision has emphasized the importance of the area's natural resources. By utilizing the concept of sustainability, this Plan makes clear the singular importance of ecosystem and natural resource preservation and protection in the long-term achievement of all of the community's goals.

### Past comprehensive plans dealt with separate, unrelated elements

In the past, the community addressed its goals and values in separate plan elements, with the hope of achieving them all through flexibility and discretion in individual actions. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan incorporated nine community issues into a vision chapter that addressed each issue as an important component of community character, but focused more on the balance and prioritization within each individual chapter than the balance and prioritization between the issues. This relationship is illustrated in the graphic below.

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<sup>3</sup> Rec 22: (County 2-2, Town 2-3) Add "without sacrificing the natural environment" after second to last sentence of paragraph 2 on page 7

<sup>4</sup> Rec 64: (County 4-1, Town 7-0) Vision Statement: ...Have staff add community character... into vision statement

<sup>5</sup> Rec 64: (County 4-1, Town 7-0) Vision Statement:...Have staff add ... quality of life... into vision statement

<sup>6</sup> Rec 69: (County 4-1, Town 3-4) Add a statement in the Vision chapter text about a "sustainable community, not dependent on growth" similar to what is in the 1994 Plan

<sup>7</sup> Rec 25: (County 4-0, Town 5-0) End of second paragraph, P 7 insert: As a community, we have a unique opportunity to lead by example, share our values and influence opinions around the world. We need to embrace this opportunity and step up to the challenge of leadership presented to us.



Figure 2.1: The 1994 Community Vision discussed achieving each community issue as a component of maintaining community character.

**This Plan balances and prioritizes the community values using the concept of sustainability**

This Plan builds on the work of the 1994 Plan with regard to each individual issue by considering the balance, interrelation, and prioritization of community issues through one, defined lens - sustainability. The Plan is organized into eight themes that describe the community’s values. The themes are organized in order of community priority. The concept of sustainability addresses the interrelationships inherent between the themes, specifically delineating that:

- ✓ All decisions should be sensitive to the preservation and protection of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the area’s natural resources;
- ✓ <sup>8-9</sup>The impact of local decisions must be understood in a local, regional, and global context because of the impacts that development and other human activities have on ecological processes;<sup>10</sup> and
- ✓ Least growth solutions that respect existing neighborhood character while acknowledging private property rights are the appropriate method of meeting the community’s human needs.<sup>11</sup>

The graphic below represents the implementation of the 2009 Community Vision through the lens of sustainability.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Rec 37: (County 3-0, Town 3-1) On P8, first paragraph: Delete second check: "ecosystem preservation does not preclude . . ."

<sup>9</sup> Rec 40: (County 0-3, Town 0-4) P8, Amend second check, under sustainability: Ecosystem preservation may at times preclude growth and development activities above and beyond those needed to meet our community's human needs.

<sup>10</sup> Rec 63: (County 5-0, Town 7-0) 3rd check on page 8 amended: The impact of decisions must be understood in a local, regional and global context because of the impacts that development and other human activities have on ecological processes.

<sup>11</sup> Rec 66: (County 5-0, Town 4-3) Insert in Vision chapter text a discussion of "least growth" solutions in order to meet human needs - emphasizing wildlife and natural resource protection while acknowledging private property rights

<sup>12</sup> Rec 65: (County 2-3, Town 1-6) P9 graphic - Community Vision. Replace with a "Nortonian" Teeter Totter



**Figure 2.2: The 2009 Community Vision is set against the backdrop of Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the eight community themes are related to each other, balanced, and prioritized through the lens of sustainability.**

The policies of *Theme 1 – Practice Stewardship of Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Scenic Vistas* are the priority of the community because they speak directly to ecosystem and natural resource preservation and protection – the paramount consideration of sustainability. However, sustainability also respects existing private property rights, State allowed development,<sup>13</sup> and existing neighborhoods. The policies of *Theme 2 – Manage Growth Responsibly* ensure that the provision of the community’s needs and desires are met in sustainable manner. Themes 3-8 each discusses in detail a specific community need and/or desire.<sup>14</sup> The community recognizes that there will be trade-offs between these themes as efforts are made to achieve the goals of each. However, sustainability dictates that, there is no situation in which achievement of a goal, principle, or policy in Theme 3-8 will take priority over the wildlife, natural resource, and scenic vista stewardship policies of Theme 1 or the growth management policies of Theme 2. This is because through the lens of sustainability, this Plan makes clear the singular importance of ecosystem and natural resource preservation and protection in the long-term achievement of all of the community’s goals.

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<sup>13</sup> Rec 39: (County 3-0, Town 4-0) P9 after "...growth patterns" and before "It recognizes..." insert: Ecosystem and open space preservation may be adversely affected by State Statutes and private property rights which may not be controlled or managed by the County or its residents.

<sup>14</sup> Rec 64: (County 4-1, Town 7-0) Vision Statement: ...Have staff add ... human desires into vision statement

<sup>15</sup> Rec 21: (County 4-0, Town 5-0) Split the Vision Chapter from the Executive Summary