



March 11, 2010

Town of Jackson and Teton County Planning Commissions  
Re: Theme 7 Comments  
Submitted via email to Alex Norton

Dear Planning Commissioners,

On behalf of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the April 2009 draft of the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan. Following are comments specific to Theme Seven - "Provide Quality Community Facilities, Services and Infrastructure."

Attached are line-by-line comments and suggestions for discussion related to Theme Seven. Listed below are key points that we hope are clarified in discussion and/or incorporated into a new draft of this chapter.

First, we believe it is important to integrate additional language regarding fiscal responsibility in this chapter. In comparison to the 2008 draft of this chapter, the 2009 draft does not include a principle or policies that specifically highlight the importance of fiscal responsibility. For example, the first principle of the 2008 draft was "provide adequate public facilities and services for current and future residents in a fiscally responsible manner." The 2008 draft also included statements such as "new development should not increase taxpayers' costs to provide new schools" and "new development should not occur in locations or a manner that increases taxpayers' cost to serve it or creates unsafe conditions." In general, the lack of focus on fiscal responsibility is particularly concerning given that the concept of fiscal responsibility in future land use decisions was also not highlighted in the "managing growth responsibly" chapter of the new draft.

Second, the 2009 draft should include an estimated timeline for the development of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), particularly given the policies' intent to require concurrent review of facilities' capacity as it relates to new development. Related to this concern about a need for a timeline is the extent to which considerable detail has been removed from the "themes and policies" on community facilities, as compared to our existing 1994 Plan. The existing 1994 Plan included extensive detail to provide for clear guidance on the drafting of land development regulations, whereas the new chapter leaves considerable room for interpretation. The extent to which this new approach can lead to increased predictability and accountability, particularly in the near future, is questionable. Additional information on existing conditions and challenges should be incorporated.

Third, while we appreciate and support the inclusion of a specific chapter on community facilities, built infrastructure, and associated services, we also believe it is critical to at least reference how these issues complement other public priorities, such as open space conservation and wildlife habitat protection. We mention this for a primary reason; through its descriptions of public needs and preferences, this chapter will likely form the basis of public funding policies in the future. As part of these discussions, it is important to keep in mind a comprehensive picture of how the community prioritizes different amenities and services. Ultimately, we need to make sure public preferences and priorities like wildlife protection are factored into budgeting and decisionmaking in a meaningful way in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Kristy Bruner  
Community Planning Director

Becky Tillson  
Community Planning Associate

# Provide Quality Community Facilities, Services and Infrastructure (Theme 7)

## Statement of Ideal<sup>1</sup>

*Residents will receive timely, efficient, and safe delivery of quality services and facilities.*

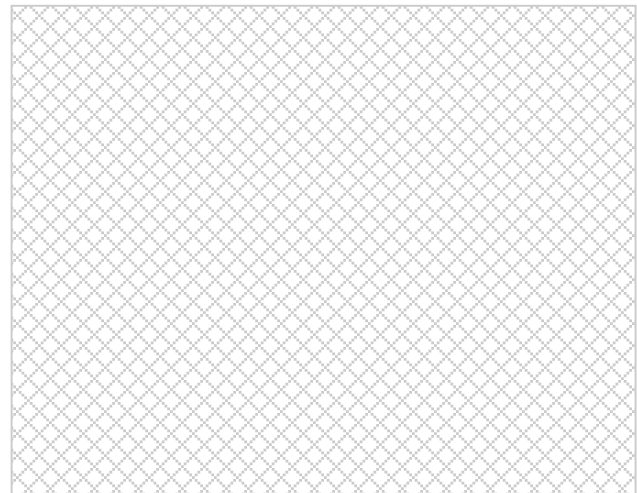
### What does this theme address?

- 7.1 – Level of Service Plans
- 7.2 – Funding for Community Facilities
- 7.3 – Community Facility Location

services and infrastructure, the town and county will create a countywide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which outlines and budgets for both existing and future facility and service.<sup>2</sup> They will consult and evaluate the approved countywide CIP to ensure that anticipated growth does not outpace the ability of local governments to provide appropriate infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

### Why is this theme addressed?

Residents, businesses, and guests in the town and county rely on the efficient, timely, and safe delivery of essential utilities and services such as fire protection, emergency medical treatment, water and sewer. Residents and businesses should also expect local government to take appropriate and reasonable steps to prepare for essential service delivery in times of emergency. In addition to essential services, the Town of Jackson and Teton County recognize that livable and desirable communities include quality schools, libraries, arts, culture, and other social services and activities that support the social fabric of the community. To ensure the provision of these



Add essential services photo



## What the community has said about this theme

Community members repeatedly expressed concern that not appropriately balancing growth with the provision of necessary infrastructure, such as schools, roads, utilities, law enforcement and emergency service delivery, threatens our quality of life and safety. Community members specifically asked for this seventh theme and its policies to be added to this Plan to address community infrastructure.

## Principles and Policies

### **Principle 7.1—Provide quality services and facilities to residents in a safe, efficient, and timely manner<sup>4</sup>**

*Residents and businesses in the Town of Jackson and Teton County rely on the efficient, timely, and safe delivery of essential utilities and services such as fire protection, emergency medical treatment, water, and sewer<sup>5</sup>. This Plan identifies measures to ensure an acceptable Level of Service is maintained for services and facilities.*

#### **Policy 7.1.a: Maintain Level of Service (LOS) plans for the provision of public services**

Level of Service (LOS) is the quality and quantity of services supplied to the community by a provider of public services. To ensure that services are delivered to the public in a safe, efficient and timely manner, the Town of Jackson and Teton County will coordinate with governmental and nongovernmental service providers to accomplish the following:

- A. Identify each provider's acceptable Level of Service
- B. Create a Level of Service plan for each service provider
- C. Develop standards for measuring service delivery success

**The first priority** will be to identify acceptable Levels of Service, create LOS plans, and develop standards for measuring service delivery success for the following services:

- Fire/EMS and law enforcement,
- Library,
- Parks and recreation,

- Public health,
- Utilities/infrastructure,
- Public transportation, and
- Weed and pest management.



**Parks are important to livability and neighborhoods**

**The second priority<sup>6</sup>** will be to identify acceptable Levels of Service, create LOS plans, and develop standards for measuring service delivery success for the following services provided by non-profit, public and quasi-public entities:

- Arts/culture and community events,

- Human services,
- Medical care,
- Schools, and
- Child care.

**Policy 7.1.b: Identify barriers to the achievement or maintenance of acceptable Levels of Service**

Service providers may or may not be currently delivering their services at an acceptable level. The reasons for sub-optimal service delivery can be the result of internal or external factors. It is important to identify barriers to acceptable service delivery, so the service provider can correct obstacles within control and understand and accommodate those beyond their control.

**Policy 7.1.c: Encourage provision of housing on-site or within response areas for critical service providers**

Critical service providers, such as those working in Fire/EMS and law enforcement, have identified a need for employee housing within the town and county. Ideally housing will be on-site or within the employee’s response area. Especially in the case of volunteer service providers, having critical service employees located significant distances from their response areas increases response time and reduces the efficiency of service delivery. In some instances, road closures may considerably reduce or eliminate service delivery for some time. The community recognizes that a paid Fire/EMS department may be needed if workforce housing cannot be provided in a capacity that allows for a continued volunteer force.

**Principle 7.2—Adequately fund existing and future public services and facilities**

*To ensure that the community can adequately fund existing and future services and facilities, the Town of Jackson and Teton County will create a countywide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)<sup>7</sup> that outlines existing and future facility/service needs and budgets for those needs.*

**Policy 7.2.a: Ensure development will pay its fair share of the cost of necessary facilities and services**

New developments will create demand for services and facilities, and the development will provide a fair share of costs of avoiding impacts to existing residents.<sup>8</sup> The town and county will consider updating the system<sup>9</sup> of fees and requirements that assess cost of public facilities and service needs generated by new development. Regulations will be clear and predictable and should not increase the cost of workforce housing provision.<sup>10</sup>

**Policy 7.2.b: Identify funding sources to maintain acceptable LOS provision**

Services and facilities provided to existing residents will require maintenance and potentially replacement over time. Continued reliable funding<sup>11</sup> is needed to ensure the continued provision of these services and facilities. Funding may also be needed to bring existing suboptimal services and facilities up to acceptable levels.

**Principle 7.3—Ensure that services and facilities are distributed equitably and efficiently<sup>12</sup>**

*Residents and businesses should expect that the governments that serve them reasonably provide for essential service delivery and quality social components such as schools,*

*libraries, arts, culture, social services and activities that generate community spirit. These services should be distributed in town and county nodes.*

**Policy 7.3.a: Provide infrastructure and public services in an efficient, equitable manner**

Project the infrastructure and public facilities needed for the buildout and future development pattern<sup>13</sup>. In addition, develop Capital Improvement Plans and development requirements to ensure the facilities and services are provided concurrently with development.<sup>14</sup> Create, update, and fund Capital Improvement Plans in the town and county.

**Policy 7.3.b: Provide redundant community services and facilities to accommodate county nodes<sup>15</sup>**

It will be important to ensure that services are available to citizens dispersed throughout the county, particularly those that are physically separated from the town by the Snake River or Teton Pass. During natural disasters, severe weather, or other times of emergency, services may be delayed or entirely unavailable to those in outlying communities due to road closures or bridge failures. The community's preferred solution to this problem is to make critical or key services available through satellite facilities on the west bank, co-located wherever possible. Given Alta's proximity to Driggs, Idaho, the community will maintain and improve interlocal agreements, with the City of Driggs to provide services to Alta residents.

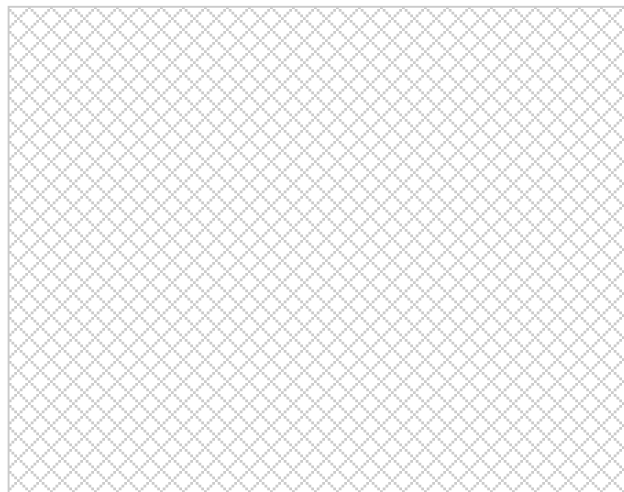
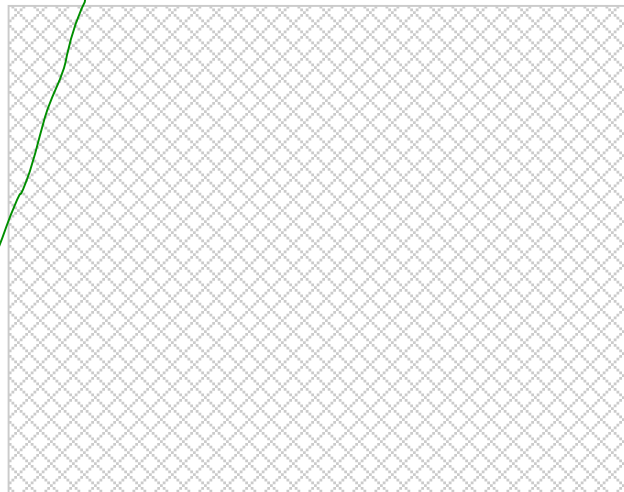


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## Strategies<sup>16</sup>

The Town of Jackson and Teton County will undertake the following strategies in initial implementation of the policies of this theme. The town and county should periodically update strategies as tasks are completed or when additional action is necessary, based on monitoring of the Theme’s indicators.

### Strategy 7.1: Define and evaluate acceptable Levels of Service

- Work with service providers to define and determine acceptable LOS.
- Identify barriers to acceptable service delivery.
- Create Level of Service plans for each service provider.
- Develop standards for measuring service delivery success.

### Strategy 7.2: Create Countywide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

- The first priority will be to create a countywide CIP that incorporates the capital needs of all Town of Jackson and Teton County agencies and departments.
- Create a countywide CIP that incorporates the capital needs of all relevant governmental and nongovernmental public service providers (as a longer-term strategy).
- Evaluate the CIP regularly to ensure development approvals are consistent with the capacity of existing and planned facilities. The CIP will also ensure that existing facilities are maintained and new facilities are anticipated.

### Strategy 7.3: Expand funding for public facilities and services

- Amend the Land Development Regulations to update the development exaction regulations and incorporate impact fees as necessary.
- Identify additional, reliable funding sources to finance existing service and facility deficits and maintain current services and facilities.

## Indicators

The community will use the following indicators to monitor achievement of this theme.

| Community Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Indicators     | Goal                  | Review Period |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Level of Service plans implementation                          | monitor               | 5 yr          |
| 2. Funding for community facilities, services, and infrastructure | monitor <sup>17</sup> | 1 yr          |

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## Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance comments

<sup>1</sup> This chapter should specifically address fiscal impacts associated with facilities, services and infrastructure. The statement of ideal should include language related to fiscal responsibility. For example, the sentence could be completed with “in a fiscally responsible manner.”

<sup>2</sup> Designation of a timeline for creating a CIP is important, particularly given its potential contribution to refining a Future Land Use Plan. It would be ideal for the agency input regarding existing conditions, challenges and anticipated needs to be available as part of the comprehensive planning process. It has particular relevance to refining the Future Land Use Plan, which is supposed to be the predictable element of the plan to guide future land use decisions.

<sup>3</sup> As in the 1994 Plan, we believe that this chapter should identify existing conditions and challenges related to key community services and infrastructure. **It could be argued that growth (particularly when considering the extensive amount of development already approved and in the pipeline) has already outpaced the ability of local governments to provide certain services.** Additional clarification on how this plan’s policies will ensure that new growth does not outpace local governments’ capacity to provide services, in a fiscally responsible manner, would be helpful.

<sup>4</sup> Similar to the statement of ideal, language regarding fiscal responsibility should be included in the principle’s statement. In the 2008 draft, as well as in the 1994 Plan, there is considerably more focus on the fiscal implications of the issues and policies this chapter addresses. For example, the 2008 draft includes the following language to describe its first principle.... “Provide adequate public facilities and services for current and future residents in a fiscally responsible manner.” This focus should be reinstated. Adequate analysis of the costs of growth (physical expansion) is an important issue for the community. Given that the themes and policies will establish a basis for the land development regulations, it is important that the topic is emphasized in the new comprehensive plan. It is not discussed in any great detail anywhere else in the plan; this chapter is the place for it.

<sup>5</sup> This principle addresses more than the utilities and services listed in the narrative. The narrative should include a more comprehensive description of the topics the policies address, such as arts, education, and weed and pest management.

During the rewrite of this chapter, it would be helpful to distinguish more clearly the different intents of principles 7.1 and 7.3. As they currently read, the statements sound nearly the same. And, the narrative describing the principles doesn’t seem to reflect the policy descriptions within the corresponding sections. For example, principle 7.3’s narrative addresses primarily schools, libraries, arts, etc., but the policies within the section address a broader range of topics, including emergency services. In general, additional clarification between these two principles would be helpful.

<sup>6</sup> The prioritization of creating LOS plans for specific services is confusing. Additional basis and language should be added that explains for example, why the draft ranks LOS plans a higher priority for parks and recreation over schools. Again, particularly given the lack of detail in this section, approximate timelines for the creation of these plans is important. Without them, the plan outlines little accountability in terms of timely commitment to create these plans as part of the CIP.

Language could be added that outlines how and where these agency and service provider plans will be incorporated into the new comprehensive plan, even if it is just an appendix. Also, as the 1994 Plan emphasized, it is very important to consider effective population when considering community facility and services capacity. For example, when agencies create LOS plans, it will be very important to distinguish what capacity (such as peak population) the infrastructure is expected to support. For example, the 1994 Plan clearly stated that the community should not build its transportation infrastructure based on peak demands alone, but should consider other factors as well, such as community character.

<sup>7</sup> See point (2) regarding the need to approximate a timeline for creation of a CIP. Until this is completed, and without the level of detail that exists in our current 1994 plan, will the abbreviated language that is provided in the new chapter be sufficient to provide the basis for our existing and revised land development regulations, particularly development requirements? Will the 1994 Plan chapter on community facilities be an appendix for the new plan, as was suggested for the transportation chapter?

<sup>8</sup> Incorporating language that can provide as much guidance as possible about what constitutes a “fair share” is essential. Adding measurable targets for a “fair share” would help to provide guidance for the land development regulations.

<sup>9</sup> The word “consider” should be removed. The county should update, not “consider updating.” To provide a stronger basis for the land development regulations, the new comprehensive plan should at a minimum mention possible mechanisms and tools to ensure that new development pays its way, such as explicitly calling out exactions and types of impact fees. To do so in the comprehensive plan lends a basis for implementing such actions through the land development regulations. See the existing 1994 Plan for an example.

<sup>10</sup> This sentence is confusing. What is meant by “should not increase the cost of workforce housing provision?” It also seems odd to emphasize that “regulations will be clear and predictable” when this should be an overall goal for all regulations.

<sup>11</sup> More detail regarding ideas of funding sources would be helpful, providing a stronger basis for enacting funding mechanisms in the future.

<sup>12</sup> See point (5) regarding the need to clarify the intent of this principle and associated policies in comparison to 7.1.

<sup>13</sup> It is for exactly this type of reason that it is critical to conduct these types of analyses before adopting a Future Land Use Plan. Doing so without this basic information is not responsible planning. Needs should be evaluated based on existing conditions and projections.

<sup>14</sup> The intent to require concurrent review of impacts on facility and service demands should be more clear. For example, the 2008 draft included a separate policy “Ensure concurrent Utilities and Facilities.” Whether or not this concurrent review is timely is also determined by the estimated

timeframe for creating a CIP and implementing it. We recommend adding the concept of concurrent review as an independent policy, as suggested in the 2008 draft.

<sup>15</sup> This policy needs to be reworked. The reference to “satellite facilities” needs to be clarified, particularly with regard to specific types of “key services.” “Nodes” should be replaced by “existing communities.”

<sup>16</sup> As in other themes, it is important to remember that our community is not starting from scratch with regard to local planning. Our existing 1994 Plan was a result of a lot of work, and can still provide a stronger foundation than it appears to have done so for the rewritten April 2009 draft. The difference in level of detail between our existing plan’s chapter on community facilities and this new chapter is significant. **It would be helpful to clarify why and make sure that there are no unintended consequences of so significantly replacing the existing 1994 Plan.**

Also, in terms of future strategies, it is important to not lose sight of a comprehensive understanding of how the community prioritizes different amenities and services. For example, we need to make sure public preferences and priorities like wildlife protection and scenic vistas preservation are factored into budgeting and decisionmaking in a meaningful way. Much of what is in this section will guide how public funding is utilized. To have no mention of open space protection or other wildlife-related goals is a concern. The way in which public funds are spent should reflect not only the safety, health and welfare of constituents, but also their highest priorities and preferences. Local government expenditures should of course reflect these priorities, which include habitat protection.

Thinking ahead, we believe that this plan should think outside of the box, and not only characterize community amenities as built infrastructure. “Green infrastructure” is a planning term that refers to an “interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations. [It] looks at conservation values in concert with land development, growth management, and built infrastructure planning.” In terms of planning for future community services, forms of green infrastructure should also be given consideration in the new plan.

<sup>17</sup> As in other themes, monitoring should not be a goal in and of itself. Therefore, these indicators need significant work. A statement should be added that indicators will be identified with the help of the different agencies as the LOS plans are drafted. Through time, projections for anticipated facility and service needs will need to be checked against actual demands.