VISION DOCUMENT

photo by Sandy Mason

TETON COUNTY, IDAHO

BOCC, P&Z and Core Committee Work Session Draft, 20 September 2011

Teton County Comprehensive Plan Core Committee
Teton County Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committees
(Economic Development, Transportation, Natural Resources + Outdoor Recreation, Community Events + Facilities, Agricultural + Rural Heritage)

Teton County, Idaho

Harmony Design & Engineering
AECOM
Jorgensen Associates, PC
Intermountain Aquatics, Inc.

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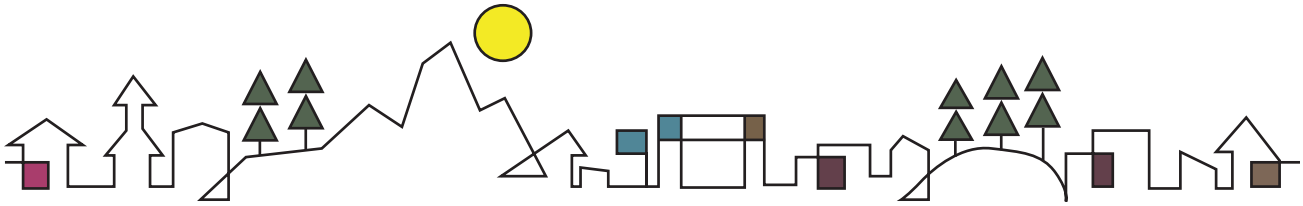


BACKGROUND

Breathtaking scenery, abundant wildlife, clean water, fresh air, open spaces, healthy forests and other outstanding natural resources are what make Teton Valley unique among many other rural areas.

Teton County, Idaho is a rural community of approximately 10,000 people and 450 square miles in Southeastern Idaho. It has three incorporated cities -- Tetonia, Driggs and Victor -- and large areas of unincorporated County. It is situated in the western shadow of the Tetons and much of the economy is outdoor recreation oriented, with Grand Targhee Resort (in Teton County, Wyoming) as one of the largest employers in the area. The County employment base is also linked to other regional population centers outside the State, as a large portion of residents commute to Jackson, Wyoming for work.

Historically, the Valley has been a small agricultural community founded by Mormon Pioneers, many descendants of whom are living in the community today. In the more recent past, it has begun to transition into a service-based mountain resort economy, with significant activity in second-home and resort-based development. The population of Teton County represents a mix of families who have been here for generations, part-time residents here for only a portion of the year, residents who have recently resettled here from other parts of the country and immigrants from outside the United States. As such, the community has a broad range of educational attainment, income levels and values.

Teton Valley has transformed from a primarily agricultural, slowly developing community to a community with an unprecedented rate of development and real estate speculation, experienced between 2005 and 2008. As the second fastest growing rural county in the United States between 2000 and 2009, Teton County was impacted by the bursting of the economic bubble and now has over 7,000 vacant, platted lots with 3,232 of those lots located in 19 partially-finished subdivisions. The resultant aftermath of that boom left Teton County with economic and land use challenges, failed subdivisions, high unemployment, high foreclosure rates and lots that are no longer marketable.

Although agriculture was historically the basis of Teton Valley's economy, it is challenged by many factors. While tourism has emerged as an economic alternative, it does not always provide stable employment opportunities. The recent development boom provided many good jobs but only for a relatively short period, resulting in an increased number of Teton Valley residents commuting daily to Jackson for employment, increasing traffic and the associated pollution and accidents.

Built on lessons learned and founded on our community values, the Teton Valley 2020 Vision Document – and corresponding Comprehensive Plan – Envision a Sustainable Future for Teton County.

CREATING A VISION FOR TETON VALLEY

Visioning is a critical step for every planning process; adding defensibility and creating a foundation for more effective community engagement. **Visioning ensures that County residents' values and goals are accurately reflected in the plan's elements, policies and frameworks.** Visioning will also provide the framework foundation for the next phases of the planning process, Plan Frameworks and Plan Elements. This Vision creates the structure and initial agreements necessary to tackle tough issues that will be further addressed by the Sub-Committees.

The visioning process is incremental and is building off the P4P Questionnaire, stakeholder interviews, input from County staff, and results of the Values/Issues/Opportunities Exercises completed by the Core Committee and Sub-Committees during meetings #1 and #2.

This is the fifth draft of the Vision Document. The first draft included preliminary guiding principles, benefits and opportunities and was reviewed by the Sub-Committees during meeting #3. Revisions were made based on the Sub-Committees' comments to create the second draft and the revised text was available for public comment through an online survey. Approximately 100 citizens gave feedback on each component, and each Sub-Committee considered this public feedback to further refine the vision statements during meeting #4. Each Sub-Committee also reviewed the photos and maps that accompany the vision statements and additional changes were made in order to create the third draft. The document was then reviewed by the Core Committee and changes were made to create the fourth draft that was presented to the public during the Community Vision Workshop held on August 25, 2011. Comments from the public made during that workshop as well as comments gathered from the "Plan Van" outreach at the Felt Days celebration were then incorporated into the document to create this fifth draft..

The Vision Document is now being presented to Planning and Zoning and the Board of County Commissioners for your endorsement. This ensures that the community, consultants, property owners and public are on the same page before considering plan options.

A VISION FOR TETON COUNTY

A vision statement and guiding principles for each plan element arose from direction given through input by the Sub-Committees, Core Committee, stakeholders, County staff, elected officials and the public through the Teton Valley 2020 questionnaire and direct Sub-Committee outreach efforts. The result is this draft of a Vision for our community, comprised of the following plan elements:

- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Natural Resources + Outdoor Recreation
- Community Events + Facilities
- Agricultural + Rural Heritage

Vision statements, guiding principles, benefits and opportunities were developed based on the comments received during this process, and are included in the following pages.

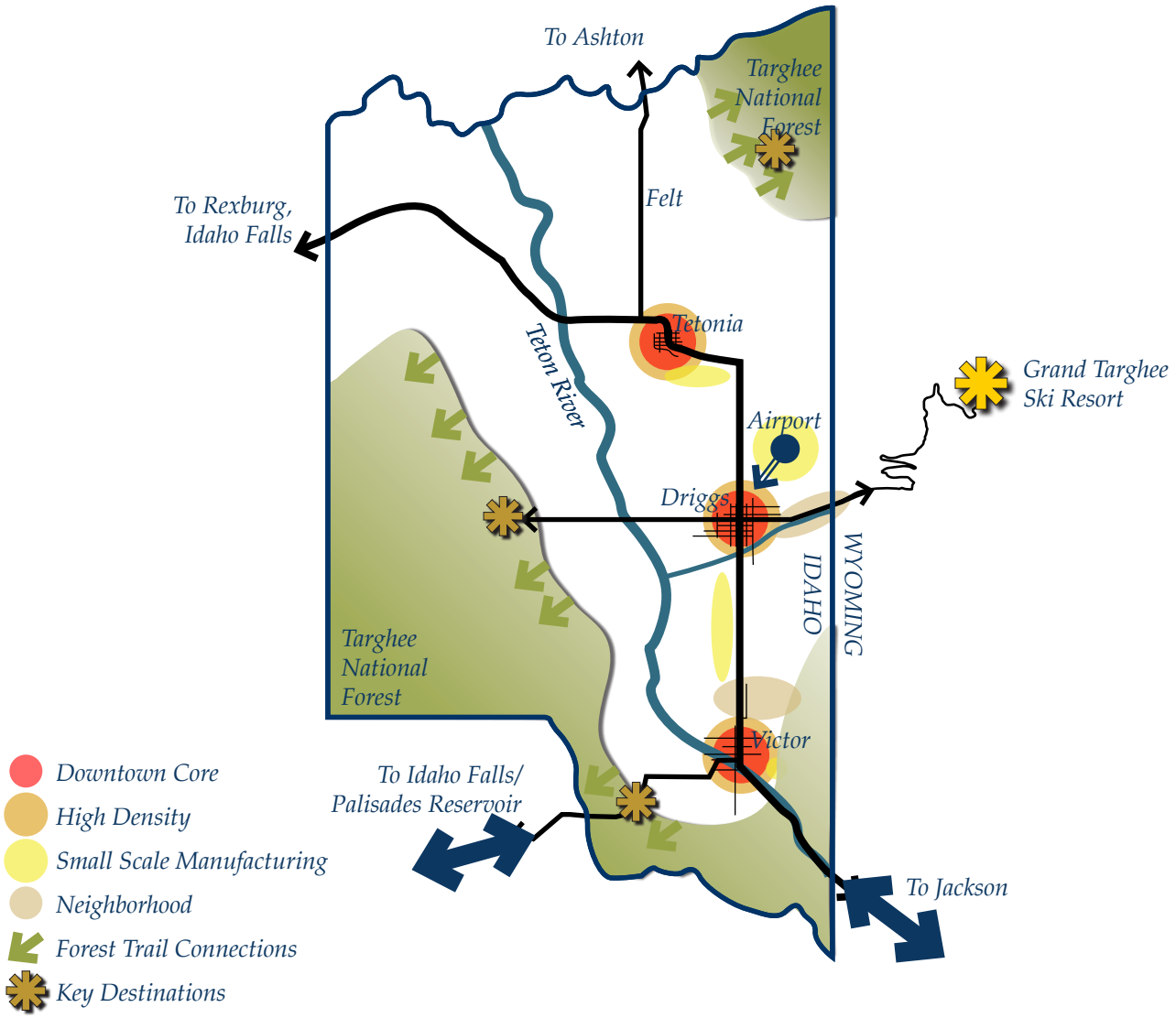
Our Community Envisions a Sustainable Future for Teton County

We will strive to:

- Establish a vibrant, diverse and stable economy.
- Create and maintain a well connected, multi-modal network of transportation infrastructure to provide convenient and safe mobility for all residents, visitors and businesses.
- Preserve natural resources and a healthy environment, which is essential for creating viable future economic and recreational opportunities for all users.
- Contribute to our strong sense of community by providing quality facilities, services and activities to benefit the community.
- Preserve and enhance the rural character and heritage of Teton Valley.

It is this Vision that informs the following vision statements and guiding principles. These will serve as the building blocks for our community's future.

economic development



economic development

Establish a vibrant, diverse and stable economy.

Guiding Principles

- Encourage, promote and support locally-owned valley businesses
- Incentivize local commerce
- Create a hospitable and attractive environment for businesses and visitors
- Preserve our rural character and heritage and help local agricultural industries flourish
- Attract businesses that are economically and environmentally friendly
- Encourage stewardship and accountability
- Pursue economic diversity, innovation and creativity

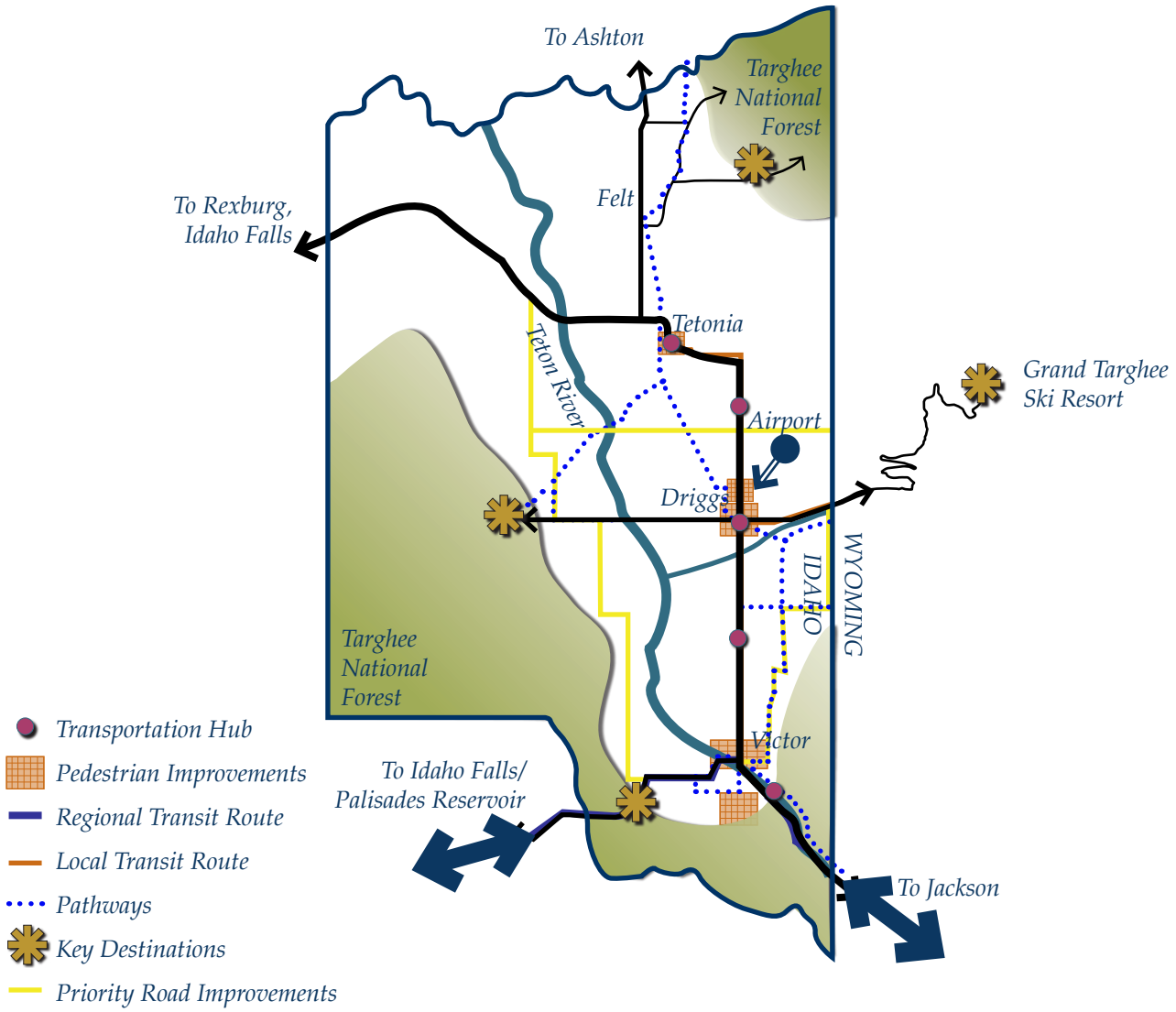
Benefits

- Provides long-term economic stability (minimizes boom/bust cycles)
- Provides gainful employment
- Provides independence
- Develops community identity
- Keeps money in the valley
- Preserves valley aesthetics

Opportunities

- Brand and market Teton Valley
- Promote smart growth strategies
- Attract businesses that support the guiding principles
- Improve infrastructure
- Improve existing educational facilities and develop educational opportunities to support economic development, including post-secondary education including via the internet, telecommuting and extension offices
- Embrace our cultural diversity and heritage
- Develop a coordinated and collaborative economic development strategy

transportation



transportation

Create and maintain a well connected, multi-modal network of transportation infrastructure to provide convenient and safe mobility for all residents, visitors and businesses.

Guiding Principles

- Create convenient, safe, timely, sustainable and efficient options for multi-modal transportation that satisfy a multitude of needs
- Provide a well connected transportation network in Teton Valley
- Provide well maintained transportation infrastructure including roads, paved pathways and sidewalks
- Develop regional connections
- Encourage pedestrian connectivity in appropriate areas
- Develop transportation appropriate for a rural community, respectful of the unique character of Teton Valley

Benefits

- Provides multiple choices for transportation
- Provides interconnection to, from and within Teton County for residents, visitors and businesses
- Increases the economic desirability of Teton County
- Improves traffic flow
- Creates a healthy community
- Reduces future transportation impacts such as pollution and harm to wildlife
- Provides cost-effective and timely transportation solutions

Opportunities

- Improve the condition and safety of existing transportation infrastructure
- Improve overall mobility within Teton County through options for multi-modal transportation
- Develop paved paths to connect all communities within the county to adjacent communities and recreation areas
- Capitalize on funding opportunities for multi-modal transportation options
- Explore opportunities for public transit for commuting, visiting and recreation
- Promote development that is transit, pedestrian, and bicycle friendly
- Establish principles/processes by which future decisions can be made

Multi-Modal Transportation includes vehicle types and programs for air, bike, bus, call-and-ride, materials transport and public transit opportunities appropriate for Teton Valley.

natural resources + outdoor recreation

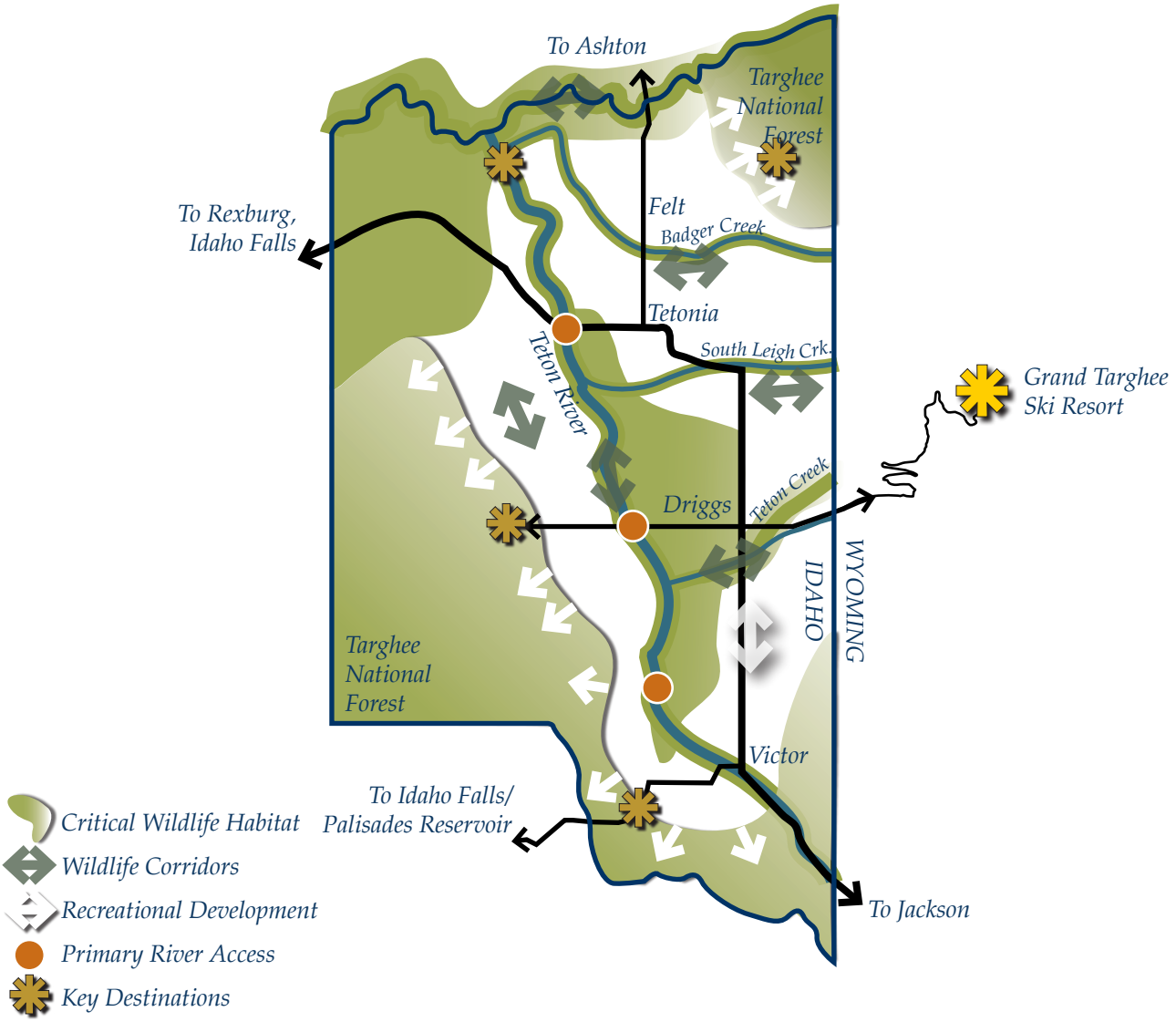


photo by Gabe Rogel

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natural resources + outdoor recreation

Preserve natural resources and a healthy environment, which is essential for creating viable future economic and recreation opportunities for all users.

Guiding Principles

- Enhance and preserve our access to public lands and recognize the need to accommodate different user groups in a way that minimizes user conflict and area damage
- Conserve our public lands and natural resources (air, water, wildlife, fisheries, climate, trail systems, wetlands, dark skies, soundscape, soils, open space, native vegetation)
- Provide recreation for all user groups (biking, skiing, fishing, OHV, hunting, trail users, equestrian users, boating, non-motorized flight and others)
- Balance private property rights and protection of our natural resources
- Recognize, respect and/or mitigate natural hazards, including but not limited to flooding, earthquakes, landslides, radon and fires
- Promote the acquisition of open space for natural resource protection by a variety of means
- Reduce infestation/introduction of invasive species
- Respect sensitive habitat and migration areas for wildlife
- Respect cultural heritage sites
- Recognize that tourism is a fundamental component of our economy and is dependent on healthy natural resources

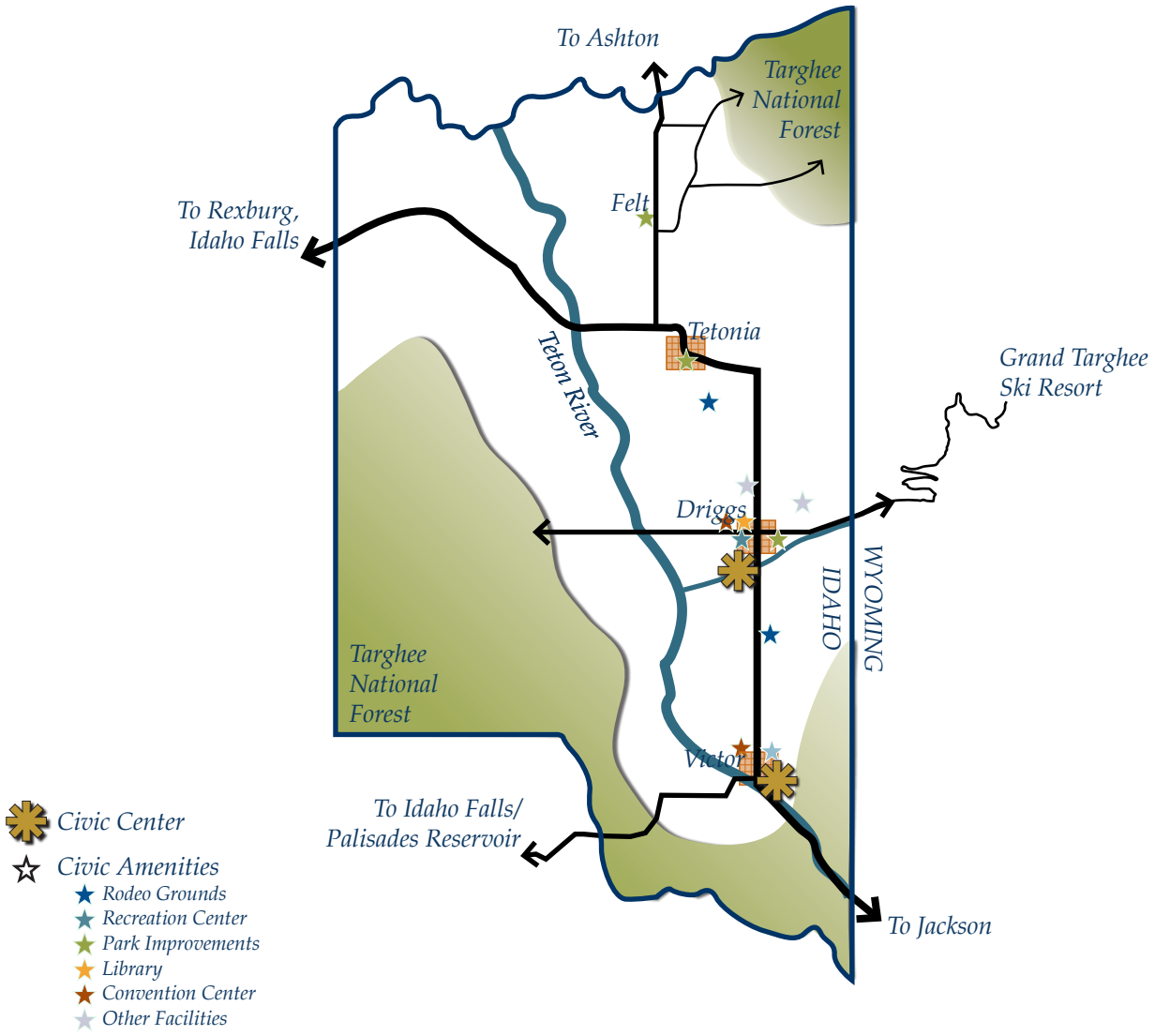
Benefits

- Conserves native wildlife habitat, wetlands, and water bodies
- Protects and provides an adequate supply of clean water
- Maintains and improves air quality
- Promotes public health, safety and welfare
- Provides physical links between neighborhoods, cities and recreation areas (trails, pathways, etc.)
- Promotes economic development through tourism and quality of life
- Provides sustainable opportunities for generations of families to remain and make a living here through all stages of life
- Brings together community and builds acceptance of diverse lifestyles
- Minimizes detrimental effects of special hazards and their inherent risks

Opportunities

- Create developmental regulations that are consistent with diverse community values, balance natural resources and growth, are predictable and preserve the economic value of the land
- Make this a place where people want to live while remaining affordable, preserving heritage and protecting resources for all users
- Maintain existing public land access and work to create new access (e.g. winter travel plan)
- Create new and sustainable funding options and incentives to protect our open space, rural lands and natural resources (e.g. recreation district)
- Preserve and improve our recreational opportunities as well as our natural resources
- Create benchmarks for monitoring and preserving natural resources
- Create and sustain economic development through promotion of recreational opportunities and natural resources

community events + facilities



community events + facilities

Contribute to our strong sense of community by providing quality facilities, services, and activities to benefit the community.

Guiding Principles

- Encourage diverse and affordable activities for all ages
- Encourage the development of quality education facilities - primary, secondary and post-secondary
- Provide quality services and facilities in a coordinated manner for the health and safety of the community
- Encourage an environment that fosters community involvement
- Encourage location of new facilities in existing population centers to maximize efficiency and convenience

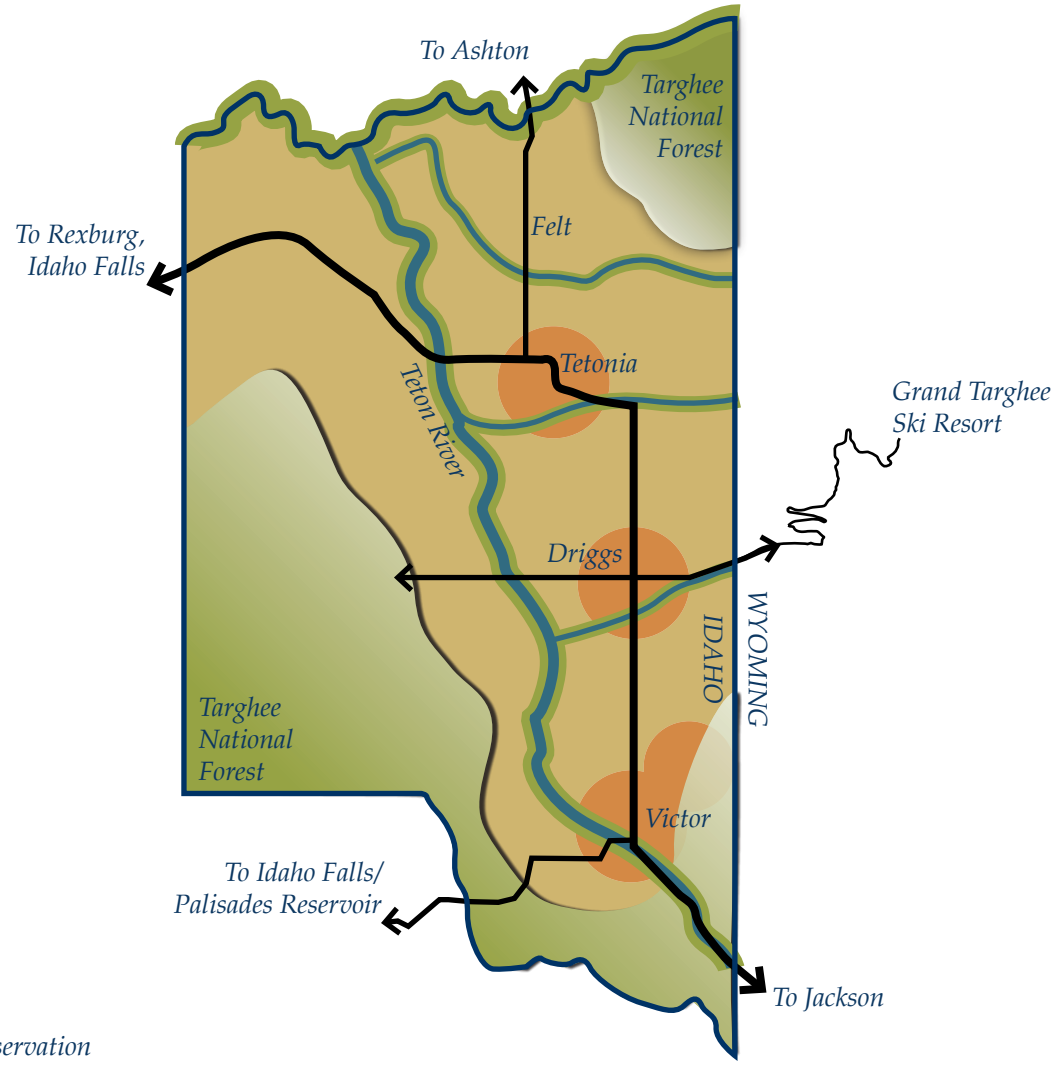
Benefits

- Bridges cultural differences to create a strong sense of community
- Increases community interaction and sense of place
- Supports economic development
- Creates an efficient infrastructure system, as a foundation for community sustainability

Opportunities

- Find common ground by identifying shared values and priorities and acknowledging differences respectfully
- Develop a Recreation Master Plan that coordinates and includes all providers and users
- Explore new funding options (e.g. Recreation District, grants, private donations) to develop and support affordable activities for all ages (e.g. Recreation Center, 4-H, etc.)
- Expand and develop pre-K through post secondary education system

agricultural + rural heritage



Rural Preservation

Rural Design

photo by Sandy Mason

photo by Reed Sullivan

agricultural + rural heritage

Preserve and enhance the rural character and heritage of Teton Valley.

Guiding Principles

- Maintain our small town feel and rural heritage
- Ensure that planned growth maintains our rural character
- Balance property rights and rural character
- Develop a means to compensate private property owners for large parcels of open space that benefit the community

Benefits

- Preservation of open space and rural character
- Preservation of our small town, agricultural heritage
- Promotes Teton County's distinctive identity

Opportunities

- Return platted land back to agricultural production where appropriate and viable
- Support and enhance agriculture and ranching
- Facilitate the transfer of land (such as to family members)
- Explore funding options to protect our open lands (e.g. Land District , voluntary open space fees and Land Trust Conservation Easements)
- Support our local agriculture through improved infrastructure (e.g. improve and maintain roads for agricultural product transportation)