Growing Our Own Communities

U.S. EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance For Victor and Driggs, Idaho

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The cities of Victor and Driggs requested EPA assistance to identify and overcome barriers to compact, mixed-use, walkable development in each of the cities, the type of the development called for in each city's recently updated comprehensive plan. Both cities want to ensure that growth and development allows for new economic opportunities, job growth, choices for getting around and where to live, work, and play. They also want growth that is supportive of the historic character and natural beauty of the Teton Valley.

Through meetings with developers, landowners, the mayors and city council members, members of the two cities' planning and zoning commissions, downtown residents, county residents, and a host of other citizens interested in better land development patterns confirmed this vision for future growth and development in Victor and Driggs. The vision includes:

- A transportation network that is accommodating to pedestrians, bicyclists, and the automobile;
- Thriving downtowns that are centers of economic, social, and cultural activity
- Pedestrian friendly downtown districts;
- A distinction in form between buildings and sets of buildings in the downtown and outside the downtown;
- Supporting growth that helps conserve the natural beauty and resources of the Teton Valley;
- Affordable housing that is conveniently located near stores, services, and schools.

The technical assistance Team outlined five broad areas where the cities can implement policies to get the development patterns each community has said they want. These areas are:

- **Unlock the market:** Reform existing land use policies, ordinances, and design guidelines so that the private sector can begin to supply the types of development projects community members have said they want;
- **Enable Affordable housing:** Home prices may be outpacing the incomes of local residents. Local land-use regulations and development policies should allow for the construction of a variety of home types. Higher densities can help reduce land prices on a per-unit basis, thereby addressing part of the affordable housing challenge;
- **Manage Parking:** Solving parking challenges can be instrumental in spurring on downtown revitalization;
- **Ensure Connectivity:** A connected street network provides more options for getting around a community. Policies that ensure new developments are interconnected with the existing community can be written into codes, ordinances, and design guidelines;
- **Support Cooperation between the cities and Teton County:** The future of Victor and Driggs (and Tetonia, as well) is linked with the future of Teton County. Working together across the municipal boundaries to address challenges to the entire region is imperative.

The Team's work in Victor and Driggs began with an overview of the market conditions in the Teton Valley. This overview demonstrated that growth is coming, that there is a demand for a

variety of housing types and price points, and that there are opportunities the development of new retail in both downtowns. The market overview also provided the context for the analysis of the regulatory barriers to infill development in both cities.

The Team then addressed the transportation issues, including the downtown pedestrian environment, street connectivity in both cities, and the challenges related to the transition from the downtowns to the more auto-oriented sections of Highway 33. The team provided a set of options that could be adopted by each city to enhance the downtown pedestrian environment, reconnect the street network to provide for more convenient ways for community members to get around, and ensure that the distinction between city and countryside remains along Highway 33.

The report also outlines a set of implementation options both cities can adopt to facilitate the type of development each has said they want out of future growth. These options include:

- Design guidelines for traditional neighborhood development (TND) and small lot residential housing;
- Strategies for making the downtowns great places to accommodate growth that is coming to the region;
- Specific to Victor:
  - The Team did a visioning exercise for the downtown, showing how redevelopment can allow the city to redevelop in a way that ensures growth meets multiple community objectives;
  - The Team presented the idea of introducing a boulevard design to help catalyze future economic development, create a better downtown pedestrian environment, and still accommodate both local and through traffic. Representatives from the Idaho Transportation Department agreed to work with Victor on this concept;
- Specific to Driggs:
  - The Team analyzed the future land-use map and presented options Driggs could adopt to get the pattern of development community members have said they want;
  - The Team presented strategies for accommodating a portion of the region's growth within downtown Driggs; and,
  - Presented strategies for defining the city's edge through cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

2 INTRODUCTION

The high quality of life in the Teton Valley is strongly tied to its rich natural resources. The nearby national parks, wilderness areas, and clear mountain rivers are all magnets for new development. The qualities that make it an attractive place to live are also sensitive to the impacts of growth and development. This, in turn, creates a delicate balancing act for the region as it plans for the future.

Teton County's economy has historically been based on agriculture. However, it has transitioned over the past 10 to 15 years toward more of a "New West" economy driven by real estate, recreation, and quality of life. The county's population has more than doubled over the past 15 years and now stands at over 7,600 people. Most of the growth has been in the formerly agricultural areas of the county. While Victor has grown by nearly 1,000 people and Driggs has grown by roughly 300, over 4,000 people have moved into unincorporated areas throughout the county since 1990.

Victor and Driggs both recognize that accommodating more of Teton County's expected growth within their boundaries is important to the entire region's future. Redirecting growth toward more compact, mixed-use, and walkable developments will help meet the challenges of dramatic growth, while producing economic, community, and public health benefits like additional jobs near existing housing, new amenities, and neighborhoods that allow residents to be active while going about their daily lives. With limited resources to expand public infrastructure, the timing, location, and design of new development will be crucial. Finally, there's an overwhelming consensus in both communities and within Teton County that working to ensure growth and development meets multiple community goals can and should be done within a cultural and regulatory framework that respects and enhances the rights of property owners.

During 2006, both Victor and Driggs completed updates to their respective comprehensive plans. Each adopted new zoning ordinances, and Driggs introduced new design guidelines for commercial areas. Both communities have made it a clear priority to establish a community vision of how and where growth should occur, backed up by development approval tools that support their goals. Victor and Driggs are especially interested in attracting development projects that support agreed-upon community goals. Among the things citizens in both communities have said they want are:

- Growth that enhances the unique community character
- Thriving, vibrant downtown districts
- A range of housing choices that people can afford at different stages of life
- Safe, attractive pedestrian environments
- Development policies that support local and regional retail opportunities
- Ordinances and design guidelines that ensure future growth patterns distinguish between the city and landscape
- Strategies that ensure Highway 33 serves as a main street for both cities as well as a transportation corridor in the Teton Valley

3 SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

To have a better understanding of how their policies, ordinances, and design guidelines may be adjusted to attract the type of development patterns they want, Victor and Driggs applied for Smart

Growth Technical Assistance (SGIA) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).[1] Victor and Driggs asked the EPA consulting Team ("Team") to conduct an analysis of their existing codes, ordinances, policies, and guidelines and to present the communities with options they could consider adopting. The Team consisted of:

- Tim Van Meter and Rick Williams, urban designers/architects, Van Meter Williams Pollack
- Dena Belzer, urban economist, Strategic Economics
- Jim Charlier, transportation planner, Jim Charlier Associates
- Will Schroeer, ICF International

Matthew Dalbey, David Bend, Carla Fromm, and Jim Werntz from EPA, Roger Millar from the city of McCall, Idaho, and Elaine Clegg of Idaho Smart Growth and the Boise, Idaho, city council also participated.

The site visit occurred during the week of October 23, 2006. During that week, the Team met with a wide range of stakeholders from Victor, Driggs, and Teton County. Participants in the public meetings in both cities included developers, landowners, the mayors and city council members, members of the two cities' planning and zoning commissions, downtown residents, county residents, and a host of other citizens interested in better land development patterns.

Victor and Driggs' charge to the Team was straightforward:

1) conduct an analysis of the barriers and opportunities for compact, walkable, mixed-use infill redevelopment in the two cities; and
2) outline strategies that both cities can consider adopting and implementing to achieve the goals they have each set out in their comprehensive plan updates.

The Team first completed a market overview for Teton County and the cities of Victor and Driggs in order to understand the economic conditions for growth and development in Teton County. This overview grounded the discussion of the regulatory barriers to infill development and created the context for understanding how and where growth may support multiple community goals. The Team analyzed the existing development policies, codes, ordinances, and design guidelines that provide the structure for new development and redevelopment and looked at the policies related to the Highway 33 corridor, the pedestrian environment in both downtowns, parking policies, and other transportation issues that influence land development patterns. The Team also conducted a visioning exercise for development in downtown Victor.

[1] See Appendix A for a more detailed overview of the Smart Growth Technical Assistance Program.

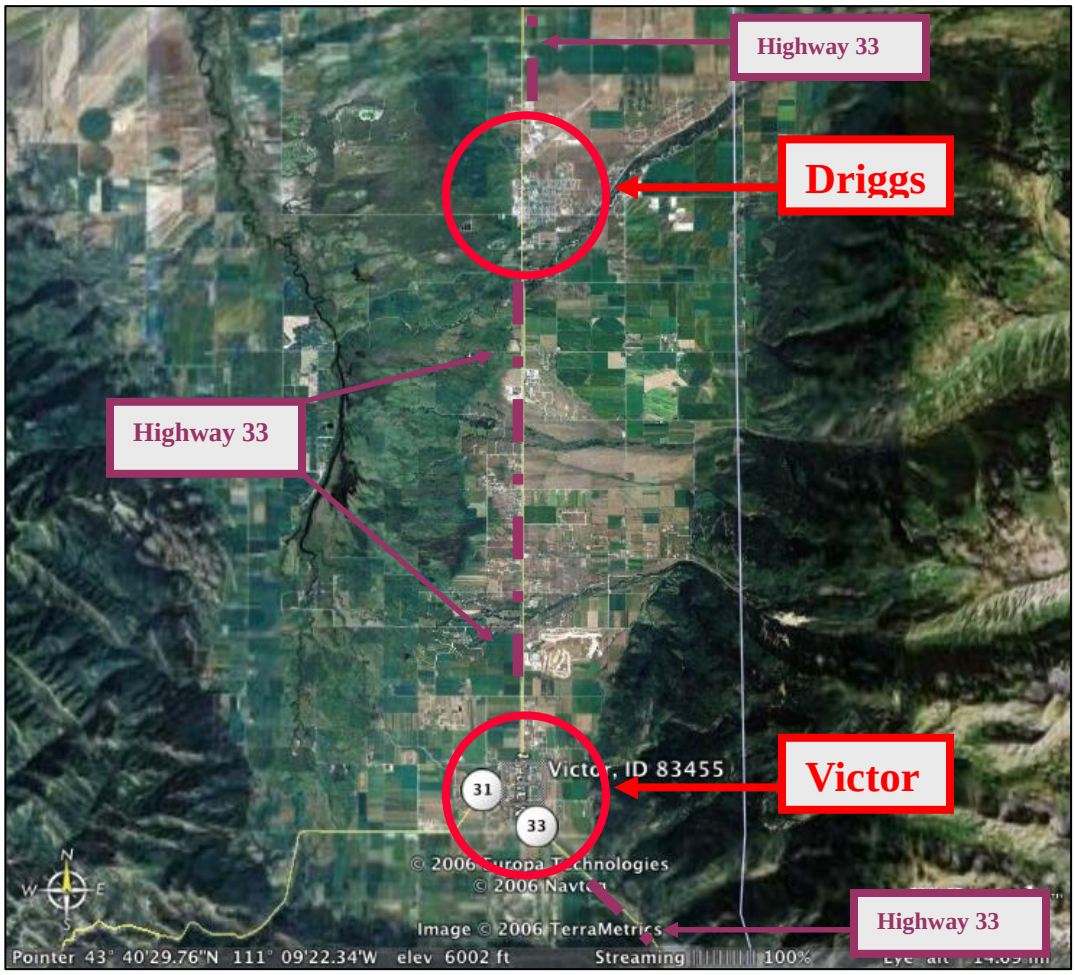


Figure 1: Aerial view of Teton County and Victor and Driggs

This report begins with the market overview, moves to the key issues that impact both communities, principally the relationship between the cities and Highway 33, and then shifts to a more detailed look at the vision and implementation options for each city. The appendices contain more detailed data on market conditions, examples of development guidelines and policies used by other communities around the West, guidelines for connectivity and parking, and a discussion of the preliminary site plan for a new development in Driggs. The council members, planning and zoning commission members, staff, and citizens of Victor and Driggs will decide if and how to implement the options presented in this report.

4 MARKET OVERVIEW

Plans must be viable in the market, so the Team completed this market study to provide a firm foundation for the analysis and the development of policy options. A market overview provides a snapshot of an area's current market and identifies opportunities for future development. The Team was asked to look at the overall market for growth and development in the region, with a particular focus on the extent and type of development potential for the cities of Victor and Driggs.

4.1 Demographics, housing affordability, and commuting

Demographics

Teton County has seen rapid population growth since 1990. Driggs and Victor are also growing, but at very different rates. For the first time, Victor's population has passed Driggs'. The U.S. Census estimates Victor's 2006 population at 1,255, 1,165 in Driggs, and 7,615 in Teton County. The most likely explanation for this is Victor's closer proximity (by 8 miles) to Jackson, Wyoming's job opportunities. As a result, Victor is becoming a bedroom community for Jackson.

	Year	Population	% Change From Previous Decade
City of Victor	*1970*	241	-
	1980	323	34.0%
	1990	292	-9.6%
	2000	840	187.7%
	2006	1,255	49.4%
City of Driggs	*1970*	727	-
	1980	727	0.0%
	1990	846	16.4%
	2000	1,100	30.0%
	2006	1,165	5.9%
Teton County	*1970*	2,351	-
	1980	2,897	23.2%
	1990	3,439	18.7%
	2000	5,999	74.4%
	2006	7,615	26.9%

Figure 2: Population change between 1970 and 2006.[2]

Population Growth Projections

Available data suggests steady population growth between 2005 and 2025. Estimates compiled by the Team indicate the county's population will grow by between 1,151 and 3,360 during that time. Based on the current average household size in the region, this population growth translated to a county-wide demand for between 410 and 1,196 new housing units by 2025.[3]

[2] Idaho Department of Labor and Commerce; Claritas. Claritas is a provider of demographic data based on U.S. Census and other data. See www.claritas.com).
[3] Idaho Power/Idaho Economics, www.idahopower.com; Woods & Poole Economics, www.woodsandpoole.com.

Household Income

2006 Median household incomes in Victor ($50,744), Driggs ($44,469), and Teton County ($52,172) are relatively high when compared to the Idaho's statewide median household income of $41,443.[4]

Housing Affordability

The Team's analysis of local and regional housing sales indicates the median home price in Teton County is approximately $300,000. The household income generally required to afford a $300,000 house is about $64,000. Given the median incomes above, a household with the median income in Victor, Driggs, or Teton County would have a hard time affording the median priced house.

This analysis confirms some of the overall comments the Team heard prior to and during the site visit. Many community members are concerned over rising housing costs. Both new and existing home prices seem to be unaffordable to many residents. Using the median cost of housing and the household income distribution, analysis shows that in Victor and Teton County, fewer than 40 percent of households could afford the median housing price. In Driggs, fewer than 30 percent of households could afford the median housing price.

	Households	Percent of Total
Driggs	122	29%
Victor	170	38%
Teton County	1,051	39%

Figure 3: Households with incomes greater than $64,000
(can afford the median price of a home in Teton County in 2006)[5]

Vacancy rates can influence rents and housing prices. Lower vacancy rates often lead to higher rents and higher housing prices, while higher vacancy rates tend to push rents and prices down. According to the 2000 Census, the vacancy rate in Teton County was 21 percent. In Victor it was 12.5 percent, while in Driggs it was 12 percent. In Teton County, 72.4 percent of all vacancies were seasonal, while in Victor it was 32.6 percent, and in Driggs 59.6 percent.[6] Seasonal housing occupancies in communities like Victor and Driggs often skew rents and prices that would otherwise be correlated with vacancy rates. That is, in the county and Driggs in particular, vacancies that may have otherwise helped moderate rents and housing prices, do not do so because they are not part of the year round supply of housing. In Victor, where the seasonal portion of the vacancy rate is lower than Driggs and the county, the impact of the seasonal vacancies may be lower. The Team believes that the amount of seasonal housing has increased since the 2000 Census. The rents and prices in the housing market will continue to be skewed by seasonal occupancies and vacancies.

Commuting

Many residents in Driggs, Victor, and Teton County are commuting to Jackson each day. More than half (54.1 percent) of workers in Victor and more than a third (34.5 percent) of workers in

[4] U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Claritas, 2006.
[5] U.S. Censu Bureau, 2000; Claritas, 2006.
[6] U.S. Census, 2000.

Driggs work out of state (most likely work in Jackson, but a portion also work at the Grand Targhee resort). In Teton County as a whole, 36.1 percent of workers are employed out of state.[7]

4.2 Land Use Inventory

Data from Teton County's Recorder's Office indicate that much of the total acreage in Victor – 77 percent – is already developed, while less than a quarter of Driggs' acreage (21.3 percent) is developed. In both communities, the most important infill sites are in their respective downtowns within a few blocks of the main intersections (Hwy. 33 and Little Avenue in Driggs, and Hwy. 33 and Center Street in Victor). Much of the undeveloped land in both cities is on the edge. In Driggs' case, a good portion of the nearly 80 percent of its land that is undeveloped was recently annexed. Victor has not annexed as much undeveloped land as Driggs, so it therefore has a lower percentage of undeveloped land (23 percent). In both cities, though, the redevelopment potential can be high with land use and development policies that are supportive of the community's infill and redevelopment goals, especially in the downtown areas. Infill sites can be unlocked for redevelopment by adopting policies such as those discussed in this report that support land assembly, subdividing larger underused parcels, and flexible zoning and parking requirements.

County Land	**Acres**	**Percent of Total**
Developed	18,039	9.3%
Undeveloped	159,208	82.0%
Conservation Easement	7,561	3.9%
Pending	9,355	4.8%
Total	**194,163**	**100.0%**
Victor	**Acres**	**Percent of Total**
Developed	543	77.5%
Undeveloped	157	22.5%
Pending	0	0.0%
Total	**700**	**100.0%**
Driggs	**Acres**	**Percent of Total**
Developed	216	21.3%
Undeveloped	798	78.7%
Pending	0	0.0%
Total	**1,014**	**100.0%**

Figure 4: Inventory of developed and undeveloped land[8]

Data from the Teton County Recorder's Office indicates strong growth in new building plats, but actual buildings lagging behind this number (see Figure 5). In Driggs, for instance, more than 200 plats were approved in 2005, while fewer than 50 structures were built. The new plats indicate where individual property owners hope or expect the market will go, while the completed projects are an indicator of current market conditions.

[7] Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor.
[8] Teton County Recorder's Office, 2006.

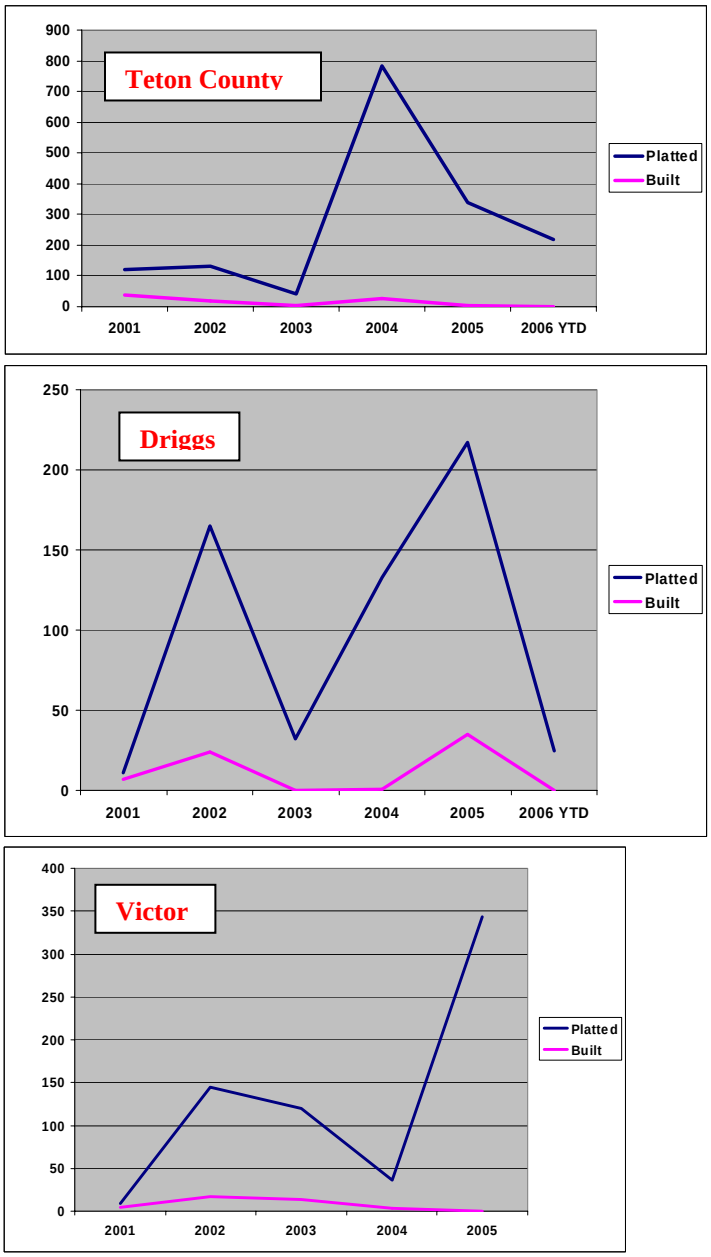


Figure 5: Platted parcels and built parcels, 2001-2005[9]

4.3 Retail Sector

The Team's analysis shows that demand for retail opportunities in Victor and Driggs outpaces supply. That is, people in Victor and Driggs will travel to other places to buy things because these things are not available locally. An assessment of current incomes, population, and existing square footage of retail indicates Teton County could currently absorb an additional 72,000 square feet of retail, Driggs could accommodate 29,000 more square feet and Victor 24,000 more square feet. [10]

[9] Teton County Recorder's Office, 2006.
[10] Claritas, 2006.

This estimate is based on current economic conditions and assumes that all the consumer demand for the retail would be satisfied in the county. Analysis suggests there is particularly high demand for building supplies, a book store, home furnishing stores, sporting goods, and hardware supplies.

This retail overview can be helpful to each community as it considers the land-use mix and scale of proposed development projects. New mixed-use developments can create their own demand for additional retail space by including residential units, but the current population has a definitive amount of retail leakage (demand that is being accommodated in other places). New projects that supply retail space in excess of the current needs risk rearranging the existing retail rather than adding new businesses to the community. On the other hand, the construction of retail space in parts of the communities identified for increased business activity can help to achieve each community's vision of a vibrant, livable downtown.

4.4 Market Summary

Teton County's population has been rapidly increasing and will continue to do so. There is some disparity in growth projections, but clearly both Victor and Driggs can and should expect significant growth. Incomes, while rising, are generally not high enough for households to buy a home, particularly the housing currently being constructed. Further, the current economic conditions can support additional retail space in each city, but the amount is not large and significant additional retail space will create redundancies.

Increasing population growth, rising incomes, infill redevelopment potential, and market conditions would all support additional retail opportunities. There is both current and growing market potential for higher density housing.

In order to achieve each city's stated goals, however, it will be essential to:

- address the need for affordable housing,
- create downtown plans to grow and attract businesses and new residents,
- implement downtown parking plans that support existing and future businesses, and
- begin to cooperate with Teton County on land use and development plans.

The Team's market findings, in sum:

- There is sufficient demand to support development in both downtowns that provides convenient ways to get around, housing that is affordable and is near shops and jobs, and sidewalks and streets that are safe.
- Future demand for retail activity will result from:
    - Future population growth.
    - Developing great places.
- Housing affordability is a concern to citizens and the data on housing costs support this. The market can support the construction of a variety of housing types in each city.
- There is retail leakage in Victor, Driggs, and Teton County. There will be continued pressure in support of strip retail development between Victor and Driggs.

Both cities and the county have the opportunity to leverage this growth and create a regulatory climate that unlocks the market for better development in the existing places.

5 CONFIRMING THE VISIONS OF EACH COMMUNITY THROUGH PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Early in the site visit, the Team met with community members and discussed the type of growth and development citizens wanted to see in Victor and Driggs. These meetings were a way to build on the ideas the Team had read in the comprehensive plans and other public documents provided by the cities' staff. The cities' charge to the Team was to help both Victor and Driggs find strategies that would allow the cities to grow in a compact, walkable, mixed-use development pattern.

The Team's discussions with community members during the site visit basically reinforced the charge, but also helped Team members better understand the issues and concerns that were most on community members' minds as they discussed how to make future growth and development achieve multiple community objectives.

At the project kickoff meeting held at the new Driggs Community Center on October 23, nearly 70 people discussed some of the challenges and opportunities presented by current growth patterns:

Challenges

- Lack of affordable housing
- Changing demographics
- Concern over changes to small-town character
- Concern that there is a lack of leadership on growth issues
- Safety concerns related to traffic and children
- Development paying for itself/impact fees
- The pedestrian environment/width of Hwy 33
- Environmental concerns over large parking lots
- Concern over how to move forward city and county cooperation
- Not a critical mass of people, retail opportunities, jobs, and residences in either downtown
- Ground level retail spaces being converted to office/service
- Concerns that rents are not high enough to allow new projects to get built

Opportunities

- Places exist in both cities to improve community interaction:
  - Vacant property used for music this past summer
  - Can be used for a farmers market
- Opportunity for additional local and regional cooperation
- Recreational opportunities
- Increased retail opportunities
- Growth is here; "let's make it work for our communities"
- New public transportation being offered in 2007 (to take commuters over the pass to Jackson, WY)

During the site visit, the Team solicited additional input and discussion from community stakeholders. Most of this discussion synthesized the challenges and opportunities put forward at the kickoff. Among the issues discussed throughout the week were:

- Managing parking in the downtowns
- The need for small area plans/neighborhood or district plans
- Importance of street connectivity in both cities as a prerequisite for getting the type of growth each community wants
- Pedestrian safety, especially in the downtowns
- Highway 33 as the main street; Victor and Driggs want grow their downtowns, yet their "main street" is also the state highway that carries regional traffic up and down the valley
- Noise and other issues associated with truck traffic (trucks wearing down roads built for automobile traffic)
- The desire for a distinct edge between the cities and the countryside

Discussions in both cities often revolved around the impact of Highway 33 – as the main street in both cities, as it transitions out into the less developed county land, and as the primary transportation corridor. Community members in both cities viewed their downtowns as places that should be pedestrian friendly, support a range of retail opportunities, have places to live and work and congregate, and define the cities of Victor and Driggs. A better relationship between the communities and Highway 33 emerged as the primary organizing theme of the vision for future growth in Victor and Driggs.

5.1 Vision for future growth

Community members in both cities envision their downtowns as the center of economic, social, and cultural activity. To achieve this vision, the transportation network should be accommodating to pedestrians, bicyclists, and the automobile. Through traffic should slow through the downtowns and there should be a distinction between the way the downtown feels and is used by the community and the less dense, more rural areas outside the cities and in the county. The downtowns should accommodate a range of uses and a variety of housing types, and should be built in a way that allows community members to get around by walking, biking, and driving. Moving away from the downtown core in each direction, the street network remains intact to accommodate future growth in the cities but the density decreases and the uses become less retail and office mixed with residential to more exclusively residential. Though the form of the buildings in this area differs from the downtown core, the historic street network still allows for easy pedestrian access to the core downtown. Once out of the traditional street network, land use and form should be different. Setbacks are greater and should be more in keeping with the rural character of the landscape.

5.2 An initial assessment for moving forward

The opportunities for achieving these goals are great. In the near term, Victor and Driggs may want to start in these areas.

- **Unlock the Market -** Frequently communities find that their own development and transportation policies make it difficult to get the type of development they say they want.

Existing policies, regulations, ordinances, and design guidelines can prevent compact, mixed-use, walkable places that the market could actually support. These existing policies often block private investment in communities like Victor and Driggs. The costs of getting the changes on a project-by-project basis is prohibitive and can quash a development before it even gets going. Further, there is still no guarantee the effort and expense will lead to the changes needed, raising additional risks for the developer. Ensuring that the regulatory climate allows the private sector to invest in projects for which there is both market demand and community support is the purpose of this technical assistance work.

- **Enable Affordable housing -** Housing costs may be outpacing the incomes of local residents. Communities that allow for a variety of housing types, from townhomes to multi-family dwellings to single-family homes on small lots, offer residents more housing choices at a variety of prices, which can help people of every income level find a safe, convenient home they can afford.

- **Manage Parking -** Parking, when well-provided, can support downtown revitalization. Current parking strategies and requirements in Victor and Driggs are not conducive to creating a vibrant downtown. A number of communities across the country have addressed the parking needs of downtowns and helped solve those needs by treating parking as a public utility, rather than as a service that needs to be provided by each business owner.

- **Ensure Connectivity -** A connected street network allows community members to get around in a variety of ways. Policies that ensure new developments are interconnected internally as well with other developments are policies that can be written into codes, design guidelines, and standards.

- **Support Cooperation between cities and Teton County -** The future of Victor and Driggs (as well as Tetonia) is intertwined with the future of Teton County. Coming together to address some of the land use and development challenges that exist would mean that the county and the cities can develop a strategy to ensure that growth provides multiple community benefits throughout the entire Teton Valley.

6 HIGHWAY 33 AS THE PRIMARY THROUGH CORRIDOR AND MAIN STREET IN BOTH VICTOR AND DRIGGS

Highway 33 is both a main street and a major artery for through traffic up and down the Teton Valley. This creates a number of challenges that both Victor and Driggs must address. This section provides a number policy options and strategies that both cities could adopt to achieve the vision they have expressed for future growth. The options are discussed below beginning at the corridor level – including the rural to urban transition – and progressing to the downtown pedestrian environment and parking strategies.

6.1 Highway 33 as rural through corridor

The Highway 33 corridor provides a vital connection between Victor and Driggs and between the cities and the surrounding areas. The multi-jurisdictional nature of the road and the multiple purposes that it serves makes formulating policy particularly challenging. Portions of the highway are within the city limits of Victor and Driggs and within the respective areas of impact (where city policy may apply). Other parts of the road are solely within Teton County jurisdiction. The land use, form of development, and the character of the road (including the interaction between the road and the development along the road) all influence the quality of life of the residents of both cities as well as the county.

At the corridor level the Team identified options that can be adopted by the cities within the city limits and the areas of impact. The Team also provided a framework for discussing development and transportation policy for the portions of Highway 33 that are under county jurisdiction. The Team was not asked to (and did not) provide policy options to Teton County.

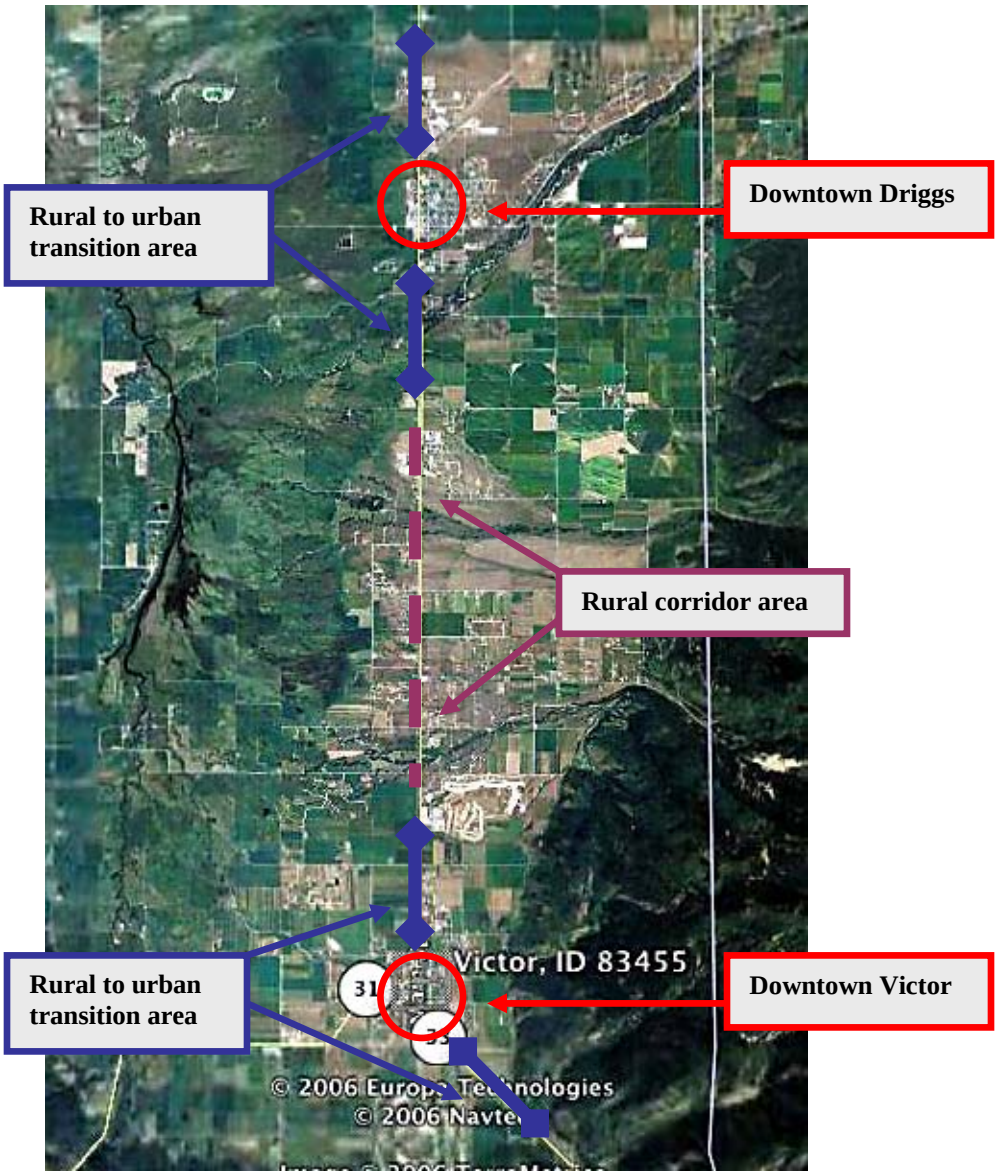


Figure 6: Highway 33 corridor showing the downtowns of Victor and Driggs, the urban to rural transition area, and the rural corridor area outside the cities

Rural to Urban Transition

Citizens in both Victor and Driggs expressed concern that it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between city and countryside. Many communities across the country use their land use and development policies to clearly distinguish this edge. The form of the built environment along a main road like Highway 33 can help define the edge of the cities and the transition from urban to rural. Figure 7a is an aerial of Jackson, Wyoming with a line indicating the transition from urban to rural. Some methods for supporting this distinction are outlined below.

Figure 7a: Jackson, Wyoming, showing clear distinction between the city and the countryside

Figure 7b: Edge between development and open space near Boulder, Colorado

Edge definition in transition areas

Neither city currently has any sign to motorists that they are entering the city. Many communities have constructed traffic-calming entryways to their communities to let drivers know they are approaching a place and should drive accordingly (see Figure 8). Placing this traffic calming entryway is an important public investment and policy decision. To be most effective, it should be sited at a place along the highway where the local zoning ordinances and policies transition from support for working lands and open space conservation to those that support more intense densities that are typical to cities. In both Victor and Driggs, this type of entry way would likely not be exactly at the city limits nor at the edge of the area of impact, but at a point – perhaps somewhere in between – that makes sense given land development policies, market demand for different types of development, and growth trends.

Figure 8: Entryway into Frisco, Colorado, calms traffic and indicates the edge of the town

Rural corridor setbacks

In addition to establishing the entryway into each of the cities, it may be important to implement development policies, codes, and ordinances that support the distinction between city and countryside. Typically this means supporting the implementation of zoning and design guidelines establishing minimum setbacks, lot sizes, lot coverage, building heights, and form. An alternative mechanism would be an overlay zone established along the Highway 33, establishing design guidelines for development adjacent to the corridor. Another mechanism would be to target the acquisition of conservation easements towards properties in along the corridor. This policy would allow owners of property within the rural corridor to sell the development rights from that property to a conservation organization.

Figure 9: Jackson Hole, Wyoming, airport is setback from U.S. Highway 89

During the site visit, the Team discussed with residents and staff the possibility of establishing a ¼ mile setback for areas outside the entryways to the cities. This setback would help to maintain rural character and distinguish between the city environment and the working lands/open space environment. Two examples of development setback from the highway are shown here. Figure 9 shows the Jackson Hole Airport set back from US Highway 89. The second example (Figure 10) is along Highway 33 north of downtown Driggs. There are positive elements in each example. For instance, in each the view of the mountains is not obstructed by the buildings, preserving one of the area's iconic elements.

Figure 10: Residential setback north of Driggs along Highway 33

Access and driveways along the Highway 33 corridor

Outside the downtowns, Highway 33 is meant to move traffic along between the cities and from the rest of Teton County and beyond. Access to the highway in these areas can and should be limited. As both cities wrestle with siting their entryways and establishing zoning ordinances and design guidelines that support this more auto-oriented portion of the corridor (Figure 11), they may also consider appropriate access off the highway and alternative methods of access to land uses adjacent to the road.

Figure 11: Retail site north of Driggs along Highway 33: a land use that could be served by a backage road

The constant ingress and egress on driveways serving single lots along a road of this type create challenges. They multiply opportunities for automobile crashes and can interfere with sidewalks, creating development that is only accessible by automobile.

The lots adjacent to the highway can be served by a backage[11] road or local access road, running parallel to the highway and connected, when possible, into the existing street network as it extends back towards the built-up part of the cities. A local access road of this type will reduce the need for driveways off of Highway 33 and decrease the number of turns on and off the highway into driveways. Second, the local access road allows local trips to be made without entering and exiting Highway 33. This also allows the buildings along the access road to front that road, creating built form that is more walkable, compact, and serviceable by transportation modes other than the automobile (primarily bicycle but also a future bus service). Finally, backage roads allow the highway to be used mostly for through traffic, which keeps it flowing well.

Downtown pedestrian environment

During the site visit, citizens of both Victor and Driggs expressed their concern about the pedestrian environment in and around the downtowns of both cities. These concerns were also noted by the Team in a number of the public documents such as the comprehensive plan updates provided prior to the site visit. Community members told the Team they wanted to be able to cross Highway 33 more safely. They wanted traffic to slow through the downtowns (the Team heard that vehicles tend to increase their speed through Victor as the road widens from 2 lanes to 4 lanes at the edge of downtown), and less noise from the truck traffic. They wanted the downtowns to be thriving community places where residents and visitors of all ages could feel safe from the through traffic. This section addresses the downtown pedestrian environment, from the character and form of good pedestrian environments to traffic speed and safety in the downtowns.

[11] A backage road provides alternative access at the rear of properties and can help to decrease the amount of turning traffic off the primary road.

Many cities have demonstrated that increasing pedestrian activity in their downtowns provides a vital boost to revitalization. Moving cars rapidly through downtown comes at the expense of pedestrian traffic that is so vital for smaller retailers. The more balanced and comprehensive approach enables communities to achieve multiple objectives by creating more complete streets. The following strategies could make downtown Victor and Driggs more pedestrian friendly while maintaining smooth traffic flow along Highway 33.

1. A good pedestrian realm

Good streets allow for smooth circulation of automobile traffic and are safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. Ensuring that the streets support a good pedestrian realm is a matter of design. A well designed pedestrian realm assigns space to three functions: a planting strip or furnishing zone (particularly in commercial areas like the downtowns in Victor and Driggs); the sidewalk; and the setback zone. Figure 12 shows each of these elements.

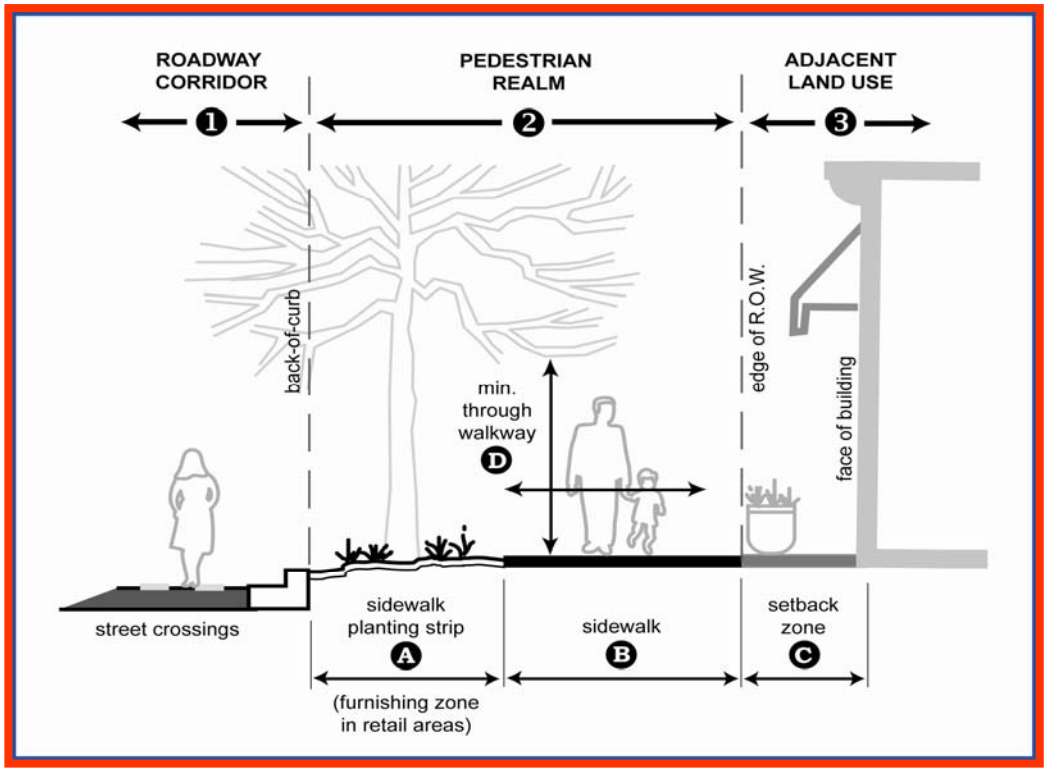


Figure 12: Elements of a good pedestrian realm include a planting strip or furnishing strip, sidewalk, and setback zone

A good pedestrian realm will vary from place to place. The example from Boulder, Colorado in Figure 13 shows the planting/furnishing strip, sidewalk, and setback that allows for the retail businesses to have a public presence outside the store. The diagonal parking in the roadway corridor combined with the planting/furnishing strip creates a buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalk. By balancing space for traffic, pedestrians, and retail, these design elements make a great street and contributes to a place where people want to be.

Figure 13: Creating a pedestrian realm in Boulder, Colorado using diagonal parking, planting/furnishing strip, sidewalk, and setback

There is no absolute standard sidewalk width that makes a good pedestrian environment. But, pedestrian realms that have a planting strip, sidewalk, and setback zones are more functional and serve the pedestrian better (see Figure 14a). Figure 14b demonstrates that the lack of a planting strip and a setback has more of an impact on the pedestrian realm than the narrowness of the actual sidewalk. What matters is the relationship between its form or width and function. Sidewalks should allow pedestrians to walk along comfortably, pass each other easily when necessary, and allow for easy access to the adjacent land use. In commercial areas like downtown Victor and Driggs, this means easy access to storefronts and entryways, as well as residential and office space above the ground floor retail.

Figure 14a: Wide sidewalk

Figure 14b: Narrow sidewalk

In Victor and Driggs, both downtowns have the design elements of a good pedestrian realm. The primary commercial streets in each downtown have on street parking that bolster the buffer between the pedestrian on the sidewalk and the roadway corridor. There is enough distance between the curb and building line to accommodate a planting/furnishing strip, sidewalk and setback that is appropriate for a downtown commercial area. The Victor example in Figure 15 shows a historic building, now abandoned, with its setback, appropriate sidewalk width, and planting strip. These design elements were part of the historic form of the community. In Driggs, the example in Figure 16 shows the north side of Little avenue looking east. Like the Victor example (but more narrow), each of the elements of a good pedestrian realm are incorporated. In both examples, though, there are improvements that can be made.

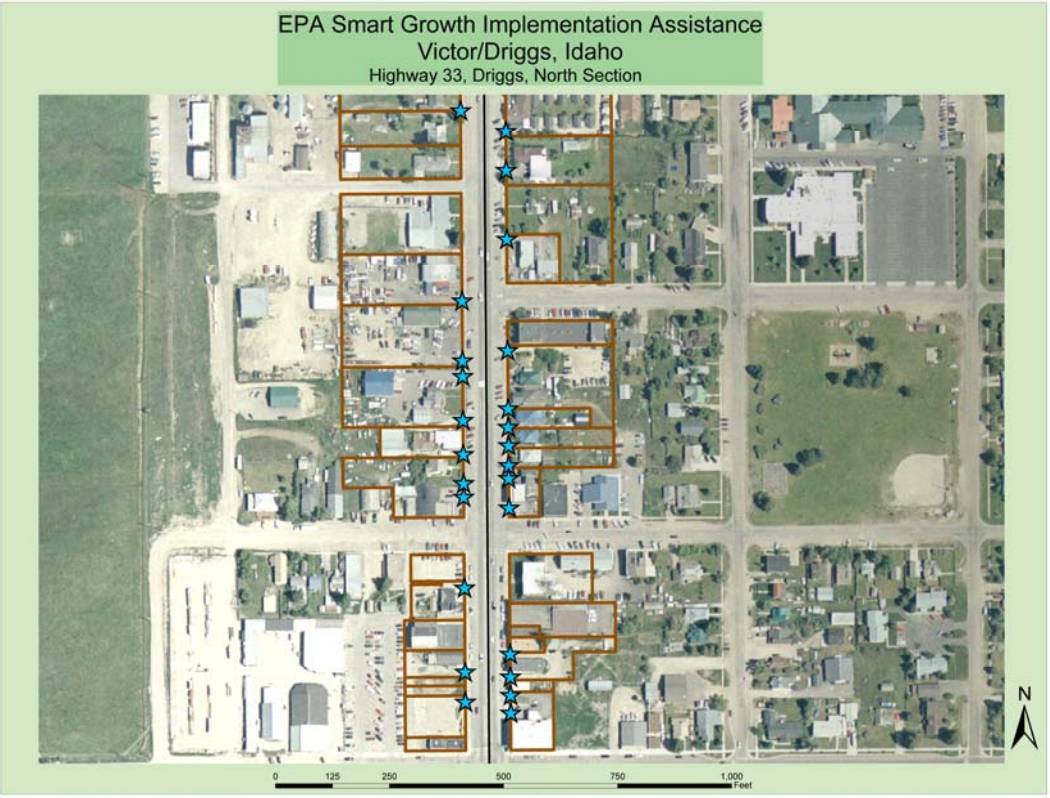
Figure 15: Main Street in Victor looking north showing the basic design elements of a good pedestrian realm – roadway corridor with diagonal parking, planting strip, sidewalk, and setback

In the Victor example, aside from redeveloping the historic building, new construction along that section might accompany the widening of the sidewalk, the introduction of planters and additional surface concrete for street furniture in the planting/furniture strip, and the reclaiming of the setback space (now grass) to accommodate features like benches or tables that are appropriate to the land use. In the Driggs example, the planting/furniture strip may be enhanced by the removal of the utility box and the addition of planting boxes spaced appropriately down the street. The addition of features in the setback would be incorporated according the adjacent land use.

Figure 16: The corner of Main Street and Little Avenue in Driggs looking east showing the basic elements of the pedestrian realm – roadway corridor with parallel parking, room for a furnishing strip, sidewalk, and setback

2. Driveway Access

Community members in both Victor and Driggs expressed concerns about driveways intersecting with sidewalks in downtown and the abundance of surface parking fronting the main street. Driveway access directly on to Highway 33 in both downtowns affects pedestrian safety in Victor and Driggs. As the maps in Figures 17 and 18 show, there are currently dozens of access points along Highway 33 in both downtowns. Driveways on the main pedestrian street create more opportunities for traffic accidents and decrease walkability in at least two ways. First, when the sidewalk is consistently crossed by cars accessing driveways, pedestrians perceive (correctly) that the sidewalk is not safe. Second, in many places driveways access surface parking lots. Surface parking lots on main streets are not typically destinations for pedestrians. Surface parking lots on main streets in downtowns prevent buildings from being sited directly adjacent to the sidewalk (which is one characteristic of a great downtown). Carefully designed access to downtown businesses makes city sidewalks safer and more pleasant.



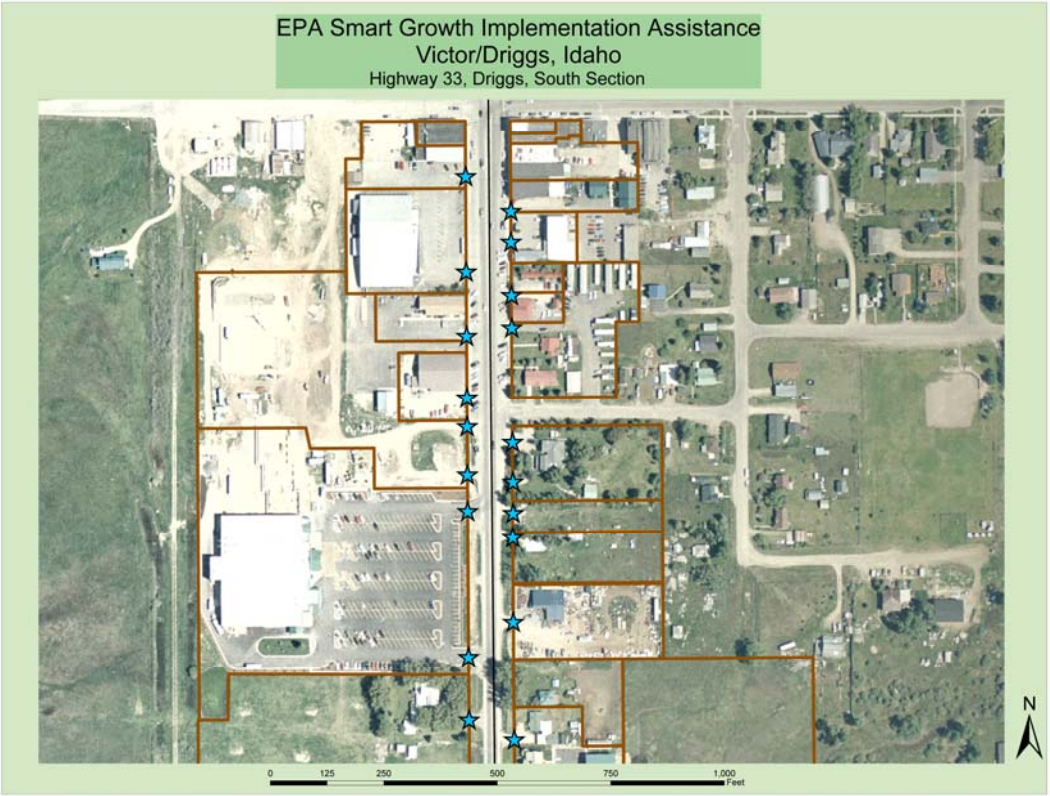
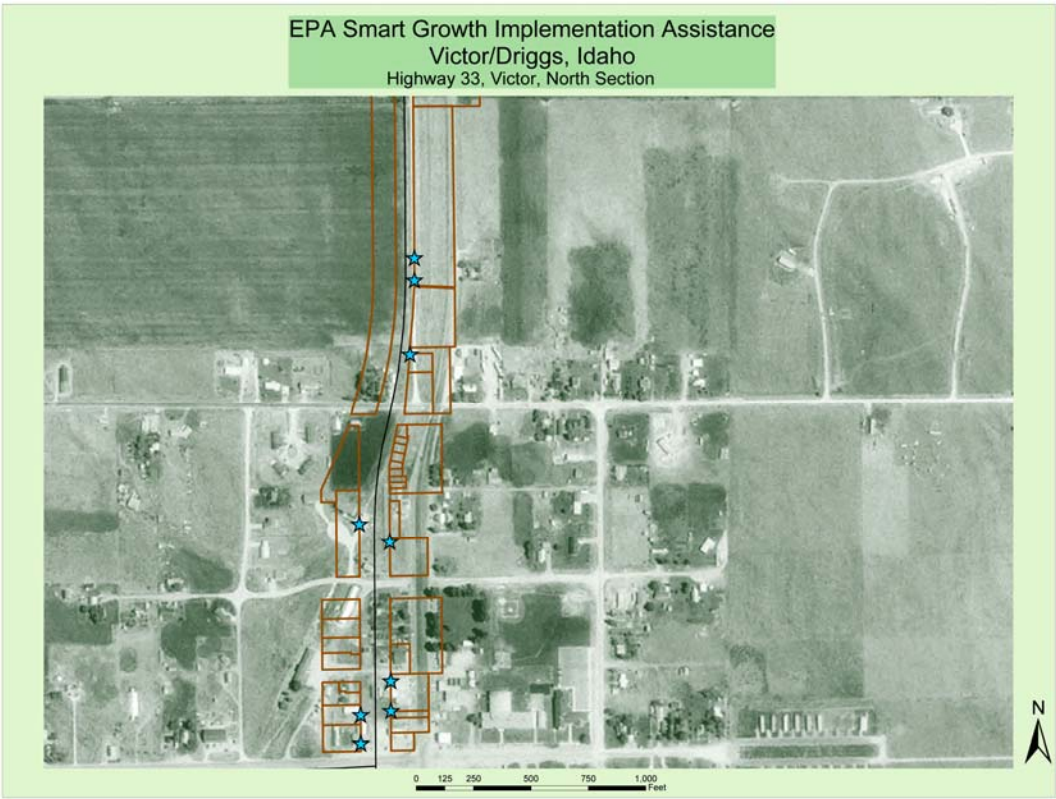


Figure 17: Blue stars indicate driveway access points in downtown Driggs



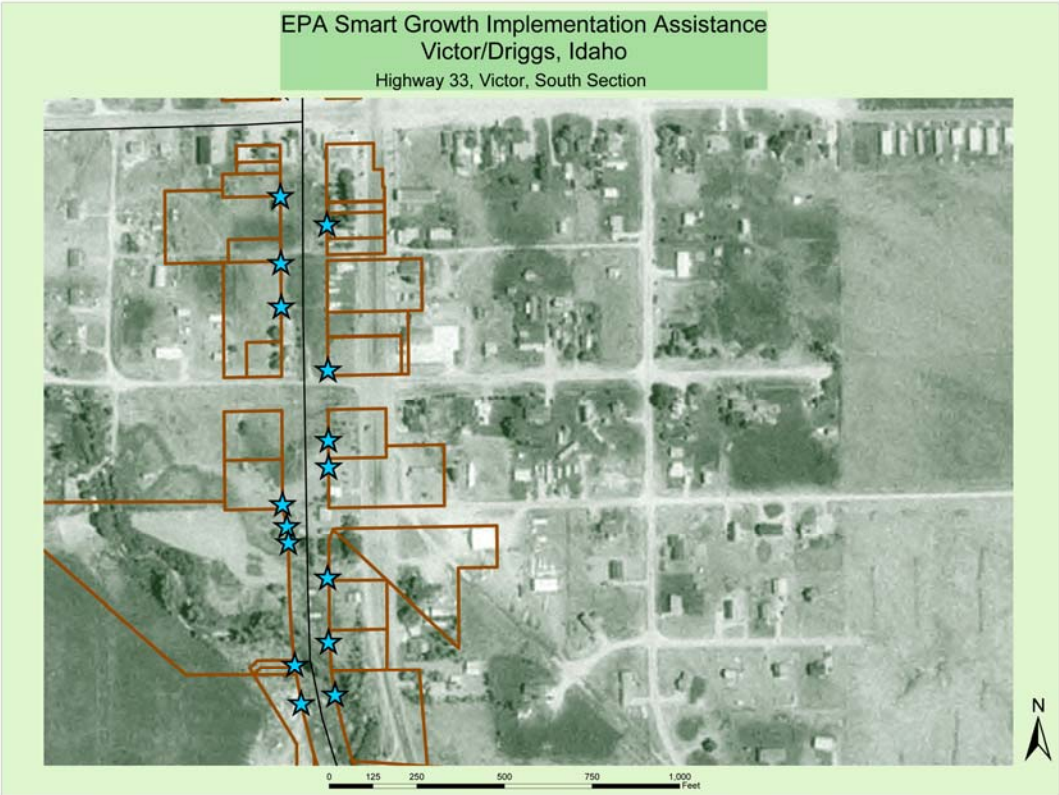


Figure 18: Blue stars indicate driveway access points in downtown Victor

If Victor and Driggs are interested in making their downtowns more attractive to pedestrians, a position for which the Team heard much support, each city may want to develop a strategy to move driveway access points in the downtowns to alleyways running parallel to the main street, connecting to the local street network. This reduces the need for driveways that directly access the main street and allows more local car trips to be made without ever using Highway 33. Over time, parking lots can also be re-oriented to the back of retail lots, allowing for the building of stores along the main street and helping to create a streetscape that is more walkable. Alleys also provide delivery access and service areas, decreasing the need for service access along the main street (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: Alley access can eliminate the main street delivery and service challenges.

Implementation options related to driveway access in both downtowns

Some interim steps towards increasing walkability and reducing driveway access off the Main Street in both Victor and Driggs include:

- *Provide new access to of-street parking lots from the rear (through alleys or side streets), rather than along Main Street*
  Preventing the introduction of new driveways in the downtown is one way communities have stemmed the erosion of the pedestrian environment.

- *Keep alleys in the public realm*
  Historically Victor and Driggs had public alleys. Access to alleys is allowed through a public easement. Access to alleys through this easement should be kept public, thus encouraging entry to parking from the alleys. Alley access to parking can contribute to a more pedestrian-friendly downtown.

- *Consolidate driveways where appropriate*
  Consolidate access where a single property is served by more than one driveway or where multiple properties could be served by a shared driveway.

- *Where appropriate, consider eliminating existing driveways as a condition of redevelopment*
  As redevelopment along Main Street takes place and access to parking is encouraged through the alleys and side streets, Victor and Driggs could require the elimination of driveways that provide access directly to Main Street.

Pedestrian safety: traffic speed, street crossings

Community members expressed concern over the high rate of speed of traffic through both downtowns and slowing traffic through these areas is a priority for citizens in Victor and Driggs. There is an inverse relationship between the speed of an automobile and the likelihood of a pedestrian surviving a collision. For example, a pedestrian struck by an automobile traveling at 30 miles per hour has a 55% chance of surviving, however, the survival rate increases to 95% if the car decreases its speed by 10 miles per hour (Figure 20).

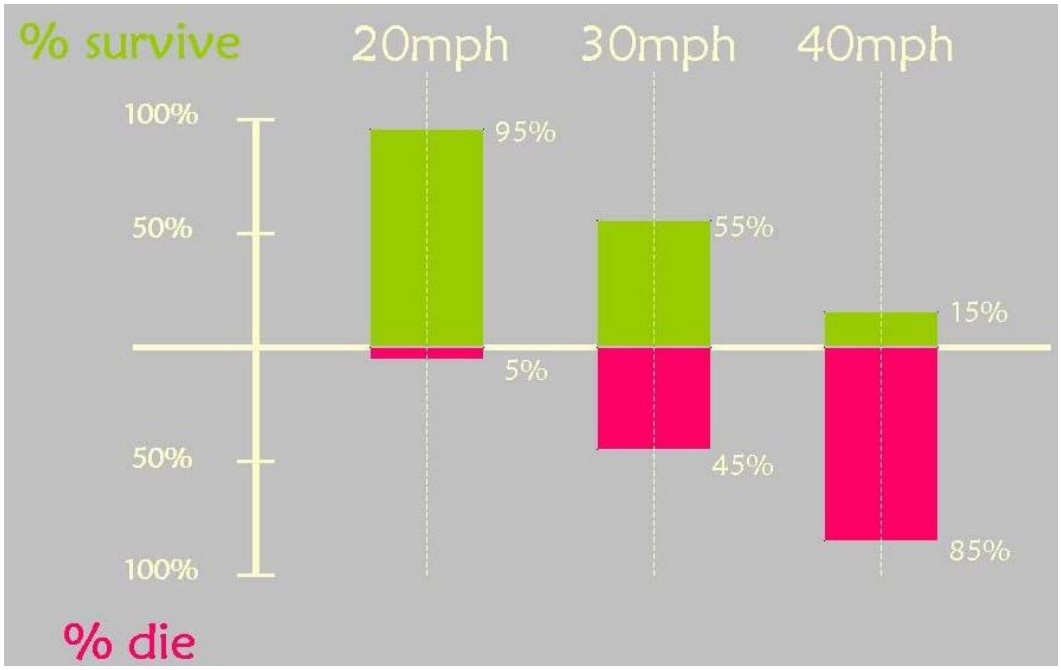


Figure 20: Relationship between traffic speeds and pedestrians surviving a collision with a car

Pedestrian safety is clearly a challenge for both communities. Pedestrians currently have to walk more than 130 feet to cross Main Street in Victor and Driggs. In both cities, most pedestrian crossings lack crosswalk signals and rely instead on flags to alert traffic to slow down (Figure 21a). The distance and lack of crosswalks and signals increase the danger for pedestrians. Victor has introduced a pedestrian refuge on the north side of downtown (Figure 21b). The refuge, combined with a well-marked crosswalk, can enhance pedestrian safety in downtown.

Figure 21a: Crossing flag and crosswalk in Victor

Figure 21b: Pedestrian refuge and crosswalk in Victor

Truck traffic is a particular concern in both cities. Noise from the trucks themselves, the wear and tear on the roads, sand and gravel kicked up by the wheels, as well as the danger for pedestrians created by the truck traffic all contribute to these concerns. Several community members suggested a truck bypass to alleviate traffic and noise along the highway. A bypass is probably not feasible because all alternate routes are located in or near residential developments. An enhanced street network would begin to alleviate some of the truck traffic along the main street in both communities, by providing alternative routes, especially for locally generated truck traffic. These local trips would not have to rely on Highway 33 for access to and from all destinations.

Figure 22: Truck traffic along Main Street in Victor

Development that helps to create a great downtown helps to create a great pedestrian environment. Victor and Driggs each have challenges related to traffic speed and pedestrian safety. Both cities can enhance their pedestrian safety by creating additional pedestrian refuges and enhancing the crosswalks. In addition, improving on-street parking (discussed in the section on parking strategies), supporting a vibrant, thriving downtown, and pedestrian activity all tend to slow traffic.

Subsequent sections discuss codes and ordinances that support infill redevelopment that leads to the creation of the downtowns citizens in both cities have said they want. Strategic public investment in road infrastructure can serve traffic and circulation needs and improve pedestrian safety. One example of this is the boulevard or parkway proposals put forward during the downtown Victor workshop. Those concepts are discussed in Section 6.

6.2 Parking Strategies

During the site visit, community members, staff from each of the cities, and city councilors and planning and zoning commission members discussed with the team some of the parking challenges in both cities. The challenges include figuring out the right amount of parking, the relative merits of on-street parallel spots versus diagonal spots, off-street parking, parking districts, and shared parking. The Team noted that successful downtowns think of parking as a public utility, not an on site use. Just as businesses are not required to create their own power on-site, companies should not be forced to supply all needed parking on their premises. The Team suggests using the following strategies (on-street parking, off-street requirements, and parking districts) to site and provide the appropriate parking mix in downtown Victor and Driggs.

On-street parking

In addition to providing a pedestrian buffer and decreasing traffic speed, on-street parking provides convenient access to retail. There are several ways to maximize and retain on-street parking.

- ***Diagonal spaces***
  Diagonal parking (as opposed to parallel parking) increases the amount of parking available along a street. Given the widths of the main street in Victor and Driggs, diagonal spaces are optimal.

- ***Space-for-space replacement***
  If on street parking is removed in one location, the same amount of on-street parking should be created elsewhere in the downtown.

- ***New spaces***
  Victor and Driggs should actively seek out additional on-street parking opportunities throughout their downtowns.

- ***On street parking credit***
  Retail establishments should be able to count on-street parking towards their parking requirements.

- ***On street parking, street width, and sidewalks***
  Several community members suggested widening Victor and Driggs' downtown sidewalks by eliminating on-street parking to make the sidewalks more accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. If the choice is between widening sidewalks or keeping on street parking, the Team suggests the latter. In most parts of the downtowns, the sidewalks are sufficiently wide. In places where they are not, additional width can be added without moving the curb. Moreover, on-street parking enhances the pedestrian and bicycling experience by slowing the speed of traffic, it serves as a buffer between pedestrians and street traffic, and the easy access it provides to street level retail is important to the overall economic viability of downtown.

Off-street requirements

Off-street parking standards often do not accurately reflect the actual needs of downtowns. Many parking ratios standards – the required number of parking spots for each housing unit or for each 1000 square feet of retail space – are borrowed from other cities' codes or policy manuals. They can result in unnecessarily onerous requirements because they were developed for a different context or fail to take into account unique site characteristics that lead to lower parking demands. The following three strategies can help Victor and Driggs develop and implement their own appropriate off-street parking requirements.

- ***Set appropriate parking ratios***
  Downtown shoppers often visit several stores during one trip. In contrast, suburban consumers often visit only one store each time they park. Communities often use suburban parking ratios for their downtowns. Victor and Driggs should consider adjusting their downtown parking ratios to reflect this fundamental difference in shopping behavior. In downtowns, shoppers often park once and then visit a number of stores. Accommodating parking for multiple stores in one place (sharing spaces) is one strategy communities have adopted.

- ***Allow and guide shared parking***
  Parking requirements that allow retail establishments to share parking support multiple community goals. By sharing parking, stores are able to provide the appropriate amount of parking while still maintaining a storefront area that is readily accessible to pedestrians. In addition, the cost of providing the parking is shared by a number of businesses and overhead costs are reduced.

- ***Offer credit for on-street parking based on street frontage***
  Stores may be given credit towards parking requirements for any on-street spaces along their street frontage.

Parking Districts

Parking districts allow a community's businesses and downtown property owners to provide the right amount of parking without inhibiting the downtown area's pedestrian orientation. The districts can be financed with a fee-in-lieu of parking program, where businesses that choose not to provide parking pay into a designated fund. The price should reflect the parking district's actual cost for providing spaces and can be updated biennially. These districts ideally situate parking lots in interior areas of downtown blocks, providing convenience without limiting access to storefronts. Parking requirements – the provision of spaces or a fee-in-lieu program – are costs born by a property owner. During a redevelopment project, the timing of these costs can often determine whether or not a project can be completed financially. Fee-in-lieu programs may be structured in a way that supports community-wide redevelopment goals, satisfies parking needs, and is not a barrier to completing a redevelopment project. Many communities, through the parking district, have allowed property owners to postpone their payments into the parking fund until the properties have been leased and rents are being paid. The initial funds used to build and provide access to the district's parking needs to be raised and put towards the construction of the parking in anticipation of the funds that will be raised once the spaces are leased.

See Appendix D for the Jackson, Wyoming, downtown parking study prepared by Charlier Associates, Inc. as part of the *Town of Jackson Downtown Study* (April 2003).

7 FUTURE GROWTH IN VICTOR

Through its comprehensive plan and the comments made during the Team's site visit, community members in Victor have said they want a thriving, vibrant community where people can live, shop, work, and play. The market overview shows that with the adoption of effective public policy and strong leadership, Victor can become this place. During the site visit, the Team discussed ways to achieve this by articulating the design vision for downtown, revising existing codes and ordinances, and strategically investing in public infrastructure. This section outlines Victor's detailed vision for future growth and then presents a set of options that could be adopted to help achieve that vision. These options are presented by first outlining a set of design concepts for downtown, then discussing Team's analysis of how the existing policies effect the implementation of the vision, and finally a set of policy strategies Victor may adopt to get the most out of future growth and development.

7.1 The vision for growth

Victor's Comprehensive Plan, the zoning ordinance, draft design guidelines, and other public documents, as well as the Team's discussions with citizens, public officials, and staff, illustrated the community's vision for future growth. The vision includes strong neighborhoods, a pedestrian-friendly downtown with thriving businesses and employment opportunities, and infill redevelopment that is compatible with or an enhancement to the existing built environment. Growth should also respect Victor's history and the natural beauty of the Teton Valley. Public policies that guide this growth should preserve and respect the rights of property owners. In particular, community members in Victor want to see:

- The development of a variety of housing types in and around the downtown
- Vibrancy that comes from a mix of residential and commercial uses in and around downtown;
- Policies and incentives that support growth in the city of Victor as a way to preserve some of the natural beauty of Teton Valley; and
- Infrastructure and public investment that support options for getting around, such as an interconnected street and sidewalk network for walking, lanes and paths for bicycling, and the possibility of future public transit between the cities in the Teton Valley and beyond (to Jackson, Wyoming, and other employment centers, for instance)

Articulating a vision – through text, images, and public investment strategies – yields a number of benefits. Communities across the country have shown that good public and private investment follows a good vision. Implementing a vision often means making public investment in streets, sidewalks, and other infrastructure that support the development pattern outlined by the community. This is an important signal of commitment to the private sector, which seeks consistency, predictability, and stability for its own investments.

7.2 Downtown Victor Design Concepts

The city of Victor asked the Team to conduct a workshop that would help the community produce a vision for the future of the downtown. Victor's comprehensive plan update (completed in early 2006) contained many ideas about the character and design of the downtown. The Team took the ideas described in the comprehensive plan update, integrated them with public input obtained during the site visit, and produced a preliminary vision for Victor's downtown. Given the time and resources available, this exercise and the supporting graphic representations of how the downtown

may grow, are a beginning. To help downtown Victor become the vibrant, walkable, mixed-use place community members and elected officials want it to be, the city may choose to commission a more detailed plan.

Key concepts the Team formed and discussed during the workshop included:

- Street connectivity
- Making downtown the place to be
- Investing in a pedestrian friendly Main Street

Each of these concepts are discussed in detail below.

Street connectivity

Grids by definition are interconnected, offering more route choices, which can reduce traffic on any given route. An interconnected street network can shorten distances, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists have better access to a greater number of shops, homes, and places to work. Grids also allow access to parcels for parking or delivery from side or back streets, further enhancing the pedestrian environment by helping to reduce need for driveways cutting across sidewalks in the pedestrian realm.

Over the past 100 years, the originally platted grid in Victor has frayed at the edges, and much of its interconnectedness throughout the community was lost due to changing development patterns and disinvestment in the downtown. There is a great opportunity, however, to build upon the originally platted grid and create an interconnected street network in downtown and throughout the community (see Figure 23). Investment in a few new streets in and around the intersection of Main Street and Center Street could improve the street network in downtown Victor. Adding cross streets perpendicular to Main Street shorten the distance between blocks and improve the pedestrian environment in the downtown. These new connections can also add value to downtown properties by opening up for development parcels that had previously been cutoff from the street network. Victor could consider requiring developers to put in the new road connections when they redevelop a property. Since the entire community could benefit from the new connectivity, Victor should also consider working with the private sector to overcome any barriers that may arise during implementation.

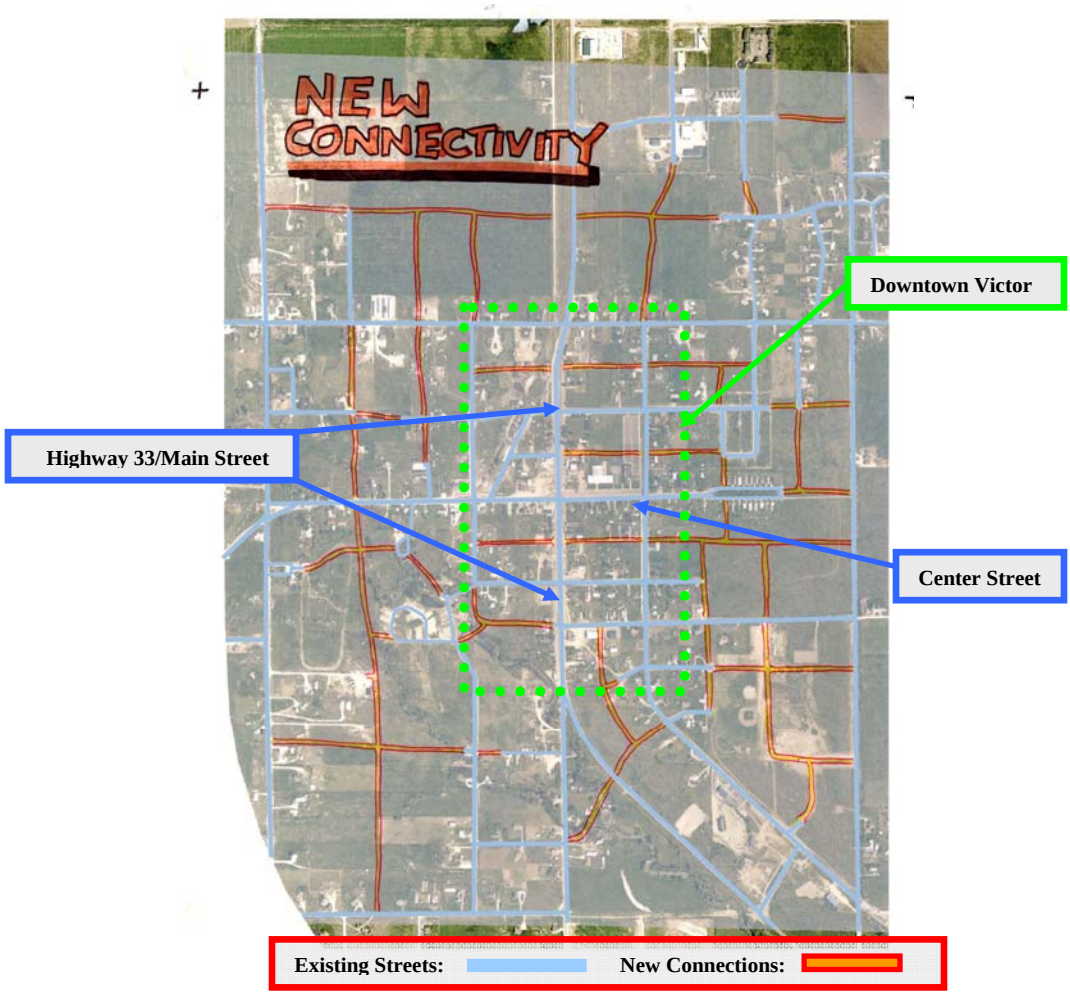


Figure 23: Street network in Victor showing existing streets, new connections, and the downtown core

Making downtown Victor the place to be

The space covered by downtown Victor is pedestrian in scale, but not in function. The distance, three or so blocks north and south of the intersection of Main and Center and one block to the east and west, is walkable and even easier to cover on a bicycle, but there is not enough uses – shops, residences, and offices – to allow it to function well. To get the downtown to function this way, the city could consider a public policy and investment strategy that would support the higher intensity development in and around the Depot area and along Main and Center Streets, moderate intensity development in the adjacent blocks, and lower intensity development outside of the downtown core. Figure 24 represents this land use intensity. The highest intensity uses could be buildings up to three or four stories with ground floor retail and offices or residents above. Building setback would be minimal, helping to create the downtown character many in the community have said they want. The moderate intensity areas would still be compact with more residential uses at say 6 to 12 units of residential per acre. The low intensity area would have a lower density where single family homes may exist on ¼ acre lots.

Figure24: *Sketch showing how future growth in Victor's downtown would be more intense in the historic depot district and along Main and Center Streets, with moderate intensity in the blocks adjacent to Main Street, and lower intensity outside the core.*

Figure 25: Possible vision for future growth in downtown Victor north of Center Street

Figures 25 and 26 show how the development in downtown Victor could look. In these scenarios, the area around the historic depot building is a pedestrian-oriented district that still accommodates cars. Since this area would be removed from the traffic of Main Street / Highway 33, it could support a range of businesses that are oriented towards the street and other uses such as cafes and restaurants with outside seating.

Along Main and Center Streets, the larger buildings pulled right up to the sidewalk would make a consistent façade and allow for ground floor shops which, combined with sidewalk improvements, would help create the thriving, vibrant place the community has said it wants.

Parking is in the rear of the buildings, in the middle of the lots, and is shared by property owners, allowing drivers to park once and visit several businesses, offices, and residences without having to get back in the car.

Creating a place people want to be in downtown Victor can also have broader community benefits. Similar communities across the country have been able to maintain their rural character by growing in way that shows the distinction between the town or city on the one hand and working lands and natural areas on the other. A delicate balance between supply and demand is required. As the downtown evolves into the place people want to be – attractive, distinctive, walkable, with a wide variety of shops and housing choices – more and more people can choose to live downtown, grow a business, and shop and work. This, in turn, may decrease the demand for dispersed, auto-oriented development outside of downtown.

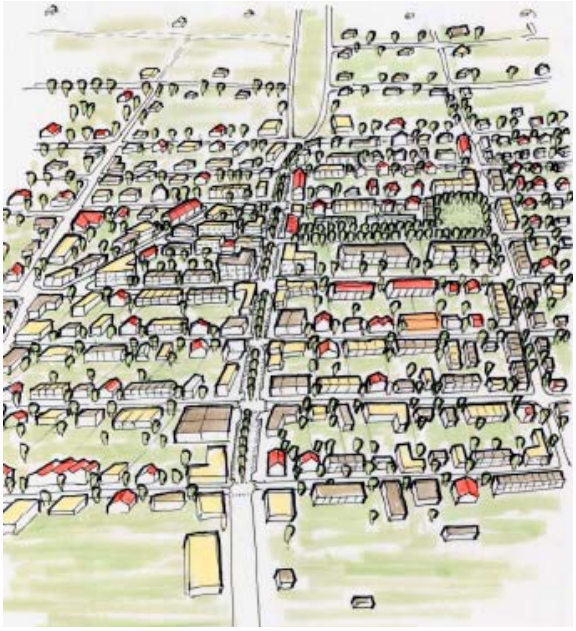


Figure 26: Aerial drawing showing how the downtown could evolve – higher intensity uses in the historic depot district and along Main and Center Streets

7.3 Design options for Main Street in downtown Victor

Some of the most repeated concerns expressed by community members in Victor related to traffic on Main Street. These concerns included vehicular speeds that are too fast, unsafe pedestrian crossings, the noise cars and especially trucks create, and the safety of the existing diagonal parking. Community members expressed support for additional street trees, the introduction of additional pedestrian refuges and other design elements that could help make

downtown Victor the vibrant center they have asked for. Street design can help create great downtown while still accommodating both local and through traffic. Two street designs that other communities across the country have successfully used to achieve these goals are the boulevard and the center-median parkway. The critical issues solved by the boulevard and center median parkway include maintaining as much on-street parking as possible, minimizing the need for off-street parking, allowing the through traffic to proceed smoothly, reducing the traffic speed, and constructing infrastructure that supports a pedestrian-oriented downtown on a high-traffic, high-speed roadway.

- ***Boulevard***

  Boulevards that separate local traffic from through traffic – called multi-way boulevards – typically require a very large right-of-way. The right-of-way in downtown Victor is 132 feet. While this width can be a challenge to pedestrians, it presents Victor with a great opportunity because it is able to accommodate through traffic in three to four center lanes separate from the local traffic and on-street parking in the outer lanes (Figure 27).

  The medians separating the local from the through traffic can provide the pedestrian refuge many community members have asked for. Segregating the local and through traffic with the introduction of islands and street trees can enhance the existing pedestrian experience by buffering the slower local traffic from the sidewalks along Main Street.

  The Team presented two variations of the boulevard design, a four-lane boulevard and a three-lane boulevard. They each work much the same way. The center lanes accommodate traffic passing through the city. In the four-lane boulevard, there are two lanes in each direction – a

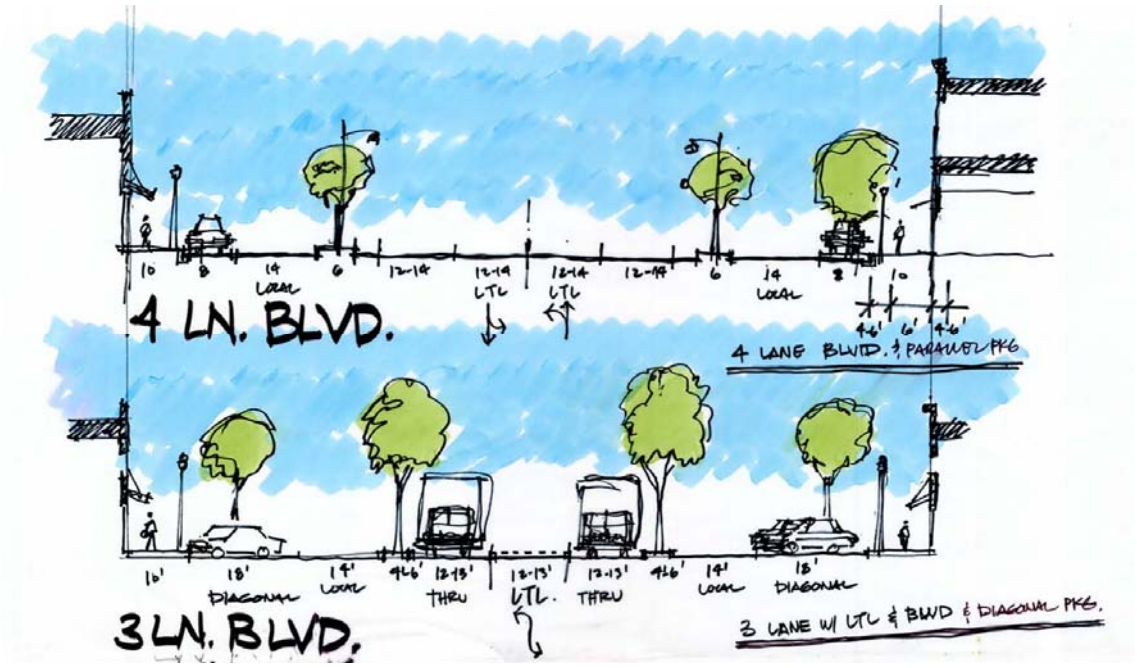


Figure 27: Two variations on the boulevard concept:

- *4-lane example shows two through lanes in each direction, two 6-foot side medians, two 14-foot local lanes in each direction, and parallel parking*
- *3-lane example shows one through lane in each direction, a left-turn-lane, two 6-foot side medians, two 14-foot local lanes, and diagonal parking*

slow and fast lane. This design also allows for cars to make left turns from the left lane. The three-lane boulevard has one through travel-lane in both directions, with the third lane allowing for left hand turns at the intersections. Both boulevards have one lane of local traffic and street parking on each side, serving the businesses lining Main Street. In the four-lane boulevard example, the street parking is parallel to the curb in order to accommodate the additional through lane. In the three-lane example, the street parking remains diagonal parking. In both examples, the 132-foot right-of-way can also accommodate street trees and a 10-foot-wide sidewalk, both of which are appropriate and necessary for a pedestrian-oriented Main Street.

This design also begins to solve another challenge created by the existing width – constructing appropriately scaled buildings to line the Main Street. Typically, a downtown with a 132 foot right-of-way on its main street would have liner buildings reaching 10 to 12 stories. In Victor, neither the community nor the market would likely support development of this scale along Main Street. The introduction of a boulevard condition allows for the buildings along Main Street to be scaled to the width of the local lanes, enhancing the pedestrian environment in downtown. A two or three story building fronted by the local lanes and diagonal parking (a distance of 40 to 50 feet) creates a relationship between building and street that is at a scale appropriate for pedestrians.

The plan in Figure 28 shows how the intersection of Main and Center Streets could work in the 3-lane boulevard example. It functions much like the existing intersections along Main Street in Victor. The principal difference is the changing of lanes from the through lanes to the local lanes which, because of the medians, can only occur at the intersections. Drivers will have to be more cautious when using this intersection, whether making turns or switching from the through lanes to local lanes. This caution can help to calm traffic speeds, an outcome many in the community have wanted.

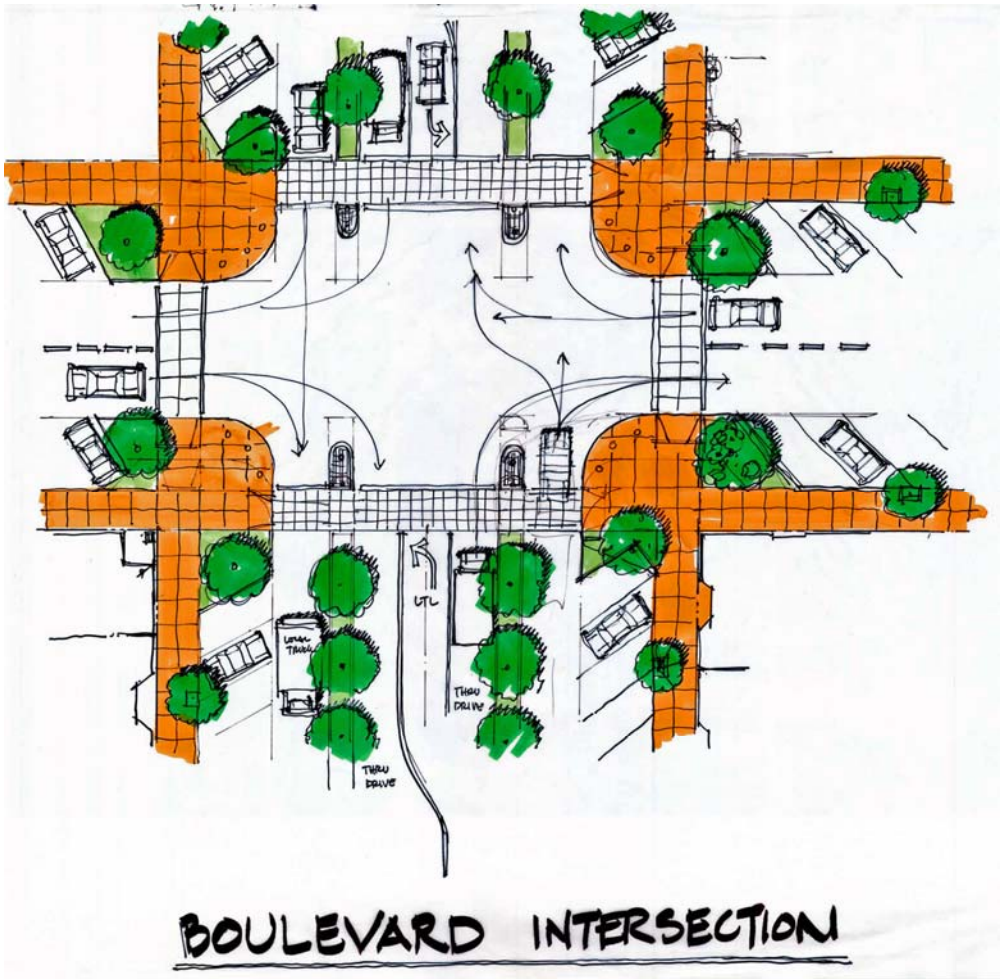


Figure28: 3-lane boulevard intersection showing through and local lanes, left turn lane, diagonal street parking, and the sidewalk with bulbouts

- ***Center median parkway***

  The center-median parkway design (Figure 29) is another option that could help meet Victor's downtown goals of enhancing the pedestrian environment, reducing automobile speed and noise, while still meeting the dual purpose function of through street and Main Street. This design has a 24-foot landscaped center median, two travel lanes in each direction, an 11-to 12-foot left-turn-lane at intersections, and parallel parking that provides easy access for drivers along Main Street. In the travel lanes on each side of the center median, the right lane would be wider, accommodating slower traffic and allowing for cars parked in the diagonal spots to back out without interfering with the through or left lane, where cars would move faster. This design provides a pedestrian refuge in the center median. The diagonal parking arrangement allows for the sidewalks at the intersections to "bulb" out to into the roadway, decreasing the distance pedestrians would need to walk before reaching the center median to a total of about 26-feet (the distance across two travel lanes. Like the boulevard examples, the median-center parkway design uses the existing curb line, leaving enough space along Main Street for 10-to12-foot wide sidewalks, maintaining the desired pedestrian realm.

Figure 29: Center-median parkway section showing a 24-foot center median, two travel lanes in each direction, diagonal parking, and a 10-foot sidewalk

- ***Discussion of the three design options and possibilities for implementation***

  During the site visit, the Team presented each of these ideas in a number of the public meetings. During these meetings, the 3-lane boulevard design emerged as the design concept most often considered as a possible option. The 3-lane boulevard solved a number of the challenges presented by Main Street/Highway 33. This design maintains the diagonal parking, allowing for more direct access to retail businesses along Main Street. In the 4-lane design, the street parking is parallel to the curb, and the total number of on-street parking spaces is less than in the 3-lane design. The left-turn-lane in the 3-lane design allows the center lanes to serve through traffic without creating unsafe backups at the intersection of Main and Center. In the 4-lane design, the left through lane also serves as a turn lane. Both boulevard concepts separate local traffic from through traffic. This separation can help to enhance the pedestrian experience by keeping the slower car traffic in the lanes closest to the pedestrian realm. The center-median parkway does not separate traffic with the side medians. All three options do, however, help to shorten the distances pedestrians need to travel to get across Main Street/Highway 33. The pedestrian refuges created by the center- and side-medians as well as the bulbouts at the intersections help to make crossing the street safer. Finally, when these concepts were presented publicly during the site visit, a representative from the Idaho Transportation Department expressed willingness to work with Victor to implement one of the road designs.

Moving forward on downtown Victor

Although there are challenges in downtown Victor, there are also significant opportunities. Reconnecting the downtown by reestablishing parts of the grid and adding new connectivity is an opportunity that can be created through proactive development policy. A reconnected grid system will benefit private landowners, business owners, residents, and the community as a whole. A reconnected Victor can also unlock the market for additional infill redevelopment. Numerous successful redevelopment programs across the country and the West show that a range of housing types, commercial space, and office space can be successfully built in Victor's downtown. Finally, Victor's existing right-of-way creates a very real opportunity to address the challenge of Main Street/Highway 33. The boulevard concept can be a significant towards creating a thriving, vibrant downtown. It can help fashion an enhanced pedestrian environment, calm traffic, segregate the through and local traffic, and demonstrate to potential developers that the public sector is serious

about making sure downtown becomes the place that the community members say they want it to be. This design helps create a pedestrian-friendly street attractive to retail establishments that thrive on walk-in traffic. The boulevard concept will require a major public investment. Private sector developers will take notice of this investment, and, as the Team noted a number of times during the site visit, private investment typically follows public investment.

7.4 Implementation

The city of Victor has the tools – through comprehensive planning, capital investment in infrastructure, zoning, and other regulatory methods – to create the appropriate development framework to get the type of growth community members say they want. The market overview has indicated that growth is coming to Teton County, and Victor is poised to accommodate a portion of that growth. In many respects, Victor's role in accommodating this growth is more about unlocking market potential for growth that supports multiple community goals than it is about a traditional regulatory approach growth management. The status quo policies and ordinances may not currently provide the regulatory environment that best supports the pattern of growth the market most likely will support, particularly in downtown.

Many communities have found themselves in a situation similar to Victor's. To attract the type of vibrant, walkable development they want, they have reformed their policies, ordinances, and codes so that, for instance, developers can build a variety of homes on small lots. They've rewritten their parking requirements and treated parking as a public utility rather than solely a private function that must be accommodated on site. They have made strategic public investments in roads, sidewalks, other infrastructure, and visioning plans as a way to catalyze private investment. Plans followed by public investment demonstrate certainty to the private sector, increasing the likelihood of the investment necessary for good development. These strategic public-sector actions are based on market realities, in keeping with the vision of the community, and are supportive of the rights of property owners.

Once the public sector commitment has been made, cities like Victor can partner with private sector developers to implement this strategy. The nature of the partnership can vary – from sharing land to contracting to rent space once a development is finished – and should evolve depending on the particulars of the project and the needs of both the city and the developer. Victor, for instance, can seek out the developers that have completed excellent projects in other places. This type of practical initiative can ensure that Victor gets the type of development it wants and that the developer has the capacity and know-how to get the project completed.

The balance of this section outlines implementation options Victor can adopt that would support the vision and ideas outlined in public documents and community meetings. These implementation options complement the strategies outlined in Section 5, where the issues regarding the relationship between the city and Highway 33 were discussed.

Detailed plan for downtown Victor

Developing a vision plan for is critical to realizing a successful downtown revitalization. The Team's downtown Victor workshop could be used as a starting point for a more detailed plan. Through a series of community meetings, workshops and extensive discussion of the priorities of the community, Victor can write a plan informed by community input that guides public investment in infrastructure and ultimately the private-sector development agenda in downtown. In other communities, successful vision plans have included at least some of the following elements:

- ***A streetscape plan***
  This plan would prioritize the improvements for all of the public streets desired in the downtown area. This should include any new streets, which the town may want to see added as parcels develop over time. The streetscape master plan can illustrate all of the street sections and important intersection designs including crosswalks.

- ***A future land use plan for all the parcels in downtown Victor***
  This plan can map those frontages that the city wants to be retail uses and those that might include other uses. Sites which might change and the community views as important in the coming years should also be discussed and appropriate concepts and uses proposed in the future land use plan. For example, the school might be such a parcel if the school district is considering relocation.

- ***An illustrative plan for downtown***
  This plan, developed with input from community members, would show concepts for streetscapes, intersections, parks, and open space, and individual site development plans for all the parcels within the downtown. Sketches in this plan showing the various areas within downtown will help to communicate the concepts and visions for future growth.

- ***An implementation and phasing strategy***
  This strategy would allow the city to focus and prioritize its efforts related to future growth. The phasing strategy should also consider how to build a relationship between and among various public investment projects and private investment.

- ***Downtown specific design guidelines***
  These guidelines, which evolve out of the vision plan for downtown, would help builders and developers incorporate into their projects the design elements that support the vision for growth. These guidelines should include streetscape improvements, site plan designs, building design elements and issues, and use of materials. They would illustrate how parking would be designed in areas where it is required on-site. The guidelines would also include examples of the types of buildings that would be appropriate on various streets.

Small-lot zoning

Victor's downtown presents many opportunities for infill development and a mix of uses spread across downtown. Good infill projects can help the meet some of the challenges the community has recently identified. Community members have stated and the market overview has indicated that affordable homes in Victor are hard to find. Across the country, small-lot residential zoning has been an effective way to provide community members with additional home choices. Small-lot zoning allows developers and builders flexibility the types and number of homes they can build. Building on small lots allows for land costs to be shared across additional homes, thereby reducing the overall cost of building each home.

Figure 30: Single family homes built on small lots in the Irvington neighborhood of Fremont, California

Small-lot zoning can increase the number of homes in the downtown, which increases the number of people in and around the downtown. More homes and more people help the downtown grow and evolve into the vibrant place community members say they want there.

In Victor, existing zoning requires minimum lot sizes and bars constructing homes on small lots. To implement this strategy, communities have adopted zoning that allows residences to be built on small lots on infill sites much like those in Victor. Implementation will require an amendment to the zoning ordinance or overlay district.

Figure 31: North Boulder Village in Boulder, Colorado

An example of a small-lot housing project discussed at the public meetings during the site visit was the Irvington neighborhood in Fremont, California (Figure 30). In this example, 17 three-bedroom homes with garages were put on 1.1 acres, yielding 15.5 net dwelling units per acre. These homes are detached, have front porches, shared driveways, and fit seamlessly into the existing neighborhood. Other types of homes on infill sites like this include townhomes and live-work units. Other infill opportunities gained by the adoptions of small lot zoning,

include vertical mixed-use, with retail on the ground floor and offices homes above above. One example is North Boulder Village in Boulder, Colorado, an infill project shown in Figure 31.

Small-lot zoning design guidelines like the ones in Appendix E provide builders and developers a clear set of design policies to follow. Typically, these guidelines would complement a community's zoning ordinance which comes from the initial vision growth outlined in the comprehensive plan. The design guidelines show a builder or developer what the planning and zoning commission is broadly looking for when a project is designed. When builders and developers use the guidelines to design their project, they are incorporating the design elements the planning and zoning commission is looking for during the design review portion of development approval. Having addressed from the beginning of a project the design elements the planning and zoning commission is looking for allows can result in an expedited review process. Developers across the country have found that design guidelines help make the development process more predictable and therefore less costly.

Getting redevelopment ready

Another effective strategy Victor could adopt to get the downtown development the community says it wants is to present itself as a place that is "redevelopment ready." Private developers often follow the path of least resistance when it comes to investing in development projects. Over the past 50 or 60 years, this has meant that they have chosen greenfield development over infill development because the physical and regulatory barriers are lower on greenfield sites. Lowering the barriers to infill redevelopment by identifying a supply of redevelopment sites, speeding up the permitting process on these sites, and reforming zoning regulations and development policies to level the regulatory "playing field" for infill and greenfield sites is a strategy that a number of communities across the country have adopted. In Victor's case, adopting a downtown vision plan that shows the private sector what the community wants and what the market will support is also a first step in this process. This step helps the developer shape her/his proposal so that when a plan is presented, it is more likely to be aligned with the goals and objectives supported by the community. Garnering community support at an early point in the development process can save time and money and lead to better built projects. In addition to the vision, aligning the local codes and ordinances with the goals and objectives of the vision shows private-sector investors that the community is serious about getting the development it wants. Redevelopment-ready certification can include a capital improvement plan that shows public investment will be supportive of the goals outlined in the vision plan.

For further explanation of the redevelopment-ready concept and methodology as well as success stories from communities, see the Michigan Suburbs Alliance's site www.redevelopmentready.com.

Design guidelines for larger developments near the periphery

Large developments outside the downtown, towards the periphery of the city boundaries, and into the Area of City Impact are part of Victor's future. These developments will have economic, community, and environmental consequences. For instance, taxpayers must pay to provide and maintain sewer and water infrastructure to peripheral developments. Deciding not to provide this infrastructure and instead relying on wells and septic tanks has potentially negative environmental consequences such as the possibility of contaminated drinking water from septic failures and public health and environmental health problems the come from well failures. Master-planned developments outside of downtown and on the edge of built up areas are often large with residential separated from highway oriented-retail. Developments of this type may compete with downtown and each other for sales and business, often just shifting around existing economic

activity rather than creating new opportunities. These developments can also increase vehicle trips and miles traveled, putting stress on existing roads and increasing emissions.

It is possible for new, peripheral developments to help Victor achieve its overall strategy of getting multiple community benefits out of growth. Communities across the country have adopted design guidelines or standards for large scale developments, often called "Planned Development Districts." Guidelines and standards for Planned Development Districts may include:

- ***Community structure/connectivity***
  These guidelines often specify that a development will create a network of streets and pedestrian and bike paths that allows multiple connections, generally every 300 feet to maximize access, and connections within the development and between developments. (See Connectivity Guidelines, Appendix C.)

- ***Open space***
  Natural open space systems may provide multiple benefits to residents in the neighborhood and the broader community. This can be achieved when the open space not only helps to define the edge of the neighborhood, but is designed to be accessible to residents both physically and visually. Public access can be assured when the open space is on one side of the neighborhood's peripheral street, across from the front of the community's homes. Public access is limited when homes are sited on both sides of the street and the open space is only accessible from the rear of the homes on the open space side of the street.

- ***Neighborhood parks***
  In addition to a larger network of open space around the community, it is important to integrate small parks into neighborhoods to allow community members to use. These parks should allow for more passive use – strolling through on foot paths – and more active recreation on ball fields and playgrounds.

- ***Built form and street design***
  Guidelines related to built form and street design typically help maintain community character, promote walkability, maintain and increase connectivity within the neighborhood as well as with other neighborhoods, and enhance safety and convenience for residents. These guidelines will include street widths, lot sizes, build-to lines, lot coverage, and street and block patterns

Victor's existing design guidelines could be restructured to give priority to those issues of the master-planned developments that are most important to the community. Successfully applied design guidelines are direct, definitive, and well illustrated to ensure the must successful implementation.

Work with the Idaho Transportation Department to partner on the boulevard

Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) representatives attended two of the workshops held during the site visit. The boulevard and center-median parkway designs were discussed at one of these meetings (the transportation policy discussion held in Victor on October 27). The ITD representatives said that they would be willing to discuss with Victor the idea of implementing the boulevard concept if Victor indicated it was a proposal the city would like to pursue.

8 FUTURE GROWTH IN DRIGGS

Land use policy in Driggs provides the framework for future development patterns. This matters for a number of reasons. Residents are leaving Driggs to shop. If Driggs can align its supply of retail land with demand for retail space, the community will reap the benefits that additional economic activity brings, including an expanded tax base, job opportunities for residents, and the convenience of nearby retail establishments. Community members want a more vibrant downtown. Decision-makers in Driggs can achieve that outcome by ensuring that the local land use policy and regulatory climate is supportive of development in the downtown. Finally, the future land use map and complementary policies can be amended to accommodate land use types that do not currently exist, but are in demand, such as live-work units and small lot residential zones. These land use designations can use land more efficiently, reduce commute times, and increase vitality and vibrancy in and near the downtown.

8.1 The vision for growth

The City of Driggs is clear on its vision for future growth. The updated Driggs Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Driggs City Council on November 2, 2006, includes the following vision:

Community Vision

Driggs' comprehensive plan clearly outlines the community's vision.

The following ideals contain those articulated in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and additional ideals that represent the comments and input received during the 2006 update:

- *A city made up of a collection of connected neighborhoods that are stable, safe, attractive and reflective of the diverse character of its residents.*
- *An attractive revitalized downtown, diversified in its character to meet emerging opportunities and a business and industry leadership that supports the varied needs of the city.*
- *Leadership committed to city improvement and progress through the incorporation of 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*
- *A city of residents committed to improvements, through beautification, maintenance, restoration or demolition*

Discussions with the stakeholders during the site visit helped the Team get a more specific understanding of what the community wanted to get out of future growth. Some of these ideas included:

- A downtown that is safe for bicyclists and pedestrians
- A built fabric with buildings sited on the street rather than behind large parking lots
- Policies that allow for the development and redevelopment of smaller spaces – retail, office, residential
- Maintaining the small-town/small-city feel of Driggs in the face of growth pressures
- Programmed and unprogrammed civic spaces
- The ability to accommodate some of the regional growth within Driggs so that the "pristine landscape" outside the city can be conserved
- Increased supply of housing types in the city
- More retail opportunities within the city, especially downtown.

The ideas presented in the public documents, input from citizens during the public workshops, and interaction with Driggs city staff and elected officials helped to guide the implementation options presented below.

Implementation options in Driggs

Driggs is well on its way to implementing policies that will support the vision for future growth outlined in the Comprehensive Plan update. Leadership from elected officials, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and, particularly, at the staff level is strong. During the site visit, the Team was able to digest and react to ongoing policy work, such as the Driggs transportation plan work that was near completion during the fall of 2006. Transportation planner Jim Charlier, one of the Team members, spent most of one morning discussing the transportation plan elements and smart growth strategies with Driggs' transportation consultant.

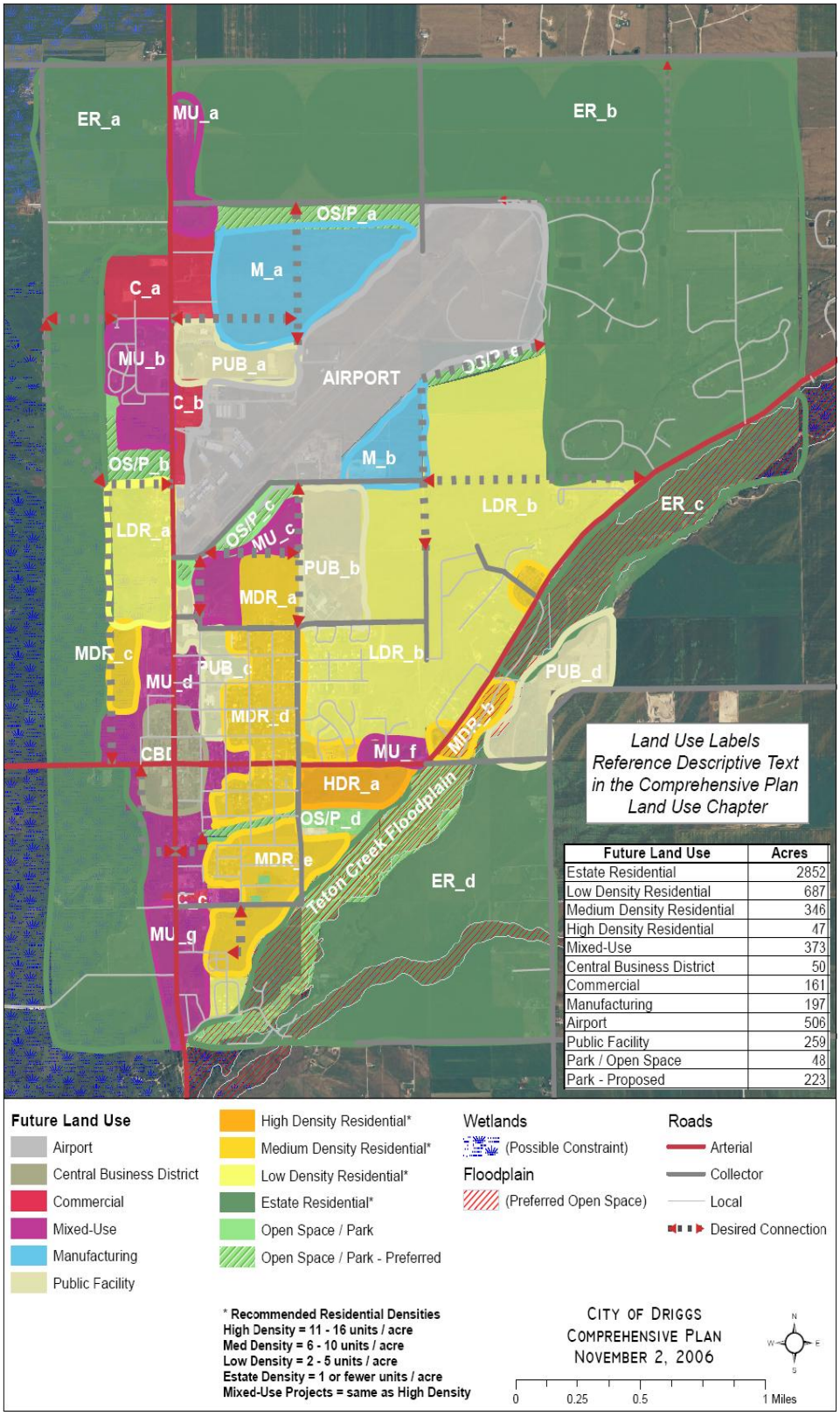
Overall, the Team felt that Driggs' policies related to land use, transportation, and the built environment in general are moving in the right direction, especially in the downtown. Growth and development near and at the edge of the municipal boundaries, in the City Area of Impact, and in Teton County may dilute the city's efforts to strengthen its downtown. The Team identified four priority areas on which Driggs may want to concentrate to continue to align its policies with the community's vision:

- Focus retail and commercial development in the downtown rather than along the Highway 33 corridor outside the downtown. One strategy that could help attract more redevelopment downtown would be to contract the mixed-use zoning designations outside of the downtown that have been proposed in the future land-use map and comprehensive plan.
- Accommodate a portion of the regional growth within Driggs in a development pattern that supports the community's goals for a thriving downtown and safe, convenient neighborhoods throughout the city.
- Define the community's edge so as to focus higher density, mixed-use development inside of that edge while supporting the conservation of the working lands and open space beyond the edge.
- Provide mechanisms for new developments, especially peripheral developments, to be interconnected both internally and externally (with the existing built fabric and street network).

The implementation options below are presented within this context. They are seen more as tweaks to forward-looking policies that are currently being adopted and implemented by Driggs. These implementation options are complements to the strategies outlined in Section 5 where the relationship between Highway 33 and the cities of Victor and Driggs is discussed.

Focusing development in the downtown: future land use map

To achieve the goals set out by Driggs' citizens and officials it's important that the future land use map both support that vision and create opportunities for innovation by private land owners. The Team's analysis identified options the town can pursue that may better achieve these ends:



Future Land Use	Acres
Estate Residential	2852
Low Density Residential	687
Medium Density Residential	346
High Density Residential	47
Mixed-Use	373
Central Business District	50
Commercial	161
Manufacturing	197
Airport	506
Public Facility	259
Park / Open Space	48
Park - Proposed	223

Figure 32: Driggs future land map as of October, 2006

- The **boundaries of the mixed-use zones may be too large for the market**, especially south of town. Under current economic conditions, Driggs could support an additional 29,000 square feet of retail space. Reducing the existing boundaries – using the current retail leakage as a guide – will allow for the downtown to be the focus of mixed-use development (ground floor retail with office or apartments above). As Driggs grows, the mixed-use boundaries can be expanded to accommodate the rising demand for land without artificially increasing land costs. This strategy of retail leakage data to help figure out the boundaries of the commercial and mixed-use zones can help provide private investors with greater market predictability and allows the community better opportunities to achieve its vision – a vibrant downtown.

- It may be more appropriate to **change an area slated for mixed-use to retail** because mixed-use projects are difficult to finance and complete. It is important for communities like Driggs to be firm about using the mixed-use designation in places where mixed use is viable in the market and its development helps achieve multiple community goals.

- If downtown is a priority, **Driggs should consider limiting the mixed-use designation to the south**. The current market conditions probably cannot support thriving retail on Main Street in downtown as well as south of the downtown core. The mixed-use zone south of downtown could be changed to higher density residential, perhaps even small-lot residential, with a small retail zone at the intersection of Highway 33 and SR 50 or South Bates Road.

- The market analysis indicates **support for vertical mixed-use development in downtown Driggs**. Along Main Street, office above ground floor retail will likely work best. Residential above retail may not work as well because of the noise and traffic along Main. The residential/retail mix may be most successful along Little Avenue and one or two of the streets perpendicular to Little.

- **Outside of the downtown core**, **the team anticipates that the market will support horizontal rather than vertical mixed-use**. Developing mixed-use projects is hard and the market will evaluate site potential and determine whether it is feasible to build the mix of uses. In horizontal mixed-use, residential is typically more profitable and is built and the retail is not, leaving a vacant parcel that does not get developed for years, creating a hole in the city's built fabric. Driggs can be strategic about its mixed-use designation and work with private developers to ensure that the retail parts of a mixed-use project are phased in appropriately. Driggs could provide incentives through its tax code or development policy to help ensure the retail portion of a mixed-use project is built.

Figure 33: Live-work homes, Hercules, California

- The **introduction of a live-work zone** can leverage the entrepreneurial spirit that exists throughout Teton County. There is a market for some small, specialty manufacturing, and the live-work designation can help to support those

businesses by allowing business owners to share some of their overhead costs for workspace with the costs of housing.

- The area designated mixed-use **south of the airport and adjacent to the middle school site, is a good place to create an area that supports office and employment**. A new land use designation reflecting this could be more appropriate than the generic mixed-use zone. Given the current land use activity in the area, the desire to concentrate higher intensity retail, office, and residential uses in the downtown, and the possibility of designating this area as office/employment, the retail use that this area may be able to support is probably limited to a café or small restaurant. This area could also acquire the live-work designation. This may increase some of the market potential for retail, but probably not enough to support a more intense mixed-use center.

- Driggs may want to provide **incentives for moderately dense housing alternatives** to be built in the areas initially slated for mixed-use in addition to revising the amount of land in the city designated as mixed-use in the future land-use map. One incentive would be to increase density and development rights. Another would be to further reduce or eliminate parking requirements. The benefit of this strategy would to keep some of the retail energy in downtown Driggs while at the same time creating a regulatory framework for the construction of housing units that could meet a variety of price points and increase the supply of housing near to the downtown.

- **Sample design guidelines for small-lot** homes are available in Appendix E. These guidelines typically evolve from a community's vision for future development and are attached to the zoning ordinance that would allow for the construction of homes on small lots, typically 4,000 to 6,000 square feet. The guidelines provide home developers with the design elements that the planning and zoning commission review during a project's design review process. Not only do the guidelines help ensure that a project meets a community's vision for new building, they help to streamline the development process thereby reducing a project's cost. In and around downtown Driggs there are opportunities for the infill development of homes on these small lots.

Accommodating regional growth in Driggs

The Teton Valley is growing. The market overview found a coming demand for between 410 and 2,000 new homes by 2025. The challenge to Driggs (and Victor) is to attract a portion of that growth in the city and ensure that it helps to meet multiple community goals – namely safe, convenient, and connected neighborhoods and a revitalized downtown. Strategies to achieve this vision also help achieve more regional goals like conservation of the farmland and rangeland, the preservation of rural character and maintaining the small community feel.

To help accommodate some of the regional growth expected in Teton county, Driggs could adopt the Planned Development District (also discussed in the Victor Section above) designation along with a set of design guidelines for development projects. The guidelines outline development priorities on connectivity, street design, building orientation and site planning, open space, and building type. Ideally, guidelines like this could be adopted by multiple jurisdictions, ensuring a level playing field across municipalities. Sample design guidelines for a traditional neighborhood development are included in Appendix F. These guidelines were developed for the city of Westminster, Colorado, and are appropriate for the Planned Development District discussed here.

The city of Driggs and Teton County have mutual interests in the pattern of development along Highway 33 as the road enters and leaves the city limits. Other communities in similar situations have found it beneficial to create a strategy for focusing the commercial development along the highway into a series of centered developments or nodes, rather than auto-oriented strip development.

During the site visit the Team heard some support for another option –one that would require regional cooperation. The county and cities, including Tetonia, may consider designating areas within the county to receive development – with the capacity to accommodate the region's anticipated growth for up 50 years. Some of this growth could be accommodated within the limits of the cities. A portion, though, would most likely need to occur outside of the cities. During the site visit, there was some discussion about identifying the historic farming villages that may have been platted in the county at the same time the street networks were laid out in Driggs, Victor, and Tetonia. These historic plats could be the basis for laying out a grid or connected street network that could accommodate a compact, walkable community with a mixed-use center. Design guidelines for planned developments and small-lot housing could be applied in these areas.

Accommodating growth in the cities and within these new developments on the historic plats could help promote the development pattern that is characteristic of rural communities the ones in Teton County in three ways. First, by increasing the supply of housing, retail, and office space within the cities, the demand for development outside the cities – typically farmland or rangeland – is reduced. Second, the increased supply of developable land in the new communities built on the historic plats could similarly reduce demand for farmland and rangeland conversion. The reduced demand for converting these lands to residences and other types of development can help the agriculture economy, allow for the preservation (through conservation easement and the purchase of development rights) of some of the landscape that is part of the character of the Teton Valley, while at the same time ensuring that the community has room to grow. Finally, the strategy of accommodating growth in the existing cities and in the new communities on the historic plats allows for the possibility of implementing a Transfer of Development Rights program. This program allows property owners to sell their development rights to development interests who will use those development rights in receiving areas – the existing cities and the new communities.

See the Appendix H for more information on Transfer of Development Rights.

Defining the edge: Cross-jurisdictional cooperation

Concerns over the low-density rural, residential development pattern have led other communities to consider strategies such as creating a minimum parcel size in areas designated as important agriculture or working lands. Typically, the minimum parcel sizes are 20 acres or more. Another strategy is to create a special cluster-planned development district, where housing units are clustered, meaningful open space corridors are conserved, and existing development rights are maintained. Cluster development, combined with working land and open-space conservation can also allow for more cost effective connection to water and sewer infrastructure, either now or in the future. Clustering of this type may not be appropriate for all communities. A series of residential clusters creates many of the same fiscal and environmental challenges dispersed residential developments do. Typically these clusters are not connected with the existing street network or with existing neighborhoods and transportation choices are often limited to the automobile. On the other hand, cluster developments can help to preserve significant farmland and rangeland. (Trout Ranch, north of Driggs, is an example of a cluster development.)

Connectivity

A community's structure can be enhanced by improving its connectivity, open space, and pathways. Properly balancing these elements can create synergies for other activities and development throughout a community. Limited connections decrease mobility options, increase congestion, and limit community access to open space and amenities. Connections, both within the neighborhood and through the neighborhood are important elements for better development patterns. Current and future developments in Driggs can benefit from these characteristics. Some of these ideas are discussed in relationship to the Huntsman Springs development in Appendix G. For more on connectivity, see Appendix C.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The cities of Victor and Driggs have indicated they want to make their downtowns and main streets more vibrant by reducing the barriers to infill redevelopment. This overall strategy can lead to a number of beneficial community outcomes, including better environmental results. Growth is coming to Teton County, and accommodating a portion of that growth in each of the cities can minimize environmental impacts (while also allowing for the economic, community, and public health benefits of growth).

Adjusting development policies and regulations and decreasing minimum lot sizes and parking requirements can provide incentives for private investments in the downtowns. Revised regulations may allow for the construction of a variety of housing types and an increase in the supply of business, commercial, and office properties. These land use approaches bring housing and jobs closer together, along with improving the connectivity of the street network to accommodate bikes and pedestrians, increases transportation options for residents. Increasing transportation choices helps enhances mobility for all residents while also reducing development's impact on air quality.

Lower density, dispersed development consumes large amounts of green space in a region. This development pattern can degrade watersheds and individual water resources (eg. lakes, streams, rivers) because it increases the amount of impervious surface in a watershed, consumes open space, and disrupts the ability of natural lands to manage and treat stormwater runoff. Accommodating a portion of Teton County's growth in a compact pattern within Victor and Driggs can help minimize the overall imperviousness of the Teton Valley. Increasing the supply of developable land in the cities by overcoming the barriers to infill development, reduces the demand for greenfield development out in the county, making it possible to preserve working lands and natural areas outside of the cities. These preserved lands help manage and treat stormwater runoff. Reducing watershed-wide imperviousness and protecting working lands and natural areas help limit the regional environmental impacts of development.

Poorly planned development, even with increased densities, can increase site level impervious cover, magnifying water quality problems. Teton Valley can achieve additional environmental benefits by allowing for compact, interconnected, mixed-use, and walkable projects on greenfield sites most appropriately suited for new development. Some of the historically platted farming village sites may be suitable for this pattern of development.

A number of site-level techniques can help minimize site-level impervious cover. These include low-impact development techniques (rain gardens, bio-retention areas, and grass swales) and site-design practices (reducing parking spaces, narrowing streets, and eliminating cul-de-sacs). When combined with concentrating development in the cities of Victor and Driggs, these techniques can prevent, treat, and store runoff and associated pollutants and help ensure that higher-density development achieves its potential for enhancing environmental quality.

10 Conclusion

Community members, city councilors, business owners, and city staff in both Victor and Driggs have shown that they want future development to be support multiple goals. Both communities want the benefits that come along with growth – job opportunities and economic growth, good schools, and infrastructure that meets the needs of the current and future populations. They want to make sure that the economic growth also supports the environment, public health, and the community as a whole. In both communities a growth and development strategy that supports infill redevelopment, street connectivity, regulations allowing for a variety of housing types, strategic mixed-use districts, and cooperation between the cities and Teton County is the path that many people would like to follow.

11 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Victor and Driggs SGIA Overview
Appendix B: Full Market Overview
Appendix C: Connectivity Primer
Appendix D: Example of Downtown Parking Guidelines
Appendix E: Small Lot Zoning Discussion and Design Guidelines
Appendix F: Planned Development District/TND Design Guidelines
Appendix G: Discussion of the Huntsman Springs Preliminary Site Plan
Appendix H: Additional Resources