

Jackson officials, residents see new plan

By The Associated Press

JACKSON - Planning officials have released the new blueprint for future growth and development in the Jackson Hole area.

The proposed plan was presented to the Jackson Town Council, Teton County Board of Commissioners and a roomful of residents on Monday. Public comment is being accepted on the plan. The plan reveals areas of the Jackson Hole valley targeted for growth or development 10 to 15 years down the road.

"Overall, what we heard the community say is that 'We care first and foremost about wildlife,' " County Planning Director Jeff Daugherty said. "We also heard that a no-growth plan was not a direction that the community wanted to go."

Daugherty said the new planning document improves on the 1994 plan by ranking seven themes in order of importance. Those were not ranked in the previous plan.

"This plan says that you can't have all things be all important in all places, that you have priorities," he said.

The new proposal would strive to protect wildlife and natural resources as its top priority by directing growth to South Park, Wilson, the Aspens, Teton Village and town. Specifically in Jackson, areas targeted for growth include southeast Jackson and North Cache. "It says that in areas of the community where we are going to grow, we are going to grow responsibly," Daugherty said.

Meanwhile, the plan would protect base property rights and seeks to redevelop rural parts of the county to the lowest possible level. That would mean one home per lot, or one home per 35 acres, in most places, he said.

Daugherty said 60 percent of the county's future growth would occur in areas already developed. Further, 96 percent of the land available for development is targeted for minimal growth.

Jackson Planning Director Tyler Sinclair noted the document is only a 10- to 15-year snapshot and doesn't seek to plan 40 to 60 years into the future. Town and county planning officials will hold a series of meetings in the coming weeks to explain the plan to the public.