

THE GALLATIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Gallatin County Commissioners have crafted a plan to manage growth in the county. This growth management package consists of four parts that will protect property values and sustain farms and ranches, water quality, open spaces, and wildlife habitat. These four parts are:

- 1) Steering growth to developed areas
- 2) Enhancing predictability within growth areas
- 3) Creating financial incentives for rural land protection
- 4) Assisting rural land owners with options



Steering growth to developed areas:

- The Commissioners' plan will establish future growth areas in which new growth will be encouraged. (Future growth areas generally include the existing cities, the areas immediately surrounding them, and some unincorporated areas such as 4 Corners and Amsterdam/Churchill, which have urban services and infrastructure.)
- All other areas will be identified as rural, where maximum densities will be set at 1 home per 160 acres. For subdivisions designed to protect open space and natural resources, up to 4 homes per 160 acres will be allowed.

Enhancing predictability within growth areas:

- The Commissioners' plan will update the County's subdivision regulations to establish separate development standards for urban growth areas and rural areas.
- Within urban growth areas, subdivisions will be required to conform to city development standards (such as street widths and sewer lines) so that when the city's growth reaches them, they connect efficiently and safely, in a planned manner.
- Within growth areas, subdivisions will receive streamlined, predictable review.

Creating financial incentives for rural land owners:

- The Commissioners' plan will establish a "Transfer of Development Rights" program. This will allow the sale of development rights by landowners in rural areas (where development is discouraged) to developers in future growth areas (where development is preferred).
- Like the County's Open Space Program (which is a "Purchase of Development Rights Program"), this program will compensate landowners for preserving their land, while allowing them to continue to own it.
- Unlike the County's Open Space Program, it will do so not by using County funds, but by establishing a market in which developers in growth areas purchase development rights from rural landowners. The developer then uses these development rights to build more homes than otherwise allowed.



Assisting rural land owners with options:

- The Commissioners' plan will create a Rural Land Use Center to provide assistance to rural landowners who are thinking of developing their land.
- The Rural Land Use Center will inform these landowners of the many options available to them, both for conserving as well as developing their land.
- When the landowner chooses to develop, the Center will provide subdivision design help, such as clustering home sites in order to protect farmland, wildlife habitat, and open

space.

THE COMMISSIONERS' PLANNING PROCESS

The County Commissioners held nine Town Meetings throughout the county in July and August to present the above concepts to the public. The Commissioners listened to comments and suggestions from citizens, and gathered input through hundreds of comment cards filled out by the public.

Based upon the public comment received at these meetings, as well as further research, the Commissioners have now created a draft of their growth management plan. Beginning in December, the Commissioners will hold public meetings to receive continuing public feedback regarding the plan. The Commissioners aim to have the growth management plan adopted by April of 2007.

HOW THE COMMISSIONERS' PLAN WILL BENEFIT YOU

- Implements the County's long-range vision for the future as expressed in its Growth Policy, reflecting values and desires expressed by County residents.
- Identifies areas that are more appropriate for growth than others, and provides the mechanisms to direct growth to these areas.
- Sustains the primary economic assets of the County by ensuring that future growth will protect agricultural lands, open space, wildlife, quality of life, and water quality and quantity.
- Ensures efficient use of roads, sewers and other urban infrastructure already paid for by taxpayers, instead of forcing taxpayers to pay for far-flung infrastructure required by sprawl.
- Demonstrates that the County is pro-growth by letting developers and businesses know what infrastructure and services will be provided and where they will be located.
- Promotes common sense development: different parts of the County will have different development standards depending on whether they are in urban areas, areas that are transitioning to urban, or rural areas.
- Creates a more predictable, efficient, and legally-defensible development process where everyone knows ahead of time what type of growth and conditions will be expected in which areas.
- Sets forth development standards up front, so that the County can streamline the subdivision review process since both neighbors and developers understand what type of subdivision is required.
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