Teton County, Idaho

Residential Buildout Analysis - 2001

Teton County, Idaho lies along the eastern edge of Idaho bordering the west side of Grand Teton National Park. Three incorporated communities — Driggs, Victor and Tetonia — dot the Teton Valley, surrounded by open, agricultural lands with views of the rugged Teton mountains. The county’s rural landscape, small towns, surrounding wildlands and nearby ski resorts are drawing people to the area, making Teton County the fastest growing county in Idaho.
Teton County, Idaho

In 1970, 2,351 people lived in Teton County, Idaho. The 2000 Census shows that the county's population has grown 155% over the last thirty years, to 6,000 residents. The transformation from a remote farming area with a small population to a rapidly growing resort and commuter community has brought highly visible changes in the local landscape and an ongoing public discussion regarding how to best manage the impacts of growth.

Teton County officials recently participated in the Western Community Stewardship Forum (WCSF), a training and technical assistance program of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Sonoran Institute, to learn more about growth management strategies. A team of Teton County Commissioners and citizens attended a WCSF workshop in April 2000. During these workshops, participants develop a work program for technical assistance based on the training they receive. Following the workshop, NACo and the Sonoran Institute work with participating counties to provide follow-up technical assistance. Among other things, Teton County’s work program included a buildout analysis to inform the county’s comprehensive planning process.

This report responds to the county's request. It begins by explaining what a buildout analysis is, and why such an analysis is helpful in local planning. The second section describes the method used to develop a buildout analysis for Teton County. The third section presents the results of the analysis.
**Buildout Analysis: Why?**

“Buildout” is the time when all vacant and under-developed land has been developed to the full extent permitted by the current regulations. A buildout analysis helps local officials and citizens understand the long-term consequences of land use policy decisions. The analysis shows how much development — how many homes or how many square feet of commercial and industrial building — is possible given the local land supply and current land use regulations.

The analysis does not predict when, or even if, buildout will occur. Communities seldom actually build out. However, a buildout analysis provides a useful reference point for discussions of existing and proposed land use policies and their consequences. For example:

- A buildout analysis can help a city or county estimate how much traffic a major road could ultimately carry and ensure that any improvements made now are adequate for future traffic. A buildout analysis should also be part of the capital facilities plan required as a basis for calculating and collecting impact fees.

- Knowing how much development the current zoning allows is a starting point for evaluating the impacts of a proposed zoning map amendment or a planned unit development or a new zoning ordinance.

Land development and its impacts have dominated public discussion in Teton County for years. This buildout analysis should contribute to that discussion by helping the people of the county better understand the potential outcomes of current land use policies.

**Buildout Analysis: How?**

This analysis is based on property and tax records provided by Teton County including:

- Recorded subdivision plats;
- Recorded certificates of survey;
- A parcel-by-parcel printout of the tax roll that came to more than 1,200 pages, and;
- The Teton County Zoning Map.

All subdivision plats and certificates of survey were located on U.S. Geological Survey 7.5” quadrangle maps. Those maps were the basis for the creation of the county map, included in this report, which shows the general location of subdivisions and certificates of survey. A list of the acreage, number of lots, and number of improved lots in each subdivision was compiled and keyed to that map. Because the certificates of survey were so numerous, they were not compiled and keyed by acreage and lots.

The tax roll was used to:

- Determine which subdivision lots have improvements on them;
- Tally the number of lots created by certificate of survey and the number of unplatted parcels; and
- Determine which lots created by certificate of survey and which unplatted parcels have residential improvements on them.
Buildout Analysis: How? ...continued

Constraints on the use of the local land supply are often incorporated into buildout calculations. These constraints might be natural, like the hazards involved in building on steep slopes or in floodplains, or they might be a function of the available infrastructure, especially utilities. The low intensity of development in Teton County — most of which is zoned for minimum lot sizes of 2.5 or 20 acres — makes these constraints less important because the lot sizes are such that a suitable building site could likely be located on any given lot. As a result, no constraints were considered in this analysis.

Buildout calculations may also reflect the fact that all of the suitable land usually cannot be developed as homes. Some parcels are crossed by irrigation, power, or other rights-of-way, or have shapes that make efficient subdivision difficult. Also, developers must provide roads and other facilities. These factors can reduce the potential number of developable lots at buildout by as much as 25% in cities, but roads and other spaces that cannot be developed usually occupy a smaller part of lower density developments. The number of potential lots was reduced by 10% on parcels zoned for a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. The number of potential lots was reduced by 5% on parcels zoned for a minimum lot size of 10 acres. These factors reduce the number of new lots that could be created by approximately 4,670 lots.

Teton County’s Subdivisions

1 WOODLAND HILLS
2 GRAND TETON ESTATES
3 WE GOTTA RANCH
4 RAMELL MOUNTAIN
5 SNOWY MEADOWS
6 PACKSADDLE ESTATES
7 GOODWOOD
8 MOUNTAIN VIEW
9 SAGE CREEK PUD
10 CACHE VISTE
11 GEFFON ACRES
12 FISHER-NEFF
13 LEIGH CREEK ESTATES
14 KNOTHOLE
15 BADGER CREEK
16 HADEN HOLLERS
17 SPLID CURTAIN
18 GROUSE CREEK 2
19 GROUSE CREEK 1
20 702 IN 100 E
21 GOODWAY HILLS
22 7 ARROWS
23 ROSEN ACRES
24 BRIDGER RANCHES
25 2600 500N
26 BATTLE LINE PLAT
27 TROUTS TETON VALLEY
28 PRIME COMMERCIAL PARTNERS
29 97 E 500N
30 SANDON
31 SUMMIT VIEW
32 ALTA VISTA
33 BEAR CREEK
34 BRIDGE RIDGE
35 PJ CLARKE
36 VALLEY VIEW
37 341N 30W
38 350N 30W
39 350N 40W
40 ROCKY FLATS
41 TETON PEAKS VIEWS
42 EE-DAH-HOW
43 SWEETWATER
44 TARGHEE RANCH PHASE 1
45 FALCON CREEK
46 TARGHEE RANCH PHASE 2
47 RED FOX
48 EAGLE REST
49 TETON CREEK RESORT
50 SKI HILL RANCH
51 GRAND VIEW RANCH
52 D. LAVY T
53 HASTINGS FARM COUNTRY PROMES
54 TEEMINOT
55 TETON RETREAT
56 COTTONWOOD RANCHES
57 1800 500S
58 COBBLE CREST
59 ASPEN MEADOWS
60 ASPEN POINT PUD
61 THE ASPENS
62 POWDER VALLEY
63 MOUNTAIN VIEW
64 INTERMOUNTAIN VILLAGE PUD
65 SHADOW BROOK PUD
66 1000 SHIH KI RD
67 CHRISTIANSEN
68 565 50W
69 GREGG
70 SICKIES ESTATE
71 BOYER
72 EAST RENDEZVOUS
73 MOUNTAIN MEADOW
74 PADDY MEADOWS
75 TETON VALLEY TOWNHOMES
76 325 100W
77 TWIIN SPRIICE
78 WAUTERING HOLE
79 LOVERS LANE
80 70W 350S
81 MEADOW VIEW ESTATES
82 JACKALOPE ACRES
83 MURDOCK ACRES
84 PEAK VIEW ESTATES
85 FAIRFIELD
86 FOX CREEK VILLAGE PUD
87 FOX CR COUNTRY CLUB
88 TETON RANCHETTES
89 SWEET HOME RANCHES
90 R. H. RANCH
91 30E 400S
92 31E 400S
93 MATHESON-SAGE
94 FOX CREEK
95 SKI MEISTER
96 COYOTE FLATS
97 HORIZON PARK RANCH
98 27E 550S
99 22W 500S
100 KELLISON KORNERS
101 TETON VIEW ESTATES
102 ALPINE ACRES
103 THISTLE CREEK PUD
104 5285 S 100W
105 FOX CREEK ESTATES
106 CHAPIN CHURCH-HOUSE
107 COTTONWOOD SHADOWS
108 HORSESHOE CREEK
109 FLYING BUTTERMILK DRAW
110 VISTA MEADOWS
111 WEST VALLEY ESTATES
112 TETON VALLEY LODGE
113 TETON VALLEY VENTURES
114 FOREST RIDGE
115 SYRINGA
116 SYRINGA 2
117 MINSON
118 RIVERRUN RANCHES
119 DIAMOND T
120 BIG HOLE MEADOWS
121 ASPEN LAKE
122 HUSBANDS CREEK
123 GROVE CREEK
124 ASPEN GROVE
125 PINES VIEW
126 BUSHING
127 HAMBLYN
128 DANS
129 PINE RIDGE
130 VICTOR VILLAGE PUD
131 WAPITI
132 TRAIL CREEK
133 DUSTIN
134 JOHNSON FAMILY
135 SWEET CANYON ACRES
136 186 500S
137 185 500S
138 EDGEWOOD
139 DUSTIN
140 TIC
141 R. WOOLSTEINHORME
142 TETON SPRINGS
143 POLE CANYON RANCHES
144 CANYON VIEW
145 OLIVER
146 SPRING CREEK MANOR
147 PEAKS ESTATES
148 SADDLEHORN RANCH
149 HATCH
150 VALLEY CENTRE
151 MUSTANG RANCH
152 FLYING SADDLE
153 HATCH
154 FLYING T
155 SHEERNS
156 SORENSEN CREEK
157 TETON HIGHLANDS
158 SPRUCE HILL
159 WINDERMERE
Teton County, Idaho

The important thing to remember about the buildout calculations presented here is that they are a function of Teton County's current land use regulations and private land supply. Any proposed change in those regulations, or any federal or state proposal to exchange or sell land, should be evaluated by revising this analysis to show how that action will affect buildout.

Legend
- Certificate of Survey
- Subdivision
- BLM and Forest Service
- State of Idaho
- Conservation Easement

State or County Highway
Local Road or City Street
Railroad
Stream
Intermittent Stream or River
Canal

Data Source: Idaho GeoData; Teton County, Idaho
Produced by the Sonoran Institute
Spring 2001
Teton County Results

This analysis found that there are approximately 3,140 subdivision lots in Teton County, some 2,390 of which are currently undeveloped. Subdivisions occupy approximately 9,600 acres of the county. Only about 750 of the existing subdivision lots, or 24%, are developed for residential use.

In the larger unplatted areas of the county, there are approximately 3,120 parcels that have already been divided by certificate of survey or other means. About 35% of these parcels have residential improvements on them.

The current zoning regulations would allow the division of these unplatted areas of the county into roughly 22,670 additional lots or parcels. Adding in the currently vacant subdivision lots, this means that approximately 25,060 new homes could be accommodated under Teton County’s existing zoning regulations. (See Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of lots/parcels</th>
<th>Number developed</th>
<th>Percent developed</th>
<th>Potential buildout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subdivisions</td>
<td>3,140</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplatted Areas</td>
<td>3,120</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Buildout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25,060 new homes could be accommodated under Teton County’s existing zoning regulations

These data were arrayed in computer worksheets to facilitate the calculation of Teton County’s buildout potential. There are some limitations on the breadth and accuracy of this analysis.

- Teton County’s zoning map is not precise enough to allow an accurate determination of the zoning of all parcels. Where there is more than one zoning district in a section, and where the boundaries between the districts are not shown precisely, the land in the section was allocated to the zoning districts on a rough percentage basis.

- This buildout analysis considers residential development only. It does not include parcels that are zoned commercial or industrial. It is also limited to the present private land supply in unincorporated Teton County. It does not include the cities of Driggs, Tetonia, and Victor, nor does it include federal or state lands that might at some future time become private.

- Finally, this analysis is based on the county’s records as they existed in December 2000. It does not reflect changes that have taken place since then.
What does it all mean?

The possibility of 25,000 new homes in Teton County is a shocking, yet abstract, statistic. Some may even dismiss a number so high as a scare tactic or simply as irrelevant to decisions that must be made in the present. However, given that Teton County only had 1,123 total housing units in 1990 (2000 housing counts are not yet available), a potential buildout of this scale should raise a number of questions.

While the county has grown rapidly during the last decade, realistically, current residents should not expect to see 25,000 new homes built in their lifetimes. Thus, it is important to remember that a buildout analysis is not about forecasting the future. Buildout may or may not occur.

A buildout analysis is a tool that helps people understand the consequences of current policies by looking ahead to what the future might hold. In this case, it is clear that Teton County’s current zoning promotes, or at least permits, extensive land development. It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss the consequences of the development permitted. Local government and county residents must decide if this is the future they desire for their community.

Acknowledgements

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About the Sonoran Institute

The Sonoran Institute is a nonprofit organization that works with communities to conserve and restore important natural landscapes in western North America, including the wildlife and cultural values of these lands. Through an innovative approach known as community stewardship, the Institute works collaboratively with local people and other interests to advance conservation, engaging diverse partners such as landowners, public land managers, local leaders and nongovernmental organizations. The Sonoran Institute seeks lasting results through its work, including healthy landscapes and vibrant, livable communities that embrace conservation as an integral element of their economy and quality of life. The Sonoran Institute maintains offices in Tucson, Arizona; Bozeman, Montana; and Canmore, Alberta.

About the National Association of Counties:

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments. NACo provides an extensive line of services including legislative, research, technical and public affairs assistance to its members. The Association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides resources to help counties find innovative solutions to the challenges they face.

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