

# New Land Development Code is In Everyone's Interest

Editorial by Commissioner Bob Heneage  
Published in the Teton Valley News March 10, 2010

In the past month the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has taken initial steps toward restarting the drafting of the county's new Land Development Code (LDC). This LDC writing process initially began following completion of our 2012 Comprehensive Plan and eventually stalled out in early 2017. Idaho Code requires counties to conform their LDC's—the legal framework and set of rules governing all future land use proposals within the county—to the policy directions contained in their adopted Comp Plans.

Our county's current Land Development Code was initially adopted in 1979 and was written for a valley that had less than 3,000 people living in it at the time. Our LDC has been amended countless times over the past 40 years, as the county has changed tremendously in terms of population growth, development and growth patterns, as well as economically, socially and demographically. The LDC is now completely outdated and no longer reflects the community's needs.

From 2015 through 2017, the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) conducted a significant effort to develop a new LDC for Teton County which intended to integrate the direction of our 2012 Comprehensive Plan. This effort produced a rough draft of a new LDC for the county which was criticized for several reasons. Chief amongst these was a perceived insufficient degree of up-front public input. This draft code was never finalized or adopted. It was instead tabled over two years ago, and no forward progress has been made on the project since that time.

It is time for a fresh start. The P&Z, met with the County Commissioners in a joint planning session on April 9, and agreed that the hiring of an independent consultant, experienced with drafting codes for rural communities like ours, would be a better way forward. The BOCC has recently issued a new Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking the services of a code writing consultant to assist our county in completing this important project. Teton County's RFP specifies:

"It is anticipated that update of the LDC would include:

1. Organize development regulations in an intuitive order in the form of a Unified Code (similar to Victor and Driggs).
2. Clearly articulate all requirements without ambiguity and subjectivity and provide clear illustrations, graphics, and tables.
3. Adopt regulations that comply with the Constitution, state statutes, and case law and have enforcement mechanisms.
4. Adopt clear standards and development review procedures with timely and predictable procedural outcomes.
5. Provide opportunities for mixed use, environmentally sensitive developments.
6. Facilitate infill development, reinvestment, and the reuse of buildings.
7. Infuse other best practices into the LDC, especially those used successfully in other mountain towns for preservation of natural, agricultural, and scenic resources and community character."

The new LDC drafting process will require considerable participation from the public. As specifically mandated by the RFP, Teton County's process "must include meaningful input from and involvement by the public, businesses owners, landowners, appointed/elected officials, county staff, and other stakeholders." The County will prioritize public participation in every stage of decision making. The

process as we move forward outlining the new draft is expected to involve numerous public meetings, interactive workshops and other input opportunities—both online and in person.

At this point in time, proceeding with the drafting of a new Land Development Code is the right thing to do for Teton County because it's in the best interest of all who live here—large landowners and small, old timers and newcomers. A well written modern code will provide us with a clear and well thought out roadmap for development while protecting our property values.

The county needs a code that is predictable and that is easy to understand. We need to replace our 40-year old LDC with a code that will help us successfully navigate the challenges of the decades ahead.

We need to finish what we started. When we reach the point where Teton County requests public participation, please get involved! Your ideas and opinions matter and your voices absolutely will be heard. For more information please contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 208-354-2593.