

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STRAW MAN
2010

Theme based chapters.

Mission Statement, legal requirements, maps, etc....

Themes: Hometown Feeling is the common thread that weaves its way through and unites all the themes (chapters).

1. **COMMUNITY UNITY:** Development within the City and in its outlying areas must be sensitive to the need for communicating changes and land use issues to the community. Changes in technology are making the exchange of information more timely, accurate and available.
2. **OPTIMIZING RESOURCES:** It is understood that the geothermal water in the Lava Hot Springs area is the lifeblood of the community. Care must be taken when developing this resource. Use of the City's hot water spring needs to be expanded to fully utilize this resource. It is understood that attempts by the City to govern the use of this resource will need to be done in harmony with the Idaho Department of Water Resources who has statutory authority over all waters in the State.

The Portneuf River and its tributaries in the Lava Hot Springs area are a vital part of the aesthetic quality of life in the valley. It is imperative that land use not negatively impact these valuable resources. It is also understood that the streams provide unique recreational opportunities that add dimensions not found in other communities.

3. **PRESERVING NATURAL SURROUNDINGS:** Areas of the City and the City Impact Area located within the 100 year flood plain need to be managed to prevent encroachment, and for preservation, protection and restoration of the riparian areas. Any areas that are annexed should have open space buffers included in their design too preserve the visual open space now enjoyed.

Public lands within the City's impact area should be managed to promote the current visual open space and to manage wildlife in the best interest of the animals and the community. Federal land to the south and north of Lava provide valuable winter range for mule deer. These lands should be considered for restricted human access during the stressful winter months. Allowing the animals a safe haven will make it more conducive for the animals to stay out of harm's way on the highway and reduce conflict with homeowners and their edible landscape. Efforts need to be made to educate the public on landscaping that is compatible with the desired wildlife of interest to the homeowner.

4. **HOUSING:** One of the biggest threats and concerns to the growth and development of the community is the apparent lack of family housing. This is driven by market forces driving the price of residential property above the means of younger families trying to establish themselves in our community. This has a negative impact on the viability of the schools, our work force and the complexion of the community (aging with lower mean income).

There are few buildable lots in the current inventory that are on the market and available for development. Many of the vacant lots are either in long term ownership and not available or being speculated on by the owners. Consequently, the cost of the available lots is much higher than comparable property in neighboring communities. Many of the developed properties in town are owned by absentee occupants and only used as a vacation home – sitting vacant the majority of the time.

There are many properties located in the commercially zoned area which are historical family dwellings but whose highest value use is as nightly rental property. This has effectively removed upwards of 20 structures from residential use. The transition of residential use to commercial use, even though it has been zoned as such, causes conflicts between the year round residents and tourists on short term stays.

The established commercial zones seem to have been set arbitrarily and without regard to historical land use or terrain consideration. The zoning in these transitional zones should be adjusted to provide buffering between the conflicting uses. Higher density residential housing should be encouraged in the buffer area along with owner occupied bed and breakfast style nightly rentals.

In order to counter the price inflating speculation on residential property, owner occupied zoning should be instituted in some future developments. Areas that are currently owner occupied and adjacent to the city limits should be considered for annexation and zoned for owner occupied development. Other annexable properties are more conducive to commercial and light industrial development. The City should start to aggressively schedule and plan for these annexations. (detailed on map X).

Much of the recent development in the vicinity has occurred outside the City limits and impact area of the City. These outside developments still impact the City resources of streets, parks, etc... The City should petition the county to expand the area of impact and work to promote future developments be done within the City limits and this development plan.

5. EMPLOYMENT:

6. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

7. TRANSPORTATION: The historical core business district of Lava should be recognized, delineated and zoned for maximum efficient use. Communal off-street parking needs to be developed so that the Main Street properties can develop to their maximum value. Overnight off street parking for Main Street needs to be available to allow for the maintenance of the City's main thoroughfare.