



Spring Creek Blaine County, Idaho

ULI Advisory Services Program
June 25 – 30, 2006



About ULI

- Non-profit research and education organization
 - Mission: Promote responsible leadership in use of land in order to enhance the total environment
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About Advisory Services

- Objective team of volunteers
 - Invited to address specific land use and development issues
 - Completely unbiased
 - Professional **advice** – nothing binding to our recommendations
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ULI Panel

- Jim DeFrancia, Chair, Aspen, CO
 - Jim Heid, San Francisco, CA
 - Linda Hoffmann, Ft. Collins, CO
 - Joe Hruda, Vancouver, BC
 - Rachelle Levitt, Washington, DC
 - Mary Roberts, Littleton, CO
 - Stan Zemler, Vail, CO
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Our Process

- Reviewed briefing materials
- Toured the site and the valley
- Met with more than 50 representatives of all sides of the issue
- Worked together to develop findings and recommendations
- Today's presentation
- Draft report – reviewed for facts only
- Final report – independent ULI report



Our Assignment

- Evaluate the feasibility of a “new town” - in general and at Spring Creek in particular



The Threshold Question

Is a new town at Spring Creek viable,
desirable and achievable?

Our Approach

- First assessed the very definition of a new town
 - Then evaluated the Spring Creek site within the context of that definition
 - Finally, evaluated current public policy as it applies to the site
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Summary of Findings

- A new town can be appropriate to addressing long term growth in the region
 - The Spring Creek site is viable for situating a new town
 - Current public policy does NOT allow consideration of a new town, at this location, at this time
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What is a “New Town”

New Town as a Land Development Model

- Defining development typologies
 - Subdivision
 - Planned community
 - New town



Characteristics of Land Development Constructs

- Development strategy
 - Contextual relationships
 - Program elements
 - Community connections
-

Example Constructs Matrix

Development Strategies	Subdivision	Planned Community	New Town
Hallmarks	Simplicity	Mixed-use	Holistic
Reason for being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Market opportunity ■ Land Availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Market opportunity ■ Create vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regional needs ■ Social responsibility
Time horizon/ capitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Short term ■ Debt base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Long term ■ Sophisticated debt/equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Long term ■ Patient debt
Implementation	Developer/ builder led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Developer led ■ Builder supported 	Collaborative with government, multiple builders
Evolution	None – fixed point in time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some – depending on CC&Rs ■ Highly prescriptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cornerstone ■ Flexible
Benchmarks	IRR	IRR and place creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Place-making ■ Diversity ■ Financial stability

Development Strategy

- Holistic
- Social responsibility
- Long term
- Collaborative
- Evolutionary/flexible
- Place-making
- Diversity
- Financial sustainability



Contextual Relationships

- Catalyst for region
 - Pro-active economic strategy
 - Diverse tax base
 - Self-sustaining governance
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Program Elements: Residential

- Deliberate
 - Range of housing choice
 - Multiple builders
 - Organic development over time
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Program Elements: Recreation and Open Space

- Open to broader public
- Willing contributor to regional green infrastructure



Program Elements: Employment

- Economic development strategy that complements the region
 - Include professional and career focus
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Program Elements: Services, Infrastructure, Transportation

- New
- Transit ready and supportive
- Alternative modes



Community Connections

- Town-based
 - Regional links
 - Public interest orientation
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New Town Implications

- Holistic approach needs an expanded scorecard:
 - Project return
 - Environmental responsibility
 - Social equity
 - Economic contribution
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New Town Implications

- Collaborations on key regional issues
 - Economic and employment development
 - Regional conservation and open space initiatives
 - Regional transportation solutions
 - Affordable housing options
 - Others specific to the region
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New Town Implications

- Community connections
 - Require nurturing
 - Must be relevant to identified social needs of the region
 - Grow over time
 - May not be able to be measured immediately
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Conclusions

- Complex
 - Collaborative
 - Patience
 - Open approach
 - Organic and iterative process to achieve and deliver
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Spring Creek as a New Town

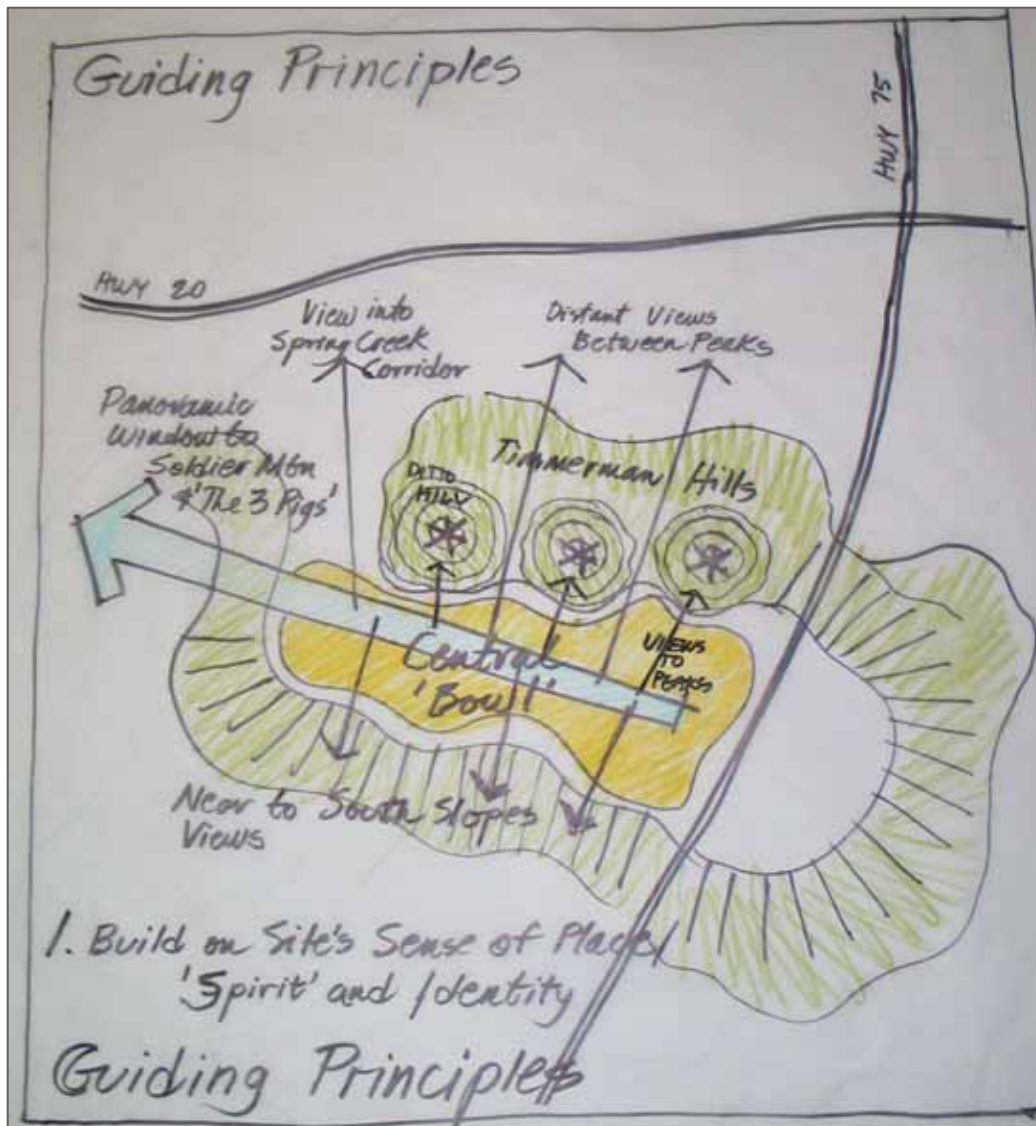
- Long term view
 - Extreme patience
 - Significant capital commitment
 - Collaborative approach
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Suitability of the Spring Creek Site

Development Pocket



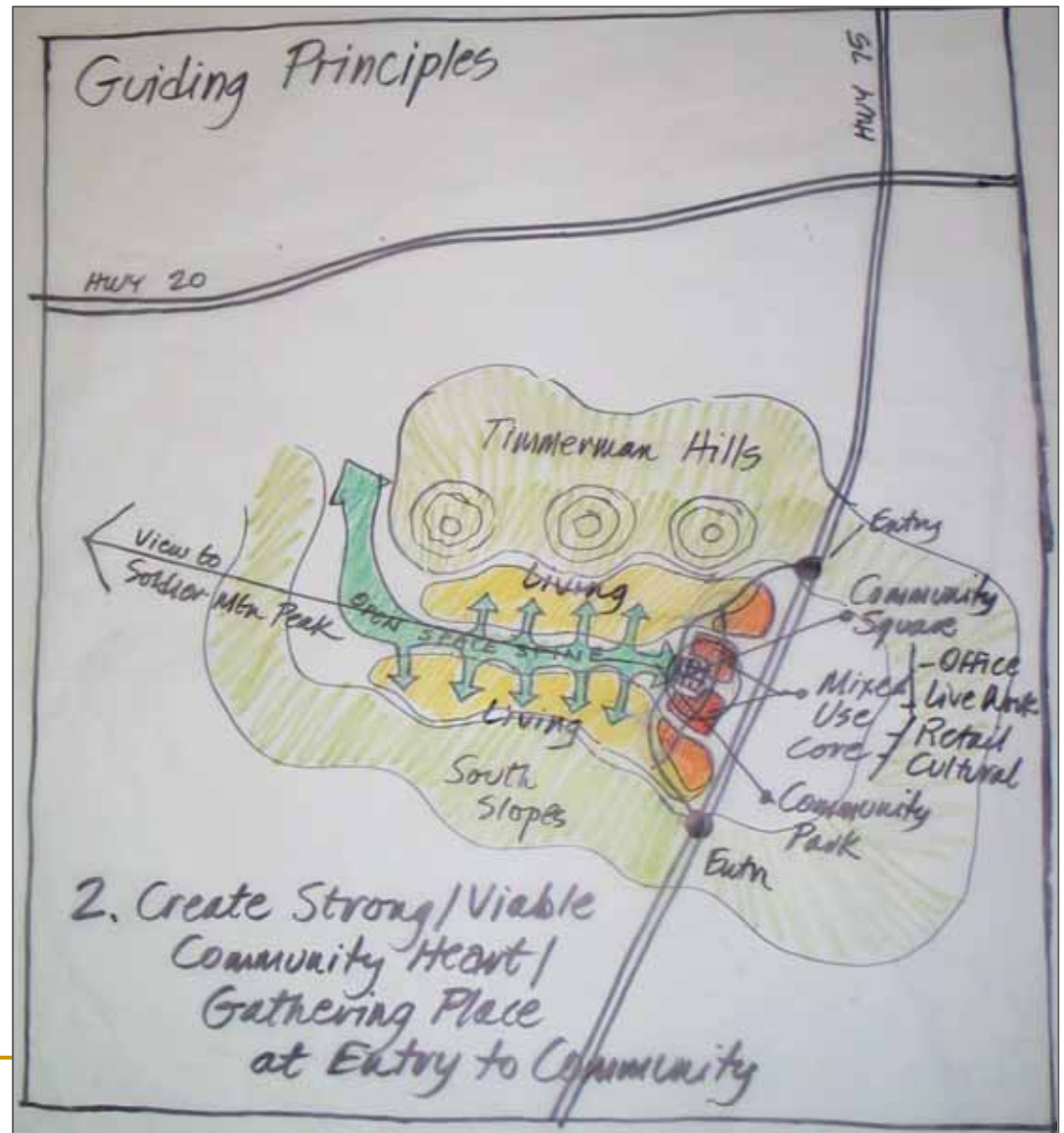
Build on Site's Sense of Place and Identity



- Each site is unique
- Its essence or spirit must be understood before design is begun
- Spring creek has place-making potential derived from its
 - Bowl shape
 - Dramatic circle of hills
 - Panoramic window to distant mountains
 - Central creek and green spine

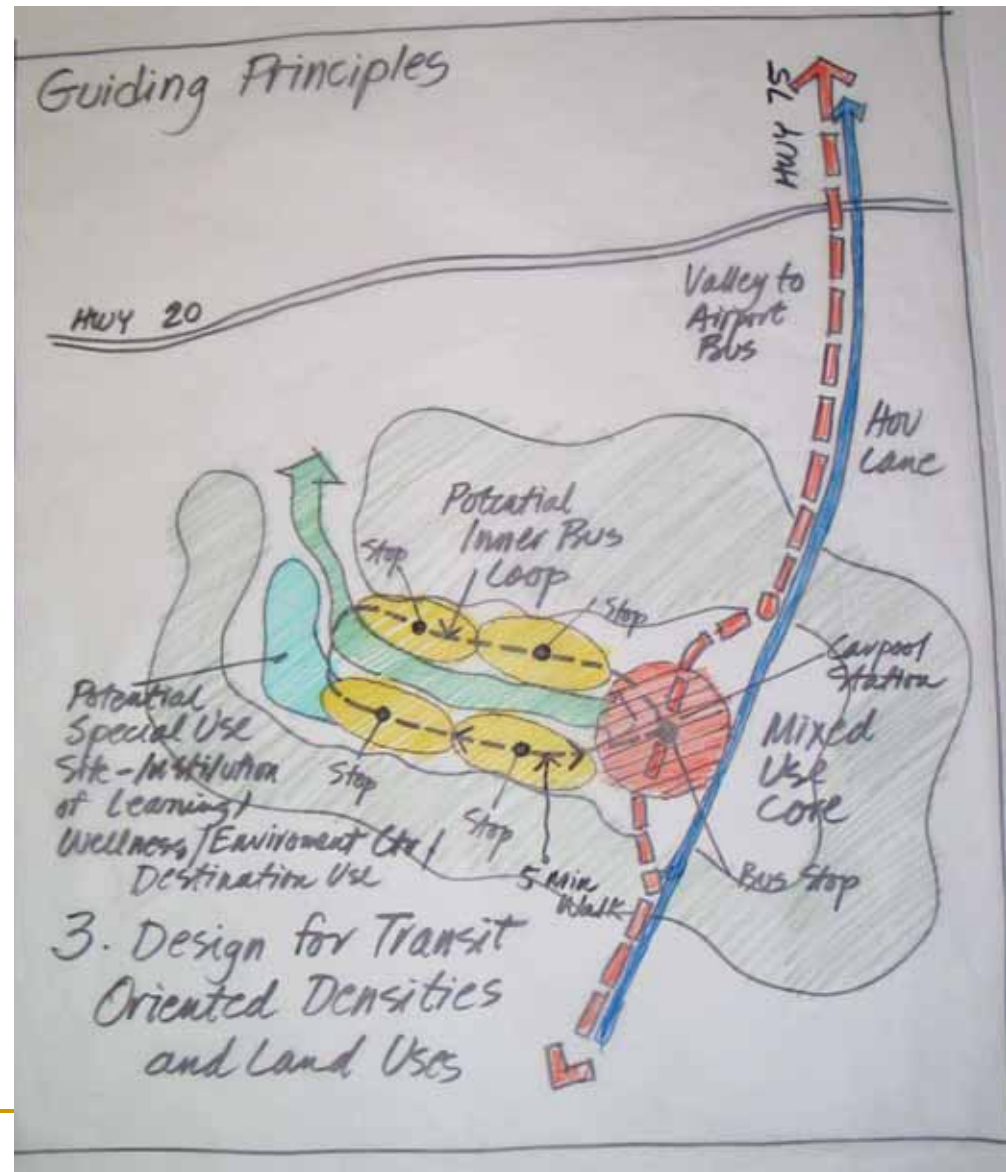
Create a Strong Vibrant Community with a “Heart”

- Towns need a heart
- People are searching for meeting places
- Gathering spaces activated by work and business
- Gathering spaces visually connected to the landscape
- Town center in a strategic location for visibility and access

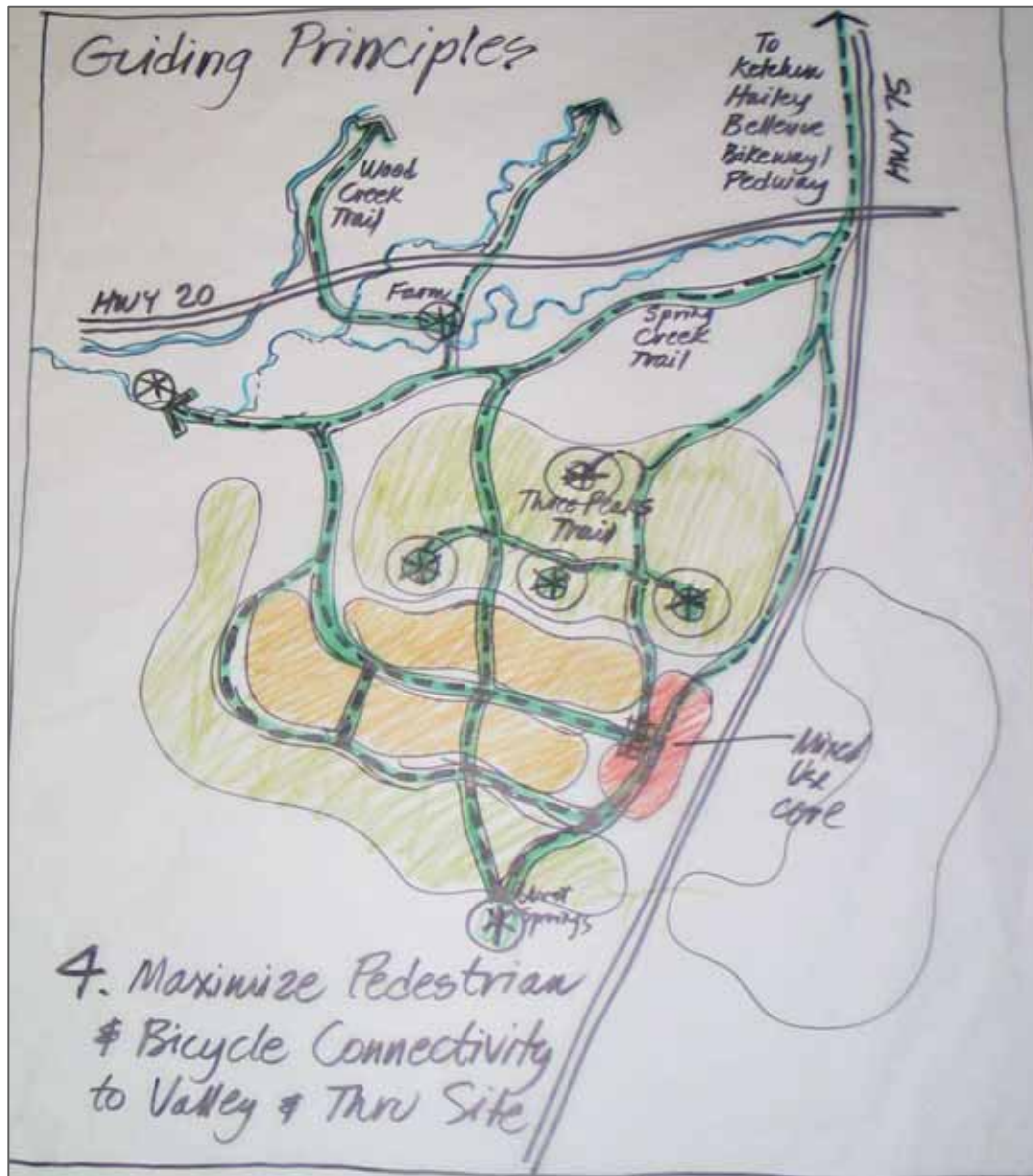


Design for Transit Oriented Densities

- Expanding movement options critical to reducing congestion
- Park and ride, rubber-tired bus, bikeways, pedestrian trails
- Bus linked to town center
- Pedestrian-friendly streets essential
- Internal town transit loop
- Relocated airport relationship an asset



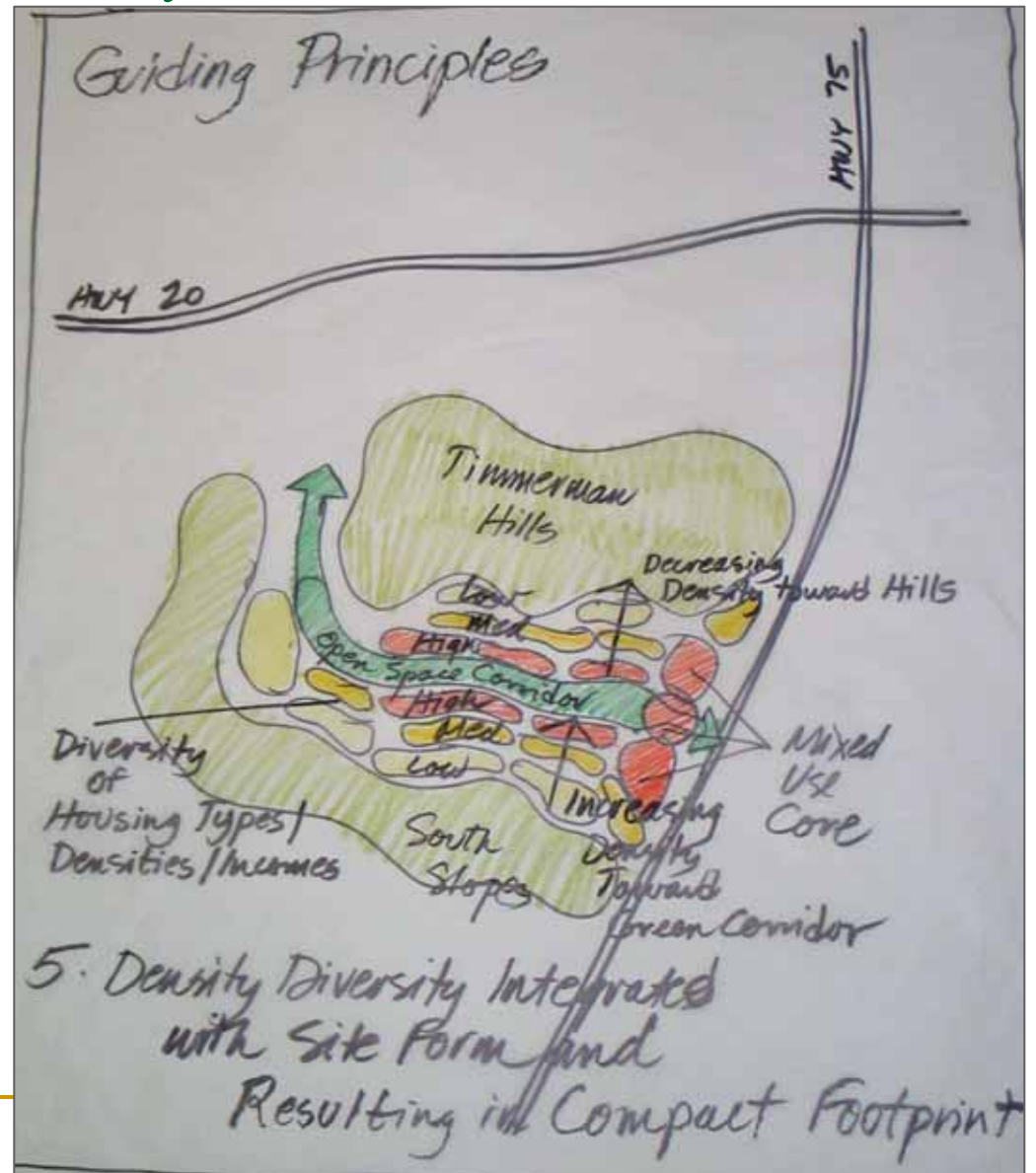
Maximize Non-Auto Connections



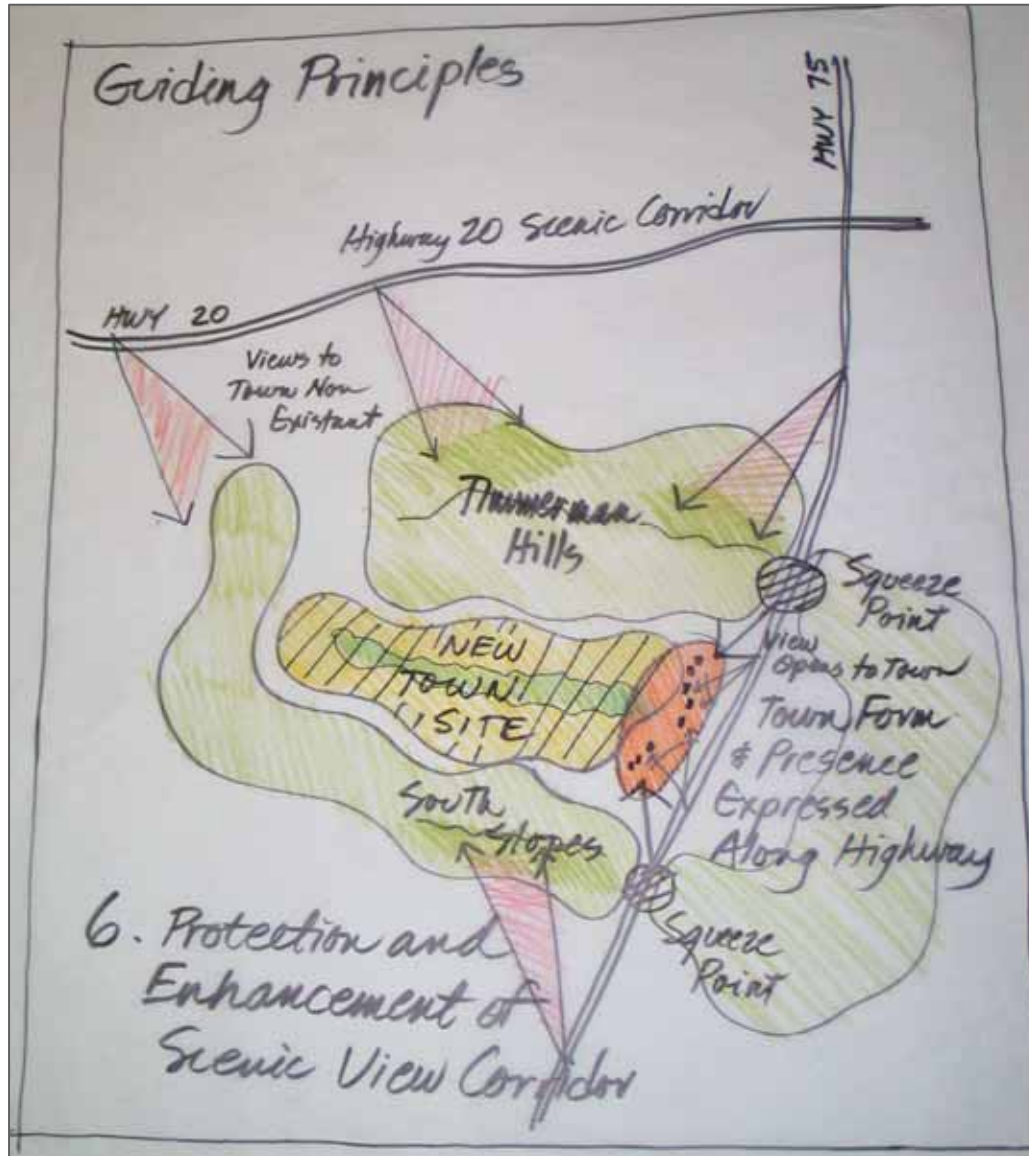
- Reduction of auto use essential to success
- Connections with valley bikeway to Spring Creek feasible
- Town needs pedestrian-friendly streets with trees
- Meets recreational and community needs

Allow Density Diversity Within the Footprint

- Density increases are essential to reducing sprawl
- Site size allows mixing of densities and forms in neighborly way
- Densities are located in concert with site slopes and views



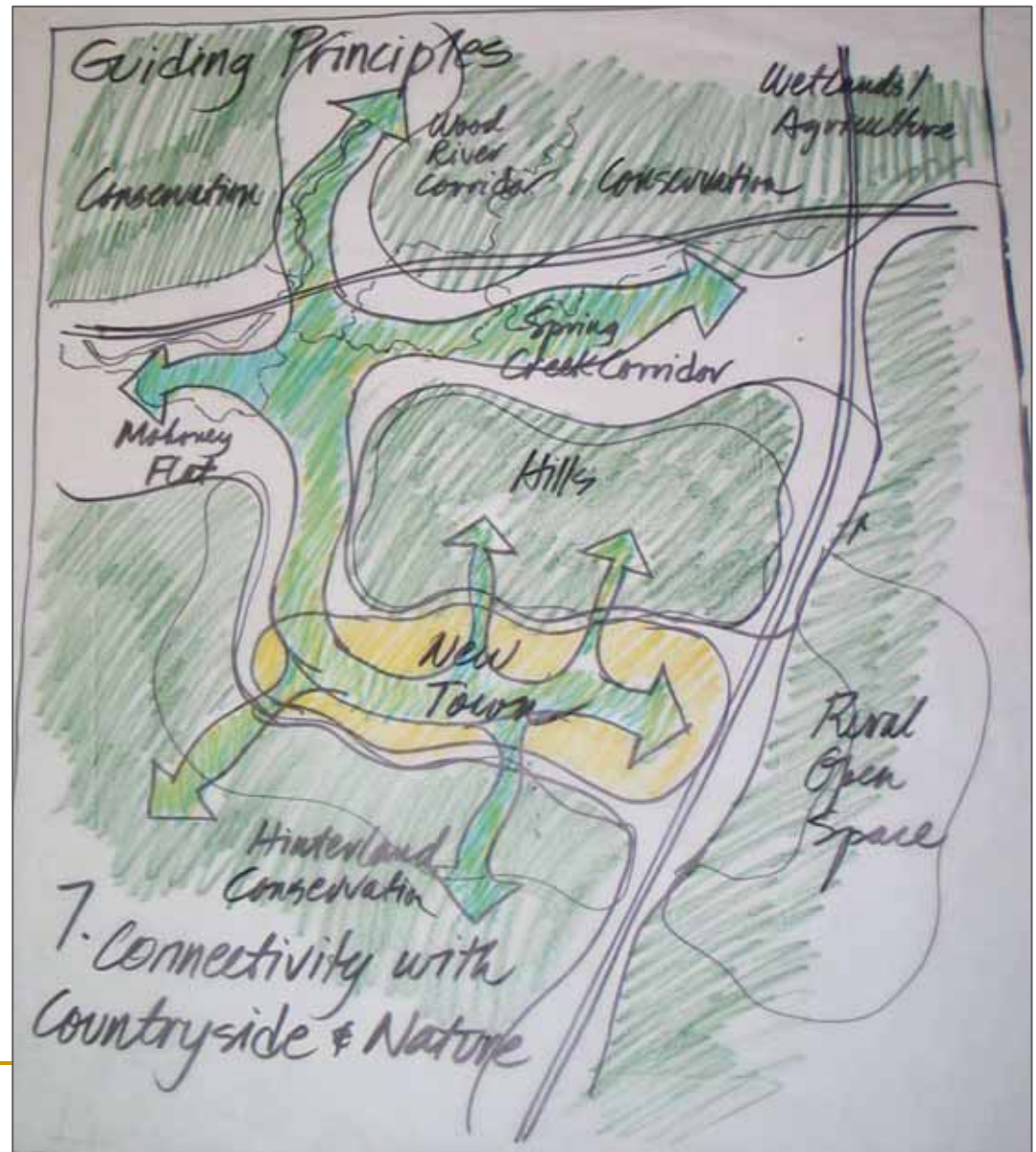
Protect Scenic Corridors



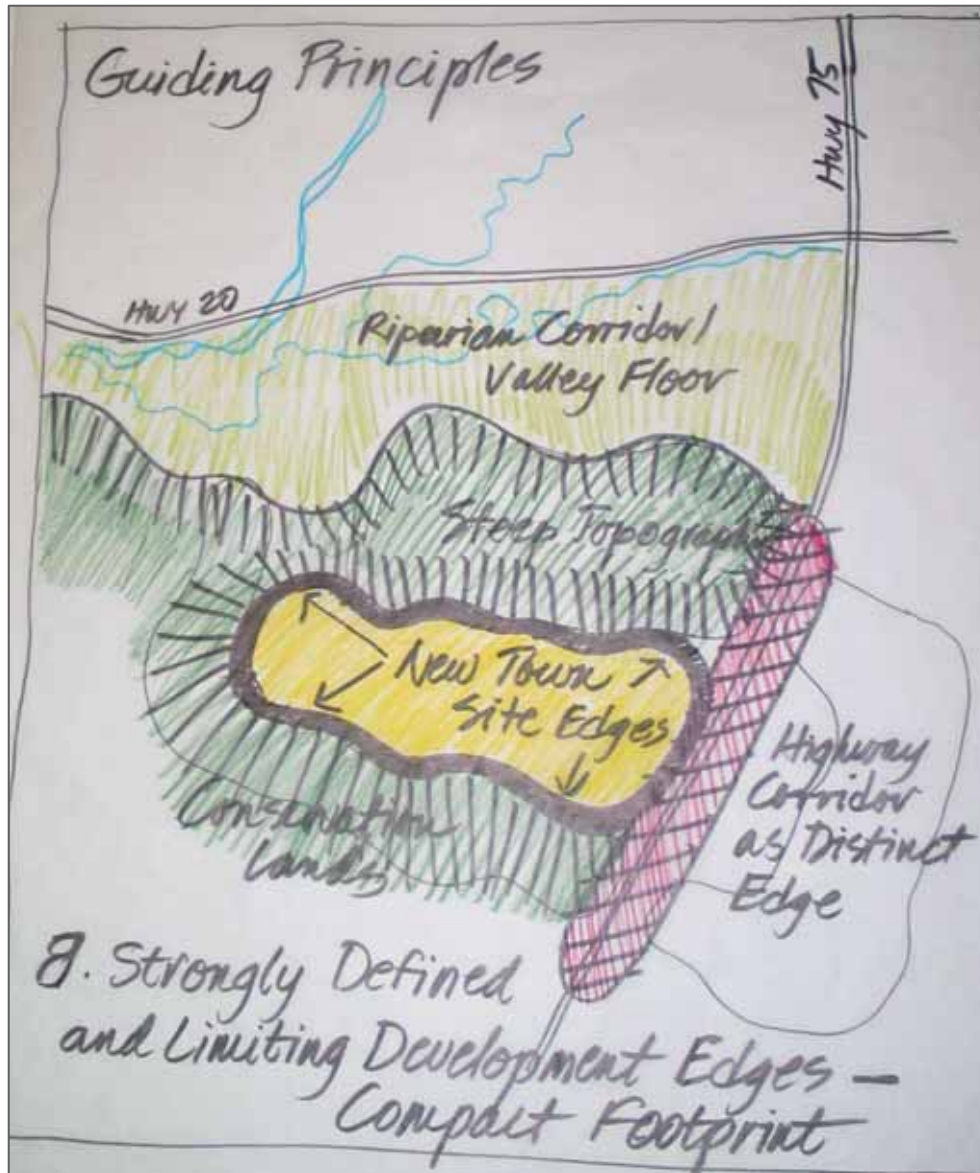
- Timmerman Hills provide visual buffer from highways
- Visibility of town center from highway as positive experience

Connect with Nature

- Connections with countryside are essential
- Community values stress preservation of rural landscape
- “Living in nature” opportunity



Create a Strongly Defined Community



- Compact development footprint needed to reduce sprawl
- Site bowl form prevents future expansion
- Compact footprint means higher densities, smaller lots and houses

This site's unique assets, in combination with models for high quality development could yield a "new town" that provides a community choice different than other precedents in the valley, Idaho, and possibly the west.

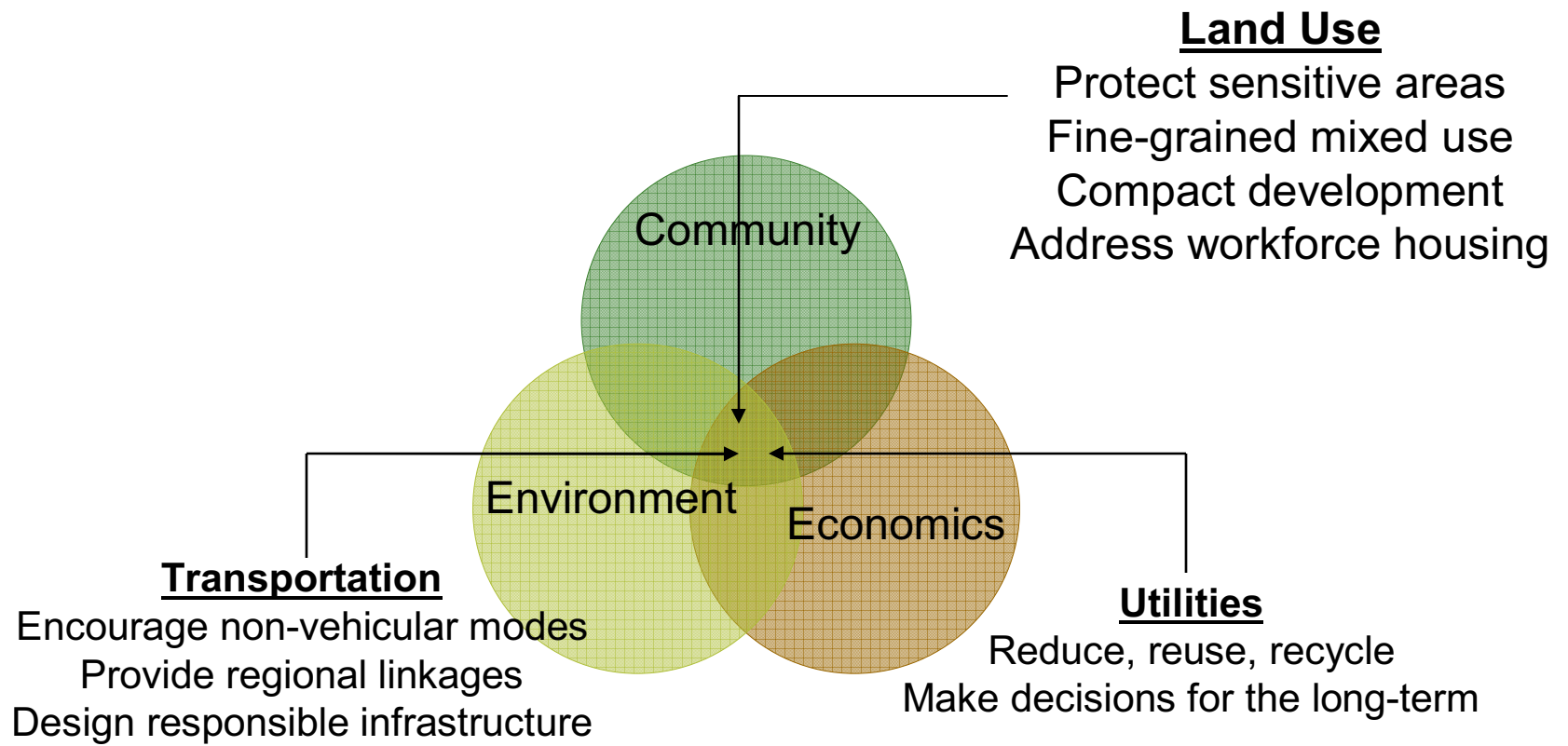


Physical Infrastructure

- **Wet Utilities**
 - Water
 - Sanitary sewer
 - Stormwater drainage
 - **Dry Utilities**
 - **Transportation**
 - Vehicular roadways
 - Bike and pedestrian
 - Public transportation
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Providing Facilities and Services

- Detailed service studies needed
 - Consider regional implications
 - Manage capital costs and operation/maintenance
 - Select options complimentary to principles
 - Utilize series of special districts
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Compatibility with the County Plans and Policies

Blaine County 2025 Tenets

- Limit growth occurring in the unincorporated county to ensure efficient provision of county services
 - Conserve land and resources in rural and remote areas of the county
 - Conserve agricultural land and reduce development patterns that will interfere with agricultural operations
 - Increase protection of environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, streams, and hill slopes.
(Blaine County 2025)
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New Town Criteria

- Location near a major road
 - Ability for the county and/or developers to provide community water and sewer system and other services such as police and fire, schools, etc.
 - Location where the development would not impact sensitive environmental resources, such as wetlands, streams, rivers, wildlife habitats, or irrigated agricultural lands
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Regional Issues

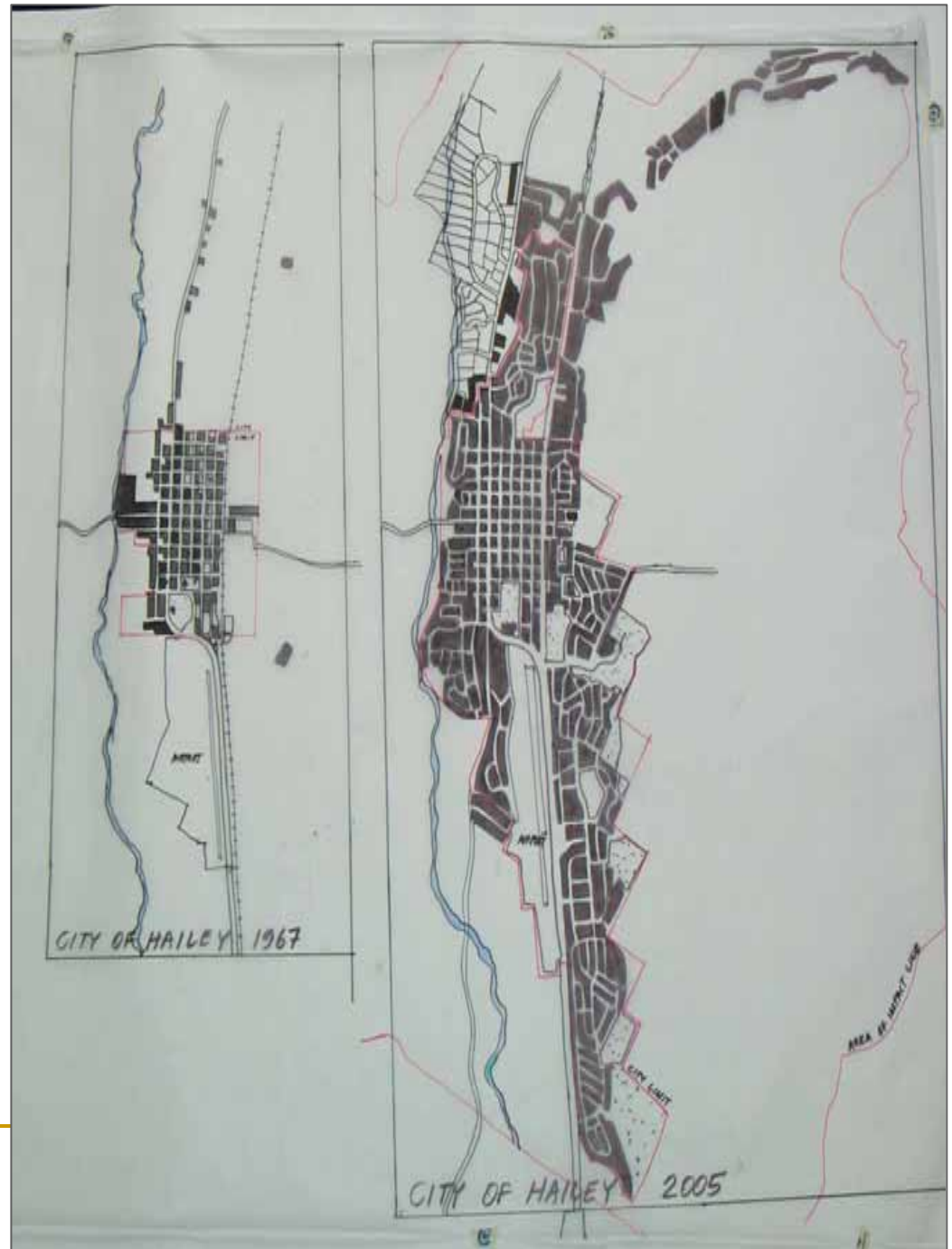
- Provision of affordable housing
 - The availability of affordable community housing is a key to the long-term viability of the Wood River Valley
 - Siting of new airport
 - Panel found support for the relocation of the airport to the south of the valley
 - Preserve natural resources of the valley
 - The fabric of open space that gives the valley its unique backdrop and pastoral valley floors must be conserved
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Regional Issues

- Retain and diversify the regional employment base
 - The changing nature of the existing economy suggests the need for a more balanced economic base
 - Capitalize on the unique nature of the region
 - A concerted regional effort should be made to promote the area's unique amenities
 - Transportation Implications
 - Traffic problems must be approached from a regional perspective
 - TDR Program
 - The basics of a TDR program should foster compact development
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Regional Issues

- Annexation can promote sprawl
 - Concern about the concentration of development in the canyons rather than pursuing infill will produce sprawl



Relationship to Spring Creek

- Increase the affordable housing stock
 - Capitalizes on the new airport site
 - Receiving area for TDRs
 - New Employment Base
 - Infrastructure is self supporting
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Timing of Site Development

- The preferred scenarios of Blaine County 2025 does not appear to allow new town development at this time
 - The potential value of a new town for the region is recognized
 - Developer and the County should immediately begin discussions about next steps
 - Patience is essential
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Conclusions

Guiding Principles

- Build on site's sense of place
- Create a strong vibrant community with a "heart"
- Design for transit-oriented densities and land uses
- Maximize non-automobile connections
- Allow density diversity within the footprint
- Protect scenic corridors
- Connect with nature
- Create a strongly defined community



What is Needed?

- Definition of the criteria for both defining the need for a new town and the selection of its location
 - A set of design principles within which to plan and develop a new town
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What Needs to Be Done?

- Regional economic development strategy
 - Defined affordable housing plan
 - Detailed regional open space plan as a framework for land use decisions
 - Regional transportation plan
 - Refinement of TDR strategies
 - Detailed planning criteria for a new town
 - Conduct detailed feasibility study
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