

## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Jerome County Comprehensive Plan ("Plan") is to integrate the concerns and expressions of Jerome County ("County") residents into a comprehensive statement of how the County should grow and develop. Furthermore, this statement must meet all legislative requirements, specifically the Idaho Local Land Use Planning Act. The Plan uses maps and narrative to describe the County, provides a vision of a desired future, and recommends a series of steps to attain it.

### **CHANGES AND GROWTH**

The 2018 Plan updates and amends the previous 1990 Plan. The County has had significant social and economic changes between 1990 and 2018. Agricultural activities have flourished, and responding growth in manufacturing, transportation, and population are evident. This Plan will reflect the changes and growth the County has experienced over the last 28 years and will provide a guide to future growth in the years to come. In addition, environmental factors will continue to change and this plan strives for encouraging environmentally responsible development and use of the lands.

Jerome County has experienced consistent population growth over the past 28 years, with a population increase of approximately 8,500 or 56%. The City of Jerome is currently the population and economic center of the County--housing a population of approximately 50% of County residents. Eden and Hazelton are the only other incorporated cities of the County. Together Eden and Hazelton house less than 10% of the total County residents.

The County's economy continues to be based largely on agricultural production and related industries. Several new dairy-product processing plants have been established in the County, and regionally, in the last 28 years--making this the leading industry in the County. Other agricultural activities include irrigated crop production and livestock grazing. Retail and service industries have expanded to support the increasing population.

State and federally owned lands account for more than 25% of the County's 387,000 acres. There have been few changes in the locations of state and federal lands. However, improvements in historic and recreational areas over the last 28 years have increased the County's offerings for citizens, visitors, and tourists. Open spaces continue to offer a number of recreational activities including but not limited to hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife observation. The Snake River Canyon--several sections of which are Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and State of Idaho owned--as well as several

privately owned sections, was considered a preservation zone in the 1990 Comprehensive Plan. This Plan views these areas as more of an area that should be developed for recreation and tourism. In 2004, the County leased land from BLM that will allow for the development of a park on the canyon rim.

Two major transportation corridors traverse the County. Interstate 84 crosses the southern portion of Jerome County, linking the Pacific Coast to destinations east. This route is a source of substantial commercial activity at a national level and has developed a number of transportation-related businesses over the last 28 years. U.S. Route 93 passes through central Jerome County connecting I-84 with major tourist destinations such as Sun Valley and Jackpot Nevada as well as providing a direct route to the railway and the Jerome County Airport--both of which have experienced improvements and expansions in support of the County's growing economy.

## STATISTICS

Unlike the previous Plan, this Plan attempts to avoid the insertion of charts and tables throughout the chapters. Statistics are ever changing and therefore become obsolete almost as soon as they are included in the Plan. Statistical information, analysis, charts, and tables may be found in the Appendix of the Plan, allowing for regularly updated information without revision of the Plan as a whole. In addition to this information there may be reference to specific web sites and databases for access to the most current information.

## MAPS

For many of the same reasons stated above, this Plan will create an Appendix for Maps. In the ever changing world of technology, particularly geographic information system (GIS) mapping, it is anticipated that updates to existing maps will occur regularly.

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Section 67-6508 of the Idaho Code mandates the Plan be based on the following components and provide analysis as to how each affects land-use actions and regulations of the County.

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| (a) Property Rights                           | (j) Recreation                              |
| (b) Population                                | (k) Special Areas or Sites                  |
| (c) School Facilities                         | (l) Housing                                 |
| (d) Economic Development                      | (m) Community Design                        |
| (e) Land Use                                  | (n) Agriculture                             |
| (f) Natural Resources                         | (o) Implementation                          |
| (g) Hazardous Areas                           | (p) National Interest Electric Transmission |
| (h) Public Service, Facilities, and Utilities | Corridors                                   |
| (i) Transportation                            | (q) Public Airport Facilities               |

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN FOR LEGISLATIVE PURPOSES

The Plan is comprised of several chapters; the primary topic of each being one of the individual components listed above. Thus, chapter by chapter, the Plan reviews all components and analyzes how each may apply to land-use regulations and actions of the board of commissioners.

The only exception is the "Land Use chapter". This chapter is not limited solely to the single component of land use, but instead touches upon the other components of the Plan as well and considers the effects these other components might have on land use as a whole. In doing so, this chapter becomes a semi-culmination of the Plan. The actual final culmination occurs in the Plan Implementation chapter, which sets forth a number of legislative directives that are derived from an overall analysis of the various discussions had in the Plan's Land Use chapter, as well as in its other chapters.

This layout allows the board of commissioners to look primarily to the Land Use chapter when drafting land-use legislation. When such legislation is drafted in accordance with these directives, it will then be in accordance with the whole of the Plan's policies.

Regular review and consideration of this Plan is also needed to keep the facts updated and the intent correct. A work program table with target dates is appended to the Plan which provides the public, County employees, and County officials with a clear pattern of what must be done and by whom, to implement the Plan.