

# The City of Ashton Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2008



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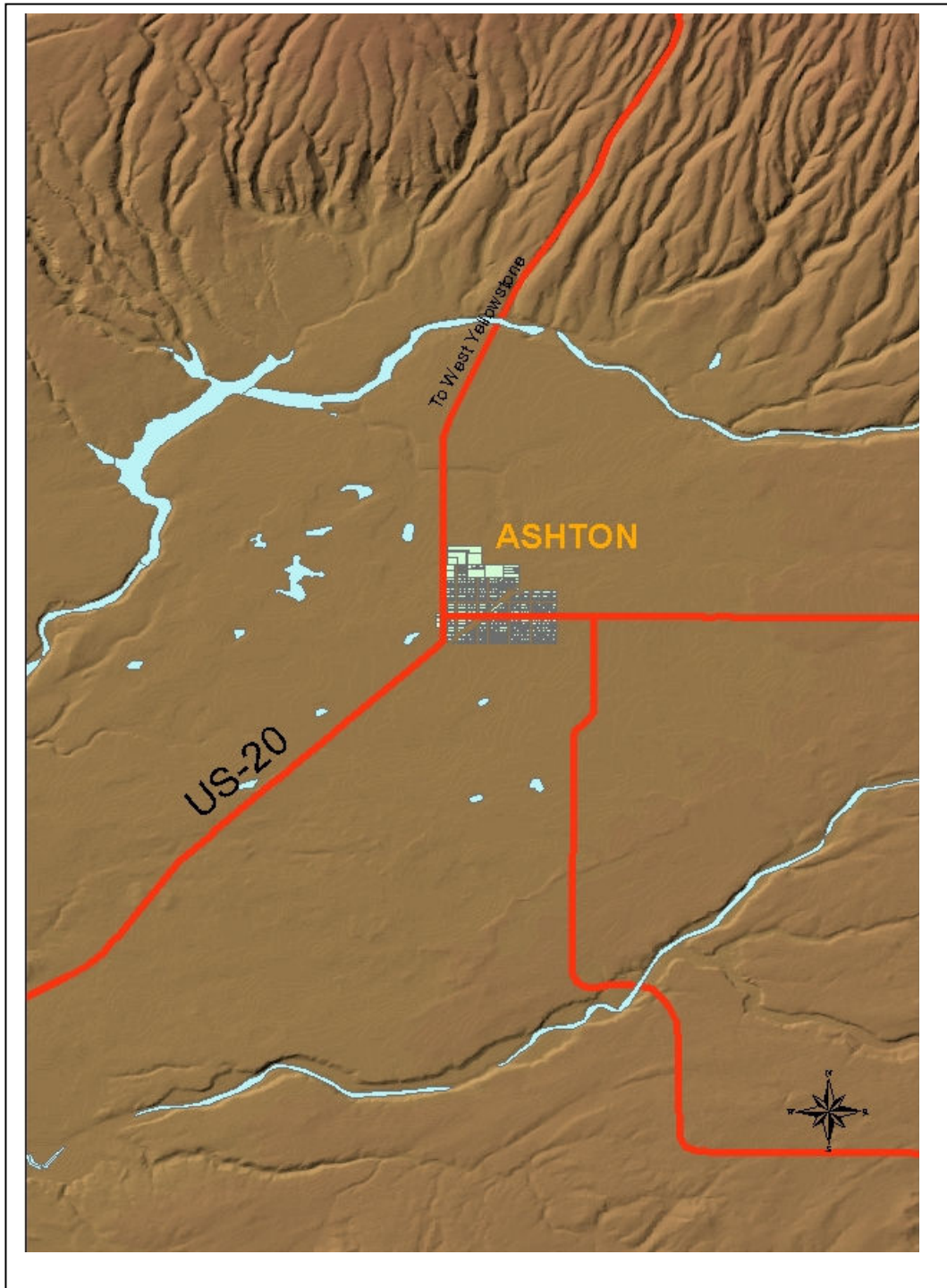


Figure 1.1 - Project Location

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Historic Background

Roots go deep in the Ashton area, beginning in the 1800's. By 1880, the small village of Marysville, established by Mormon settlers from Utah and southern Idaho, was thriving. Pioneers were taking up land for farming, ranching, logging, opening businesses, building homes, and raising families in the upper half of what would later become Fremont County. A remarkably diverse cross section of settlers dwelled in the area. Swiss, German, Scandinavian, English, Scotch, Welsh, Russian, and others established the area. Some direct from the "Old Country," some who had settled in eastern and southern states until the drive to find the right spot moved them west again, and others whose family members had already found the right spot and urged them to journey westward. Many smaller settlements had grown up in rural areas of northern Fremont County, usually around the local school, which served as the educational, social and recreational center for residents. As roads and automobiles improved and the school district began closing rural schools, settlements such as Drummond, Lamont, Greentimber, Sarilda, Hugginsville, Farnum and Lillian faded or disappeared altogether. Ashton soon replaced them as a center of commercial, social and community life.

Ashton owes its existence to a disagreement between the railroad and land speculators who sought to profit from buying up land along the projected right-of-way, then trying to sell it at what the railroad felt was an inflationary price. As the Oregon Short Line Railroad moved north, it had laid out a route into Teton County through Marysville.

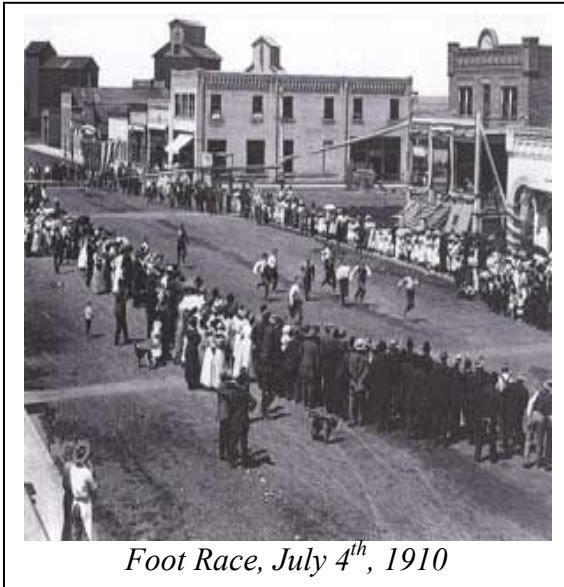
When landowners and the railroad failed to reach a compromise over prices, the railroad moved the right-of-way two miles west to get around the disputed land and the new town of Ashton was platted. In 1904, H.G. "Fess" Fuller and Charles C. Moore, considered the "founding fathers" of Ashton, joined with 12 others to organize the Ashton Townsite Company. The men eventually purchased 640 acres from early settlers for the town. The town was designed so that the railroad bisected the town diagonally.

On March 20, 1906, the Oregon Short Line Railroad began daily train service to Ashton. Shortly thereafter the Yellowstone Coach Line began running its horse-drawn coaches from Ashton to Yellowstone Park. Additionally, officials contracted the City of Ashton for several million pounds of grain and stable building to support their operation. The railroad continued to extend its lines north to West Yellowstone and southeast into Teton Valley, and on June 11, 1908, the first "Yellowstone Special" passenger train ushered in fifty-two years of passenger service to Yellowstone Park. By 1913, the railroad line had reached Victor, and Union Pacific began advertising passenger service on this route into the dude ranches of Jackson Hole and Grand Teton National Park, transporting passengers by bus from Victor over Teton Pass into Jackson Hole. The railroad also provided daily mail and freight service to all the small communities along the way, with all services running through Ashton

By 1911, Ashton boasted among numerous businesses including grain elevators, a

farm implement company, several lumber and hardware stores, a Studebaker dealer, three blacksmiths, several plumbers, an electric shop, a grocery store, meat market, two department stores, one clothing store, a

millinery shop, two jewelry stores, a photography studio, two livery barns, a cafe, 3 boarding houses, and the Ashton Hotel. In addition to Dr. Hargis and his Ashton sanatorium, there was a dentist, pharmacy and undertaker.



Ashton-based Fall River Rural Electric Co-op, a member-owned utility company established in 1938, now has 14,000 members, and provides electric and other services to customers in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The electric cooperative now has more than 1,800 miles of distribution line. Since 1920 the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has operated a fish hatchery near Ashton, which still provides nine species of trout and salmon for streams around the state.

The Ashton Memorial Hospital, which opened in 1950, was turned into a nursing home in 1988, and in 2002, was replaced by a new thirty-seven-bed nursing home on the west side of town. This bright, cheerful living center comes complete with several resident cats and a chorus line of birds to welcome visitors.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 What is a General Land Use Plan?

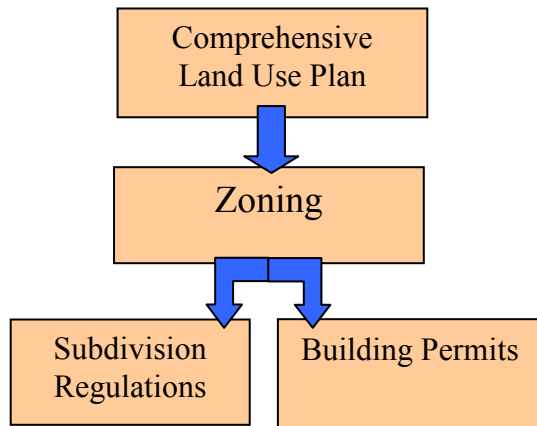
A General Land Use Plan is sometimes referred to as a “Master Plan” or “Comprehensive Plan”. It serves as the community’s general guide for making land use decisions. In many ways a Comprehensive Land Use Plan is a reflection of the community’s values. The plan usually describes how the community wants to grow, where the community wishes various land uses to take place and what the community wants to look like. As such, this Comprehensive Plan is a continuation of the effort that originally began in 1960 with the City of Ashton striving for a better, more efficient, functional and beautiful community.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan provides guidance for decisions that affect all aspects of land use. It covers the area within the City limits, as well as land anticipated to be annexed to the City in the future.

Although the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is not a regulatory document, it can be granted authority under Idaho Law. Idaho Code authorizes communities to adopt a Comprehensive Plan and allows the communities to require that all streets, parks, public buildings and utilities (public or private) be constructed in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Ideally, the Comprehensive Plan is the first level in a three-level process of regulating land uses.





1. The Comprehensive Plan guides broad decisions regarding Land Use (such as rezoning).
2. The Zoning Plan, following the basic land use pattern established in the Comprehensive Plan, assigns specific densities and uses to individual parcels of land.
3. The Subdivision Regulations and Building Permit process implements the requirements of the Zoning Plan.

That is (taken in reverse order) a building permit is granted by the city only for building uses that are in conformance with the zoning designation for the building site. One cannot normally get a permit, for example, to build a house on a lot that is zoned industrial. The zoning designation given to a parcel is usually based on the land use designation identified in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, an area that is designated “low density residential” in the Comprehensive Plan would subsequently be zoned for single family lots rather than apartments or a grocery store and only one permit for a single, residential home would be granted for each lot.

Therefore, once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, it is important that City Zoning Code be made consistent. This may be brought

about by rezoning any parcels that are not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, or by amending the Comprehensive, or both. It should be noted that either rezoning or amending must follow the City’s required procedures, including public notice and public hearings. Also, while the City has the authority to re-zone land, that authority is not unlimited. Recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling are clear that a land owner may not be deprived of all use of his or her land without compensation.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended for use by City Council, Planning Commission, and other City board, City staff, developers, and residents concerned about the future of the community. The purpose of the plan is to provide a comprehensive guide to the physical development of the City. It is a basic tool to guide zoning, budgeting, capital improvement decisions and policy making.

### 1.3 Why should we update the Comprehensive Plan?

Cities evolve over time and the Comprehensive Plan should be a living document that is updated periodically to reflect changing development patterns, population, market and employment trends, and increased demand for services. The City’s previous Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1997.

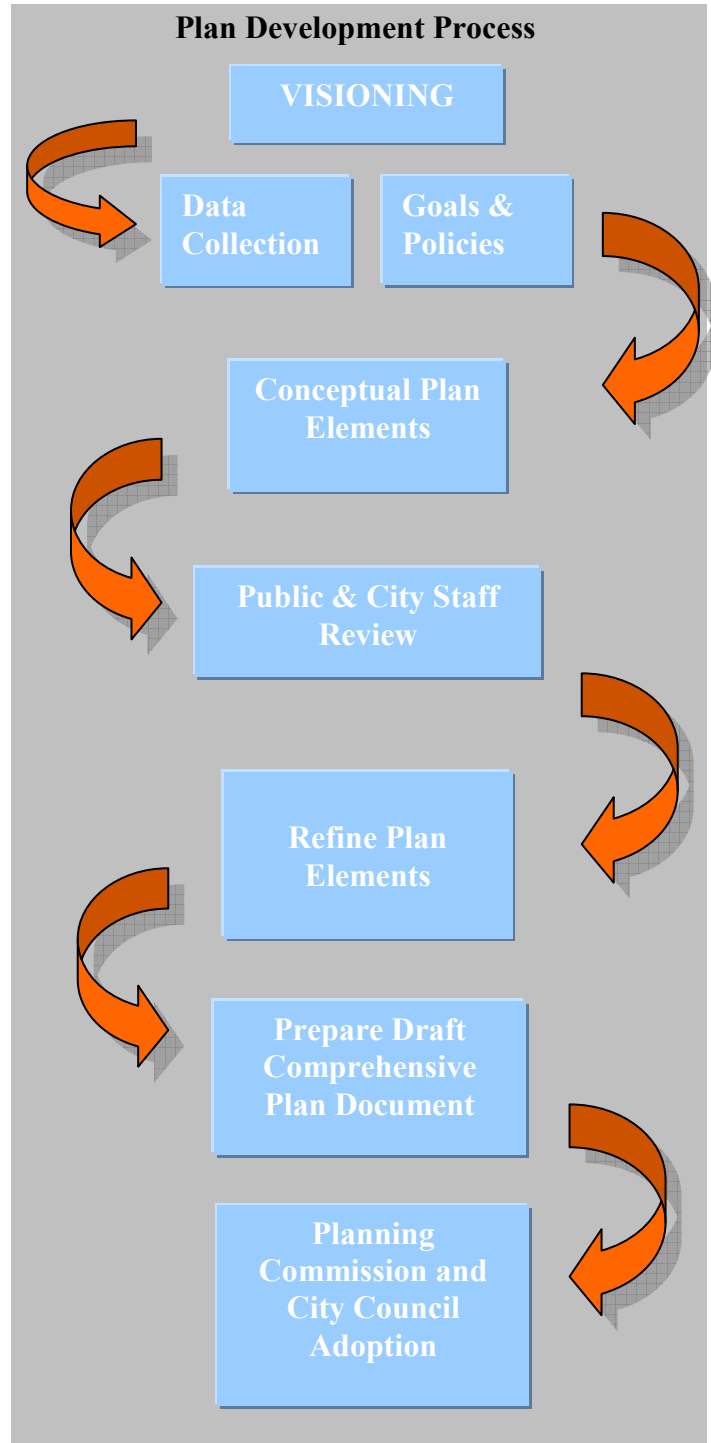
Since then, the community has changed due to a small population increase, residential development pressure, and changes in businesses and local industries.

The Comprehensive Plan has been updated to reflect these changing conditions and to reassess population and employment trends. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the City plans for its existing population as well as

future population growth to provide adequate housing, roads, parks, utilities, and services. The update will help to address emerging community issues. Public participation in the update of this Plan was important in defining and shaping the direction of the City's future growth and included residents, business owners, and community organizations.

### 1.4 How was the Comprehensive Plan Developed?

The first Comprehensive Plan was developed and adopted in 1997. Since that first adoption, only one amended to the Comprehensive plan has occurred. This update of the Comprehensive Plan is a significant overhaul on the land use element of the comprehensive plan since it was originally adopted. The comprehensive plan and this update were developed over an eight month period that included guidance and oversight from the Planning and Zoning Commission, community survey, and review by all of the City Departments.



## 2. Land Use Element

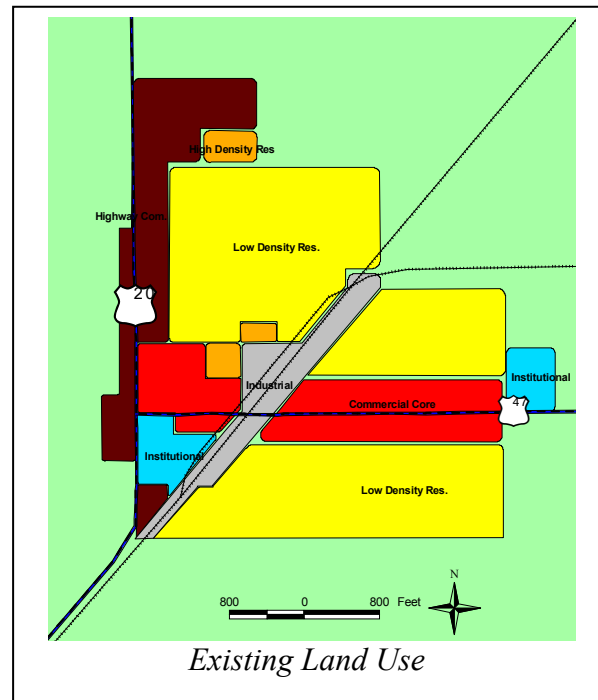
The general land use plan is an important guide for decisions related to development. The plan encompasses areas within the city and those areas anticipated to be annexed to the city in the future. This comprehensive plan is a reference for public agencies and private individuals seeking information about land development opportunities within the city.

Each designation on the land use plan is accompanied by a number of policies that have been adopted to guide the city's decisions on each individual request. These policies are listed below each section of the land use element.

The land use designations are approximate guidelines. The designations may be indicated by polygons or circles that do not necessarily follow property boundaries. Property specific issues are reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council.

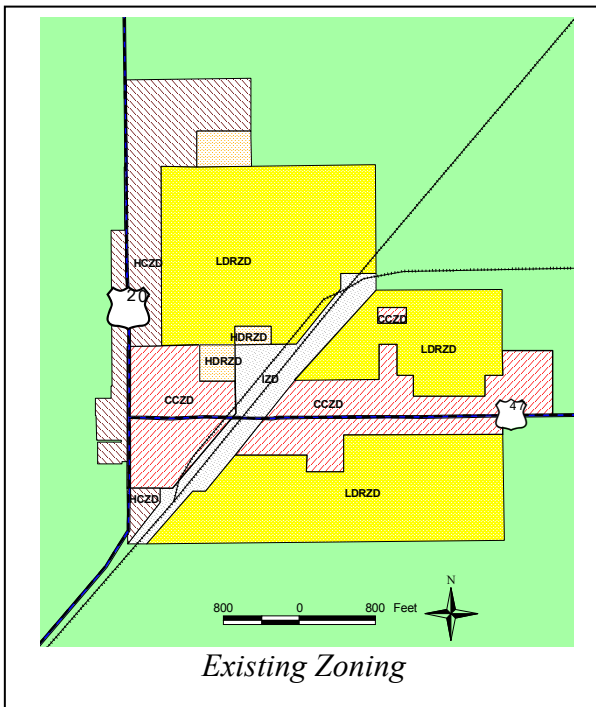
### 2.1 ZONING MAP vs. LAND USE PLAN

The zoning map and the land use plan work hand in hand with each other. The land use plan indicates general density ranges and how development is to be located on the land with special consideration for preserving natural features. The zones on the zoning map are legal designations that assign a specific overall density to a parcel of land. In most cases, the zoning is uniformly applied to a whole parcel of land. By contrast, the land use plan follows land forms, floodplains and road patterns. It generally indicates how land uses should be arranged.



Land use designations are identified by general categories such as residential, commercial, open space, industrial, and institutional. These designations sometimes have sub-categories depending on the size of the community, and the desired future growth. For example, residential land uses may be further categorized into low-density, medium-density, and high-density residential. Commercial uses can be categorized into freeway commercial, neighborhood commercial, or central business district commercial. Zoning designations are then correlated to the land use designations. For example, low density residential land use would associate with an R-1 or R-2 zoning designation.

The City of Ashton's current land use plan is specific and maintains some consistency along property boundaries. However, some discrepancies between the land use plan and zoning designation currently exist.



Take for example an area along US-20 that is zoned as Commercial Core, even though the land use designation for that area is the Institutional. Another example is the Commercial Core land use identified one block north and one block south of Main Street. The current plan identifies areas where zoning has been allowed to go beyond the desired land use boundaries. If this development pattern continues, the central core of the City will continue to degrade. The city was developed in a traditional grid pattern design with most commercial occurring along Main Street with an average 1 acre block size. The City realizes the importance and the need to maintain the traditional "small town"

character while trying to maintain economic sustainability.

## 2.2. Summary of Existing Conditions

The City of Ashton's current land use designations include commercial, residential, and industrial areas.

The current land use plan identifies approximately 136 acres of residential land use, 105 acres of commercial land use, 18 acres of school land use, and 0 acres of parks and open space land use. Contrary to this, the zoning map identifies 192 acres for residential, 119 acres for commercial, 40 acres for school, and 5 acres for parks and open space.

### RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The City of Ashton is predominantly single-family developed area specifically within and near the core of the city averaging about four dwelling units per acre. Larger parcels of land exist near the city or outside the city boundary line that are currently used for agricultural purposes.



Three areas within the City are identified for medium density within the city that currently occupy (duplex, apartment). One area near 3<sup>rd</sup> and Maple Street contains medium density housing (two/several duplexes/apartments) averaging about 4 dwelling units per acre. The other area is identified north of the City near 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and White Pine Street. This area averages six dwelling units per acre.

### COMMERCIAL LAND USE

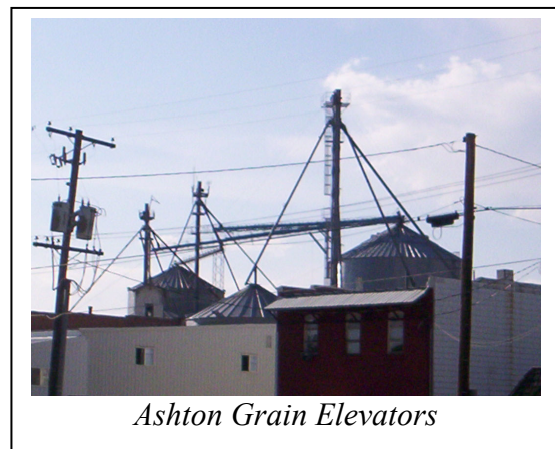
The community core zoning district encompasses approximately 56 acres primarily centered along Main Street from US-20 to 11<sup>th</sup> Street. In some areas along Main Street the community core area expands to either side of Main Street to include existing commercial uses. Commercial uses include a mix of retail such as a drug store, tire sales, gas station/convenient store, restaurant, bank, and others.

The highway commercial area encompasses approximately 44 acres located primarily along the frontage of US-20. Uses in this area include a grocery store, drive inn restaurant, hotel, gas station, and outdoor recreational sales.



### INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

The railroad corridor and several grain elevator facilities and accessory uses are identified within the industrial area. These serve as a historical reminder of Ashton's strong economic base in agricultural production. Although the agricultural industry is still active today, production has declined over the past decade.



### PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and Recreation are important aspects of a healthy community. Recreation facilities, programming and events are important direct and indirect economic development tools. Directly, recreation events can bring important sources of revenue, and recognition to a community. Events such as the Mesa Falls Marathon and the Ashton Dog Derby have a significant impact on the City's economy.

The existing land use map does not specifically identify parks or open space areas. However, Ashton does have a City Park on 5 acres of land. No other parks or open space areas have been developed within the City. Recently, a Rails-to-Trails project developed a trail from Ashton to

Tetonia. This is a very popular and highly used trail system.

**AGRICULTURAL LAND USES**

Agricultural land is a non-renewable resource. Once public and private decisions are made to convert agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, the resource is almost always irretrievably lost.

Agricultural land has two public benefits: 1) self sufficiency and the cost advantages of local production; and 2) preservation of open space and aesthetic values associated with the rural lifestyle that has played an important role in the region’s heritage.



*Existing Agricultural Uses*

The primary productive agricultural soils in the area of Ashton all occur within the jurisdictional boundaries of Fremont County. Some of this productive agricultural land is within the Area of Impact, which is discussed below.

**LAND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

Residential development appears to be on a slight increase in the area. Primarily this development is occurring in areas identified as the City’s Area of Impact (AOI). The AOI is not currently within the

City’s jurisdictional boundaries but is identified as areas for incorporation. Within the city boundaries, approximately 12 acres of vacant or undeveloped land currently exist. The City could accommodate some infill development but similar to other communities around the region, Greenfield development is more appealing than infill. Some commercial revitalization appears to be slowly occurring along Main Street with some building rehabilitation.

**Area of Impact (AOI)**

The Area of City Impact is defined as the area in which the City would like to manage growth. For Ashton, these areas have been identified with the County for future annexation. The identified Area of City Impact is approximately four times as large as the existing City limits. It is a predominantly agricultural area, averaging 40 acre or more per dwelling unit.

**Existing Land Use Challenges**

The AOI poses several challenges for the City of Ashton. Since the area is not currently within the jurisdictional control of Ashton, the City really has no zoning control over the property. Future annexation and development of these areas potentially increases the demand for city services such as water and sewer. This places a capital expense on the City to accommodate these requests. Figure 2.1 identifies the current identified Area of Impact for Ashton.

Additionally, commercial use continues to be a struggle along Main Street. Some commercial businesses along Main Street have continued successfully but attracting new businesses to the area has proven difficult. Vacancy is not the problem. Several buildings remain vacant and could accommodate new businesses. The challenge for commercial interests is maintaining a strong commercial presence on a yearly basis. Most businesses do well during the summer tourist season. Once this drops off in late September, it is much more difficult for businesses to remain open from the local population. However, most of the uses in highway commercial area do better on a yearly basis. Yearly traffic, access and visibility lead to the success of commercial uses in along US-20.

**Specific Critical Issues**

Within the City, key planning issues and opportunities revolve around the issue of how, when, and in which jurisdiction new development is approved. This concern necessarily involves issues of the location, type and quality of development, transportation, and annexation.

- Specific critical issues:
1. the need to enhance the unique “small town” identity of Ashton, including the traditional residential neighborhoods, and central business core;
  2. the need to ensure a top-quality appearance and design for development;
  3. the need for logical, complementary and predictable land use patterns;
  4. the need for efficient transportation facilities and services which are closely coordinated with development;
  5. the need to provide efficient and effective public facilities.

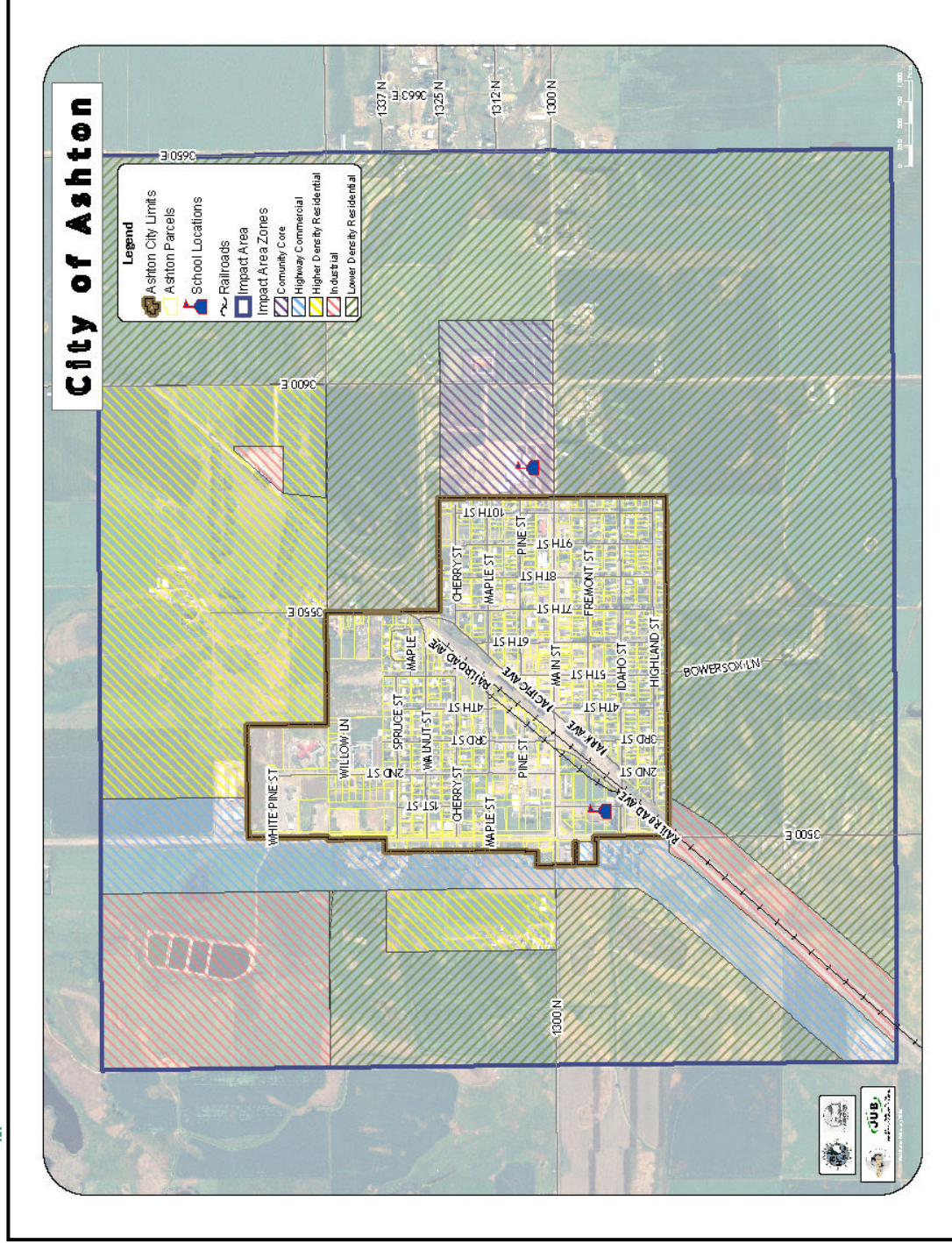


Figure 2.1 - Ashton Area of Impact



### 2.3. Population and Housing Forecast

Ashton’s population has fluctuated over the years. According to the 1960 U.S. Census, Ashton had an all time high of 1,292. The population in 2000 was 1,129. The lowest recorded population occurred in 1994 at 1,085. The population change has not been drastic between census years. The City of Ashton’s population has remained relatively stable compared to other communities. Current number of households is approximately 395, with an average household size of 2.79.

#### Population forecast

As previously noted, Ashton’s population has fluctuated in the past seven years (Figure 2.1). Even though the City has experienced a -.3% decrease since 2000, the population has remained relatively stable since the 1960’s. The period between 2006 – 2007 experienced some new residential building permits. The City is optimistic that this growth trend will continue.

Table 2.1 - Population Projections

2000	2002	2004	2006
1,129	1,112	1,131	1,092
Pop % Change 2000-2006			-.3%
Pop % Change 2005-2006			-.70%
Source: US Census			

### 2.4. Land Use Focus

During the preparation of the Ashton Comprehensive Plan, public input gave credence to the Ashton Community Review process that was conducted in 2005. Other public input was received during the Planning Commission and City Council public meetings.

Issues specifically related to land use included the following:

- Plan wisely for growth
- Implement an Area of Impact and annexation policy
- Update zoning ordinances
- Update comprehensive plan
- Protect the City’s viewsheds
- Improve the visual quality of downtown
- Coordinate planning efforts with Fremont County

### 2.5. Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) classifies all land in the Ashton planning area into broad categories. The land uses delineated by the FLUM are generally distributed consistent with existing land use and zoning. However, some changes to the FLUM were made to address the balance of commercial land, the availability of a variety of housing types, gateways, parks and open space (Figure 2.2). The following land use classifications indicate the existing use and the desired mix of other uses deemed to be compatible as the City changes. It is emphasized that the map must be used in conjunction with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in each element of the Comprehensive Plan. The FLUM reflects those elements of the comprehensive plan and also defines the areas to which the land use goals, objectives, and policies apply.

In addition to the above general explanation of the FLUM, specific descriptions of each classification are given below to show the intent of the FLUM.

## **Districts**

The following section provides a description of each land use category included on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map. These categories provide a broad description of land use and development type. These descriptions, along with the following goals, objectives, and policies, provide direction for the use and development of the land within Ashton. Implementation occurs through development regulations adopted by the City. The land use planning choices made in the FLUM will serve as the basis for any property rezoning and for amendments to the City's zoning ordinance.

### *Low Density Residential*

The low-density residential classification designates areas intended primarily for single-family dwellings. As identified in the AOI, a significant amount of land is identified for residential use. As such, low-density residential will continue to be a major land use type for Ashton. Home occupations may be acceptable. The recommended density is up to a maximum of 4 dwelling units per gross acre.

### *High Density Residential*

This classification provides for a mixture of housing unit types, including single-, two-, three-, and four-family dwellings, townhouses, or clusters thereof. The classification is also intended to apply to planned unit developments having a mixture of housing unit types and limited commercial land uses. Development should incorporate safe, attractive, and continuous connections and walkways for travel and access by foot as an integral part of its overall layout and design.

Development adjacent to lower density uses should incorporate elements in the site design and building design to soften the development's impact and to result in a compatible transition. Home occupations may be acceptable. The recommended density is up to 8 dwelling units per gross acre.

### *Community Core Commercial*

The Community Core Commercial classification recognizes the "main street" development pattern that serve the day-to-day needs of the community as well as the surrounding neighborhoods and residential areas. The Community Core Commercial areas typically allow but are not limited to a variety of banking, office, government use, apparel stores, and personal service establishments such as beauty shops, automobile parts and service, and restaurants. Residential uses are allowed but above the first floor.

### *Highway Commercial*

Highway Commercial relies on visibility and access. The highway commercial area is allowed along US-20, SR-32 & SR-47. Uses in this area include most commercial providing goods and services to travelers, tourists, and the local community. These businesses include hotels, restaurants, gas stations, "mini-marts", and variety stores. The Highway Commercial should be interpreted as a "gateway zone" and uses such as storage units, or uses that require large storage areas should be discouraged along the frontage.

### *Gateway Commercial Overlay*

The purpose of the Gateway Commercial designation is to develop quality highway entrances to the City. Gateways are important to the overall character of the City as they present the first impression to those traveling to the City. Visitor-oriented commercial uses, corporate campuses, and recreation opportunities will be the primary uses found in the Gateways.

Gateways are characterized by attractive buildings with large setbacks from the primary roadway, highlighted by gracious landscapes or natural areas. Gateway development will preserve open spaces and vistas in order to reinforce the picturesque setting of Ashton. High quality site and building design are imperative to ensure Ashton's first impression as "a place you want to call home."



*Designate Gateway Areas with Signage or Design Features*

### *Industrial*

The overall intent of the Industrial designation is to provide for low-intensity manufacturing, assembly, industrial services, distribution, storage, and similar uses that are conducted with minimal adverse impact on the environment and the general community. Light industrial uses tend to involve assembling and manufacturing of products from previously prepared material.

The existing uses within the Industrial area are primarily associated with the historic agricultural and the grain elevators. These industries are served by rail and/or tractor trailer. The light industrial classification recognizes areas for such uses as light manufacturing and fabrication, warehousing and storage, wholesale distribution, product processing and packaging, construction and contracting operations, feed and seed stores, and similar uses. These serve as a historical reminder of Ashton's strong economic base in agricultural production and are still very active today.

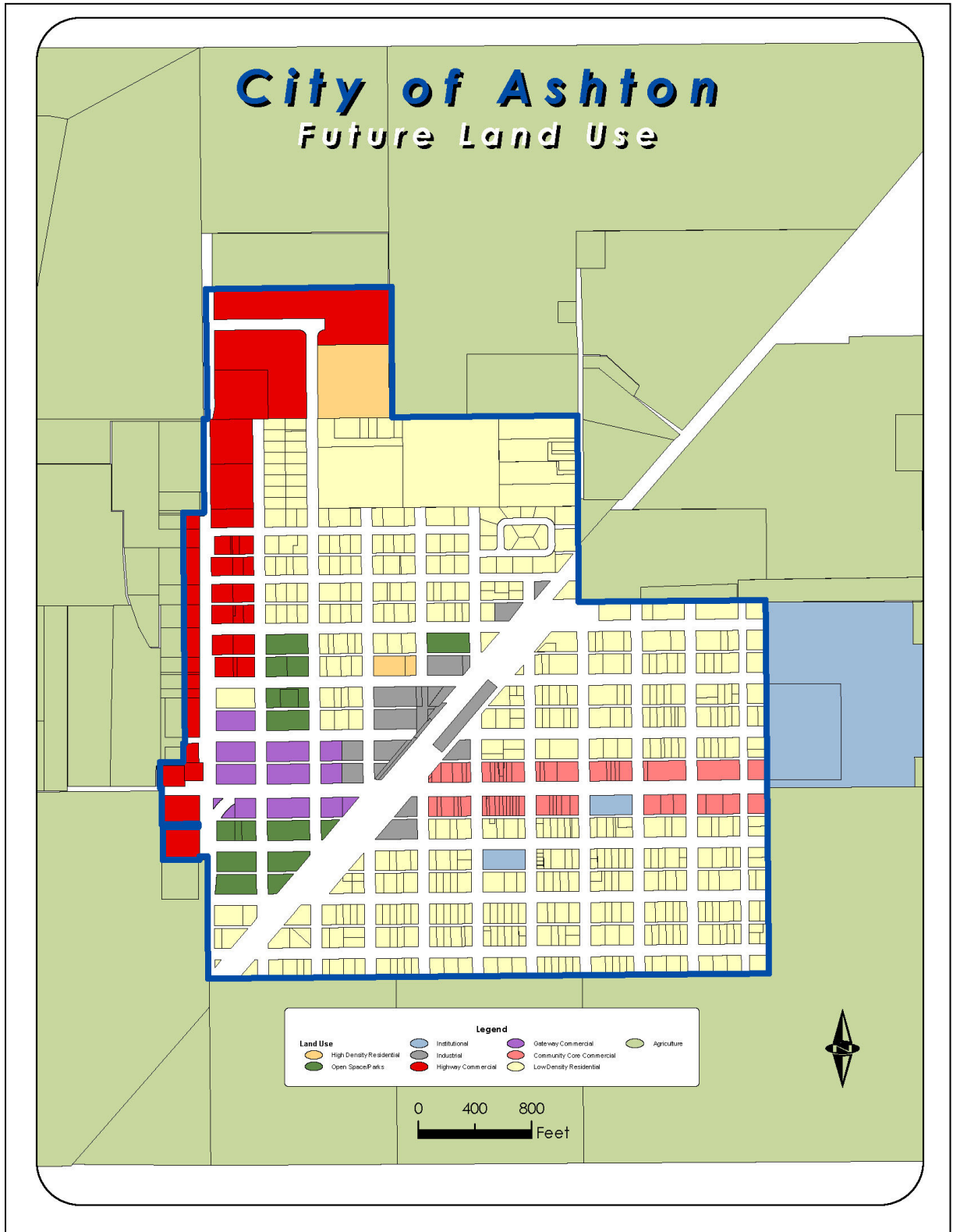


Figure 2.2 - Ashton Future Land Use Map

## 2.6. Land Use Goals and Policy

The Land Use Goals and Policies cover a broad spectrum of issues. They are divided into land use sections to make it easier to find the policies relating to a specific issue. However, it is important to note that all of the Goals and Policies function together as a coherent and comprehensive vision of future growth in the community. Furthermore, there are applicable goals and policies in other elements of this Comprehensive Plan that also relate to land use and development.

### Residential Land Use

Goal: Foster orderly growth that encourages efficient use of land, cost-effective provisions of urban services, and results in a livable, attractive community.

Policy:

1. Coordinate effectively with Fremont County on potential and proposed development within the AOI.
2. Assure that growth occurs at a reasonable pace, and in areas that can be sustained by City services and facilities and therefore does not place an inequitable burden on existing residents. "Growth should pay it own way".
3. Assure that new development is organized as neighborhoods, and is integrated with the existing neighborhoods.
4. Facilitate redevelopment of existing developed land when appropriate. Encourage infill development on vacant or undeveloped land within the City.

5. Maintain the single-family dwellings as the principal use in the City's established low-density residential districts. Allow for secondary uses that are compatible with a single-family character.

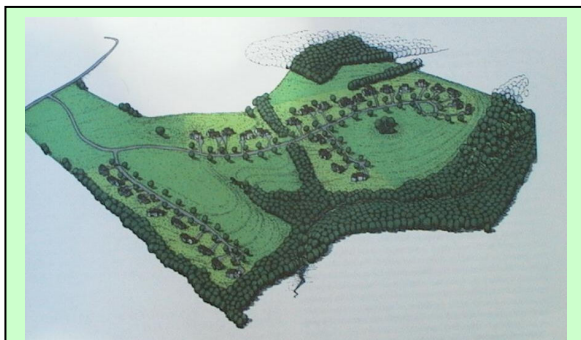


*Proposed land area*



*Inefficient land use pattern*

- *Increased infrastructure cost*
- *Eliminates natural open space*



*Recommended land use pattern*

- *Infrastructure is compact*
- *Natural open space is preserved*

### Commercial Land Use

Goal: Develop a strong, diverse local economy to provide employment opportunities, goods and services to the city, region and tourist industry.

Policy:

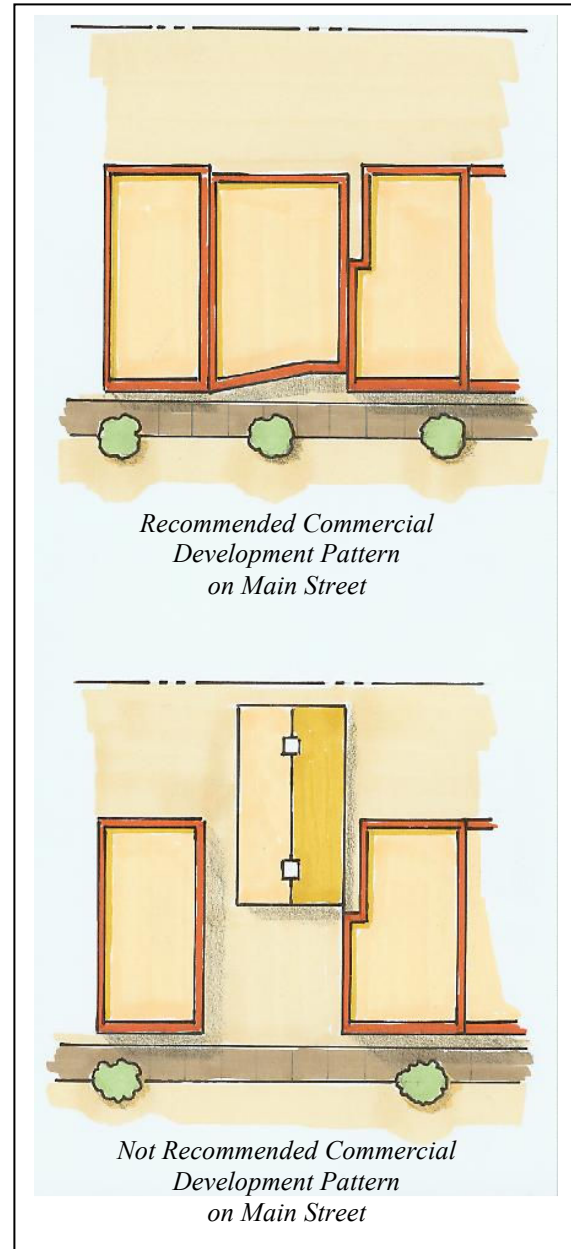
1. Support and encourage locally-owned niche market businesses.
2. Commercial and business development along US-20 should be designed to fit the character of the area. Facades should have finish materials similar to building fronts and landscaped setbacks.
3. Attract industries that will need a skilled labor pool and will raise the local wage rate.
4. Ensure commercial buildings front on a public or private street. Building facades should relate to the street and clear pedestrian entries should be provided from the street and parking areas.
5. Avoid commercial zoning beyond the frontage of Main Street. Maintain a pronounced commercial zone along the frontage to avoid the spreading of commercial uses into adjacent residential areas.

### Industrial

Goal: Preserve and expand the core of industrial activity.

Policy:

- 1 Attract regional wholesale distribution business
- 2 Laboratory and research operations for local and regional agricultural and forestry



**Open Space and Recreation**

Goal: Identify an open space and recreation land use and zoning designation.

Policy:

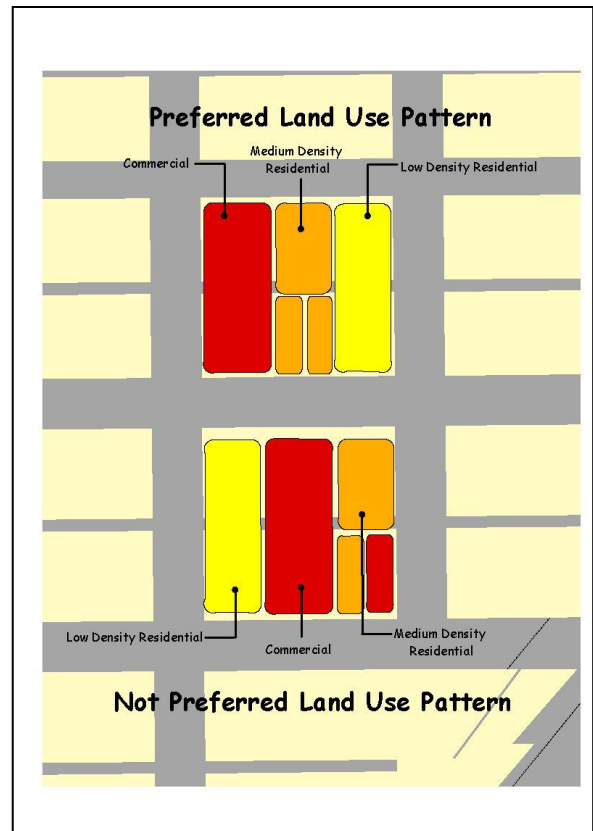
1. Develop a regional park and facility that not only serves Ashton but also neighboring communities.
2. Promote a regional trail and open space network to capitalize on recreational tourism and host regional events.

**Community Character**

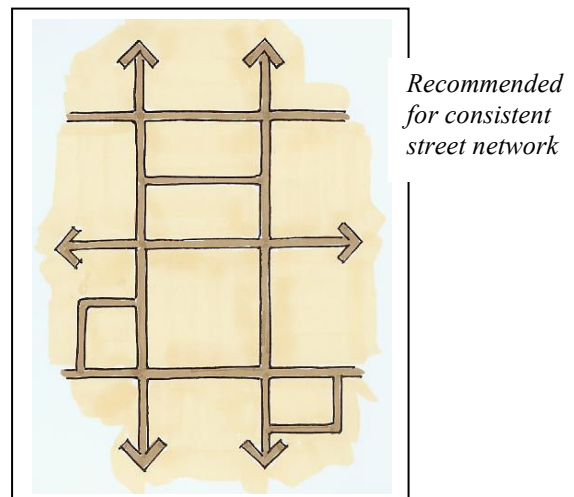
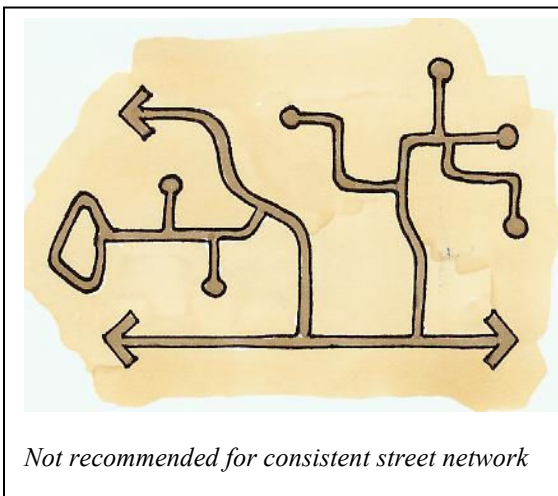
Goal: Maintain and preserve the assets that make Ashton a livable community.

Policy:

1. Focus on quality of building and site design to assure that developments relate to the surrounding natural and built environment.
2. Land use incompatibility between adjacent uses and/or between various land use districts should be avoided.
3. Maintain connectivity and mobility through a consistent street network that recognizes and follows the traditional development pattern.



4. Include clear and ample walkways from street sidewalks and parking areas to building entrances as well as within and between developments.



### 3. Natural and Cultural Environment

The high quality of life in Ashton is affected by the health of its natural environment. Ashton's built environment directly and indirectly affects the natural environment. Therefore, land use plans and major land use decisions should be made with the fullest possible understanding of the natural environment. Although the built environment inevitably affects the natural environment, the City of Ashton can implement policies that allow for development while minimizing the level of direct impacts to the natural environment that are commonly associated with development activities.



*Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall*

The Natural Environment Element provides a policy framework for the protection and improvement of Ashton's natural environment. Policies and regulations guide land development, with particular attention given to development in critical areas such as wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife

conservation areas, geologically hazardous areas, and floodplains. The intention of these natural environment policies is to achieve land use and development practices that are compatible with the features and functions of the natural environment. The result should be development practices that protect rather than destroy significant natural features and processes of the land in Ashton.

The Natural Environment Element is interconnected with the various aspects of other Comprehensive Plan elements. No one goal, objective, or policy is pursued to the exclusion of others. In considering protection of the natural environment against other needs, including urban growth, housing, economic development and recreation opportunities, Ashton strives to balance these goals and achieve protection of the environment through a variety of means, including regulation of property, incentives, and public programs.

The goal of this element is to minimize loss of habitat functions and to maintain, protect, and enhance the functions of cultural and historic resources, fish and wildlife habitat, water quantity and quality, wetlands, and other water bodies; and to integrate the natural environment with the built environment. The following discussion sets the framework for the City's Natural Environment goals, objectives, and policies provided at the end of this element.



### 3.1. Cultural and Historic Resources

Ashton's history dates back to circa 1900 with much of the area's first residents being farmers. Most of the early physical development of the City occurred in about 1906. Ashton is fortunate to have maintained numerous historic buildings and sites dating back to the original development. While many of these resources are not registered on the National Register of Historic Places, they meet the several of the criteria for eligibility. These resources include:

- Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall (corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Main). Built in 1907 by I.O.O.F. owned and maintained by the fellowship since its inception. The building is on the National Historic Site Registry.
- Opera House (500 block of Fremont St) Est. in 1909. The Opera House has been restored for community events, weddings, and dances.
- Dan Plumbing and Heating (421 Main) Built 1906 was a Hotel with offices upstairs (Dentist, Doctor, Lawyers, Bank, Lumber).
- Imperial Club (500 block of Main) 1906 or 1907.
- Buck's II (409 Main) 1906-10 was originally the Thomas Ford Agency.
- City Drug. (511 Main) This building, has a corner entrance and was built in 1906-07.
- Masonic Lodge Hall. (406 Main) Was a hotel with a café downstairs. Built in 1906-07.

- Medical Building. (412 Main) Was a hotel, café with pool hall downstairs, built in 1907-10.
- Baker Springs Ranch (1379 Baker Rd) Est. in 1889. an original homestead still under family ownership
- Many of the stone and brick homes were built between 1900-15



406 Main Masonic Lodge

- a. 308 Highland (1890)
- b. 423 Highland (1900)
- c. 586 Highland (1900)
- d. 608 Highland (1904)
- e. 688 Highland (1906)
- f. 856 Idaho St (1900)
- g. 872 Idaho (1900)
- h. 324 Fremont (1903)

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The City of Ashton has established archives for the collections of books newspapers pictures tapes and other historical collectables. Jane Daniels, an unpaid volunteer runs and operates the City Archives. The Archives raises their own funds for supplies and the City provides a room, utilities, and upkeep.

Goal: Preserve the remaining historic structures on Main Street and promote re-use of the buildings.

Policy:

1. Pursue nominations for the National Register of Historic Properties for selected buildings.
2. Increase public awareness and outreach to tourists. Volunteers are working on a display of pictures of Main Street from the first building and uses to the current buildings and uses.

Maintaining and preserving these structures is critical to the sustainability of downtown Ashton. These historic structures add vital character to Main Street.

### 3.2. Natural Open Lands

One of the most outstanding natural resources of the City of Ashton is the magnificent view of the Teton Mountains rising out of the gently rolling farmland to the southeast. Splendid views are readily available from many points in the City, as well as from the Federal, State and County highways traversing the general area.

Beautiful views can be had from the area of the city of the low forested hills formed by the rim of the huge volcanic caldera to



the north, which now roughly defines the boundary of the Targhee National Forest and the green hills to the east which form the foot of the northern end of the Teton Mountain Range.

Contrast is one of the main visual elements contributing to the natural beauty. Contrast between the flat or gently rolling farmlands and the rugged mountain peaks; and contrast between the forested green color of the foothills and the green or yellow of the crops in the summer, or the brown in the spring and fall. These natural open lands, vast open space, and magnificent colors are a year round asset to visitors and locals alike.

### Natural and Cultural Environment Goals and Policies

Preservation and protection of the natural environment is an essential element of the City's livability. By integrating the natural and built environment, Ashton will preserve and enhance a high quality life for its residents with clean water, recognition of its historical past, habitat for fish and wildlife, and safe and secure places for people to live and work. Ashton is committed to protecting and enhancing the natural environment at the same time that it meets its other land use, economic development, housing, and infrastructure goals.

Goal: To ensure the proper management of the natural environment to protect critical areas and conserve land, water, and historic resources.

Policy:

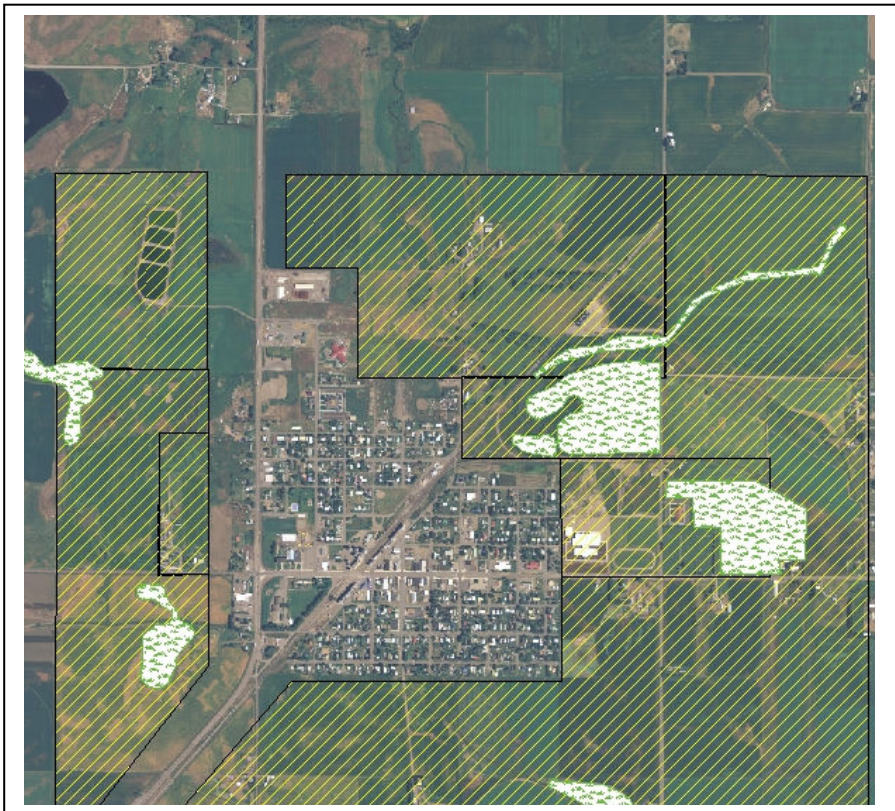
1. Define critical areas consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the City's goals.

2. Discourage any development to occur within natural open land areas.



3. Consider Transfer of Developments Rights (TDR's) to accommodate the property owner's development entitlement.

4. Consider conservation easement and coordinate with organizations dedicated to preserving open lands to perpetuity. (The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Lands, etc.)
5. Implement and preserve critical area buffers based on Best Available Science adjacent to critical areas to adequately protect such areas from development and land use impacts. Require enhancement where feasible.
6. Develop strategies for preserving, protecting, or restoring important habitats and corridors, particularly if they are at risk of significant degradation.



Identify critical lands worthy of preserving prior to development in the AOI. These lands can consist of prime and unique farm lands, wildlife habitat corridors, wetlands, or cultural sites.

Once identified, accommodate development around these features to preserve for perpetuity. Begin with an anticipated road network and develop from the city core out to minimize infrastructure costs.

## **4. Public Facilities**

Cities cannot exist without the proper infrastructure necessities and facilities. The definition of public facilities within the context of this report is broad and captures several facilities that provide a service to the residents of Ashton. Service can range from culinary water, garbage collection, and recreational facilities or parks. In addition to facilities owned and managed by Ashton, there are a number of publicly owned facilities managed by other special districts, which provide for some of Ashton's public facility needs. These include but are not limited to schools, water supply, sewage treatment, and solid waste.

### **4.1. Culinary Water**

The City of Ashton is served by a central water system. The water system was updated in 1992. The City maintains purity and cleanliness and is not responsible for water pressure. The City's biggest concern is keeping contamination from entering the water system. Back-flow contamination is the greatest concern. That is, when the pumps shut off for whatever reason and the pressure drops and contamination is potentially siphoned back into the water system.

The Division of Environmental Quality monitors the water system in Ashton. The water system in Ashton consists of 2 wells, approximately 375 ft. deep which is capable of supplying 1700 gallons of water per minute, ground level storage tank with a storage capacity of 400,000 gallons. The central water system is comprised with three pumps; two 20 HP Boosters and one

70 HP pump specifically reserved for Fire service. The pressure is kept between 60 and 80 lbs with average water use approximately 200 G.P.M. in the winter and 900 G.P.M. in the summer. Chlorinator and distribution pipeline is projected to accommodate future population growth.

### **4.2. Ground Water Quality**

Aquifer recharge areas have a critical recharging effect on groundwater aquifers. Rainfall contributes to surface water and recharges the groundwater as precipitation infiltrates through the soil. Groundwater aquifers supply water to lakes, wetlands, streams, and private wells in areas of the City not connected to the domestic water system. Land development can change the natural hydrologic cycle when the surface is transformed through clearing, grading, filling excavation, compaction, and new impervious surface. These modifications decrease the land's capacity to absorb and retain rainfall and reduce the groundwater recharge potential. Aquifer recharge areas are vulnerable to contamination that would affect the potability of the water. Once groundwater is contaminated, it is difficult, costly, and sometimes impossible to clean up.

The wells and aquifer recharge areas are monitored periodically by the State of Idaho, Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Environmental Quality. Also see Natural Resource Component, Water Quality section.

### 4.3. Sewage System

The City of Ashton is served by a central sewage system. The sewage system was updated in 1978 & 1979. The sanitary sewage treatment facility for the City of Ashton is an aerated lagoon system located in the northwest quadrant of the city identified as industrial land use for the future AOI. The sewage from the City is collected and comes to a flow monitoring station located along U.S. 20-191.

From the influent flow metering station sewage flows by gravity to the inlet structure and into pond No.1. The hydraulic profile of the treatment facility is shown in Figure 3 of the as built drawings.

The treatment facilities consist of four lagoons with a total surface area of approximately ten acres. Pond No.1 and part of pond No.2 are aerated lagoons. The blowers for the aeration equipment are enclosed in the blower house which is located in the southwest corner of the fenced complex. The sewage flows from pond No.1 through ponds 2, 3, and 4 and into the chlorination facilities which consists of the chlorine house which contains the chlorination equipment and the controller for the irrigation equipment, as well as the flow meter and recorder. The chlorine contact chamber is located just east of the chlorine house with the irrigation pump just due north and below the chlorine contact chamber. The entire layout of the irrigation system is shown on the as-built drawings. The purpose of the complete treat process is to treat the raw sewage so that it will meet the minimum effluent limitations as required by the

NPDES discharge permit. Those requirements are identified in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 NPDES Requirement

Effluent Characteristic	Units of Measure	Monthly Average	Weekly Average
Effluent Concentrations			
Biochemical Oxygen Demand-(5-day)	mg/l	30	45
Suspended Solids	mg/l	30	45
Fecal Coliform Bacteria	number/100lm	200	400
Effluent Loadings			
Biochemical Oxygen Demands	kg/day (1lb/day)	16(35)	24(53)
Suspended Solids	kg/day (1lb/day)	16(35)	24(53)

#### Design Criteria

The principal parameters that were used in designing Ashton's treatment facility are as follows:

1. Population. The design population over a 20 year period is expected to be 1350, people.
2. Design Flow. The design flow for a population of 1350 people is 280,000 gallons/day.
3. Pond Sizes. The pond size on No.1 is 3.94 acres, pond No.2 is 2.0 acres, pond No.3 is 2.0 acres, and pond No.4 is 2.0 acres. The total lagoon capacity is 9.94 acres, with a total lagoon volume of 53.0 acre feet.

The wells are monitored periodically by the State of Idaho, Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Environmental Quality. Also see Natural Resource Component, Water Quality section.

#### **4.4. Solid Waste**

The disposal of garbage in the world is a problem that continues to grow with the development of industrialized nations and the growth of population. Since the beginning of time people have needed to find a way of disposing of their trash. In 18th century England and France, carters were paid by individuals to carry trash and discard it on the outskirts of town. Disposal in open pits became routine and Benjamin Franklin initiated the first municipal cleaning program in Philadelphia in 1757. Since then we have come a long way and have developed types of waste that cannot simply be dumped into a hole.

The average American generates about 4.3 pounds of solid waste each day. This has increased over one pound per person in the last decade. The National Council on Public Works identifies that the cost to dispose of waste continues to rise while refuse areas are shrinking.

Water quality and hazardous waste management concerns account for much of the precipitous increase in national solid waste disposal costs. Fremont County's 1988 garbage dump budget was about \$126,000, or about \$11.45 per capita, but these relatively low solid waste disposal costs do not reflect a serious need for new facilities.

Ashton's solid waste collection service is provided by a PSI of Idaho Falls. In the Ashton area, this contractor serves 431 residential and 73 business customers. Fees within the City are \$10.52 per customer. With the present system there is ample service capacity for future growth. The waste is hauled presently to the Fremont County landfill north of St. Anthony. For more information on this landfill, please see the Fremont County Comprehensive Plan (FCCP). Landfill fees are collected by the County through taxes.

#### **4.5. Law Enforcement**

The primary responsibility for law enforcement rests with the City Chief of Police, with back-up from the Fremont County Sheriff's Department.

The Ashton Police force consists of two full time police officers. These officers' are also deputized by the Sheriff's Department for jurisdiction outside City limits. There are two county deputies residing in the Ashton area, and one Idaho State Police officer residing close by.

The law enforcement budget for 2007 was \$72,105, or 3% of the total City budget. The law enforcement budget also covers the wages of the Animal Control for the City.

The Fremont County jail in St. Anthony serves the entire county and can accommodate up to 27 adults. Ashton Police Chief has stated that with the potential for future development and any increase in population would require the need for additional police officers. Current ratio is 1 officer per 300-400 people. This is inadequate to provide quality law enforcement.

#### 4.6. Fire Protection

The North Fremont Fire District (NFFD) serves the Ashton and surrounding Fremont County areas. The District currently has 20 members (24 members are authorized) plus 3 commissioners and 1 secretary.

The North Fremont Fire District (NFFD) currently has 16 members (24 members are authorized) plus 3 commissioners and 1 secretary. The City of Ashton was annexed into the NFFPD in February of 1994. Volunteers are dispatched from the Sheriff's office. To avoid confusion at the St. Anthony Dispatch Office, the department is now referred to as the Ashton Fire Department. Use of the siren is optional. All firemen currently have 2-way radios as well as a total of 23 air packs. One limitation on the Department's capabilities is that only three or four members are actually in Ashton during the day (most commute to work elsewhere). Response times range from four to five minutes in Ashton and up to 20 minutes or more at the District's perimeter. The average time for a truck to roll is 13 minutes.

The Department has a mutual aid agreement and on board radio contact with its counterpart in St. Anthony, also U. S. Forest Service and the BLM.

NFFPD have access to 8 vehicles, including a 1976 3,000 gallon tanker; 1991 4,000 gallon tanker; 1992 4,000 gallon tanker; a 1980 1,000 GPM pumper truck; 1996 Freight Liner with a 1250 gallon pump and 1000 gallon storage tank; 1991 with a 1250 gallon pump and 1000 gallon storage tank; 1990 500 gallon Brush Truck; and a 1997 500 gallon Brush Truck.

Emergency vehicle storage was completed in 1996 and is located at 283 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street which is on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Cherry. The facility houses the EMS as well as the Fire Department apparatuses.

The Department also has portable pumps and direct drafting capabilities to use streams or canals, when possible. The improved and updated water system in Ashton greatly improved fire fighting capabilities within the city and surrounding areas. The current fire rating for the city of Ashton for insurance purposes is a "5" and is good for 5-7 years. "5" is a very good rating – other cities in the area have ratings of "6" & "7". Lower numbers are better.

#### 4.7. Emergency Medical Services

Fremont County provides emergency medical services through a system of approximately 58 volunteers consisting of Emergency Medical Technicians and Certified 1<sup>st</sup> Responders in three communities within the county.

Ambulances are based in St. Anthony, Ashton and Island Park and are dispatched by the Fremont County Sheriff's Office. There are two ambulance based in each of these locations. All three locations have light and heavy duty vehicle extrication equipment.

The lack of hospital in Fremont County dictates transports to out of county facilities. Ambulance calls that terminate at Madison Memorial Hospital can take up to 4 hours, EIRMC in Idaho Falls can take seven or more. If a back up crew is not available to staff the second ambulance, an ambulance for

St Anthony or Island Park will be dispatched to the Ashton area. Helicopter service to the area is provided by Air Idaho Rescue based at EIRMC in Idaho Falls, with back up service from Portneuf Life Flight based in Pocatello. Advance Life Support Ambulances are available from Madison and Bonneville Counties if a helicopter is unavailable.

### EMS Survey

Fremont County Ambulance Service-Ashton Unit.

An Ambulance Taxing District was established in 1990. The Fremont County Board of Commissioners serves as the Advisory Board. A full-time position for an Ambulance Director was hired to oversee the day to day operations of the county's ambulance service. Funding sources include; Fremont County Ambulance Taxing District, Fees generated from patient billing, Grants and donations, and Volunteer Crews.

### Crew Members Based in Ashton:

20 active	8 Advanced EMTS
	8 Basic EMTs
	6 First Responders
	4 Drivers

### Equipment and Vehicles Based in Ashton

- ambulances
- 1 rescue/extrication vehicle (light, medium, and heavy extrication gear)
- 1 snowmobile with trailer and rescue sled.

Equipment and supplies required by the State of Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (EMS Bureau) with additional supplies and equipment deemed necessary

by local police and protocols. Fremont County Emergency Services is located at the Corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Cherry.

### Response Areas:

North to Pine Haven  
Southwest to Fall River  
South to Fremont/Teton County Line  
East to Flagg Ranch, WY  
West to Sand Creek Road

A Mutual aid agreement with all units for surrounding States and National Park Service is currently coordinated. Dispatch through Enhanced 911 of Sheriff's office Ambulance calls terminate at Madison Memorial Hospital in Rexburg or EIRMC in Idaho Falls

### Search and Rescue

Fremont rescue consist of approximately 35 members who devote their time, knowledge & resources to help people and their families who are in need of assistance. The Mobile Command Center is equipped with mobile communications, heat, power and lighting to facilitate with recovery efforts. The Search & rescue consist of a great group of people who devote their time, knowledge & resources to help people and their families who are in need of assistance.

The Search & Rescue trailer hauls their rescue gear and snow machines. The City of St Anthony is where they hold there meetings and do training. There use state-of-the-art topographical and aerial computerized maps, assisted by their GPS units for guiding members through unimaginably rough terrain which also records all of their movements throughout the area.



Search and Rescue is hoping to build their own building in the near future with funding from donations and fund raising events. Through donations and numerous fund raising events they have acquired some equipment to help, though they rely heavily on their own members, who use their own equipment.

#### **4.8. Health Care Facilities**

Although the Ashton Hospital closed in 1988, one physician, two dentists, one chiropractor, and a message therapist maintain offices in Ashton.

The closest hospitals in the area are Madison Memorial in Rexburg, Teton Valley Hospital in Driggs, and EIRMC in Idaho Falls.

##### **Care of the Elderly**

Ashton has Fremont County's only licensed skilled care facility for the elderly. Ashton Memorial Inc. is a non-profit organization. New facilities were built and opened in 2002 providing full-time licensed nursing care for up to 38 residents. The

Ashton Living Center also provided in-house physical and occupational therapists for both the Nursing Home and outpatient services. They employ approximately 56 people making this facility one of Fremont County's largest employers. Funding sources are primarily private with insurance payments, Medicaid, Medicare, and county taxes.

##### **Public Health Services**

Ashton shares Eastern Idaho Public Health District (previously known as District Seven Health Department) services administered from the St. Anthony office at 45 S 2<sup>nd</sup> W. The staff includes a public

health nurse, environmental health specialist, and a secretary.

The Department provides health education, physical health clinics and environmental health services throughout eastern Idaho. They also issue permits for on-sited sewage disposal facilities and monitor private drinking water supply systems. There is also a WIC (Women, Infant, and Child) office open three days a week.

##### **Private Health Services**

Dr. Cheyne - Doctor from St. Anthony has taken over the Medical Center. The North Fremont Hospital Taxing District helps fund both the Ashton Living Center as well as the Ashton Family Medical Clinic.

Ashton Memorial Inc. has opened a clinic in the Island Park area, which has filled the need for that service.

#### **4.9. Public Schools and Land Use**

Public Schools in grades K-12 are provided and administered by the Fremont County School District. The number of students attending Northern Fremont County schools was stable during the 1980's. Peak enrollment came in 1981, when there were 754 students in the city's schools. The population projections included in A Social and Economic Profile of Fremont County (Nellis 1988) suggest that the school age population will grow during the 1990's, but the extent of that increase will depend on economic conditions and birth rates. Population projections based on the current job loss rate indicate that schools serving Northern Fremont County may plan for about 300 additional students by the turn of the century. Even a small in-migration of young families could add significantly

to school enrollments. Northern Fremont County schools serve an area from Fall River north, including the areas of Ashton, Lamont, Drummond, Greentimber, Squirrel, Farnum, Marysville, Sarilda, Island Park, Last Chance, Mack's Inn, & Henry's Lake. Some students during the winter months may travel as much as two hours one way to attend school.

Enrollment went steadily down during the 1980's. In 1990 it began to steadily increase, but in the mid-90's it leveled and only fluctuated between 5-10 students. Since 2000, enrollment for High School and Jr. High has slowly dropped each year. Enrollment for elementary aged children has remained constant (Figure 4.2 School Enrollment).

Table 4.2 School Enrollment

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
High School	195	171	158	168	169	197	178
Junior High	93	107	107	99	81	131	138
Elementary	345	344	332	350	344	304	

North Fremont High School was built in 2004 and the auxiliary Gymnasium added in 2006. The Elementary School was constructed in 1965. The part of the building that was pre 1965 was torn down and rebuilt in 1974. These rooms are spacious by comparison to other schools in our district and could accommodate 8 to 9 students per classroom before reaching capacity. This would also require the need for teachers aids to assist with the total number of students.

#### 4.10. Ashton City Public Library

The Ashton Public Library is located in the Ashton Community Center at 925 Main. The library is administered by a five-member board of trustees which meets the second Monday of each month. Because the library has a reciprocal borrowing contract with St. Anthony Library, the two libraries meet once a year with County Library Board to discuss and plan the budget for the following year. The library operates on the city, county, and federal funding; an approximate income of \$45,000 per year. The library serves all of Fremont County and is open six days a week for a total of 26 hours. The staff includes 2 full time librarians and three part-time employees work Saturdays and for the librarians when they need time off. In our last report to the City in 1991 our circulation for the year was 13,787.

The library collection includes approximately 17,000 books, two local newspaper, and thirteen periodicals. We have also joined a Books-on-tape circuit. We receive fifty-five tapes for a two month circulation and they are sent on to the next library and we receive fifty-five more. Other services offered are proctoring of tests, delivery of library materials to the home bound, children's summer reading program, story hours: twice monthly during the winter and weekly in the summer, current tax forms, large print books (receive every three months from Idaho State Library), and inter-library loans which gives our patrons access to over seven million printed items.

Since the preparation of the last comprehensive plan, the Ashton Library has now updated their check-out system to

an automated system. This also includes the elimination of the card catalogues to an automated search feature. In addition, the library now offers Internet service from a generous donation from U.S. West.

#### 4.11. Parks, Recreation, and

##### Public Libraries and Land Use

Because Libraries contribute such an important role to community and socialization and provide a destination, a long term goal is to maintain and expand the Libraries existence within the urban core of Ashton. Opportunities for expansion can include a community arts center, theatre stage, or other performing and visual arts exhibits. Representatives should consider funding sources such as the endowment for arts, the Carnegie Foundation, local businesses, and private donors.

##### Open Space

Parks and open space are an important amenity for any community. They provide opportunities for social interaction, community events, destinations, and recreational activities. Socialization can be defined as a common location for regional, community, or family events.

Parks and open space areas offer two types of recreational opportunities; passive and active. Passive recreation can be defined as walking, jogging, bird watching, kite flying, etc. and typically occur in open space areas with minimal physical

improvements or apparatus involved. Active recreation includes baseball, basketball, swimming, soccer, etc. and usually requires improved areas designated for the activity. Many forms of recreational activities are available to the residents of Ashton.

There are three baseball diamonds: (city, school, church). The City Park provides picnic facilities with playground equipment and ample play area with pleasant shade and foliage. Tennis Courts, Swimming Pool, and a combined roller skating/ice skating rink and Pavilion are also located at the City Park Recreation Center.

A Community Center is also available which includes a full sized gymnasium that is currently used for gymnastics, aerobic groups, volleyball, as well as a library, conference, rooms are available on the second floor.

Ashton's regional climate adds to the variety of opportunities in the area. Summers are warm, often with temperatures averaging in the mid 80 degree range. The winter months of December through March are cold, with temperatures often falling below zero with an average of two feet of snow.

Winter makes other forms of recreation available. Ashton is linked with West Yellowstone and Yellowstone Park by county maintained snowmobile trails. Cross-country skiing is only steps away from most doors. There is also a cross-country ski trail around the football field and school grounds for student and public use.

Several groomed trails lie within easy driving distance, on the Targhee National Forest and Harriman State Park. Ashton is also the gateway to much of Fremont County's recreational opportunities.

A variety of natural attractions bring more than two million tourists through the Ashton area. Many seek the scenic attractions which are endless throughout the area. The wide variety of mountains, lakes, rivers and other scenic attractions bring sightseers and sportsman alike. A National Scenic Byway follows State Highway 47 through Ashton, east and north following a route through farm land and into the Targhee National Forest, winding it's way North to intersect again with Highway 20 enroot to Yellowstone National Park. Along this route is a fish feeding point on Warm River to Lower and Upper Mesa Falls. Upper Mesa Falls has been recently improved by the U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with the State Department of Parks and Recreation, with paved road and walkways for easy access to view the beautiful vista. Much of the areas fishing are centered in and near Ashton and Island Park. There is archery, black powder, and rifle hunting seasons on deer and elk; sage grouse, upland game birds. Horseback riding, camping and



picnicking are all within easy access. Two Forest Service campgrounds are within 10-15 miles from Ashton.

The Ashton Reservoir offers a public boat dock that is used a great deal by local and regional area residents from as far away as Idaho Falls. The reservoir is a popular ice fishing destination in the winter.



The City is close to vast outdoor playgrounds on the Targhee National Forest, Harriman State Park, and the Sand Creek Wildlife Refuge. More distant but still accessible are Henry's Lake and Gallatin National Forest to the North and Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and the Rockerfeller Parkway to the east. These lands are utilized year-round from local residents and visitors alike.

Fishing is popular on several waterways in the area, including Henry's Fork of the Snake River, Warm River, Robinson Creek, Fall River, Teton, Conant and Bitch Creek. The Henry's Fork is a World Class Trout fishing river. These waters also see small boats, canoe and kayak use.

Recreational sightseeing is a popular activity and is expected to increase in the future. Well used routes include the Cave Falls Highway East of Ashton, which leads to Cave Falls in southwestern corner of Yellowstone Park; Fish Creek Road paralleling the western boundary of Yellowstone Park; Mesa Falls Scenic drive and U.S. Highway 20. Other routes include State Highways 32 and 33 (parts of which

are now designed as the Teton Scenic Loop), which provides magnificent views of the Teton Mountains and the Ashton Flagg Ranch Road, which leads travelers east from Ashton past a scenic reservoir and forest rich in wildlife to the south entrance to the southeast entrance of Yellowstone Park. This road is groomed as a popular snowmobile route in the winter.

#### **Snowmobile and Cross Country Trails**

Ashton is the starting point for some of the nation's premier snowmobile and cross country ski trails. Over 400 miles of groomed snowmobile trails are maintained on a daily basis in Fremont County. Trail heads at Ashton provide snowmobile's with direct routes to Mesa Falls, Island Park and Yellowstone National Park to the north. To the east travelers can visit Wyoming's Cave Falls and Flagg Ranch, a premier destination site nestled in the Teton Mountain Range. Annual snowmobile registration is required.



Over 40 miles of groomed cross country ski trails are available at four locations within 45 minutes of Ashton. Trail heads are located a Fall River Ridge, Mesa Falls, Harriman State Park and 29 Buffalo-Brim Stone Trail system. Idaho Park and Ski recreation passes are required.

The Ashton Visitor Center was completed in 1994. It is the only visitor's center along U.S. Highway 20 between Blackfoot, to the south, and Montana's State Line, approximately 100 miles north.

The Center is staffed by volunteers during the summer months and provides visitor information regarding Fremont County and surrounding areas. Also provided are shaded picnic areas, potable water and waste water collection for recreation vehicles.

Two Fremont County Parks provide fishing and boating access for recreational enthusiast. The ORA Bridge County Park purchased from Fremont County in 1996, provides access to the Henry's Fork of the Snake River downstream from the Ashton Reservoir. The 13 acre park is located approximately 3 miles west of Ashton and is available without charge for day use only. Frome Park, located north of Ashton along the west shore of Henry's Lake is also a day-use only facility. It is the only non-fee boating access in Henry's Lake, a high mountain lake know for it's trophy sized Rainbow Trout. Boat docking, picnicking, and rest room facilities available.

Personal Water Craft are restricted on various streams and water bodies in

Fremont County. The Ashton Reservoir, located approximately two miles north of Ashton, is one area where personal water craft are welcome. Other areas include Island Park Reservoir, Henry's Lake and Chester Dam. Personal water craft operators should review local regulations before launching.



### Rails to Trails

Currently, three rails to trails systems exist within or near Ashton:

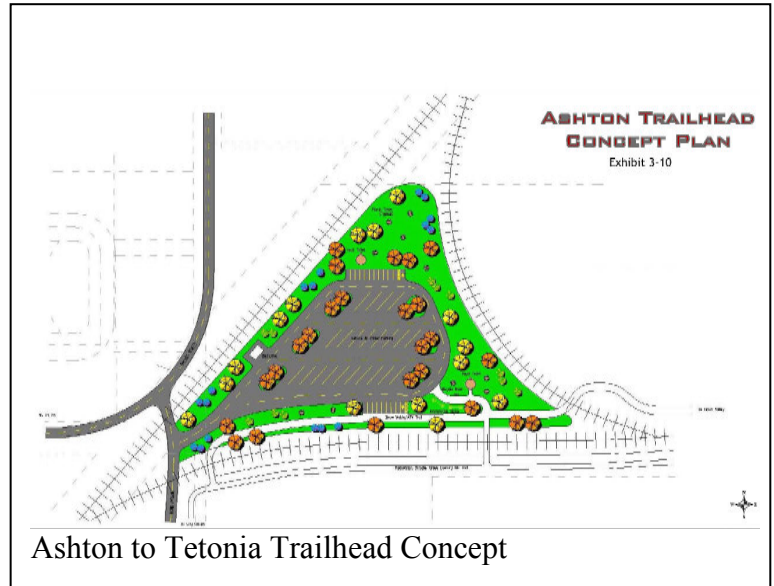
- Ashton to Tetonia;
- Harriman State Park;
- Henry's Lake State Park.

### GOLF COURSES

There are three available in the Ashton area. Aspen Acres (18 Hole) 5 miles southeast of Ashton, Timberline (9 Hole) east on the Greentimber Road, and

Fremont County (9 hole) 7 miles south on Highway 20.

Other recreational activities of interest are public access to feed the fish at Warm River, Ashton Fish Hatchery, Mountain Man Rendezvous, and Float Trips. Sponsored by the Ambassador Cup are River Regatta, Mountain Bike Races (during the summer) and the Ashton Dog Derby in February. Also Snowmobile Races are sponsored by the Targhee Ridge-Runners Club.



## 5. Transportation

The transportation element of the comprehensive plan addresses decision making related to the transportation of people, goods, and services for Ashton and the surrounding areas.

A comprehensive Transportation plan was recently prepared (2006) for Fremont County which included the greater Ashton area. The following information has been duplicated from that plan and is provided in this section of the Ashton City Comprehensive Plan.

### 5.1. Roadway Network

The City of Ashton is a rural city covering less than one square mile. Nearly all of the city streets are laid out in a north-south, east-west grid. Most of the city streets serve residential areas, with some commercial buildings along Main Street and the north portion of town and some industrial use along the railroad.

In 2005, the City had the following roadway inventory:

- 11.8 total miles of road
- 10.3 miles of paved road
- 1.5 miles of gravel road
- No bridges

There are no traffic signals and seven railroad crossings within the city. Main Street has curb, gutter and sidewalk for all but the last block to the east. About half of the streets in the residential area south of Main Street have sidewalk. North of Main Street, Pine Street and the north block of 2 Street have sidewalk but the remaining streets do not.

#### Functional Classification System

A roadway network is typically comprised of a hierarchy of roadways that are defined by their respective functional classification. Generally, roadways serve two primary functions—access and mobility—and the degree to which the roadway serves these functions define its functional classification. Ashton presently has a functional classification map that is maintained and published by the Idaho Transportation Department (see Exhibit 5-1). The functional classification map is updated and republished every five years; however, modifications to the map can be requested at any time by highway jurisdictions depending on land-use changes and/or traffic use fluctuations on the roadways.

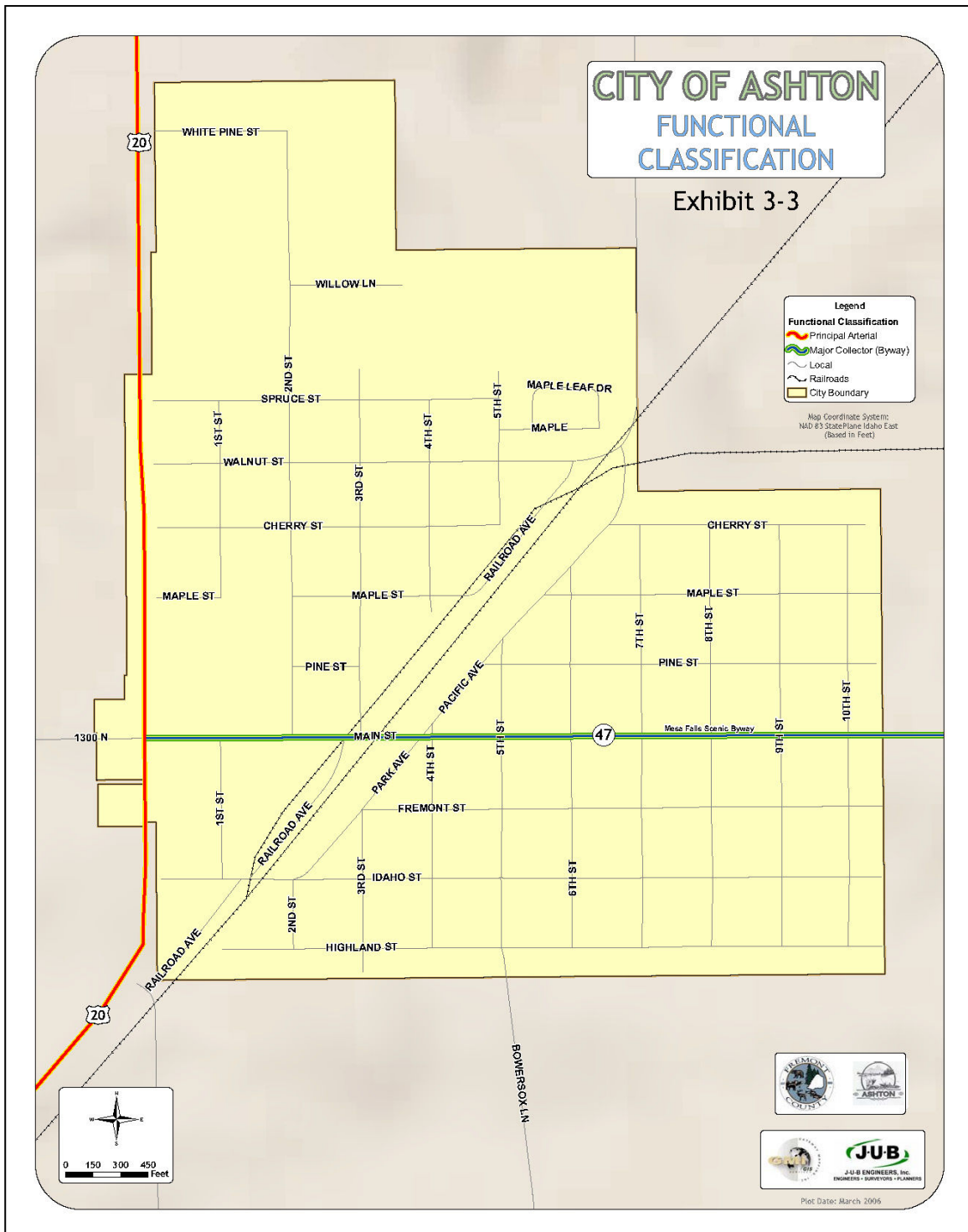


Figure 5-1 - Functional Classification



Table 5-1 - Major Highways

Jurisdiction	Route Designation	Miles from Ashton
Federal interstate	I-15	47
Federal highway	US 20	0
State highway	33	21
State highway	32	25
Mesa Falls Scenic Byway	SH 47	0

Source: Idaho Department of Commerce

Functional classification maps are an important part of the highway system for state and federal funding requests, as generally only roads rated major collector or above are eligible for these funds.

Nationally, road networks are constituted as follows:

- Principal arterial system—2 percent to 4 percent
- Minor arterial system—7 percent to 10 percent
- Collector roads—20 percent to 25 percent
- Local roads—65 percent to 75 percent

Roadway Functional Types - A description of these classifications follows:

Principal Arterials and Minor Arterials

- Principal arterials carry longer-distance major traffic flows between population centers and important activity locations, including statewide or interstate travel. Minor arterials also provide
- direct transportation links between cities and major traffic generators.
- US 20 is the only principal arterial that passes through Ashton. This is the main north-south route through Fremont County and leads into Montana. US 20 is maintained by the ITD.
- ITD generally requires a minimum right-of-way width of 120 feet for principal arterials and 80 to 100 feet for minor arterials.
- The design speed for US 20 near Ashton is 70 mph. The posted speed is 65 mph. Design speeds are typically 5 mph higher than posted speeds.

Collectors

- Collectors link local streets with the arterial street system and provide travel corridors within a city.
- Travel speeds and volumes are generally more moderate than arterials and the travel distances shorter.
- Collector design speeds are typically higher than local street speeds, up to 35 mph.
- In Ashton, the only street designated as a collector is Main Street.

- The east portion of Main Street (east of US 20) is also known as State Highway (SH) 47.
- The City of Ashton street standards do not have a separate designation for right-of-way width for collector streets.

#### Local Roads

- The primary function of local roads is to provide access to adjacent residential and business land uses.
- Local roads are generally low-speed, two-lane roads that carry relatively low traffic volumes.
- The local road standards, listed in the City of Ashton Design Requirements and Criteria, indicate a minimum right-of-way width of 60 feet for all city streets.
- Design speeds for local roads range from 20 to 35 mph.

#### Traffic Volumes and Patterns

Volume data are collected periodically for all County roads. These data provide an excellent history of roadway use, or “level of service.” Main Street (SH 47) carries a very high traffic volume in relation to other roads within Ashton. Main Street is now operating at LOS B and will continue to do so for many years. However, operational issues such as a high percentage of turning traffic should be addressed to maintain an adequate LOS and improve safety. Figures 5-2 and 5-3 identify Average Daily Traffic Volumes for existing conditions and 2025 as well as existing and projected Level of Service.

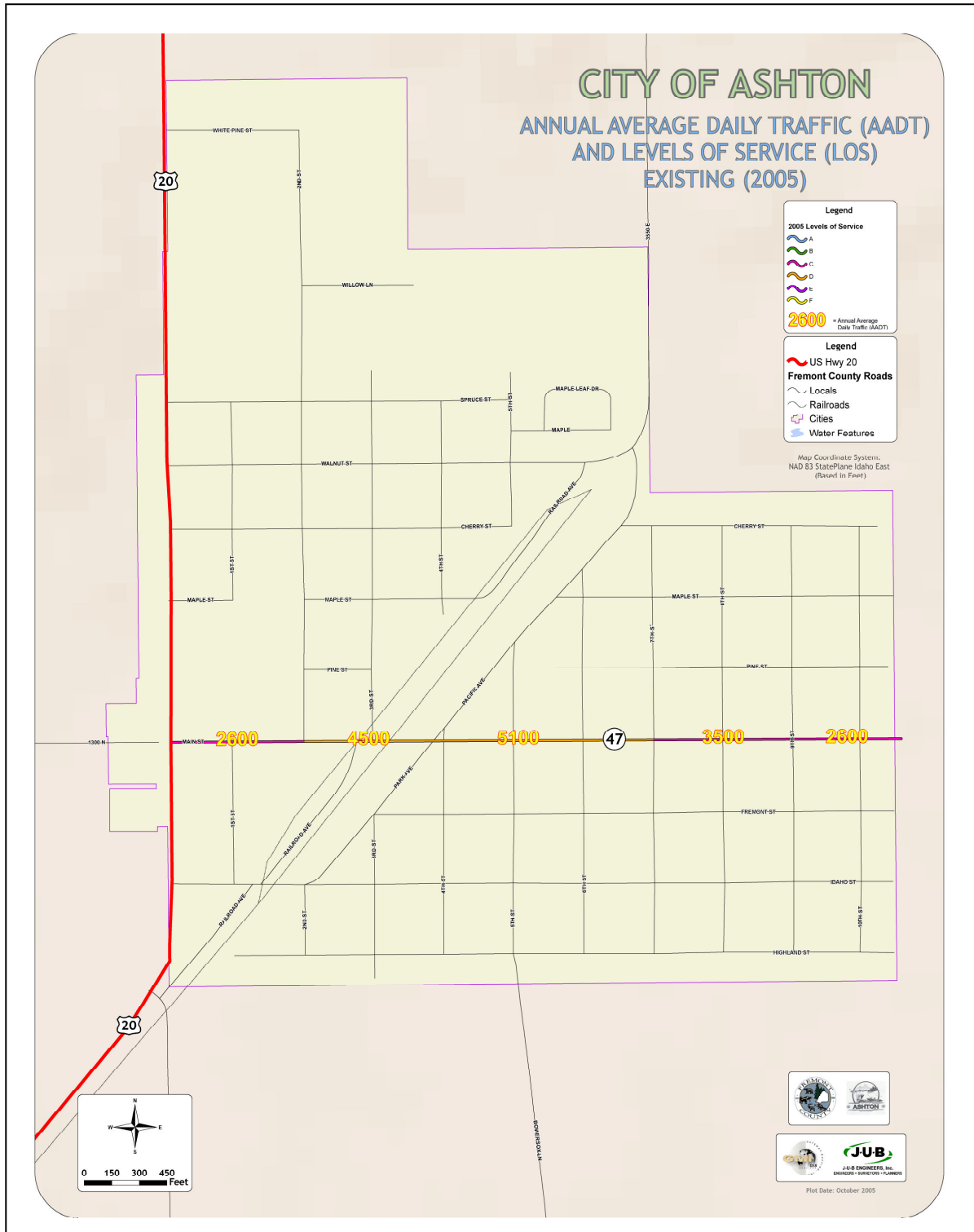


Figure 5-2 - Existing Average Daily Traffic



**Operational Measures**

Roadway Levels of Service (LOS)

Traffic flow is typically measured by LOS (Table 5-2). LOS is an assessment of traffic-flow characteristics and mobility. Each segment of a roadway can be rated from A to F to reflect traffic conditions at the given demand or service volume. A level of service rating of A means essentially uninterrupted flow, while a rating of F indicates a breakdown of traffic flow with excessive delay. In urbanized roadways, the LOS is measured by the average travel speed for the segment of roadway. Average travel speed reflects driver mobility and accounts for delays created by traffic control devices, turning vehicles and parking maneuvers.

Table 5-2 - Descriptions for Urban Street Class IV Level of Service

LOS	Description	Average Travel Speed (mph)
A	Free flow. Vehicles are completely unimpeded in their ability to maneuver in the traffic stream.	>25
B	Reasonably unimpeded flow. The ability to maneuver in the traffic stream is only slightly restricted.	>19-25
C	Stable traffic flow. The ability to maneuver in the traffic stream and change lanes mid-block may be more restricted than LOS B. Congestion is primarily due to turning traffic.	>13-19
D	Approaching unstable traffic flow. Small increase in flow may cause substantial increases in delay.	>9-13
E	Unstable flow. Significant delays and travel speeds less than 1/3 of free flow speed.	>7-9
F	Forced or heavily congested flow. Extremely low speeds approaching 1/4 of free flow speed.	≤7

Source: Highway Capacity Manual (2000)

The following are optimal conditions for an urban highway:

- Capacity of 1,800 passenger cars per hour per lane.
- Lane width of 12 feet or greater
- Clear shoulders, 6 feet or greater
- Dedicated turn lanes
- Only cars (no trucks) in the traffic stream
- A 50/50 directional split of traffic
- No impediments to through traffic
- Level terrain

Typically, levels of service of C or D are acceptable on urban roadways.

Table 5-3 shows the current (2004) and projected (2025) levels of service for major collectors in Ashton.

Table 5-3- Current (2004) and Projected (2025) Levels of Service for Major Collectors—  
Ashton

Name	Begin Road/ Location	End Road/ Location	Average Annual Daily Traffic 2004	Average Annual Daily Traffic 2025	Avg. Travel Speed (mph) 2004	Avg. Travel Speed (mph) 2025	LOS 2004	LOS 2025
Main Street (SH 47)	US 20	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2,600	3,640	19.1	19.1	B	B
Main Street (SH 47)	2 <sup>nd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	4800	6720	21.0	21.0	B	B
Main Street (SH 47)	7 <sup>th</sup>	US-32	3050	4270	23.4	23.3	B	B

Source: J-U-B ENGINEERS, Inc., 2005

#### Intersection Levels of Service

Traffic flow is typically measured by level of service at intersections. Two-way stop-controlled and all-way stop-controlled intersections measure level of service by the stopped delay at the intersection (Table 5-4).

At two-way stop-controlled intersections, drivers on the controlled approaches are required to select gaps in the major street flow before crossing the road or turning. The capacity of the controlled legs is based on the following factors:

- Distribution of gaps in the major street traffic stream
- Driver judgment in selecting a gap through which to execute the desired maneuver
- Follow-up time required by each driver in a queue

The five-leg intersection was analyzed using the 1985 HCM methodology. The later versions do not lend themselves for calculating intersections with more than four legs. The LOS is based on reserved capacity instead of vehicle delay although the letter designations are approximately equivalent. The selected intersections in Ashton are unsignalized and perform well from a capacity standpoint. The five-leg intersection of Main/Pacific/S 4 may have other operational problems related to intersection's geometry.

Table 5-4 - Level of Service at Stop-controlled Intersections

LOS	Description
A	Less than 10 second delay
B	More than 10 and less than 15 seconds of delay
C	More than 15, but less than 25 seconds of delay
D	More than 25 seconds and less than 35 seconds of delay
E	More than 35 seconds, but less than 50 seconds of delay
F	More than 50 seconds of delay

Source: *Highway Capacity Manual* (2000)

**Crash Location—Road Segments and Intersections**

Urban roadways trend towards numbers of crashes with lower severity than rural roadways. This can be attributed to higher traffic volumes and increased roadway access, but lower vehicular speeds. Table 5-6 lists locations where more than two crashes occurred in Ashton.

Table 5-6. Ashton Accidents (2000–2004)

Location	Intersection or Segment	Accidents	Injuries	Fatalities	Comments
5 <sup>th</sup>	Main Street	3	–	–	–
7 <sup>th</sup>	Idaho Street	2	–	–	–
Main Street	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2	–	–	–
Main Street	7 <sup>th</sup>	2	–	–	–

Source: City of Ashton, 2005.

Three of the four locations in Ashton that had two or more crashes are located along Main Street (SH 47). The intersection of Main Street at 5th Street experienced three crashes. Main at 2nd, Main at 7th and Idaho at 7th experienced two crashes each in the last 5 years (Figure 5-4)

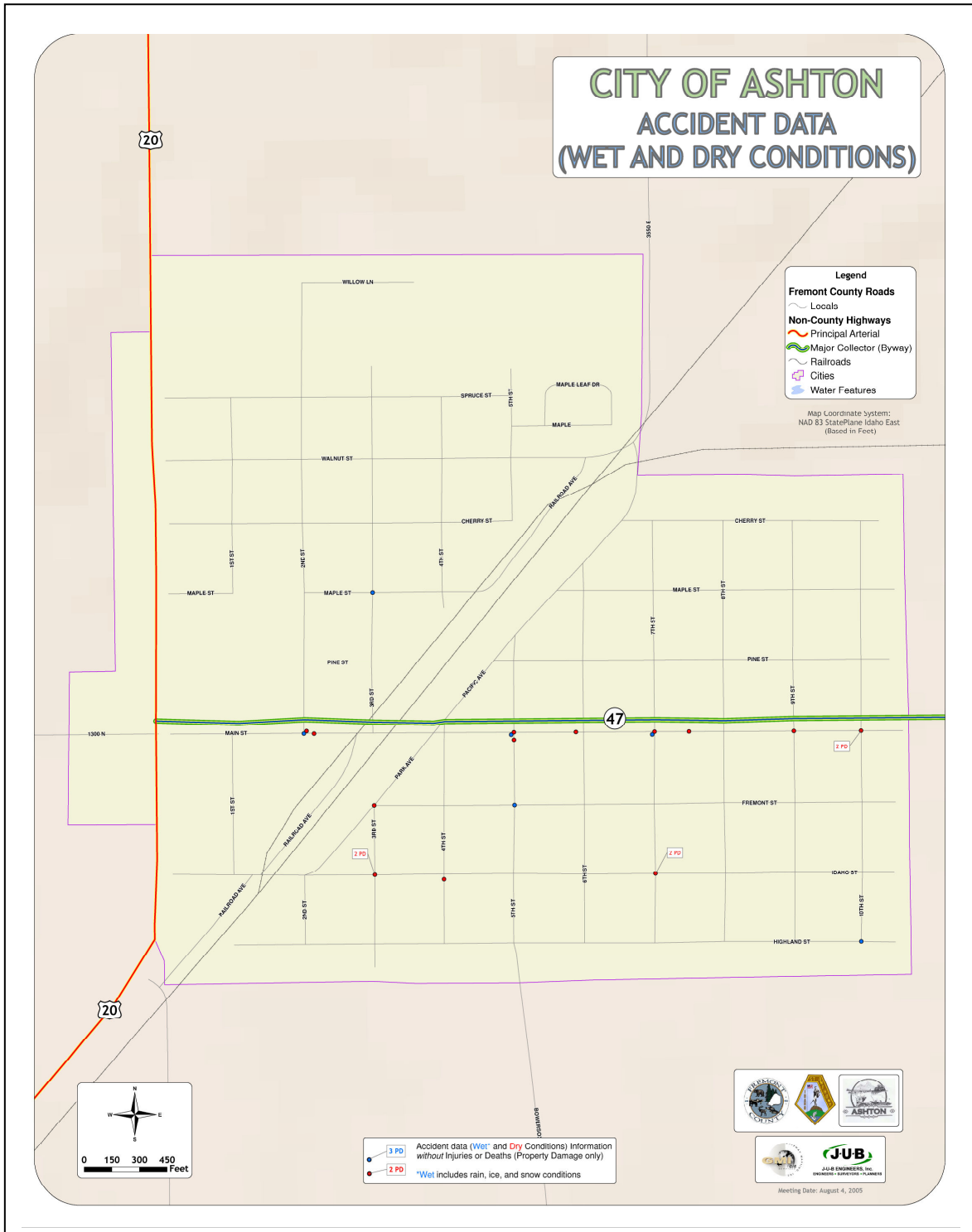


Figure 5-4 – Crash Sites



## 5.2. Access Management Policies

Roadways function for both mobility of the public and accessibility to adjacent properties. Both functions are essential, but roadways are designed with different emphasis on each function.

An arterial is designed to carry more traffic at higher speeds. Mobility is paramount, while the roadway's access function is minimized. This emphasis necessitates a design for higher speeds and restriction of access along the arterial.

On the other hand, access is the primary function of local roads. A local road is more important for providing access than for providing mobility. Travel speeds are low and accesses are permitted.

Collectors provide the bridge between local roads and arterials. A collector road should allow controlled access under specific conditions. Speeds on collectors should be from 35 to 50 miles per hour (mph), depending on the surrounding land uses. A rural collector road should be continuous between arterials, collectors, traffic generators and towns/cities to provide intra-county travel corridors.

### Access Spacing

Short spacing between private access drives complicates the driving task. Drivers must watch for ingress and egress traffic at several points simultaneously while maintaining lateral and longitudinal control of the vehicle and monitoring vehicles ahead, behind and in adjacent lanes.

Longer spacing between accesses simplifies the driving task by reducing the amount of information that drivers must process and react to and increasing the time between conflict points.

Access control is an essential part of good land-use and transportation planning. It can be implemented through two primary approaches on local road systems:

- An access or right-of-way permit system
- Planning, zoning and subdivision processes

ITD and the LHTAC have similar approach policies. Table 3-12 summarizes ITD's access spacing requirements. The LHTAC standard approach policy does the following:

- Encourages joint use approaches
- Provides for a minimum separation of 330 feet for private approaches
- Provides a maximum of two approaches per property tract or business frontage
- Provides geometric requirements that include the following:
  - Sight distance
  - Minimum and maximum width
  - Grade
  - Approach alignment

The information in Table 5-7 is provided as a guideline for determining appropriate access spacing for new development. It is understood that cities such as Ashton will have existing collector streets that have established approaches and intersections that are much closer than those indicated in the table.

Table 5-7 - Summary of ITD’s Access Spacing Requirements

Access Type	Functional Classification	Type	Intersection Spacing	Approach Spacing	Signal Spacing
I	Rural Minor and Major Collector	At-Grade	0.25 mile	300 feet	0.5 mile
II	Rural Minor Arterial	At-Grade	0.25 mile	500 feet	0.5 mile
	Urban Collector and Minor Arterial	At-Grade	660 feet	150 feet	0.25 mile
III	Rural Principal Arterial	At-Grade/ Interchange	0.5 mile	1,000 feet	0.5 mile
	Urban Principal Arterial	At Grade/ Interchange	0.25 mile	300 feet	0.5 mile
IV	Rural Principal Arterial (Multiple-Lane)	At Grade/ Interchange	1 mile	N/A	0.25 mile
	Urban Principal Arterial (Multiple-Lane)	At Grade/ Interchange	1 mile	N/A	0.25 mile
V	Rural Interstate	Interchange	3 miles	N/A	N/A
	Urban Interstate	Interchange	1 mile	N/A	N/A

Source: Idaho Transportation Department

### 5.3. Design Standards

The following text shows recommended roadway design standards for the City of Ashton. It is recommended that these revised standards be adopted into the existing city ordinances.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this section is to provide standards for the construction or reconstruction of roadways. These standards are for roadways in low to medium density residential and light commercial areas. A large-scale development study will be required for any development that generates sufficient traffic to necessitate additional construction requirements.

#### Large-Scale Development

Any requirement of this section may be altered as a result of a large-scale development study that may be required by the City of Ashton. Any alterations shall be at the discretion of the City of Ashton.

Right-of-Way - Table 5-8 shows roadway right-of-way minimum width requirements.

Table 5-8 - Right-of-way Standard Widths

Type of Roadway	Minimum Width of Public Right-of-way (ft)
Arterials	80 - 100
Collectors	70 - 80
Local roads and streets	60 - 80
Subdivision streets*	60

\* Subdivisions in city impact areas shall follow current right-of-way widths of the closest city.

Cul-de-sacs are discouraged in the City of Ashton. Dead-end streets shall be prohibited except where temporarily permitted by a subdivision phasing plan or to provide for future connections between developments. A temporary cul-de-sac shall be provided when a temporary dead-end street serves four or more lots. The temporary cul-de-sac shall be constructed in accordance with the standards detailed above.

Roadway Design Criteria

Table 5-9 is intended to show the minimum and maximum values for various parameters used in design criteria for the three classes of streets and highways to be designed. Modification by the city on an individual project by project basis may be accomplished by following appropriate procedures.

Table 5-9 - Roadway Design Parameters

Design Parameter	Arterial	Collector	Local Roads and Streets
Vertical Grades*			
Minimum	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Maximum	6.0%	6.0%	10.0%***
Horizontal Curvature	7 <sup>o</sup>	11.5 <sup>o</sup>	25 <sup>o</sup>
Minimum Radius**	510 - 1039 foot	510 ft	198 ft
Design Speed	35 – 45 mph	35 mph	25 mph
Angles of Intersection	80 - 90 <sup>o</sup>	80 - 90 <sup>o</sup>	70 - 90 <sup>o</sup>
Grade at Intersection	3% over a minimum of 50 ft		
* Roadways constructed using curb and gutter sections may have a minimum grade of 0.35 percent			
** Radius measured to centerline of roadway			
**** May be increased to 15 percent with special attention to maintenance consequences			

Roadways shall be constructed with applicable characteristics shown in Figures 5-5 through 3-8. The minimum centerline radius of any curve shall be 100 feet (super-elevated). The minimum radius may be larger, according to current ASHTO guidelines. Vertical geometry and passing or stopping sight distances shall be in accordance with the latest AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Site triangles on approaches and intersection from a stop condition shall be unobstructed along both directions of the road in accordance with AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. Clear zone distances shall be in accordance with the most recent edition of the AASHTO Roadside Design Guide.

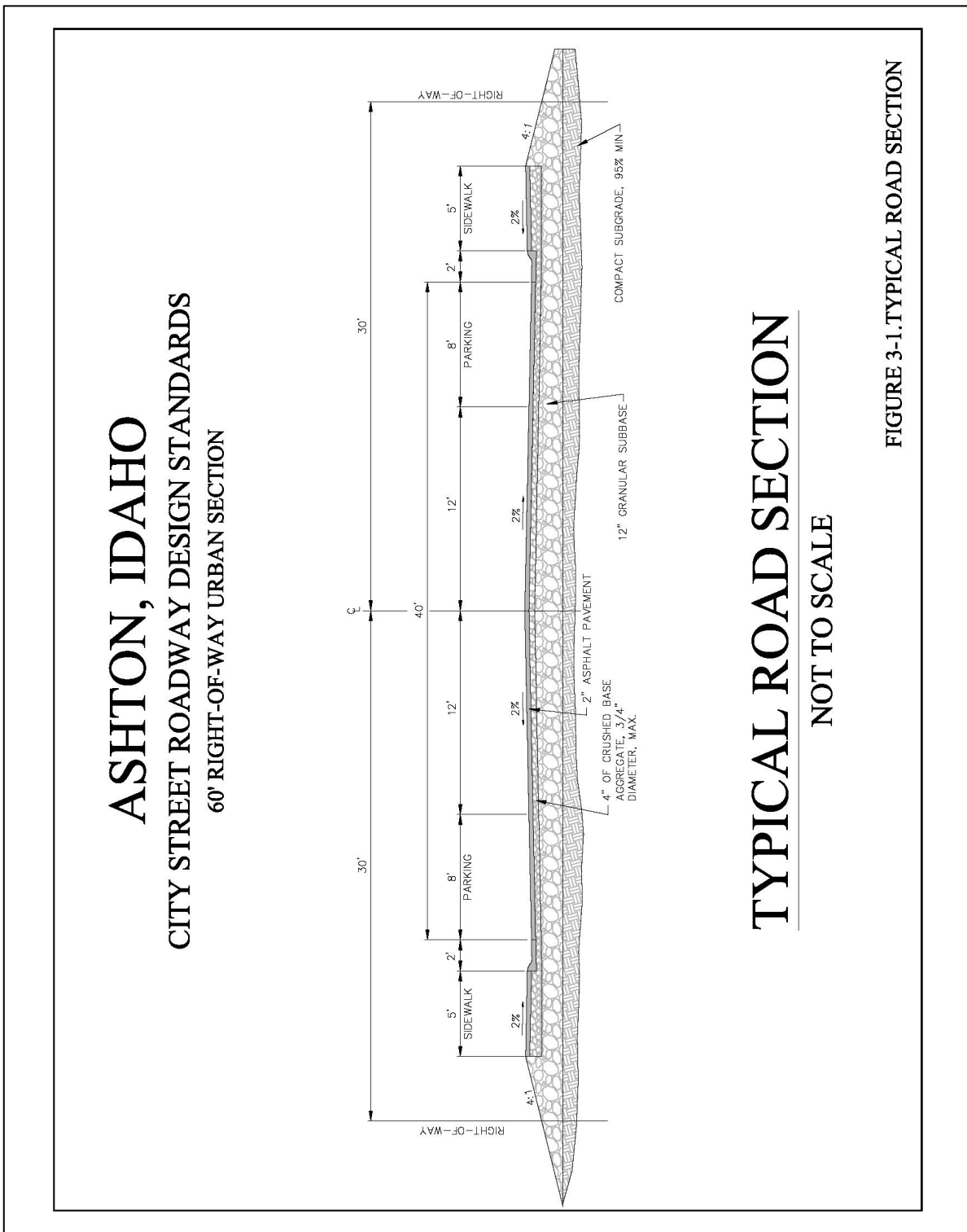


Figure 5-5 - Typical Cross Section Urban 60'

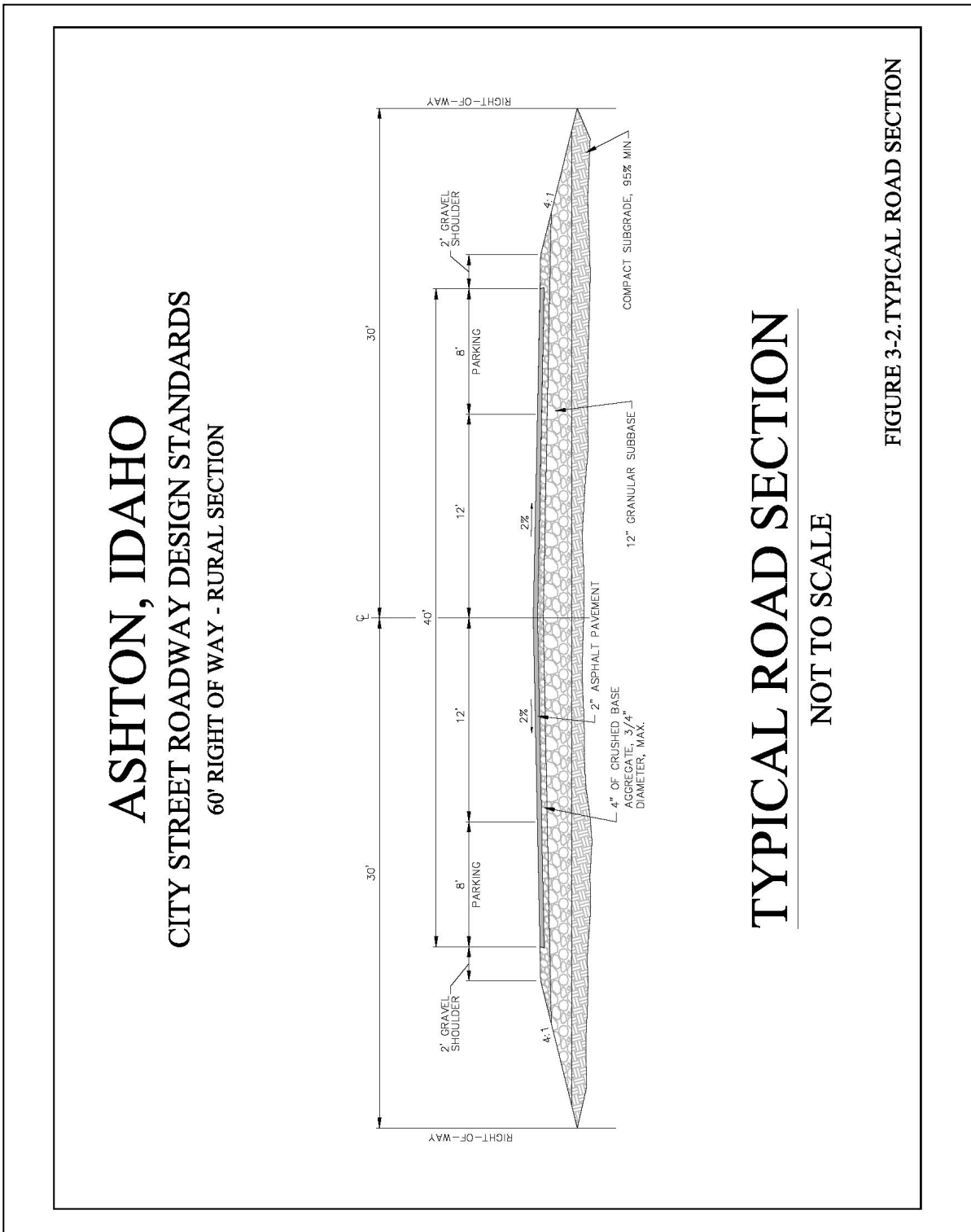


Figure 5-6 - Typical Cross Section Rural 60'

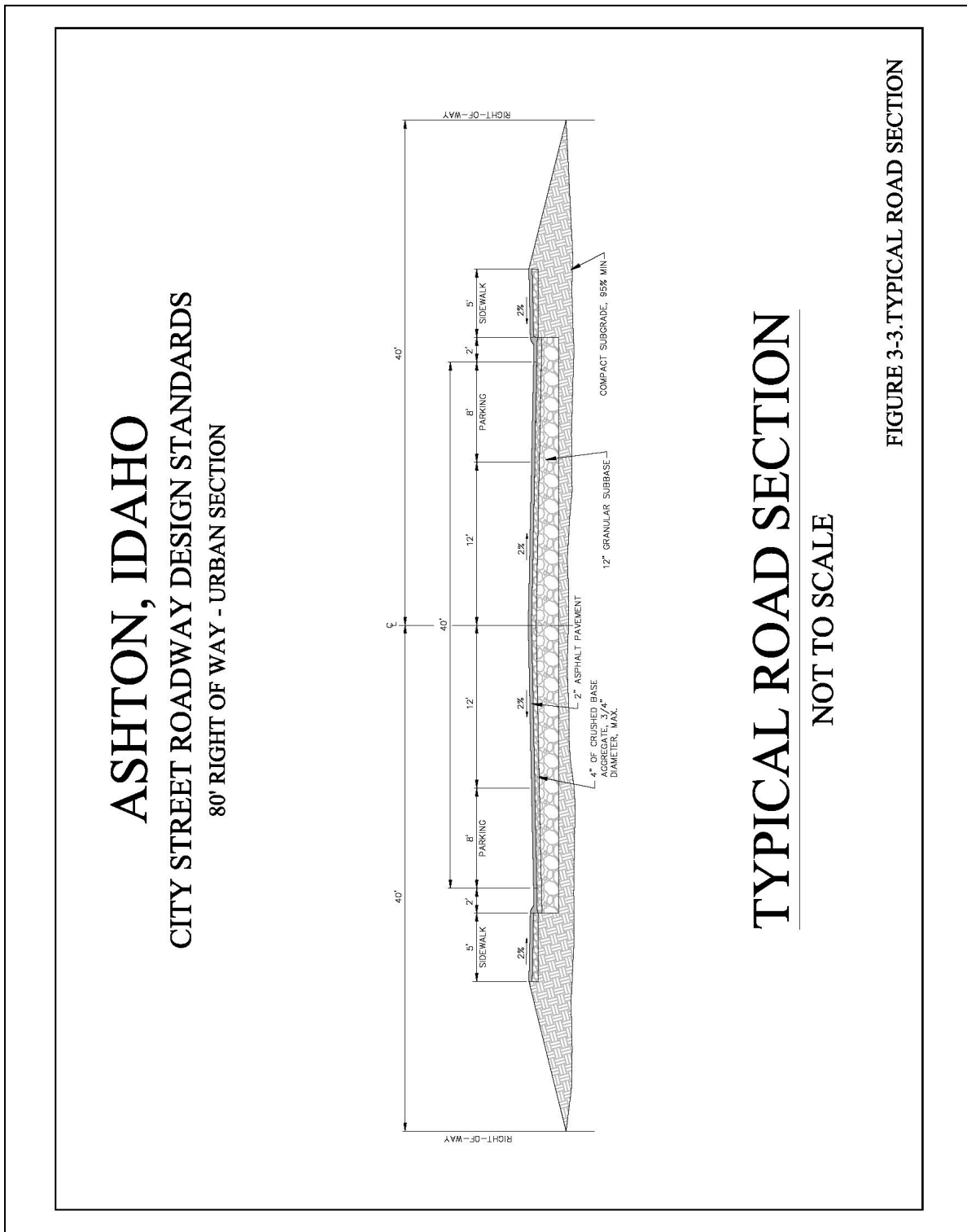


Figure 5-7 - Typical Cross Section Urban 80'

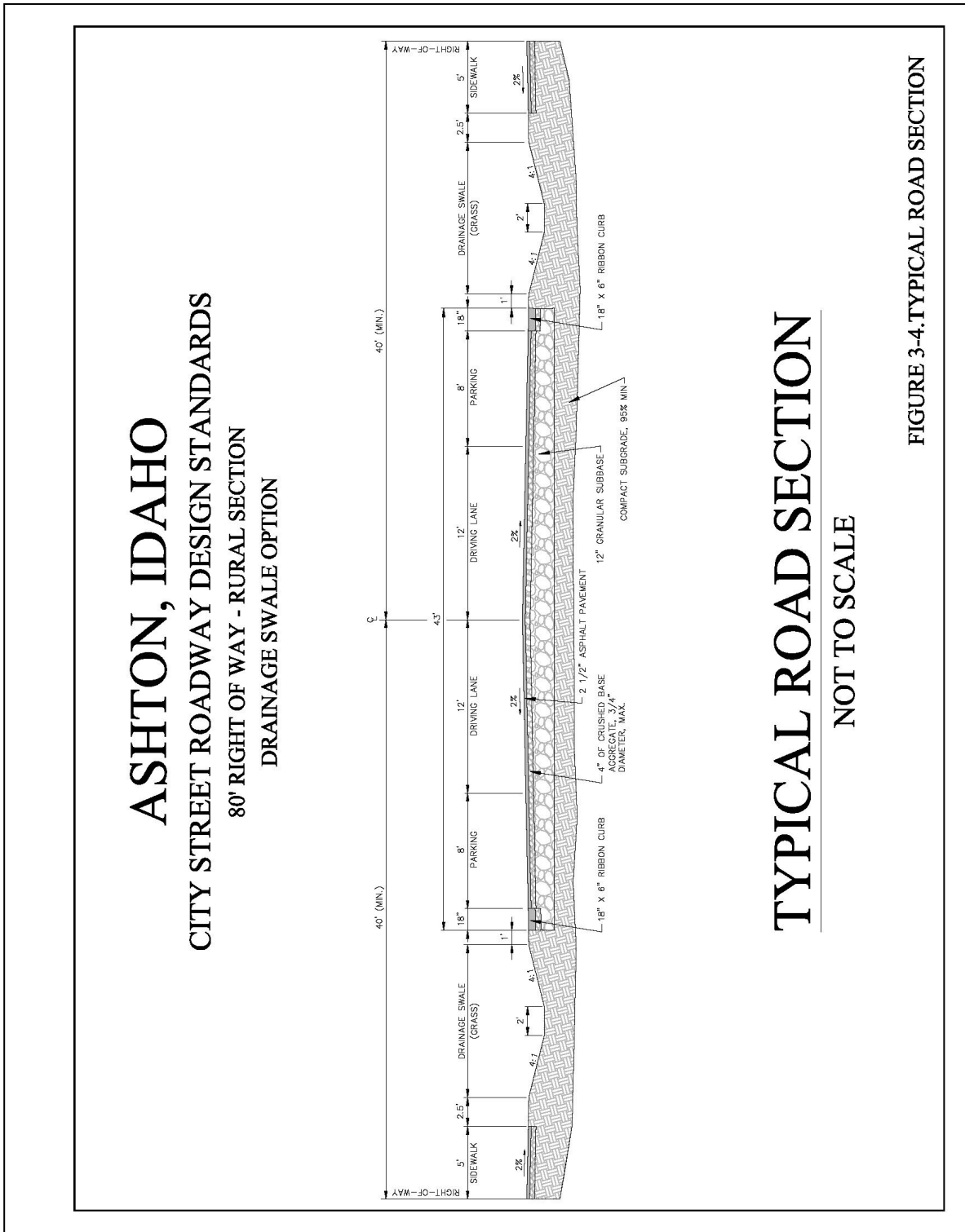


Figure 5-8 - Typical Cross Section Rural 80'

## 6. Implementation

In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be valuable, it must result in action. The process of carrying out the policies and proposals included in the plan requires a long-term commitment by the community and city leaders. A plan that is a benefit to the community does not happen by the mere adoption of a plan. The plan must be implemented.

### General Steps to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan

1. Formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Commission and City Council.
2. The zoning ordinance should be revised to reflect the changes in the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The general public should be involved in and made aware of the updates of the Comprehensive Plan, its policies and the zoning ordinance.

### Specific Implementation Actions

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
All zoning and other land use decisions shall be consistent with the comprehensive plan	Prepare and present a “consistency” resolution to the City Council, that shall include the following considerations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All land use decisions to be consistent with the comprehensive plan,</li> <li>2. For a proposed land use action (zoning, building permit) not consistent with the comprehensive plan, the plan will be amended before the land use action is approved.</li> </ol> Prepare and present for adoption, a revised zoning map that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
Development should generally be located within or adjacent to existing urban areas in order to eliminate a “leap frog” development pattern.	Amend the development code to require “adequate public facilities” must be present concurrent with development.
The City will zone land consistent with the designation of the density ranges on the land use map	Prepare a zoning amendment to reflect the updated land use map.
Commercial and business development along US-20 should have a pleasing appearance from the roadway. Facades should have finish materials similar to building fronts and attractive landscaping.	Revise the zoning ordinance to allow the planning commission greater control for Class II permits.
The city shall encourage and help attract business development.	Coordinate with the State and County Economic Development Council in the recruitment of targeted industry.



	<p>In conjunction with downtown revitalization, propose actions that will reinforce the downtown as an attractive area for business.</p>
<p>Ashton’s historic building and their settings area an important part of the City’s unique identify and should be restored and preserved.</p>	<p>Encourage business for historic storefront renovation.</p> <p>Continue the Historic Landmarks program.</p>
<p>Productive agricultural land is a limited resource of both environmental and economic value and should be conserved and preserved. Preservation and enhancement of a rural lifestyle is an important component of the cultural and natural environment.</p>	<p>Explore and adopt appropriate measures to encourage the preservation/conservation of agricultural land. Such measures might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster development</li> <li>• Conservation easements</li> <li>• Transfer of development rights</li> </ul>

<sup>i</sup> Idaho Magazine, February 2005, Vol. 4, No.5, Helen McMullin