

# **PUBLIC HEARING ON FREMONT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**Date:** December 17, 2008  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m.  
**Location:** Fremont County Annex Building

**Attended by:** Commissioners Skip Hurt, Don Trupp, and Paul Romrell

**Also in attendance:** Clerk Abbie Mace, Deputy Clerk Jody Flores, Commissioner Elect LeRoy Miller, Joette Lookabaugh, P&Z Administrator Kurt Hibbert, Josh Chase, Hearing Officer Josh Garner

Hearing Officer Josh Garner opened the meeting and introductions were held. Mr. Garner questioned Clerk Abbie Mace if proper notification and publication was made for this public hearing. She stated that it had in accordance with the state statute.

## **PLANNING & ZONING ADMINISTRATOR KURT HIBBERT AND JOSHUA CHASE**

Planning & Zoning Administrator Kurt Hibbert and Joshua Chase presented a brief overview and history of the development of the Fremont County Comprehensive Plan. In October 2006, the Fremont County Commissioners ordered the development of this plan. Throughout the process, additional meetings were held to gather public comment and input. In 2008, two additional subcommittees were formed to review land use in the county, and to develop a land use map. Some modifications were made from the Board of County Commissioners to the original form of this document.

Commissioner Romrell stated that he is impressed with the Planning & Zoning staff and their process of developing this document; taking into account public comment. Kurt Hibbert stated that he has appreciated the educational opportunity in developing this Comprehensive Plan. He also stated that he has greatly appreciated the public's participation in the development of this document. This is a general document and not a regulatory document. It outlines the direction in which the citizens of Fremont County would like to go.

Commissioner Romrell stated that he would like a specific target date identified in either the Comprehensive Plan, or Development Code that identifies when this plan would be revisited and reviewed. Kurt Hibbert stated that typically every six months applications are taken, and at the time, changes would be made.

Hearing Officer Josh Garner stated that two letters were received for public comment from 1) Kim Ragotzkie of the Henry's Fork Foundation, and 2) Scott Christensen of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition which will be added to the record.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Greg Stoddard (2205 East 200 North, St. Anthony, ID 83445)**

Mr. Stoddard stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He stated that he appreciates the way the Commissioners have handled the process in developing the

Comprehensive Plan over the past year. He is in the construction business and his colleagues have stated that they are also pleased with this plan. He presented a map (exhibit #1) that indicated Rural Infill and Commercial/Industrial Land Uses. Brief overview was given. He requested that a parcel of land owned by Depatco be included in the Comprehensive Plan and zoned as a Commercial/Industrial area. They have met with Planning & Zoning twice and no major issues were identified. Their company may need to utilize this ground in spring or early summer; if this is not added to the plan, it could put their company in a predicament.

Commissioner Romrell questioned if an additional hearing would be required to make this change, or if it could be done today.

Mr. Hibbert stated that the Commissioners do have the authority to make these changes as it does not represent a material change to the plan, so no hearing would be required.

**Troy Thurgood (81 East 3500 North, Rexburg, ID 83440)**

Mr. Thurgood stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He stated to the board that he was here to echo what Mr. Stoddard previously stated. Mr. Thurgood feels that there is no reason to not make the change requested by Mr. Stoddard as this was the previous intent.

**Charles Remore (2221 East 400 North, St. Anthony, ID 83445)**

Mr. Ramone stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He stated that he has been striving to get the Commissioners and the county to listen to the public and note their input and opinions. Mr. Ramone thanked the board for doing so.

**Adrienne Keller (P.O. Box 858, Ashton, ID 83420)**

Ms. Keller stated her address for the record and introduced herself. She is representing the Caribou/Targhee National Forest on behalf of the Ashton/Island Park Ranger District. She apologized for not being more involved earlier in this process. She presented a copy of the Comprehensive Plan with edits and notations (exhibit #2) that she made. Ms. Keller stated that the Forest Service commends the vision the Comprehensive Plan sets for the future of Fremont County. There is recognition of the valuable assets within Fremont County boundaries and provisions for development to preserve those assets.

Ms. Keller stated the Forest Service is experiencing an increase in unauthorized motorized use on National Forest System (NFS) lands adjacent to subdivisions by people operating ATV's etc. from the subdivisions onto NFS lands. They are concerned with providing motorized access to areas adjacent to subdivisions where such use is not permitted.

In reference to pages 53 and 57 (Forestry), they felt that the forestry discussion should include mention that Idaho Department of Lands is selling timber sales in Fremont County. Also, people from our county and elsewhere are able to get forest products such as firewood, transplants, and Christmas trees etc from NFS lands. In Sections 2.2-2.4, a detailed description of the County's economic profile was included; it also included a statement of the economic effect of the closure of the St. Anthony Stud Mill. They felt that this statement does not add value to a Comprehensive Plan of 2008. She stated that the Wilmore Lumber Company, while not a large employer, is operating in our county. Possibly mentioning this business could be included in the plan.

In reference to page 62 (Minerals and Geothermal Resources), she stated that the discussion of geothermal resources in the section titled "Land Use" did not describe any current uses of the geothermal resource and felt this discussion would better fit under Section 2.6. They also suggested an addition to this section would describe past decisions on geothermal leases for an area called the Island Park Geothermal Area. These past decisions offer insight on why there is no geothermal leasing in a large portion of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Fremont County. The explanation is as follows:

"Oil and gas and geothermal leases blanketed the Island Park & Madison-Pitchstone Plateaus Subsections of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in the mid 1980's, but none exist today. Congress has effectively prohibited geothermal development and mineral leasing in this area through legislation prohibiting the leasing of lands in the Island Park Geothermal Area (Geothermal Steam Leasing Amendments Act of 1988). The majority of acres within the IPGA are Federal or State managed lands in Fremont County"

In reference to page 90 (Solid Waste Disposal-Landfills), the last sentence in the first paragraph under landfills stated "The County has operated on the understanding that there would be additional acreage for expansion of the site; however this is uncertain at this time." Ms. Keller made reference to a letter dated January 12, 2007 that was sent to Commissioner Romrell from Forest Supervisor Lawrence A. Timchak on the question of expansion of the Island Park landfill. The County was advised that the Forest Service would not authorize expansion of the existing landfill on NFS lands in Island Park. Commissioner Hurt questioned Ms. Keller if not extending the landfill on NFSF lands was a local or national policy. She stated that it was a national policy.

Please refer to the submitted letter (exhibit #3) for a full list of suggestions made.

**Kim Ragotske (P.O. Box 550, Ashton, ID 83420)**

Ms. Ragotske stated her address for the record and introduced herself. She is appearing in behalf of the Henry's Fork Foundation. She stated that the foundation has reviewed the draft of the Comprehensive Plan and are pleased with the document. They also recognize the tremendous amount of hard work that has gone into developing this plan by the Planning & Zoning department, Planning & Building department staff, Commissioners, and by many Fremont County residents and interested citizens. The Henry's Fork Foundation recognizes that with a sound Comprehensive Plan for the county, it also enables them to move forward with their mission. They appreciate the Commissioners for providing many opportunities for public review and input during the process of revising the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Ragotske stated that they had two comments regarding the Preferred Land Use Map. They feel that the City of Island Park Impact Area covers an unduly large area. They encourage Fremont County to continue working with the City of Island Park to reduce the Impact Area to a more meaningful area. She also noted that there is a small area zoned "Industrial/Commercial" at the junction of the Yale-Kilgore Road the Shotgun Road. They recognize there are a number of existing businesses at this location and they encourage the county to limit the development in that area to the existing businesses, and not allow this area to be developed into another major commercial district. Commissioner Romrell questioned if they had a recommendation as to what the Impact Area for Island Park should be. She stated that they feel it should be smaller.

Commissioner Romrell stated that he cannot think of anything more important than water quality. He also stated that the board takes this issue very seriously and recognizes this fact. He stated that we are the only county that has any active, aggressive program to address issues such as mussels, zebra etc. We need the additional help from such organizations as the Henry's Fork Foundation to continue these programs. She will take these comments and information back to the Foundation.

**John Harrington (4050 Flat Rock Road, Macks Inn, ID 87433)**

Mr. Harrington stated his address for the record and introduced himself. Thanks were given to the Commissioners for the opportunity for the public to offer comment. He is pleased with this plan and was grateful for the work that went into the development of the Comprehensive Plan. He was chair of the Land Use Subcommittee and felt that this plan addressed issues that were identified by this committee. Thanks were given to Josh Chase for his work as well. Commissioner Romrell stated that he appreciates the support from the public.

**Larry Timchak (1405 Hollipark, Idaho Falls, ID 83401)**

Mr. Timchak stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He is the Forest Supervisor for the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. Mr. Timchak thanked the Commissioners for the relationship that Fremont County and the Forest Service has. He gave a brief overview of their goals and objectives. Mr. Timchak feels that the Comprehensive Plan offers a good balance to protect and promote positive growth.

**Steven Loosli (702 North 3000 East, Chester, ID 83421)**

Mr. Loosli stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He stated that he had served on the Land Use Subcommittee. He would like to see a more extensive definition section within the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Loosli was pleased with the opportunity to participate in the process of developing the plan. The Commissioners thanked him for his help on this committee.

**Chan Atchley (4077 East 1300 North, Ashton, ID 83420)**

Mr. Atchley stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He is appearing on behalf of the Smart Growth Coalition. He stated that in general, they are pleased with the Comprehensive Plan. He also stated that on page 5, paragraph 3, he feels that this needs to be reworded. Brief overview of reasoning was given. They would like the wording to be changed from "possible" to essential. Mr. Atchley stated that they had concerns with the land use map and did not see any definitions to the categories of the map such as Rural Infill. Examples were briefly stated. He identified an area of concern with wetlands around the Chester area. Commissioner Hurt stated that he does not agree with the wetlands proposal in the stated area.

**Brent Stohl (P.O. Box 505, Chester, ID 83421)**

Mr. Stohl stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He stated that he realized that this is not a regulatory document, but that he knows that anytime the Commissioners vote on a document, it must be important. He is concerned with the rights that landowners have and finding a balance. We need to look at land purchase as an investment. He is concerned with the future of agriculture in this county. Commissioner Hurt stated that he agrees with Mr. Stohl in the need to finding a balance.

**Bob Reiley (St. Anthony, ID 83445)**

Mr. Reiley stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He stated that he has concerns with the closure on the desert. Commissioner Romrell stated that the closure does not include private land owners. Mr. Hibbert stated that this is an ordinance issue, not one that would be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Reiley reiterated the need to identify a time when review and revision will be made to the plan. He feels in general, that this is a good plan.

**Steve Schmidt (4279 Commerce Circle, Idaho Falls, ID 83401)**

Mr. Schmidt stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He is the regional supervisor of the Idaho Department of Fish & Game: Mr. Schmidt submitted a letter (exhibit #4) for the record. He stated that he congratulates the people of Fremont County and the Commissioners on a well thought out and developed Comprehensive Plan. He said it is one of the best in the state. Mr. Schmidt said it will go a long way in preserving our world class recreation opportunities and resources. He identified two sections in Policy 11 (Fish & Wildlife) that they feel should be re-worded. They noted that in Section 11.1 the draft strikes the portion of the section beginning with the words "by limiting impacts to fish and wildlife habitats." It is their recommendation that words that were deleted be replaced with "and to require mitigation for all those public values lost to development." They also noted that in Section 11.3, that the Commissioners would consider reinstating the language struck that states IDFG will offer recommendation to the County regarding adequacy of mitigations proposed. Commissioner Romrell stated the reason some of that language was struck was that the Board would like decisions to be made more at a local level, and was concerned that some of that language would open the doors for state agencies to have more of a role in making those decisions. Commissioner Hurt agreed with Commissioner Romrell. Mr. Schmidt said that they would like to offer specific data to the county on fish and game resources that would enable the county to make decisions.

**Steve Lookabaugh (2781 East 800 North, St. Anthony, ID 83445)**

Mr. Lookabaugh stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He would like to compliment those who developed the Comprehensive Plan and the work they put into it.

**Joette Lookabaugh (2781 East 800 North, St. Anthony, ID 83445)**

Ms. Lookabaugh stated her address for the record and introduced herself. She was a member of the Planning & Zoning board. She stated that they spent a great deal of time reviewing the Comprehensive Plan. She questioned on why some of the edits were not made by members of Planning and Zoning. They spent a great deal of time reviewing this document. Mrs. Lookabaugh questioned on why some of the edits were not made so the Planning & Zoning Committee could review them.

**John Nedrow (3079 East 1200 North, Ashton, ID 83420)**

Mr. Nedrow stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He would like to echo what Ms. Lookabaugh said. He feels that we need to adopt the Comprehensive Plan and move on to the Development Code. Mr. Nedrow stated that he has no problem with changing the land use map for the DePatco gravel pit. Commissioner Hurt stated that he appreciates Mr. Nedrow's effort. Commissioner Romrell reiterated his appreciation.

**Jim Gerber (St. Anthony, ID 83445)**

Mr. Gerber stated his address for the record and introduced himself. He is impressed with the public involvement. He feels the key will now be to integrate the Comprehensive Plan with the Development Code.

**Planning & Building Administrator Kurt Hibbert**

Mr. Hibbert presented a definition page for the Land Use Map (exhibit #5) to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Brief overview was given of those definitions. Commissioner Hurt questioned the definition of "visually sensitive" to be included as well. Mr. Hibbert stated that it would be in the Development Code.

Hearing Officer Josh Garner asked those in attendance if there was any rebuttal to be offered. None was given and there was no conflict of interest. Thanks were given to those who offered comment.

Commissioner Romrell stated that he appreciated all information that was gathered today. A Commissioners special work meeting will be held today immediately following the conclusion of this public hearing as advertised and posted.

There being no further business to be addressed, the public hearing was concluded.

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Paul Romrell, Chairman  
Fremont County Commission

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Abbie Mace, Clerk

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## **Exhibit List**

Exhibit 1 – Land use map presented by Greg Stoddard

Exhibit 2 – Edited version on the proposed Comprehensive Plan presented by Adrienne Keller of the Forest Service

Exhibit 3 – Letter presented from Adrienne Keller of the Forest Service

Exhibit 4 – Letter presented from Steve Schmitt of the Department of Fish and Game

Exhibit 5 – Definitions of the Land Use Map presented by Planning & Building Administrator Kurt Hibbert