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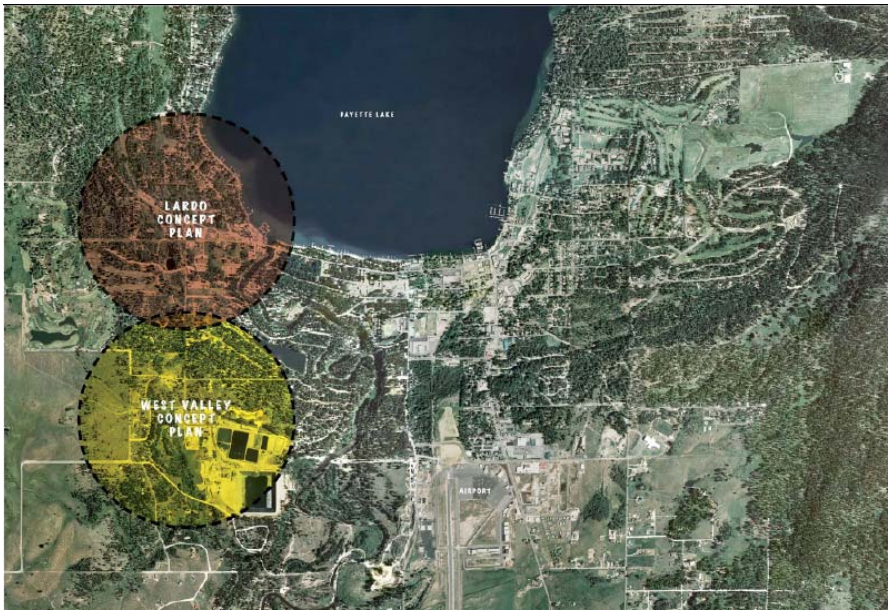
Connecting McCall: Concept Plans for Lardo and West Valley



U.S. EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

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November 29, 2005

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1 INTRODUCTION: MCCALL SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE

More and more people are discovering the scenic beauty and small town charm of McCall, Idaho. Between 2000 and 2005, the population of McCall increased 41 percent. The recent opening of Tamarack, the nation's newest ski resort just 15 miles south of McCall, is also fueling real estate demand. Alongside this incredible growth, the city recently opened the East-West Loop Road with hopes of reducing downtown congestion and giving truck traffic the option to avoid the pedestrian-friendly downtown. Because the new road is providing access to the state highway, and given the intensity of the growth, the city anticipates that there will be considerable development pressures along the Loop road. The city is concerned that this pressure could create development that is inconsistent with McCall's character and that could cause congestion on the newly built road.

In response to these concerns, the city applied to the Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program. The city requested assistance to develop options for responding to growth along the new East-West Loop Road that would meet community goals. EPA assembled a Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Team (Team) to work with city officials, local leaders, community representatives, and others to create a vision for the development at two sites along the road. The Team's site visit occurred October 24-27, 2005.

As part of those meetings and consultations, the Team prepared concept plans illustrating approaches that would help produce the results that McCall is seeking near the Loop Road. The Team then developed options for actions that the City could take to begin implementing the concepts.

This Final Report to the City of McCall:

1. Summarizes the Team's work with the City and citizens;
2. Presents the resulting Concept Plans; and
3. Presents options the City could use to move toward implementing the Concept Plans.

2 BACKGROUND: THE SMART GROWTH IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Communities around the country want to foster economic growth, protect environmental resources, and plan for development and in many cases they may need additional tools, resources or information to achieve these goals. In response to this need, the Environmental Protection Agency's Development, Community, and Environment Division (DCED) has launched the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program to provide technical assistance—through contractor services—to selected communities.

The goals of this assistance are to improve the overall climate for infill, brownfields redevelopment, and the revitalization of non-brownfield sites—as well as promote development that meets economic, community, and environmental goals. EPA, with its contractor ICF Consulting, assembles teams whose members have expertise that meets community needs. While engaging community participants on their aspirations for development, the team can bring their experiences from working in other parts of the country to provide best practices for the community to consider.

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Communities around the country are looking to get the most from new development and to maximize their investments. Frustrated by development that gives residents no choice but to drive long distances between jobs and housing, many communities are bringing workplaces, homes, and services closer together. Communities are examining and changing zoning codes that make it impossible to build neighborhoods with a variety of housing types. They are questioning the fiscal wisdom of neglecting existing infrastructure, while expanding new sewers, roads, and services into the fringe. Many places that have been successful in ensuring that development improves their community, economy, and environment have used smart growth principles to do so (see box). Smart growth describes development patterns that create attractive, distinctive, and walkable communities that give people of varying age, wealth, and physical ability a range of safe, convenient choices in where they live and how they get around. Growing smart also ensures that we use our existing resources efficiently and preserve the lands, buildings, and environmental features that shape our neighborhoods, towns, and cities.

Principles of Smart Growth

1. Mix land uses
2. Take advantage of compact building design
3. Create housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable communities
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

From: The Smart Growth Network. www.smartgrowth.org

3 CHARGE TO THE TEAM

Concerned with growth pressures and the potential for development inconsistent with McCall's character along the new East-West Loop Road (Loop Road), the city applied to EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program. The city requested support to create a vision for development at two sites along the road. Instead of allowing for strip development along the Loop road that would take away from the city's character and have the potential to clog the road with traffic, the city sought to proactively plan for attractive and functional development that could serve the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Team narrowed its focus to two areas along the corridor, shown in Figure 1:

1. Lardo, located at the western edge of McCall where the Loop Road (as Boydstun Street) intersects with State Highway 55 and,

2. West Valley, located near the junction of West Valley/West Mountain Road and the Loop Road.

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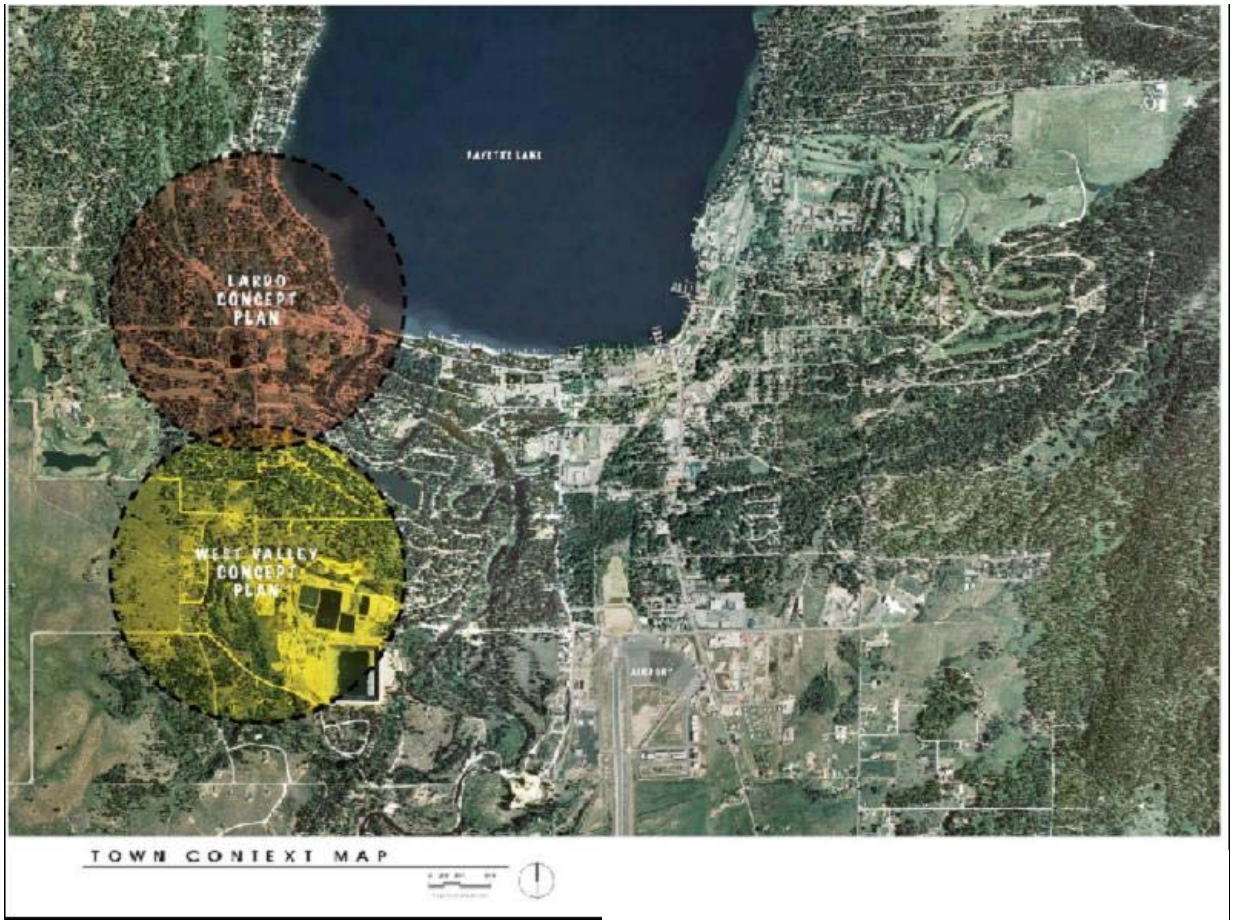
Figure 1: Focus areas



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In order to create concept plans for these sites, the City's application called for holding a multi-day planning "charrette" or workshop to generate development ideas for Lardo and West Valley.

The Team consisted of:

- Tim Van Meter, Architect, Van Meter Williams Pollack
- Jim Charlier, Transportation Planner, Charlier Associates
- Dena Belzer, Economist, Strategic Economics.

Additional support was provided by William Schroeer, ICF Consulting, and Mary Kay Bailey and Geoffrey Anderson of EPA.

4 CONTEXT AND INPUTS

The Team drew on information from: a detailed site visit, planning documents posted on the city's web site, input from community meetings, and an analysis of development economics in the city and the area.

4.1 Economic Analysis

McCall is a rapidly growing small town that has shifted from a resource-based economy to one centered on tourism. The city's abundant natural beauty, proximity to resorts, and role as the largest town in Valley County has fueled much of this growth. Many of the city's homeowners are part-time residents who have second homes in McCall. With the arrival of Tamarack resort, fifteen miles south of the city, it is expected that growth pressures will continue. The new Loop road is creating key connections to State Highway 55 and West Mountain Road, opening up more potential development opportunities. These factors have implications for McCall's economy and how it deals with future development.

Understanding the local real estate market as well as demographic and economic trends is crucial to developing options that are realistic and respond to the local situation and community needs. This section reviews the economic, demographic, and market trends and characteristics of McCall.

Trends

McCall's demographics are in transition. Between 2000 and 2005, McCall's population increased by 41%, growing from 2,175 people in 2000 to 2,524 people in 2005[1]. In 2000, McCall accounted for almost one-third of Valley County's total population. Although comparable numbers are not available for 2005, given McCall's growth, the city is likely to be increasing its share (percentage) of County population.

Particularly significant is that only 40 percent of the housing units in both the city and the county are occupied year-round. This has significant implications for the city's economy, especially its retail sector.

[1] Source: 2000 Census and Rees Consulting.

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Figure 2: Housing profile

	Valley County	Percent of Total	McCall	Percent of Total
Year-round Occupied Units	3,208	40%	924	41%
Second Homes / Vacation Housing	4,876	60%	1,341	59%
Total	8,084	100%	2,265	100%

Source: 2000 Census

McCall accounts for over half of all building permits issued in Valley County since 2001 and 100 percent of all multifamily units, although the number of multifamily units is actually insignificant as a percent of the overall total. This lop-sided development reinforces the importance of the steps that McCall is taking to increase the number of units being built and offered at prices that McCall's workers can afford. .

Figure 3: Recent development activity

Year	McCall			Unincorporated Valley County		
	SF	MF	Total	SF	MF	Total
2001	63	2	65	76	0	76
2002	84	2	86	89	0	89
2003	91	3	94	109	0	109
2004	109	3	112	247	0	247
2005	87	1	88	229	0	229

Source: Census Bureau

Despite the growth in the number of units constructed, housing prices have increased substantially recently, as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Median Sales Price, 2004 and 2005 Active Listings

	2004 Sales	Active Listings	% Increase
Cascade Area	$130,000	$219,900	69.2%
Donnelly Area	$165,000	$287,000	73.9%
McCall Area	$199,000	$389,500	95.7%
Council Area	$90,250	$194,500	115.5%
New Meadows Area	$199,500	$295,000	47.9%
All Areas	$180,000	$295,000	63.9%

Source: Mountain Central MLS

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This increase in housing prices in one year further reinforces the point that the housing market has shifted very rapidly towards a higher-income buyer, putting greater upward pressure on all segments of the market, not just the high-end units.

It is important to note that McCall historically has three- to four-year residential market cycles where prices will escalate year over year. At the end of these cycles, prices flatten out, but they typically don't decrease. It is currently unclear whether the current increases are just the third year of a typical cycle, or if, because of Tamarack, these price increases will continue for several more years.

McCall has historically been a more modest priced ski area than Sun Valley or some of the more famous ski areas in Colorado. Nonetheless, Figure 5 provides another way to look at the current leap in housing prices, showing that current housing prices are starting to catch up with some of these more established and wealthy areas.

Figure 5: Ski resort comparison

	McCall	Breckenridge	Aspen
Permanent population (2000)	2,175	2,408	5,914
Median home price (2004)	$199,000	580,100	$1,700,000
Median income (2000)	$36,250	$43,938	$70,300
Cost of Lift Ticket (2005)	$40-55	$45-75	$52-78

Source: Strategic Economics

Characteristics

McCall's economy is concentrated in two areas:

- Services for the locals (health care, education, government), and
- Activities for the tourist economy: some of the retail employment, arts, recreation, accommodation

The figures below, from 2000 data sources, illustrate the key employment sectors in McCall:

- Retail trade comprises 12.7 percent of employment in McCall
- Arts, recreation and accommodation comprises 17.4 percent of total employment in McCall
- Educational and health services comprise 19 percent of total employment
- Construction jobs comprise 11 percent of total employment

See full employment figures in Figure 6. Since the data are from 2000, it is likely that they understate the current number of people working in construction. Overall, the figures clearly demonstrate that McCall is a service-based economy.

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Figure 6: McCall employment

Industry	Valley County		McCall	
Educational, health and social services	514	14.3%	216	19.9%
Arts, recreation and accommodation	452	12.6%	188	17.4%
Retail trade	469	13.0%	138	12.7%
Construction	478	13.3%	123	11.4%
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	253	7.0%	79	7.3%
Public administration	313	8.7%	62	5.7%
Professional and administrative services	197	5.5%	60	5.5%
Other services (except public administration)	206	5.7%	59	5.4%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	186	5.2%	55	5.1%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	174	4.8%	44	4.1%
Manufacturing	242	6.7%	34	3.1%
Information	52	1.4%	20	1.8%
Wholesale trade	63	1.8%	5	0.5%
Total	3,599	100.0%	1,083	100.0%

Implications for greater McCall

The characteristics and trends for McCall have implications for the amount and type of retail that can be absorbed by the market.

Figure 7 shows that:

- Year round residents currently support about 140,000 square feet of retail space. This doesn't count visitor spending, nor does it count people living in other parts of Valley or Adams County who also shop in McCall.

- By 2020 McCall residents alone will support more than double the amount of retail they support now. The most significant increase in demand will be for restaurants, which also serve the tourists, as well as demand for one more full-service grocery store.

The buying power analysis in Figure 7 excludes visitor spending and spending by Valley or Adams County residents from outside of McCall. As such, it is a conservative estimate of supportable square feet of retail. A conservative analysis was the most appropriate in this context because:

- There is a lack of accurate data regarding the number of annual visitors to McCall or the spending habits of other Valley County or Adams County residents.

- Including the buying power of seasonal visitors would only serve to measure the supportable square feet of retail during the high seasons. Given that currently sales decrease significantly enough during the low seasons that many retail businesses struggle to maintain profitability, aiming for the amount of square feet supportable during the high seasons would create an excess of retail space during the low seasons and could cause excess business turnover.

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Figure 7: Buying power / retail trade potential, estimates

	McCall			
	Buying power		Supportable Retail Square Feet	
Type	**2005**	**2030**	**2005**	**2030**
Drug and Proprietary Stores	$799,230	$1,725,437	3,197 sf	6,902 sf
Eating and Drinking Places	$5,509,974	$11,895,345	22,040	47,581
Food Stores	$7,927,695	$17,114,902	31,711	68,460
Furniture and Home Furnishings	$538,115	$1,161,723	2,152	4,647
Total Retail	$34,567,703	$74,627,344	138,271 sf	298,509 sf

Source: Claritas, Strategic Economics

The market will respond to this coming demand; however, the market may not deliver in ways that allow McCall to get the most out of retail development. While the market will bring in the types of stores that McCall can support, the city has the opportunity to ensure that those stores are located in places and designed in ways that create synergies with other city goals. For instance, the city can designate commercial space strategically so residents can walk to stores. The city can also situate retail so that it is easier for multiple establishments to share parking. In order to maintain McCall's unique character the city can ensure that storefronts and buildings are appropriately scaled and designed.

Implications for downtown

Although downtown was not part of the Team's charge, discussions with the City revealed the importance of maintaining downtown's health and vibrancy. The Downtown Master Plan calls for a central business district (CBD) that "is pedestrian oriented, physically attractive, safe and easy to navigate, whether on foot or in a vehicle, and which retains a mix of goods and services for sale which serve the resident and tourist populations." In reviewing the existing downtown conditions, the Team found:

- The downtown lacks a critical mass of retail space.

  The downtown doesn't have enough retail space to create a significant critical mass of retail activity. Many of the storefronts in the main business district are real estate offices, breaking up the retail character of the street.

- Much of the existing space could be renovated.

  The historic exteriors of the retail district are distinctive and give downtown its special character, but the interiors of many of the stores feel a bit outmoded, making them less than appealing places to shop.

- Downtown needs to reposition itself to compete in the growing resort economy.

  The mix of goods in the stores is still targeted to the historic visitor, second home and resident income levels. However, as the visitors and even new residents to McCall become more upscale, the merchandise mix in the stores should adjust to meet changing

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demand. Also, Tamarack is planning 300,000 square feet of retail by the time the project is complete. If McCall doesn't improve the quality of its retail, many potential shoppers could choose to spend their time and money at Tamarack, and by-pass downtown McCall.

To fulfill the vision for the CBD in the Downtown Master Plan, the city may want to examine these findings in greater detail.

4.2 Community meetings

The Team's site visit was held from Monday, October 24 – Thursday, October 27th. The schedule included many opportunities for community input and feedback. An initial kick-off meeting was held on Monday night. The Team shared concepts that have been used to create village and neighborhood centers from around the country. Meeting participants were asked to share ideas for development in the Lardo and West Valley areas and to raise issues important to them.

A summary of what residents of McCall felt was important:

- Bike/pedestrian paths, parks, and open space
- Making it easier to walk to places
- Access to the river
- Protecting the things that make McCall special
- Connecting neighborhoods – providing services to neighborhoods without them now
- Creating gateways/special places when you enter neighborhoods
- Housing that families can afford
- Limiting strip development
- New development should be connected and not just pods
- Natural beauty
- Keeping McCall a real community and not just a resort town

Following the kick-off meeting, the Team held public workshops on Tuesday afternoon to discuss opportunities in Lardo and Wednesday afternoon to discuss West Valley. At these workshops, attendees provided the Team with ideas about the kinds of land uses that should be incorporated at the sites; where streets, trails and public spaces could be located; and what issues were most important to cover. The Team used this input to create draft concepts for each of the areas that were presented during each evening's public meetings. These evening meetings gave participants another opportunity to ensure that the Team's designs and concepts responded to community goals.

On Thursday the Team refined the concepts for both sites based on the input received at the public meetings. The Team presented the findings to City Council on Thursday evening. Immediately following the Council meeting, the Team held an open house at the Library where citizens could review the plans and talk with team members.

The week's agenda and attendee lists are attached as Appendix A.

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5 PRODUCTS: CREATING AND LINKING VILLAGE AND NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS IN LARDO AND WEST VALLEY

In order to develop concept plans for Lardo and West Valley, the Team drew on:

- Residents' values and goals for the City and the region, as expressed in the meetings with the Team;
- The economics of the area as described above; and
- The goals expressed in the City's application to the EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program.

The Team approached each site by looking for "areas of change" and "areas of preservation." The areas of change are intended to be places where development seems most appropriate and should be targeted. The areas of preservation are those places where unique features currently exist and should remain. In these areas, the Team placed little or no emphasis on new development.

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5.1 Lardo Study Area

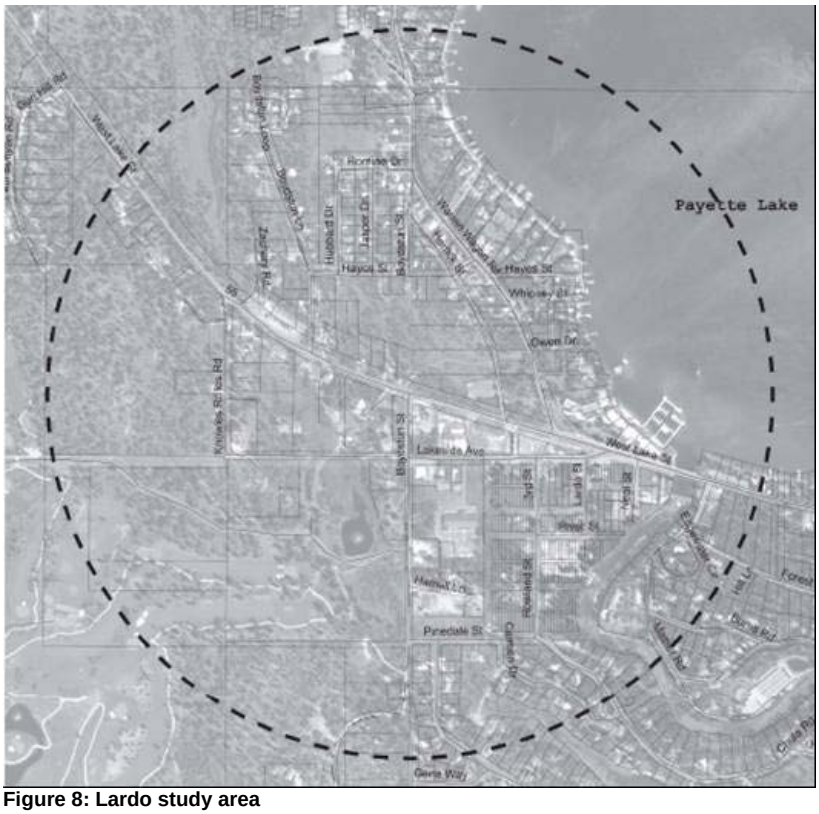

Figure 8: Lardo study area

Existing conditions

The Lardo area sits on the southwest shore of Payette Lake. This area serves as the northwest entry/exit of McCall. Lardo is bisected by Highway 55 (West Lake Street) which leads northwest to local ski areas and traverses east through downtown McCall. Most of Lardo's non-residential land uses (motels, retail, and services) are located on Highway 55. Residential neighborhoods of various qualities run north and south of Highway 55. A new gated golf course development, Whitetail, is located on the southwest quadrant of Lardo and crosses under the highway to connect north. Payette Lake and the North Fork of the Payette River are located in the northeastern and southeastern sections of Lardo, respectively.

Areas of potential change / redevelopment

The area south of Highway 55 (West Lake Street) and bordered by the North Fork of the Payette River, Pinedale Avenue to the south, and Boydstun Street (the end of the Loop Road) contains potential redevelopment opportunities. The area contains a mix of vacant and operating commercial businesses with surface parking, industry, and a variety of single and multifamily

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housing in various states of repair. This area was platted in the early twentieth century with small lots along a gridded network of streets. Only some of the streets are built; however, the city retains the rights-of-way for the platted and unbuilt streets. (See Figure 19) Just across the highway from this area and adjacent to Payette Lake is the attractively restored Whitetail Lodge.

Other areas of potential change within Lardo are the small parcel adjacent to Knowles Road and Highway 55, and the 18-acre parcel fronting the north side Highway 55 and between Zachary Road and Gun Hill Road.

Areas of preservation

A significant portion of Lardo has distinctive local character and is well cared for, including the residential neighborhoods north of Highway 55; east of the Payette River; and south of Pinedale Road. West and north along Highway 55, the forested hillsides and wooded areas create a natural edge to the city—alerting travelers that they are entering the mountains.

Development design options

Having identified the areas of change—where new development could occur—the Team worked with residents, property owners, and local officials to create a plan that would realize their individual and city-wide objectives. Specifically, the development should:

- maintain the character of McCall
- create convenience so that needs can be met close by
- protect the natural resources that make McCall special
- provide housing opportunities so that those who work in McCall can live in McCall
- make connections to downtown
- provide access to the river
- create more opportunities to travel by foot or bike
- take advantage of economic opportunity and the strength of the market
- create opportunities for economic synergy where both resident and tourist needs can be met.

In response to these goals, the team examined the “areas of change” within the Lardo study area to find development designs supportive of the goals. With the participation of property owners, city officials, and residents, the team contemplated several design options. Ultimately the Team created a proposal for a village center situated along the southern side of Highway 55 (West Lake Street) from the North Fork of the Payette River to Boydstun Street (the end of the Loop Road), surrounded by a walkable residential neighborhood. The plan also calls for creating residential opportunities on a small parcel adjacent to Knowles Road and Highway 55 and on an 18-acre parcel fronting the north side Highway 55, between Zachary Road and Gun Hill Road. While there are opportunities to get more from the areas of change, the areas of preservation are already contributing to the accomplishment of these goals.

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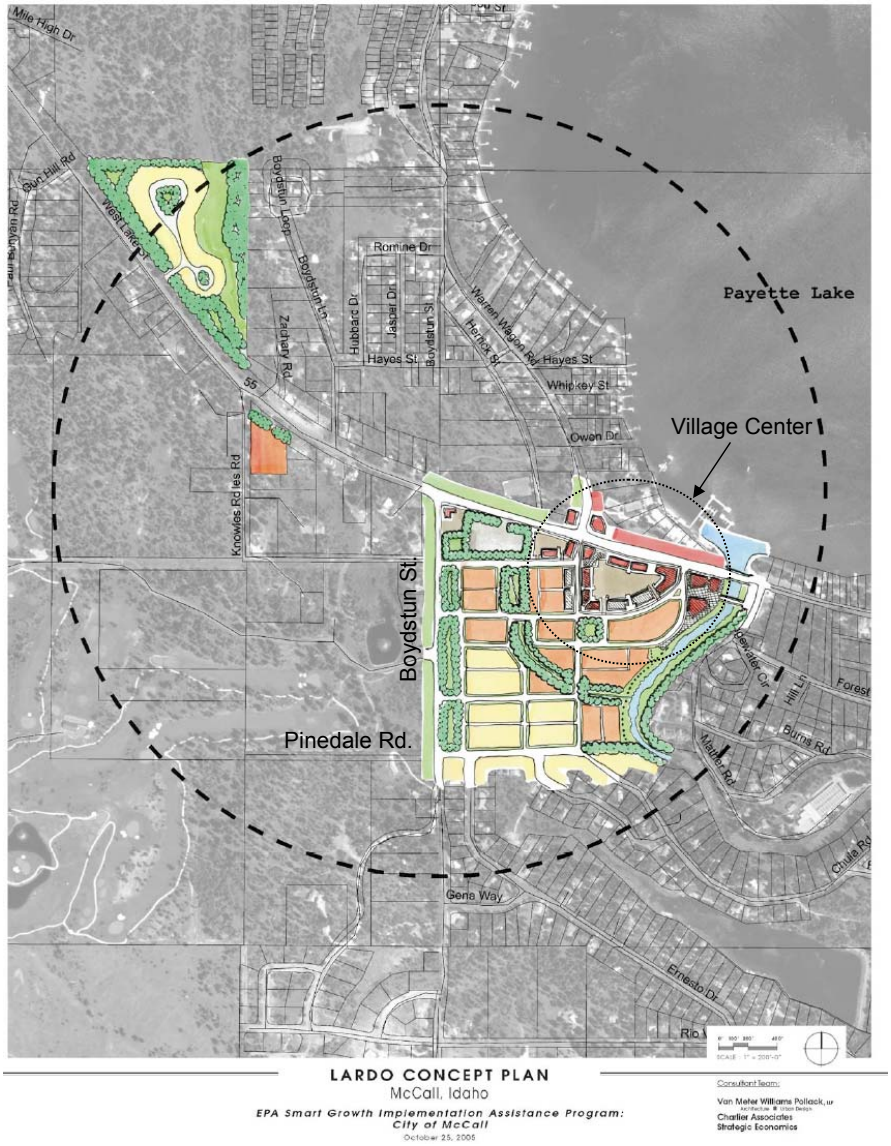

Mixed use: retail floor, office up
Mixed use: retail floor, residential up
Medium/high-density residential
Low-density residential
Parking

Figure 9: Lardo Concept Plan

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The development design translates the community's goals into physical form. For example:

- Establishing a village center with shops and neighborhood amenities means that people can meet daily needs by walking to stores. The village center's orientation and design will create a sense of place and an area for people to gather in a way that strip development would not. Because the retail is geared toward the neighborhood, it doesn't detract from downtown, yet can still meet the needs of nearby residents and tourists.

- The network of gridded streets, with smaller block sizes, can help McCall achieve its goal of making Lardo easy to navigate on bike and foot. The design also allows traffic to flow more smoothly throughout the area, since it can be distributed onto several streets, rather than concentrated on a few arterials.

- By allowing for more housing units per acre and a range of housing types, the city facilitates the creation of more units at different price points. This also allows property owners to get the most economic value out of their land.

- The design's restoration of wetlands and riparian areas throughout Lardo create more opportunities for residents to live near green space, while improving the ecological function of the land. New connections to the river are proposed throughout the village center's surrounding residential neighborhood, giving people improved access to this natural amenity. Paths connecting Lardo to downtown, nearby parks and neighborhoods will make it easier for McCall residents to travel by bike and can begin to make McCall a more attractive bicycling destination for tourists.

- By encouraging clustered housing development in the 18-acre parcel located on the northern side of Highway 55, the design maintains a forested gateway into the city and protects wetlands located throughout the site.

Design Elements for Development Success

The concept plan for Lardo requires addressing multiple design elements. For the most part, these design elements work together and need to be addressed comprehensively.

Keys to making the design work include:

- **The location of the village center**. Positioning the village center across from Whitetail Lodge at the intersection of Highway 55 and the River supports the retail with the higher traffic volumes on the highway and the scenic amenity of the river.

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Figure 10: Lardo village center

- **Retail Location and Tenant Mix.** By locating retail on the ground floor of buildings and putting office and residential units above, the village center becomes an energized place. A tenant mix of mostly one-of-a-kind stores or second locations for stores that already exist in McCall help to make the village center unique. For example, Paul's, which has a real presence in McCall and knows its customers, could be encouraged to open a smaller more convenience- and specialty-oriented store at Lardo. Other ideas for tenants include a coffee shop, an ice cream store, a candy store, a sporting goods store focused on aquatics (kayaking, fishing, boating, etc.), and at least one higher quality restaurant. McCall could definitely support more restaurants.

- **Mix of Uses.** The presence of office workers and residents will help to make the village center a lively gathering place. By putting small offices or residential units on the upper stories of buildings, there is a guaranteed supply of people who will contribute to the liveliness of the area. If the existing US Forest Service building were removed, the headquarters could be located to the upper floors of these buildings. This would create a critical mass of 150-200 year round employees.

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- **Scaled density to transition into established neighborhoods.** Higher densities in the village center will make sure it is "charged" with people and activity. Tapering densities can create a gentle transition from the village center to the residential areas. The plan proposes that the highest density is near the bridge crossing; medium density is adjacent to the River; and the lower density is adjacent to the Rio Vista neighborhood. For example:
  - Mixed Use density of 30 units an acre near the Bridge;
  - 20 units an acre near the river and adjacent to the electrical substation;
  - 8 units an acre near the Rio Vista neighborhood.

  These densities are easily achievable using styles appropriate to McCall.

- **Residential Neighborhoods.** The design proposes creating a residential area of lower to medium density homes surrounding the village center. By creating a variety of housing types (garden apartments, condos, and single-family homes) of varying sizes, McCall can accommodate people of various ages, incomes, and tastes. By planning for pocket parks and playgrounds no further than 1/8 of a mile from each house, residents can enjoy easy access to green space. (Figure 11)

  The small parcel located at Knowles Road and Highway 55 could also be rezoned to support higher density and community housing for McCall's teachers, fire fighters, and hospital workers. (Figure 12.)

- **Managing Parking.** Parking needs to be designed in a way that doesn't detract from the quality of place, while serving customer needs. Locating parking underground or "hidden" in lots in the center of a block, enclosed by several buildings, minimizes its impact on village center Underground parking is expensive and to support it economically, property owners will likely need to build four-story buildings (50' heights).

Many of these approaches are already in use in McCall and towns like it, as illustrated in Figures 13-19.

Figure 11: Wellington pocket park

Figure 12: Additional Lardo opportunity parcels

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Figure 13: An example of ground-floor retail with a second floor that could be used for office or apartment. Buildings like this, located closer to the street, would provide a sense of place.

Figure 14: Another locally appropriate two-story approach, which could accommodate various uses on each floor. To provide the best sense of place, similar buildings would be located closer to the road, and the porch would open to the street.

Figure 15: A third example of mixed-use: residential over retail, or office over retail.

Figure 16: Local multi-story buildings illustrate possibilities for compact, appropriate design.

Figure 17: Wellington in Breckenridge is an example of a Western-style single-family compact development. It is also affordable.

Figure 18: A western, small-town, multi-story urban environment.

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Figure 19. Be careful about parking. Here a wall separates the parking for two neighboring stores. This configuration prevents walking between stores, and makes each store think it needs more parking.

- **Street Network.** By following Lardo's existing gridded platting as closely as possible (see street grid Figure 20), the city can encourage walking, connect Lardo to other destinations, and better distribute traffic flow. Where there are existing homes, roads should bend to accommodate them. To facilitate pedestrian travel, block sizes need to have a perimeter of no more than 1,500 feet. Near the river's edge, where topography makes extending the roadways difficult, the design proposes pedestrian pathways and public connections to the river (Figure 21).

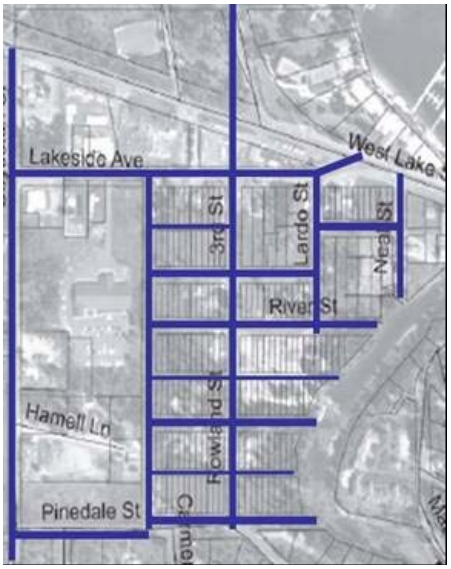

Figure 20: Lardo's historic grid

Figure 21: …can be adapted to connect the neighborhood and village center to the river.

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- **Bridge and Dam Connections.** The bridge and dam over the Payette River are key features in the Lardo Village Center. They are opportunities to create civic architecture, signifying a gateway into McCall and making Lardo a defined place. A redesign can also make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to use them to make downtown connections, as well as to Whitetail Lodge and Art Roberts Park (Figure 22). Figures 23 a – d illustrate how this path system could be designed.

Figure 22: Use the bridge and the dam to create both a gateway and a connected pathway system.

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Figure 23a-d: Possible river path and dam crossing

Working with the Idaho Department of Transportation and other agencies, McCall can improve connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists at the point where the River emerges from the Lake. The bridge and the dam will have to be replaced in the future, creating an opportunity to provide a network of non-motorized crossings of both the river and the highway.

The photos on this page provide a simplified schematic of how this could be accomplished. The neighborhood and village center (as well as the existing resort) will thrive if they are well-connected for walkers and bikers. Pushing the bridge abutments back on both sides of the river (requiring a longer bridge), creates space for pathways under the highway – on both the east and west banks of the river. By designing a dam with an integral pedestrian/bicycle bridge, an additional crossing of the river can be provided away from the highway. Finally, by ensuring the new highway bridge has adequate sidewalks on both sides, the City can correct a missing element in the local circulation network.

The partial redundancy of these improvements is intentional. A crossing under the bridge on the west bank of the river would connect the resort to the village center and neighborhood. However, the property north of the highway and west of the river is private. The under-crossing probably could not be connected up to a sidewalk on the highway because of space limitations and grade differences. Thus, having under-crossings on both banks ensures the resort would be connected to the community while at the same time the general public would have a safe way to get across the highway, connecting the Art Roberts Park to the community as well.

By placing sidewalks on the bridge and at the same time placing a bridge across the dam, the City could provide a high level of connectivity across the river and make river crossings available to families and children. The dam also provides good linearity with Forest Street, which continues to be a key route for bicycle connections into downtown.

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- **Improving Lardo's Connection to Warren Wagon.** To link Lardo with the established lakefront neighborhoods and the bike route along Warren Wagon Road, the design proposes connecting Warren Wagon Road to Pinedale/Chula Road along Rowland Street. This connection would require reconfiguring the current intersection of Warren Wagon and Highway 55 so that it is more of a right angle. A new four-corner intersection here would also provide another opportunity to mark this area as a gateway.

Figure 24: Align Warren Wagon Rd. & Rowland

- **Removal of the concrete batch plant.** In order to create the neighborhood of lower- to medium-density homes surrounding the village center, the first opportunity is to remove the concrete batch plant. It is currently situated within a drainage basin in the heart of a growing residential area. Relocating the plant to a more appropriate location—perhaps adjacent to the airport on land that needs appropriate land uses to protect the airport—would redefine this area as a positive place to invest in.

- **Re-design of current US Forest Service Building site** Another opportunity lies in re-engineering the site of the US Forest Service building. The current structure is not a substantial building and it is located in a very wet area. The building could be removed and the wetlands and riparian area restored. This could become a significant green feature for the renewed neighborhood. The restoration could allow stormwater to be naturally treated as it percolates through the wetlands as well as provide a wildlife corridor through the neighborhood. (See Figure 25)

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Figure 25: Restore the wet areas as a village and wildlife amenity connecting to the river.

- **Improving area around substation.** The Idaho Power substation takes up a significant portion of the northwestern edge of the site. Where possible, parties should look for opportunities to consolidate its functions and remove the surface parking that surrounds the site. Parking can be located curbside on the street and shared with the redeveloped commercial uses to the site adjacent east. The perimeter of the substation could be landscaped and attractive fencing or walls could be erected.

- **Boydstun Design Considerations.** Along Boydstun Street (the end of the Loop road), it is anticipated that future traffic volumes will be high. Landscaped buffers along the road can reduce noise for any new development and redevelopment. A goal of workshop participants was to maintain the roadway's capacity and the best way to do that is to discourage new access points onto Boydstun. Positioning residential units so that they can access smaller, neighborhood streets will help. There is also an opportunity to locate the downtown McCall gas station at the site on the corner of Boydstun and Highway 55. This is a good location as it is somewhat disconnected from Lardo and sits at a key intersection along the city's main commuter corridor.

Figure 26: Cluster development with a buffer

- **Maintaining a gateway western entrance to McCall.** The community expressed a desire to have a gateway entrance into McCall from all directions. In the West, as Highway 55 enters town, it

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is surrounded by forested hillsides, which participants felt was an attractive way to enter the city. Clustered development on the 18-acre site on the northern side of Highway 55 between Zachary Road and Gun Hill Road could be used to maintain this rural character. (Figure 26) The parcel has a number of wet areas and clustering the homes in an appropriate location can keep the landscape intact, create a buffer from the highway, and maintain the scenic quality of the area. There may also be opportunities to connect this parcel with areas to the north.

- **Bike and Pedestrian Connections.** In addition to the three specific parcels, there was a strong feeling among participants that Lardo would benefit from better connections to downtown. In response, the Team developed two cross-sections for Highway 55 that would make it more bike and pedestrian friendly. Both schematics assume a 50-foot right-of-way width that is standard for McCall.

  - The rural cross-section reflects the existing drainage ditches used by McCall to manage storm water. In order to accommodate the ditch, the city needs reduce the amount of paved surface in the right-of-way. This decreased width means that the city can only provide for a sidewalk path on one side of the street. The other side can only accommodate a shoulder and the ditch.

  - The modern cross-section provides more paved-width for bicycle and pedestrian paths, but will also require the city to manage the additional storm water runoff, which is likely to be more expensive.

    In order to ensure that there is no net increase in pollution in Payette Lake, the storm water volume and quality needs to be controlled. Traditional approaches would require the installation of pipes to move storm water to the treatment plant before it can be discharged into the Lake. However, the city may want to examine “low impact design” techniques (buffers, permeable pavement, swales, etc.) to treat the runoff before it is discharged. In order to move forward with a modern cross-section, the city will need to consult with relevant state agencies. See Figures 27 and 28.

Regardless of the approach taken, the Team recommends keeping Forest Street as an alternative, scenic bike route into downtown.

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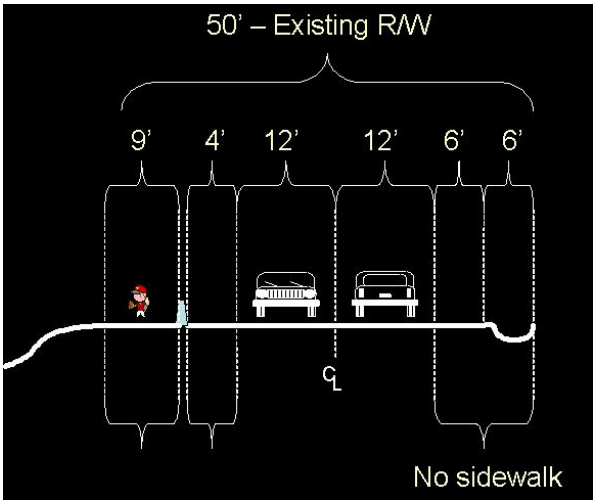

Figure 27: Rural section

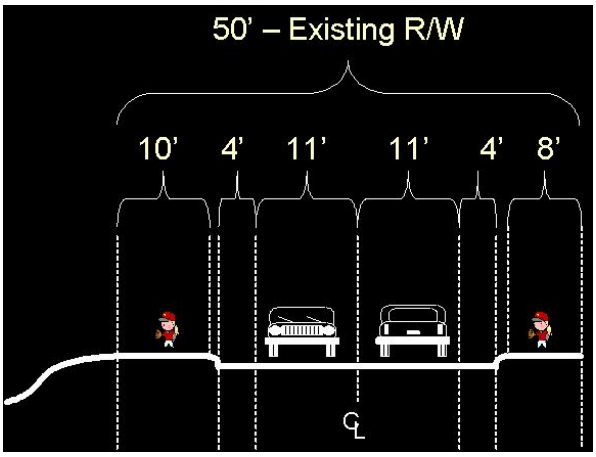

Figure 28: Modern section

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5.2 West Valley Study Area

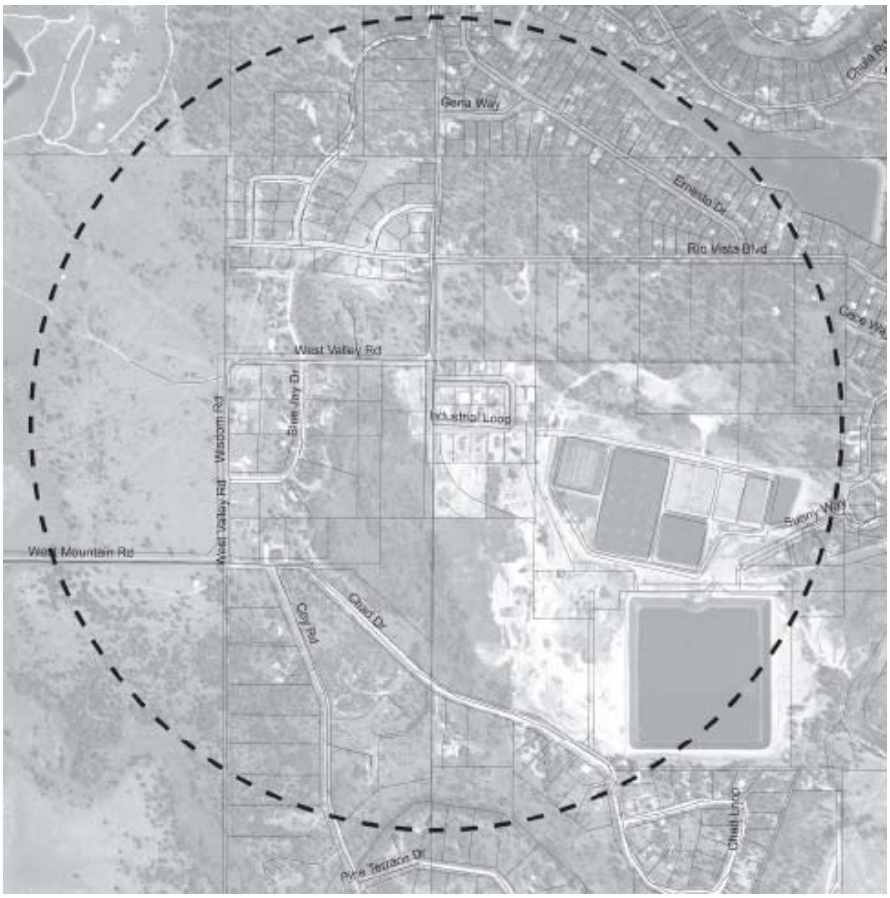

Figure 29: West Valley Study area

Existing conditions

When compared to the values and goals expressed by citizens, the West Valley site is a challenge. The area is characterized by rural residential abutting heavy industry and a large wastewater treatment plant along a major connector road. In the southeast quarter, the City's wastewater treatment plant and winter storage pond is located with no buffer from the public way. In the center of the West Valley study area is the City's heavy industry district. To the north of the heavy industry is the rural neighborhood along Rio Vista. New smaller subdivisions are developing just west of the Loop Road (where it becomes Boydstun Street). At the western edge of West Valley are wide-open western ranch and open lands with significant views in all directions.

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Areas of potential change / redevelopment

Directly south of Rio Vista Boulevard are low-density residential lots [1 unit/acre], many of which have not been built upon. The lots abut the industrial uses to the south. To the west of Boydstun Street, just west of the most intensive industrial uses, is a haphazard arrangement of industrial, parking, and open lands. At 160 acres, the open range land on the west side, is by far the largest parcel in the West Valley study (indeed many of the 160 acres are not technically within the study area but were dealt with because it is one parcel under one owner). This land is considered an "area of potential change" because it lies adjacent to the newly opened connector road, it was recently purchased by development interests, and because it was recently annexed into the city with a zoning designation of 1 unit per 5 acres.

Areas of preservation

The neighborhood north of Rio Vista Blvd is populated and thrives with its defined character. The industrial area and waste water facilities were the subject of significant attention during the team's visit. Discussion with local officials and residents revealed legitimate reasons for the town to consider relocating some of these uses. However, in the final analysis, a preponderance of the public and local official participants, as well as the consultant team, believed that the industrial district should remain in place. The reasons for this were several. First, the town uses these services and it makes sense for the town to accommodate the activities that are necessary for its functioning. Second, many of these uses are job and economic drivers that contribute to diversification of McCall's economic base. Third, the very practical question "where would these uses relocate?" was not easily answered. Finally, the design team believes strategic rearrangement of uses within the facilities, proper design of new abutting development, and improved landscaping can significantly mitigate the impacts of the industrial activities and make them better neighbors.

Development Design Options

McCall residents, land owners, and local officials have specific goals for new development in West Valley, many of which mirror the goals articulated in Lardo and for the town more broadly. Residents, officials and land owners want (not in order of priority):

- Bike/pedestrian paths, parks, and open space
- Places to walk for pleasure and places to walk to fulfill utilitarian needs (e.g., get a quart of milk)
- Development that is consistent with and enhances McCall's character
- To protect the things that make McCall special
- Connected neighborhoods
- To take advantage of economic opportunities in the development and tourist markets and build their economic vitality
- To create gateways/special places when you enter neighborhoods
- Housing that families, local workers, and city staff can afford
- To limit strip development

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- Preserve traffic capacity on Boydstun road—a valuable connection between route 55 on the north and south side of McCall.
- Natural beauty
- To keep McCall a real community and not just a resort town.

With this guidance, the design team looked at the "areas of change" within the study boundaries to find development designs that move the town towards achieving these goals. Working with workshop participants, land owners, and town officials, the team sifted through a number of design possibilities and ideas. With the benefit of iterative input from stakeholders, the team arrived at a proposal for

- additional housing in the neighborhood east of Boydstun and south of Rio Vista Road;
- the development of a significant new neighborhood on the 160 acre parcel on the west side of the study site along with preservation of land to the west of the 160 acres; and
- a neighborhood retail center on West Valley Road where it intersects Boydstun.

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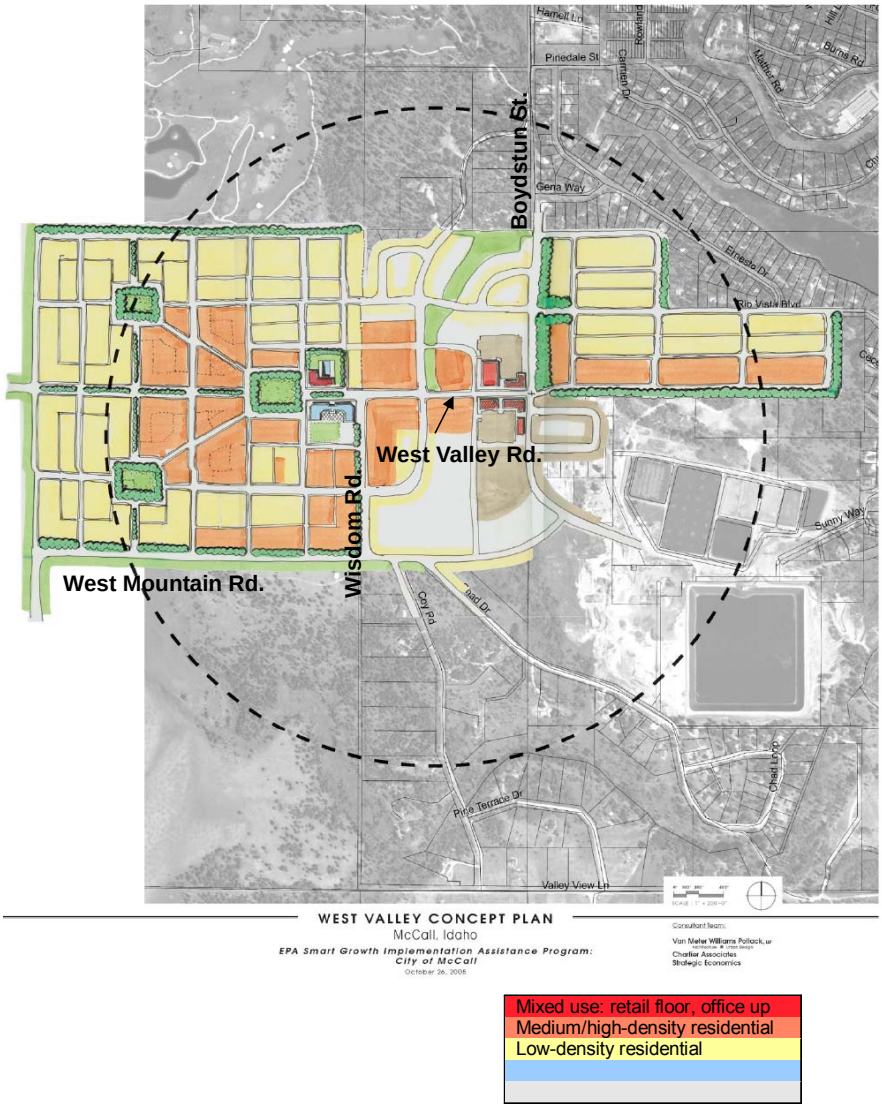

Mixed use: retail floor, office up
Medium/high-density residential
Low-density residential

This design concept offers many advantages with respect to meeting the multiple and diverse goals of McCall's citizens, landowners, and town officials. For instance:

- Providing more housing on the east side of Boydstun and a new neighborhood on the west side of West Valley/Wisdom Road significantly increases the housing supply which can help bring supply into balance with demand, reducing price pressures. In addition, the design in these areas calls for a variety of housing types from townhomes, to condos, to single family

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houses on large lots—providing a variety of price points and housing that meets the needs of different household types including families, seniors, and young people just getting started.

- Increasing the housing on the parcels east and west of Boydstun has other benefits as well. Not only does it help to meet demand, but in doing so it reduces pressure on other open spaces that McCall residents value for aesthetic and environmental reasons. Further, because landowners may be in a position to make more money (because they are allowed to build more houses on their lots), it may be possible to negotiate for preservation of other areas in return. For example, the development proposed on the 160 acre parcel has a significantly higher number of buildable units than current zoning allows—the town may wish to condition the property upzoning on the acquisition of development rights on the adjacent 540 acres. This land could help to treat wastewater from the additional development, provide permanent recreation and trail opportunities, and add value to the 160-acre development as an adjacent scenic and recreational amenity.

- The design's highly connected, small-scale road system provides excellent pedestrian and bike access and will readily connect into a regional bike network. In addition, the design provides significant neighborhood parks and green spaces, distinctive gateways and "places" that help to define the neighborhoods. Finally, the housing types, and architecture are meant to be consistent with and draw on the best of McCall's traditions to reinforce it's character as a special community attuned to the beauty of its surroundings.

- The location of the retail facing on West Valley at the intersection with Boydstun provides easy, walkable access to neighborhood services for Boydstun's east and west side neighborhoods. The small-scaled commercial center ties the neighborhoods together, captures the buying power of traffic passing on Boydstun, and reduces the market desire for strip development elsewhere on Boydstun. By locating the retail on West Valley rather than Boydstun, the design eliminates the needs for curb cuts into Boydstun – helping to keep traffic on the Loop road freely flowing.

Design Elements for Development Success

The design concept put forward by the Team is integrated, meaning that each component—the housing, the retail, open space, etc.—works better in combination with the design's other components than it would by itself. Therefore, certain elements of the design take on added significance and are crucial for the success of the design. Some of these are discussed below.

- **Neighborhood Center.** The neighborhood center depends on several factors for its success. The team's economic analysis suggests that the center can successfully support a grocery anchor and contain a small mixed-use commercial shopping district, with offices over retail and live/work buildings. Small workshop / light industrial can be sited off-street and behind the mixed-use commercial buildings. To achieve the community's goal of walkable neighborhoods and easy access to goods and services, the design suggests that buildings be brought up to the street (as opposed to set back from it) with good sidewalks, 2 to 3 stories of height, and importantly parking behind the buildings. Studies and experience consistently show that these features promote a high quality walking environment. In addition, a successful walkable shopping experience will need a strong connection to the planned residential development east and west of the West Valley/Boydstun intersection, with a well-designed pedestrian street. Allowing higher-density housing [16 units/acre] adjacent to this connection will support walkability and community housing goals. This is key because in addition to car traffic on Boydstun, the retail will rely on customers from the adjacent

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neighborhoods. Allowing higher density near the retail means that customers are within a short walk of their needs.

Figure 30: West Valley neighborhood center and new residential neighborhood to the east of Boydstun

Mixed use: retail floor, office up
Medium/high-density residential
Low-density residential
Civic (schools, community center)
Parking

- **Development Phasing.** Phasing the development plan will be a key to success. Currently, neither the rooftops, nor the auto traffic exist to support a neighborhood center on West Valley. But it will eventually. Keys to preparing for this eventuality include:
  - Plan for the long term.
  - Roof-tops come first; the retail will be a later phase.
  - Zone for a commercial site, but wait for the market to "program" it.
  - Hold out for high quality design and appropriate tenants.
  - Look for local tenants when possible (e.g. Paul's).

  In the next 15 years, McCall will be able to support another grocery store. Planning for its location at the intersection of Boydstun and West Valley Road would:
  - capture traffic on E/W Loop and going south to Tamarack,
  - serve residential growth to the west, and
  - create a walkable neighborhood.

- **Neighborhood East of Boydstun.** The area east of Boydstun Street and South of Rio Vista Boulevard can be re-defined by creating a new street and block network that creates smaller lots, allowing for higher density housing. The highest density [16 units / acre] is proposed adjacent the heavy industry to the south. An attractive landscape buffer will screen the

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industrial area from the residential neighborhood. Medium density housing [8 units / acre] can fill out the block north to Rio Vista Blvd. Again, landscaping can buffer the border with Boydstun Street, whose traffic is likely to grow in future years. (Figure 30)

In order to connect this residential area with the proposed neighborhood center, the city will want to consider various pedestrian crossings for Boydstun. Current levels of traffic may not require any facilities, but future volumes may warrant signals or grade separated crossings. See Appendix D for examples of various pedestrian crossings used in other snowy, mountain towns.

- **Neighborhood West of Wisdom Road.** To the west of Wisdom Road, on a 160-acre parcel annexed into the city in the 1990s, there is an opportunity to create a vibrant new neighborhood with a variety of distinctive housing choices, beautiful vistas, comfortable streets, and pocket parks. A key to achieving this vision is to provide a range of housing and building types including:

  - Stacked flat and senior oriented apartments at 3 stories/30 units acre;
  - Row houses @ 3 stories/ 24 units/acre;
  - Townhouses@ 2 stories / 18 units/acre;
  - Small Lot single family houses @ 2 stories/8 units/acre; and
  - Single Family houses @ 2 stories/ 4 units acre w/ Carriage Houses over garages / 8 units/acre].

  Tapering densities will help to buffer sensitive uses and create a more attractive neighborhood. For instance, higher density can be located to the east and south of the site, while lower densities face the golf course to the north and open rangeland to the west. Locating small community-oriented pocket parks with playgrounds throughout the development can bring each dwelling unit within 1/8 mile of a park.

  To make walking an attractive option in this new neighborhood studies and experience suggests that a network of small streets and small blocks are key (with perimeters of 1500 feet or less). These design features contribute significantly to a direct and pleasant walking experience. With smaller blocks and the range of allowable densities, 900 to 1000 dwelling units are possible here in a 2 and 3 story neighborhood environment, consistent with McCall's look and feel.

  In addition to housing, the design anticipates that this new neighborhood could be anchored by a significant civic building such as a new elementary school at the east entrance. The school should be fronted toward the new neighborhood. At the same site, the city could co-locate a community center [indoor gathering place, outdoor pool] to act as the civic amenity to this area of town. These features help to create a focal point for the community and can act as a significant gateway to the neighborhood.

  The site's dramatic scenery, the values expressed by meeting participants, and the value that mature trees can add to a new development all suggest that new streets, blocks, and buildings avoid and orient around the major existing tree stands. Similarly, there is an opportunity to preserve the homesteader gravesite by making it a small, passive park. In keeping with McCall's unique character, a wide variety of architecture can be accommodated with a common western theme. In keeping with the environmental ethic

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expressed in the public meetings, the city may want to consider implementing a "Green" housing and development standard for design and construction.

Figure 31: West Valley cluster development

Mixed use: retail floor, office up
Medium/high-density residential
Low-density residential

- **Open Space and Trading Development Rights**. The higher intensity development on the 160 acres helps to achieve many of the goals that residents, land owners, and town officials articulated. The additional units (compared to current zoning) help create walkability, support neighborhood retail, provide much needed housing choices, and provide a vastly improved return on investment for the land owner. However, the plan would convert significant acreage from a relatively pristine state to intensive use, and residents clearly value the close proximity and access to natural areas. A critical element to making this new neighborhood a success is preserving, as a community-wide amenity, the open rangeland to the west (see Figure 32). These 540 acres are just outside the City limits and dramatically shape the character of the area. Current zoning allows 54 units of housing to locate on this land. Changes contemplated in the design of the 160 acres allow hundreds of additional units over the existing zoning. As a result there is an opportunity to work out a trade of some sort, in which the development allowed on the 540 acres is in

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effect transferred to the 160 acres. As many residents pointed out, it is McCall's natural beauty that makes it special. McCall's Comprehensive Plan calls for using natural areas, among other things, to shape physical elements of the community. In order to create a distinctive edge that shapes the community, it is essential that these two actions — the upzoning and preservation — be pursued in tandem. Any allowable residential development in that area can be carefully sited along the ridge. The 160-acre neighborhood can be connected to the west via a rural road to the ridge-top rural homes.

Figure 32: Preserve this rangeland

Both Jackson, WY and Crested Butte, CO benefit from a clear edge where the urban area ends and rural lands begin. By preserving scenic views and wildlife habitat at the urban edge, these mountain towns have protected natural assets that make them special, providing a lasting amenity for residents and visitors as well as valuable savings in municipal service costs.

However, the means by which this edge was accomplished is different for each community. In Jackson, the edge was created by establishing the National Elk Refuge at the north town limits. This federal reserve is inviolable. Some growth management experts believe that public ownership of buffering lands at the urban edge is the only reliable way to preserve lands. However, this can be an expensive approach.

By contrast, the edge in Crested Butte is created by an agreement between the town and Gunnison County. This inter-local agreement, based on Colorado's "Three-Mile Plan" provision, limits urban growth in the county and describes the terms by which lands may be annexed into Crested Butte.

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Such an approach avoids the cost and difficulty of acquiring lands at the urban edge. However, this agreement requires periodic renewal and is under continuing pressure from development. Also, the county zoning that prohibits urban development outside the incorporated limits of Crested Butte allows large lot residential development. As a result the hillside shown in the photo is now being developed in large houses that are primarily used as second and vacation homes.

Figure 33: Jackson, WY

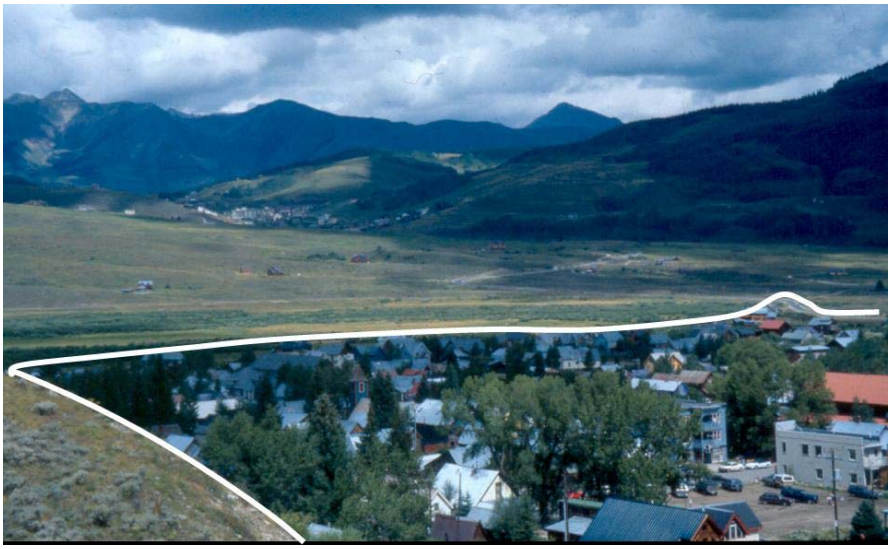

Figure 34: Crested Butte, CO

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- **Street Connectivity.** The West Valley area also presents an opportunity to increase the connectivity of the existing roadway system helping to improve the flow of traffic. Figure 35 illustrates in white, two key connections:
  - an extension of West Mountain Road so that it meets the Loop Road southwest of the large cement plant, and
  - another ingress/egress to Chad Loop and the planned subdivision near the river and sheep bridge.

Figure 35: Links to improve West Valley connectivity

In this more rural area, streets with a 50-foot right-of-way can be re-configured to better accommodate pedestrians. Figure 35 illustrates the widths that can be used for travel lanes, sidewalks, and rural drainage.

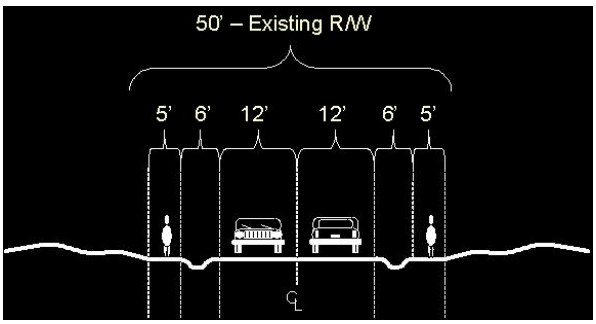

Figure 36: Rural section

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5.3 For Lardo, West Valley, and greater McCall: Develop a non-motorized pathway system

McCall residents repeatedly mentioned the need for more bicycle and pedestrian pathways. Both Lardo and West Valley planning should explicitly include a network of pathways that link to the rest of McCall and the surrounding area. The City has begun to plan and build pathways linking the town with area outdoor recreations sites such as Ponderosa State Park and the Little Ski Hill community ski area just west of town. These facilities are important investments. In the future, pathways should be envisioned as elements of a comprehensive network that includes:

- Separated pathways – multi-use facilities that provide continuous corridors for bicycling, walking and running, skating, and, potentially, wintertime Nordic skiing.
- On-street bicycle lanes – serving bicyclists along busy roads and streets, providing connections for bicycle circulation in addition to the pathways.
- Bicycle routes – low-speed neighborhood streets where bicyclists share the roadway with motor vehicles.

McCall would benefit from an approach that connects these three types of facilities together in a network that serves the community internally and connects externally to surrounding recreation places. The benefits would fall in two categories:

Improved quality of life for residents and workers. By enabling walking, bicycling and other means of human-powered travel, McCall can open up new choices for local residents and workers, increasing daily travel flexibility, allowing some children to travel to school independently (rather being driven), supporting more active lifestyles with attendant community health benefits, and providing home-based and job-based recreational opportunities.

Increased recreational opportunities for visitors and tourists. As the City works to develop a viable four-season tourism economy, pathways and other elements in the network could provide additional activities for visitors and new reasons to choose McCall as a destination.

Three ideas are important in the context of recreational use of pathways to provide recreational opportunities for visitors.

1. Longer Pathways Create Cycling Destinations

First, the length of pathways is important because longer facilities attract visitors who are seeking opportunities for half-day to all-day rides. Experience in resort communities has shown that bicycling facilities of at least 15 miles in length (one-way or loop) will draw weekend users from the immediate area. Bicycling facilities (or combinations of facilities) that are at least 30 miles in length will strengthen the community's appeal as a multi-sport destination and will draw some destination visitors. Bicycling networks that provide trips in excess of 45 miles and those that offer multiple ride opportunities (especially those that offer rides for different skill levels) become bicycling destinations in their own right, and may draw visitors from throughout the country. The bicycling population that vacations in the West is attracted by places that have both paved routes and off-road mountain biking trails. There are not many of these – Jackson, Wyoming is an emerging example, as is Ketchum/Sun Valley although to a lesser extent. Colorado examples include Breckenridge, Aspen and Glenwood Springs. Other bicycling destinations in the West (e.g., Moab, Telluride and Crested Butte) are focused primarily on mountain biking – a market in which McCall could

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compete only to a limited degree. However, McCall could have success as a bicycling destination that offers both paved routes and unpaved trails.

2. Create Opportunities to Bike from Lodging Areas to Trailheads

Second, a key opportunity for McCall would be to develop a viable "garage to forest" network. The experience of taking half-day or day-long rides on nice facilities without having to drive to a trailhead is virtually non-existent in urban America. (Boulder may be the sole exception in the West, and even in Boulder trailhead parking is a major source of bicyclists.) Certain mountain towns can however, with careful planning, develop networks that free bicyclists from the inconvenience, expense and distraction of driving to gain access to rides. Flagstaff, Crested Butte and Aspen have all pursued this strategy with some success. Jackson has this as an important objective of its valley-wide pathways program, and is currently working to provide a direct trail connection from town to Grand Teton National Park. In the tourism business, a place that offers the ability to ride directly from a campground, condo or motel on safe, pleasant facilities that connect directly into major regional trails in the countryside represents a major attraction – one that will garner national notice.

3. Use Bicycling to Lengthen the Tourist Season

Third, resort communities cannot achieve stable economies with primary employment until they become multi-season destinations. Places that are only busy in the summer lose their workers in the fall and thus have low percentages of year-round owner-occupied housing. Grocery stores, banks and even restaurants find such communities to be marginal business locations. At nearly 45° latitude and 5,000 feet, McCall faces special challenges in achieving year-round visitors. . It has solid appeal and a long-standing reputation as a summer destination. But its ski season is only about 100 days long and its mud season (April and May, November and December) is quiet indeed. Bicycling can help fill in the early fall months (September and October). However, for the town to thrive as a recreation destination, it should consider adding to its wintertime appeal. Nordic skiing would seem to be a natural way to do this. Area assets are considerable: the valley floor is relatively flat, snowfall is more than adequate, Ponderosa State Park with its winter trail network is nearby, and the availability of Alpine skiing opportunities in the area makes McCall a feasible base camp for visitors who want more than just one kind of ski experience. For these reasons, McCall should consider following Aspen's example by developing a groomed Nordic ski network using some of the pathways that serve bicyclists in the summer. Nordic skiing can generally use the same facilities that bicyclists do, although bridge design must take grooming equipment and snow characteristics into account. Grooming of trails can extend the skiing season well into and, in some years through, April in this climate.

A comprehensive non-motorized network in McCall would contribute to community sustainability in numerous ways. The benefits for children and resident families are obvious. In the event of fuel price increases, the community can make increased use of a bicycling network for commuting and basic mobility (as has occurred in other mountain towns). A non-motorized network also offers McCall a way to attract recreational visitors who are less auto-dependent and who will spend more money in local sporting goods and clothing retail, thereby strengthening the economy and at the same time partially mitigating the traffic impacts of growth.

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6 ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Recent development in McCall has typically been dispersed, large lot, single use, residential, with little focus on transportation choices. In cooperation with local officials, citizens, and land owners, the Team has created development options that are more compact, mixed use projects with an emphasis on providing opportunities to walk and bike as well as drive to destinations. The concept plans are substantially focused on more efficient use of land and infill opportunities that locate development in areas served by existing infrastructure.

Research demonstrates that low density, single use development has significant impacts on environmental quality. As destinations are further and further apart, increases in driving can lead to increases in tailpipe emissions that have negative impacts on air quality. By designing street networks to accommodate bikes and pedestrians, as well as bringing jobs and housing closer together, there are real opportunities to increase walking and biking and reduce development's impact on air quality. Development that consumes large amounts of green space in a region can also degrade watersheds and individual water resources (e.g. lakes, streams, rivers.) By accommodating new growth on smaller parcels of land, McCall may be able to reduce the growth pressures further out on the fringe and limit impacts to regional water quality.

In the Lardo Concept Plan, the Team suggests restoring a riparian area and wetland to help bring back the natural functionality of this eco-system. In the case of suggestion of re-locating the concrete batch plant and integrating the site into a residential neighborhood, the city will potentially be cleaning up a brownfield. In this area, as well as West Valley, the Team proposes improving non-motorized connections to destinations throughout McCall, helping to reduce vehicle miles traveled and ultimately the air pollution associated with this travel.

In the West Valley Concept Plan, the Team proposes that the city look at upzoning the 160-acre parcel in order to accommodate significant amounts of future growth into a more compact neighborhood. Normally, this number of units could consume 900 acres of land with significant impacts on water quality and habitat. In exchange for the higher density development on this site, the Team suggests that the city put the surrounding rangeland into a conservation easement. This option shapes growth into defined areas while preserving a large amount of habitat.

7 NEXT STEPS: OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The concept plans were presented to the McCall City Council and well-received. If the City would like to pursue the visions developed during the charrette, then what are the next steps? This section discusses several possible City actions.

7.1 Possible actions by the City

To support the land use and transportation changes envisioned by the plans, the City of McCall may want to consider the following actions:

- An amendment to the comprehensive plan and zoning map
- Entering into development agreements during permit applications and/or re-zonings.
- Creating a Tradable Development Rights program

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Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan, adopted in July 2000, only calls for commercial development in the Central Business District, along Highway 55 south of the CBD, and along Highway 55 near Lardo. In addition, the highest allowable residential density is 8 units per acre, which is unlikely to support additional retail activity. Under these conditions, it would not be possible to create neighborhood or village centers with mixed commercial uses with residential and office space in the same building. Nor would the existing plan or zoning support possible residential densities of 16/units per acre or higher.

In the future update of the Comprehensive Plan, the City could designate Lardo and West Valley as "special areas." Under this designation, the city could specify the land uses, densities, and design guidelines consistent with the community's vision.

Zoning

In Lardo, the zoning currently calls for commercial strip along Highway 55 and low-density residential zoning in surrounding areas. In the West Valley area, current zoning allows low and medium-density residential and industrial uses. The current zoning map for these areas rigidly separates uses from one another – not allowing for a walkable mix of retail, residential and office uses. In addition, the current residential zoning classifications in the areas will not allow for the range of housing types and densities that will support the city's Community Housing Policy.

The new Commission Adopted Draft of the proposed Planning and Zoning Ordinance provides more opportunity to implement the visions for Lardo and West Valley.

The draft ordinance has a new "Community Commercial (CC) Zone." As stated in the draft, CC Zones support "general commercial uses that serve the greater community of McCall. These retail, service, and mixed use establishments may be auto-oriented and require a larger lot area provided that they are designed to safely and comfortably accommodate those arriving by foot, bicycle, or transit. This zone allows residential uses at a maximum of forty dwelling units per acre."

A CC Zone designation in Lardo will allow the commercial activities and higher residential densities envisioned for the area.

The draft ordinance also creates a Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zone. This is defined as:

> "the least intense commercial designation in the City, and is intended to provide retail, service, and mixed use establishments that are within easy walking distance for area residents. These small scale commercial uses should be conveniently located and integrated within neighborhoods and designed to complement the pedestrian environment of the neighborhoods in which they are located. This zone allows the residential uses at a maximum density of that allowed by the average of the adjacent residential zones."

The village center proposed for West Valley is smaller-scaled and more neighborhood-oriented than Lardo and the NC zone reflects that level of retail and service activity. However the vision for West Valley also calls for housing densities ranging between single-family homes on ¼ acre lots up to three story apartment buildings at 30 units/acre. Given the low densities that currently exist in the area, the NC Zone requirement that "allows the residential uses at a maximum density of that allowed by the average of the adjacent residential zones" would limit the ability to build at

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the proposed densities. The city will need to address this issue in order to encourage the residential densities that it deems appropriate and that will make the retail viable.

Development Agreements

Participants in the workshop expressed a desire to keep the things that make McCall special – and in many instances this is the beauty of the natural environment. The Comprehensive Plan calls for using "corridors, gateways, entrances, districts, and natural areas" to shape the physical element of the community. This notion is particularly important in the West Valley area—where former ranchlands and the forested ridgeline act as the Western edge of the city.

With the prospect of development in this area, the city may want to enter into a development agreement that conditions the use of certain areas of the property. In particular, the 540-acre portion of the Bezates Ranch property that has not been annexed into the city provides a clear transition between the built environment of the city and the prairie, hills, and forest of the wilderness. If an owner seeks to annex the land into the city, McCall may want to enter into an agreement focused on preserving some portion of the acreage, while shifting development to more appropriate areas of the property. This undeveloped ranchland could serve as a natural edge for the city that could also be used to land-apply waste water from the treatment plant.

The city may also want to use development agreements to encourage street connectivity. Throughout the workshops, participants discussed the need to make McCall more pedestrian-friendly. The visions developed propose creating more connected street networks with smaller pedestrian-scaled blocks and sidewalks. The "Design Guidelines – Commission Adopted Draft" also call for "Creat[ing] an atmosphere in McCall that is open and friendly, that caters to pedestrians by providing safe walkways and open space amenities (outdoor seating areas, activity areas, site features, etc.). During the course of a re-zoning or other action requiring approval, the city can use the development agreement to specify street connections, widths, and sidewalks. In certain areas—particularly along the Loop Road—where a developer may want to apply for a driveway permit, the city may want to consider creating intersections, with new streets, rather than funneling vehicles onto one road with a driveway. In addition to creating a more walkable environment, adding more intersections can also help to keep primary collectors and arterials from becoming overly congested.

Creating a Tradable Development Rights program

The city may want to consider creating a program that allows for the trading of development rights within the city and between the city and county. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs are an opportunity to concentrate development in certain areas, protect other critical areas from development, and compensate property owners where development is not encouraged. Rather than denying development rights in areas slated for protection, a TDR program transfers those rights to other property allowing this "receiving property" to develop at greater densities than would otherwise be allowed.

TDRs may not be allowable in the State of Idaho and thus would require enabling legislation. Also, an institutional "allowance holder" is often needed to account for the trades and/or bank available rights. The TDR approach has been successfully used in New Jersey where approximately 40,000 acres of the New Jersey Pinelands have been protected since the Pinelands Commission sanctioned the use of TDRs in 1981. New Jersey adopted a statewide TDR law in 2004; see http://www.nj.gov/dca/osg/resources/tdr/index.shtml

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7.2 Concluding considerations for evaluating options

Economics

McCall has historically been a modest community where local workers, including forest service employees, school teachers, and ski instructors could afford to live here and raise their families. With the changing real estate market, this essential character could be lost and very quickly. Workers already are having to commute in from south Valley County and from Adams County because they can no longer afford to live in McCall.

Proactive planning that allows for some increases in density (i.e., smaller lots) will allow property owners to continue to achieve an acceptable return on their investment, without having to sell their individual lots and/or units at the top of the market. For example, if a property owner can sell lots as one-acre parcels for $500,000 a lot, he can essentially make the same amount of money if by subdividing the same one-acre lot in to five parcels, each of which sells for $100,000. A simple rule of thumb is that land accounts for about one-quarter of the cost of a finished house. If the land costs $500,000, then the final house will cost $2 million, but if the land costs $100,000, the house will cost $400,000. While $400,000 is not cheap, it is far more affordable than $2 million. Zoning alone can help to create (more) affordable housing with no other type of subsidy or developer incentive.

Growth can bring many positive changes to McCall, providing a more diverse range of retail opportunities and more housing choices.

While growth does mean change, McCall can continue to maintain its historic character, but only if the community plans proactively.

Design

Design matters in McCall. This wonderful courtyard behind the Hotel McCall (pictured below) is a great example of how great places make a difference for retail. Before this was built, the businesses in the area weren't doing that well and there was a lot of turnover. Since the courtyard has been built, people really like to linger in this wonderful spot. The businesses have stabilized and now seem to be thriving.

With similar attention to design across all scales, McCall too will thrive.

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APPENDIX A: SITE VISIT DETAILS

List of Participants

Consultant Team

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Jim Werntz, Director, Idaho Operations Office
Judith Leckrone Lee, Smart Growth Program, EPA Region 10, Seattle Office

Special thanks to Fire Chief Dave Sparks and the McCall Fire Protection District for allowing the Team to use their excellent facilities the week of October 24th.

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Workshop Participants

Participants in the workshops represented a wide range of view points and interests. We had participation from property owners, businesses, real estate professionals, interested citizens, utilities, and others. The participants listed have been consolidated from sign-in sheets that were circulated during the public meetings and are included for reference purposes only. This list may not represent the full number of attendees. Individuals may not have seen the sign-in sheet at the meetings or they may have chosen not to sign in for privacy concerns.

Andy Laidlaw	Izonna Stoddard	Mike Maguire
Ben Hipple	Jack Kornovich	Mike McGown
Betsy Roberts	Jacquie Cochran	Paige Zobell
Bill Burke	Jamie Melbo	Pat Hill
Bob Youde	Janet Reis	Patricia Smith
Chuck Griffin	Jim Olson	Paul Washburn
Cindy Crawford	John Russell	Ravena Baker
Claire Remsberg	John Sabala	Ray Alford
Curtis Spalding	Jon Barrett	Ray Robnett
Cynthia Dittmer	Judy Maguire	Richard Trebbien
Dan Gallagher	Kurt Wolf	Rob Lyons
David Sparks	Layne Dodson	Robert Carrico
Dawn Griffin	Leslie Freeman	Robert Hamell-Stoddard
Dean Martens	Lucia Knudson	Stephanie Millar
Dennis Coyle	Luke Vannoy	Sueann Van Epps
Don Bailey	Mandi Roberts	Terry Donicht
Don Smith	Mary Nuckols	Tobeia Walker
Ed Hattrup	Matt Anthony	Tony Calzacorta
Gerald Flatz	Mike Eckhart	
Gloria Schilling	Mike Freese	
Heather Friedrichs		

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Schedule

EPA SMART GROWTH CHARRETTE					
October 24-27, 2005					
	MONDAY	**TUESDAY**	**WEDNESDAY**	**THURSDAY**	**FRIDAY**
7AM - 8AM	EPA/SG TEAMS TRAVEL TO MCCALL	BREAKFAST/ SETTING	BREAKFAST/ SETTING	BREAKFAST/ SETTING	EPA/SG TEAMS DEPART
8 AM -12		8AM-9AM BIG PICTURE 9AM-NOON LARDO DESIGN	8AM-9AM LARDO LESSONS 9AM-NOON WEST VALLEY DESIGN	8AM-9AM BIG PICTURE 9AM-NOON LARDO DESIGN REFINE	
12-1PM		**LUNCH**	**LUNCH**	**LUNCH**	
1 - 2PM	LUNCH AND MEET WITH MCCALL TEAM	LARDO DESIGN-PUBLIC INVITED	WEST VALLEY DESIGN-PUBLIC INVITED	WEST VALLEY DESIGN WORKSHOP/ REFINE	
2 - 5PM	SITE VISITS TO WEST VALLEY AND LARDO	LARDO DESIGN-PUBLIC INVITED	WEST VALLEY DESIGN-PUBLIC INVITED	WEST VALLEY DESIGN WORKSHOP/ REFINE	
5 - 6PM	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	
6-7:30	DINNER AND PREP FOR INITIAL COMMUNITY DISCUSSION	TEAM DINNER-LARDO DISCUSS/PREP FOR MEETING	TEAM DINNER-WEST VALLEY DISCUSS/PREP FOR MEETING	6:30-7:30 PRESENTATION TO CITY COUNCIL	
7:30-9:30	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #1 SMART GROWTH 101	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #2 LARDO	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #3/WEST VALLEY	COMMUNITY DISCUSSION #4 OPEN HOUSE@LIBRARY	
9:30-11:30	WRAPUP AND DOWNLOAD	WRAPUP AND DOWNLOAD	WRAP UP AND DOWNLOAD	WRAP UP AND DOWNLOAD	

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APPENDIX B: TRANSPORTATION-RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

For transportation-related infrastructure improvements associated with any of the options presented here, there are several sources of federal funding available through the Idaho Department of Transportation (ITD).

Transportation Enhancements (TE): This program is an excellent source of funding for pedestrian and bike paths. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):

> Transportation Enhancements activities offer communities funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices such as; safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic routes, beautification, and other investments that increase recreation opportunity and access. Communities may also use TE funds to contribute toward the revitalization of local and regional economies by restoring historic buildings, renovating streetscapes, or providing transportation museums and visitors centers.

TE funding may also be used to acquire scenic land easements, vistas, and landscapes, however the TE project must "relate to surface transportation." According to FHWA, factors that can help establish this relationship include:

- the project's proximity to a highway or a pedestrian/bicycle corridor,
- whether the project enhances the aesthetic, cultural, or historic aspects of the travel experience, and
- whether it serves a current or past transportation purpose.

Ten percent of ITD's Surface Transportation (STP) funds are set aside for enhancements funding. For more details, see: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/index.htm and http://www.enhancements.org/.

Safe Routes to School: This new program can fund projects that will make it easier for children to walk and bike to school safely. In the case of Lardo, if trail connections were made from the river and the nearby residential communities to the high school and elementary school project, these funds could be pursued. If McCall were to consider locating a new elementary school in the West Valley area, these funds would also be appropriate.

According to FHWA, "eligible activities are the planning, design, and construction of projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school. These include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming and speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, secure bike parking, and traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools (within approximately 2 miles). Such projects may be carried out on any public road or any bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail in the vicinity of schools."

FHWA has set aside authorization limits for each year of the program (ranging from $54 million in 2005 and $183 million in 2009) and will apportion funds to individual states based on their relative shares of total enrollment in primary and middle schools (kindergarten through eighth grade). No state will receive less than $1 million.

For more information, see: http://itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/sr2s/index.html.

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Transportation, Community and Systems Preservation Program (TCSP): Another federal transportation program that may be of interest to McCall is TCSP. TSCP funding can be used for projects that integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices that:

- Improve the efficiency of the transportation system.
- Reduce the impacts of transportation on the environment.
- Reduce the need for costly future investments in public infrastructure.
- Provide efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade.
- Examine community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development.

The City may want to coordinate with ITD about the possibilities of approaching elected officials about the use of TCSP funds in McCall. While the legislation calls for this to be a discretionary grants program, it is routinely earmarked.

For more information, see: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/tcsp.htm for current funding maximums. For complete program description, see: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/index.html.

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APPENDIX C: ONLINE INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about smart growth tools and techniques, please visit the following websites:

EPA's Smart Growth Program: http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/

Smart Growth Network online: http://smartgrowth.org/

Smart Growth America: http://smartgrowthamerica.org/

Smart Growth Leadership Institute: http://www.sgli.org/

Idaho Smart Growth: http://www.idahosmartgrowth.org/

Idaho Planning Association: http://www.idahoplanningassoc.com/

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APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

These examples are taken, as much as possible, from other snowy mountain towns.

Figure 37: Curb extensions, Glenwood Springs

Figure 38: Mid-block curb extensions, Bainbridge Island, WA

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Figure 39: Grade separated crossing, Boulder

Figure 40: Grade separated crossing, Boulder

Figure 41: Grade separated crossing, Wilson, WY

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Figure 42: Temporary (summer) curb extensions, Crested Butte

Figure 43: Summer curb extensions, Crested Butte

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