

Twin Falls County Comprehensive Plan Update Open House Comment Summary

April 2006

Five open house public meetings were held in April 2006 to solicit public input on revising the comprehensive plan for Twin Falls County. In addition, four lunch presentations were made to civic groups around the county. A total of 256 people attended these nine events. Here are the comments received on each of the comprehensive plan elements:

Element 3 – Land Use

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County regarding land use?

- Water.
- Subdividing agricultural land for housing, especially out in the rural areas amongst the farmers. Remember: without agriculture (crops, animals, etc.) Idaho would not have the thriving economy that it has! Keep it that way!
- We need to think about the energy and climate change aspects that go with moving people from home to work to school.
- Encroachment on agricultural land.
- By helping to preserve farming areas as pressure to build houses increases.
- Too much development (city, area of impact) water shortage – drought. SUI – there is no interface, farmland is being turned into DENSE development (business and residential) our canyon rims (esp. the Snake River) is a unique feature – yet TF city/county officials ignore the standing comprehensive plans to allow less DENSE development of rims to protect the views.
- I question an industrial area near Hub Butte because there are no public services and the area is upstream of Twin Falls water system.
- Sprawl and leap frog, loss of prime agriculture, lack of community. Difficulty for modern agriculture expansion (dairy site availability).
- Keeping agriculture zoning to protect our agriculture base! Agriculture is our base of the County's economy. Homes do not need to be in the farming/rural areas.
- Coordination with surrounding counties and cities. City of Twin Falls will be updating their comprehensive plan soon. Also protection long term of the airport as a community asset is critical.
- Urban sprawl – money of subdivisions - conflicts with agriculture operations.
- The dairies.
- How will CAFO impacts to existing residents be addressed in the future?
- I feel when something "like dairies" come to an area, people who live beyond the one mile distance should be able to speak, because the smell reaches much further than the one mile.
- My concern that the Hollister area has no need of CAFOs – due to water issues – concerns for health related issues.
- I agree with policy of limited development in agricultural areas.
- Urban sprawl.
- Consolidate industrial zones to one part of the city. (Unlike now there are industrial type businesses on the South side, West, and East side of town)
- Move all industrial type business out and away from Rock Creek to a new industrial park. This would create better opportunity for housing along Rock Creek.

- Create a designated area or industrial park for dairies.
- Create more gated communities, retirement homes.
- Give land buyers more options, for example let buyers buy 1 acre or less.
- Make room for planned communities.
- Create more residential properties closer to town, goods and services such as hospitals and schools.
- Rezone marginal agriculture land, like along the canyon rim and open it up for housing.

What changes in land use would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Get with the fire chiefs.
- Protect open spaces.
- A little stricter in the building permits for housing in agricultural areas/or nuisance waivers in the escrow that transfer with property title.
- Central manure processing plant to allow for stabilization in the dairy industry.
- Don't scatter housing developments – place housing by existing cities.
- Spread it out. Why is Twin Falls developing like it's in California? We have the room. If water is the concern – shouldn't your priority be supply for those who are here already, not continued adding of new consumers?
- Keep industrial areas within cities.
- Follow the comp plan.
- Keep agriculture, agriculture. Limit homes in the agriculture area! Enforce the zoning ordinances, give the planning and zoning department money to enforce. If the county does not enforce, let's forget the comp plan.
- My main concern is the dairies. The existing ones have changed our area with the odor and their trash.
- No more dairies. Be careful of subdivisions not close to towns. Spotty subdivisions are not good.
- Restriction of development outside city impact areas.
- Growth should come from the cities out.

Element 4 – Transportation

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in transportation?

- Getting another crossing across the canyon. Everything can't continue to go through Twin Falls.
- More funds allocated to Transportation Department.
- Connectors – South of Kimberly, South of Hansen. Clearlakes needs improved. 3700 N. made better.
- Inadequate road width in Melon Valley.
- Too many people – being spread out and leaving to drive everywhere – we need more local businesses.
- Too much traffic on Blue Lakes Blvd. The City of Twin Falls and Twin Falls County should do more to promote a bridge across Snake River Canyon north of Highway 93 (2400 East) which would take a lot of truck traffic off the Perrine Bridge and off Blue Lakes Blvd.
- Truck routes on residential streets, esp. school zones. PLANNING would separate populated areas and big rig thoroughfares. Don't plan houses on truck routes. Don't put elementary schools

on truck routes.

- Feeder Roads. 3700 N from one end to the other south of Kimberly and Hansen, Foothills Road, Poleline, Clearlakes.
- There is a need for an enhanced system of public transportation in Twin Falls County.
- Increased development is overloading rural roads.
- Twin Falls Highway District needs to keep with alternate truck route plan that bypassed the town that was addressed in the newspaper that came in by water tower of not the foothill road which wasn't the final proposal accepted.
- Don't put alternate truck route on the foothill road.
- Adequate roads to service growth.

What changes in transportation would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Bypass routes for trucks.
- We need Trans IV.
- Widen shoulders of roads frequently used by the farming community (Poleline, 3700 N.)
- Put another crossing in over the Snake Canyon.
- Wider road width on winding canyon roads. Additional access road into Melon Valley. Push 1200 through from Highway 30 to River Rd.
- Lessen "congestion" of major streets. One particular peculiarity of late, TF city planners don't plan straight roads – they angle and curve and turn here and there to promote "slowing traffic down." Great joke – dangerous drive.
- Solid feeder roads with a consistent maintenance program.
- Embrace a trail system for bikes and pedestrians.
- Improvements to Highway 93 and Poleline road to allow for trucks and larger vehicles. A bridge across Rock Creek at roughly the Grandview Drive Alignment.
- Public transportation to cut down on traffic. Please make sure steps are taken to schedule the improvements on Washington St. N. in front of the new high school site and proposed Wal-Mart site in time to ensure completion of that section before both entities open for "business."
- More attention to county arterials (i.e. 3600) as a means of heavy traffic to by-pass the city.
- Need to require developers to contribute to road improvements offsite.
- All roads lead out.
- Roads need improvement especially in rural areas.
- More options for public transportation needed.
- Partner up with school in rural areas to transport youth to Twin Falls city activities. (Rural youth have difficulties participating in extra curricular activities after school)
- A new bridge or route is needed for the growth of Twin Falls.
- Create some new options for people commuting to the Blaine County area.
- Place more signs telling drivers to slow down or come to a stop especially at CSI and Falls Ave.
- Provide safer cross walks.

Element 5 – Community Design

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in community design?

- Enforce the regulations we have rather than keep adding on more.
- A moratorium on all land splits in an agriculture zone.
- Don't cram everything in so tight. Add space, distance between buildings, between roads and structures. Keep open feel.
- Focus on smaller communities, Castleford, Hollister, Amsterdam, Curry, and Hansen. Help them out.
- Intensive clean up Rock Creek needs to be forced!
- Keep our city cleaned up – no abandoned cars – open trash cans, etc.
- Unsightly areas in rural developments, weed lots, junk autos and machinery.
- Ordinance that has teeth for open burning of garbage cleaning of unsightly properties.
- Basic condition of the neighborhood, we should adopt an ordinance dealing with junk vehicles, trash in the yard. There are way too many houses in Hollister that have gone unkempt. Property values will decrease if we don't start to clean up our neighborhood.
- A county-city uniform ordinance would make sense.

What changes in community design would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Need a Latino plaza for entertainment and also for education to other cultures and races.
- It is a pretty good place as is. Remember: You will never satisfy 100% of the people. Some are habitual complainers!
- Property improvements (Buhl); many unsightly.
- The potential for significant economic development in the area north of Balanced Rock is very logical. That development could be directly related to the dairy industry (i.e. cheese plant) or as diverse as methane, ethanol or wind power production. Light manufacturing focuses or other small industries might even be reasonable.
- Develop areas that feel they belong together.
- Enforce the comp plan or forget the comp plan!
- Please clean up Rock Creek area – the area where Locust St. S and Osterloh meet is awful (junk yard). It was such a beautiful place just 30-40 years ago and can be again.
- Full development of Rock Creek as an urban boundary recreation area.
- Enforce existing laws.
- Parks areas need to be set aside for each new development in county.
- Extend trails along canyon rim to the East and West.
- Build more soccer fields around the county.

Element 6 – Cultural & Historic Sites

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County with respect to cultural and historic sites?

- At 100 years old, we don't have a lot of history. Preserve OR trail markers, etc.
- Move museum to Twin Falls City Center. Fund historical preservation. We have an agriculture heritage but it is being pushed out.
- Keeping the agriculture preservation zoning intact.
- Preservation.
- Keep them as natural as possible.

What changes in cultural and historic sites would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Most of the county parks can offer a venue to tell a piece of local history. Salmon Dam, Balanced Rock, Rock Creek. Traveling boards via the Twin Falls Historical Society.
- At Auger Falls, there are several historical sites that could be used to inform and educate the public about the county's origins. (Mining sites, homestead remnants, etc.) Developing these resources is important for the county to maintain its cultural identity.
- The more inaccessible the better.

Element 7 – Economic Development

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in economic development?

- Encourage year round school. Only a small % of population is involved in agriculture – yet our whole lives are based around a traditional school schedule. If you had 1/4 the kids (families) off at a time – more spending, more vacations, more teen workers vs. seasonal gluts (holidays and summer).
- Value added agriculture, easy to do business in the county.
- The City of Twin Falls is growing rapidly. With this growth come conflicts between urban and rural residents. Agriculture areas with possible conflict must be identified and allowed uses must be restricted. (No new dairies, etc.)
- Get jobs that pay a living wage.
- Twin Falls County has enough dairies.
- I feel there are enough dairies in the county.
- Maintaining environmental quality of air and water, i.e. coal fired power and agriculture run off pollution.
- Low wages – high cost of living.

What changes in the area of economic development would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Value added agriculture.
- A regional plan that supports quality development no matter where it is located.
- Create new ways for high tech companies to come into the Twin Falls area with higher wages.
- Get four year universities to set up satellite sites in the Twin Falls area. This would also help in recruiting new companies to the area.
- Find ways to educate agriculture workers of their rights and hourly wage.
- Build Park N Ride lots for commuters traveling to Jackpot or Hailey area, along travel routes.
- Have work shops on owning or running a business with emphasis on Latino culture for individuals who are self-employed or wanting to start their own business.

Element 8 – Hazardous Areas

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in hazardous areas?

- Arsenic levels in city water systems. Money to support.
- Countywide burning regulations.
- Growth in wildland/urban interface – canyons, rims, draws, etc.
- Groundwater (well) issues in Buhl.
- Floodplain – TF city planning and zoning scoffs at 100 year flood zone mark. Cut it to 50 year (maybe 10 year) and it is up to home owner/business owner to have flood insurance. They allow building in low lying areas – high water table areas. Buyer beware.
- We need a good public grazing program to control range fire. Water, air is all good.
- Waste disposal. Population increase.
- Idiots that move to rural areas that have no clue that they might need to be self sufficient.
- What does the county have in case of mass pesticide exposure to humans?
- Arsenic issues in drinking water sound threatening; more education is needed on this issue and what measures are being taken to meet guidelines.
- Some areas in county have a lot of abandoned cars what measures are being taking to get rid of cars with broken windows and grass all around them?

What changes in hazardous areas would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Create a county plan and have hazmat team ready to act in case of emergency.
- Abandoned cars on street are not being ticketed, enforce a county ordinance to only have 2 non-running vehicles per house. County ordinance on open burning that compliments state and federal laws.
- Adopt NFPA Codes for Wildland Urban Interface Planning Codes. NFPA 1144.
- I think we are doing a pretty good job. As always there are probably areas we can do better. Once again use science and look at what has been done. It is a lot better than it used to be.
- Allow for less dense development in problematic (low lying) areas – redefine floodplain and be smart. Don't build where it's a former lake or where the water drains to the canyons. Think – it should be more than money talking.
- We continue to have small pollution, H2S issues, etc. from CAFOs. Smell geotoxins emitted via irrigation systems when CAFO lagoons are pumped.
- Don't create more – it's rather hard to change what is.

Element 9 – Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in public services, facilities, and utilities?

- Finding funding for the 700 MHz for first responders. Better camera system for court systems.
- Rural water service district!
- Smaller sewer and water systems to develop communities. EMS is working well.
- Plans for recycling centers near cities with land set aside for these centers.
- It is the county commissioners' responsibility to protect agriculture business in the agriculture

zones. Taxes being paid should protect all parties including agriculture business.

- What plan? TF city currently working on a model to show water/sewer needs/challenges. "No information until the end of summer" said city planning and zoning and engineers. Yet development is under full swing. Luckily I have my own well and septic.
- Show Wellhead Protection Areas for cities in the county.
- EMS and fire are pretty good. Water and sewer are very weak.
- Major powerline runs along south hills across the county.
- Lack of power generation facility (wind, nuclear, etc.)
- Population increases in already taxed county facilities.

What changes in the area of public services, facilities, and utilities would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- The sheriff's department would better serve the public by utilizing pilot stations at the far end of the county – Castleford, Murtaugh and Rogerson. Officers could respond in toward Twin from there.
- Develop small communities that free stand.
- The electrical grid needs updated. As the city and water pumpers consume more energy, more energy must be produced and it must be distributed.

Element 10 – Recreation

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in recreation?

- Trail south of Balanced Rock Park. Dirt bike and four wheeler developed areas.
- The county has some great parks. However the related support system is having difficulty meeting the financial needs/demands of up-keep. Co-operative endeavors between the county and whatever groups, federal agencies, clubs, private, and organizations will be a necessity in the future. As isolated park parcels are sold, the money needs to go into a trust to expand and/or enhance the current system.
- Lack of green space. Neighborhood parks are called for in current TF city comprehensive plan – but developers aren't putting them in and the city can't afford the upkeep.
- Ability to develop recreation opportunity Salmon Falls Creek Trails, Motorcross, Public access to river, Rock Creek Trail system, Canyon rim.
- Development of the Rock Creek corridor as a recreation beltway and not a garbage spot!
- Over use of limited facilities as population increases.
- I think the paths on the Canyon rim are very nice. I feel there is a concern of the ATVs not staying on roads and destroying grass and the land.
- The Snake River Canyon Trail System is very nice. The use of ATVs should be kept on roads more than just cross country use.

What changes in the area of recreation would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Promote the park along Salmon Falls Creek near Balanced Rock – it is a great facility.
- Move development of outdoor recreational zones, lodges, stores, cabins, summer homes.

- Increase in facilities.
- I realize enforcing ATV use would be nearly impossible.

Element 11 – Schools, Facilities, and Transportation

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in school locations, facilities, and bus routes?

- Schools must be kept in the loop. Planning and zoning needs to be sending plans or at least a letter letting them know of these many subdivisions that they are trying to get passed planning and zoning. Things are growing so fast I don't think the school realizes the spot they are going to be in the next 2 to 5 years.
- The Castleford School District/Facilities have the capability to hold another 100 students (spread over that system). Enrollment is down approximately this number over the last 6-7 years. Broadening of the local economic options is also a related need.
- Balanced Rock grade is in need of significant improvements because of its intense use. 3700 North is in need of substantial widening. An improved road system into Hammet/Glenns Ferry would allow another access to interstate and railways.
- Long range plans for rapid transit system.
- I'm not happy that my taxes are going to increase. But what's the option. It's certainly not paid school officials figuring out these great plans. I applaud the time, effort and thoroughness of the citizen's committee.
- Rural schools have room. We need development.
- The new funding system has resulted in flat line appropriations resulting in most districts going out for supplementary levies.
- How will Kimberly be able to respond to school growth with no bonding capacity available?
- Population increases – facilities.
- Traffic plans. Growth – developers should pay the costs for increase in infrastructure and school facilities.

What changes in the area of school locations, facilities, and bus routes would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Great plan going to be implemented.
- Perhaps some sort of tax can be assessed to those who are visiting – many cities/counties do so – that money can be distributed to the schools.
- Legislation to allow communities to exceed bonding capacity limits in times of intense growth. (Championed by Idaho Association of Counties.).

Element 12 – Natural Resources

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in natural resources?

- Water is depleting in the aquifer create measures to restore water back to natural levels.

- Chamber is now working on Thousand Springs Byway sights. Going to improve those roads.
- A constant barrage of regulations against agriculture and dairies in particular. No allowing grazing on BLM ground in certain areas. Get wildfires/burns up everything – waste of resources.
- Water supply for human use. Changing from sub-irrigation to sprinklers has caused the water table to drop – fact of nature. Now what do we do to get the water level back up – we add more users and expect to have plenty.
- Work with existing groups to get the job done. Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Population increases – increased use of recreation facilities.
- The preservation of our water!
- Water – Any new drilling should be looked at carefully as to its impact on existing well rights – Twin Falls City for instance. Believe much of the water under Twin Falls County is a result of many years of irrigation – not natural aquifer. The water has been over-appropriated by Water Resources.
- More studies and USGS should be involved before more well drilling – new drilling is a concern to existing well rights.
- Water quality ground water pollution.

What changes in the use of natural resources would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- Use facts and science in evaluation of complaints – not opinions! Without food we have nothing. Agriculture is important.
- Cooperate! Don't fight!
- Continued approval of rural subdivision in the agriculture zones put stress on services and impact agriculture production operations.
- Allow more wind power development.
- The solution to the arsenic problems in our wells.
- Growth from the cities out.

Element 13 – Housing

What are the most important issues facing Twin Falls County in housing?

- Putting housing developments in concentrated areas rather than scattering them around which creates conflict with farming interests. These need to be by existing city buildings.
- Where they are built!
- Building energy efficient housing – anything over 2,000 square feet should be LEEDS gold – over 1200 silver.
- The school system needs local single family housing to attract young families; people who will take and then hold a vested interest in the community and its character.
- Castleford area needs some housing if that community is going to survive.
- Variety. Small lot sizes. Water/sewer shortfalls and demands. Over exceeding our output into Snake River from the sewage treatment mandatory watering schedules for water users. But instead of stopping adding new users – we punish/penalize existing water users.
- Affordable, smaller lots in group with open areas. Services. Stop the rural “estates” and allow manufactured homes.
- Housing development without providing for facility improvement specifically road improvement.

- Affordable housing compatible to wages.
- Lack of residential lots for present and future residents, especially those who are retiring in Twin Falls.
- A greater choice of residential lots, taking into account people moving into the valley from more expensive, outside areas.

What changes in the area of housing would make Twin Falls County a better place for me and my family to live?

- By making housing grouped up to share water systems both for drinking water and sewer systems to avoid the increase of septic tanks.
- Don't put them in conflict with agriculture.
- Buhl needs improved (prevent) residential housing – paint, roofs – landscaping repairs.
- Small community development and county investment in those areas. Include: Pleasant Valley, Hollister, Curry, Hansen, Murtaugh, Castleford, Fairview
- Enforcement of existing environmental laws i.e. weeds and junk in rural housing areas.

Comments

- The farm economy in the Castleford vicinity could benefit from some diversity in terms of its options. Currently, most farming is becoming over-dependent on the dairy industry and the location of a bean warehouse, specialized feed processing, or other new markets would protect the long-term future of these family farms. A methane or ethanol production facility would be a great long term marriage between farmers and dairy – as the by-product of one is a proven cow feed and the other can use the waste.
- Alternative crops should be explored in terms of recruiting businesses into the Castleford area. Economic development inside the City of Castleford limits is tied to obtaining a solution to the arsenic problem. Expansion of the current town site would offer other avenues that would also affect the county's economic potential.
- I am proud to be an American Dairy Farmer and we feed the world.
- Only allow residential development within city areas of impact in order for cost effective use of infrastructure.