

Public Hearings on the draft Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan as of March 10, 2010

(CLICK HERE for a recap of the Comp Plan hearings that took place in 2009.)

The Teton County and Town of Jackson planning commissioners are continuing to meet **each Thursday from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the county commissioners' chambers at 200 S. Willow** to make recommendations for revising the draft Comp Plan, which was released in April of 2009. (The planning commissioners' review is expected to last through the winter, if not longer. Once they have okayed a revised draft, it will pass to the Teton Board of County Commissioners and the Jackson Town Council for them to begin reviewing it together.)

Agendas and staff reports for the joint planning commission hearings are being posted at www.jacksontetonplan.com as they become available (click on the links there under Upcoming Events). For a link to the list of the planning commissioners' recommendations to date, visit www.jacksontetonplan.com/blog/2009/08/planning-commission-review. This address is also where you can make comments online, or you can submit them to:

Jeff Noffsinger, Jackson principal planner, jnoffsinger@ci.jackson.wy.us, Town of Jackson, P.O. Box 1687, Jackson, WY 83001; and Alex Norton, Teton County lead planner, anorton@tetonwyo.org, Teton County Planning Department, P.O. Box 1727, Jackson, WY 83001.

The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance will continue to work to ensure that both planning commissions incorporate the majority of the public's comments to come up with a Comp Plan that will actually protect Jackson Hole's wildlife, open spaces and community character. [Click here](#) for links to our detailed comments.

For a recap of the Comp Plan hearings that took place in 2009, please click here. For background information on the Comp Plan revision process, visit www.jhalliance.org/issuescompplan.htm. Contact Kristy Bruner, Alliance community planning director, at Kristy@jhalliance.org or (307) 733-9417 for details.

Jan. 7, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: The planning commissioners wrapped up their review of Theme Three, "Uphold Jackson as Heart of the Region" with joint recommendations for the draft to include plans to improve Jackson's gateways, and to include special protections for the Flat Creek and Cache Creek corridors. On the down side, although the town planning commissioners voted to add a paragraph recognizing the importance of many areas of the Town of Jackson to wildlife, the county planning commissioners' 2-2 vote on this measure dooms it to footnote status in the revised draft. Also, both boards unanimously voted down a recommendation to remove the planned-use and planned mixed-use development tools from the draft Comp Plan, but left the door open to possible changes to these two tools down the road. Finally, as a precursor to next week's hearing, the commissioners each gave their views on affordable and workforce housing.

Jan. 14, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: The Teton County Housing Authority presented a report regarding a goal in the draft plan to house 65 percent of our workforce locally. ([Click here](#) for their report.) Town and county planning staffs then presented an overview of Theme Four, "Meet Our Community's Housing Needs," after which the planning commissioners unanimously voted to recommend that "a housing program is still necessary" and that its basis should be "maintaining a local workforce, maintaining socioeconomic diversity, encouraging generational continuity of local families, and not exporting our housing impacts to neighboring communities." [Click here](#) for comments the Alliance made during this hearing.

Jan. 21, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: This hearing was cancelled, due to a lack of quorum.

Jan. 28, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: Christine Walker of the Teton County Housing Authority began the meeting by talking about the "spectrum" of housing needs and how they've traditionally been met. The planning commissioners then took a series of unanimous votes, deciding that all of the bases of the housing program (as discussed on Jan. 14 – see above) are equally important; that maintaining "a sense of community" should also be a basis; that subsidized housing programs should focus on full-time workers (to include full-time residents with seasonal jobs); that density bonuses should continue to be a housing strategy, as long as they correlate to a commensurate decrease in density elsewhere; and that the Comp Plan should focus on preserving existing workforce housing stock, with an emphasis on not displacing the middle class. Planning commissioners also unanimously voted that creating a permanent funding source should be a housing strategy. A motion to recommend that mitigation requirements on new developments should continue to be a housing strategy also passed.

Feb. 4, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: In several votes, the planning commissioners essentially recommended that the new Comp Plan encourage workforce housing through a combination of regulations, incentives and preservation of existing housing. They then discussed employee and affordable housing mitigation rates for residential and non-residential developments, voting that mitigation should be based on a sliding scale, determined by the size of the development's impact. They also voted that exemptions to mitigation should be considered for small businesses and small family homes. However, there was no apparent acknowledgement of the fact that new development contributes to a lack of employee and affordable housing units, and that inadequate mitigation only makes the problem worse.

Feb. 11, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: The planning commissioners wrapped up their review of Theme Four, "Meet Our Community's Housing Needs" with recommendations that the Comp Plan encourage deed-restricted rental units and that the Teton County Housing Authority be put under joint town and county jurisdiction. They also agreed unanimously to eliminate all the "What the community has said about this theme" sections in the draft plan – a welcome move since many of these were misleading. (Actual results from community surveys will be included in the draft's appendix.) Summing up the Theme Four discussions, aside from a sliding scale for mitigation rates and a new Housing Authority setup, the planning commissioners recommended very few changes to existing housing programs. It's still unclear how the new Comp Plan will reconcile the goal of Theme Four – to provide housing for more of the community's workforce – with the goal of Theme Two, which is to limit growth. Commitment to the concept of "no additive growth" appears to be wavering.

Feb. 16, 8 a.m., Written comments on the revised Theme Two, "Manage Growth Responsibly," are due. The planning staff's rewrite of Theme Two – based on recommendations passed jointly by the town and county planning commissions – was released on Jan. 22. [Click here](#) for a link to the draft, which at first glance is very encouraging. For instance, the chapter's statement of ideal has been changed from "Meet the human needs of the community in locations identified for development" to "Limit growth to established development allowances while encouraging preservation of existing neighborhoods and open spaces." This is quite a switch, and one that's much more in line with what our community has said it wants from this theme. The Alliance's written comments on the new Theme Two draft are available by [clicking here](#). (See the top of this page for info on how to submit your comments.)

Feb. 18, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: The planning commissioners decided that the revised Theme Two, "Manage Growth Responsibly," mostly accurately represented their previous recommendations. However, they acknowledged that there were conflicts inherent in some of their previous votes. They decided they would treat each theme individually without addressing conflicts until the very end of their overall review, a step that may prove problematic, since it means that all the votes taken and recommendations made throughout the initial review could essentially be reopened for debate at that time. On a positive note, they asked for the Alliance's and the Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce's help in estimating effective population, so that the plan can take into account not just residents but visitors, commuters and others who are here at different times of the year.

Feb. 25, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: This hearing was cancelled, due to a lack of quorum.

March 4, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan: A couple of good things came out of this first hearing on Theme Five, "Provide for a Diverse and Balanced Economy." First, most of the planning commissioners publicly recognized that Jackson Hole's economy depends on protecting our wildlife and other natural resources. Secondly, they unanimously agreed to incorporate the Rocky Mountain Institute's definition of economic sustainability into Theme Five – a very encouraging move, since RMI's recommendations essentially promote building an economy not dependent on growth. [Click here](#) for information on how our community can build a better economy without growing bigger, and [here](#) for the Alliance's comments.

Thursday, March 11, Joint Town/County Planning Commission meeting on current draft of Comp Plan, 5:30 p.m., County commissioners' chambers, 200 S. Willow The planning commissioners are scheduled to continue discussing Theme Five and perhaps move on to Theme Seven, "Provide Quality Community Facilities, Services and Infrastructure." (They're skipping over Theme Six, "Develop a Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy," until after they've met with two transportation consultants on March 23.)