

Re: Auto-Urban Residential zoning amendment workshop

Below are the comments Becky Tillson, Community Planning Associate, verbally presented at the April 19, 2010, Town Council workshop.

Becky Tillson, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. Thanks for the opportunity to comment today.

Again, we will be primarily raising questions about this proposed change. First, as we mentioned at the last hearing, we are still a bit concerned with the timing of these detailed discussions relative to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commissions decided to delay the discussions of the detailed Future Land Use Plan maps until the elected bodies have a chance to review the plan. While we recognize that this Comp Plan process has not been short, it is still important to respect the community visioning exercise and to continue to plan comprehensively for the town as a whole. Why are we making what could be significant changes *now*?

Second, the changes to the AR zone seem to be driven by a desire to increase the supply of homes in the district. Is this to bring more workers closer to the workplace? Is this simply to increase investment and reinvestment in the area – likely at the expense of affordable rentals?

Specifically, we agree with the Housing Authority's concerns that there has to be a strategic look at the loss of housing types – particularly for low-income workers. While we understand a desire for reinvestment, we need to be realistic about the high portion of jobs that are low-income, and the role that rental properties play in housing those employees – who serve largely as the basis of the economy.

As we all know, particularly in resort communities, and even here in Jackson, increasing the supply of small units does not necessarily translate to affordability, particularly in the long term. And as we stated before, home ownership – particularly when the units can still be rented – is not the only way to increase residents' investment in their neighborhoods.

Lastly, staff raises some excellent questions in their report, specifically regarding the fiscal impacts on the town of alley improvements and delivery of essential services (sewer, water, etc.). We would hope that these questions can be resolved prior to moving forward with any sort of action.

Overall, to get a positive result from the changes to this zone, the details have to be right. If you do decide to move forward and not wait until you review the Comp Plan, some type of deed-restriction will be critical to increase the chances of affordability and of achieving a real community benefit.

Thanks.