

January 6, 2012

To: Teton Board of County Commissioners, Mayor Barron and Jackson Town Council, Teton County Planning Commission and Jackson Planning Commission
CC: Town and County Planning Staffs, Bruce Meighen
Re: Character District Maps and Community Goals

Dear County Commissioners, Mayor Barron and Town Council, Town and County Planning Commissioners and Planning Staffs,

Thank you for the intensive work all of you have been doing with the Comprehensive Plan in the last several months, and for your commitment to community goals.

I am writing to explain why the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance believes it is important to verify that the new Character District Maps accurately illustrate overall community goals.

We agree with your general approach to the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Develop broad policy objectives
2. Generate relatively detailed maps based on those objectives
3. Crosscheck that the maps do in fact match up to the overall objectives

We are now at the point in the process where checking the maps against the overall community goals is vitally important, and we would like to provide suggestions on what additional information is needed to conduct a thorough crosscheck.

The Alliance agrees that an important first step is to generate a detailed description of the goals for the future of each Character District. You have already identified the location and type of development desired in each area of every district, and determining the desired amount of this development will complete the picture. This is an important step because:

- Determining the amount of development desired in each sub-district would enable the community to immediately verify whether the maps are in line with the concrete goals we have established in the policies, including the goal for a 60/40% split on rural/complete neighborhood development, the goal to house 65% of our workforce, and the goal of not exceeding a doubling of current development.
- This information forms the foundation for analysis of a range of other issues, including the projected impacts of this development on wildlife, the expected effects on traffic, the fiscal impacts of new development, and the economic viability of commercial endeavors in the area.
- Numerical objectives for future development in each district would provide greater predictability, and would make the Comp Plan more understandable to the general public.

We understand that the discussion about buildout numbers became very heated in recent years. We recognize that this is not intended to be a “numbers-based plan,” yet the public was told that numbers

would “fall out of the mapping process.” There is now an opportunity to provide numerical objectives as part of the description of each sub-district in the Character District Maps.


We encourage you to ask the planning staff to provide estimates of the amount of future development that is desired in each sub-district. This step would reduce the confusion that will be generated if people make their own independent estimates, and will clearly illustrate what the plan means for our future.

Over the next few days, you will see a newspaper ad by the Conservation Alliance asking whether the maps accurately illustrate the community’s overall goals. Answering this fundamental question is now within reach, and clearly providing answers on the expected amount and location of development is vital to getting the support of the community before the adoption of the Comp Plan.

The Conservation Alliance has advocated for responsible planning for 33 years. In order for the Alliance to explain to residents why development regulations are important to the community’s ability to preserve wildlife, scenery, and community character, we need to be able to show people how some trade-offs in their neighborhood contribute to achieving the major priorities of the community as a whole. We believe that residents will support the Comp Plan if they can see how increased development in some areas enables conservation of other areas, and achieves overall community goals.

Please give the planning staff the green light to provide this information to you, and to the community, to foster better understanding of the Comp Plan, and better decisions based on that data.

Sincerely,



Trevor Stevenson
Executive Director