

Below are comments that Alliance Executive Director Trevor Stevenson and Becky Tillson, Alliance Wildlands & Community Planning Associate, verbally presented at the Jan. 26, 2012, Joint Town of Jackson and Teton County Planning Commission hearing on the Character District Mapping section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Trevor Stevenson:

1. Planning Commissioners, I would like to thank you for your many years of collective work on the Comprehensive Plan.
2. There are some overarching issues that I want to bring to your attention, so that you can keep the big picture in mind as you work tonight.
3. The Character District Maps define goals for the future more specifically than the policies by describing the desired future of each area of the town and county. Actually ACHIEVING any of these goals is far from assured. Success hinges on coming up with effective regulations to guide development in the way that the community desires.
 - a. Therefore, the Alliance has requested that a detailed Implementation Plan be developed, which should outline the major tasks ahead and include a timeline and budget explaining how we will get from describing goals to actually having the regulations needed to achieve them.
 - b. As you work tonight, please flag issues that you think need additional work after the Comp Plan is adopted, so that these can be incorporated into the Implementation Plan.
 - i. For example, because we don't yet know HOW we'll shift development around, we don't know HOW MUCH we can shift, and you're likely to run into this problem repeatedly in your discussions tonight.
4. Meanwhile, a much more clear statement of intent is needed explaining that it is a SHIFT in development that is desired, not simply an increase in "additive growth" in some areas.
 - a. First, please recommend that a statement be added to the introduction explicitly saying that any increases in development in some districts must be directly linked to permanent decreases in development potential elsewhere.
 - i. We believe this is already the intent of the plan, and that it can be considered a "green change," but it is currently not clear enough.
 - ii. Not spelling this out would violate the will of the community, and would severely undermine many of the central tenets of the plan.
5. Finally, I would like to clarify why the Alliance believes that it is important to provide information about the *amount* of development that is desired in each district.
 - a. Clearly stating approximately what the intention is in terms of the amount of growth would provide much greater "predictability" for residents of the area, and would enable a more informed conversation.
 - b. The Alliance believes that explaining the amount of development desired in each district is important for a wide range of planning reasons.
 - c. This is also the best way to illustrate how the Comp Plan will achieve community goals, and we think this is the best way to increase residents' understanding of, and support for, the plan.
 - i. We recognize that some of you believe that releasing this information would cause a community uproar and derail the plan. We disagree. The Alliance believes that being transparent with this information is the best way to address the clear concerns that have been expressed by residents for many years.
 - d. As you work through the Character Districts tonight, please think of how much more clear all of this would be if the *amount* of development was more clearly explained.
6. In closing, please discuss these three key points:
 - a. Implementation Plan.
 - b. Shift development by ensuring a LINK between increased density and conservation.
 - c. Clearly describe the AMOUNT of development that is desired in each district.
7. Thank you again for considering our recommendations.

Becky Tillson:

I wanted to start by thanking each of you for the time and dedication that you have given to this process on behalf of the community over the past few years.

Trevor covered some of our more comprehensive recommendations, as did our written comments, and I wanted to add a few more suggestions specific to the maps.

First, overall, there needs to be a statement in the beginning of the maps section that clearly establishes the prioritization of wildlife and resource protection in this plan. For example, in Buffalo Valley, it should be clear that achieving the goal of housing should not trump the top priority of wildlife protection.

The definition of a conservation area should clarify that the goal is not only reducing the impacts of development, but also reducing the actual overall development potential.

Lastly, overall, there needs to be a clearer consideration of commercial development potential as a major driver of the need for housing, and consideration of the amount and type of commercial development desired throughout the districts.

Specific to the districts, we have a few recommendations:

In Districts 2 and 4, it will be important to clarify that Flat Creek enhancements are not only social but also ECOLOGICAL.

In District 2, we agree that the Lodging Overlay needs further discussion, but that it is not appropriate for the LO to extend into District 4 unless it is explicitly limited to existing nonconforming uses.

In District 5, Section 5.6 should be clear that the idea is not to give an upzone without any corresponding decreases elsewhere. It is a good idea to continue the discussion on linking development in this area to the goals of the Growth Management Plan. A linkage that includes a caveat allowing for development associated with a significant and permanent open space protection effort could be appropriate.

In District 6, Town Periphery, we'd ask that you support the suggested red change to discourage further subdivision in the area.

The responsible stewardship of public lands, mentioned in the River Bottom District, should also be included in the Town and County Periphery Districts.

In District 10, the description should also identify important East/West wildlife corridors as areas to be protected.

High-density development in the Aspens – which is an area with high wildlife values and existing roadkill problems – is not consistent with the goals of the Comp Plan. We don't know how much development is slated for that area, but it would make the most sense to develop the absolute minimum there.

In Teton Village, we support the goal to not increase beyond the existing development footprint. With regard to the amount and type of future growth, development that will generate car trips rather than reduce them is not appropriate. A balance of convenience commercial and workforce residential could be explored, but only with some analysis of the transportation impacts of growth on a dead-end road.

In the Buffalo Valley portion of District 15, as we change the subdistrict lines, the goal should be to maintain the rural character of that gateway area, and preserve its unique rural characteristics.

Again, I would like to thank these commissions for their enormous commitment to this plan and to the community.