

***SUMMARY OF COMMENTS on June 2008 Draft “Themes & Policies”***

***THEME SIX***

***Provide for a Diverse and Balanced Community and Economy***

**Big Picture:**

This section strongly underemphasizes the role of wildlife and natural resources as essential components of our community identity and economy. The summary of the “theme’s topics” do not even mention conservation, wildlife or natural resources. Natural resources are the “economic backbone” of the region.

This section needs significant changes in language, specifically regarding the importance of natural resources. Perhaps evident in this theme more than any other, there is a general lack of linking different theme issues. Perhaps this is yet to come, but one of the main objectives of this entire planning process was to view community priorities in an integrated way, not in isolation. This document still appears to view themes in isolation. This document also fails to prioritize themes or provide an overarching foundation from which all these are evaluated. Strategic conservation of wildlife and natural resources is central to a land-use planning approach that works to protect our community culture and economy. Why has this been overlooked?

This section also includes a number of vague policies, such as “limit commercial development consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and as a percentage of mixed-use development.” When will we know how much commercial development the Land Use Plans are proposing? “Limit” will mean very different things to different people. Another example is “Commercial and mixed-use development will be sensitive to existing context and design.” This language should also state that quantitative guidelines are essential in defining this “sensitivity.”

Resort-related policies need to be clear. For example, suggested strategies state, “No additional Planned Resort approvals and no expansion of current plans, except to provide employee housing.” Suggestions need to be clear. Would expansion be allowed if some element of the expansion included employee housing, or would expansion be restricted to the form of employee housing units only?

Overall, particularly given its focus on “balance”, this section needs to clearly connect themes. To date, it doesn’t. Both our community and economy will drastically suffer if our wildlife resources are impacted. This fact should be very clear in this theme.

**Key Issues:**

- In general, there is some overlap with issues addressed in other themes, primarily with those in Theme Two. Perhaps the issues would be clearer overall if the two are addressed more collectively. Or, if you feel there is a strong advantage in separating them, their purposes should be more clearly defined and distinguished.
- Identify the importance of wildlife and natural resource protection for our community and economy.
- This theme repeatedly includes policy language about community balance, but it consistently doesn’t mention conservation or wildlife. For example, Principle 6.2 states, “Balance economic development with workforce housing and community needs.” The principle language should include “wildlife and conservation.”
- This theme needs major work!