



Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
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Below is an outline of comments that Alliance Executive Director Trevor Stevenson presented at the Teton Board of County Commissioners and Jackson Town Council joint information meeting on August 1, 2011.

Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance Comments on Character District Mapping

Honorable public officials of Jackson Hole:

We greatly appreciate that you have prioritized two of the key issues that the Alliance and members of the public recommended you include in the Comp Plan process: Data-Driven Mapping and an Action Plan.

Overlay Maps

The list of available information presented by staff in this month's report is excellent, and we encourage you to use as many of these data sources as possible as the foundation for the mapping phase of the plan.

We want to highlight that the community has clearly prioritized some issues above others, so the overlay maps will need a way to distinguish higher priority issues from lower priority issues to help inform decision making.

(Example: Critical Wildlife Habitat is more important than the distance to the nearest library). We're sure staff will find a way to express greater priority overlays on the maps once these are developed.

The Natural Resources Technical Advisory Board (NRTAB) has made some excellent suggestions for additional data sources that can be included to identify critical habitat, and we're pleased to see their increasing involvement in this process.

Action Plan

We are pleased to see the beginnings of an Action Plan in this month's staff report.

Our understanding is that a few issues may be studied in the immediate future to better inform the Character District Mapping, and a full, multi-year action plan will be developed and included as part of the formal adoption of the Comp Plan in January 2012.

The updates to the Natural Resources Overlay are being worked on by the NRTAB, and the Alliance is working to provide support on this work as needed.

We believe it would be best to initiate a Transfer Task Force immediately, to see how we might best achieve the Comp Plan's goals of shifting development patterns to more appropriate areas. The Alliance is interested in starting this discussion by bringing an expert on the subject to evaluate what tools might work best for Jackson Hole, which may not include the Transfer of Development Rights tool. Please launch a transfer task force immediately to look into this important issue.

Reengaging the Public

As you know, public involvement in the Comp Plan process has decreased dramatically over the years. We all agree that we want to get the public to reengage as we do the Character District Mapping, and the Alliance would like to offer a few ideas on how to best reengage residents.

The current plan is for a couple of county-wide meetings, then character district meetings to collect feedback from residents of each district, then a follow-up meeting to report back on what was done with that feedback, and finally more county-wide meetings leading to eventual adoption.

The individual character district meetings are key to reengaging the public, and we've discussed this with many of our members in recent weeks.

Please hold them at diverse times to allow people in all professions to find at least one meeting they can attend.

Please hold character district meetings on-site in each district, ideally within biking range if possible. This will greatly increase participation.

We realize this will be time-intensive, requiring additional time from planning staff. Having discussed this with planning staff and AECOM, we believe that time investment will pay off with much greater public participation and buy-in.

We would like to see on-site character district meetings held both for the initial input gathering, and for the subsequent report-back of what was done with that input.

If you have too many character districts, we understand that you may need to combine two or more neighboring districts into a single meeting to streamline the process.

The Alliance plans to work intensively to encourage people to participate, and to inform participants on how to best provide useful input during these meetings.

Please make sure to include the public feedback you received during previous mapping exercises and Future Land Use Plan work, so that the public doesn't feel that this feedback was ignored or that they wasted their time over years of participation.

We would like to thank the planning staff for the excellent work that they are doing in preparing for the next phase, and we thank our elected officials for considering the recommendations we have presented here today.

Sincerely,

Trevor Stevenson
Executive Director