



Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
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News Release

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Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance **Encourages Moratorium**

Citing a potentially crushing wave of large-scale development proposals in the community and the need to carefully consider valley growth in a comprehensive way, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance Board voted this week to encourage local officials to pass a temporary moratorium as soon as possible.

“We are at a crossroads in this valley, and many residents are feeling overwhelmed by all of the development being proposed at once,” said Chuck Schneebeck, co-chairman of the Conservation Alliance Board. “It’s clearly time to collectively pause, take a deep breath and make sure we don’t make community decisions today that we will regret tomorrow.”

During recent weeks, county planners received requests to look at rezoning part of the Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch, and at a complicated land development deal proposed by the Lucas, Von Gontard and Robertson families. These plus the Teton Meadows Ranch development proposal, which county commissioners will hear April 29, could result in more than 1,100 new homes in South Park.

Teton County commissioners say they likely will discuss some form of a moratorium at the Tuesday, April 1, Board of County Commissioners’ meeting. A land-use moratorium is a local enactment that temporarily suspends a landowner’s right to obtain development approvals while the community considers and potentially adopts changes to its comprehensive plan and/or its land-use regulations to address new circumstances not addressed by current laws. Moratoria can take a variety of forms, including a partial moratorium, a pause in issuance of development permits or a delaying of proposals to subdivide land.

The Conservation Alliance proposes a moratorium that would temporarily halt all zoning changes and subdivisions until the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan update is completed. This would give the community time to decide how it wants to develop in the next 10 to 20 years, which is the goal of the ongoing update process. It is also hoped the measure would give an over-worked county planning staff some much-needed relief.

Because one of the factors that seems to be driving the dense upzone proposals of late is our community’s need for workforce housing, the Conservation Alliance also recommends a separate but related measure: that elected officials consider further increasing the affordable housing

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mitigation rates to 40 percent. The increase would accommodate more affordable housing but within current development potential. (In its 2007 Housing Needs Assessment, the Teton County Housing Authority recommends increasing the affordable housing mitigation rate to a minimum of 40 percent just to “keep up” with housing needs generated by new growth.)

“By increasing the percentage of affordable housing required in all new developments to at least 40 percent in the interim, and higher in the future, our community can put its money where its mouth is – without destroying those qualities our community values the most, such as wildlife, open space and smart growth,” said Franz Camenzind, Conservation Alliance executive director.

The Conservation Alliance stated that a moratorium is a reasonable and defensible policy for elected officials to follow, and that it would reflect strong sentiment in the recent community surveys that wildlife, open space, and responsible, managed growth should be top priorities in government efforts. Camenzind said he was pleased to see the survey results – pleased, but not surprised.

“The survey results didn’t really surprise me much,” Camenzind said. “Those are the same values that topped the community’s lists during comprehensive planning efforts 30 years ago and again 15 years ago. They are the same values that drew us all to this spectacular valley, whether we’ve been here for generations or whether we came yesterday. They are the same values that Jackson Hole residents live for, live by, and live from economically.”

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The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to responsible land stewardship to ensure that human activities are in harmony with the area’s irreplaceable wildlife, scenic and other natural resources.