

Phase II Character Districts Wraps Up – A Frank Assessment

On November 1, planners concluded a weeklong effort to gain community input on the latest draft maps. Based on the nature of community workshops, Save Historic Jackson Hole has some major concerns:

- The workshops were designed in a way to lead the average citizen into agreeing to extra density where elected officials and planners have decided it should go. And, the elected officials' commitment to transferring development potential and requiring permanent conservation in exchange for density increases appeared to be overstated.
- Based on the way information was gathered, it enabled a lot of filtering of citizens' comments. In some cases, all of the input was not recorded.
- Some citizens felt that too much effort was made by planners to encourage input that they did not believe in. Planners should not try to convince citizens to modify their comments.
- It is unclear whether elected officials will have the opportunity or take the time to read citizens' individual comments. Instead they could just hear staff's interpretation of input (presented as "common themes").
- So far, the maps don't provide a lot of information, such as basic ranges for density. And, based on answers provided by planners, it seems highly unlikely that the revised Character District maps will either. This means that the public once again won't get the predictability and clarity that they have expected for years.

Using the input from Phase II, a draft Character Districts Chapter is expected out in early December. (A community open house is scheduled for December 7.)

Save Historic Jackson Hole will continue its work to make sure that the new plan truly represents the vision of our community.