

*The other side of the story...*

## Moratorium on Madness

Town Council deserves credit. They're finally dealing with runaway commercial growth, the root cause of our housing problem, the real cause of local overcrowding and discontent.

It has been a year since town and county elected officials discussed raising our low and ineffectual commercial mitigation rates up to 100%. So instead of housing just a few of the seasonal jobs created, developers would need to provide housing for all the new employees priced out of local housing opportunities.

Town electeds just placed a six-month moratorium on commercial development while they work out the details. We applaud their action; county commissioners should follow suit. Runaway growth is killing our quality of life.

The naysayers claim higher mitigation will stifle development, both commercial and residential. Don't believe it. Halting the commercial building madness is a blessing for locals.

Don't worry about the deep pocket, out-of-state developers. For too long their new, large-scale commercial projects (massive hotels and major restaurants) have been dumping low wage workers into our tight housing market.

Over the past 15 years, we've added about 150 housing units a year in Teton County while job growth zooms at twice the national level. We've slipped from housing 75% of the workforce locally to just 58% in that same time span.

In other words, developers have been getting rich off Jackson Hole while its citizens suffer. It's hardly asking too much for developers to house the employees their projects create, all of them.

Our electeds will need community support to hold the 100% mitigation line for all nonresidential developments. When the opposition argues the rate is too high, the response should be, "It's the bare minimum." Housing all the employees a business creates covers just a part of the housing impact.

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*100% mitigation,  
it's the bare minimum.*

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Each new job will go to someone who will likely have a spouse, and maybe a child or two. More schools, hospitals, grocery stores, and so on will need to be built. This growth will mean more housing will

be needed for additional teachers, nurses, and cashiers—and on it goes.

So 100% mitigation doesn't cover the entire impact of the new employees. It may cover only half or two-thirds of the impact. Our electeds should study this so we know the real impact.

We can't build our way out of a housing shortage. Slowing the commercial building explosion is the smart thing to do.

As the old cowboy said, "If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging." Stop making things worse.

"We are a community first and a resort second." That was an axiom of the 1994 Comp Plan. It might not be in the new Plan, but it is wisdom we should live by.

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