

*The other side of the story...*

## Town Re-Development or Ruin?

Every day it seems we are tearing down something of the old Jackson Hole we all love to make room for something shiny and bulkier. And it will soon get worse. There's some truly massive unseen change in the pipeline.

A huge backlog of approved and unbuilt town construction waits in the wings, yet to break ground.

Has town council defied the will of the voters? It looks that way. As far back as 2003 voters wisely overturned downtown re-development by a two-to-one margin in a referendum vote.

Before we approve any more large projects we should build out those already approved. No one is against needed renewal, a new pub here or a cozy café there. But what's about to be built is different.

Town Square is getting a complete facelift. A massive 96-room hotel, bank, restaurant-bar, retail complex is going in on Center Street. It's 75,887-sf of new construction that will require hundreds of new employees when complete.

North of Town Square, in an already congested gateway pinch point to town, some 168 new homes are being shoehorned onto less than 10 acres. At a conservative three people per unit, that's 500 more souls that will soon call Jackson home.

The approved and unbuilt Sagebrush Apartments will place 90 more units on Broadway. And there's another 26 units or so town is building on N. King and 16 or more in a new neighborhood at the Y.

Folks are justifiably concerned. Locals are questioning the dizzying pace of development. They're feeling powerless to stop it, or even slow it down.

Folks are particularly upset about major change

on E Broadway in the historic block just off the square. It's being sold to developers who are aggressively seeking an up-zone so they can cram a 46-foot sun-blotting building (rumored to be a hotel) where locally-owned Café Genevieve and Persephone have served the community for years.

Considering the big-time uncertainty about the impact of those already approved and unbuilt projects, we need a breather.

The prudent thing for town council to do is wait. Let some of the construction backlog get worked off before approving any more major projects. Hold off on spot zoning for now.

Until traffic studies, parking and other details are planned for, it's dangerous to keep approving more. It's hard to imagine absorbing all the new construction and perhaps 1,000 new residents without needing stoplights, wider sidewalks and streets... We just don't know.

Property owners have rights. But developers need direction, too. There's too much uncertainty around what's approved already to grant more right now.

Traffic jams and general over-crowding already rules the day. It's sure to get worse in the downtown core. Construction now in progress around Snow King will add to the problem.

Are we taking a holistic look at all this? Addressing it in piece-meal fashion is foolish and dangerous.

Again and again, residents have wisely voted NO to over-development of our town. Through referendums and failed tax hikes we've made it clear we are a community, not a commodity.

We must take a pause before approving more big projects.

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*Dizzying pace of growth  
is a cause for pause*

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