

*The other side of the story...*

## Will the Majority Ever Win?

If you are like most people you might be wondering what happened to Jackson Hole? How did we get so crowded? Why should it ever take an hour to get from the Village to Town Square?

The quality-of-life made us love it here. But what we loved is slipping away. Quality-of-life is going down, not up.

Big city headaches have invaded the peaceful place we loved. Traffic, congestion, crime... Why? How did we let this happen? Was it so sales tax collections could keep going up? So visitations could set new records year after year? That's the way our politicians measure success. But most of us never wanted that.

We just wanted a quiet place to call home so we could enjoy the unspoiled beauty.

The urbanization of Jackson didn't happen overnight. Town and county leaders approved project after project, up-zone after up-zone, to the detriment of wildlife and voters.

In decades long past, our electeds were carefully building the economy, helping all of us during trying economic times. And they were mostly right. But they didn't know when to let off the gas.

And we began to protest. We voted against Porter Estate annexation in 2002 and Downtown Redevelopment in 2003. Two citizen-led referendum votes that each passed two-to-one.

Now, instead of doing the business of the people, our electeds are giving the 'business' to the people. In spite of the referendums — both ancient and recent — we've been largely ignored. Our elected think they know best.

They don't.

Like it or not, we're in a fight. It's the silent majority versus a noisy minority that is greedy for growth.

And we're on a tilted playing field where the big-growth developers have the advantage. They're a minority in raw numbers, but they make noise and have clout.

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Developer financial clout and political clout is winning. Mom, dad and the kids are losing their quality of life.

So what can we do?

We need to band together.

There are plenty of concerned citizens and enough splinter groups: South Park Neighbors, Alliance of Route 390 Neighbors, Responsible Growth Coalition, Friends of Snow King, et al... but we don't cooperate.

Overdevelopment isn't a right or left issue. It's not a progressives versus conservatives thing. It's a quality of life issue that affects all of us. Overcrowding gets worse year by year no matter where you live — Jackson, Hoback, Wilson...

The whole valley dies a little each year.

Are there any candidates for Town/County offices that want to preserve-and-protect rather than build-and-profit? We don't know because the right questions don't get asked at voter forums.

There's a big time disconnect between the voters and the candidates running for office.

Until we unite and get some collective 'clout' of our own, we'll keep losing the place we love.

The last of the Old West is slowly dying. We can save it, if we cooperate and build political clout.