



Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

July 12, 2011

Teton County Planning & Zoning Commission
150 Courthouse Drive
Driggs, Idaho 83422

RE: Canyon Creek Re-Plat

Dear Commissioners:

Before you tonight is the first re-plat under the newly-adopted county ordinance. The original project is an extremely large, remote, contentious, and complicated resort community that included a lodge, commercial village, horse arena, dude ranch, municipal water system, and public sewer system. All of which was planned to also straddle two counties. It is currently 0% built. This is a great opportunity to do a comprehensive overhaul of this project into something much more in keeping with the extremely rural landscape of the surrounding area.

CHALLENGES presented by this project's location and current design:

- Extremely remote location that is often inaccessible in the winter and expensive for providing public services.
- No significant water rights onsite and culinary wells need to be drilled several hundred feet down.
- Multiple sensitive environmental locations throughout the property that will be impacted by development.
- Location (and in particular, the proposed village) straddles two counties.

CHALLENGES presented by current re-plat proposal:

- **Lack of detail in application materials.** The master plan submitted is hard to interpret. The proposed changes appear to still leave large footprint over the landscape.
- **Goal of this re-plat seems to be to not build the project at all.** It is a lot easier to negotiate a re-plat when you have a real project on the ground, and where the developer seeks to actually build their project. How do you plan for a 20-year project that may not even be logistically possible?



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- **High carrying costs.** Infrastructure design and layout will be extremely expensive for developer to build. Commercial village concept essentially requires the developer to construct an entire village community. Once this land is taken out of CRP, the tax consequences will be high.
- **Do you know where the county will be in 2032?** An extension until 2032 ties the regulatory hands of Teton County for the next 21 years. As evidenced by River Rim, complex development agreements for large projects that stretch out over several years have proven totally impossible to manage. If the size and scope of this project were scaled back, the developer could be given an extension of time, but
- **Where is the public benefit?** The re-plat assumes too much about future real estate markets with too little benefit to either Teton or Madison County.

OPPORTUNITIES presented by a re-plat:

- **Reduce the potential for future complications:** A lot has changed since this project was first filed in 2007. It is impossible to predict the future market and development scheme for Teton County by the year 2032. One thing we do know is there are currently 8,000 vacant lots already platted in Teton County. The best thing that could happen here would be to drastically simplify the logistics, scope, and scale of this project. *For example, why not re-plat this development as 100-acre lots?* It would be a lot easier to plan and build a project of that scale than what is proposed before you tonight.
- **Reducing the scope and sale has multiple benefits for the developer, the county, and the community at large.** The developer will have lower carrying costs, lower infrastructure costs, less “headaches” building out the project, and the parcels may even be more marketable. Significant reductions in densities will also reduce the costs of services to this area. A re-plat to large ranch parcels would be more in keeping with the landscape and reduce negative wildlife impacts.
- **Re-platting by example.** As successful re-plat may pave the way for future project to engage the county in the re-platting process.

Next Steps:

- **This situation calls for a site visit.** To envision any kind of re-plat on a property of this size and scale, this commission needs on-the-ground experience. This landscape is some of the most pristine in Teton County. It is



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also quite rugged and traversed by deep canyons. As indicated by the F.I.P.S. spreadsheet that is attached, this project will be especially expensive to service because of its remote location. You all need to get out there and imagine coordinating emergency response for 250 homes out there. Imagine the impact of these homes on the landscape. A site visit will likely crystallize the goals for re-platting this project.

- **Establish overall goals for this re-plat.** This is your opportunity to give feedback and guidance to the applicant. I suggest that re-platting goals for this project should focus on significant reductions in density that fall in line with the surrounding area as well as better preservation of habitat corridors.
- **More information is then needed from the applicant in light of the goals for this re-plat.** Once goals are established, the applicant will have direction as to what is requested from this commission.
- **Comments should also then be solicited from IDFG, DEQ, Madison County, the Fire District, etc.**

As the first re-plat under the new ordinance, I encourage you to set the bar high and set an example for re-plats in the future. Thank you once again for all of your hard work in the service of our community.

Anna Trentadue
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