

January 17, 2017

Dear Jackson Town Council and Teton County Board of Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on potential Specific Purpose Excise Tax (SPET) measures for voter consideration in May 2017.

The 2012 Jackson/Teton County Plan declared that we as a community value three priorities for public investment:

- Ensuring at least two thirds of the people who work in Jackson Hole are able to live here;
- Dealing with our traffic congestion by providing people with transportation choices through investments in public transportation, bike paths, and sidewalks; and
- Protecting the wildlife habitat and open spaces that define our valley, and making it safe for wildlife to cross our roads.

Now, five years later, we're dealing with an even-worse housing crisis that's destroying our middle class and threatening the fabric of our community, transportation challenges that are tearing into our quality of life, rural development that is consuming wildlife habitat and open spaces across our valley, and nearly 400 animals that are struck and killed on our roads every year – endangering both wildlife and our families.

Public investments funded through SPET provide an opportunity to address these challenges by aligning our investments with our values. In order to align these SPET measures with our values and the Comprehensive Plan, the Alliance recommends empowering voters with the opportunity to approve projects in May 2017 that focus on our community goals of:

- ✓ Ensuring at least two thirds of the people who work in Jackson Hole are able to live here;
- ✓ Dealing with our traffic congestion by providing people with transportation choices through investments in public transportation, bike paths, and sidewalks;
- ✓ While leaving room in the public funding pipeline for upcoming projects focused on protecting wildlife habitat and open spaces, and making it safe for wildlife to cross our roads.

In addition, according to the Comprehensive Plan, "A transportation system oriented toward automobiles is inconsistent with our common values," and our "community's transportation vision is to create a multimodal transportation system by enhancing the current automobile oriented system to include a network of complete streets, transit, and pathways system."

Therefore, please do not propose transportation projects for voter consideration that do not appear to align with this vision, and are not yet fully studied and planned.

Specifically, before providing voters with the opportunity to consider the "South Park Road Network" project, it should go through the due diligence process. This process should involve an alternatives analysis, including a traffic modeling study that analyzes the drawbacks, benefits and costs of the alternatives to move people and goods throughout west Jackson and South Park. This should include an analysis of how upcoming changes at the "Y" intersection will impact our transportation network. Along with this traffic modeling study, the project should have an identified project charter that explains the need and purpose of proposed construction, as well as a list of any alternatives. Before this study and charter are complete, it's premature to

ask voters to consider the “South Park Road Network” project, as our community wouldn’t know specifically on what we’re voting and if it in fact aligns with our transportation vision.

Furthermore, the proposed “South Park Road Network” project should be planned to serve the desired future land uses of the area. Currently, we lack analysis regarding how this project fits within future planned land-use scenarios because we have yet to complete this planning work as a community. Lacking this analysis, it’s unclear if this project is in fact necessary or aligned with desired future land uses. Therefore it’s untimely to ask voters to consider the “South Park Road Network” project in May 2017.

Looking forward, the core vision of the Comprehensive Plan is to “Preserve and protect the area’s ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community and economy for current and future generations.” To accomplish this vision, Policy 1.4.c states “It is the community’s primary goal to permanently protect and actively steward wildlife habitat, habitat connections, scenic viewsheds and agricultural open space.” To achieve our community’s primary goal the Comprehensive Plan calls for “the establishment of a dedicated funding source for conservation easements and other measures that protect the wildlife habitat, habitat connections, and scenery valued by the community (Policy 1.4.d).”

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan calls for a reduction in wildlife and natural and scenic resource transportation impacts through “improvements [that] should address wildlife permeability and identified wildlife vehicle collision ‘hotspots’” and the recently adopted Integrated Transportation Plan contains an entire section dedicated to wildlife protection.

As Vice-President Joe Biden once famously quipped, “Don’t tell me what you value; show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value.”

Unfortunately, our community has not yet implemented a dedicated funding source for conservation measures. In addition, voters have not been presented with a single opportunity in the past three decades to approve a SPET project that helps permanently protect and actively steward wildlife habitat, habitat connections, scenic viewsheds and agricultural open space.

In order to align our public investments with our values, we respectfully request that you leave room in the public funding pipeline for upcoming projects focused on protecting wildlife habitat and open spaces, and making it safe for wildlife to cross our roads.

Specifically, as you make decisions regarding SPET measures for voter consideration in May 2017, please keep in mind potential future funding needs for the implementation of mitigation projects that may be recommended in the wildlife crossings master plan once it’s complete, and associated conservation measures that protect important wildlife habitat and connections.

Thank you for considering this request; we would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further,



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Executive Director