

Description

As part of the zoning code update project, the consulting team of Civi Tek Consulting and GRAEF conducted a series of one-on-one listening sessions with various stakeholders to gain insight into how the current zoning regulations are functioning and to identify potential areas for change.

Eight sessions, each approximately 45 minutes in length, were held virtually between July 25 and August 6, 2025. Participants are part of the development community and have been involved with one or more projects in the Village.

Village staff and officials did not participate in these sessions. Separate meetings with staff have been conducted and will continue for the duration of the project.

What We Heard

The following points reflect general feedback from participants. While some comments extend beyond the scope of the zoning code update, they are included here because they provide valuable context and perspective.

Positive Observations

- Working with Village staff is viewed positively; staff are available and provide appropriate guidance when asked.
- Jackson is well positioned geographically for growth in the coming years.
- The Village has done a good job setting the stage for industrial development.
- The recently completed Village Hall complex received positive remarks.
- The Oaks Development is seen as an asset.

Housing and Development Trends

- Even with reduced development standards, financial incentives are still needed to make affordable housing viable.
- High costs for vacant land are a significant barrier to development, especially housing.
- Demand for accessory dwelling units is low in the local market.
- Three-car garages are becoming the norm for single-family dwellings; "affordable" housing typically has two or 2.5-car garages.
- There is strong demand for side-by-side condominiums. Two-story homes are becoming more common due to lower construction costs and potentially higher densities.
- Most multi-family units being developed locally are not high-end; those seeking high-end housing also expect local amenities which are lacking.
- Builders are increasingly acting as land developers due to shrinking margins and higher risk.

Land Use and Zoning Issues

- Municipalities can act as developers if they have unused, developable land.
- Jackson lacks an identifiable downtown, which is seen as a problem; there are few civic amenities or gathering spaces such as restaurants.
- The Village's current floor area limit on detached buildings is perceived as too low.
- The zoning code is viewed as ill-defined, with many projects processed as PUDs or conditional uses.
- Developers typically follow zoning requirements for single-family housing, but multi-family and townhome projects are often proposed as planned development districts.
- Buffers between incompatible uses (e.g., residential and industrial) are underused.
- Industrial projects sometimes surprise nearby residents, who are unaware until construction begins.
- Locally adopted architectural design standards are acceptable if there is a path to approve new exterior materials.
- Zoning requirements for site design and landscaping are acceptable if stated upfront—developers dislike process or requirement “surprises.”
- Residential subdivisions should be allowed to build model homes at development entrances before all infrastructure is complete. That way, builders can start selling their product the day the infrastructure is ready.

Process, Fees, and Predictability

- Developers want all development-related fees stated upfront and preferably posted on the Village's website. Similarly, the Village's website doesn't have enough information on the land development process.
- Inspection fees for subdivision infrastructure should have clear limits; developers need predictable soft costs.
- Predictability and time to market are critical to developers.
- Developers are reluctant to challenge local rules, even if contrary to state law, but builder associations are increasingly willing to do so.
- Communities should follow their comprehensive plans; if a project meets the long-term vision and zoning standards, it should be approved.
- “Tell us the rules. We don't care if there are few or many.”

Community Development Opportunities

- The reuse of the elementary school represents a significant opportunity for the Village and could be a catalyst for additional development if done right.

- Jackson has succeeded in the “live” and “work” aspects of community life, but “life between home and work” is lacking.
- The Village should think about creating a “downtown” area, potentially with tax increment financing.