Teton Valley Housing
Teton County Joint Housing Authority

WORKFORCE HOUSING · SUBMISSION TO THE WEST SLOPE TETONS WORKSHOP

Development Across the State Line and Workforce Housing in Teton County, Idaho

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Teton Valley Housing, the Joint Powers Housing Authority for Teton County, Idaho, and the Cities of Driggs, Victor, and Tetonia, submits this on the workforce-housing dimension of the socioeconomic landscape shared by Teton County, Idaho, and Teton County, Wyoming. Much of the region's growth occurs on the Wyoming side of the Tetons, yet a significant share of the resulting workforce lives, and needs housing, on the Idaho side.

A resort-driven demand on an already short market

Resort-type development generates more housing demand than any other kind: Teton County's 2023 Land Use and Employee Generation Study found that every 100 units of resort-residential development generate 48.5 employee households, more than double the 19.9 from multifamily and well above the 27.2 from single-family homes. On the west slope of the Tetons, that workforce lands disproportionately on the Idaho side, on top of an already severe shortage. The 2022 Housing Needs Assessment projects a need for up to 1,580 additional homes by 2027, at least 60 percent below market, while the median home sells for about $1 million, roughly three times what a median family can afford. The working households this region relies on, from service and trades workers to teachers, deputies, and nurses, earn roughly 50 to 150 percent of the area median income for a household their size, squarely in the range the market no longer serves, mapped in the accompanying Spectrum of Housing Needs.

The response: a place, gap funding, and stewardship

Idaho gives local governments few traditional housing tools, such as inclusionary zoning or real estate transfer taxes, and the state funds housing at the region's lowest level. A workable response relies on voluntary incentives and long-term stewardship, and takes three things together: **a place** to build; **gap funding**, because projects cannot pencil at market prices; and **stewardship** to keep homes affordable for good.

QWHIP and its lottery

The Qualified Workforce Housing Incentive Program is Teton Valley Housing's central tool for producing and stewarding workforce housing. Pioneered by the City of Driggs with Teton Valley Housing as its Authorized Administrator, the program lets developers earn additional density in exchange for permanently below-market, deed-restricted homes, or a payment in place of building them. In addition, it sets income and price ceilings, qualifies applicant households, awards homes through a lottery, and monitors each deed restriction for the life of the unit. The lottery is weighted toward local public service: households working for public-service agencies, including Teton County government, receive the strongest preference, so homes reach the people who staff the Valley's essential services. A single Authorized Administrator runs one consistent, scalable process across jurisdictions, applying equally to homes built through local development and to the mitigation units Wyoming requires.

Mitigation is a Wyoming tool and a cross-border opportunity

Housing mitigation is a Teton County, Wyoming, tool, not one Idaho local governments have: it requires development on the Wyoming side to provide or fund workforce housing. Because of the state line, some of that mitigation is met with deed-restricted homes placed in Idaho, even as other Wyoming-side mitigation fees fund housing on the Wyoming side. Where mitigation homes sit in Idaho, they would ideally be administered and stewarded through Idaho's own program, for clarity, consistency, and efficiency on the Idaho side. Teton Valley Housing has been collaborating with the Jackson and Teton County Affordable Housing Department with the hope of bringing future mitigation units into Idaho's Qualified Workforce Housing Incentive Program.

Sources: 2022 Teton Region Housing Needs Assessment (Teton Valley); 2023 Land Use and Employee Generation Study, Economic & Planning Systems; ECONorthwest impact study for Teton County, ID (2022); National League of Cities, Local Tools to Address Housing Affordability (2019); Teton Valley Housing program records.