

The other side of the story...

Unintended Consequences

Local government's pro-growth agenda has consequences the community deserves to know about. Too often, the end result of town and county decisions read like shiny, happy quotes in the newspaper.

Left to tell their own story, we've seen politicians proudly state how they're solving our housing and transportation issues by buying more houses and more buses with our tax money.

But wait. It should be every citizen's right to know the impacts of decisions made by our electeds. That way we can see for ourselves the consequences and decide if we, the people, are truly being served or seduced.

The current strategy of building our way out of a housing crisis simply won't work. If government provided an impact statement along with their well-intended plans, we'd know that.

Until then, here are just a couple of points to ponder.

Building more worker housing in Jackson has unintended consequences. It makes the housing problem worse.

When a commuter living in Victor, for example, moves into their new affordable home in Jackson, they bring their family. Their kids now go to school in Jackson, they shop in Jackson, they drive around in Jackson.

That new family requires new Jackson services. So Jackson needs more teachers, hair dressers, grocery clerks, plumbers...

And where will these new folks live? They'll want to live in Jackson as well.

It's a snowball effect. Building more worker housing in Jackson creates more housing demand in Jackson. A lot more.

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The painful truth is, we can't house all the people that want to live here. Our roadways aren't wide enough. The first step in a real solution is to stop making the problem worse. Stop allowing new business to push their workers on the

community. Make the new business provide housing for their new workers.

For example: When a new hotel comes to town, they should provide the housing for their employees. That's called housing mitigation.

But the Jackson mitigation rate is the lowest around. Other mountain towns require up to 80% housing mitigation. Jackson requires 25%.

Sometimes we cut special deals and don't even require the 25%.

Given our very low mitigation rate, you've got to wonder if local officials really want to solve the housing problem.

You've got to wonder why we don't have 80% mitigation like other ski towns.