

# Housing gift horse needs oral exam

Recent news articles lauding approval of the new apartment complex on Broadway (90 units) and the groundbreaking on Hidden Hollow residential neighborhood (168 units) are 'feel-good' headlines for some—especially those in need of housing. But there are valid reasons why others disagree. Why, in fact, the majority of voters in Jackson and Teton County shoot down subsidized housing every chance they get.

First and foremost, these projects make for a lot more people. We've been identified as one of the fastest-growing communities in the nation. If that's where we all want to be headed, well and good. But lots of folks don't want a big city lifestyle; they see the dense population goals of our local government as misguided.

Many of these 258 units that will soon come online are multi-bedroom, each "unit" will represent at least one more vehicle—and for most families, two—added to our already overcrowded transportation grid. Each unit could house two, four, or more people.

At just 2.5 people per unit, that's 645 new folks in Jackson. And they will all need local services—schools, grocery stores, police/fire, hospital, parks & rec. Additional people will be needed to provide those increased services, and those employees will want to live in Jackson, too. It's a snowball effect, a never-ending cycle that guarantees endless big-time growth.

Adding government-provided workforce housing, funded by new taxes, would be

another slippery slope, another big-growth snowball.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if every new hotel or restaurant was required to house all their new employees? They aren't. Current regulations require housing for just one out of every four new employees. It's a low-bar requirement. Other western ski towns require more than our 25% mitigation, lots more.

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*More Housing =  
More People =  
More Housing ...*

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Wouldn't it be great if every new affordable unit went to someone who truly needs it? They don't always. The way local rules are written now, workforce housing could just as easily go to Paul (who owns two other pieces of property in other states, makes \$180K a year as a lawyer, and just arrived in Jackson yesterday) as it could Peter (who has been an ambulance driver in Jackson for 20 years, has two kids, and was evicted from his last residence when it went high-end condo). What's worse, Peter will be required to pay Paul for his house when a portion of his sales tax goes to Paul's "affordable housing."

All this is just the tip of the iceberg. There are other instances of injustice and 'gaming the system' that never get reported. As a community, the path we're on is full of unintended consequences. More traffic jams, more overcrowding, lower quality of life.

A key question is: Does anyone have the 'right' to live in Jackson Hole? Our electeds seem to believe everyone who wants a house is entitled to one. Voters are saying that is government overreach. And the gap between the elected and the electorate is growing ever wider.