



COMMUNITY PLANNING: Community Housing

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Baseline Characteristics:

COMMUNITY HOUSING

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the housing crunch escalated to crisis levels quickly. Between 2019-2020, Blaine County's population grew by about 6%— about six times greater than the average annual rate of population growth for the prior nine years.¹ Most dramatically, the City of Ketchum's population grew by ~25% from 2019-2020.² During that time the City of Sun Valley grew by ~20%, the City of Hailey grew by ~6%, the City of Bellevue grew by ~4%, and the City of Carey grew by 0.3%.³ Growth has since slowed, but the overall population remains unprecedentedly high.⁴

During that time, long-time property owners extended their visits in their second homes.⁵ Still, more people— including many retirees— came to Blaine County looking to buy.⁶ The median age of the population increased by 10 years in Ketchum and 5 years in Hailey.⁷ The median sales price of a home in Blaine County jumped from \$477,000 in 2019, \$876,000 in 2022,⁸ to \$1MM in 2023.⁹ The estimated annual income needed to purchase a home increased to approximately \$240,000/year in 2023,¹⁰ not too far off from the average adjusted gross income of people moving into Blaine County in 2022: \$261,663.¹¹ In contrast, the average adjusted gross income of people moving out of the County was \$78,415 in 2022.¹² The data suggests that an out-of-state market is driving the demand and prices of homes in Blaine County, not long-time residents earning local wages.

Renters found themselves squeezed in the middle. Over the three-year span covering the pandemic (2019-2022), monthly rents on long-term properties rose by 65%.¹³ American Community Survey data suggests that 38% of renting households in Blaine County are cost-burdened,¹⁴ meaning that they are spending upwards of 30% of their incomes on rent.¹⁵ Employers in the County provide financial assistance to their employees who are burdened by housing costs, as do philanthropic initiatives that

provide a suite of housing assistance.¹⁶

The “affordability gap” has grown stark in Blaine County, over the past 10 years.¹⁷ Where two median earners could afford to buy or rent a two-bedroom unit in a multifamily home in 2014, rising prices and stagnant wages put that well out of reach.¹⁸ In 2021 the median available two bedroom rental apartment

cost \$12,600 more per year than what was affordable to a household of two median earners.¹⁹ Similarly, that same household was about \$390,000 short of affording to purchase a similar unit.²⁰ Prices have risen since.²¹

Costs have driven families into precarious living situations. One in 40 Blaine County residents live in an overcrowded²² home, and about 1 in 200 people live in a unit without plumbing or a kitchen.²³ In January 2023, Blaine County's first point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness found 125 people in a shelter or transitional housing and 14 people living unsheltered.²⁴ Blaine County Housing Authority recently assessed that 40% of local residents are at risk of displacement.²⁵

Community housing units are key to meeting the needs of local residents, especially those earning local wages or on fixed-incomes. Community housing describes residential units that are legally restricted, by priority, for local use and occupancy.²⁶ Restrictions vary by mechanism and criteria, like average annual income or household size. Community housing restrictions, however much they vary to meet different housing needs, offer permanence for local residents who struggle to afford market-rate rents and prices.

In 2022, the City of Ketchum's Housing Action Plan measured that Blaine County needs at least 4,700 additional community housing units through 2030, in order to address the current housing needs and accommodate forecasted population growth.²⁷ The target number of community housing units equates to approximately 5 times the number of existing community housing units (943 units).²⁸ For further comparison, an average of 148 new residential units were built annually in the County between 2020-2023.²⁹ Most substantially, the City of Hailey is home to approximately 550 community housing units, equating to about 16% of Hailey's housing stock.³⁰

The Hailey Housing Needs Analysis estimates a need of 838 community housing units over the next 10 years— 67 being in need of renovation or replacement and 771 new community housing units to accommodate for population growth and severe overcrowding.³¹ Ketchum, which currently has about 500 long-term rentals against upwards of 2,000 short-term and seasonal units, seeks to build, preserve, or convert a minimum of 660 units into community housing in the next ten years.³² While the other municipalities— Blaine County, plus the cities of Sun Valley, Bellevue, and Carey— have participated in housing solutions, none of them have identified a target number of community housing units to provide. The cities of Hailey and Ketchum's target community housing units total to 1,498 or approximately one third of the total number of community housing units needed across the County.

There is no silver bullet— no one solution— to the local housing crisis. Rather, a myriad of partial solutions are



A single-family community housing unit developed by ARCH Community Housing Trust⁴⁴

needed to meet a diversity of needs and complement one another. Some solutions work better in certain parts of the valley, depending on property values and the housing structure types available in the market. Some solutions are better suited to higher area median income groups than others.

Certain entitlement processes allow for greater flexibility when developing a parcel of land. For example, entitlement through a Planned Unit Development Agreement allows for a developer to petition a waiver to zoning requirements in exchange for providing a benefit, such as community housing units. Similarly, Annexation Agreements allow for flexibility in zoning requirements and may entail an exchange of benefits and waivers, including the provision of community housing.

For smaller developments, zoning regulations can incentivize the provision of community housing through the Design Review process. For example, the City of Ketchum's zoning code offers a density bonus to developers that build community housing units or pay an in-lieu community housing fee.³³ The City of Hailey's zoning code offers a density bonus for cottage developments if a certain number of units are restricted as community housing.³⁴ Besides the aforementioned entitlement processes and zoning codes, no other mechanisms currently exist to incentivize the provision of community housing units in Blaine County.

With funding, local governments and housing partners may deed restrict existing units. Currently partnered with the Blaine County Housing Authority, the City of Ketchum is piloting a "preservation" program that grants homeowners and potential buyers 15-30% of the cost of a housing unit to deed-restrict to locals living and/or working in Blaine County.³⁵ Currently partnered with ARCH Community Housing Trust, the City of Hailey's "Locals Only" program offers to subsidize 20% of a home's cost in exchange for a similar community housing deed restriction for "locals."^{36,37}

In other cases, the cities have purchased and funded the development of new community housing units. The 51-unit community housing "Bluebird Village" in downtown Ketchum is being developed by a cross-sector partnership. In 2023, the City of Hailey purchased one of two townhouses that were deed-restricted as community housing, through a PUD Agreement;³⁸ as well as a Tiny Home on Wheels,³⁹ to be used for housing Hailey Fire Department staff. In partnership with the City of Hailey, the City of Sun Valley purchased a historic structure on a 2-acre lot– to develop into community housing for locals.⁴⁰ It is common for employers in Blaine County to invest in housing for their employees.

Support for community housing initiatives is currently at a historic high across the County. In May 2023, voters in Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley overwhelmingly voted to renew and reallocate an existing local-option tax (LOT), for community housing efforts.⁴¹ The success of the ballot measure indicated the widespread acknowledgement of the need to support community housing efforts. The LOT revenue is the first dedicated stream of tax-revenue for community housing in Blaine County.

"Not only does the referendum result in additional financial support for our housing initiatives," Ketchum Mayor Neil Bradshaw told the Idaho Mountain Express newspaper at the time, "but it also clearly demonstrates that our community views workforce housing as a priority for our town."⁴² Under the leadership of the City of Hailey's Mayor Martha Burke– who pledged a public process to deliberate housing solutions and how to spend the newly allocated funding– the City created a citizens' Housing Committee.⁴³

Regional Coordination

In addition to the Blaine County government and the five cities therein, community partners in community housing include:

ARCH Community Housing Trust

Blaine County Charitable Fund

Blaine County Housing Authority (BCHA)

Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA)

Wood River Community Housing Trust

Sun Valley Board of Realtors



About one third of the community housing units are provided by developers benefiting from federal tax-credits.⁴⁵

Shared Goals

PROCESS

Recognizing the significant overlap in Comprehensive Plan policy statements from Blaine County and its cities– Carey, Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley– the Wood River Land Trust scoped the Community Planning program and its action plan objectives (Chapter 3) to stem from goals shared between three or more municipalities. This Chapter 2: Shared Goals presents shared goals backed by Comprehensive Plan policy statements, as displayed in the following tables. Furthermore, the following tables present aspirational ideals meant to house and guide shared goals.

POLICY BACKING

For each focus area, see the policy statements that support the shared goal. From the Land Trust’s perspective, shared goals in each focus area work towards the following set of ideals.



COMMUNITY HOUSING

IDEAL: Infill and redevelopment meets the community's needs with housing that is stable, comfortable, and affordable to the people who work in Blaine County.

SHARED GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICIES
CH.1 - Support the provision and monitor the need for community housing units.	Blaine County - Chapter 2: Housing, Policy Statements C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, C-6, C-7, C-8, D-1, D-2, Chapter 6: Public Services, Facilities and Utilities, Health and Social Services, C-18, Chapter 8: Land Use, Policy Statement A-5, A-6, C-2.
	City of Carey - Housing, Desirable Goals 1, 5, Land Use, Future Land Use Objectives 5, 7.
	City of Bellevue - Chapter 2: Population, Goal 3, Objective 1.
	City of Hailey - Section 7: Demographics, Cultural Vitality, Social Diversity & Well-Being, Goal 7.1, Section 8: Housing, Goal 8.1
	City of Ketchum - Chapter 3: Housing, Goal H-1, Policies H-1.1, 1.2; Goal H-2, Policy H-2.1.
	City of Sun Valley - Principle I, Goal 3, Objective 3.1.
CH.2 - Ensure that workers in Blaine County have viable options to live within the County.	Blaine County - Chapter 2: Housing, Policy Statements A-1, A-3.
	City of Ketchum - Chapter 3: Housing, Goal H-1, Policy H-1.1, 1.2.
	City of Sun Valley - Principle I, Goal 3, Objective 3.1, Principle III, Goal 8, Objectives 8.3.
CH.3 - Encourage a diversity of unit types to accommodate the range of housing needs in Blaine County.	Blaine County - Chapter 2: Housing, Policy Statements B-1, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, B-9, B-10, B-11, Chapter 6: Public Services, Facilities and Utilities, Health and Social Services, C-18.
	City of Carey - Housing, Desirable Goals 1, 2; Objectives 1, 2.
	City of Bellevue - Chapter 12: Housing, Goal 1, Objective 1; Goal 2, Objectives 1, 2.
	City of Hailey - Section 8: Housing, Goal 8.1.
	City of Ketchum - Chapter 3: Housing, Goal H-1, Policy H-1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5; Goal H-3, Policies H-3.1, 3.2, 3.3
	City of Sun Valley - Principle I, Goal 3, Objective 3.1.



*Hailey's Comprehensive Plan articulates the economic, environmental and social benefits "realized when workers live in their own community" – as a basis for their two Section 8: Housing goals. However, the exact wording of the goals does not align them with Shared Goal CH.2 (see page 38).

Action Plan

OBJECTIVES

For each focus area and shared goal, see a subset of high-level objectives. The objectives are intended to be broad, so that they offer flexibility in implementation. The following Implementation section provides information about how the objectives will be prioritized over time.

APPROACHES

In shaping the scope and objectives of the Community Planning program at the Land Trust, the leaders in local government identified five approaches through which they welcome our support and partnership. Every objective adopts one of the following approaches:



ENGAGE:

Centering the community, the “engage” approach describes how the Land Trust will listen to, share information with, and involve stakeholders in land use planning. On various levels and through a mix of mediums, we will facilitate and host conversations about how to steward a more livable future for the people and wildlife of Blaine County.



EVALUATE:

The “evaluate” approach prioritizes access to up-to-date information. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to respond to the community’s concerns, inform planning decisions, and prioritize solutions. Importantly, accurate information can also help build consensus. We see where there are gaps in knowledge and understanding, then collaborate with partners to investigate the dynamics behind community needs and potential solutions.



EDUCATE:

When community issues or needs arise, they generally stem from a complex combination of factors. Ecological, hydrologic, geographic, economic and social trends influence the baseline characteristics of the Community Planning focus areas– summed up in our lived experience. Education supports us to understand the complexity of our lived experience, including the challenges we need to resolve and the solutions that support our shared goals.



ENCOURAGE:

The Land Trust recognizes the remarkable alignment between its vision for conservation and the shared goals of our leading partners, in local government. All the while, the Land Trust understands the pressures of competing priorities and developmental markets that threaten to compromise the bountiful environment and quality of life that the local community cherishes. The Land Trust is prepared to encourage its partners to act in alignment with our core values, when it’s most important to do so.



COORDINATE:

When the community needs a leader to address a community need or problem, the Land Trust is poised to coordinate solutions. Coordination involves going between people and groups to organize deliberation, resolution and action. Being flexible– plus overseeing a service area that is regional, not just local– the Land Trust is well positioned to work up and down the valley, between jurisdictions. Coordination is needed to coexist and make efficient use of resources.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Ideal: Infill and redevelopment meets the community's needs with housing that is stable, comfortable and affordable to the people of Blaine County.

SHARED GOALS	OBJECTIVES
CH.1 - Support the provision and monitor the need for community housing units.	CH.1.a - Evaluate the nexus between new market-rate development, job generation, and community housing needs.
	CH.1.b - Educate the community about the current provision of market-rate and community housing for households across different income groups and municipalities.
	CH.1.c - Educate the community on the municipal definitions of community housing and how it is created, preserved, and managed.
	CH.1.d - Educate the community about fair housing law and the housing needs of older adults in the community.
CH.2 - Ensure that workers in Blaine County have viable options to live within the County.	CH.2.a - Engage the community to discuss the benefits of housing developments that increase land use efficiency and provide community housing.
	CH.2.b - Educate the community to understand how community housing supports local businesses.
	CH.2.c - Encourage planning and zoning incentives to build or fund community housing units near employment hubs.
	CH.2.d - Coordinate the community housing development of the West Bullion Street property.
CH.3 - Encourage a diversity of unit types to accommodate the range of housing needs in Blaine County.	CH.3.a - Educate the community about the benefits of diverse housing structure types, especially smaller units, to smart growth and compact community design.
	CH.3.b - Educate the community about the local need for housing with universal access and proximity to transit services.
	CH.3.c - Encourage the development of Municipal Code incentives to diversify housing unit types in single-family zoning districts, including but not limited to plexification, co-housing solutions and ADU's.
	CH.3.d - Encourage the live/work units in single-use zoning districts.



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to view the
full report**



CONTACT

Cece Osborn
Community Planning Director
cece@woodriverlandtrust.org