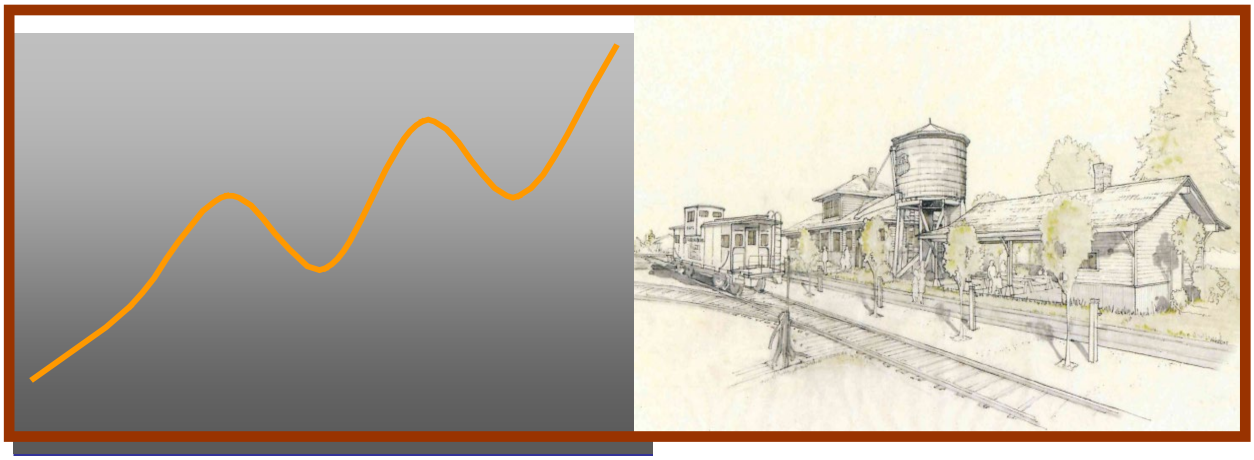

Teton County Economic Plan

Teton County, Idaho

May 2024 Update

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Executive Summary

Resort towns across the globe suffer from overcrowding, natural resource destruction, unaffordable housing and low workforce wages. Teton County, Idaho, has a historic opportunity to define a better destiny before it's too late.

The county's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code are key elements that define the type of smart growth that citizens desire. This Teton County Economic Plan aims for an economy that respects the natural values of this extraordinary place and places the needs of citizens first.

Boosting economic diversity by supporting local entrepreneurs, selectively recruiting low-impact, high-wage businesses and addressing natural, human and infrastructure constraints, will help Teton Valley remain an economically vibrant community that provides meaningful job opportunities at good wages without ruining what makes the valley special: open space, wildlife, a rich history and uncrowded recreation opportunities.

The first half of this document describes the plan's development process, historical context and data describing accomplishments, constraints and challenges, all of which set the stage for economic policy outlined in the action plan, which begins on page 40:

Action Plan: Economic Goals and Strategies:
- Protect and Foster Natural Resources and Community Values
- Selective Business Support and Development
- Physical Asset Development
- Tourism

Implementation of the first iteration of this plan began in 2013 and has helped the community manage growth well despite extraordinary pressures. This second and latest revision aims to do the same for the future.

Introduction

The Teton County Economic Development Plan was developed in 2013 as a component of the Teton County Comprehensive Plan, which is required by state statute. It was updated in 2019 and this updated version was completed in May 2024.

Since 2019, we've seen substantive changes in the Valley economy. This updated plan has significantly revised strategies to address these changes and guide the economy for the future.

As the official policy of Teton County, Idaho, great care has been taken to solicit and incorporate:
- Expert advice and data from the Idaho Departments of Commerce and Labor
- Input from a diverse group of citizens and public officials on the Steering Committee
- Public input on line and at a town hall meeting

This plan takes into account the significant growth the valley has seen since the plan's last revision in 2019. That past and anticipated growth has shifted the focus from "development plan" to "strategic plan," a more comprehensive way of guiding the economy.

Among the issues that merit continued discussion and focused effort:
- Benchmark other resort towns. Which ones are good models to emulate?
- Who should benefit most from the economy? Citizens or investors?
- How do we counter-balance the predominance of construction and tourism sectors?
- How do we offset the seasonal nature of our economy?
- How do we support agriculture?
- What is the land's carrying capacity for people?

What's the end point of growth? How to define success?

A strong economy that meets the needs of local citizens is the work of many private business ventures, government entities and non-profit organizations. This plan helps ensure that we are all working together on common activities and goals.

From the 2010 Comprehensive Plan:

While it is now 13 years old, most of the Comprehensive Plan is still valid.

Our Community Envisions a Sustainable Future for Teton County

We will strive to:
- Establish a vibrant, diverse and stable economy.
- Create and maintain a well-connected, multi-modal network of transportation infrastructure to provide convenient and safe mobility for all residents, visitors and businesses.
- Preserve natural resources and a healthy environment, which are essential for creating viable future economic and recreational opportunities for all users.
- Contribute to our strong sense of community by providing quality facilities, services and activities to benefit the community.
- Maintain, nurture and enhance the rural character and heritage of Teton Valley.

Establish a vibrant, diverse and stable economy

Guiding Principles:
- Encourage, promote and support locally-owned valley businesses
- Incentivize local commerce
- Create a hospitable and attractive environment for businesses and visitors

- Preserve our rural character and heritage and help local agricultural industries flourish
- Attract businesses that are economically and environmentally friendly
- Encourage stewardship and accountability
- Pursue economic diversity, innovation and creativity

Teton Valley Economic Vision

Teton County desires balanced growth, prosperity, and enduring well-being for present and future generations. The focus is creating value and well-paid jobs for Teton Valley citizens rather than profits for outside interests that offer little value to the citizens.

We are committed to cultivating a thriving, diverse, and stable economy that contributes to the health and welfare of all residents while safeguarding our unique natural and cultural heritage. It's not only for current and future generations, but for the wildlife and the environment…for the region and the planet.

Guiding Principles:

Sustainable and Inclusive Economy:
- Forge a diverse and stable economic landscape, generating meaningful career opportunities for all ages with wages exceeding national averages.
- Empower local businesses that add intrinsic value to our community, ensuring that economic growth directly benefits the citizens of Teton County

Preserve Natural Resources:
- Safeguard our exceptional natural environment, preserving the intricate ecosystems that define Teton Valley.
- Implement sustainable building codes and practices, minimizing our environmental impact and ensuring a harmonious coexistence with nature.

Community Well-being and Connectivity:
- Cultivate a robust sense of community by providing quality facilities, services, and activities that enhance the lives of both our residents and visitors.
- Develop a well-connected, multi-modal transportation network that ensures convenient and safe mobility for all members of our community.

Cultural Heritage and Identity:
- Honor and preserve our rich cultural heritage and traditions, amplifying residents' voices and values in decision making.
- Promote cultural awareness and education, positioning Teton Valley as a destination for education-based tourism and cultural events.

Balanced Tourism Sector:
- Prioritize quality experiences over mass tourism, maintaining a managed and balanced approach to growth.
- Invest in infrastructure and amenities that enhance the visitor experience while addressing the needs and concerns of our residents.

Social Equity and Quality of Life:

- Strive for a fair distribution of resources and benefits, ensuring living wages for local labor and fostering affordable housing for our workforce.
- Cultivate a family-friendly community with an exceptional quality of life, emphasizing open spaces, inclusivity and vibrant downtowns.

Environmental Stewardship:
- Commit to thriving ecosystems through controlled and regulated environmental impact of housing and business development
- Promote resilient environmental practices, supporting green spaces and sustainable transportation options.

Year-Round Cultural, Recreation, and Community Events:
- Enrich the fabric of our community with diverse, family-oriented events and festivals throughout the year, fostering a sense of togetherness and community engagement.

The update process

- Idaho Department of Labor economist and others updated the data in the plan.
- Economic development director produced a revised draft based on steering committee input, new Labor data and input from county and city staff; Housing Authority, Collaborative for Early Learning and other organizations.
- During an October 2023 working meeting, the steering committee reviewed, discussed and further refined the plan.
- The resulting document was reviewed by the steering committee and changes incorporated prior to a second steering committee work session, on March 7, 2024, which focused on the action plan: economic goals and strategies.
- Plan was shared with the public on the county and TREC websites, a summary was published in the Teton Valley news, and public input was gathered at an April 17 open house meeting at the Teton Geo Center in Driggs.
- Commissioners officially adopted the new plan in May 2024.

Acknowledgements

2023/24 Update Steering Committee:

- Cindy Riegel, Teton Board of County Commissioners
- Bob Heneage, Teton Board of County Commissioners
- Mike Whitfield, Teton Board of County Commissioners

- Brent Schindler, Mayor Tetonia
- August Christensen, Mayor, Driggs
- Will Frohlich, Mayor, Victor

- Erica Rice, Principal, The Brandstalk
- Emily Selleck, Board Chair, Teton Geo Center
- Jonathan Schechter, Executive Director of the Charture Institute, author, economist and Jackson town councilor
- Rick Miller, Altura, formerly The Development Company
- Ryan Whitesides, Idaho Dept. of Labor economist
- Doug Self, City of Driggs
- Kristi Meston, Collaborative for Early Learning

- Tatum Clark, Idaho Dept. of Commerce
- Delwyn Jensen, Realtor and Financial Advisor
- Aaron Hansen, Bank of Commerce
- Rob Marin, Teton County GIS Coordinator
- Wyatt Penfold, Ag Rep

- Mark Farmer, TREC board chair
- TREC Staff: Brian McDermott

Additional reviewers:

County and city planners, public works directors, NGOs, EMS chief, sheriff, TREC board

2019 Update Steering Committee:

- Mark Ricks, Chair, Teton Board of County Commissioners
- Cindy Riegel, Teton Board of County Commissioners
- Harley Wilcox, Teton Board of County Commissioners
- Gloria Hoopes, Mayor Tetonia, and original plan steering committee member
- Hyrum Johnson, Mayor, Driggs, and original plan steering committee member
- Jeff Potter, Mayor, Victor
- Ted Hendricks, The Development Company
- Hope Morrow, Idaho Dept. of Labor economist
- Jonathan Schechter, Executive Director of the Charture Institute, author, economist and regional economic development authority
- Randy Shroll, Idaho Dept. of Commerce
- Roger Brink, founding president of TVBDC, predecessor to TREC
- Brian Gibson, plan steering committee member and three-year TVBDC board member
- David Kearsley, Bank of Commerce
- Jim Schulz, TREC board chair
- TREC Staff: Brian McDermott, Kristie Eggebroten, TREC

Teton County is indebted to the people and organizations who created the original, 2013 plan and updated it in 2019. They represented the full range of interests in the valley and created a plan that has remarkable staying power.

2013 Steering Committee:
Pete Koson; Shannon Brooks-Hamby; Hyrum Johnson; Bob Foster; Gloria Hoopes; Jeff Naylor; Bill Knight; Doug Self; Erica Rice; Anna Trentadue; Brian Gibson; John Bingham; Lynda Skujins; Tony Goe; Wayne Maness

County Staff: Angie Rutherford

Participating Organizations:
Teton County, Idaho
Cities of Driggs, Victor and Tetonia
Teton Valley Chamber of Commerce
Teton Valley Business Development Center
Teton Valley Marketing Alliance
Teton Valley Foundation
Downtown Driggs Community Association
Driggs Urban Renewal Agency
Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

Consulting Team: Gabe Preston and Andrew Klotz, RPI Consulting

Historical Context

Adapted from Wikipedia and other sources:

Teton Valley is located on the west slope of the Teton Mountain Range in the western United States. Sometimes known as "The quiet side of the Tetons," it is composed of the Idaho cities of Victor, Driggs and Tetonia and Alta, Wyoming. The valley's economy was for most of the 20th century based in agriculture and ranching. Over the past 30 years, the economy has shifted toward recreational tourism and real estate.

Teton Valley has a unique climate and geology, as well as a wide variety of attractions including proximity to national parks and opportunities for wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, skiing, motorized exploration and participating in the arts.

Teton Valley is marked by three cycles of volcanic activity that occurred in the last 2.1 million years. These eruptions made the valley a rich environment for plant and animal life.

The area was initially populated by the Shoshone-Bannock and Northern Paiute Indian tribes before Lewis and Clark made their epic trek across the area in 1805.

Teton Valley was the site of the annual Rocky Mountain Fur Rendezvous in 1829 and 1832. At the Rendezvous, trappers from the Rockies would go to sell their furs and traders would come in to provide supplies. Indian tribes such as the Flathead and Nez Perce would also attend the rendezvous. In the summer of 1832, a battle was fought between the trappers, Flatheads and Nez Perce with the Blackfeet Indian Tribe near Victor, Idaho.

Teton Valley is informally known as Pierre's Hole in honor of "le grand Pierre" Tivanitagon, a Hudson's Bay Company fur trader said to be of Iroquois descent, who was killed in a battle with Blackfoot Indians in 1827.

From 1841 to 1868, over 300,000 whites migrated over the South Pass, about 150 miles south of Teton Valley. The completion of the transcontinental railroad and the Homestead Act of 1862 brought many settlers into Teton Valley. Many of the present-day inhabitants of Teton Valley are fifth-generation descendants of the early settlers.

These early settlers established beef and sheep ranches, dairies, and crop farms, a heritage that continues today. In the days before radio and TV, residents created their own entertainments and established a rich tradition of arts, music and drama.

In the late 1990s, the economy began to shift to a recreation and real estate-based economy. In 2021, 40% of the total personal income in Teton County was non-labor income in the form of retirement income, investment dividends, social security and other sources. Today, much of the economic growth has been based primarily on lifestyle provided by Teton Valley's physical beauty and recreational opportunities.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Teton Valley experienced a tremendous residential housing boom, which collapsed with the national recession in 2008, leaving the community with many vacant lots and homes and devalued real estate prices. At the same time, unemployment was high, tourism was slow and the valley's Main Street retail areas in Victor, Driggs and Tetonia had numerous empty storefronts.

Since then, the community and its leaders have been working toward a more sustainable path to economic prosperity. Several different organizations work on varying aspects of economic development, with the Teton Regional Economic Coalition (TREC) serving as the lead coordinating agency on behalf of the county. Communication between the public and private sectors has improved and an overarching strategy and coordination have been implemented since November 2013. This plan for economic management ensures that the community continues to move strategically toward a more positive economic future.

State of the Economy 2024

Among numerous measurable accomplishments since the plan's last update in 2019, these items stand out:

Key Economic Indicators (Data as of December 2023, source: Lightcast analytics):

- **Teton Valley's census population** is 12,500, up by 1,045 between 2017 and 2023. Annual growth rate is 1.9 percent. These numbers are conservative as the US Census doesn't capture all households. We estimate that the valley population is close to 14,000. Summer population is as high as 25,000.
- **We've added 1,256 new jobs between 2018 and 2023**, 314 in the past year, a seven percent annual growth rate. At an average annual wage of $44,000, that's $55 million in new *annual* income in Teton Valley over the past five years. Note: Job creation data is better than Census population data, hence the disparity.
- **Teton Valley's 2017--2023 job growth of 35.**7 percent was 33 percent better than the national rate. Since 2020, we've added 75 jobs in the well-paid ($85K per year) scientific, professional and technical category. Construction jobs grew by 260, with not enough skilled labor to meet demand.
- **Top industries** are construction, hospitality; accommodations and food services; government (includes schools); retail and healthcare. As a result of covid, we've seen growth in remote working industries such as computer programing.
- **Non-profit sector:** 60 non-profits in the valley raised $2.8 million during 2023 in Tin Cup funds to promote human, environmental, sport and other social benefits. This is an important employment sector and proves the valley's ethos of social and environmental stewardship.
- **Average annual wages** have grown to $44K per year, a $14,000 increase since 2013. This is still unacceptably low: average wage in US is $67K/year; Idaho $47K/year.
- **Economic Diversity**: Almost 90 percent of our companies have 20 or fewer employees. While it appears that this diverse mosaic of many small companies could help insulate us from the effects of one company or one sector going up or down, many of these companies are in the real estate and construction industries, a potential problem during a real estate downturn.
- **December 2023 unemployment:** 2.2 percent, up from 1.5 in Sept. 2022, indicating that the labor market is loosening somewhat. National rate 3.7 percent; Idaho rate 3.3 percent
- **Residential Real Estate:** After three years of exponential growth, the market appears to be slowing. For the year 2023, overall transactions are down 23 percent, total sold dollar volume down 10 percent. However, compared to pre-covid annual transaction levels of 195, this year's 576 transactions are still quite high. There was an 11 percent increase in single-family home average sales price. Land transactions decreased 29 percent, but median price increased 18 percent, indicating continued desirability. (Source: Fall Line Realty Q4 2023 Market Report)
- **Commercial Real Estate**: There were 15 transactions as of the third quarter of 2023, 88 percent more than the prior year, with median sales rising by 51 percent to $895,000. Inventory decreased by 47 percent, indicating a limited supply of available properties. (Source: Fall Line Realty Q4 2023 Market Report)

- **Ag, Residential and Commercial Building Permits, all types:**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Driggs	77	66	71	66	
Tetonia	9	8	9	12	
Victor	36	77	68	41	
Unincorporated Teton County	245	383	346	356	
Total	367	504	494	475	

Source: Cities, County building and planning departments

- **Tourism**: During the 2021 summer visitor season, lodging sales were $41 million and most residents and businesses agreed that the number of visitors was more than we could effectively handle. In addition to scaling back promotion, factors such as weather, fuel prices and the Yellowstone flood led to a five percent reduction in lodging sales in 2022. Our 2022 lodging sales were $37 million, which is still way ahead of our pre-covid benchmark year of 2019 ($19 million in lodging sales) and businesses indicate that staff and guests had a much better experience. 2023 lodging sales were $38 million, another good year despite a wet spring and slow start to ski season. The two percent Idaho lodging tax sent $700,000 in Teton County revenue to the state.

	Teton County Lodging Sales in Millions				
	2019	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Jan	1.08	0.646	2.2	2.7	2.26
Feb	1.02	1.2	2.5	2.5	2.5
Mar	1.3	1.2	2.6	2.7	2.28
Apr	1.1	0.524	3.5	3.2	2.9
May	0.65	0.24	2	1.4	1.44
June	1.09	0.103	2.8	2.3	2.1
July	2.9	2.5	6.4	5.1	5.2
Aug	3.4	4.3	5.6	4.7	5.57
Sept	3	4.3	4.9	3.95	4.38
Oct	2.7	4.8	5.3	6.1	6.678
Nov	0.912	1.9	2.1	2.07	1.88
Dec	0.646	0.966	1.2	1.15	1.13
Total:	**19.798**	**22.679**	**41.1**	**37.87**	**38.318**

Source: Idaho State Tax Commission

- **Average Daily Traffic in July (Peak Season):**

Location	2013	2018	2023	10-year increase %	Road Improvements
Hwy. 33, Driggs	9,023	11,520	14,135	56 percent	none, ITD jurisdiction
Ski Hill Rd, Driggs	3,700	4,481	5,072	37 percent	none
Teton Pass, Victor	7,042	8,969	10,613	51 percent	none, ITD jurisdiction
Pine Creek Pass	2,776	3,043	4,109	39 percent	Resurface, new bridge, ITD jurisdiction

Source:
https://iplan.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0a36396e6fa744ee937a5dc7afa0ebb7

Teton County Land Use Breakdown

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent of Total County Acreage
All public lands	101,234	35.10%
All Residential Zoning (20-ac density or greater)	65,388	22.67%
All Agricultural Zoning (35-ac density or lower)	120,424	41.75%
All Commercial Zoning	347	0.12%
All Industrial Zoning	798	0.28%
All Civic/Rec/Conservation/Open Space zoning	245	0.08%
Total	288,436	100.00%

Source: Teton County GIS Department

Income Disparity
In spite of having the second-highest per-capita income in Idaho, Teton Valley, like most tourist towns, has a large disparity between the well-off and the average wage earner. While median household income looks fine at about $75,837, that number includes retiree and investment income. A more telling number is the average annual wage income of $44,000. One needs to earn $200,000 to afford the median home price of $949,000 in Teton Valley.

Moving Ahead

Basic economic activity that will encourage job creation, consumer spending and investment is required for the valley to prosper. High-value job creation is the goal, but growing and recruiting new businesses creates costs and constraints, including lack of affordable housing and childcare, and stresses on infrastructure and the ecosystem. The valley's growth since 2019 has been substantial and requires careful management to address impediments to high-wage jobs, most of which are location-neutral, and to manage the impacts of growth.

The desirable nature of Teton Valley means growth is going to happen no matter what we do. However, the community has some influence over the direction and velocity of growth.

The connection to the Jackson Hole economy will continue to be an important driver for the local economy, but it must be modified. The valley needs to provide well-paying jobs so residents don't need to commute, and Teton County Wyoming needs to fully address its workforce housing needs rather than rely on Teton Valley, Idaho. This Economic Plan outlines several strategies for accomplishing this fundamental goal. Some strategies center on creating and attracting new businesses and business clusters, while others center on fostering thoughtful growth in established industries such as light manufacturing, technology, agriculture and tourism. All must be managed in the context of costs and constraints.

A strong tourism market and new residents have contributed to a healthy retail and restaurant sector. This has boosted our downtown commercial centers. However, while the owners prosper, they've struggled to find employees because of the lack of affordable housing. This is common in resort towns and there are no easy remedies.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this document is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of economic management efforts within the valley by providing a set of unified and focused strategies. With the available resources among the public and private sectors, the plan focuses investments of time, energy and strategic assets. Additionally, coordinating the development of infrastructure and other asset investments can increase the effectiveness of their implementation. A realistic economic strategy must acknowledge the economic history (i.e. where we've been) and underlying economic conditions of a community and its surroundings (i.e. where we are) to clearly identify where the community can be in the future. Some economic circumstances in Teton Valley present barriers, while others present opportunities. This plan is intended to provide a path forward to a sustainable economy and community, and relies on coordination among all the groups, private and public.

Agriculture

According to D.B Green's 1977 Brigham Young University geography master's thesis, Teton Valley's abundant surface water and the resulting rich grasslands are the foundation of the valley's ranching and farming heritage.

Since the late-1800s, most private lands in Teton Valley have been in agricultural production. Measured by sales, the top crops are potatoes and vegetables, grains and hay. The top livestock segments are cattle by far, and sheep.

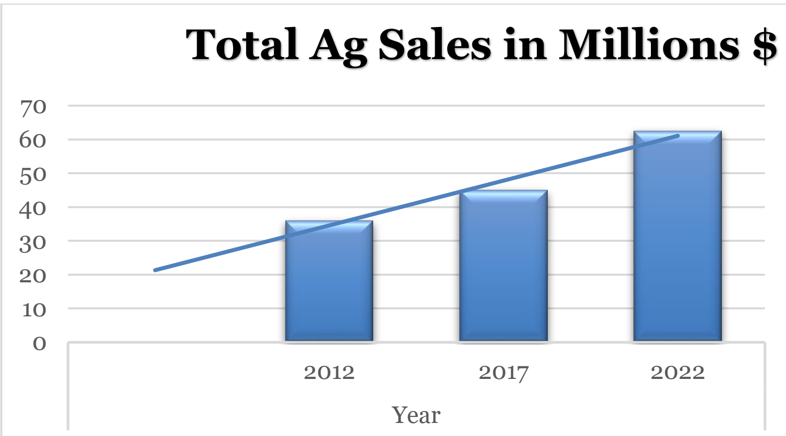
In the early 20th century, most Teton Valley farms were fairly small, family affairs. Over time, mechanized equipment allowed the cultivation of much larger tracts and led to consolidation of ownership. As well, numerous owners lease their acreage for commodity crop production.

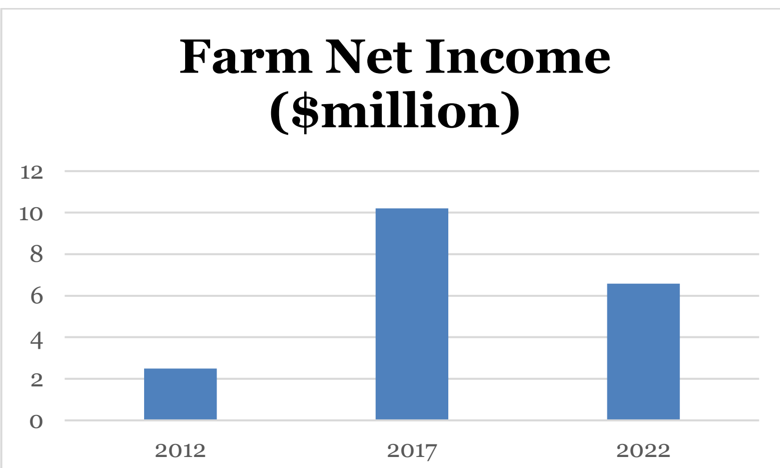
Another dynamic is the growth of small farms growing vegetables and meat for local consumption.

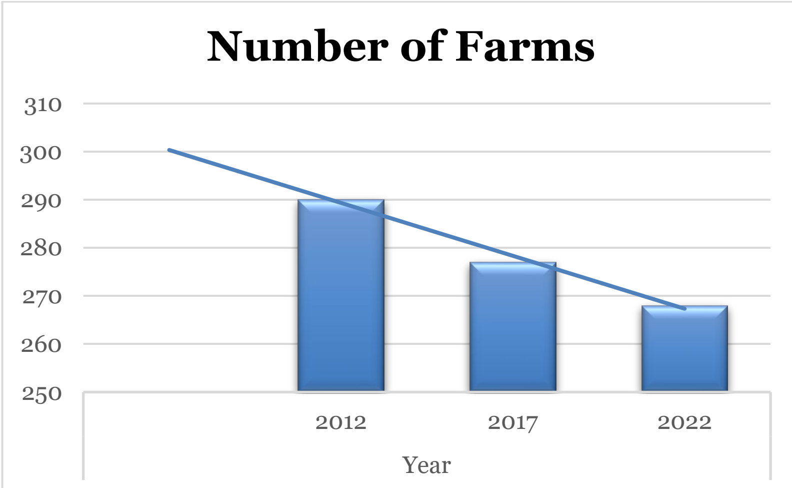
The development boom in the early 2000s converted much agricultural land to speculative development. Today, many large tracts of platted subdivisions have returned back to agriculture, albeit in a less productive state due to roads that get in the way of high productivity farm practices.

By nature of the large amount of land in production, agriculture carries the biggest tax burden, yet is the least expensive to service. As land is placed into agriculture, it enjoys some benefits of lower property taxes and tax exemptions, such as for fire protection and ambulance service.

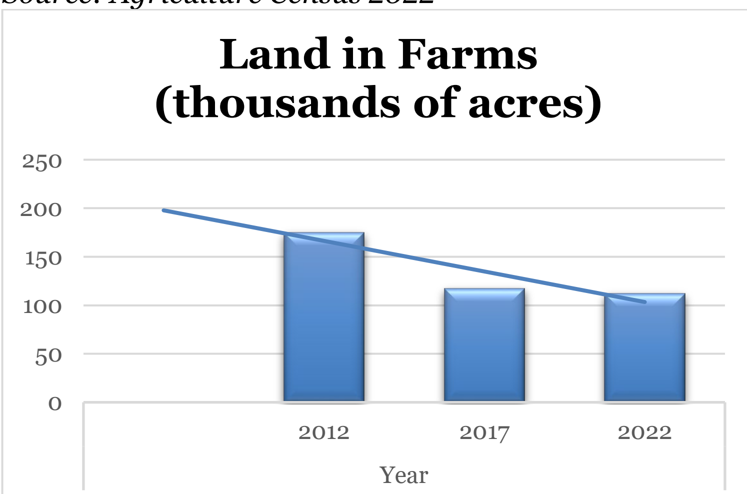
Data shown below is the most recent available. For more details, see Appendix A on page 63.







Source: Agriculture Census 2022



Source: Agriculture Census 2022

The agriculture sector in Teton Valley is shrinking in terms of land being farmed, but growing in terms of the value of sales.

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture (the most current available), there were 268 farms in Teton County and 112,000 acres of land in farms. Most of that land was used to grow crops while the rest was pastureland and woodland.

Farmers and ranchers in the county brought in a total of $62.5 million in 2022, the lion's share of which came from crops, including barley, hay, wheat and potatoes. The rest came from livestock production, mainly cattle and calves.

Critical Factor: Farm Net Income is Shrinking
While gross crop values are up, so is the cost of production. Net farm income is significantly less than five years ago:

2017 = $10,194,000
2022 = $6,576,000

A primary driver for the loss of small and medium farms is they cannot afford to stay in business.

Agriculture will continue to play an important role in Teton Valley's economy both as a sector of its own as well as its role in retaining the community's scenic beauty and rural character. As the economy shifted to a lifestyle amenity-based economy, remote workers and tourism, land prices increased significantly from 2017 through 2022. Incentive to sell and convert agricultural lands to commercial or residential uses has increased. Many of the farms in Teton Valley are small by today's standards, which makes it hard to get a return on the high capital costs for land and equipment. Paradoxically, the shift to lifestyle and tourism is intimately linked to retaining a rural and unique community character. A new county Land Development Code was enacted in 2022 to help retain that character.

The community has exhibited a deep interest in augmenting the agricultural sector with an emphasis on providing food for locals and visitors and exporting value-added food products. Locally produced foods are a marginal job creator, but are a valued product for locals and visitors. The Teton Valley Farmers' Market has increased sales substantially every year for the past 10 years. Local farms have been successful in selling high-value products in the Jackson market as well.

Recreational Background

As part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Teton Valley is rich in natural and recreational resources. Teton Valley is located near Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks and is home to wildlife including bald eagles, Sandhill cranes, deer, elk, black bears, cougars, wolverines, grizzly bears and wolves.

The Teton River, which runs through the center of the Valley, is a blue-ribbon trout fishery. The South Fork and Henry's Fork of the Snake River are both less than 30 minutes' drive. Fishing is world class as are many other recreational attractions include hiking and horseback riding, mountain biking, downhill and backcountry skiing, hunting, backpacking, outdoor photography, snowmobiling, ATV touring and dirt bike riding.

Grand Targhee Resort in Alta, WY was established in 1966 by East Idahoans as a cooperative of 900+ members to "benefit the community and economy of the region." The resort was officially dedicated by Idaho Gov. Don Samuelson, even though the resort is in Wyoming, speaking to the importance of the relationship of Teton Valley to Wyoming, particularly Jackson Hole. Grand Targhee resort offers seasonal employment for many residents in Teton Valley and offers recreational activities and events throughout the winter and summer.

Targhee attracts thousands of visitors to the area who support lodging, restaurant, retail and service businesses throughout Teton Valley. However, taxes generated by Grand Targhee (e.g. property, sales, lodging) are collected and allocated in Teton County, WY. While agreements with Teton County, Idaho, are in place for emergency and solid waste services and they've done some housing mitigation, they do not cover roads and other infrastructure and community costs.

Regional Economic Dynamics: Financial Implications

The creation of Grand Teton National Park in 1929 and the establishment of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in the 1960s fueled the growing tourism and lifestyle community in Jackson Hole. As Jackson Hole changed and land values increased so did Teton Valley as it began to serve as a bedroom community to Jackson Hole.

Today, nearly one third of Teton Valley's workforce works outside the Valley, bringing both opportunities and challenges. A significant portion of those commute to Jackson, with Grand Targhee being a second primary out-of-state work destination. In 2022, 4,773 people both worked and lived in Teton County. 3,952 Teton County people travel outside of Teton County to work, many of them in Jackson, Wyo.

While Jackson-generated income and business activity provides significant benefits to Teton County residents, commuting over Teton Pass incurs costs in transportation, stress and time.

The existing START bus system serves workers and students who commute from Teton Valley to Jackson. And the Greater Teton Regional Transportation Task Force is in the early stages of leading a broad effort to improve transportation options.

In some cases, businesses have moved over from the Jackson side, bringing additional income and jobs. By incrementally building additional activity into the local economy, this movement of income and human capital from Jackson Hole to Teton Valley can contribute to the valley's self-sufficiency. On the positive side, Jackson provides a significant market for such Teton Valley businesses as 460 Bread, Ascent Kombucha, High Point Cider, construction and professional services firms.

A significant trend is the more mobile workforce, as evidenced by a significant number of remote workers moving to the valley during and after COVID. These remote jobs bring income and opportunity to the valley, but the workers tend to be less engaged in the community.

There are some negative effects of being a bedroom community. Teton County, WY, Jackson and Grand Targhee capture a large proportion of the business tax base and tourism dollars while Teton County, ID, is burdened with providing public services for the commuter households under very limiting Idaho tax laws that will likely result in reductions in the level of those services.

Ultimately, Teton Valley will benefit from becoming less dependent on Jackson and diversifying its own economy.

Development Boom, Recovery, Boom

Teton Valley has experienced five boom/bust cycles since 1969. Those cycles used to be driven by peaks and bottoms of agricultural commodity pricing. Over the past 20 years, real estate has driven those cycles. The following account of the boom and bust of the past decade and a half is included here in the interest of not repeating the mistakes of the past.

Between 2000 and 2010, total population in Teton County grew at a dizzying pace of 5% per year, adding 400 new residents per year. This made Teton County the fastest growing county in the State of Idaho during that period.

Teton Valley's attractiveness inevitably led to an intense development boom beginning in the mid-1990s, which collapsed in 2007-2008 along with the rest of the nation's real estate market. The boom and intentional efforts to develop, which were driven by very loose credit and facilitated by local government land use policies and codes, made way for rampant speculation and ultimately a hard crash.

Teton Valley was not alone in this real estate boom, but its peaks and valleys were extreme.

The robust demand of the 1990s and early 2000s real estate market, followed by the recession-driven bust, resulted in a glut of vacant lots and an overstock of speculative subdivisions in various degrees of completion, some of which have incomplete infrastructure (distressed) and others that are approved but have no infrastructure (paper plats). The oversupply and market downturn resulted in gross devaluation in land and home prices resulting in increased property tax levy rates for many residents.

In the post-recession period, the County began to evaluate systematically the events that had occurred and chart the course forward. After the real estate crash, the County inventoried vacant lots, calculated the fiscal implications of this inventory, and began the process of managing the results of past development patterns. The County adopted a re-platting ordinance that offers options for re-designing subdivisions to fit new market conditions. The County has also been vacating paper plats to reduce the excess inventory of vacant lots. The County has determined that some developments have complete infrastructure and remain part of the inventory, but these may be in disrepair, leading to blight and/or disinvestment.

The over-development of residential lots in Teton County will continue to hamper the economy unless comprehensive efforts are made to reduce liabilities and enhance community assets, that is ensure that new development pays for the increased services required and mitigates impacts on resources and community utilities such as water, sewage treatment and roads.

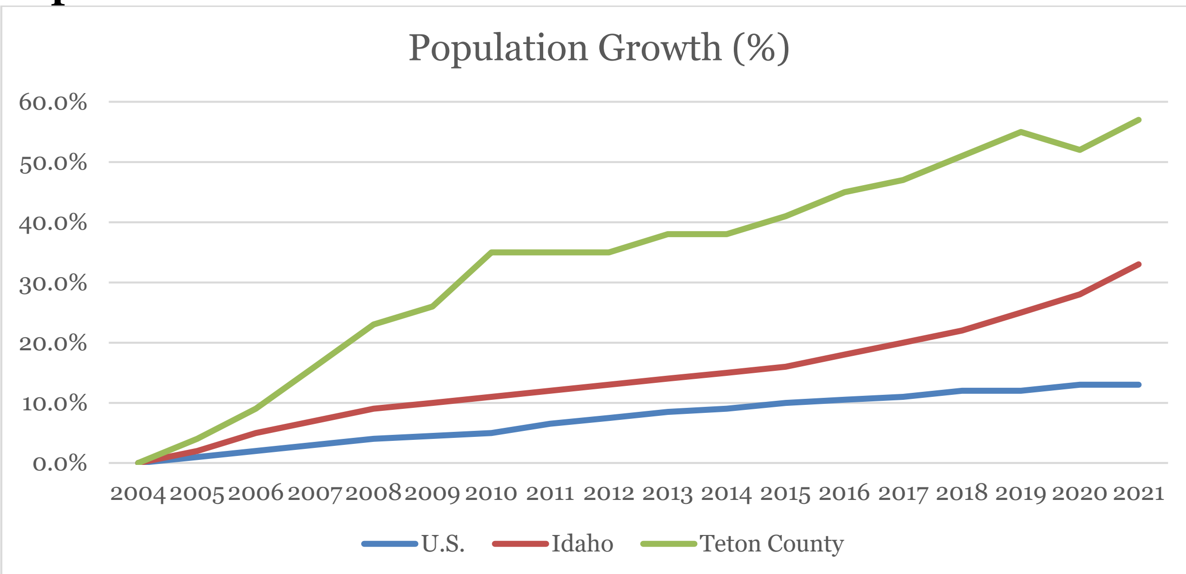
The 2010 Teton County study, Fiscal Impacts of New Houses on Vacant Rural Subdivision Lots, showed that servicing the vacant lot inventory is a fiscal net loss for the county given the current revenue structure and service demands. Schools, fire/EMS districts, and private utility companies such as Silver Star and Fall River also have very limited resources to serve the development that already approved. As well, dispersed development (sprawl) increases the cost of community services.

The adoption of the Teton Valley 2010 Comprehensive Plan provides a strong platform for making decisions to plan the economic future of Teton County, ID, as long as local government has the political will to implement it.

The County, in partnership with the cities of Driggs, Victor and Tetonia and the Sonoran Institute created the initial version of this Economic Plan to chart strategies for private and public partnerships that will break the historic boom-bust cycle and create sustainable economic growth. Evidence of the success of the original plan is found in the “Economic Indicators” section early in this document.

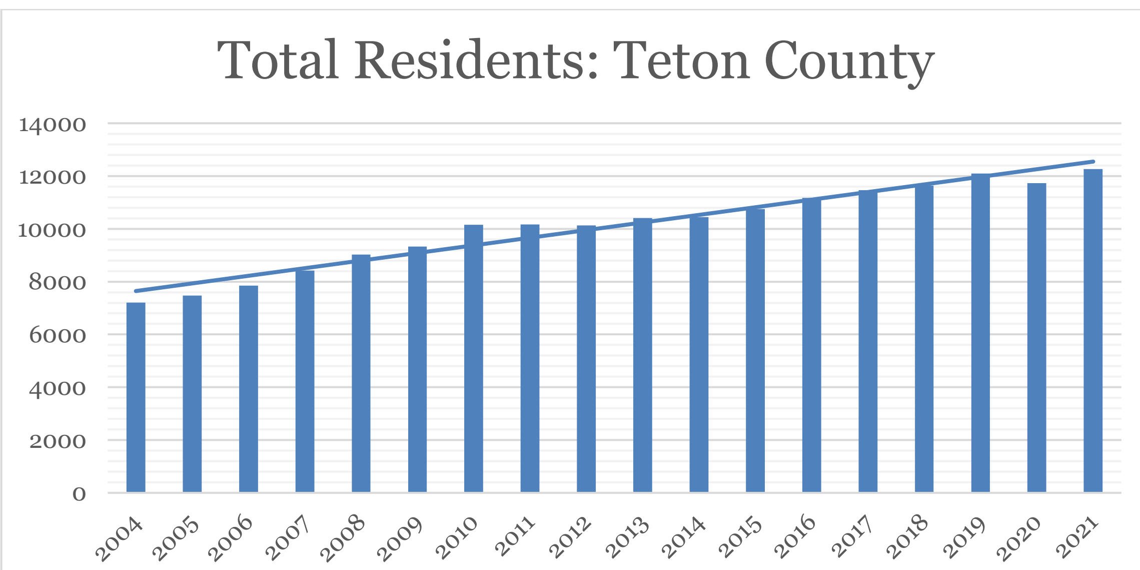
The valley’s real estate market began a slow recovery in 2013 and was booming between 2018 and 2023, causing median housing prices to nearly quadruple. This high demand, the high cost of new construction (expensive materials, lack of skilled construction labor, etc.), the low number of available standing inventory and conversion of homes to hotels (short-term rentals) have combined to create an affordable housing problem that will be examined in a later chapter.

Population

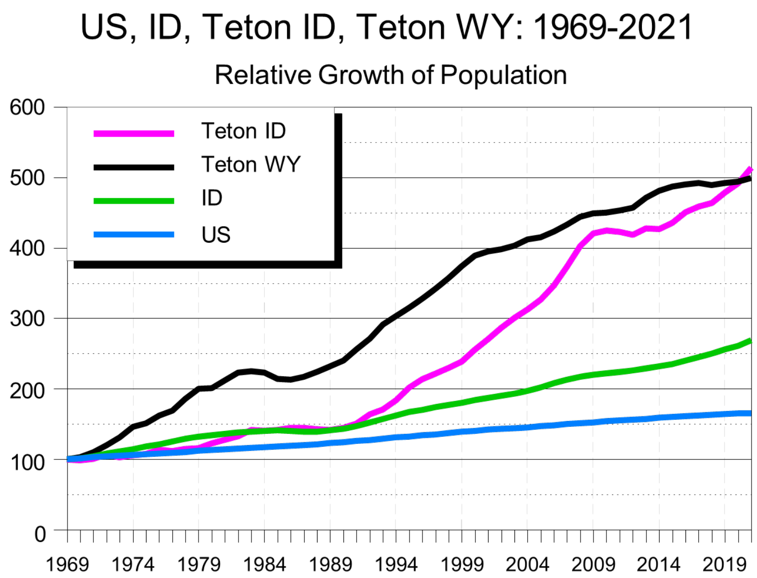


Source: Lightcast, Conference Board Data

Teton County's population grew 57% from 2004 to 2021, compared to Idaho as a whole, which was just over 32%. We estimate a total population of 14,000 in 2023, 19% higher than 2017. Annual growth rate is 1.9 percent. This influx confirms the desirability of Teton Valley, but also the need to manage limited resources in the face of significantly increased demand.



Source: Lightcast, Conference Board Data



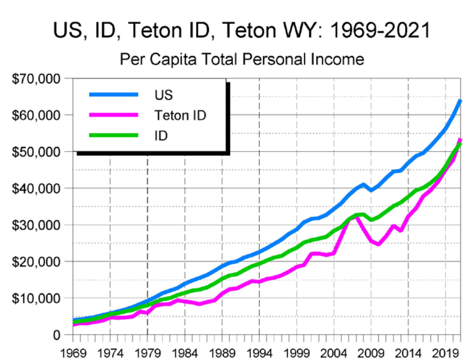
Source: The Charture Institute, Jackson, Wyo.

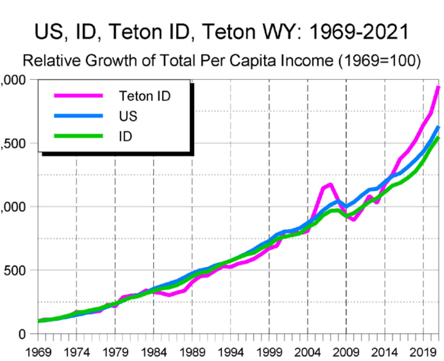
Lifestyle/Tourism Community

The Rise of Non-Labor Income

The future of the valley hinges on this point: income coming into county households in the form of dividends on investments, interest and rents is an increasingly important component of the local economy. Retirees add to the volume of these non-labor income sources entering the county as well as via Social Security payments and Medicare (transfer payments). By bringing in money from outside of the local economy, households themselves are an increasingly important component of the economic base, supporting the business health of restaurants, retailers and services.

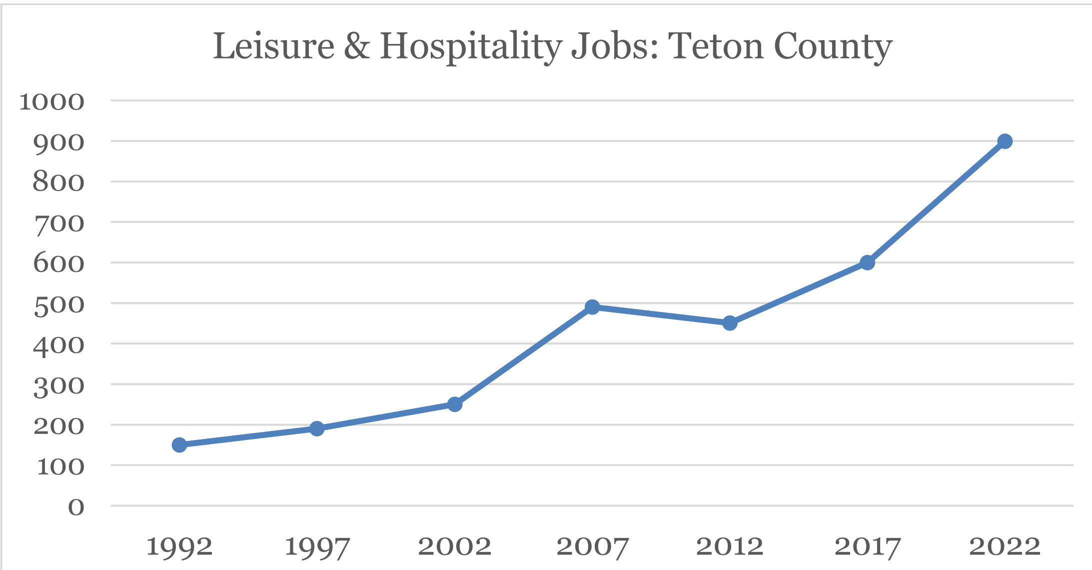
The downside is that non-labor income from outside the county is outcompeting local wages. The economy adjusts to non-wage income levels, pricing out local wage earners, particularly in housing. This is common to most mountain amenity towns. It’s not just tourism dollars, it’s new residents in an entirely different income bracket.



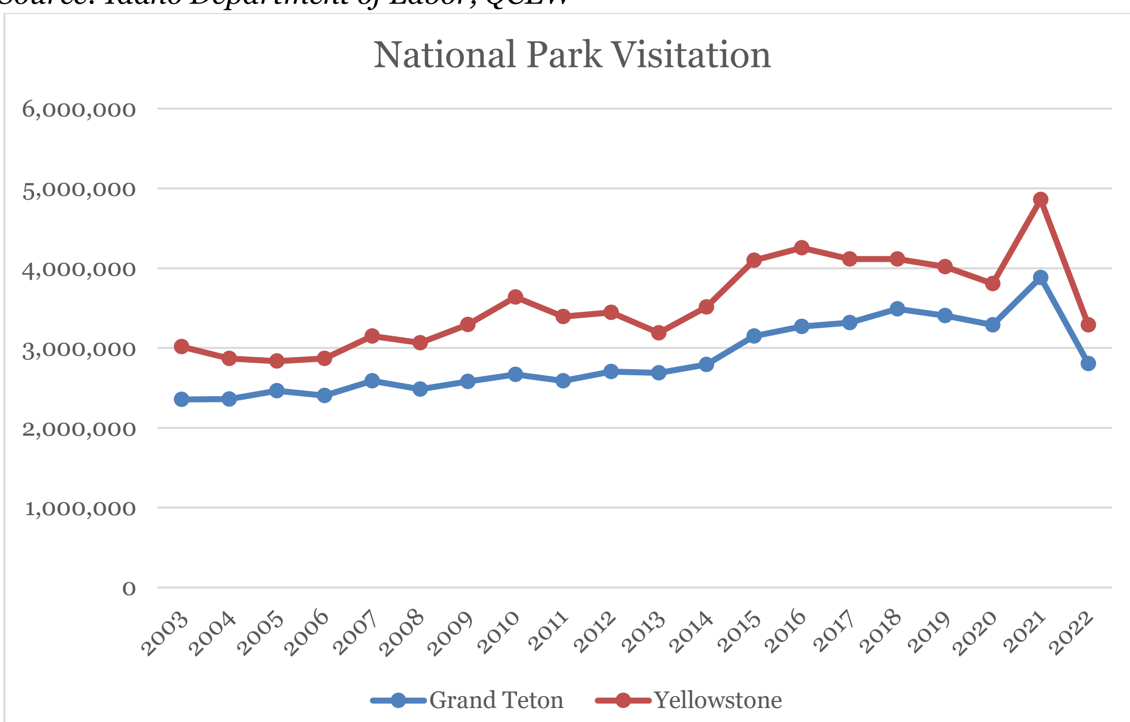


Source: The Charture Institute, Jackson, Wyo.

Tourism
With Jackson Hole 40 minutes away, two major national parks and Bozeman within day-trip distance, and Grand Targhee Resort 12 miles from Driggs, Teton Valley is on a major tourism corridor. Lodging sales grew from $19 million in 2019 to $38 million in 2023, peaking at $41 million in 2021. Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park visitation has increased markedly over the past 10 years, but appears to have peaked in 2021. The current high level of tourist activity in the region suggests that tourism must be managed carefully to avoid residents being crowded and priced out of their own community.



Source: Idaho Department of Labor, QCEW

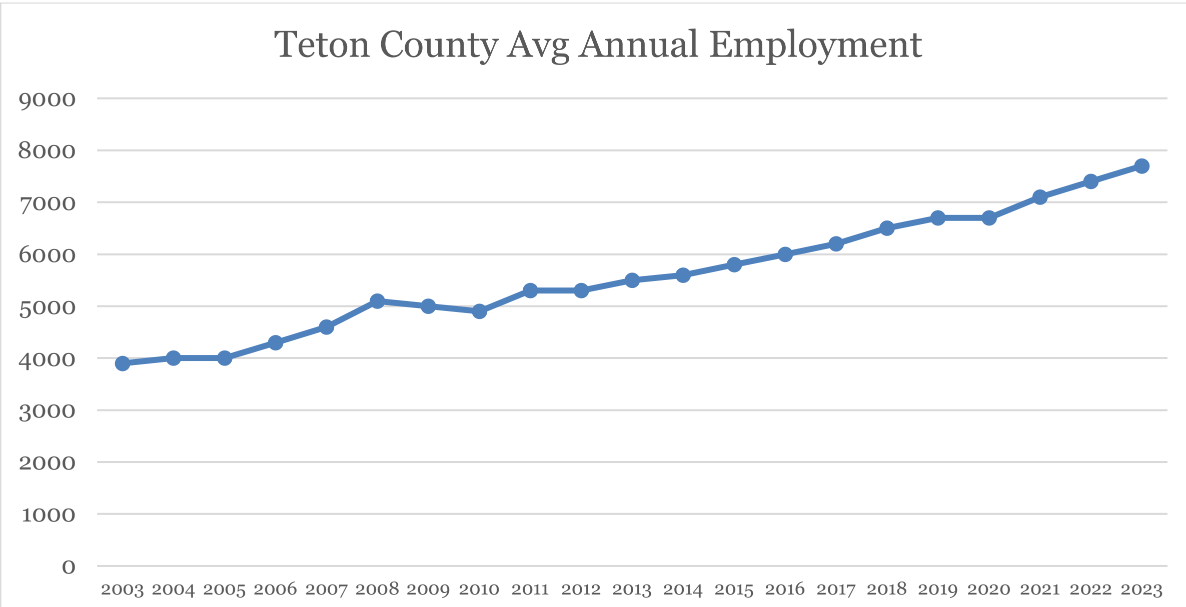


Source: National Park Service

As of October 2023, year-to-date visits have rebounded from 2022. Yellowstone: 4,446,508. Grand Teton: 4,655,546.

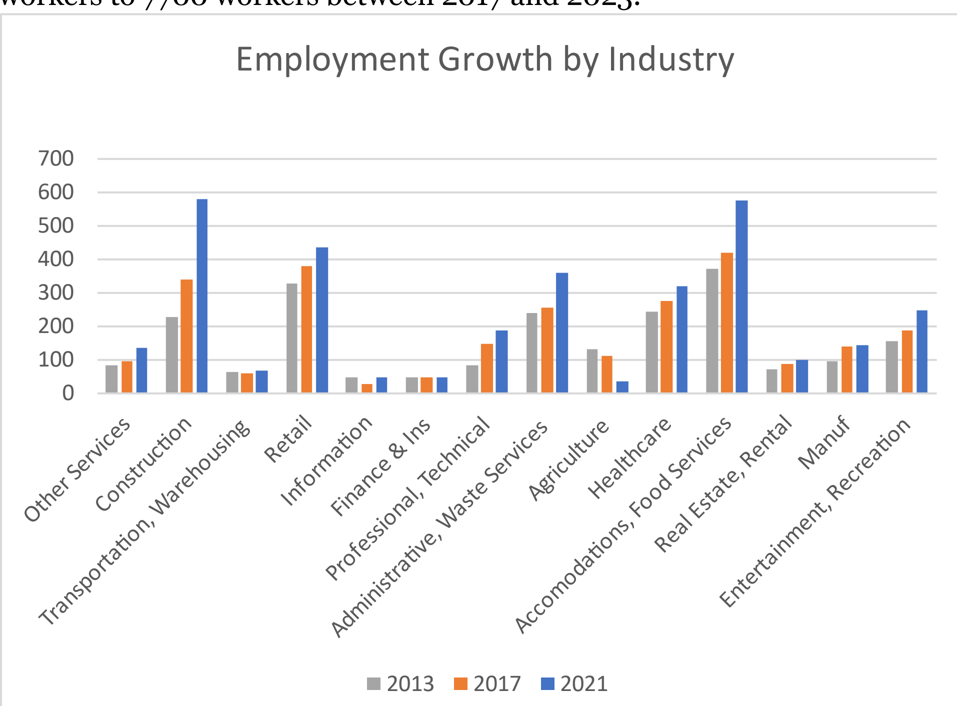
Employment, Regional Influences

It's useful to look back at growth trends during the previous decade. With the exception of agriculture, all other industries have grown their average employment levels. During the 2000s, financial services, information and professional services grew in importance to the regional economy. Companies in these sectors are inherently mobile and are often small businesses. Lifestyle preferences can play a central role in business location. Teton Valley has many assets and offers lifestyles that are attractive to mobile businesses. Tourism also contributed to job growth.

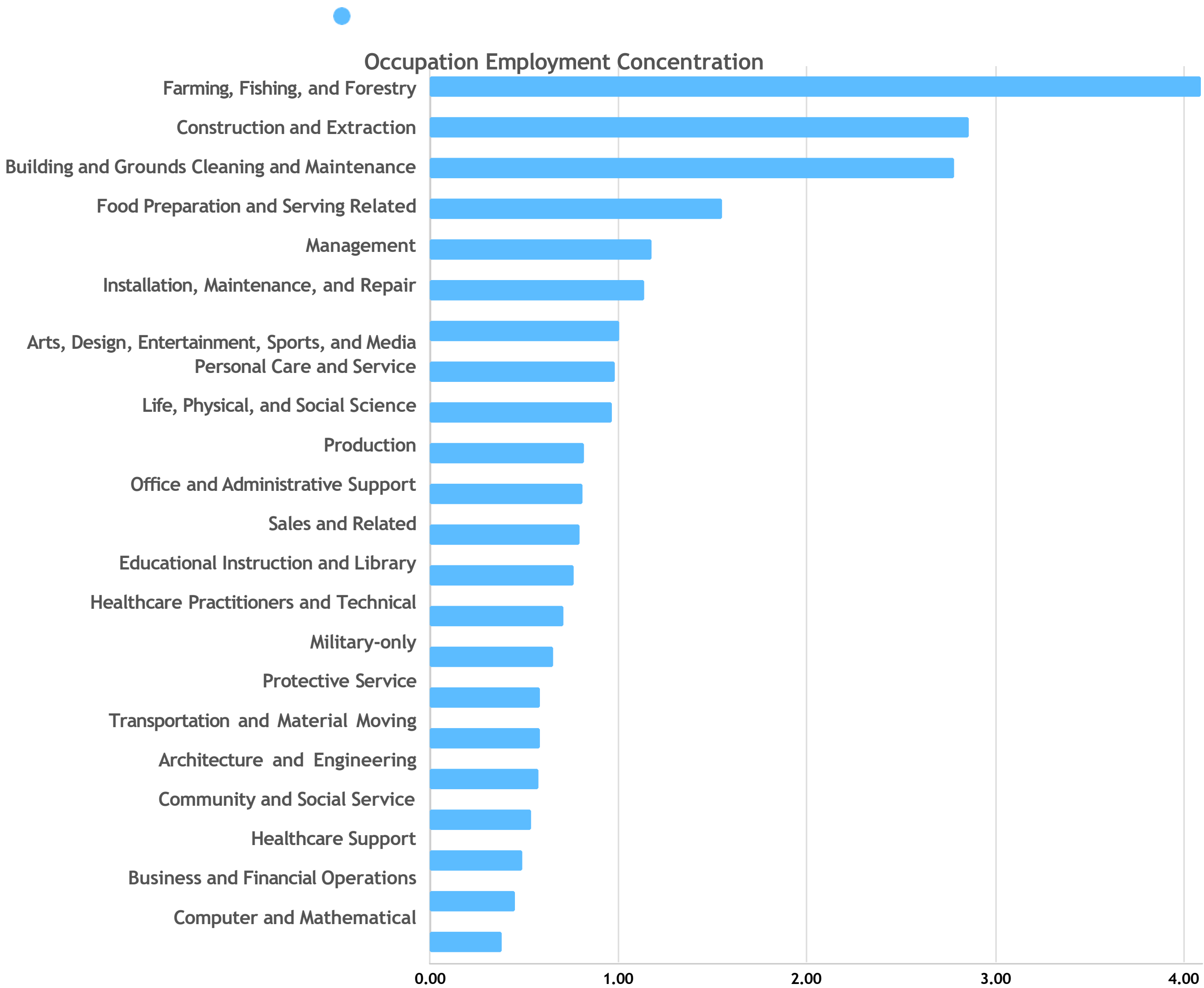


Source: Idaho Department of Labor, QCEW

Annual average employment has grown significantly over the last five years, jumping from 6200 workers to 7700 workers between 2017 and 2023.



Source: Idaho Department of Labor, QCEW


Occupation Employment Concentration
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
Construction and Extraction
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
Food Preparation and Serving Related
Management
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
Personal Care and Service
Life, Physical, and Social Science
Production
Office and Administrative Support
Sales and Related
Educational Instruction and Library
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
Military-only
Protective Service
Transportation and Material Moving
Architecture and Engineering
Community and Social Service
Healthcare Support
Business and Financial Operations
Computer and Mathematical
0.00
1.00
2.00
3.00
4.00

The x axis on the above chart is the location quotient (LQ), an analytical statistic that measures a region's industrial specialization relative to a larger geographic unit (usually the nation). An LQ is computed as an industry's share of a regional total for some economic statistic (earnings, GDP by metropolitan area, employment, etc.) divided by the industry's share of the national total for the same statistic. For example, an LQ of 1.0 in mining means that the region and the nation are equally specialized in mining; while an LQ of 1.8 means that the region has a higher concentration in mining than the nation.

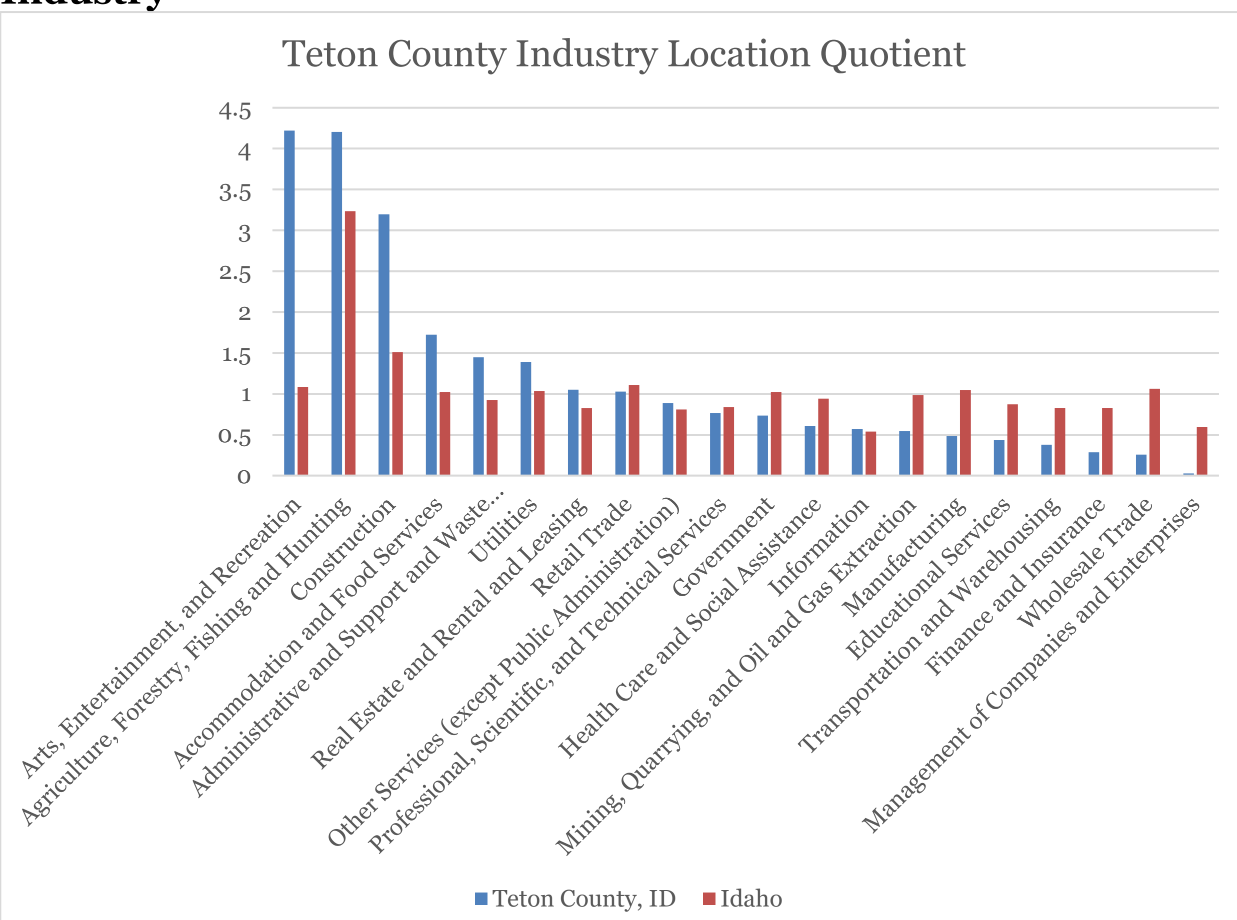
According to Department of Labor's classification, Leisure and Hospitality is the largest employment sector in Teton County, however, development—construction and real estate—when combined, are the dominant employment sector. This reliance on homebuilding makes the Teton Valley economy very vulnerable to a building downturn.

It's difficult to quantify the downstream effects of this reliance. However, as we experienced in 2008, a downturn in development, construction and real estate would drag down the retail and hospitality sectors patronized by locals and imported workers.

This is one of the primary reasons that this plan calls for diversifying the economy.

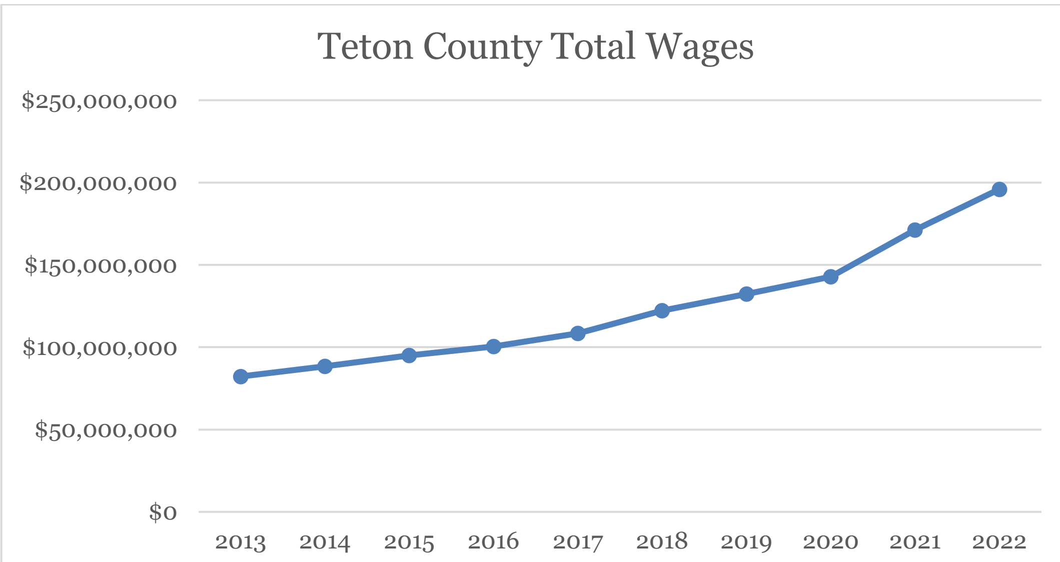
A significant retail challenge is the proximity of Idaho Falls, a regional center with a full array of retail stores, and the ease of internet shopping. Residents will pay more for certain items to enjoy the convenience and social responsibility of shopping locally. But some items can't be found in the valley, or there's the perception that they can be had cheaper elsewhere.

Industry

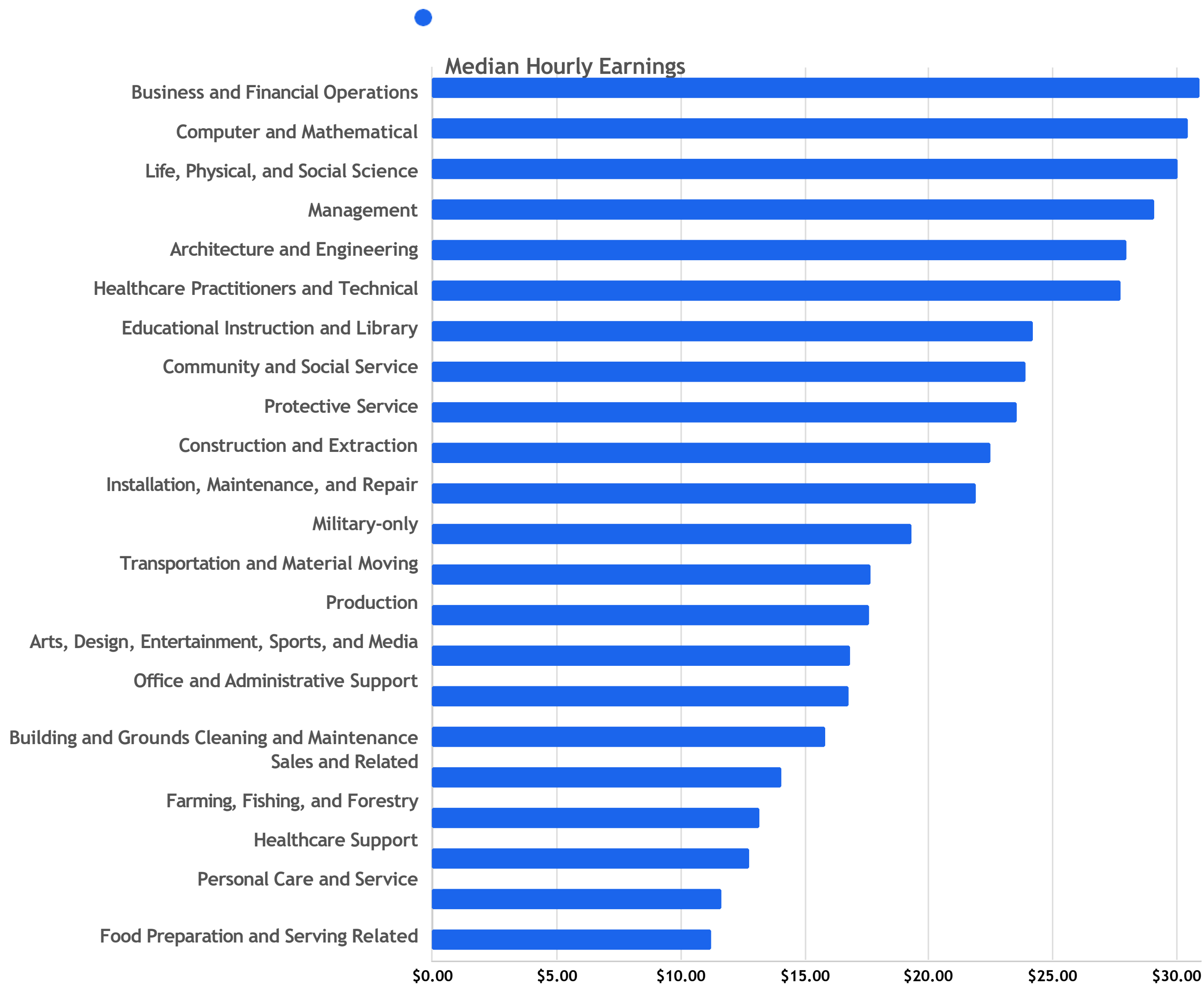


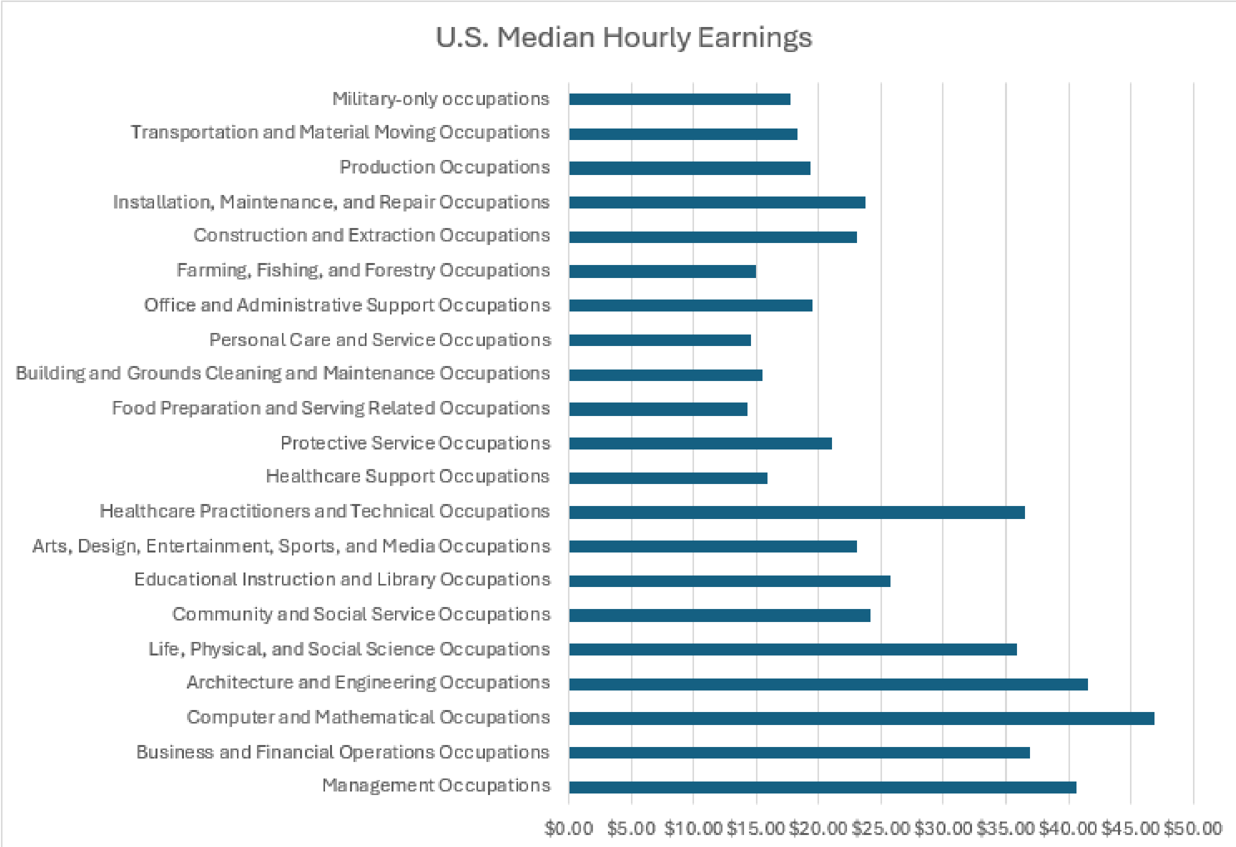
Source: Lightcast, Conference Board Data

The chart above shows location quotients for Teton County industries. This measurement shows the concentration of each industry, based on number of employees compared to the national average. For example, Teton County's recreation industry has a location quotient of 4.25. This means that Teton County has a 425% higher concentration of recreation employees than the national average. This measurement is useful to understand the competitive advantages for a geographic region. The sectors with the highest concentrations typically provide mostly low-wage jobs, as we see below.



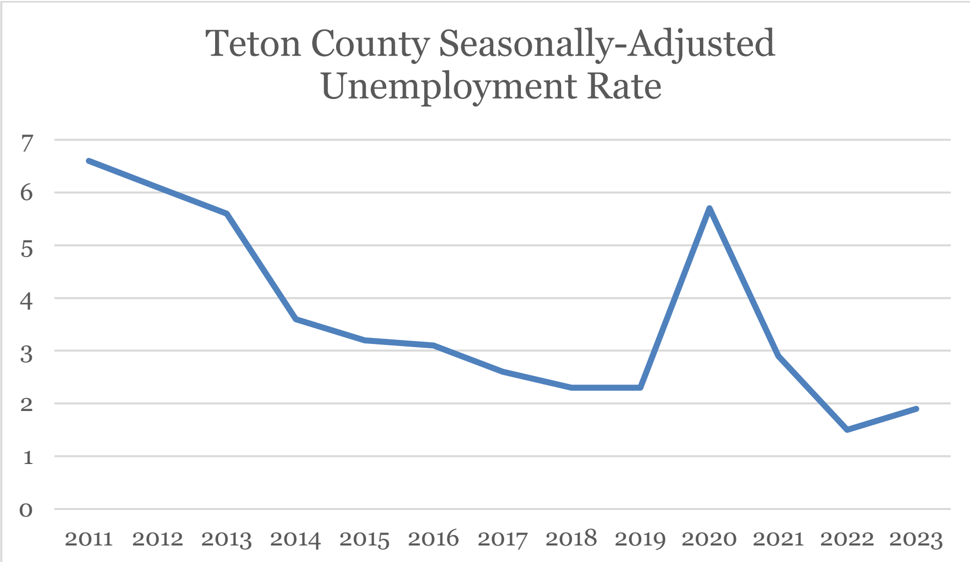
Source: Idaho Department of Labor, QCEW


Median Hourly Earnings
Business and Financial Operations
Computer and Mathematical
Life, Physical, and Social Science
Management
Architecture and Engineering
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
Educational Instruction and Library
Community and Social Service
Protective Service
Construction and Extraction
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
Military-only
Transportation and Material Moving
Production
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
Office and Administrative Support
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
Sales and Related
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
Healthcare Support
Personal Care and Service
Food Preparation and Serving Related
$0.00
$5.00
$10.00
$15.00
$20.00
$25.00
$30.00



We look at average annual wage earnings, which is a reliable indicator of what working people earn, rather than median household income, which includes non-wage income such as investments, pensions and Social Security.

Average annual wage earnings for Teton County in 2022 are $44,000, up 20% from 2010. That gain was negated by 34 percent inflation during the same period. Compared to other counties and the U.S., Teton County sits quite low because of its high concentration of jobs in the low-paying tourism sector. By comparison, Ada County's average wage income is $64,000, Blaine County's is $73,000, and average wage in the U.S. is $67,000. Note that tip income is not included.



Source: Idaho Department of Labor, QCEW

The low unemployment rate in Teton County is positive in most respects, but many businesses can't fill open positions.

Taxes

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Revenue, Millions $	5.4	5.6	5.7	6.3	6.6

Source: Teton County Taxing District Levies and Amounts—includes all taxing districts, i.e. Fire, Library, etc.

The chart above depicts the actual property tax revenue collected for Teton County. The county's actual tax revenue has increased incrementally since 2018, sitting at $6.6 million in 2022. However, because of state-mandated limits, county tax revenue does not keep up with the ever-increasing population and demand for services.

Carrying capacity, services

Additional work needs to be done to determine the carrying capacity (population density and resource availability) of the valley. This will help prioritize the services needed to support that population, e.g. childcare, education, healthcare, emergency services and hard infrastructure such as roads, water delivery and waste treatment.

Housing Challenges

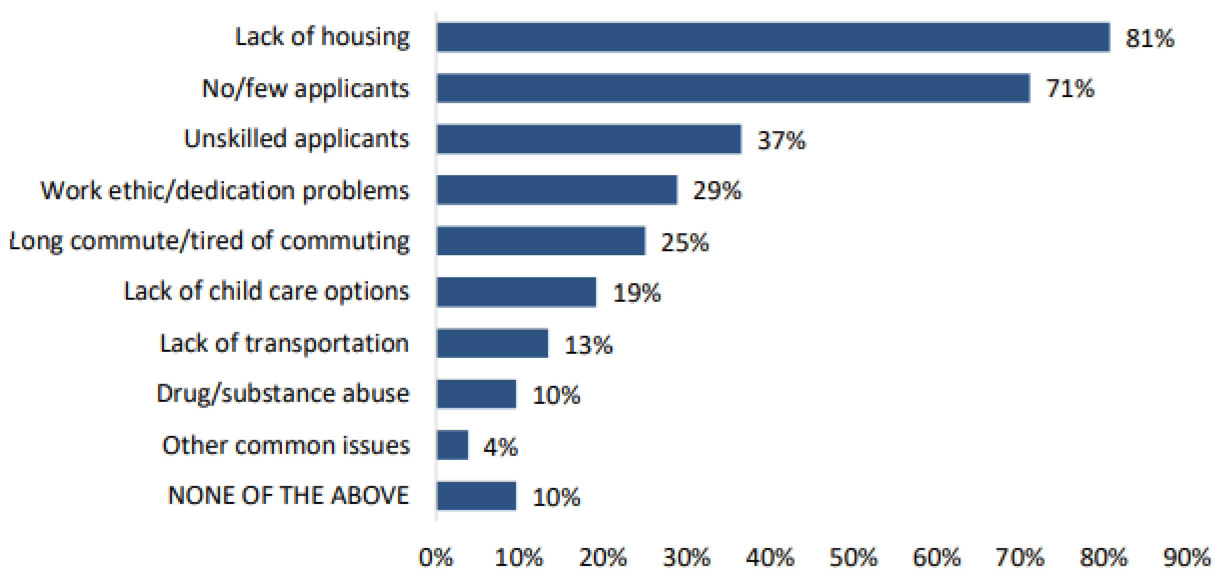
The 2022 Teton County Housing Needs Analysis identified that the number of jobs increased five percent each year since 2015, while the housing supply increased by just 2.1 percent each year during the same period. During this time, home prices increased significantly. Based on an analysis of Multiple Listings Service (MLS) data, the median home price of recently constructed homes that sold between 2018 through 2022 was $668,000. Looking only at 2021 and 2022, the median price of newly constructed homes increased by 37 percent to $918,000, which requires an income of approximately 300% of the median household income in Teton County, Idaho.

Many homes have gone from long-term rentals available to workers and residents to short-term vacation rentals. There are now approximately 1,100 such short-term rental properties. This dynamic has removed many properties from the long-term rental pool and has been a significant factor in rising home prices. Where a home used to be primarily about shelter, in Teton Valley and other resort communities, homes are viewed as profit-making investment opportunities.

Note that the data included in this section is a snapshot in time and is periodically updated by the Teton County Housing Authority. The seven-member Teton County Joint Housing Authority was created in 2016 by the cities and county by resolution in accordance with Idaho Statutes (Title 50, Chapter 19; and Title 31, Chapter 42) after considering data from the 2014 Teton Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Commissioners were appointed (2 each by Teton County, Driggs and Victor, and 1 by Tetonia) to the board in 2019 following the adoption of the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan, which identified a functioning housing authority as an important component for implementing most of the recommended housing strategies.

When employers were asked in 2021 about issues they experienced when finding or keeping qualified employees, the lack of housing was the number one issue (81%). This has affected local government, which had struggled to recruit and retain critical workers. The challenges of long commutes into Teton Valley is likely because their Teton Valley wages are not enough to afford to live here.

Issues experienced in finding or keeping qualified employees:



Source: 2021 Employer survey

<u>Employee turnover and difficulty recruiting.</u> About 76% of employers in the county responding to the survey had employees leave and 78% had potential hires decline positions due to the inability to locate suitable housing in the area.

- The number of employees that left employment equates to 5% of jobs in the county; meaning 5% of jobs were vacated and had to be refilled. Candidates were found for another 12% of jobs, but declined offers of employment.

- Turnover is costly to the business. Aside from affecting business hours and operations (as discussed above), it costs money to recruit and train new employees. Some studies have estimated that it costs 20% of an employee's salary to replace that employee - costs that quickly add up with repeated turnover.

"How many people, in your estimation did not accept a job or left your employment in the past 12 months because they lacked or could not find housing they could afford in the area?"

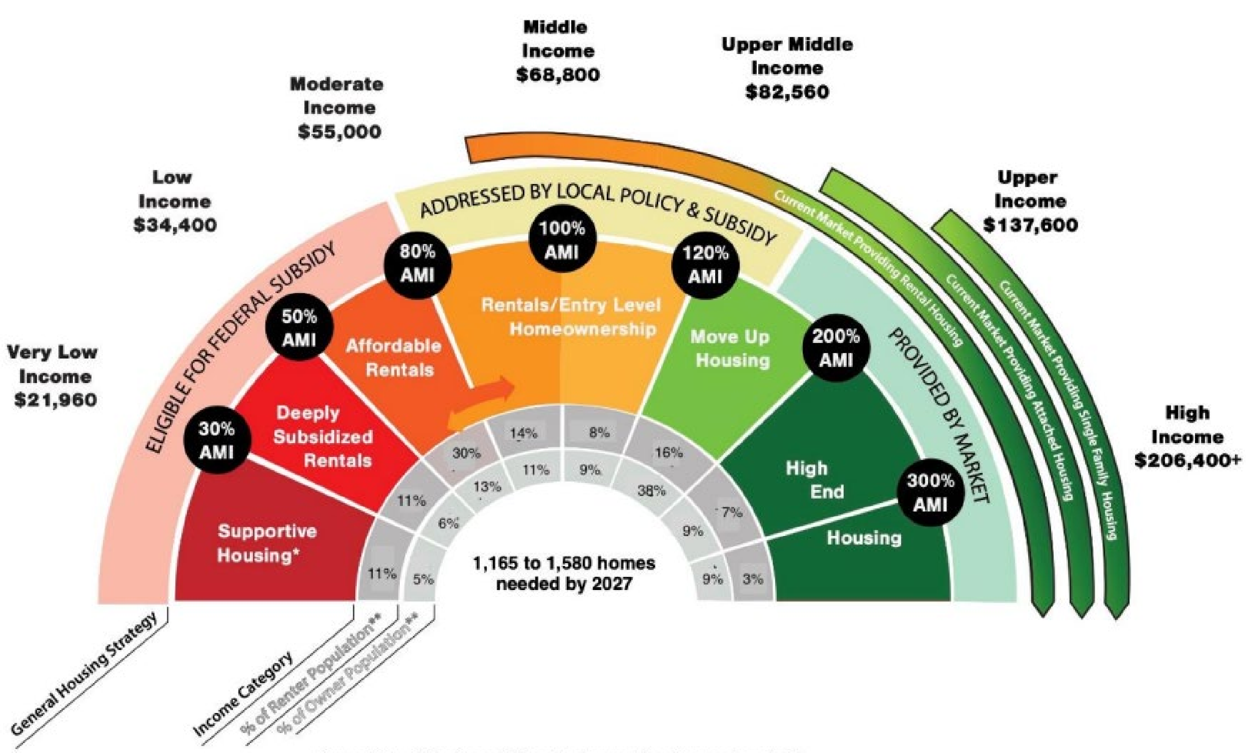
	% of employers experiencing the problem	Average # of employees lost per business	% of total jobs in the county represented
Employee(s) left	76%	2.3	5%
Potential hire did not accept job	78%	5.7	12%

Source: 2021 Employer survey

Impacts of new jobs and new residents

Under a projection of 4.8% annual job growth (2012-2019 saw 5.3% annual growth), Teton County, Idaho, will need 1,165 new housing units for its workforce (1580 if Jackson commuters are accounted for) by 2027. Approximately 60%, or 700 units will need to be priced below market. Most of the below market housing will be rentals. The spectrum of housing needs is shown in the graphic below.

Teton County ID Spectrum of Housing Needs (January 2022)



Source: Dept. of Housing and Urban Development for a 3-person household
**Source: Blue Ribbon Demographics, LLC; 2021 Employee/Household survey

Development-specific workforce housing needs have been developed by the Teton County Idaho Joint Housing Authority in its 2023 Employee Generation Study produced by Economic and Planning Systems, Inc.

Table 1 Summary of Commercial Employee Generation Results

Households Generated by New Commercial Development	Office	Industrial	Retail/ Service/ Restaurant	Lodging	Institutional
Total Employee Households per 10,000 sq.ft.	**13.1**	**5.8**	**10.4**	**5.8**	**13.1**
Total Employee Households per 1,000 sq.ft.	**1.31**	**0.58**	**1.04**	**0.58**	**1.31**
≤ 50% MFI (Very Low)	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.41	0.00
> 50% MFI, ≤ 80% MFI (Low)	0.75	0.09	0.96	0.12	0.29
> 80% MFI, ≤ 120% MFI (Moderate)	0.20	0.36	0.03	0.05	0.83
> 120% MFI, ≤ 298% MFI (Workforce)	0.30	0.07	0.03	0.00	0.18
> 298% MFI (Market Rate)	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Employee Households	**1.31**	**0.58**	**1.04**	**0.58**	**1.31**

Sources: Economic & Planning Systems

Table 2 Summary of Residential Employee Generation Results

Households Generated per 100 Units	Multifamily	Single Family	Resort Residential
Total Households Generated	**19.9**	**27.2**	**48.5**
Target Income Range			
≤ 50% MFI (Very Low)	0.4	0.5	1.0
> 50% MFI, ≤ 80% MFI (Low)	12.3	16.9	30.0
> 80% MFI, ≤ 120% MFI (Moderate)	3.4	4.6	8.6
> 120% MFI, ≤ 298% MFI (Workforce)	3.8	5.1	8.8
> 298% MFI (Workforce)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**19.9**	**27.2**	**48.5**

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

Challenges

As noted in the Housing Needs Assessment, the magnitude of the issue requires a robust and regional response from all sectors of the community (public, private, non-profit) working collaboratively to engage community support and accelerate housing solutions. Simply building more market housing will not solve the problems as the market is not providing housing affordable to most of the workforce and with each new market-rate housing development there are new demands for below-market workforce units, as noted above from the Employee Generation Study. Funding is required to fill the gap between construction costs and affordability, and that funding is the primary challenge in being able to meet our housing needs.

It's becoming clear that government alone cannot catch up with the affordable housing shortage, although public strategies and funding are useful in mitigating the problem. Public/private partnerships are essential in this effort.

As in other factors, there are no easy answers. Among the tough policy questions:

- What is success? An endless series of affordable housing initiatives? Building our way out of the problem? Is that possible?
- Is it the community's goal to house everyone? This suggests that we will continue to let business growth drive the demand for housing without regard for resource limitations. Is that the way we want to go?
- Whose job is it to build housing? Does the private sector have the interest and ability? Or do they want to focus on high-end homes? And if government is looked to, the community needs to ask itself the degree to which they wish to subsidize private business.

Successes to Date
The Joint Housing Authority and other public entities have begun to deliver. This year, people have moved into the Depot Square affordable apartments, which is a collaborative project with Northwest Realty Capital Corporation, the City of Driggs, and the Driggs Urban Renewal Agency. Driggs is actively working on an employee housing program to attract employees and provide reasonable housing.

In Victor, the Sherman Park project will provide 90 units with 55 units in the affordable classification of 80—120 percent of average monthly income.

In the private sector, Grand Targhee built 96 units of employee housing in Driggs. Large agricultural operations typically offer workforce housing. Recognizing that no housing equals no employees, numerous other businesses in the valley provide subsidized housing.

The economics of the valley can’t provide a job and a house for everyone who wants to live here, however dense city zoning and public/private partnerships can make employee and affordable options more feasible.

Child Care Challenges

To be best prepared to enter school, every child deserves access to quality early care and learning. In Idaho, because there are no state-funded early learning opportunities, families must rely on privately owned businesses which are limited in number and high in cost, which restricts access for many families. Families in rural communities, those with low-income, and households where English is not the primary language, face additional barriers to accessing high quality early care and learning.

Compounding the problem is the shift to a four-day school week, which leaves many parents with no options on Friday. Some children who rely on school food aid may go hungry. And summer care continues to be a problem.

As with housing, the answer is a combination of private and public efforts.

According to the USDA Rural Development Joint Resource Guide, there are several factors that create challenges to families in rural areas seeking child care. These include: fewer choices, limited public transportation, a lower population density (fewer options), fewer skilled service providers, and lower incomes (to afford care). Additionally, the landscape in Teton Valley has other challenges that are like other communities in the mountain west, namely a dearth in available workforce as well as limited availability of affordable properties for both families and child care providers, current and potential, to afford to rent or to purchase.

The lack of child care facilities motivated local leaders from nonprofit organizations, and representatives from county and municipal government and TSD #401 to establish the Collaborative for Early Learning. The Collaborative engaged community members in three surveys in the Fall of 2022 to learn more about the child care crisis: a Family Survey, a Provider Survey, and a Business Survey.

Family Survey respondents across all groups indicated that families need greater access to affordable early care and education opportunities. Regardless of the average annual income of respondents, finding child care presents a large challenge due to the extremely limited options, especially for the 0-2 age range. Many respondents also indicated that some current options do not support the hours needed for working families, especially for the families that commute to Jackson.

Sixty percent of children aged two and under are being taken care of in their family's home with only 24% of parents making that choice intentionally. 32% of parents do not have another option and 30% of parents keep children home because it is the option that is affordable for their family.

Current providers reported significant challenges to providing care for children in the **Provider Survey**. In-home providers (55%) reported they would like to expand their services, but have been unable to find a building that is affordable to rent or purchase, which limits their capacity, as well as their ability to expand services to more families. They also expressed that if they were able to expand, they are concerned they would not be able to find and retain reliable and high-quality employees or be able to pay a livable wage. For licensed providers, charging enough per child to provide reasonable wages for employees makes it unaffordable for many families. A consistent theme is that to keep their services affordable for care, their profits are low, which limits our ability to maintain and recruit new providers in the valley.

The **Business Survey** is representative of both small and large businesses, including non-profits, in Teton Valley. Employers believe child care is vital to our community's economy, and that the lack of access and affordability of child care in the valley is increasing employee stress and decreasing productivity. 30% of employees are frequently missing work because of child care issues and it is difficult to attract new employees because of the lack of child care. 5% of employers are already offering financial assistance to employees for child care and 35% would be interested in learning about more ways to do so.

One view is that subsidizing child care would provide a much greater economic benefit to the valley than subsidizing housing. By subsidizing child care the county/city/non-profits etc. would encourage more families to move to the area. Families are typically more "sticky" to a community and tend to get more involved as their kids move through the education system.

Employers will be key allies in this work. The findings suggest that a large portion of employers in the valley would be interested in support from the Collaborative regarding solutions that decrease employee stress around childcare issues and increase the reliability and availability of employees.

Working toward solutions:

The Teton Valley Collaborative for Early Learning obtained a $1,028,000 Idaho Workforce Development Council Child Care Expansion Grant in March of 2023, to move and renovate a donated 4,000 square foot residential home on Teton School District property to be the future home of a center for early care and learning for 70+ additional seats. TREC is the grant administrator for this project, and there are many community partners that are working together to bring this project to fruition, including a local general contractor, Wilkinson-Montesano, who is providing their work pro bono, as well as several other local contractors that are providing their services at a reduced cost and at an accelerated time frame.

School district properties are especially well-suited to this purpose.

The Collaborative is working with other community partners to maintain existing child care seats as well as support child care expansion in Teton Valley. The Collaborative is also working with other providers to support them in their needs, including connections with Idaho STARS, the state licensing agency, as well as connecting them to outside support and resources to provide high quality care.

The Collaborative will also work with local businesses who are interested in learning how to incorporate more family friendly business practices, to support working parents and retain this critical part of our workforce. There will also be ongoing collaboration with county and municipal government representatives on zoning and land use regulations, tax incentives, adaptive reuse of existing properties, as well as diversifying funding.

Strategic Questions

- What are the assumptions underlying the need for child care? They range from affordable housing to having two working parents. What are the implications of that formulation for the community, the kids, etc.?
- We should be asking what kind of community is created when our focus is on addressing/prioritizing business's needs and interests.

Ecosystem Implications

Teton Valley occupies a unique position within the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. The topography, open space and water resources support a unique array of wild animals, as well as providing sustenance for humans. Preserving this resource is a Teton County priority.

Excerpts from the Teton County Comprehensive plan:

Our Community Envisions a Sustainable Future for Teton County
- *Preserve natural resources and a healthy environment, which are essential for creating viable future economic and recreational opportunities for all users.*
- *Maintain, nurture and enhance the rural character and heritage of Teton Valley.*
- *Preserve our rural character and heritage and help local agricultural industries flourish*
- *Attract businesses that are economically and environmentally friendly*

Reliance on real estate and construction as economic drivers adversely impacts the local ecosystem: wildlife habitat, migration, water supply and quality will be severely degraded. If we ruin the ecosystem, everything else--the community and the economy, for both today and tomorrow--is forever compromised.

The narrative below is from the Friends of the Teton River, which was founded in 2001 by a diverse group of stakeholders, including farmers, anglers, scientists, agency personnel, and conservation interests who were concerned by declines in water quality and the Teton River fishery.

Teton Watershed Ecosystem Challenges:

Recreation: The Teton River has experienced significant growth in recreational use in recent years. The Teton Waterways Recreation Advisory Committee at Teton County is currently working to meet the need for recreation management on this resource. One area of discussion is how to quantify the impact on the ecosystem, including displacement of wildlife, impact to riparian area health and degradation of the streambed that supports aquatic life.

According to counts conducted by Teton County and Idaho Fish and Game, visitor trips on the river increased from 51,992 in 2018 to 65,839 in 2021 and 65,753 in 2022.

Water availability (Quantity): Across the Teton watershed, there is a finite amount of water that is derived from annual precipitation then translated to surface and groundwater supply used by residents for agriculture, consumption through residential and municipal wells, and to sustain wetlands, streams, rivers, fish and wildlife.

A growing population and a changing climate means increasing uncertainty on the amount water that will be available for these different uses. It is likely that we will see reduced water availability for all water users as the supply is outpaced by the demand, or the pattern/amount of supply changes with climate. This water supply is critical to fish and wildlife as well as human populations in the watershed and we will need to work for creative water conservation/management strategies in our watershed to ensure a water availability for all stakeholders.

State water managers are looking at the supply and demand of available water in our watershed (Upper Snake) and recognizing that we have hit a point where there is no extra water to be allocated to users. We have to use the amount that is available now and start working on strategies for conservation.

Water Quality: Water quality is impacted as we see continued growth in our watershed. We experience water quality contamination through point sources (like the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant) and non-point sources (like fertilizer runoff from agriculture and residential lawns, leaky septic systems). Currently the main concerns are nitrates and bacteria in surface and groundwater and sediment in rivers and streams.

The Driggs Wastewater Treatment Plant is a good example of a water quality challenge directly linked to growth in the valley. From the City of Driggs website https://driggsidaho.org/departments/public-works/wwtp :

"The current plant has historically failed to meet standards to mitigate the ammonia level in discharge water feeding into a small creek that feeds into the Teton River. Now, as of 2022, we are approaching the maximum loading capacity on the other classifications, thus the current plant needs to be expanded or a new plant constructed that operates on a different treatment process."

Nitrates are a growing problem across our watershed and primarily originate from agricultural runoff and improperly maintained septic systems. With continued growth and development, the influence from septic systems is a concern in the future.

Floodplain protection: The FEMA remapping of our floodplains for their National Floodplain Insurance Program (NFIP) has been going on for over a decade but should be completed soon. The proposed floodplains can be found here on the County's website: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e0a933224a5c4c0387d055c0c942cbec/page/Draft-Floodplains/. Unfortunately, the floodplain map is only a snapshot in time and can be quickly outdated as our stream channels migrate, fill in, and/or are restored. The concern is that severe flooding risk has increased with climate change and will continue to increase and without adequate protection of floodplains we will see expensive damage to infrastructure, most of which the taxpayer will be on the hook for. Floodplains are shock absorbers for floods. The more floodplain that can be protected the less economic hardship we will endure and the less expense to the taxpayer for costly repairs. One of the biggest hurdles we face as a community is to come up with funds to purchase and protect floodplain areas from willing landowners. This model has worked well on Teton Creek with the purchase of the Green Ranch several years ago. See the Teton Creek Corridor Project https://www.tetonwater.org/featured-work/teton-creek-corridor-project/ .

Wetland Protection: The Supreme Court gutted the Clean Water Act (CWA) wetland protection in 2023. This will now allow people to fill in about half the nation's previously protected wetlands. This will have devastating impacts on water quality, flood mitigation (loss of flood water retention) and wildlife habitat and will have significantly negative impacts to our economy as we have to deal with contaminated water and increase flooding issues. The loss in wildlife habitat will have dramatic impacts on our recreation economy.

Stream Restoration: Friends of the Teton River and other local NGOs such as Teton Regional Land Trust are working with landowners, farmers and ranchers to include and improve land use practices to improve our waterways for farming, ranching and recreation along with improving habitat for fish and wildlife. This Farms and Fish initiative has completed several projects that illustrate how we can improve land use practices such as grazing opportunities for cattle ranching while improving the river (see Buxton Park Project here: https://www.tetonwater.org/featured-work/bates-public-access/) The community needs to work together to ensure that we have healthy streams for all our needs including water for municipalities, recreation, farming, ranching and fish and wildlife. This goal seems lofty, but it is completely attainable with community participation and creative planning.

Fisheries: Our native fish including Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT), Mountain Whitefish and Green Sucker (newly identified species) could be listed as endangered species at any time and are currently considered species of concern by multiple agencies. As a community we have banded together to improve and project YCT populations and may need to do more in the future to improve and protect Whitefish and Green Sucker populations. As we do our part to conserve our native fish populations it is likely that our community will be treated kindly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) if one or more of these species is listed as an Endangered Species. The concern is that given dwindling native fish populations across their range and threats from climate change, non-native fish competition and introgression, rapid development and land use practices, one or more of our native species could get listed and if we don't do our part the USFWS could shut down irrigation and fishing for a period of time to allow the fisheries to rebound which would have severe economic impacts on our community.

Wildlife

Intact natural habitat is the key to sustaining terrestrial fauna. There are numerous ways to ensure this, from zoning regulations to conservation easements.

The regional leader in this effort is the Teton Regional Land Trust. Their efforts to work with landowners are summarized here: https://tetonlandtrust.org/conserve/stewardship/

Significance of Teton County, Idaho for Fish and Wildlife
A Summary of Fish and Wildlife Resources in Teton County, Idaho
Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Revised 2022

Teton County supports fish and wildlife resources critical to the cultural and economic well-being of local residents, and provides habitats of regional and continental significance for several high priority species.

Much of this habitat is on private lands which provides connectivity to seasonal habitats on public lands. Recent telemetry data collected by Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) documents interstate mule deer movements between Teton County and Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Parks. In 2004 the National Audubon Society and IDFG formally designated Teton Basin as a State Important Bird Area (IBA). "The IBA program is a global effort to identify areas that are most important for maintaining bird populations, and it focuses conservation efforts at protecting these sites." (Audubon Society 2006).

The Teton River, from the center of Teton Valley to Teton Canyon, and Bitch Creek on the County's northern boundary, support a highly prized sport fishery and comprises one of several important strongholds for Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the upper portions of the Snake River watershed.

In a comprehensive assessment of ecological values throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE), the Teton River Basin was ranked as the highest private lands conservation priority among 43 such sites within the entire GYE for its combination of ecological irreplaceability and vulnerability. This assessment considered three primary aspects of biological diversity: 1) rare and sensitive plant and animal species and populations; 2) representation of a full spectrum of vegetative, abiotic, and aquatic habitat features; and 3) support for a select group of large, wide ranging focal species such as elk.

Lower elevation lands in the GYE have some of the most productive habitats, but also face the most uncertainty related to long-term persistence; particularly on private lands. Also, it highlights the importance of sustaining fish and wildlife habitats in Teton County in order to maintain the ecological integrity of the GYE.

Among Teton County's most notable ecological features are its prominent wetlands. The National Wetlands Inventory classifies 26,760 acres of Teton County (9% of total area) as wetlands. These wetlands include cottonwood forests along streams, expansive areas of wet meadows, emergent marshes, sloughs, shrub/scrub willow thickets, and fens.

The Wildlife Report frequently refers to certain habitats as "ecotones," transitional areas between ecological communities or habitats that can occur at multiple spatial scales and encompass the transitions between two or more natural or human-influenced habitats. For example, an ecotone exists where forest land transitions into mountain shrub or sagebrush steppe; or where the Teton River is bordered by grain fields.

Numerous studies have shown that wildlife species richness and abundances tend to peak in ecotone areas. Some researchers argue that ecotones deserve high conservation priority because ecotones are often small in size (relative to the larger landscape) and rich in wildlife habitat value.

The main potential impacts to fish and wildlife populations from human development are habitat loss, degradation, and/or fragmentation. Habitat and open space conservation of ecologically valuable open space is a key strategy Teton County leaders and planners should consider to conserve wildlife habitat. Conserving habitat is essential to maintain fish and wildlife populations. Habitat is a combination of food, water, shelter, and space arranged to meet the species' needs.

Space is an often overlooked aspect of wildlife habitat. Most people generally understand wildlife's requirements for food, water, and shelter, but the concept of space can be abstract and complex. Wildlife need space to forage, reproduce, rest, travel, and hide. In general, larger areas of undeveloped habitat better avoid disturbing or displacing many species.

Based on the fish and wildlife resources in Teton County and covered in this report, we suggest that some of the most important areas to focus planning for wildlife would be:

- Teton County canyon lands including lower Badger and Bitch Creeks
- The boundary area of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest (Teton Front, Horseshoe Canyon, etc.)
- Teton River corridor (valley reach)
- Fluvial Cottonwood corridors
- Large valley wetland complexes on the east side of the Teton River

Wildfire Risk

Teton Valley is surrounded on three sides by heavily forested slopes. With our dry, high-desert environment, catastrophic wild fires are inevitable. Local fire officials and federal land managers have worked for years to mitigate these risks, but they are increasing as more homes are built in or near forests.

The *Wildfire Risk to Communities* website, https://wildfirerisk.org/ is designed to help community leaders such as elected officials, community planners, and fire managers understand how risk varies across a state, region, or county and prioritize actions to mitigate risk. This is the first time that maps and data about community wildfire risk are available nationwide. As a national project, *Wildfire Risk to Communities* is best for comparing risk among rather than within communities, and it is not designed for considering risk at the local, neighborhood, or individual home scale.

The *Wildfire Risk to Communities* team is led by the USDA Forest Service: National Headquarters – Fire and Aviation Management, and Rocky Mountain Research Station's Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory. Pyrologix and Headwaters Economics are partners in developing and delivering the data to the public.

https://wildfirerisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WRC-Info-Sheet-2020-04.pdf

Health Care Challenges (from Teton Valley Health Care)

Teton County Idaho has experienced a great deal of growth over the last decade. In response, Teton Valley Health Care (TVHC) has expanded its services, with additional providers and new equipment and technology, to meet the needs of our growing community. This has been challenging for TVHC as they still recovering from a pandemic that so negatively affected our community's physical and mental health, and the financial health of rural healthcare systems.

New services and procedures require a large financial investment in replacement and new equipment and technology. With the assistance of its re-established foundation, TVHC has been able to provide what is necessary to fully implement new services.

With the addition of providers and services comes space requirements. Along with the routine updating required for the aging facility, to bring it current with healthcare standards and requirements, TVHC needs to expand the facility. An initial phase one expansion is estimated at $17-20 million.

TVHC is a small, rural Critical Access Hospital (CAH). The business model for CAHs is designed for financial survivability, not growth and expansion. TVHC like CAHs nationwide operates on smaller margins than larger suburban and urban hospitals, due to several factors, including break-even government insurance, low patient volumes, and a high percentage of uninsured and underinsured patients.

Since COVID-19 and 2020, the financial landscape for rural healthcare has worsened. Costs have increased while revenues continue decreasing. The Idaho Hospital Association reports that this year, 50% of not-for-profit hospitals in Idaho are operating on margins of less than 1%. Half of rural hospitals in the state have less than one hundred days cash on hand.

And there are more threats looming for rural hospitals like TVHC in Idaho like removing property tax exemption for non-profit hospitals in Idaho or allowing the Department of Health and Welfare to tax hospitals to fund Medicaid. Legislation like this would be devastating to TVHC.

Teton Valley Health Care is making every effort to establish and maintain a sound financial position and is making progress. The overwhelming challenge is the need for expansion of the facility, without cash reserves and very limited ability to borrow.

Valley of the Tetons Library

The valley's library an educational asset, economic driver, and epicenter for Teton County.

The current library branch in Driggs occupies a 4,550 square foot facility that is rented from two out-of-state landlords in three adjacent spaces. This facility does not provide adequate space for library programs, resources, or community events, and continues to face dramatic rent increases, leaks, heating problems, and mold that disrupt library operations. A new, permanent facility will provide an intentionally designed space that supports 21st century literacy needs for all patrons (e.g., free Wi-Fi, meeting space for groups, telehealth, and tele-education; digital/technology support, loaner laptops and hotspots, and audio studio; tools, seed library, and kitchen appliances; and sewing stations).

Other Constraints

Rapid growth over the past ten years has stretched the capacity of critical resources, services and infrastructure, including:

- Water quality, quantity, distribution capacity

- Sewage treatment
- Schools
- Fire/EMS
- Sheriff
- Roads

Given these constraints, it’s critical that economic growth provide the revenue to allow these services to respond to increasing demand.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

Surveys and anecdotal evidence indicate that most Teton Valley citizens want to balance economic prosperity with preserving the historical, cultural and environmental values that make the community unique.

One could argue that values are more important than the economy, but one does not exist without the other. Low unemployment and rising wages are key economic success indicators, while habitat conversion, rising population, traffic and resource consumption rates are among the metrics used to understand the success of adhering to community values.

The SWOT analysis below is the strategic balance sheet of the Teton Valley economy. Valley leaders must understand the external and internal contexts and develop strategies that link the two for an effective response to changes in the environment.

Strengths **(Characteristics that we already have that give us an advantage)**	**Weaknesses** **(characteristics that place us at a disadvantage)**
- Natural scenic beauty - Diverse, quality recreational opportunities - Unique community character—combination of agricultural heritage, outdoor recreation, arts, small town feel - High quality of life - Availability of health care - General aviation airport, with 7,200 ft. runway - Proximity to Jackson Hole, Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks - Geographic isolation - Low taxes - Multiple high-speed internet options - Live/Work and industrial development opportunities	- Natural resource and infrastructure limitations - Bedroom community - Limited tax base—mostly residential, not much industrial, small population - Differential community vision and priorities—some want growth, others want no growth, for example - Geographic isolation—high transport costs - High cost of housing - Limited workforce - Negative perceptions of public school system - Seasonal fluctuation in commercial activity - Lack of manufacturing space
Opportunities **(external elements that we can exploit to our advantage)**	**Threats** **(external elements that can hinder our objectives)**
- External appeal of natural assets - Lifestyle-prioritized people and businesses who want to come to Teton Valley - Proximity to Jackson Hole, NOLS, the Teton Science Schools, College of Eastern Idaho and BYU-Idaho - Evolving private and public post-secondary educational opportunities - Remote work business models	- Recreation expansion into sensitive habitats - Wildlife connectivity - Retail leakage to neighboring communities and internet sales - Other competitive mountain communities - Overwhelming in-migration and growth rates - Erosion of unique community character—rising population equals traffic, crowding, loss of neighborliness - Climate change – we need to plan and prepare for wide-scale environmental changes (drought and flooding, forest fires). - Limited physical carrying capacity (water, sewers, greenspace) -Diminished air quality, increased noise

*SWOT elements can be in multiple boxes depending on the objective on which they are based

Action Plan: Economic Goals and Strategies:

Boosting economic diversity by supporting local entrepreneurs, supporting low-impact, high-wage businesses and addressing natural, human and infrastructure constraints, will help Teton Valley remain an economically vibrant community that provides decent job opportunities at good wages without ruining what makes the valley special: open space, wildlife, uncrowded recreation opportunities.

This action plan outlines four strategies:

Protect and Foster Natural Resources and Community Values -

People live in Teton Valley because they love the outdoors and because they have flexibility in their choice of where to live. The assets that create our high quality of life need to be protected and enhanced. These assets include: access to natural and recreational resources, arts and cultural events, community character, agriculture and local food.

Business Support and Development- Maintain a stable, sustainable source of funding and organization to implement this plan, support and grow existing businesses and support appropriate, diverse businesses that provide low-impact, high-value jobs.

Physical Asset Development- Assess and inventory the existing physical assets that support economic development and community well-being. This inventory can be used in the planning process for local governments and in recruitment of potential new businesses. Encourage the development of appropriate new buildings.

Tourism - Carefully managed tourism brings people to the area who may eventually become permanent residents and business owners. Tourism helps the economy by bringing outside money into the valley, supporting retail, restaurant and service businesses, and advertising Teton Valley to other areas. Tourism marketing needs to be strategic and balanced: targeting user groups that are most likely to visit and respect the valley and ensuring that we do not attract more visitors than the valley can accommodate.

Numerous entities are working on the four elements above, including the coordinating agency, TREC. TREC’s current tactical focus is on supporting existing businesses, addressing constraints and new business development.

Action Plan Outline and Evaluation Framework

This plan outline and evaluation framework offers a consolidated overview of the action plan. A detailed narrative of the action plan follows.

This plan is reviewed, by the staff, the board of directors, and elected officials, on an annual basis, and a full update completed every five years.

The five-year update includes priorities from elected officials and a report to the community which will allow the public to comment on economic development in the Valley. This update is officially adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and the city councils and should be part of the official planning documents of each jurisdiction. Non-profit entities working on economic development are also encouraged to adopt this document and use it to guide their work when feasible.

Plan outline and Evaluation Framework

Protect and Foster Natural Resources and Community Values

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Maintain open space and protect natural resources • In keeping with the Comprehensive Plan, ensure that land use code preserves open space, wildlife habitat and clean water • Enhance agriculture land by supporting the business health of local farms and agricultural tourism • Consider the use of Open Space Conservation bonds.	Agricultural landowners, conservation groups, developers, county and city planning entities. Ongoing.	
Historic Preservation • Adoption of the Teton County Historic Preservation Plan, being prepared by the Teton County Historic Preservation Commission. • Inventory and preserve historical assets, which add character to the valley and can educate locals and visitors.	The Teton County Historic Preservation Commission, others	

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Maintain and enhance recreational assets • Update the Teton County Recreation Master Plan to address new recreational needs and opportunities. • Support the maintenance and development of multi-use trails for livestock, motorized vehicles, cyclists and skiers. • Educate users on mindful recreation. • Support the maintenance and management of appropriate river and creek access for fishing, paddling and other recreation. • Support the maintenance and management of campsites, ski areas and other appropriate services on public lands • Coordinate and balance recreation with wildlife and resource protection • Support a pathway from Driggs to the Teton River.	Various recreation groups. Federal land managers, local government, TREC support. Ongoing.	

Support the development of a variety of housing choices

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
• Update the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan and Housing Supply Plan • Continue education on affordable housing needs and opportunities • Implement new public-private partnership projects on acquired/donated land • Expand financial capacity to implement new programs and projects • Encourage local jurisdictions to require mitigation of development impacts on workforce housing • Cap, tax and control short-term rentals • Utilize lodging tax on short-term rentals (STRs) to help implement adopted housing strategies, and ensure STRs do not erode residents' quality of life. • Selectively recruit appropriate hotels to reduce demand for STRs. • Provide a variety of housing types • While Idaho statute does not allow cities or counties to implement mitigation fees for new development that results in increased demand for workforce housing, there is the ability to negotiate conditions on development applications (including annexation, zone change and subdivision).	Housing Authority, Cities, County, Realtors, Community Resource Center, TREC. Ongoing	

Selective Business Support and Development

Support a Focused Business Development Center that serves as a resource to new and existing businesses

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Ensure continued funding for business recruitment and development center—the economic coalition. • Ongoing focus on government and business funding	TREC, State, Teton County, Idaho Department of Commerce, cities, business community	

The economic coalition's key strategies:
• Extend support of local businesses
• Help solve startup problems
• Support new businesses and entrepreneurs, targeting those who are already sold on the area.
• Organizational sustainability: funding and quality staff
• Coordinate with cities and other economic development entities via board meetings, quarterly reviews with county commissioners.
• Lead Destination Management strategy and tourism promotion
• Encourage the construction of appropriate commercial and industrial space
  o Push to increase lease prices to allow owners to profitably build necessary space
• Promote property tax exemption opportunities for new businesses
  o Option for county tax exemption for new businesses—need ordinance in place
	TREC Board, staff	

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Provide business expansion and start-up assistance. Encourage entrepreneurial and niche businesses Tactics: • Referrals to financing and professional resources. • Help navigate the regulatory and zoning environment through connections with city and county staff. • Real estate inventories and advice. • Introductions to state, city and county officials, and local business owners. • Business plan consulting. • Marketing consultation • Made in Teton Valley Branding	TREC. Ongoing.	
Micro-loan funding for small businesses • Serves on Altura board • Work with local banks and equity funds.	TREC, Altura, Banks. Ongoing	
Support lobbying efforts for reforms to help local business and government. In particular, support lobbying to help local government as well (bed tax, STR controls, etc.). If Teton County can obtain new sources of tax revenue, like the cities already have, we will be able to deliver better services and pay our staff better. • As a recipient of public funds, TREC does not lobby, so we support others who lobby through appropriate channels	Local government, TREC. As needed	
Get feedback from real estate brokers regarding the reasons prospects choose or choose not to invest. • Share this feedback with appropriate officials	TREC	

Coordinate and implement Economic Development Plan

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Serve as a facilitator with appropriate organizations—companies, non-profits, local government--to support business retention and startups.	TREC. Ongoing	

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Collaborate with public entities on physical asset development • As an example, support infrastructure grants for transportation, urban renewal and pathways projects as well as buildings and commercial spaces	County, Cities, TREC. Ongoing	
Expand and diversify educational opportunities • Continue work to connect business and student needs with vocational and university course offerings. o EAA, civil air patrol program with High School • Encourage trades for servicing existing homes	Teton School District, Colleges, Universities. Ongoing	
Foster a stable environment to support healthcare needs • Support Teton Valley Health Care's consumer communication initiatives.	Teton Valley Healthcare and other providers. Ongoing	

Support targeted industries

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Inventory infrastructure and real estate assets, compile and disseminate information on assets • Evaluate how to make it easier to do business. Evaluate Gem State prospector again • Continue to work with Realtors. This is the buyer's go –to list. • Tax exemption—state and county—for qualifying investment	Realtors, cities, TREC. Ongoing.	

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD

Identify specific businesses and set goals for recruitment
• Focus on high-value, high-wage sectors such as software, recreation technology, professional, scientific, low-impact manufacturing
• Focus on Jackson Wyoming prospects
• Airport, aerospace
• Balance a healthy construction industry (contractors, subs, suppliers) with community needs.
• Health—medical technology.
    o College of Eastern Idaho, career pathways
    o Meet with Teton Valley Health Care to enlist their support.
• Ecotourism – get people into the outdoors in a way that's appreciative of the resource—teach people how to interact. (see tourism)
	TREC, County Plan, ongoing.	

Support creative class individuals that can telecommute • Tourism marketing helps attract these people. • Support their transition and set-up • Encourage them to volunteer, integrate into the community, provide the opportunities	TREC. Ongoing	
Enhance the local agriculture and food production movement • Promote food events that support farming • Support infrastructure to enhance local value-added farm products • Large farms—promote actions that benefit their economic sustainability, incentive. • Expand Farmers' Market opportunities • Support agri-tourism • Support more events like AJ Woolstenhulme's summer Hay Days celebration of traditional agriculture.	Market, Farm and Food Coalition, Teton County Extension, large land owners. Ongoing.	
Maintain and optimize the information portal for potential new businesses • Discovertetonvalley.com	TREC. Ongoing	

Physical Asset Development

Help coordinate, improve and support partnership and communication throughout the valley regarding physical asset development

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Expand broadband infrastructure • Support broadband investment and grants • Promote availability to prospects	Telecom providers, Cities, County. Ongoing.	
Coordinate transportation • Implement public transport and pathway alternatives • Improve existing roads	Transport entities, government. Ongoing	
Continue downtown enhancement and infill	Cities, urban renewal agencies, downtown associations, businesses. Ongoing.	
Expand way finding signs using established template	Cities, County.	
Improve recreational infrastructure. (Parks, Rec Center, Ice Rink) • Support with recreational information on Disctovertetonvalley.com website • Update county recreation master plan • Friends of Sports and Wellness	Non-profits and businesses. Ongoing.	

Tourism

Continue sophisticated tourism marketing and branding strategy focused on the valley's unique Western recreation and cultural activities.

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Attract tourist who are in the area • With Yellowstone Teton Territory (YTT) and Idaho Tourism Council (ITC) grant funding, support events and market the region. • Sustain the existing amount of tourism and be prepared to slow it or grow it as the data indicates • Geo visitor center	TREC, YTT, Geo Center. Ongoing.	
Encourage tourists and through-commuters to stop when in Valley • Visitor Center, signs	TREC, Geo Center. Ongoing.	

Strategy	Accountability, Timing	Results TBD
Support events that highlight local arts, history, culture and music • Seed and promote events with YTT and state tourism promotion grant money • Leverage state and federal opportunities to the community's advantage.	TREC, YTT, Geo Center. Teton Valley Foundation, Downtown Driggs, Tetonia. Ongoing.	
Market to a focused group of potential visitors. • Target recreation and cultural enthusiasts, using ITC grant money and YTT media to promote such events as rodeo, dog sled races, Wydaho Mtn. Bike Rendezvous, Snowscapes, Plein Air, Downtown Sounds and Music on Main, to name a few. • These events benefit visitors as well as locals	TREC, Fair Board, . Ongoing	
Maximize the Teton Valley brand • Discovertetonvalley.com • Get brand recognized locally—discovery for residents as well as visitors.	TREC. Ongoing.	
Enhance the Discovertetonvalley.com information portal and Geo Center • Discovertetonvalley.com • Literature and exhibits at Geo	TREC, Downtown Driggs Assn. Ongoing	
Measure, evaluate marketing programs • Lodging sales, local option tax	TREC. Ongoing	
Support agricultural tourism efforts	TREC, Extension Office	
Protect and market the valley's unique, diverse, traditional Western culture: music, County Fair, rodeo, Teton Valley Museum, etc.	Fair Board, Extension, Historic Preservation Commission, etc.	

Action Plan Detailed Narrative

A. Protect and Foster Natural Resources and Community Values

Protection of critical assets

The driving economic forces in Teton Valley are tied to assets that promote a high quality of life. Those assets include open space, scenic mountain ranges, abundant wildlife, clean surface and groundwater, community character, recreational amenities, and native and pioneer history. Those assets are unique to Teton Valley compared to other resort-type communities and should be protected in order to foster economic and emotional well-being.

1. Maintain open space and provide mechanism to protect natural resources

Visitors, new residents and businesses are attracted to Teton Valley because of the accessibility to natural and scenic resources. They come because of Teton Valley's unique, rural community character, including quaint downtowns and spectacular outdoor recreational opportunities. It is important to maintain these natural resources because they serve as critical drivers of the economy. Fly fishing, for example, brings visitors into the Valley that might not otherwise come. If the fishery is compromised, this segment of the tourism market will decline.

Visitors who value scenery, wildlife and open space might choose to go elsewhere if the open space becomes developed and loses its scenic value. Our valued dark skies need protection from light pollution. Funding mechanisms such as purchase of development rights, conservation easements, etc. can help protect these resources. This is largely the work of private landowners and organizations such as Friends of the Teton River and the Teton Regional Land Trust. Some natural resource protection objectives require comprehensive land use regulations such as the Teton County Land Development Code. Future stresses such as fire and drought need attention now.

Agricultural land is the key component of Teton Valley's open space. Supporting the business health of local farms, agricultural tourism and Open Space Preservation bonds are among the tactics to help retain this resource.

2. Historic Preservation

Teton Valley has rich history, from native Americans to trappers and pioneers. Each of these groups has left tangible evidence of their occupation. The Teton County Historic Preservation Commission is the lead agency in inventorying and preserving these assets, which add character to the valley and can educate locals and visitors. In particular, landmarking historic farm sites and homesteads can attract thoughtful tourists who respect the valley and its history.

3. Enhance Key Recreational Assets

Enhancing recreational assets will make the Valley more attractive and accessible to residents and visitors while striving to maintain a sense of solitude. This includes improving motorized and non-motorized trails, access and trailhead signage, and providing affordable recreational activities through school sports programs and the like (similar to Targhee's school programs provided in conjunction with the local school district). The growing network of mountain biking and motorized trails in the Big Hole Range, mountain biking at Grand Targhee Resort, the Teton Creek Corridor Trail and the rails-to-trails pathway through the Valley are solid examples of beneficial recreation enhancements, but they need continued, attentive management. Another improvement has been the expansion and enhancement of the groomed trails for snowmobiles and skiers. Teton Valley Trails and Pathways, Mountain Bike the Tetons and the Skyliners Club, in concert with landowners, the county, the cities and federal land managers, are leaders on trail work and responsible recreation.

Teton River access is also a key recreational asset that has exploded in popularity over the past five years. Teton County, Idaho Fish and Game, Friends of the Teton River and local outfitters need to continue their collaboration to protect and manage this asset. This resource in particular should not be promoted, as it is already approaching carrying capacity.

Support the development of a variety of housing choices

Housing that is affordable by our predominantly low-wage workforce is in short supply. Lack of affordable housing is at a critical point where it is affecting businesses and public service agencies. The private sector is the first line in addressing affordable housing, however, because of the economics of a desirable resort community, the public sector must step in when the private sector is unable to produce results.

Strategies

The Teton County Affordable Housing Strategic Plan and the Housing Needs Assessment provide a comprehensive suite of strategies that are currently being implemented. These include:

- Public-Private Partnerships – typically involve a land donation by the public, and a private developer that agrees to produce permanently affordable units for locals and may be additionally compensated through grant or tax credit programs or through allowance for market-rate units to be included in the project. Recent examples include Depot Square (30 affordable apartments that are attractive and minimize the stigma of public housing) and 175 Front Street (28 affordable apartments) in Driggs, and Sherman Park (48 affordable apartments) in Victor. A fourth project in Driggs is in the property acquisition stage and could deliver an additional 40+ units.
- Development Exactions & Incentives – While Idaho statute does not allow cities or counties to implement impact fees for workforce housing, there is the ability to negotiate conditions on development applications (including annexation, zone change and subdivision). City of Driggs has implemented a density bonus incentive program where developers are offered increased density approval in exchange for deed-restricting half of the increase for workforce housing. Driggs also offers a 2nd accessory dwelling unit if that unit is deed-restricted as workforce housing. This strategy is beginning to produce workforce ownership housing (Flats at Teton Peaks and White Antler in Driggs) and is expected to be refined and expanded to other jurisdictions based on the Employee Generation Study.
- Purchase of Deed Restrictions (Preservation of Affordable Housing) – With an established funding source, such as a percentage of local-option sales tax, TCJHA can begin to purchase deed restrictions on existing housing units. This can also take the form of a downpayment assistance program where new local buyers are granted or loaned a portion of the downpayment in exchange for placing a deed restriction on the property to ensure perpetual affordability.

- Community Housing Trust – a nonprofit partner that develops affordable community housing while retaining ownership of the land. The Gemstone subdivision in Driggs is a similar model where the Karl Johnson Foundation is beginning to restart their program of leasing single-family lots to homebuyers who will purchase a modular or manufactured home.

B. Selective Business Support and Development

Teton Valley's approach is to support the development and recruitment of small-footprint, low-impact, high-wage businesses. Ideally, these businesses earn income from outside the valley and that income goes to good resident salaries and local purchases of goods and services.

We encourage businesses that provide products and services that benefit our community and whose income and profits stay in our community.

Since 80 percent of business growth comes from existing businesses, we focus on three areas in order of priority:

- Strategic support to retain and grow existing businesses
- Support of local start-ups that fit the model outlined above.
- Selective recruitment of businesses that fit the model outlined above

Since County government does not have the financial capacity to fund an economic management function, in 2013 Teton County supported the formation of a non-profit business development center with a full-time business development director who works on the strategies outlined above.

The Teton Regional Economic Coalition (TREC), contracts with the county to coordinate the implementation of this plan. TREC works with public agencies, non-profits and private investors. TREC's slate of work is defined by this Teton County Economic Plan and an aligned work plan from the Idaho Department of Commerce. These organizations are the primary funders of TREC.

1. Maintain a Focused Business Development Center that serves as a resource to new and existing businesses

Purpose and Priorities
Community leaders and business owners agree on the need for a one-stop-shop business recruitment and development center that is sufficiently funded and staffed. Programs administered under the center focus on industries or industry clusters that have the highest potential for providing low-impact, high-value jobs in the valley, such as recreation technology; premium and high-tech manufacturing; small, organic farms; and food and beverage producers. Businesses that have demonstrated success in Teton Valley include Gravity Graphics, CityPASS, 22Designs, 460 Bread and New West Knifeworks.

Challenges
There are three primary challenges for maintaining a business recruitment and development center:

1. Funding: Teton Valley's small population and business base makes it impossible to rely on private support. The organization will continue to rely heavily on the Idaho Department of Commerce, Teton County and city funding for the foreseeable future. **This is a beneficial situation in that it gives each entity a stake and voice in the work.**

2. Organizational focus and structure: It's critical that the organization maintain its focus on high-value, small-footprint job creation that doesn't degrade the natural environment or overwhelm human and infrastructure limitations.

3. Board composition: The composition of the Board and the leadership of the organization are critical to the long-term success of the economic development organization. The composition of the Board enables both the private and public sectors to work together closely to achieve strategic objectives for economic growth. Board composition includes representatives from targeted industries, funding partners, infrastructure providers, business investors and community leaders.

Role of the economic development director

- Create and implement programs to retain, expand, attract, and grow compatible businesses and industries both independently and in partnership with other city, county, regional, state and federal agencies.
- Lead the implementation of the Economic Plan and program of work.
- Represent Teton County's economic development interests through active involvement with appropriate local, regional, and state organizations, committees, and task forces.
- Manage and report on the business recruitment and development center finances and programs.

During the development of this original plan in 2013, the consulting team recommended that the business development and recruitment center be a non-profit corporation. This allows broad and stable oversight from the board of directors and provides the structure for strategic cooperation between the private and public sectors. Board membership is balanced between public sector and private sector perspectives, with each funding entity having a seat on the board. The non-profit structure allows private businesses that are motivated to invest in economic management efforts to help fund the corporation.

Board of Directors Composition and Role

The board needs to build on a broad community network and foster relationships with public and private entities throughout the region.

The board sets priorities for the director and provides a communication structure among economic development groups in the Valley, including the public entities. The director works with other economic development organizations, but remains accountable to the board. The board includes at least seven members with specific skills that relate to business development and economic development as identified within this plan. The board needs to be small enough to be responsive and to ensure consistent attendance at meetings.

The following table summarizes the ideal board of directors' composition. One member could fulfill more than one focus area or needed action.

Board of Directors Composition

Focus Area or Actions Needed	Board Member Expertise	Example Board Member Affiliation
Focused Business Recruitment	recreation technology eCommerce local small business	22Designs, Teton Homestead
Business Development	business planners	First Interstate Bank, eCenter/BYU-I, Small Business Development Center
Physical Asset Development: Public	transportation infrastructure communication infrastructure education	Teton County, Victor, Driggs, Tetonia, Alta, WY, TVHC, Teton School Dist.
Physical Asset Development: Private	transportation infrastructure communication infrastructure education	Grand Targhee, Silver Star, TVTAP, Teton Science Schools
Identify financing and funding	banking venture capitalist private investors	Idaho Dept. of Commerce, US Bank, Wells Fargo, Key Bank, Bank of Commerce, philanthropists, First Interstate Bank, Altura Business Finance
Identify real estate opportunities	developers realtors	Mountain Standard Realty, Teton Homestead, architects
Tourism	Tourism drivers Niche retail Restaurants Guides/outfitters	Grand Targhee, Teton Valley News. Various restaurant and retailers
Marketing and Branding	social media bloggers writers community organizers	Teton Valley News
Events and Festivals	event planners community organizers	Teton Valley Foundation, Grand Targhee, Downtown Driggs Assn.
Regional Connections	Jackson Hole State of Idaho education professional	Town of Jackson, ID Dept. of Labor, ID Dept. of Commerce, BYU-Idaho, CEI, the Charture Institute, Jackson Hole Travel and Tourism Board
Government	Local government	Teton County, Victor, Driggs, Tetonia
Underserved Population	Social Service Organizations	Seniors, CFTV, CRTV
Conservation perspective	Conservation NGOs	Friends of the Teton River, Land Trust

A professional organization needs to secure funding from public and private sources in order to sustain the business development and recruitment center. Funding is needed to pay staff, maintain office space, travel expenses, and implementation for projects outlined in this plan. Funding for projects can be obtained on a project-by-project basis (i.e. grant funding sources) or could be included in the overall budget of the business development and recruitment center.

Public funding includes a combination of contributions from state, county and city governments. The Cities of Victor and Driggs, Teton County and the Idaho Dept. of Commerce continue to commit funds for the center. Grant funding should be sought for all feasible opportunities; however, grant funding is not a reliable, sustainable source of funding and is rarely available for administrative expenses. Positive results in job creation, new business startups, increased wages and growth in targeted, high-value job indicate that the public investment is paying off. Private funding continues to be a challenge because of the small population and business base in Teton Valley.

Business Development Center Strategies

Local business development and support for existing businesses are critical components of economic development. The economic coalition should recruit businesses that connect to remote markets to bring in new dollars and support local start-ups and existing businesses that want to expand or make a transition, with connections to public, financial, and technical resources.

Provide business expansion assistance

Supporting local businesses that are doing well and looking to expand is a pragmatic and effective way to grow the local economy. The economic coalition supports existing businesses with information such as funding resources, an asset inventory and real estate referrals. The City of Driggs currently offers a business incubator building. A business incubator building could also be developed in Victor to ease transitions for new businesses seeking to locate in the cities.

Provide information on Micro-loan funding for small businesses

Altura Business Finance (formerly the Development Company) offers a micro-loan fund to help new businesses. Growth of this program provides opportunities for new businesses that would otherwise not be able to access financing. Because financing is such a crucial component, financing expertise on the board of directors is a must. As well, the economic coalition's director serves on the loan review board of Altura, a regional group that packages Small Business Administration and bank loans for small businesses.

Start-up support including business plan assistance, networking and financing options

The economic coalition offers resources to entrepreneurs to help a start-up become a successful new business. The organization offers some services directly and is a point-of-contact for new business to find the resources they need--providing referrals to real estate agents, finance officers, investors and other professionals.

Collaborate with state organizations to lobby the State Legislature on issues that encourage business and economic growth and allow government to provide adequate services

Currently several State laws work to discourage local businesses. For example, a law that puts a very limited quota on the number of liquor licenses a municipality may issue makes it difficult for restaurants to compete. While cities can levy local option taxes and regulate short-term rentals, state statutes prevent the county from levying lodging taxes or adequately regulating them. These and other issues should be lobbied for change by business leaders and elected officials.

Encourage entrepreneurial and niche businesses

Provide a climate that encourages entrepreneurial endeavors and new niche businesses. Non-profit organizations should work with local governments to provide opportunities for new businesses, for example, farmers markets for local agriculture niches.

Coordinate the implementation of the Economic Plan

The consolidation of economic development efforts has ensured the good communication and information sharing that are essential in implementing this plan. The organization has built productive relationships with local and state government, non-profits and businesses.

The tasks outlined in this Economic Plan far exceed the abilities of a single person working alone. The director works with government and business entities in the Valley to coordinate efforts and collaborate. The Board of Directors ensures that the priorities of the plan are accomplished.

Expand and diversify educational opportunities

Expanding technology to offer more educational opportunities such as online training, post-secondary education, workforce development and vocational training is a critical component of the lifestyle-based economy and long-term economic success of the valley. All entities should continue to work with the public schools to support excellent educational opportunities for students in Teton Valley.

Education is an important factor for determining why families move to or away from an area and excellent public schools are an important community and economic asset. Attracting new businesses and residents relies on a strong school system and broad opportunities for education. Private schools in Teton Valley provide an alternative to public schools in the area. The community should continue to encourage partnerships between schools in Jackson Hole and higher education such as BYU-I, ISU and the College of Eastern Idaho to promote and offer local post-high school trade-oriented learning opportunities that will increase the local workforce and create more equitable salaries.

Foster a stable environment to support healthcare needs

The attractiveness of the valley depends in part on the quality and affordability of health care. As the baby boomers retire to resort communities such as Teton Valley, they need reliable health care. Similarly, as young people move into the community and start families, they also need affordable, quality health care. To this end, the community needs to ensure that affordable, quality health care services are available and not limited to emergency care.

Target and Support specific industries

Our visitor marketing program publicizes Teton Valley's assets as a lifestyle community, which supports business startup and retention efforts.

Inventory infrastructure and real estate assets

The inventory of public infrastructure and assets in municipalities and other business growth areas will require coordination with public service providers and utility companies. The inventory should include broadband infrastructure, recreational assets, education, health care, transportation, and water/sewer utilities. New or expanding businesses may require larger sites that offer better access and commercial infrastructure.

A comprehensive and consistently maintained inventory of commercial real estate helps businesses easily find suitable property for their businesses. County/city officials and local real estate agents are essential partners in creating the real estate asset inventory.

Currently, a lack of small industrial space is hampering new and existing business growth, as well as keeping prices prohibitively high. Cities need to encourage and provide incentives for appropriate small industrial development.

Disseminate information on assets

Once the inventory information has been determined, it needs to be effectively and efficiently disseminated. The Discovertetonvalley.com website partially serves this purpose and recruitment targets receive custom inventories and referrals tailored to their needs from TREC. Thus far, the excellent Gem State Prospector tool from Idaho Department of Commerce is overkill for the limited inventory available.

Identify specific businesses and set goals for recruitment

As a lifestyle community, Teton Valley relies on small scale and size. Businesses are small and unique--local is valued. Teton Valley plays to its strength as a lifestyle community and focuses on mobile businesses that can locate based on preferences such as e-commerce; telecommuting;

industry clusters such as recreation equipment R&D and manufacturing; aviation technology; businesses making specialty goods such as agriculture and local food enterprises; and creative industries such as arts and entertainment. Elected officials play a critical role in business recruitment.

- Focus on high-value, high-wage sectors such as software, recreation technology, professional, scientific, low-impact manufacturing
- Focus on prospects already sold on the region
- Airport, aerospace
- Support large and small farms
- Balance a healthy construction industry (contractors, subs, suppliers) with community needs.
- Health—medical technology.
    - College of Eastern Idaho, career pathways
    - Meet with Teton Valley Health Care to enlist their support.

Support creative class entrepreneurs that can telecommute from home

In addition to businesses that can be located anywhere, there are also independent entrepreneurs who can live in Teton Valley and work independently or for a company located elsewhere. Lifestyle is the primary reason these individuals move to Teton Valley. Telecommuters need fast internet and often need to travel so they need reliable air service. The most productive avenue for attracting these individuals and businesses is tourism. Many of our new businesses and workers came for the recreation and moved here to make it a permanent part of their lives.

Promote agriculture and food events

Local community leaders are working with University of Idaho Extension officers to attract and recruit agricultural entrepreneurs. Agricultural entrepreneurship includes raising new crops, raising new crops using different methods, such as organic, or creating value-added industries utilizing a combination of agricultural inputs, for example as a potato chip factory that utilizes locally grown potatoes. The community could also promote weekly farmers markets by providing a year-round market facility. Community gardens are also a possible element of the local food system. A local food system map of community farm assets could also attract food tourists and encourage local farmers to offer attractions for visitors.

Celebrating traditional agriculture benefits residents and visitors. Each summer at the Woolstenhulme family farm is the Hay Days celebration. Helped by the American Brabant Association, farmers and horse teams from all over the west gather just south of Driggs.

The event gives spectators a glance of vintage, non-motorized farming techniques and an appreciation of western values.

Support infrastructure to enhance local value-added farm products

The following should be considered to enhance local farming:

- Partner with UI Extension to recruit agricultural entrepreneurs
- Promote weekly farmers market and community gardens
- Establish a year-round food market facility
- Create a local food system map of assets and gaps
- Help get a small, USDA meat processing plant located in the valley.
- Large ag support and incentives

Maximize the effects of summer events; add other venues

From Victor to Driggs to Tetonia, various organizations and private venues offer a plethora of sporting and cultural events. Grand Targhee Resort hosts music, running and mountain bike events each summer. These events draw a loyal crowd of visitors from around the region. Visitors going to these events must pass through Teton Valley. Local non-profits and governments should coordinate with Grand Targhee when providing services or planning other events to maximize the benefits to local businesses of these large influxes of visitors.

While Grand Targhee is the biggest recreation entity in the valley, there is potential for developing other sports and event venues, such as performance and conference facilities. A major expansion of the Kotler Ice Arena in Victor is under way.

Maintain and optimize the information portal for potential new businesses

The Teton County Geographic Information System provides ownership and zoning data. TREC provides comprehensive information to prospects on an as-needed basis. Our websites help promote Teton Valley to prospective businesses. Tools are user-friendly, informative and persuasive. This online resource of information about Teton Valley allows prospective businesses a convenient way to conduct background research and answer common questions.

C. Physical Asset Development

Help coordinate, improve and support partnership and communication throughout the valley regarding physical asset development

Downtown character is a proven economic asset. The valley has made substantial progress keeping existing buildings occupied and well-maintained. The Downtown Driggs Association has done particularly good work on beautification and events. As well, Driggs Urban Renewal has helped redevelop blighted sections of town. Similar work is moving in Victor and Tetonia.

Another deep recession could land us where we were in 2013: low retail sales volumes, disrepair of buildings, and property owners who are unmotivated to rent or sell. Downtowns are important to produce a vibrant economy, as are infrastructure development and other physical asset development that can used to recruit/attract new businesses.

Driggs and Victor have broadband internet infrastructure in focused areas downtown and that infrastructure expanded significantly in the past few years. Continued investments in broadband will help attract a wider array of information-dependent businesses.

Transportation improvements make business operations more efficient. Cities and County should work together and with state and regional partners to ensure transportation network service levels and safety are maintained as the community grows.

Developing the recreational assets in Teton Valley will help retain and recruit families and businesses. Facilities, such as ball fields, parks and trails help foster a lifestyle that includes activities for all ages. Creating more, better, and more easily accessible recreational facilities will help attract people to the Valley, improve their visit while they are here, and encourage them to stay longer and to return. Developing some of these recreational assets will need to be in conjunction with Teton County, the U.S. Forest Service and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Coordinate transportation

Teton Valley's limited funding capabilities, isolation and weather continue to be a barrier to expanding or enhancing transportation infrastructure. Our main arteries have experienced massive traffic increases:

Average Daily Traffic in July (Peak Season):

Location	2013	2018	2023	10-year increase %	Road Improvements
Hwy. 33, Driggs	9,023	11,520	14,135	56 percent	none
Ski Hill Rd, Driggs	3,700	4,481	5,072	37 percent	none
Teton Pass, Victor	7,042	8,969	10,613	51 percent	none
Pine Creek Pass	2,776	3,043	4,109	39 percent	Resurface, new bridge

The Idaho Transportation Department and jurisdictions within Teton Valley should focus on realistic solutions for transportation improvements and maintenance that support a healthy economy and community. Areas with existing infrastructure, such as the cities, should be prioritized. Major rural roads should also be well-maintained to help facilitate the transport of locally-produced agricultural products to markets.

Expanding multi-modal transportation including pathways and regional public transit are important assets for attracting residents, businesses and tourists. The Greater Teton Regional Transportation Task Force (Task Force) is participating in a series of facilitated discussions to understand options for coordinated, comprehensive, continuous regional transportation planning in the region. The Task Force Region currently includes northwest Wyoming and Teton Valley, Idaho. https://www.greatertetonregionaltransportation.org/

Government should encourage formal and informal ride share networks for Jackson and Rexburg commuters. The Driggs-Reed Memorial Airport is an important asset that currently attracts private plane users.

Continue downtown enhancement and in-fill

Dense housing and business development is most appropriate in the cities, where sewer, water and utilities are already in place and are easily extended to new projects.

Businesses in the cities of Victor and Driggs have made huge progress over the past 10 years filling vacant buildings, lots, and eliminating blight. Cities need to continue to work with business and citizen groups to identify the physical improvements necessary to continue the recent trends of downtown success, including using Urban Renewal tools to augment funding for physical improvements.

Two new mixed-use projects have been completed in Driggs. The remnants of an old lumber yard have been cleared and a third project is under construction. People living in downtown areas provide a critical mass to create vibrancy and support local businesses. Land use regulations incentivize opportunities for quality, downtown residential and mixed-use development that promotes walkable neighborhoods within a quarter mile of the downtowns. These housing and development opportunities are marketed as lifestyle enhancements and essential elements of economic development with an importance equal to that of business recruitment because most service businesses follow the population. More importantly, these projects can provide affordable housing for local workers.

Events like Music on Main, Plein Air, and Snowscapes bring residents and visitors into the downtowns, creating a vibrant and attractive scene. Cities, tourism grants and private philanthropy are the key sources of funding to make them happen. Other examples include the

Fall Art Festival, Victor Fourth of July, Tetonia Celebrates America, the Sand Hill Crane Festival, Friday Art Walks, Shakespeare in the Park and Sunday Concerts.

Additional work is being done by the new Main Street collaboration between DDA, TREC, DURA and the City of Driggs, as well as the new Victor URA and Victor Placemakers.

Enhance Valley Wayfinding

Valley wayfinding is an important investment for expanding the visibility of attractions for visitors and new residents. A coordinated valley-wide wayfinding system that directs tourist to attractions and recreation, such as river access and forest trails, makes it easier for people to enjoy Teton Valley.

Driggs created a wayfinding design template through the Teton View Regional Planning program. It has been shared with other communities and is being implemented as funding allows.

Improve recreation infrastructure and update the county recreation master plan

One of Teton Valley's main assets is its access to high quality outdoor recreation. Building and enhancing this asset is an important component of attracting investment. Recreation improvements may include: basic park facilities, forest access and parking, trails, pathways, motorized routes, groomed winter trails, the Kotler Ice Arena, Teton Valley riding area, an aquatics center and a future recreation center, as detailed in the adopted Teton County Recreation and Public Access Master Plan.

By working with the US Forest Service on trails and Idaho Department of Fish and Game on river accesses, and other public lands agencies, the community could add to the overall attractiveness of Teton Valley improve its position as a recreation destination. However, expanding/improving access has to go hand in hand with limitations on use, otherwise we just add to overcrowding problems by improving access areas.

D. Tourism

Teton Valley encompasses Teton County; the cities of Victor, Driggs and Tetonia; and the rural community of Alta, WY and Grand Targhee Resort. Tourists visiting a resort look at the local and easily accessible community amenities when weighing their vacation options. Tourist amenities are a perfect point of entry for recruiting business prospects.

While there are mixed opinions on tourism in the valley, it is the major factor in creating healthy downtowns, strong retailers and thriving restaurants and services. These businesses and their hundreds of jobs sustain many families.

As of 2024, the state of Teton Valley's tourism business is strong, thus our low-key marketing strategy. However, we need to be prepared to increase our efforts when the market inevitably softens.

Continue sophisticated tourism marketing and branding strategy focused on the valley's unique Western recreation and cultural activities.

The regional promotion group, Yellowstone Teton Territory (YTT), uses Idaho Travel Council hotel tax funds to promote the region. Working closely with YTT, the Teton Regional Economic Coalition leads the tourism promotion strategy, creative and velocity for Teton Valley.

Teton Valley's destination management strategy is the product of extensive and diverse benchmarking, planning, collaboration and input:

- The Teton County Economic Plan
- County and City elected officials
- The economic coalition Board
- US Forest Service
- Non-profits such as Teton Valley Trails and Pathways
- Citizen and business surveys and interviews
- Economic and lodging sales data
- Teton Valley Marketing Council
- Regional Sustainable Destination Planning: https://engagetetoncountywy.com/W3564
- The Charture Institute
- The Riverwind Foundation

Tourism and Marketing Goals

Overarching goal: balance a healthy visitor trade with the valley's natural, infrastructure and human capacity limits, which include river overcrowding, traffic, housing affordability, lack of employees, child care, etc.

1. Minimize the impact of tourism on the environment and local resources while providing economic benefits for local businesses.
2. Encourage longer stays.
3. Encourage visitors to spend more and support and interact with local businesses.
4. Encourage visitors and prospective visitors to recreate and behave responsibly and safely in our region
5. Provide easily accessible information on attractions to help visitors navigate Teton Valley and enhance their stay.

Most businesses and residents strongly support this strategy. Business and public leaders from peer locations such as Jackson, Bozeman, Sun Valley and McCall have lauded Teton Valley's strategy, unity of purpose and results.

We rely on our event partners, website and brochure for the bulk of our visitor marketing. Funding for most tactics in Teton Valley is from bed tax money that is administered by the Idaho Department of Commerce, the Idaho Travel Council and the Yellowstone Teton Territory. These organizations support our unique approach.

It must be noted that Teton County cannot collect bed tax money per state statute. Officials must lobby the legislature to allow a county bed tax and enhanced controls on short-term rentals.

Tactics:

1. Events

Support the marketing efforts of marquee events managed by local non-profits. These organizations do targeted marketing to out-of-region sports, arts, nature and culture enthusiasts--it's the equivalent of having numerous ad agencies all working to bring the right folks to town. It’s the full range of events that gives Teton Valley its unique flavor.

These events, spread across most of the year, offer visitors a rich menu of activities to augment our renowned fishing, hiking, skiing, biking and motorized recreation. Most visitors plan a packed several days in the valley, which naturally leads to dining out and shopping for gear and supplies.

Local option tax and lodging sales data confirm that the people attracted to our events stay longer and spend more.

2. Website
Maintain and enhance the Discovertetonvalley.com website as a comprehensive resource for visitors and citizens, which drives users to Teton Valley's full range of businesses and activities.

3. Brochure
The Discover Teton Valley brochure is published annually with Idaho Travel Council funds and distributed throughout the Wydaho region. The piece contains a map, business directory, activities and events by season, and compelling descriptions of each of our city's retail, food and activity offerings. The brochure mirrors content on the website and is a very popular resource for visitors and prospects, particularly those that identify as not being tech-savvy.

Both the website and brochure emphasize responsible, considerate visitor behaviors and offer tangible ways for visitors to minimize their impact on our ecosystem and maximize the rewards of their journey.

4. Measurement
Use Local Option Tax and State Lodging Tax reports to monitor visitor numbers and guide advertisement spending.

5. Teton Geo Center
Support the Teton Geo Center as a way to educate visitors on sustainable tourism. The Downtown Driggs Association assumed the management of the Geo in April 2024.

Enhance and promote the local art and music culture

Local music events in the summer include weekly free concerts such as Music on Main, music festivals at Grand Targhee Resort and many local bands performing at various venues throughout the valley. The Teton County School district offers a variety of music, drama and dance programs. Art events include the Plein Aire Festival and Snowscapes in Driggs.

Teton Arts is active in providing opportunities for local artist to create and sell their art. The Driggs City Center includes an art gallery. These events diversify the types of visitors to the community beyond the more numerous recreational visitors. They also allow local artists and musicians to supplement their income. Perhaps most importantly, they promote Teton Valley as an interesting and vibrant place and promote the community to prospective residents and businesses.

Support events that highlight local arts, history, culture and music

The local arts culture is engrained in the lifestyle of Teton Valley, from native American and trapper celebrations, to the drama and music traditions of pioneer settlers.

Artists typically have careers that can be located anywhere and artists choose their location based on lifestyle preferences. Amenities and opportunities for displaying and selling their work can also affect artists' location decisions. Supporting and highlighting the local arts and culture scene helps draw visitor artists to the area some of which may choose to locate in the valley.

Enhance the Discovertetonvalley.com information portal and Teton Geo Center Museum and Discovery Hub

Visitor information includes lodging, restaurants, attractions, activities, events and festivals and other trip planning services. This information is maintained and updated by TREC. Print information is available in strategic locations throughout the valley and distributed to target markets outside of the valley.

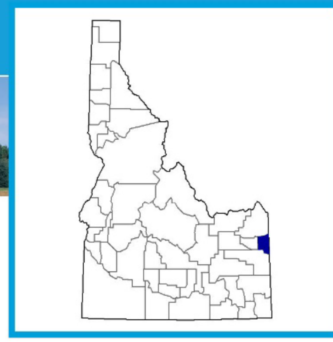
Conclusion

Teton Valley is a special place, rich with natural and recreational amenities, unique community character and strong human capital. Since this plan's inception in 2013, we have made steady progress in business formation, recruitment, employment and wages. There is still much to do. Our average wage income of $44,000 per year is nowhere near what's required to own a home or support a family. As well, the lack of childcare and affordable housing, while typical of wealthy resort towns, are serious societal problems. Finally, it's imperative to balance economic well-being with the incessant pressures on the ecosystem, infrastructure and human capacity.

This economic plan aims to support that balance. This plan should be used by all entities working on economic management to focus and unify their hard work into an efficient and effective effort. This plan relies on open communication and honest collaboration between non-profits, government entities, utility suppliers, local businesses and private investors. It relies on a unified effort that uses the best of all parts of the community for the achievement of a thriving economy. We've done well over the past 10 years. Let's stay focused for the future.

Appendix A

2022 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE County Profile



Teton County
Idaho

Total and Per Farm Overview, 2022 and change since 2017

	2022	% change since 2017
Number of farms	268	-3
Land in farms (acres)	112,072	-5
Average size of farm (acres)	418	-1
Total	($)	
Market value of products sold	62,626,000	+38
Government payments	897,000	+4
Farm-related income	1,341,000	-53
Total farm production expenses	58,288,000	+50
Net cash farm income	6,576,000	-35
Per farm average	($)	
Market value of products sold	233,680	+43
Government payments [a]	12,128	+12
Farm-related income [a]	12,078	-47
Total farm production expenses	217,493	+55
Net cash farm income	24,538	-33

1 Percent of state agriculture sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)

Crops	91
Livestock, poultry, and products	9

Land in Farms by Use (acres)

Cropland	80,005
Pastureland	16,128
Woodland	13,564
Other	2,375

Acres irrigated: 40,705
36% of land in farms

Land Use Practices (% of farms)

No till	15
Reduced till	6
Intensive till	21
Cover crop	8

Farms by Value of Sales

	Number	Percent of Total [b]
Less than $2,500	108	40
$2,500 to $4,999	9	3
$5,000 to $9,999	30	11
$10,000 to $24,999	16	6
$25,000 to $49,999	24	9
$50,000 to $99,999	19	7
$100,000 or more	62	23

Farms by Size

	Number	Percent of Total [b]
1 to 9 acres	21	8
10 to 49 acres	81	30
50 to 179 acres	78	29
180 to 499 acres	26	10
500 to 999 acres	25	9
1,000+ acres	37	14

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service
www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Teton County
Idaho, 2022
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2022 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE *County Profile*

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales ($1,000)	Rank in State [c]	Counties Producing Item	Rank in U.S. [c]	Counties Producing Item
Total	**62,626**	**26**	**44**	**1,787**	**3,078**
Crops	**57,258**	**21**	**44**	**1,209**	**3,074**
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	16,350	23	42	1,363	2,917
Tobacco	-	-	-	-	267
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	-	-	647
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	18,964	17	41	175	2,831
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	(D)	25	36	(D)	2,711
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	(D)	2	42	216	2,660
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops	-	-	8	-	1,274
Other crops and hay	6,305	37	44	551	3,035
Livestock, poultry, and products	**5,368**	**34**	**44**	**2,411**	**3,076**
Poultry and eggs	79	15	44	1,454	3,027
Cattle and calves	(D)	34	44	(D)	3,047
Milk from cows	14	26	30	915	1,770
Hogs and pigs	79	11	40	960	2,814
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	47	34	44	1,873	2,967
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	(D)	(D)	44	(D)	2,907
Aquaculture	-	-	21	-	1,190
Other animals and animal products	(D)	33	43	(D)	2,909

Producers [d]	**509**
Sex	
Male	341
Female	168
Age	
<35	45
35 – 64	256
65 and older	208
Race	
American Indian/Alaska Native	2
Asian	-
Black or African American	-
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-
White	507
More than one race	-
Other characteristics	
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	2
With military service	34
New and beginning farmers	151

Percent of farms that:

Have internet access	80
Farm organically	5
Sell directly to consumers	7
Hire farm labor	32
Are family farms	87

Top Crops in Acres [e]

Barley for grain	32,418
Forage (hay/haylage), all	18,801
Wheat for grain, all	7,822
Vegetables harvested, all	3,321
Potatoes	3,306

Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2022)

Broilers and other meat-type chickens	(D)
Cattle and calves	6,471
Goats	52
Hogs and pigs	158
Horses and ponies	834
Layers	1,493
Pullets	164
Sheep and lambs	175
Turkeys	13

[a] Average per farm receiving. [b] May not add to 100% due to rounding. [c] Among counties whose rank can be displayed. [d] Data collected for a maximum of four producers per farm. [e] Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at www.nass.usda.gov/go/cropnames.pdf. [f] Position below the line does not indicate rank. (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations. (NA) Not available. (Z) Less than half of the unit shown. (-) Represents zero.

B. Economic Development Organization Executive Director Job Description

Position Overview:

The Executive Director plays a pivotal role in managing economic growth and fostering business expansion within Teton Valley. The ideal candidate will have a deep understanding of economic principles, business dynamics, and strategic planning, coupled with excellent communication and analytical skills. Collaborate with local stakeholders, government agencies, and businesses to implement initiatives that promote sustainable economic development, a thriving business environment and a diversified economy.

Key Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with government entities, private sector organizations, and community leaders to develop and implement Teton County's Economic Plan.
- Develop and implement strategies to attract new businesses, support existing enterprises, and diversify the local economy.
- Manage current memorandums of understanding and grants, and identify opportunities for new grants and fundraising opportunities.
- Conduct thorough research and analysis of local and regional economic trends, market conditions, industry dynamics to identify growth opportunities and address impediments to prosperity.
- Provide expert guidance and consultation to entrepreneurs, startups, and established businesses on market entry, expansion, and investment opportunities.
- Cultivate relationships with potential investors, financial institutions, and funding sources to facilitate access to capital for local businesses.
- Organize and participate in workshops, seminars, and networking events to foster knowledge sharing and business collaboration.
- Monitor and measure the impact of economic development initiatives through data collection and analysis, and adjust strategies as needed.
- Collaborate with marketing and communication professionals to promote the region's economic strengths and opportunities to external audiences.
- Manage the Discover Teton Valley website to promote local businesses and maintain the community's events calendar.
- Coordinate with other similar situated resort cities such as Jackson, Wyoming, McCall, Idaho, and Sun Valley, Idaho to share lessons learned and innovative ideas to address common issues.
- Build and maintain good relationships with local and regional media outlets.
- Stay updated on industry best practices, economic development trends, and emerging technologies to enhance the effectiveness of strategies.
- Serve on appropriate state-wide, regional, and local boards and committees.
- Manage the financial, legal, and organizational responsibilities of a small non-profit.

Qualifications:

- Preferred Bachelor's degree in Economics, Business Administration, Public Administration, Urban Planning, or a related field.
- Proven experience in economic development, business consulting, or a related area.
- Strong knowledge of economic principles, market dynamics, and business strategies.
- Knowledge and experience with leading a nonprofit and successfully managing a diverse board of directors.
- Successful resource development, fundraising, and philanthropic experience.
- Excellent analytical skills with the ability to interpret complex data and trends.
- Exceptional communication, negotiation, and relationship-building skills.
- Proficiency in using data analysis tools, software, and databases.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to develop and execute innovative plans.
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders.
- Understanding of government policies, regulations, and funding mechanisms related to economic development.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.