



May 29, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Vail Valley Partnership is the regional chamber of commerce, with over 850 members throughout Eagle County who collectively represent over 80% of the local workforce. We are dedicated to the economic vitality of the valley, and as such our board of governors – which includes residents & business operators throughout Eagle County – has identified workforce housing as our number one priority.

Eagle County's cost of living is higher than many other places. To no one's surprise, housing is the key element pushing Eagle County's overall cost of living above the U.S. average. The Council for Community and Economic Research produces an annual County Cost of Living Index (CCLI) that serves as a measure of relative cost of living between different locations across the county.

Eagle County's cost of living indexes at 176.30 against a nationwide average of 100. In the CCLI, a number above 100 is more expensive than the U.S. average, and a number below 100 is less expensive than the U.S. average. Housing costs in Eagle County, however, are indexed at 340, while most other consumer goods and services in the county fall slightly above or below the U.S. average, making housing the primary driver elevating local living expenses.

Eagle County faces a gap in the availability of ownership and rental housing that is affordable for local residents. Residents are burdened by high housing payments. Employees are forced to commute long distances. According to the annual workforce survey, employers believe that the availability of workforce housing is a critical or major problem in Eagle County. The Eagle County Housing Assessment shows a shortfall of 4,500 units to meet current needs.

Workforce and affordable housing has long been an issue in Eagle County. The difference today is the demographic data clearly shows an increased need for more affordable housing options for the current and future Eagle County workforce. Addressing our affordable housing issue is essential to the continued success and growth of our business community across industry sectors.

In the current Eagle County housing market (2015 full year sales data), the median sales price has risen to \$575,000, close to pre-recession levels. In this four-year time period from 2012 to 2016, the area median income (AMI) level has risen 4% while the median sales price of a home in Eagle County has risen 35%. When we look at the current affordability gap we see a \$234,310 gap for that 100% AMI family, and even at 140% AMI, there is still a \$97,600 gap. These new affordability gap numbers point to the increased need for more affordable housing options for the current and future Eagle County workforce.

97 Main Street, Suite E-201, Edwards, CO 81632

[VailValleyPartnership.com](http://VailValleyPartnership.com)



Currently and anecdotally, units that have been long-term workforce rentals are being removed from that market as they are converted into short-term rentals. This has the potential to grow both catch-up and keep-up needs for workforce housing.

We support the Reserve at Hockett Gulch project in the Town of Eagle, and recognize that addressing our community housing needs will require a variety of solutions – rental projects, for sale projects, deed restrictions, and other solutions.

We want to ensure our community can remain competitive to keep locals local and to support our business community. We encourage local governments and boards to approve appropriate in-fill projects and to be open-minded and flexible to grant appropriate variances to local code to facilitate the development of these projects, and we encourage HUD to support this much-needed rental project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Romer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Romer  
President & CEO  
Vail Valley Partnership