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FORWARD



MONTANA

WHO WE ARE ▾

WHAT WE DO ▾

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VOTE NO ON WARD

Forward Montana's housing program is grounded in affordability, sustainability, and resiliency, and **envisions a Bozeman where young people can both live and work**. WARD threatens that vision.

So WTF is the WARD Ballot Initiative?

The WARD ballot initiative, short for Water Adequacy for Residential Development, proposes a change to the Bozeman Municipal Code. If this initiative passes, residential developers (building 3 or more units) can only use the cash-in-lieu option for water rights (i.e., paying the city instead of supplying new water) if at least 33% of their new units are designated as affordable.

- A **no** vote on WARD means you **oppose** the proposed changes to municipal code and support additional housing development in Bozeman.
- A **yes** vote means you **support** amending municipal code and support the WARD initiatives' limitations on access to water rights

WARD claims to create affordable housing and conserve water in Bozeman, **however it will actually do the opposite: threaten the affordable housing progress our community has already made.**

Ward will:

- Drive up costs by substantially limiting

- new homes within Bozeman's city limits
- Increase urban sprawl accelerating the consumption of important wildlife corridors, drive up carbon emissions and the taxes we pay for infrastructure.
- Rely more on inefficient county water systems that waste water and leak excess nutrients and toxins into our aquifers.

Forward Montana **does not** endorse the WARD ballot initiative and encourages you to vote **NO on WARD**

Why will WARD make housing more expensive?

- We want 33% of new development to be permanently affordable– just like the WARD initiative claims to create. But WARD won't get us there. The reality is that development in Bozeman will slow or stop because developments.
- An unattainable amount of subsidies will be needed to make most projects happen at those levels of affordability.
- To dig a little deeper, if the rent payments cannot make up the monthly payments for the cost of building new housing (land, labor, lumber, laws, and loans), anyone who builds housing would lose money on that project. There are not reliable sources of funding to bridge that gap for most builders.
- Since WARD suggests no funding mechanisms, funding for any project would have to come from even higher rents on the other 66% of the units, city dollars, philanthropic donations, or other funding sources.
- Many developers will likely forgo the unrealistic restrictions by building in the county, halting development in Bozeman and accelerating sprawl.

Resource from city: https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/3616783/233073-Water_Ballot_Initiative_Slidedeck_9-16-25.pdf

Why do we need continued development in Bozeman?

Continued housing development within City limits is crucial to creating a steady supply of homes, which prevents the cost of homes and rent from skyrocketing. **Right now, Bozeman's**

12% vacancy rate suggests an oversupply, and the average rent has gone down **\$346 dollars in the last year!**

This is directly related to the increase of supply. If we do not plan for the future and do not keep up building, Bozeman's housing market is expected to absorb this oversupply and leave us back to the inflated prices seen in 2020-2022 (when rents were raised every year!). Restricting building within the City inherently forces any development to sprawl out into the county and surrounding valley. Sprawl increases infrastructure costs and taxes, strains affordability inside Bozeman, increases commuting, consumes surrounding open spaces, and degrades water quality.

Why WARD will be harmful for water and the environment:

- Restricting building within the City accelerates sprawl out into the county and surrounding valley.
- Sprawl...
 - Puts more homes in the county, which relies mostly on well and septic tank systems that will **use more water than development in Bozeman and leak excess nutrients and toxins into our water shed.**
 - Consumes open lands that serve as vital wildlife corridors from the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
 - Increases car dependency, commute time, human wildlife collisions, and carbon emissions.
 - Requires more paved roads, road maintenance, and snowplowing, increasing infrastructure costs for everybody. We recognize that sprawl is already happening. WARD will exacerbate sprawl, and we call on our leaders to enact strong policies between our city and county to prevent and limit sprawl.
- We recognize that sprawl is already happening. WARD will exacerbate sprawl, and we call on our leaders to enact strong policies between our city and county to prevent and limit sprawl.
- WARD removes off-site water conservation measures, which allow developers to offset their water impact, and takes away this tool for water conservation by only allowing for on-site measures. Taking away water conservation tools does not equate to water conservation.

Why do we Oppose WARD?

WARD undermines our vision. WARD:

- **Misleads Voters:** WARD claims to create affordable housing and conserve water in