



Brown Ranch

Designed By and For the Yampa Valley Community

An unprecedented opportunity to create affordable, stable housing in the Yampa Valley

- Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the Yampa Valley Housing Authority (YVHA) purchased the 534-acre Brown Ranch in 2021.
- The intent is to create four affordable, vibrant local workforce neighborhoods.
- The Brown Ranch is immediately adjacent to the western city limits within the designated growth area for the city of Steamboat Springs and Routt County.
- In fact, this West Steamboat area has been identified for years as the ideal location to address our decades-old housing problem.

Why do we need the Brown Ranch?

The extreme lack of affordable housing in our community is at crisis levels. According to a housing demand study commissioned by the YVHA in 2022, there is an immediate need for 1,400 housing units for the current full-time Routt County workforce.

- More than 20% of Routt County homes have multiple families living together to make ends meet. This creates health and safety issues for residents.
- For those able to find housing, many pay more than 30% of their gross income just for housing.
- The number of short-term rental properties and second homes adds to the challenge of providing affordable homes for our workforce.

Will the Brown Ranch be part of the City of Steamboat Springs?

The Brown Ranch Annexation Committee (BRAC) started meeting in January 2023. BRAC is working to develop solutions for key infrastructure elements (e.g., water, sewer, roads, snowplowing, traffic) before the Brown Ranch can be annexed. For a schedule of the meetings and topics, as well as the ability to provide comments, go to: <https://steamboatsprings.net/1346/Brown-Ranch-Annexation-Committee>

How did we get to this affordable housing crisis?

According to the Urban Land Institute, workforce housing stopped being built during the recession of 2008. Research has shown it's too expensive for private developers to build housing that is affordable for the workforce. Demand has also outpaced supply for decades,

How does lack of affordable housing impact our economy?

Housing and employment are inseparably linked. Since 2010, the Routt County workforce has declined due to the shortage of affordable housing.

- There is a community-wide shortage of teachers, nurses, police and service industry workers.
- Businesses and nonprofits are reducing hours and services because they can't hire workers.
- The entrepreneurial spirit of the Steamboat small business community is struggling. Many are at risk of leaving the community, rather than growing and creating more jobs.
- Schools and medical providers can't find workers, thus leaving positions open.
- The police, fire and sheriff's departments are not fully staffed.
- Restaurants can't find servers and chefs. Hotels can't find staff.
- More young people and families are moving away because they can't afford to live in Steamboat Springs.



What will the Brown Ranch look like?

The Brown Ranch will be a vibrant, resilient, diverse, and welcoming neighborhood that provides a wide variety of housing options and services designed by and for the Yampa Valley community. The first neighborhood, designed like Old Town Steamboat, will have approximately 480 units and is expected to break ground in 2026. The Community Development Plan envisions 2,264 homes to be built in four neighborhoods by 2040. This will include a mixture of rentals and homes for sale. It will feature apartments, single family townhomes and detached homes. The Brown Ranch will develop one neighborhood at a time allowing for flexibility.

What services will be included at the Brown Ranch?

Working with Routt County partners, the Brown Ranch will create the services prioritized by residents' input for this new neighborhood. There will be a future school site, a food market, access to medical care, a daycare center, youth services, community spaces, recreation and open space, as well as walking and biking trails.

Who will pay for building the Brown Ranch?

YVHA is pursuing federal, state and private foundation funds to offset costs of building the Brown Ranch.

In addition, the voters of Steamboat Springs passed a short-term rental tax in 2022 to fund affordable housing. Proceeds are expected to be about \$14 million annually. The City Council will direct where funds will be used. YVHA is working with the City to use some of these funds for the Brown Ranch.

Who will live at the Brown Ranch?

Only Routt County workers and retirees are eligible to live at the Brown Ranch. Workers are defined as individuals who work for an employer physically located in Routt County. One person in the household must qualify (minimum of 30 hours per week) or be retired from the Routt County workforce.

How will homes be kept affordable and not turn the Brown Ranch into another high-priced development?

YVHA will use a variety of funding sources to help build the Brown Ranch and ensure that homes remain affordable for the Routt County workforce.

- Rents and for-sale prices won't exceed 30% of the gross income of the residents or purchasers.
- High density development will help keep homes affordable to rent and own.
- Residents will have the mobility to rent, buy, build equity, move up, or down-size.
- YVHA will continue to utilize the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program for the acquisition and construction of affordable rental housing for low- and moderate-income residents. YVHA will also pursue federal, state and private grants to help lower infrastructure costs.

How much will the Brown Ranch cost?

The Brown Ranch is the catalyst for upgrades the City of Steamboat Springs has been planning for decades.

This includes building the infrastructure for an additional water treatment plant to back up the current water system in case of wildfire or other natural disasters. Another opportunity is the extension of the Core Trail to the west, which has wide community support. At the same time, government programs like the Inflation Reduction Act which has grants for alternative energy, could help fund the build out of a community geothermal system. Costs will depend on the federal, state and private foundation grants that YVHA is able to secure for infrastructure and home-building.



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