TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Title: Receive a presentation on the final 2026 Regional Housing Needs Study Report

Meeting Date: April 1, 2026

Prepared by: Marcus Sproll, Housing Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an informational only item. Town Council can discuss and ask questions of staff.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Mammoth Lakes ("Town"), along with Mono County, Inyo County, City of Bishop, and Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) (collectively the Collective Housing Committee or CHC), have been working on a Regional Housing Needs Assessment since January 2025. The final report was published in March 2026 and provides a comprehensive analysis of housing conditions, needs, and challenges facing the region's workforce. This Study will serve as the foundation for a forthcoming Regional Housing Toolkit.

ANALYSIS:

Population and household growth in the Town, and across much of the region, has been negative over the last decade and households are getting smaller. The Town lost approximately 1,200 residents, or 14.5 percent of its total population, from 2010-2025; the largest loss of any jurisdiction in the region. This population decline is expected to continue, driven in part by an acute shortage of available long-term housing for the resident workforce. The data indicates that these dynamics were under way prior to the pandemic, with pandemic induced population movement exacerbating existing trends and driving a changeover of the population (i.e., existing resident households moving out with transient occupants and remote workers moving in).

Nearly two-thirds of employers surveyed for this research reported that housing availability hampers recruitment and retention, with businesses estimating they could grow 23 percent more over the next five years on average, if adequate workforce housing options were available. Employers cited a need for all types of housing, with a particular need for rental housing units.

The study's quantitative housing needs model estimates that a total of 1,170 households have unmet housing needs in the Town. The breakdown of the unmet housing needs by area median income (AMI) is as follows:

- Low-Income (≤ 80% AMI): 389 households
- Moderate- to Upper-Middle Income (80% - 150% AMI): 560 households
- Upper-Income (≥ 150% AMI): 221 households

Over 500 units, or 88 percent of the existing deed-restricted housing inventory in the region, is located within the Town. Due to the recent delivery of a significant number of low-income housing units, the largest need cohort in the Town now falls into the middle-income category. The Study finds the greatest unmet need among smaller middle-income households earning up to 120 percent of AMI, who are best served by studio and one-bedroom rental units.

The Study makes clear that while the Town has made significant progress in terms of the low-income housing inventory, there is an urgent need for new rental units that are affordable to moderate and middle-income workers. These workers are first responders, health care professionals, teachers, and small business owners, and form a critical component of the social and economic fabric of the community.

As a follow-up to the Housing Needs Study, staff will be coming to Town Council over the next several months with a series of informational presentations on middle-income rental housing, the financing challenges, and a proposed model for how the Town can successfully develop this critical middle-income housing infrastructure.