



Aberdeen Community Review

March 4-6, 2014

Report printing courtesy of Idaho Transportation Department

Community Review Report

for the

City of Aberdeen

March 4-6, 2014

The Idaho Community Review Program is a collaboration of federal, state, tribal, and local governments along with the private sector. It is coordinated by the Idaho Rural Partnership.

For more information call 208-780-5149 or visit www.irp.idaho.gov.



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City of Aberdeen



MONSANTO



Other supporting agencies and organizations

- Idaho Department of Labor
- Idaho Latino Economic and Development Center
- Southeast Idaho Council of Governments
- Idaho Rural Water Association
- Office of Senator James Risch
- Idaho Smart Growth
- Southern Idaho Rural Development
- U.S. Small Business Administration

Additional local funding partners

Driscoll Brothers

Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce

Idaho Select Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of the Aberdeen Community Review is due to the many individuals who generously shared their time, opinions, and knowledge by serving on the home team, completing a survey, or participating in a listening session or other conversation with the visiting team. Special thanks to Mayor Morgan Anderson, Mary Leisy, and Karalee Bonzon. Also appreciated was the participation of Kristen Jensen, Great Rift Business Development.

Finally, the visiting team thanks the organizations, businesses, and individuals below for their contributions of support, time and information to this project.

First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen

Gloy Wride

Jane Ward, Aberdeen School District

Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce

Steve Love, University of Idaho Research and Extension Center

Carmelita Lucero Benitez

Great Rift Business Development

J.R. Simplot Company

Driscoll Brothers

Idaho Select Inc.

El Jaliciense

Country Kitchen

Aberdeen Senior Center

Stokes Fresh Food Market

Maverik

Home and Visiting Teams for the Aberdeen Community Review

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Infrastructure

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Downtown Revitalization

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Deanna Smith, Idaho Smart Growth

Listening Sessions

Lorie Higgins, University of Idaho Extension
Erik Kingston, Idaho Housing and Finance Association

Leadership, Support, and Coordination

Mike Field, Idaho Rural Partnership
Vickie Winkel, Idaho Rural Partnership
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PART I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Aberdeen submitted an application for a community review to the Idaho Rural Partnership in March 2013. The application is found in Appendix A. The community review was conducted from March 4-6, 2014.

As with the 31 other community reviews that have been completed throughout Idaho since 2000, direct costs to the City were limited to the cost of mailing a survey to Aberdeen households and food and transportation for the visiting and home team for the three-day period.

The Aberdeen Community Review concentrated on the three focus areas selected by community and economic development leaders: (1) economic development, (2) infrastructure, and (3) downtown revitalization. The review also included two town hall community meetings and a series of community listening sessions with selected stakeholder groups. A summary of the community listening sessions and the opportunities identified by the visiting team is found below.



Summary of Community Listening Sessions

Community listening sessions were held with the home team and six other stakeholder groups. These focus group-like sessions are described in detail beginning on page 18. In summary, many residents told us they do NOT want a future that includes:

- Business closures
- Bad roads
- Divided community
- School decline
- Bad roads and sidewalks
- “Big box” chain stores

In contrast, when asked what they do want to see in Aberdeen future, listening session participants gave us these responses most often:

- More businesses
- Beautification (including more trees)
- A unified community with diverse leadership
- A focus on youth education and development

Summary of Opportunity Areas Identified by the Visiting Team

The visiting team identified the following opportunity areas within each of the three selected focus areas. See Part IV for detailed recommendations under each opportunity area.

Economic Development

Opportunity Area 1: Develop and communicate Aberdeen's identity and brand

Opportunity Area 2: Build business-to-business connections, cooperation, and coordination

Opportunity Area 3: Connect education to businesses and employment

Opportunity Area 4: Support the expansion of existing businesses and entrepreneurs who want to start new businesses

Infrastructure

Opportunity Area 1: Continue to improve water and wastewater systems

Opportunity Area 2: Maintain and improve and your transportation infrastructure

Opportunity Area 3: Increase the quality and variety of housing

Opportunity Area 4: Continue to develop school, library, and recreation programs and facilities

Opportunity Area 5: Law enforcement and emergency services

Opportunity Area 6: Develop broadband connectivity

Downtown Revitalization

Opportunity Area 1: Give older, vacant, and underused buildings a new lease on life

Opportunity Area 2: Create a more appealing and vibrant streetscape

Opportunity Area 3: Develop business opportunities by attracting residents and visitors to the downtown area

Opportunity Area 4: Plan for future growth that fits your traditional, walkable community

Opportunity Area 5: Build consensus and enlist the community in downtown revitalization efforts

In Part V of this report, the visiting team offers observations, recommendations, and resources regarding another topic that came up repeatedly during the community review: civic life and community involvement. Building bridges between cultural and other groups in the community and encouraging greater participation in community and economic development projects is at the heart of this fourth focus area.

About Change

The visiting team ends this executive summary with some comments about change. We believe that change is one thing Aberdeen — an in fact all communities — can count on. The community will change whether you guide it or not. If you do nothing, people will move away; new people will move into the community. Likewise, some businesses will survive while others will go away if residents and visitors do not support them. No community stands still, frozen in time. Under the “do nothing” scenario, it’s reasonable to predict that your businesses will struggle, your job base will decrease, your kids will move away, and your infrastructure will deteriorate.

We ask the residents and leaders of Aberdeen: would the community rather take its chances with the kind of change that is more likely to happen if you just stand aside or the kind that will more likely happen if you agree on the kind of change you prefer and then work to create that future? Put another way, does the community want to take control over your own destiny? These questions are at the heart of community and economic development.

PART II BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW

Description of the Idaho Community Review Program

The Idaho Community Review Program provides observations, recommendations, and available resources to Idaho communities with populations less than 10,000. Idaho communities participate in the program to understand how they might better approach long-standing and emerging issues and opportunities related to community and economic development.

For information about the Idaho Rural Partnership and Idaho Community Review program, go to <http://www.irp.idaho.gov/>. We also invite community leaders and residents to “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IdahoCommunityReview.

Community leaders initiate a review by assembling a “home team” and selecting three subject areas they would like to be the focus of the review. These “focus areas” become the basis for the creation of the “visiting team”, a group of 15-20 community and economic development professionals employed by public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses across Idaho. Appendix C contains biographies and contact information for the Aberdeen Community Review visiting team. The review process also includes community listening sessions, which are open-ended, focus group-like discussions with key stakeholder groups.



Aberdeen Visiting Team Members (left to right): Erik Kingston, Lorie Higgins, Jeremy Field, Kathleen Lewis, Kerrie Hurd, Julia Oxarango-Ingram, Jon Barrett, Bill Hayes, Deanna Smith, Priscilla Salant, Josh Hightree, John Meyers, Jerry Miller, Brent Tolman, Julie Neff, Mike Field, Lori Porreca, Paul Lewin. Not pictured: Sonia Martinez.

The visiting team spent three days in the community learning about issues through tours, meetings, listening sessions, and interviews with community leaders and residents. The review concluded on the evening of the third day with a public presentation of preliminary opportunities, recommendations, and resources.

The program cannot instantly resolve all issues, but the 31 communities that have participated in the program since 2000 have evaluated it as an invigorating, validating, and unifying experience. Many communities have successfully used community review recommendations to help obtain funding for infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and other projects. Community reviews also provide invaluable networking opportunities, setting the stage for future resource referrals and follow-up prioritizing and project development.

Coordinated by the Idaho Rural Partnership, the Aberdeen Community Review was a collaborative project of IRP member organizations and agencies, the City of Aberdeen, Region IV Development Association, Inc., and USDA Rural Development. Local funding partners included Key Bank, J. R. Simplot Company, Driscoll Farms, Idaho Power, Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce, and Idaho Select Inc. Additional supporting agencies and organizations are identified at the beginning of this report.

Purpose, Use, and Format of this Report

This report is presented to the community residents and leaders of the City of Aberdeen. The visiting team hopes it will initiate and focus community dialogue, follow-up action planning, and project development. We will also consider this report successful if it results in increased citizen participation and more effective coordination and collaboration within and between government entities and private sector stakeholders.

Part III of this report contains a summary of the community listening sessions. Part IV identifies the community comments and concerns, opportunity areas, recommendations, and resources for each of the three focus areas selected by the community, as described below.

Community Comments and Concerns

The visiting team uses this section to reflect what we heard from community residents and leaders in the context of each focus area. We often find people will express ideas and perceptions to us, as neutral outsiders, that they may be less inclined to share directly with community leaders.

Opportunity Areas

Opportunity areas are the three to five areas identified for special attention by the visiting team. These opportunities are developed using all community input gathered before and during the review for each of the focus areas.

Recommendations

Each opportunity area includes a set of recommendations or strategies offered by the visiting team. Some recommendations involve supporting, improving, or redirecting objectives the community is already pursuing. Other recommendations suggest completely new initiatives.

This report intentionally does not prioritize the visiting team's opportunity areas and recommendations. The visiting team strongly believes this is more appropriately done by the community as follow up to the review.

Resources

We list resources in hopes they will help the community pursue the recommendations. Resources include potential funding, sources of technical assistance, publications, and successful examples from other communities.

A Fourth Focus Area

In Part V, the visiting team offers additional opportunities, recommendations, and resources under a fourth focus area: Civic Life and Community Involvement.

Pre-Review Planning and Training

The City of Aberdeen submitted a community review application to the Idaho Rural Partnership in February 2013 with assistance from Kristen Jensen of Great Rift Business Development. This application is found in Appendix A. In December 2013 the IRP Community Review Ad-hoc Planning Committee and home team leaders began weekly planning meetings via conference call. Developing a pre-review community survey of Aberdeen households was the group's first order of business.

The Aberdeen Community Review addressed three focus areas. As described under *Community Expectations and Identification of Focus Areas*, these focus areas included:

- Economic Development
- Downtown Revitalization
- Infrastructure

Visiting team members also conducted a series of interviews with specific stakeholder groups. These "community listening sessions" are described beginning on page 18.

Home Team Training

On Thursday, January 30, 2014, available members of the home and visiting teams met in the council chambers at Aberdeen City Hall for a two-hour training and orientation session. Approximately 20 people attended the session (about 15 home team and five visiting team members). It allowed participating members of both teams to meet each other, understand the

purpose of the community review, discuss the three focus areas, talk about the proposed schedule, and identify remaining tasks.

Monetary Value and Costs Paid by the City of Aberdeen

The in-kind value of the Aberdeen Community Review exceeded \$50,000. Imagine the cost of hiring 18 professionals in land use planning, transportation, housing, civil engineering, economic development, tourism, cultural resources, arts, communication, grant funding, and other fields of expertise for three 14-hour workdays. Now add in the cost of preparation, travel, follow-up, and report production. These costs are generously covered through donations by participating agencies, organizations, and businesses and are supplemented with private sector donations. We encourage the community to take advantage of opportunities to use the dollar cost value of the community review as in-kind match when submitting future funding requests.

Recent Community and Economic Development Efforts

Aberdeen leaders and residents have many reasons to be proud of recent and ongoing community and economic development efforts in the community. These efforts consist of capital improvement projects, organizational development efforts, and initiatives related to planning or policy. They are described in the City's community review application and/or were discussed during the review itself. The following summary is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Recent and Ongoing Capital Projects

- Waste Water Treatment Plant Expansion/Upgrade
- Installation of ADA sidewalk ramps at Main Street intersections
- Development of the Gem Trail
- New street signs
- New golf course club house
- Bi-annual alley clean-up
- New trees in city park
- Improvements at library (e.g. classes, new kids room)
- Operation Facelift
- New picnic shelter at Posse Park
- Airport upgrades
- Bridge improvements

Planning, Policy, Design, and Organizational Development Initiatives

- Downtown visioning project
- Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan

Community Expectations and Identification of Focus Areas

As described previously, community reviews concentrate on three subject or “focus” areas identified by the home team. Descriptions and expectations for each of the focus areas selected for the Aberdeen Community Review are provided in this section. Community expectations are expressed in the City’s application to the Idaho Rural Partnership and were discussed with the home team in the months and weeks leading up to the review. The home and visiting team leaders used this information to create the review’s detailed agenda. See the “Community Comments and Concerns” section for each focus area in Part IV of this report for a summary of what we heard from leaders and residents during the community review. For the listening sessions, the home and visiting team leaders sought a balance of stakeholder groups to represent a cross-section of residents.

Economic Development

Broadly defined as the development of new jobs through the creation, expansion, and recruitment of businesses, economic development is a required focus area for all community reviews.

In 2011, the Simplot Company announced plans to close its potato processing plant in Aberdeen sometime in early 2014. At the time of the community review, the plant was employing about 290 people; approximately 110 of them (or 38% of the total) are Aberdeen residents. The pending plant closure and implications for the community was a large part of the City’s interest in a community review. Potential impacts of the closure expressed by local leaders and residents included:

- Loss of property tax base (if the plant property sits vacant for a significant period of time)
- Loss of residents and school enrollment
- Closing of businesses
- Loss of revenue for local businesses who have historically provided goods and services to Simplot.

In its application, the City of Aberdeen expressed interest in learning about strategies and ideas to promote local employment, including agriculture-based employment that might replace the jobs lost by the Simplot plant closure. The following strategies were specifically mentioned as examples:

- Growing what’s here as opposed to recruiting businesses from the outside. Add value to the products and services currently available.
- How does Aberdeen fit into the larger regional economic development picture?
- Nurture cottage industries, home-based start-up businesses, etc.
- Market our Aberdeen and businesses to surrounding communities. What is the image and identity we want to project?

Infrastructure

The community has made substantial progress on improving its infrastructure in recent years. Major investments to upgrade the condition and capacity of the wastewater treatment system, in particular, have been completed. In its application and from conversations with community leaders at the outset of planning for the community review, City requested help with the following infrastructure-related issues and opportunities:

- Replace old, deteriorating sewer system collection lines
- Improve existing streets and sidewalks. Currently, many streets are unpaved; few residential streets have sidewalks.
- Continue improvement of the Gem Trail
- Review existing ordinances related to infrastructure standards
- Funding future infrastructure improvements

Downtown Revitalization

Aberdeen's community review application identified community design and identity as the third focus area. Early on in the planning process, home team leaders determined it would be more helpful and appropriate to change this focus area to downtown revitalization. This change obviously placed greater emphasis on the healthy and vitality of downtown. Downtown revitalization issues include business development, community use of downtown, and organization/leadership — as well as design and identity. The maintenance of downtown streets and sidewalks, renovating vs. demolishing existing vacant buildings were specific issues the community wants to address.

Other Issues of Concern

In the weeks and months leading up to the community review, community leaders and home team members expressed hope that the review also address the following perceived issues and assets not directly related to the three selected focus areas:

- Recognize that Aberdeen exists and evolves within a larger area that includes adjoining unincorporated communities and municipalities.
- Bringing the community together around common goals and priorities.
- What does Aberdeen's significant and growing Hispanic population mean in terms of the community's assets, identity, and economy.
- Young people are leaving the community due to a lack of employment, education, and cultural opportunities.
- Likewise, a significant number of people commute to jobs in Aberdeen from American Falls, Pocatello, and Blackfoot. What can the community do to make it more attractive as a place to live for some of these commuters?

Pre-Review Community Survey

The community review process includes conducting a community survey in the weeks leading up to the review. This survey allowed residents of Aberdeen to share their ideas, experiences, and perceptions regardless of whether or not they had direct contact with the visiting team during the review. The additional information provided by the survey gave the visiting team information to compare with input gathered through public meetings and face-to-face conversations conducted during the review itself.

The survey of 786 Aberdeen households was coordinated jointly by visiting and home team leaders using the Idaho Department of Commerce's access to www.surveygizmo.com. Survey questions were developed in January 2014 and covered subjects including infrastructure, economic development, and public involvement. While the survey was anonymous, it also included some demographic questions for statistical purposes.

Five hundred and eighty-six surveys were mailed from the Idaho Rural Partnership office in late January 2014. Two hundred surveys were provided to the City of Aberdeen for hand delivery to residents living in renter-occupied housing. Each survey envelope included the survey in English and Spanish, a stamped and addressed reply envelope, and a cover letter from Mayor Morgan Anderson. The 217 completed surveys received by the Idaho Rural Partnership were entered one at a time into the www.surveygizmo.com survey application. This represents an excellent response rate of 27.6%. The mailed survey form and a detailed accounting of the results of both surveys are included as Appendix B.

Summary of Survey Results

Demographically, a strong majority of survey respondents (68%) have lived in Aberdeen for more than 21 years. Slightly more respondents were female (51.6%). At 73.7%, most respondents were non-Hispanic. Response to the survey by Hispanic residents was stronger than in surveys conducted as part of previous community reviews. Thirty-three residents, or over 15% of residents who were mailed a survey, chose to complete it in Spanish. Overall, Hispanic people completed 26.3% of surveys.

Almost 28% of survey respondent do not work. Only 13% of respondents who work commute to jobs in another community.

Infrastructure and Other Public Services

The survey asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with the community's infrastructure and other public service. Respondents expressed the highest level of satisfaction included (in no particular order):

- Fire Department
- Water services
- Sewage treatment services

- Library
- Condition of school facilities
- Availability of emergency health care/EMS
- Quality of parks

Infrastructure and public services Aberdeen residents expressed the lowest level of satisfaction with were:

- Condition of city streets
- Bicycle and pedestrian access
- Availability of sidewalks
- Local law enforcement
- Availability of drug and alcohol treatment programs
- Availability of high-speed Internet service
- Availability of local arts and cultural opportunities

Economic Development, Downtown, and Housing

The survey also asked several questions related to jobs, downtown, and housing. There is clear dissatisfaction with the *availability* of local jobs, with over 56% of respondents saying they are either highly or somewhat dissatisfied. A slightly lower percentage (50%) is highly or somewhat dissatisfied with the *quality* of local jobs. A similar number of respondents (48%) are highly or somewhat dissatisfied with the variety of local businesses.

Through the survey, Aberdeen residents told us they are dissatisfied with the current availability of job training programs. A slightly lower percentage of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the availability of information and training for people starting new businesses.

When asked to identify what prevents them from supporting locally owned businesses more often, the following responses were most frequently chosen, in descending order:

- Services and products I need are not available in Aberdeen.
- Cost
- Nothing. Supporting Aberdeen's businesses is a high priority to me.

A lack of parking and inconvenient business hours was *not* identified as a significant barrier to supporting Aberdeen businesses.

The survey also asked residents to identify how important they think it is to increase or improve certain types of businesses and services. Survey respondents feel it is MOST important to increase or improve the following:

- Aberdeen Daze
- Entertainment and recreation
- Retail stores

- Professional or personal services
- Youth services and facilities
- Aberdeen Gem Trail

Respondents indicated that increasing or improving the following types of businesses and services was, to them, a lower priority:

- Social services (e.g. domestic violence shelter and other emergency services)
- Adult education
- Farmer's market

Nearly 50% of survey respondents indicated they were highly or somewhat dissatisfied with the appearance of downtown Aberdeen. By comparison, residents revealed a somewhat higher level of satisfaction with the appearance of public buildings.

Aberdeen residents expressed mixed opinions about housing. On one hand, there was a general high level of satisfaction with the *affordability* of housing, but a relatively lower level of satisfaction with the *availability* of housing.

Community Involvement, Information, and Leadership

The survey asked residents to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements related to community involvement, information, and leadership. Survey respondents indicated strong interest in being better informed about community issues and projects. A large percentage also indicated they are happy with their level of involvement in community issues and organizations. Responses to the following statements were more mixed, with slightly more residents expressing disagreement:

- I am satisfied with the quantity and quality of information provided by the City of Aberdeen.
- I am satisfied with opportunities to be involved in decisions affecting the community.
- I generally trust the City Council to make decisions for the community.

While a large percentage of survey respondents said they were happy with their level of involvement in the community, the survey identified factors that prevent residents from being more involved as leaders and volunteers. The most significant barriers to more involvement were lack of time, family responsibilities, and not being asked to be involved.

Similarities and Differences between Hispanic and non-Hispanic Survey Respondents

Aberdeen's future will be determined, in large part, by the degree to which all residents are able to build consensus and work toward common goals that bridge cultural, ethnic, and political differences. By including a demographic question about ethnicity, the visiting team is able to make some observations about how Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents responded to the

survey. We encourage Aberdeen's leaders and community organizations take these observations into account as you move forward, together.

Relative to Non-Hispanic survey respondents, Hispanic respondents were more likely to be *less* satisfied with the following:

- Condition of city streets, bicycle and pedestrian access, and availability of sidewalks.
- Availability of emergency health care/EMS
- Availability of day care for children
- Availability of senior programs
- Availability of drug and alcohol treatment programs
- Availability of high-speed Internet service
- Availability of local arts and cultural opportunities
- Quality of parks
- Housing availability, quality, and affordability
- Quality of local jobs
- Level of business involvement in the community
- Availability of job training programs and information/training for people starting new businesses.

On the other hand, Hispanic survey respondents expressed higher satisfaction with the following, relative to non-Hispanic respondents:

- Local law enforcement
- Water services
- Quality of library

According to the survey, Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents are equally dissatisfied with the following:

- Appearance of downtown and public buildings
- Availability of local jobs
- Variety of local businesses and variety of goods available in stores

Relative to non-Hispanic survey respondents, Hispanic residents placed higher priority on increasing or improving adult education services and lower priority on youth services and facilities and retail stores. Hispanic and non-Hispanic survey respondents placed about the same priority on increasing or improving the following:

- Social services
- Professional or personal services
- Entertainment and recreation
- Aberdeen Gem Trail

- Aberdeen Daze

In the area of community information, involvement, and leadership, Hispanic people responding to the survey were more likely to disagree with the following statements:

- I am satisfied with the quantity and quality of information provided by the City of Aberdeen.
- I am satisfied with opportunities to be involved in decisions affecting the community.
- I generally trust City Council to make decisions for the community.

In summary, Hispanic survey respondents gave a clear indication that they want to be more informed about and involved in community and economic development efforts.

Demographically, Hispanic survey respondents were more likely to commute to a job in another community and to speak Spanish as the primary language spoken at home. While it is true that a larger percentage of non-Hispanic survey respondents have lived in the community for more than 21 years, 82% of Hispanic respondents have lived in Aberdeen for 11 or more years.

Key Participating Individuals

The success of the Aberdeen Community Review is due to the efforts of many people. The visiting team wishes to thank the all members of the home team for their time and contributions. These individuals are named by focus area at the beginning of this report. Also, the review would not have been successful without the active participation of many community residents who chose to spend time attending one or both community meetings and/or talking with various visiting team members during the review.

Home Team Leadership

The focus area leaders jointly accomplished coordination of the home team: Mayor Morgan Anderson (Economic Development), Mary Leisy (Infrastructure), and Karalee Bonzon (Downtown Revitalization). They were assisted by Kristin Jensen, Executive Director of Great Rift Business Development, who coordinated the American Falls Community Review in 2008. These four individuals facilitated communication with the home team, coordinated local logistics, invited organizations and individuals to participate in the review, and served as the primary contacts for visiting team leaders.

In addition, the following people invited individuals to participate in one of the community listening sessions (see page 18 for more information):

Cheryl Koompin
Karalee Bonzon
Linda Cardona
Jerry Kaiser
Carmelita Lucero
Katherine O'Brien

Visiting Team Leadership

The visiting team was comprised of 18 community and economic development professionals who were recruited based on their experience and expertise in the three selected focus areas. They came from local, state, regional, and federal agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses. Contact and biographical information for all visiting team members is included in this report as Appendix C. The following people served as visiting team focus area and listening session leaders:

Visiting Team Focus Area Leaders

Brent Tolman, Idaho Department of Labor	Economic Development
Julie Neff, USDA – Rural Development	Infrastructure
Jerry Miller, Idaho Department of Commerce	Downtown Revitalization
Lorie Higgins, University of Idaho Extension	Listening Sessions
Erik Kingston, Idaho Housing and Finance Association	Listening Sessions

Jon Barrett of Clearstory Studios served as visiting team coordinator and report writer. Key leadership and support was provided by Idaho Rural Partnership staff Mike Field, Executive Director, and Vickie Winkel, Administrative Assistant. Also appreciated was the support of University of Idaho graduate student and research assistant Josh Hightree.

Known as the ad-hoc committee, the following individuals began meeting with home team leaders in December 2013 to coordinate review planning and recruit people to the visiting team. The committee is grateful to the Association of Idaho Cities for providing meeting space and teleconference services.

Visiting Team Ad-Hoc Planning Committee

Jon Barrett	Clearstory Studios
Mike Field	Idaho Rural Partnership
Vickie Winkel	Idaho Rural Partnership
Brent Tolman	Idaho Department of Labor
Paul Lewin	University of Idaho Extension
Erik Kingston	Idaho Housing and Finance Association
Lorie Higgins	University of Idaho Extension
Jerry Miller	Idaho Department of Commerce
John Meyers	U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Brian Dale	U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Lori Porreca	Federal Highway Administration
Julie Neff	USDA – Rural Development

Review Itinerary

The home and visiting team focus area leaders named above jointly developed the overall master schedule, listening session schedule, and detailed itinerary for each focus area. This information is attached as Appendix D.

The review officially began at 3:00 pm, Tuesday, March 4 with a bus tour of Aberdeen and immediate surrounding area. The tour was followed by a listening session with the home team. Community listening sessions are described in detail beginning on page 18. The evening ended with dinner, followed by a town hall meeting at the Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. This meeting used a rotating small group format to provide interested residents and leaders an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions and respond to questions from the visiting team within each of the three areas.

Wednesday, March 5 began with a meeting at the Aberdeen City Hall, where Gloy Wride presented the highlights of Aberdeen's history and Aberdeen School District Superintendent Jane



Ward summarized the District's facilities, trends, assets, and challenges. Following these two presentations, the visiting team split up to conduct listening sessions and participate in a series of meetings and sites visits related to each of the three focus areas. The visiting team also benefitted from a presentation by Steve Love about the University of Idaho Research and Extension Center.

Highlights of the Wednesday morning and afternoon itinerary for each focus area are summarized below.

Economic Development

- Visit to Quality Meats and meet with John Campbell
- Visit to Regalos Y Novedades Elizabeth and meet with owner Gabina Gonzalez
- Visit to Simplot Potato processing plant and meet with Bruce Hauber
- Visit with multiple business owners
- Tour and discuss currently vacant commercial and industrial buildings

Infrastructure

- Visit wastewater treatment plant to discuss recent upgrades and collection system challenges
- Tour Aberdeen neighborhoods and discuss housing issues and opportunities
- Visit and discuss streets, sidewalks, and the Gem Trail
- Tour and discuss storm drainage issues and opportunities
- Visit to airport

Downtown Revitalization

- Meet with downtown business owners
- Downtown walking tour to visit occupied and vacant buildings
- Meet with Aberdeen Chamber members
- Visit Sportsman’s Park, Gem Trail, and golf course
- Visit the park near Maverick and vacant lot south of town

Concurrent with the focus area itineraries above, community listening sessions were conducted with selected stakeholder groups. See Part III. The visiting team held a short debrief meeting following dinner at the Aberdeen Senior Center.

The visiting team re-convened the morning of Thursday, March 6 to compare notes, debrief, gather additional information, and prepare presentations—one for the listening sessions and one for each of the three focus areas. These presentations were given at community meeting following dinner on Thursday night at the Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall.

Publicity and Public Participation

Numerous efforts were made to make residents and business owners of Aberdeen and surrounding area aware of opportunities to participate in the community review. The community survey mailed in early January 2014 included a cover letter signed by Mayor Anderson. This letter announced the community review and encouraged participation. Coverage of the community review by local media was excellent. Information about the community review also appeared in the Aberdeen Times with articles appearing in the January 29, February 12, and February 26 editions. A fourth article appeared the week following the review on March 12. This article is included as Appendix E. In addition, community review flyers were posted on community bulletin boards and at several places of business in the days leading up to the review.



Community participation in the review was comparable with other communities hosting reviews. Approximately 35 people attended the community meeting on Tuesday, March 4 and 40-45 people came to the final presentations on Thursday, March 6. These totals included members of the home team. In addition, business owners and other people we met in the community were very open and willing to share their ideas, experiences, and

perceptions in conversations held on sidewalks and in restaurants and other businesses. Nearly all home team members participated throughout the review.

PART III COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

Community listening sessions are open-ended, focus group-like discussions with key stakeholder groups identified by the home and visiting teams. The purpose is simple: we ask open-ended questions of a cross-section of community residents with diverse perspectives, listen to their answers, and reflect back what we hear. This means that for the most part, we're telling you exactly what we heard from residents; we also made a few observations and will share those at the end of this section.

The Aberdeen Community Review included listening sessions with the following stakeholder groups:

- Home team
- Agricultural leaders and commuters
- High school students
- First responders, social service agencies and faith community
- Hispanic residents
- Senior citizens

Listening sessions last approximately 60 minutes. Participants were not prompted to talk about any specific subjects, nor were the sessions directly associated with any of the four focus areas selected for the review. Facilitators simply ensure stakeholder groups understood the four questions, carefully record comments, and encourage everyone in attendance to participate in the session. Listening session questions include:

1. What DON'T you want to see in your community over the coming 5–10 years?
2. What DO you want to see in your community over the coming 5–10 years?
3. What challenges will have to be overcome to attain your desired future?
4. What assets exist that can be used to bring about your desired future?

These same questions were contained in a brief survey form distributed to all participants at the beginning of each listening session, with the following explanation:

“Please write down your thoughts on the following questions. During the listening session, we will invite you to discuss items you are comfortable sharing in a group setting. Like asking your doctor for a diagnosis, the process works best when we have your honest experience and perceptions in your own words; your responses will be treated confidentially and will help inform the overall picture of life in your community. Thanks for helping us paint that picture.”

shaking buildings, and dust.

Civic Issues

Many people we spoke to do not want Aberdeen to be a divided community where ethnic, religious and economic groups work separately for different ends. There is a sense that Aberdeen is in a state of deterioration and sometimes that leads to increased crime. Further deterioration, loss of services and school programs, crime and continued outmigration — particularly of younger adults — were often mentioned as things the people of Aberdeen do not want.

Youth

There is broad concern for the welfare of Aberdeen youth, but high school students we spoke with have witnessed the loss of electives at the school, including most agriculture classes, and fear that further contraction in educational opportunities are on the horizon. They already see the impact on student morale and think apathy is on the rise. Other fears for young people include drugs, gangs, and teen pregnancy.

What DO you want to see in your community over the coming 5–10 years?

The word cloud below visually represents how residents answered this question. Again, the size of the text correlates to the number of times the response came up during the listening sessions.



Economic Development

By far the issue foremost in the minds of Aberdeen residents is the local economy. There are a number of successful and beloved businesses in Aberdeen. There is also room for expansion of existing businesses and additional businesses in the community. Though local support for these businesses is pretty good, many thought residents could easily spend more money locally than in nearby cities.

Light manufacturing and an economic use for the Simplot potato plant were mentioned often as desirable, as were businesses that would complement existing ones, like a bowling alley and more restaurants. Businesses that offer higher wages and job opportunities for women were also a priority, especially for Hispanic residents.

A business directory (perhaps a chamber of commerce project) was suggested as a way to get the word out about what is available locally – particularly home-based businesses that are not as visible as those on Main Street. Along the same lines, a skills directory would help with local hiring and provide ideas for businesses that fit local skill sets.

One particular economic strategy was mentioned more often than others – tourism. Clearly, one of Aberdeen’s strengths is in outdoor opportunities. Numerous opportunities to leverage this strength were offered by listening session participants, including:

Expand the Gem Trail

This is already in the works and the number of times it was mentioned demonstrates how proud residents are of the trail. We got a clear sense that the trail, to many, represents hope that better days are ahead for Aberdeen and it is suggestive of future developments that improve local quality of life and make Aberdeen attractive to visitors and those seeking to relocate.



Leverage Sportsman’s Park as a community asset

Many of those we spoke with would like to see more made of this incredible asset in the surrounding area. This will probably require working closely with the County on some level, but it also presents possibilities for complementary businesses.

Improve and restore access to the Sterling Wildlife Management Area and the trail system

This is related to development of Sportsman’s Park in that the Refuge, if we understand correctly, is adjacent to it and at one time a walking trail system linked the two.

“Crackin”

This activity was discussed by some in the youth listening session who enjoy walking through the cracks between rock formations all around Aberdeen and nearby American Falls Reservoir, although another young person mentioned the danger of snakes inhabiting those spaces.

This cluster of Aberdeenian “Wants” suggests a collective sense that at least part of the community’s economic destiny lies in development of recreational opportunities. Along the same lines, there were many who would like to see more events, celebrations, and activities to attract visitors and provide locals with more opportunities to have fun and come together as a community. Sporting events, rodeos, recreational competitions, and festivals were mentioned specifically.

Quality of Life

Many comments clustered around improving the look, accessibility and “people friendliness” of the community – especially its public spaces. Quite a few people from different groups expressed a desire for more trees (particularly on Main Street), streetlights, fountains, community cleanup and beautification, and improved parking lots, streets and curbs. There was

also a feeling that though dust is a part of life in rural Idaho, businesses that stir it up with their activities could take more responsibility for abatement. This is a health issue as well as an aesthetic one.

Another “people friendliness” issue that arose often in listening sessions was local law enforcement. There were differing opinions about the nature of the concerns, but suffice to say, there is a general feeling that the skills and objectives of local law enforcement are frequently perceived to be “out of step” with community needs and conditions.

There is also a strong desire for more public gathering spaces and a feeling that empty storefronts could at least temporarily be repurposed as teen centers, art studios, or other activities that would engage a broad spectrum of the community. This strategy would provide opportunities for community members to come together during good times and not just during a crisis.

There was broad recognition that youth need more after school activities. A skate park was mentioned several times (but not by youth). Youth were more concerned about the condition of the school, restoring electives, test scores, and opportunities to obtain real work experience such as internships at the UI Experiment Station.

Celebrating community diversity and providing interaction space for groups that don’t normally cross over ethnic, economic, religious or generational lines was another desired focus related to new or existing community gathering spaces.

The Chicken and the Egg

The increasing lack of age diversity in the community was raised as a concern numerous times. When young adults are unable to earn a living, they must relocate to another community where jobs are available. At the same time, it was observed that if everyone who worked in Aberdeen lived in Aberdeen, the age structure of the community would be far more balanced, more money would be spent locally, the tax base would increase, and community improvements would be more likely to happen. Without economic opportunities or quality of life improvements, young adults and those who are currently commuting have little incentive to move to Aberdeen.

Leadership

The recommendations at the end of this section and elsewhere in this report offer some ideas for bringing about desired changes in Aberdeen. We observed that many in the community already understand many of the steps needed to move toward a desired future. Leadership issues were often mentioned as keys to moving forward. A more diverse leadership system that reflects the community’s demographics, including younger leaders and Hispanic leaders of all ages is a critical first step. This includes local government, civic organizations, the school board, and Volunteer Fire Department. High school students would like to see more Hispanic youth in Advanced Placement (AP) courses as well. All youth participants in the listening session agreed that empowering and further developing youth volunteer organizations would result in more

youth leadership and some of the desired improvements expressed by all listening session participants.

What challenges exist that could prevent the future you want?

Every community has challenges, whether imposed by outside forces or traced to local traditions, change, or conflict. We heard about many issues that will no doubt be familiar; without question, the loss of the Simplot facility being among the most immediate and visible challenge for the local community and residents. As noted previously, we heard some concerns expressed by individuals with respect to local law enforcement and the lack of local court services.



Many of us were intrigued by stories of Aberdeen's early days as a community of religious diversity, with over a dozen churches co-existing in such a small town. We were told that a

network of small family farms spread out around the township and employed local residents and immigrants alike during planting and harvest seasons. At first, these jobs involved seasonal, hands-on labor; things like cultivation, irrigation, harvesting and sorting attracted people eager for employment. While early workers were seasonal, some liked Aberdeen and became permanent residents, property and business owners, and in the process contributed to Aberdeen's history.

Farmers, their families, and their workers supported businesses in town—they got haircuts, bought vehicles and equipment, shopped for supplies, frequented local establishments, and went to town for cultural and social diversions. They were buying local before it was a 'thing,' and each dollar circulated throughout the local economy for so long they became like old friends.

As we also learned, agriculture changed in the decades following World War II. With the advent of technology and farm consolidation, fewer hands were needed for cultivation and fewer families were being supported by agriculture. These larger operations sought economies of scale in their farming practices and their purchasing behavior. As the farms grew, so did the distance traveled by each local shopping dollar.

Economic

With the Simplot plant closure, general isolation, shifting markets, and decreased school funding, several people we spoke with described a vicious cycle: more families moving away, which in turn leads to a shrinking tax base, further disinvestment, and loss of economic vitality.

Several business owners referenced a disconnect between resident's shopping behavior and their stated concern over local economic vitality and available jobs. We learned that in some cases residents were not aware of the goods or services available locally. As in many other small towns, local businesses carry limited selection and have limited hours. This creates a classic tension: consumers want more choice and convenience, but if they aren't supporting local businesses, those business owners have little incentive to invest in the desired inventory and operating hours.

Schools

The young people we interacted with spoke of the many elective courses and extra curricular opportunities that have gone by the way in recent years. When asked about the trend a community retiree told us "the governor and the legislature haven't been a good friend to education in the last five years." Without electives and opportunities like internships, young people feel they aren't being well prepared for careers or life.

Changing social and demographic dynamic

Aberdeen's history is still being written, but over time it has been shaped by those who came to worship, work and trade, and by the many cultures calling it home. As we listened to a presentation on the history of Aberdeen, one group seemed to be missing: Hispanic residents. We heard about several challenges in this area. These are best summed by comments from a

participant who approached our Listening Team to thank us for the opportunity. “This is the first time anyone has invited us to participate,” she said, adding “No one has asked us for our opinion.”

Aberdeen is not alone. Many Idaho communities have large, well-established Hispanic populations, but lack Hispanic representation in government, education, law enforcement and other essential services. The challenge for those individuals and families, especially young people, is to see themselves as fully integrated into their communities. They bring skills, talent, creativity and knowledge to the table.

Those we’ve had the pleasure of hearing from stand ready to support community projects and initiatives with their time, energy and resources. The challenge for Aberdeen and other communities seems to be strengthening the entire community through more inclusive and productive activities, partnerships and programs. Young people seem ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder on common goals. The challenge for elders may be to provide needed support, or at least remove known barriers.

Attitudes and perceptions

Some of the terms used in this category include apathy, despair, negative attitudes, and surrender. In some case, a sense of discouragement was tied to the Simplot plant closure; feeling isolated, perceived lack of support for local retail and other business, conflicts between local government and property owners, and to cultural and language divisions.

We heard the term ‘divisive atmosphere’ used in relation to racial and religious differences. One teenager suggested that Aberdeen’s grownups should “just get over things” so the community can come together and move forward on common goals.

Youth and adults alike pointed to a reputation for high school sports teams (both local and regional) that perceive Aberdeen’s sports community as being ‘poor sports.’ “Nobody likes us”, said one teen. We heard from locals that ‘league referees say they do not like working games with Aberdeen.’ Others simply chalked this up to highly competitive teams and fans, but it was mentioned several times by both youth and adult participants.

Communication

As mentioned earlier, we heard from several participants about the need for more effective communication among various groups. The most evident communication challenge we observed seems to be language. Community activities, public meetings and notifications that are only advertised in English will fail to involve a sizeable portion of taxpayers and residents.

Beyond language barriers, we heard about communication-based challenges involving local government, law enforcement, and business-to-business.

Geographic isolation

Many people cited Aberdeen's geographic isolation as a challenge. In some cases, locals told us they are challenged to access more diverse goods and services. At the same time, many residents believe Aberdeen's location also poses a challenge for bringing outside investment into Aberdeen. This was expressed as the *why factor*, as in 'Why would a business want to come here?' 'Why would you want to live here if there's not a...(Wal-Mart, bowling alley, theater, etc.)' Mostly, we heard that Aberdeen is 'not on the way to anyplace.'

Natural Resources

While water *quality* was considered an asset by many, water *quantity* seemed to be a concern, since Aberdeen's main wells have a limited capacity; we also heard that this pristine drinking water may be used for industrial purposes. The challenge is to make the most of this precious resource, as many predict clean drinking water may become more valuable than fuel in the coming years.

Assets

As outsiders looking in, we always take note of a community's setting within the surrounding landscape — whether it's forested, pastoral farmland, high desert, or near water. Next, some of us look for historic architecture or unique community features that define a sense of place.

One of the biggest surprises for the visiting team came when we asked locals to identify assets such as people, organizations, natural resources, or places. Often after an initial pause, listening session participants shared numerous assets with us, as reflected by the following word cloud. If there is one phrase that we thought summed things up, it was that Aberdeen is a 'small town with a big heart.'



People

As in other Idaho communities, Aberdeen residents cited caring neighbors who come together to assist those in need, hard-working honest people. Several commented that they feel the Mayor and Council genuinely care about the community, and that Aberdeen’s business owners have a reputation for integrity that attracts repeat business from regional customers. We also heard praise for teachers, first responders, along with the farmers and business people that support schools and students.

Organizations

Aberdeen’s cultural and civic organizations were often mentioned during our listening sessions. Churches, Civic Groups and the American Legion. In various ways we heard praise for local first responder (police, fire and EMTs) services, but also for their collaborative relationships. Many participants expressed appreciation for the University of Idaho Research and Extension Center.

Places

Although isolation was thought by some to be a challenge, others saw Aberdeen’s location as an asset. Proximity to the reservoir means good boating and recreational access, and several people

felt nearby communities offered a variety of services and resources when needed. Locals also appreciate the local golf course, clubhouse, airport, and especially the Gem Trail.

Natural resources

We heard agreement that drinking water quality is an asset for Aberdeen. The city's water supply is useable without treatment and tastes great. Hunting, fishing, hiking trails and local geologic features are all popular with locals and attract visitors from far and wide. The broken rock formations along the reservoir shoreline create a unique system of channels mentioned by high school students. 'Cracking' is the home-grown sport of running through these formations, presumably while dodging the occasional rattlesnake.

Observations and Recommendations

Each person attending listening sessions was asked to sign up to participate in implementing change and community review recommendations. When processes are established to implement review recommendations, those who are not already involved can be called on to volunteer in some capacity. Keep in mind that some people are interested in many community issues, while others will have narrower interests. Some like to go to meetings and be part of planning projects, while others just want to lend a hand when it's time to implement an activity – an event, a clean-up, a makeover, etc. Be sure to provide a menu of ways to be involved.

Our observations are limited to our direct experience during the pre-visit and the review itself; we can only base our observations and recommendations on this small sample of Aberdeen residents.

Evaluating Assets and Coordinating Action Around a Collective Vision

- There are many community-based planning programs that have helped rural towns heal divides, and develop and implement effective strategies for positive change. One that has been successful is the Orton Family Foundation's program, "Heart & Soul." For a program handbook and implementation guides, go to http://www.orton.org/resources/heart_soul_handbook.
- The National Service Learning Clearinghouse has a fact sheet entitled "Beyond Needs Assessments: Identifying a Community's Resources and Hopes" that describes an effective approach for create positive community change. Go to http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/fact_sheets/cb_facts/beyond_needs_assess.
- An easy to implement approach to asset mapping for heritage tourism was developed by an organization in Kansas. Go to <http://www.kansassampler.org/rce/>.
- <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/http://www.strongtowns.org/>
- See additional resources in Part V and VI of this report.

Becoming an Inclusive Community

Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents and leadership could seek out or create opportunities for collaborative and bilingual partnerships. This might involve common interests such as civic groups, veteran's organizations, business owners, recreation, hunting or fishing, arts, music, etc. Those in local government, schools and other federally funded programs should assess requirements related to Limited English Proficiency. Once that is complete, take meaningful steps to remove barriers. In many cases, failure to provide bilingual outreach is a violation of federal law, and noncompliance can be costly and unproductive. Visit <http://www.fairhousingforum.org> and click the "Limited English Proficiency" link to learn more about requirements and solutions. More useful information is available from the same site by searching for "What Every County and City Needs to Know." See Part V of this report for additional recommendations and resources.

University of Idaho Extension faculty, Lorie Higgins, Kathee Tiffitt, and Paul Lewin are available to work with Aberdeen residents to get organized to implement community review recommendations by bringing a cross-section of the community together to identify assets, learn about the economy and what's possible/feasible, create a vision, develop teams and take action. The program, Community Coaching for Grassroots Action, is designed to build leadership capacity while establishing and moving toward shared goals for the community. The brochure for this program is included as Appendix I. Go to <http://cd.extension.uidaho.edu/leadership/index.php>. Contact Lorie Higgins, 208-669-1480 or <mailto:higgins@uidaho.edu>.

PART IV FOCUS AREA REPORTS

Aberdeen's Demographic and Economic Trends

The visiting team recognizes the importance of identifying opportunities and recommendations in the context of Aberdeen's demographic and economic trends. We believe the following trends are particularly applicable to future community and economic development efforts. We encourage Aberdeen community and business leaders to keep these trends in mind as you move forward. Some of them started decades ago and continue to this day.

- While it may have gone up and down from decade to decade, your population has been increasing over the long term.
 - 1950 – 1,486 residents
 - 1990 – 1,406 residents
 - 2010 – 1,994 residents
- While the economic significance of agriculture remains high, there are fewer people working in agriculture (and fewer farms and farm families) due to increasing farm sizes and technological advancements related to, for example, irrigation, weed and pest control, harvesting, and processing.
- Increase in residents who are Hispanic
 - Hispanic people comprised 39% of Aberdeen's population in 1990.
 - In 2010, they comprised 52% of your population.
 - In 2010, 54% of kids enrolled in Aberdeen schools were Hispanic; by 2014, this percentage had increased to 58%.
 - From 2000-2010, the number Hispanic students have increased by 19%, while the number of non-Hispanic students has decreased by 41%.
- Hispanic residents becoming permanent residents
 - 30 years ago, about 80% of Hispanic population was migrant. In 2014, only 5-10% of Hispanic population is migrant.
- Relatively young workforce
 - Aberdeen's median age is 28.
 - 70 % of residents are under age 45.
 - Non-Hispanic population is a relatively older (e.g. older adults with adult children).
 - Hispanic segment is relatively younger (younger adults with kids).

- Commute to work trends
 - About 50% of Aberdeen’s workforce commutes to jobs work outside Aberdeen.
 - About 50% of people working in Aberdeen outside the community – mostly in Power, Bannock, and Bonneville Counties.

Economic Development

Community Comments and Concerns

Aberdeen residents and community leaders expressed many comments and concerns related to creating and expanding businesses and increasing job opportunities. The most often heard comments and concerns are summarized below.



Looking beyond the Aberdeen city limits

Before and during the community review, several people urged the visiting team, community leaders, and businesses to recognize that the Aberdeen community extends beyond the Aberdeen city limits. Any discussion of Aberdeen’s assets, opportunities, and challenges should take into account this larger area. Taking this comment a step further, we also heard that Aberdeen should maintain its understanding

of the assets and efforts of Bingham County and the Cities of American Falls, Blackfoot, and Pocatello as it pursues complimentary and potentially collaborative strategies.

Telling Aberdeen’s Story

Numerous people the visiting team spoke with shared a belief that the Aberdeen area should develop effective ways to communicate its identity, workforce attributes, amenities, and quality of life to individuals, organizations, and businesses in the region, as well as to potential visitors and businesses outside the immediate area. A partial list of assets identified during the community review is found below. See Part III: Community Listening Sessions beginning on page 18 for additional information.

- American Falls Reservoir and Sportsman’s Park
- Sterling Wildlife Management Area
- Golf course
- U of I/U.S. agricultural research facilities
- Gem Trail
- A motivated, hard working labor force

- Available land
- Locally-owned businesses known for quality customer service
- Aberdeen Daze

An Agricultural Sector Experiencing Change and Turbulence

Comments and concerns related to agriculture often focused on the imminent closure of the Simplot potato processing plant in Aberdeen. The anticipated economic impact of this closure was one of the community's primary motivations in submitting an application for the community review. Not surprisingly, the visiting team heard many people express fear that the closure could result in the closing of other small businesses, loss of population due to a lack of jobs for people losing their employment with Simplot, and reduction in the tax base used to support public infrastructure and services. The visiting team also heard repeatedly that a variety of agricultural operations require fewer employees than in the past due to technology and other advancements. Understandably, many Aberdeen residents are wondering what educational and employment path people will take if there are fewer agricultural jobs available to Aberdeen residents.

Growing Businesses from Within

A significant number of Aberdeen residents and leaders expressed hope that Aberdeen would find ways to better support the retention and expansion of its existing businesses and to facilitate the creation of new businesses (as opposed to focusing attention on recruiting businesses from outside the area). Related ideas expressed by Aberdeen residents during the community review included the following:

- Add value to the products we have to create more jobs so people can stay.
- Identify opportunities to market our businesses to surrounding communities.
- Growing what's here rather than focusing on recruiting businesses.
- Need to understand capabilities and capacities to know where to start and how to proceed.
- Encourage businesses that compliment and build on the goods and services currently available.
- Leary of chain stores that could jeopardize existing local businesses.
- Supporting an Aberdeen business is not just good for that particular business — it's good for the entire community. This idea needs to be reinforced in Aberdeen.
- Bridging the existing divide between Anglo and Hispanic residents and business owners would result in economic and cultural benefits.

Desire for Specific Types of Businesses

Aberdeen residents would like to see certain types of businesses in the future. In some cases, the creation of these businesses would help reduce retail leakage to other, larger communities in the region. The following list identifies the types of good and services Aberdeen residents would like see made available locally (in no particular order).

- Laundromat
- Motel/other lodging
- Small engine repair
- Recreation and entertainment
- Trades/home repair and improvement
- Food processing (especially for smaller scale direct sales and exporting)
- Day care
- Clothing
- Restaurants
- Sporting goods
- Fitness center

Empty or Idle Buildings

Business owners, residents, and elected officials all expressed dismay and concern about the number of empty buildings, especially on Main Street. The optimists in the community saw these buildings as assets and opportunities. Opinions on what should be done with or about such buildings was mixed, with some expressing a desire to see them preserved, rehabilitated, and re-used as an important part of Aberdeen’s history and identify; others felt these buildings are



unlikely to be renovated and that demolishing them would be the appropriate thing to do. People in both camps agreed they do not want to see more buildings become vacant in the future.

Perceived Constraints and Challenges

The most frequently repeated constraints or challenges related to economic development in the Aberdeen area included the following.

- Geographic isolation (*i.e.*, “Aberdeen’s not on the way to anywhere or anyplace else.”)
- Proximity to Pocatello urban area presents challenges for Aberdeen businesses.
- Limited availability of developable land and limited water supply.

Economic Development Opportunity Areas

The visiting team’s opportunity areas and recommendations for economic development are based on the above comments and concerns identified before and during the community review. Collectively, they will help the community and the region create new jobs by supporting entrepreneurs, the growth of existing businesses, and the recruitment of new employers to the area. They will also help support downtown revitalization. The economic development opportunity areas fall into these three broad categories:

- Connections
- Workforce Education
- Business engagement

Economic Development is abbreviated as “ED” throughout this section of the report.

A Word About the Simplot Potato Plant

The visiting team is aware that the pending closure of the Simplot potato plant, in part, motivated the City of Aberdeen to request a community review. Losing an employer providing approximately 300 jobs is a big deal in any community. One-third to one-half of these employees lives in Aberdeen. As described under, “Community Comments and Concerns” above, people in Aberdeen told us the closure could adversely impact existing businesses, place additional pressure on local taxpayers and businesses, and reduce school enrollment and the population of the community. Many comments were made about the need to replace Simplot with another large employer.



The majority of opportunities and recommendations related to economic development described below reflect the visiting team’s underlying belief that the closing of the Simplot plant can and should be viewed as an opportunity to make the community of Aberdeen and surrounding area more durable and resilient by reducing your dependence on a single major employer or industry.

The Heyburn/Burley area faced a similar situation several years ago with the shutdown of a Simplot facility. Eventually, the property was re-used. All of the 700 lost jobs were replaced (and then some) by the cumulative number of new jobs provided by over a dozen companies.

In summary, the visiting team appreciates that the Simplot’s Aberdeen plant is a significant asset. It will no doubt be used for a commercial purpose in the future. We encourage you to not focus all of your economic development efforts on finding that purpose right away. You’re not likely to influence the type of businesses the Simplot Company will or will not allow to lease or purchase the property, but there are plenty of opportunities and ideas you can more readily influence. For one, recognize that 70% of all job growth comes from existing companies and creation of new businesses by Aberdeen residents. When trying to recruit new employers, focus on small businesses with 5-15 employees in diverse industries. This will help to spread the impact of future potential job losses rather than concentrating them in one entity.

Economic Development Opportunity Area 1: Develop and communicate Aberdeen's identity and brand

This opportunity area is about telling the world who you are, what you offer, and what makes Aberdeen unique. This is relevant to visitors as well as to existing and potential residents and business. This communication should include what there is to do in and near the community. Establishing clarity about what you want people to know about Aberdeen will help focus a variety of community and economic development activities.

Rather than being rolled out one day as a finished product, a community's brand is earned over time through word of mouth, on-line and print marketing, and social media. A community doesn't suddenly wake up one day with a brand; it is the result of many related actions and decisions made the community.



Recommendations

ED 1.1 Create an *Aberdeen Ambassador* program that encourages residents to keep friends and family up to date about what's going on in Aberdeen.

ED 1.2 Enlist other residents (including youth) in a project to create a heritage tourism map or booklet that describes important places, people, visitor services and attractions (e.g. food and lodging), art, historical and contemporary events, and recreation amenities. Taking the idea a step further, work with other organizations and communities to develop the map or booklet at a regional level. For example, create a map or booklet as part of implementing recommendation DT 3.11.

ED 1.3 Improve welcome signage, access to visitor information, and wayfinding. The visiting team had several ideas regarding such signage, including:

- Create a "Welcome to Aberdeen" gateway sign at the south end of town; consider incorporating a changing message board into the sign to promote current events.
- Install a sign on the highway directing people to the airport.
- Install wayfinding signage on Main Street directing visitors to the high school, Gem Trail, city park, Sportsman's Park, golf course, U of I Research Center, and other destinations of interest.
- Install signage directing people traveling from the south to Sportsman's Park.
- Consider adding Aberdeen promotional signage in American Falls and/or on I-84.

ED 1.4 The water tower is an important community icon. Some visiting team members feel the graffiti on the tower is not attractive and suggest that it be painted and security increased to prevent future graffiti.

ED 1.5 Increase use of social media to tell potential visitors, residents, and business what's available in Aberdeen. As part of such efforts, encourage visitors and residents to talk about their experience visiting or living in Aberdeen. For example, encourage people to share stories about the great customer service they received in Aberdeen or about the great time they had attending Aberdeen Daze. Encouraging and then monitoring this kind of visitor-generated information provides local government and businesses with valuable feedback while also promoting the area to prospective visitors and businesses. Here are a few more thoughts from the visiting team about on-line marketing:

- The Chamber and City should partner to create an Aberdeen, Idaho web page. The page should contain contact information for the city and chamber, an on-line business directory, links to other community organizations and nearby attractions as well as commonly requested forms, documents and meeting information for both organizations. Incorporating a business directory and promoting attractions like Sportsman Park and the golf course might make a website project eligible for grant assistance. Eventually the website could offer residents an online method for paying their water and sewer bills.
- The City should consider creating a Facebook page. Facebook is free, easy to use, and effortlessly linkable to other forms of social media. A Facebook page would allow the city to quickly share time sensitive information and, in the event of an emergency, possibly help save lives and property.
- The City should also explore the creation of an electronic newsletter. A free newsletter service like Mail Chimp would allow the City to reach every household in the community without spending a single cent. The City of New Meadows, a community one-third the size of Aberdeen, has a website, electronic newsletter and a Facebook presence that could serve as models for the City's foray into social media.
- The Aberdeen Chamber needs to increase the number of postings on its Facebook page. At a minimum there should be at least two posts a week. Facebook is set up so that one can enter a number of posts in one sitting and use a timer setting to release the post. Frequent posting will make it easier for folks to find the Chamber through search engines like Bing and Google. Additionally, the Chamber should work to boost the number of "likes" for its Facebook Page. Everyone who "Likes" the Chamber page will have



Chamber postings appear on their page. Some topics for posting might include community events and a business or member of the week.

- In addition to the Chamber's use of social media, local businesses need to jump on the bandwagon. Free listings on social media outlets like Yelp and Trip Advisor is a great way to connect with travelers who more and more are using cell phones to help make dining and shopping decisions. Social media would also allow local business to jumpstart business on a slow day or quickly unload dated inventory. On a slow day maybe Wallace Drug offers an afternoon social media special on ice cream cones or Stokes offers an early evening special on ripe bananas.
- Take full advantage of opportunities to participate in webinars and other types of training on social media and other forms of on-line marketing.

ED 1.6 Create more formal opportunities to share your history and culture. Members of the visiting team were very excited about the privately-owned museum one block off Main Street and encourage the community and the property owner to explore the possibility of making it open to the public on a regular basis, even if on weekends only. The bi-cultural population and the important role Mennonite people played in your history are also stories that need to be told. See the downtown revitalization focus area for additional related recommendations.

Economic Development Opportunity Area 2: Build business-to-business connections, cooperation, and coordination

This opportunity area responds to two comments heard frequently by the visiting team in Aberdeen: (1) many businesses and business owners rarely communicate with one another, if at all, and (2) there are social and cultural divisions in the community that, among other things, discourage people from one cultural or ethnic group from going into businesses owned by people of another group. Similarly, some Latino residents told us they are not comfortable using existing health care services.

Several Aberdeen area residents and business owners brought up a perceived economic divide among groups in the community. Most rural Latinos are poor. They have jobs that typically do not offer health care and other benefits. Efforts to increase economic opportunities and prosperity in the community should be as inclusive as possible.

Recommendations

ED 2.1 Encourage greater coordination and communication between business owners and managers regarding the goods and services available in the community to reduce retail leakage and duplication. For example, a connection needs to be made between Regalos Y Novedades Elizabet and Quality Meats so Elizabet's can sell meat to their customers during Quality Meat's slow months.

ED 2.2 Build chamber membership by reaching out to Hispanic and non-traditional businesses.

ED 2.3 Create or update the community’s business directory. This directory needs to be available on-line and it must be kept current.

ED 2.3 Establish a forum for communication that used incentives to encourage businesses and organizations to promote each other’s businesses, projects, and events.

Economic Development Opportunity Area 3: Connect education to businesses and employment

Based on our conversations with students, faculty, business owners, and other youth advocates in Aberdeen, the visiting team sees opportunities to more consciously connect your employers to the community’s education system so that high school students become more aware of the kind of employment likely to be available to them in the future and the higher or technical education those jobs require. This information could create new educational opportunities at the school, or new apprentice opportunities with local businesses, while increasing the potential for Aberdeen’s youth to return after receiving college or other education elsewhere.

Recommendations

ED 3.1 Businesses should be encouraged to partner with the high school to develop after hours training opportunities for senior students to develop hands on experience working in local businesses; specific ideas include an apprenticeship, internship, or mentoring program.

ED 3.2 Work with the University of Idaho to connect the Aberdeen Research and Extension Center to youth in the community through service learning, internships, and other learning opportunities. A stronger relationship with the Center can happen, perhaps through funding to advance minority education in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).

ED 3.3 Workforce development training funds could be used to support training for a variety of qualifying jobs.

ED 3.4 Explore creation of a community-funded entrepreneurial and educational meeting space that would contain tools and equipment chosen by founders to support creation of businesses and



learn hands-on skills. This project might make use of a currently vacant building in the downtown area. It would help spark entrepreneurial activity while fulfilling a need to provide vocational, hands-on, and team-oriented educational opportunities — exactly the kind of opportunities that have become more rare in recent years. In essence, this project represents an expansion of the “Makerspace” currently found at the Aberdeen Public Library. See also recommendation I 4.1 in the infrastructure focus area.

Economic Development Opportunity Area 4: Support the expansion of existing businesses and entrepreneurs who want to start new businesses

As noted under “Community Comments and Concerns”, many Aberdeen residents and leaders spoke about the importance of growing from within by encouraging existing businesses to grow and supporting the creation of new businesses. Achieving this goal will help increase Aberdeen’s resiliency in the face of uncertain economic trends and reduce it’s dependence on one or two major employers.

We’re not suggesting that the community not spend any effort recruiting businesses from outside Aberdeen. We are saying that you should pay at least as much attention to your existing small businesses. The so-called “economic gardening” we’re talking about includes connecting entrepreneurs with resources and information. It also includes investing in policy changes, physical improvements, and relationship building to create a more entrepreneurial community.

Recommendations

ED 4.1 Perhaps in partnership with American Falls, work with applicable state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations to produce a series of workshops for businesses and entrepreneurs on, for example, business planning, financing, social media marketing, financial management, etc.

ED 4.2 Develop a business retention and expansion program.

ED 4.3 The City and Chamber should work together to identify things the City administration and the community in general can do to create a positive, entrepreneurial business environment in Aberdeen. If one does not exist, this effort could result in the formation of a business or economic development advisory committee that would serve as a sounding board for the city council.

ED 4.3 Complete an inventory of commercial and industrial properties in Aberdeen and surrounding area to identify unused or underused buildings and vacant land.

ED 4.4 Make sure available commercial and industrial properties are on the State of Idaho’s Gem State Prospector website.

ED 4.5 Partner with the Small Business Administration, Idaho State University, and/or other agencies to establish a new business mentoring program.

ED 4.6 Develop a community workforce survey to document the skills community members possess. Create a database for use in attracting new businesses.

ED 4.7 The Chamber and City should create an appealing, engaging process for celebrating the opening of every new business.

ED 4.8 The City should develop a checklist and packet of information for new businesses that identifies what processes the business must go through to operate within the city limits of Aberdeen. This packet should be in both English and Spanish. It should also be made available on the City/Chamber website.

ED 4.9 Explore the possibility of a community-owned retail business and/or a business operated by high school students.

ED 4.10 Create a campaign that encourages Aberdeen area residents to support Aberdeen businesses. Incorporate incentives and other principles of community-based social marketing.

ED 4.11 Support the development of agri-tourism businesses. Agri-tourism is broadly defined as any agriculturally-based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch. It can include a variety of activities, including buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, picking fruit, feeding animals, or staying at a B & B on a farm.

Economic Development Resources

The College of Business at Idaho State University offers its Bengal Solutions programs to connect the expertise of the College's faculty and graduate with businesses and entrepreneurs. Consulting is provided at an affordable cost to business owners. Go to <http://www.isu.edu/cob/bengalsolutions.shtml>. Contact Jeff Street at 208-282-2504 or strejeff@isu.edu. The College of Business is also home to the Idaho Small Business Development Center for the region that includes Bingham County communities. Go to <http://www.idahosbdc.org/locations/region-5-idaho-state-university-pocatello/> or call 208-244-8521.

U.S. Small Business Administration, Boise District Office. Go to <http://www.sba.gov/id>.

Southeast Idaho Council of Governments (SICOG) has a revolving loan fund to assist business start-ups and expansion. Go to <http://www.sicog.org/>. Contact Kathleen Lewis, 208-233-4535, Kathleen@sicog.org.

USDA Rural Development Business Enterprise Grant Program can fund many projects that support business development and job creation (e.g. a business director). Go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_rbeg.html. Contact Dale Lish, dale.lish@id.usda.gov, 208-785-5840, ext 119.

Idaho Regional Travel Grant Program funds projects related to developing tourism-related amenities and marketing. Go to <http://commerce.idaho.gov/tourism-resources/itc-grant-program>. Contact Jill Eden, jill.eden@commerce.idaho.gov, 208-334-2650 ext 2161.

This resource may offer an affordable option for a new, more comprehensive website:

http://govoffice.com/index.asp?SEC=8FFED0F0-28B6-4D59-BAB4-15A21D138203&Type=B_BASIC.

Southern Idaho Economic Development has been involved in evaluating economic development opportunities in communities with rail access and/or available manufacturing or agricultural processing facilities. Go to <http://www.southernidaho.org/aboutsiedo/>. Contact Jan Rogers, 208-324-7408.

Great Rift Business Development Organization. Go to <http://greatriftbusinessdevelopment.com/>. Contact Kristen Jensen, 208-380-1719, kristenrjensen@gmail.com.

The Lemhi Education Project in Salmon improves the lives of the citizens of Lemhi County by providing face to face, professional expertise and connecting them with critical resources with the goal of maximizing their investments in education. Go to <http://lemhied.org/>. Contact 208-756-1551 or director@lemhied.org.

To continue development of the “Makerspace” and related ideas at the Aberdeen Library, maintain communication with the Idaho Commission for Libraries. Go to <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/make-it-library-where-idaho-makers-meet>.

The Fab Lab concept was developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) by Professor Neil Gershenfeld, founder and head of the Center for Bits and Atoms, who developed a very popular course titled “How to Make Almost Anything.” As part of the class, he gave his students access to a fabrication laboratory containing some very basic cutting, milling and electronic tools. Inspired by the transformative results, Dr. Gershenfeld encouraged others to open similar Fab Lab’s in their own communities giving ordinary people the ability to make whatever they want. The Boundary County Library District in Bonners Ferry will be attempting to pass a \$5,000,000 Bond in May 2014 to build a Fab Lab based on the MIT model. Go to the Center for Bits and Atoms at <http://www.cba.mit.edu/>. This resource might be helpful as you consider recommendation ED 3.4.

The Ewing Kauffman Foundation supports projects that foster a society of economically independent individuals who are engaged citizens, contributing to the improvement of their communities. The Foundation focuses grant making on two areas—education and entrepreneurship. Go to <http://www.kauffman.org>.

Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Fundamentals is a joint publication of North Dakota State University Extension and Mississippi State University Extension. It provides a useful guide to beginning a business retention and expansion (BR&E) visitation program. Go to <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/agecon/market/cd1605.pdf>.

Local Dollars, Local Sense: How to Move Your Money from Wall Street to Main Street and Achieve Real Prosperity by Michael H. Shuman. Mr. Shuman is Director of Research for Cutting Edge Capital, Director of Research and Economic Development at the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE), and a Fellow of the Post Carbon Institute. He has

published several books on locally-based economic development. Go to <http://www.amazon.com/Local-Dollars-Sense-Prosperity-Resilience/dp/1603583432>.

Funding from USDA's Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator grant program is available to spur job creation and economic growth in distressed rural communities. Go to <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2012/03/0089.xml>.

State of Idaho Industrial Revenue Bonds. Industrial revenue bonds provide businesses with a potentially lower cost alternative source of funding for purchasing and improving upon industrial facilities. The lower cost is realized because the bonds issued under this program are tax-free. This incentive might entice investors to accept a lower rate of return. Go to http://commerce.idaho.gov/assets/content/docs/IRB_GUIDE_2010.doc. Randy Shroll, 208-334-2650 ext 2124, randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov.

TechHelp provides technical and professional assistance, training and information to Idaho manufacturers, processors and inventors to help them strengthen their global competitiveness through product and process improvements. Go to <http://www.techhelp.org/index.cfm>. Idaho TechHelp also has a team devoted exclusively to food processing and food marketing. Go to <http://www.techhelp.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=services.food>. Jeff Kronenberg, Food Processing Specialist, jkron@uidaho.edu, 208-364-4937.

University of Idaho Extension's "Open for Business" program is designed to bring business training to remote rural communities. Lorie Higgins, 208-885-9717, higgins@uidaho.edu.

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship uses webinars, publications, and other tools to share timely information and best practices on a variety of topics related to economic development in rural communities. Go to www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/site. "*Innovative Approaches to Entrepreneurial Development: Cases from the Northwest Region*" is one publication of interest. To read or download, go to <http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/site/images/research/cp/cs/cs4.pdf>.

The Eastern Idaho Entrepreneurial Center (E Center) is a Rexburg-based nonprofit providing value-added business consulting through a network of local university students, government leaders, and business professionals. Go to <http://www.idahoecenter.org/about/>. Will Jensen, Executive Director, 208-356-5009, w.jenson@rbdcenter.org.

Fill-in-the-Blank Business Recruitment Workbook. This workbook was designed for downtown and commercial district revitalization organizations that want to improve the mix of businesses in their districts by helping existing businesses thrive, and by recruiting new businesses to fill gaps in the market. Go to: <http://www.DowntownDevelopment.com/fibbr.php>, 1-800-232-4317.

The *Entrepreneurs and Their Communities* archived hour-long webinars available through University of Idaho Extension are focused on research-based best practices for supporting small businesses. Free webinars are ongoing. Go to <http://www.extension.org/entrepreneurship>.

An entire curriculum focused on building an entrepreneur friendly community is available through Ohio State University. Go to <http://sustentrep.osu.edu/building-an-entrepreneur-friendly-community>.

A PowerPoint presentation titled *Creating an Entrepreneurial Culture/Community* by Deborah Markley. Go to www.agecon.purdue.edu/aicc/valueaddconf/PPT/5MARKLEY2.ppt.

The Southern Rural Development Center offers a self-paced training on web sites for small Hispanic businesses. Go to http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/curricula/hispanic_business/. GrowthWheel® helps entrepreneurs build their businesses through a simple action-oriented process that stays true to the way most entrepreneurs think and work. For the business advisor, the toolkit is a checklist to keep a 360° perspective and a way to save time by empowering the client company to do more work. For organizations, GrowthWheel establishes a common language for all advisors and clearly communicates what the consulting process offers. It is available through the Regional Development Alliance, Inc. and Region VI Small Business Development Center.

Idaho Housing and Finance Association's Idaho Collateral Support Program establishes pledged cash collateral accounts with a lending institution to enhance loan collateral for businesses in order to obtain financing on acceptable terms. Go to <http://ihfa.org/ihfa/small-business-loan-programs.aspx>. Cory Phelps, coryp@ihfa.org, 208-331-4725.

Idaho TechConnect, Rick Ritter, rick.ritter@idahotechconnect.com, 208-562-3700.

Idaho National Laboratory's Technical Assistance Program provides technical expertise to state and local government, and regional small businesses. The requesting organization can receive, at no cost to it, up to 40 hours of laboratory employee time to address technical needs that cannot readily be met by commercially available resources in the region. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/992ayxe>. Stephanie Cook, Stephanie.cook@inl.gov, 208-526-1644.

Wealth Creation and Rural Livelihoods is a learning network of practitioners, researchers, and policy makers focused on creating and sustaining rural wealth. Go to <http://www.ruralwealth.org>.

Host a luncheon or meeting for business owners that features a showing of the "Maps, Apps, and Mobile Media Marketing" webinar available through University of Idaho Extension, then work

together to help each other learn about and access the many resources provided in the presentation. Go to <http://www.extension.org/pages/16076/etc-webinar-archive>.

South Central Idaho Tourism and Recreation at the College of Southern Idaho can possibly offer customer service training. Debbie Dane, 208-732-5569, ddane@csi.edu.

The Idaho Humanities Council provides grant funding for projects and events related to history, culture, and identity. Go to www.idahohumanities.org. 208-345-5346.

Idaho State Historical Society's Community Enhancement grants can fund interpretive signage, brochures, and history-related audio and video projects. Go to <http://history.idaho.gov/community-enhancement-grants>. Keith Peterson, keith.peterson@history.idaho.gov, 208-882-1540.

Tourism Cares is a non-profit offering grants and technical assistance for the preservation, conservation and restoration of cultural and historic sites and visitor education. Go to <http://www.tourismcares.org/>.

University of Idaho Extension Specialist, Lorie Higgins, developed the Two Degrees Northwest artisan trail guide for nine counties in north central Idaho and southeastern Washington to help visitors locate place-based businesses ("place-based" means tied to place – this kind of development can't be off shored). Lorie is available for consultation if this kind of rural development strategy is considered by Aberdeen residents. Go to <http://www.2dnw.org/>. Contact Lori Higgins, Director, 208-885-9717, Higgins@uidaho.edu.

Harvest Hosts is a network of farmers, winemakers, and attractions that invites self-contained RVers to visit their vineyards and farms and stay overnight for free. Food producers in the Aberdeen area can join this network. Go to www.HarvestHosts.com.

Infrastructure

Community Comments and Concerns

Aberdeen residents expressed to the visiting team many comments and concerns related to infrastructure. From many people we heard recognition of the relationship between infrastructure improvement and economic development. Such improvements increase capacity and make Aberdeen a more attractive place to live, raise a family, and own a business.

Wastewater and water

The majority of pre-review survey respondents indicated they are moderately if not highly satisfied with community's wastewater and water systems. While in Aberdeen, the visiting team learned about the recent major upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant. With this project nearing completion, the City now recognizes that the priority needs to shift to the replacement of its aging wastewater collection system.



The visiting team was informed that major employers generate large amounts of wastewater and that efforts to manage and reduce this load on the system are ongoing. City leaders also expressed a concern that Aberdeen's limited water supply may make it difficult to attract new industrial and agricultural employers that require significant amounts of water. The visiting team was also informed the City currently does not read water meters, not does it have water storage capacity.

Housing

Even though it was not selected as a focus area per se, the visiting team recorded several housing-related comments and concerns voiced by Aberdeen residents. Overall, there is a perceived need for rental housing off all types.

Much of the existing housing stock is aging and in need of repairs, especially housing for low and moderate income households. At the same time, we also heard people speak with pride and appreciation about the improvements that have been made to older owner-occupied homes in recent years.

Several community members expressed concern about buildings and yards that are not being maintained and/or used for long-term junk storage. Dogs running loose was also identified as a concern among some.

Transportation

The visiting team heard numerous comments about Aberdeen's streets and roads. Many people would like to see more streets paved and better maintained. Existing unpaved streets were described as inconvenient, dusty, hard on vehicles, full of potholes, and unsafe and unsuitable for pedestrians. Other comments and concerns related to transportation included:

- Lack of sidewalks
- Stormwater/flooding issues in some areas due to Aberdeen's flat topography and lack of a structured storm drain system
- Speeding
- Heavy truck volumes on Main Street and associated impacts (dust, noise, pedestrian safety, etc.)
- Erratic parking practices and potential conflicts between pedestrian and vehicle use of road shoulders. It's not clear who belongs where.
- Students not able to walk to and from school safely

Many residents expressed awareness that the City simply does not have the funds to pave and maintain more roads and address many of the other concerns above.

Law Enforcement and Emergency Services

The visiting team heard a variety of comments and concerns about law enforcement and emergency services. We noted significant appreciation for fire protection and emergency services, although some said more of the community's young adults need to become engaged as volunteers to ensure continuity. It is the EMS program's goal to transition from a "basic" to "advanced" service.

Opinions about local law enforcement were more mixed. Some residents believe the police are inflexible, selective, and heavy-handed with their enforcement; while others feel the police are not as responsive as they could be. More than one resident shared with the visiting team their opinion that there is too much emphasis on minor traffic violations and not enough on animal control and more serious violations. To the visiting team, there appears to be a need for trust building and communication between law enforcement and the community.

Education

Satisfaction with the quality of education provided by Aberdeen's schools among many residents appears strong. The school facilities themselves, in particular, are a source of satisfaction and pride. From students we heard a desire for more choices and variety in educational opportunities and that all students should have equal access to such opportunities. We did hear some people express concern and disappointment about the number of teachers and administrators who do not live in Aberdeen.

Library, Parks, and the Gem Trail

Aberdeen home team members and residents were keen to show us and/or talk about the library, parks, the golf course, and the Gem Trail. We heard much appreciation for all of these assets. Many people expressed their hope that they continue to be improved in the future.

Infrastructure Opportunity Areas

As Aberdeen considers the opportunities and recommendations below, the visiting team encourages the residents and leaders of Aberdeen to think about public infrastructure as a system of facilities and services that, collectively, create a community that supports economic development and conserves fiscal and natural resources.

Infrastructure is abbreviated as “I” throughout this section of the report.

Infrastructure Opportunity Area 1: Continue to improve water and wastewater systems

The visiting team congratulates the community for its steady, long-term effort to improve the wastewater treatment plant in order to remain in compliance with increasingly complex and demanding regulations. This is an enormous challenge for small communities, and it is especially daunting for Aberdeen, where the major employers generate significant waste for which the City is responsible for treating.

The newly constructed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) contains an Integrated Fixed Film Activated Sludge (IFAS) system that was installed to replace the existing bio-tower and aeration tank. This new IFAS system is not currently functioning due to the failure of one of the components. A third-party investigator is examining the cause.

The IFAS and the newly built secondary clarifier had problems with freezing. Covers for these WWTP components have been proposed and the pros and cons of various types of covers are being considered. The City has applied for a subsequent USDA Rural Development grant to construct the redundant secondary clarifier and covers. A secondary clarifier is also needed at the WWTP to complete items needed for the City to meet the requirements of their Compliance Agreement with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

The WWTP receives wastewater from three potato packing plants. This wastewater contains a high concentration of grit. The grit becomes a part of the sewage solids that must be stored and eventually disposed of by the City. The disposal of sewage solids is expensive.

Our recommendations related to wastewater treatment focus on a significant issue identified during the community review — the integrity of the wastewater collection system. The City has acquired a video camera to inspect existing sewer lines. The City’s Public Works staff replaced lines as funds have allowed. About ½ of the 11 miles of sewer collection lines in the City are deteriorated or root-infiltrated and are in need of replacement.

We also offer additional recommendations intended to increase and safeguard the City's water supply. Making further progress in these areas is an important part of increasing your capacity to accommodate future commercial, industrial, and residential development.

Recommendations

I 1.1 The City and major employers that create large amounts of wastewater should continue working together to reduce the costs resulting from their operations. The visiting team recognizes these employers provide the jobs on which this community's future depends.

I 1.2 Aberdeen's wastewater collection system has deteriorated and much of it needs to be replaced. There is a backlog of maintenance issues. The City has been diligent in making repairs as they can afford, but this remains a long-term critical concern for the community and must be a priority. Leaking collection pipes could contaminate Aberdeen's pristine and enviable drinking water. We recognize this is an expensive undertaking with which the City may need assistance and that the work needs to be done before roads are significantly upgraded. The \$350,000 block grant will help but they need more funding to address this challenge.

In general, continue to replace small sections of the collection system in-house as possible. Replace sewer lines prior to paving or major repairs to streets if needed. Continue to apply for grant funds and consider applying for low interest loans.

I 1.3 Establish a consumption-based water billing rate structure. This will commonly result in a 30% decrease in consumption.

I 1.4 Consider installing a water storage system to utilize well capacity during low usage times of the day.

Infrastructure Opportunity Area 2: Maintain and improve your transportation infrastructure

Aberdeen residents clearly want to see improvements to the community's streets. They also want improvements that make Aberdeen more safe, convenient, and attractive for biking and walking. The visiting team recommendations related to transportation also address storm water drainage issues. See the downtown revitalization focus area for additional recommendations specific to Main Street.

Aberdeen's streets and street rights-of-way are wide enough but many lack defined driving, walking and parking areas, which creates confusion and safety issues.

Recommendations

I 2.1 Making it easier and safer for residents to walk or bike to nearby destinations (e.g. parks, schools, and downtown) will help promote downtown business. Once folks are in their cars, it's just as easy to drive to American Falls, Pocatello, or Blackfoot. Strategies for encouraging biking and walking include:

- Create community-wide mobility committee or active transportation committee that includes stakeholders from all interests in community.
- Complete the proposed community-wide pedestrian network outlined in the Aberdeen Gem Trail brochure.
- Use signage to identify pedestrian network and crossings
- Consider the use of pedestrian flags at Main Street intersections.
- Paint “sharrows” on selected streets to indicate road use for bikes as well as cars. In some cases, there is enough width for actual bike lanes.
- Develop an annual or monthly walk to school day.
- Develop a walking school bus.
- Work with school to identify safe routes for kids on the other side of Main Street to be able to walk to school
- Celebrate National Bike Month in May by creating fun community rides, bike rodeo, safety training, competitions, a bike parade, and special coupons at local stores.
- Install artful bike racks in convenient locations around town.
- Include bike parking in parking ordinance.



I 2.2 Use appropriate treatments to maintain existing unpaved roads in order to create a neat, aesthetically pleasing road environment. Specific recommendations related to road maintenance include:

- To minimize possible impacts, look for alternatives to using magnesium chloride to melt winter ice and make unpaved road surfaces more compact.
- More regular road grading and maintenance
- Fill in potholes
- Scrub coating as a maintenance option for paved roads (less expensive compared to repaving)
- Double shot of seal coating

I 2.3 Explore the possibility of narrowing many local roads by identifying pedestrian space with 5-foot asphalt pavement or something more temporary and inexpensive like striping,

candlesticks, or jersey barriers. This delineates space for pedestrians and parking while encouraging cars to slow down on your residential streets.

I 2.4 Address storm water drainage issues by, for example, constructing on-site rain gardens in specific problem areas.



I 2.5 The airport should be operated as an enterprise fund like water and sewer funds. City leaders should try to find ways to generate more revenue from the airport to offset costs to the general fund. Perhaps have a fly-in breakfast at the airport, radio controlled airplane fly-in, increase hanger fees, or sell fuel.

Infrastructure Opportunity Area 3: Address housing needs and property maintenance issues

While it wasn't selected as a focus area for the community review, various issues related to housing and property maintenance did come up prominently while the visiting team was in Aberdeen. Below the visiting team offers several recommendations designed to improve the condition of the existing housing stock and increase the variety of renter- and owner-occupied housing available in the community.

Aberdeen's existing single-family housing appears to have a fairly high number in need of new roofs, energy efficiency improvements, and other repairs and maintenance. At the same time, it is clear that some residents are upgrading and improving their homes. These rehabilitated homes are a source of pride among community residents and leaders.

Recommendations

I 3.1 Work with housing agencies, builders, and realtors to gain an accurate understanding of the housing market and needs. This can be accomplished by completing a housing market analysis and needs assessment.

I 3.2 At the time of the community review, members of the visiting team noticed a lot of litter on the property just west of the high school. Organize a cleanup day to beautify this area.

I 3.3 Home repairs are expensive, especially for low income residents. Many of Aberdeen's residents would be eligible for low interest loans from USDA Rural Development, an agency that assists rural communities with infrastructure investments.

I 3.4 Aberdeen is a community in which residents care greatly about each other. For example, the faith community, high school athletic teams, and other community organizations have an enormous opportunity to bring its strength and volunteers to help senior citizens, in particular, to make much needed repairs.

I 3.5 Provide information to make residents more aware of existing weatherization and energy efficiency audit programs in the region.

Infrastructure Opportunity Area 4: Continue to develop school, library, and recreation programs and facilities

This opportunity area includes observations and ideas regarding several public assets and facilities in Aberdeen. These assets include the schools, library, and park facilities and programs. Acting on the following recommendations will help make them meet unmet needs in the community and attract additional visitors.

Recommendations

I 4.1 Continue to develop and expand the Aberdeen public library as a place for community use and education. The library is a significant, successful community asset ; build on it. To the visiting team, it appears to be a location at which there is potential to develop activities that encourage cross cultural (i.e. Hispanic and non-Hispanic) understanding and appreciation. We were particularly impressed by the new “Makerspace” room developed in partnership with the Idaho Commission for Libraries. The library building has uneven floors, narrow passageways and a need for more space. There may be some community members who are unaware of the variety of services provided by the library. See also recommendation ED 3.4 within the economic development focus area for information about a related idea.

I 4.2 Encourage the development a stronger cooperative relationship between the schools and the library to identify opportunities for complimentary programming.

I 4.3 Increase use of school facilities for community education and recreation purposes. For example, broadband connectivity and the school’s access to the Idaho Education Network can be used for a variety of educational purposes. The library could survey patrons and the community at-large to identify the types of new services and facilities desired. For example, is it possible for the library to expand into arts education?

I 4.4 The City should try to leverage Sportsmen’s Park to draw more visitors to town. See the Economic Development focus area, Opportunity Area 1 about marketing this and other assets.

I 4.5 Assess current use of the Gem Trail by doing biking and walking counts to establish a baseline.

Infrastructure Opportunity Area 5: Law enforcement and emergency services

In the area of law enforcement, the visiting team responds to the comments and concerns we heard about the relationship between Aberdeen residents and law enforcement in the community. Such concerns came up in multiple listening sessions and other meetings. Many of our recommendations will hopefully improve communication and understanding, leading to the identification of actions that make sense for the community. We commend the Aberdeen Police Department for creating and using a Facebook page to communicate with citizens.

During the limited time the visiting team spent in Aberdeen, we were not able to determine if comments and concerns about local law enforcement were widespread or limited to relatively few community members. Looking at the survey results, Anglo members of the community tended to express a slightly lower level of satisfaction with local law enforcement than did Hispanic residents. We were not able to meet with representatives of the Aberdeen Police Department. We also offer recommendations to address the needs identified by other emergency service professionals we spoke with during the community review.

Many of the recommendation under this opportunity area reflect the principles of community-oriented policing (a.k.a. community policing). Community-oriented policing is a philosophy that:

- Promotes organizational strategies
- Supports the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques
- Proactively addresses the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime

Law enforcement agencies in Idaho and across the country are successfully using the principles of community-oriented policing to :

- Prevent misconduct within their departments
- Properly address misconduct, should it occur
- Build and maintain community trust and confidence
- Create and maintain an ethical work environment
- Develop and sustain trust between their organizations and the communities that they serve

Recommendations

I 5.1 Survey Aberdeen residents and/or conduct a series of focus groups to understand community perceptions, concerns, and ideas concerning local law enforcement and emergency services. This effort should be coordinated by a third party (i.e. not a representative of the City, the County, or the Aberdeen Police Department). Representatives of the City and the Police Department should be involved in clarifying the purpose of this effort, but should not actively

take part in facilitating or collecting the information. At this point, we do *not* recommend a large community forum on law enforcement and emergency services.

I 5.2 Using information gathered through the recommendation above, identify and prioritize communications and public relations activities so that all segments of Aberdeen’s population become: (1) more informed about law enforcement policies and procedures, and (2) more trustful and understanding of law enforcement agencies and officers. An important point here is to ask the *community* to play a role in improving relations and satisfaction with local law; ask yourselves, “What do *we* need to do to make Aberdeen a safer community?”

I 5.3 Review existing policies and procedures in light of the information gathered via recommendation I 5.1.

I 5.4 If one does not exist, form a public safety advisory committee comprised of representatives from key community stakeholder groups. The committee would serve as an important vehicle for communication (both ways) between residents and local law enforcement.

I 5.5 Identify the safety equipment needs and other changes required to transition from a “basic” to “advanced” EMS service and seek the funding and community support needed to acquire or implement them.

Infrastructure Opportunity Area 6: Develop broadband connectivity

The availability of sufficient and affordable broadband Internet service has become an economically critical element of infrastructure. In Aberdeen, our analysis is that these services are currently about average when compared to other rural communities. While these services are, for the most part, privately owned, there are several steps the community can take to facilitate their improvement. The visiting team also observed there are few businesses and public agencies using available broadband to market their products and services. The visiting team’s related recommendations are found below.

Recommendations

I 6.1 Communicate with local Internet and cell phone service providers to see if they offer discounted service to senior or lower income customers.

I 6.2 Survey businesses and other institutions (e.g. U of I Extension Research Center) to determine their current and projected broadband needs and preferences.

I 6.3 Perhaps under the leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, conduct outreach or training to businesses and public agencies to help them maximize their use of existing broadband services (e.g., for marketing purposes).

I 6.4 Leverage the schools’ access to the Idaho Education Network and the Internet access available at the Aberdeen library for adult classes, workforce training, and other educational purposes.

I 6.5 The Aberdeen library has many laptops, desktops, and other devices the public can use access to get on the Internet and the library is well wired thanks to e-rate funds. We know from surveys of other rural communities in Idaho that about 10 percent of the population uses their local library to access the Internet.

Infrastructure Resources

The USDA Rural Development Community Facilities (CF) Program has a limited amount of grant funds available to assist in the development of essential community facilities (including infrastructure, streets, roads, and bridges) in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population. Grants are authorized on a graduated scale. Applicants located in small communities with low populations and low incomes will receive a higher percentage of grants. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, parishes, boroughs, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profit corporations and tribal governments. Contact Dale Lish, dale.lish@id.usda.gov, 208-785-5840, ext 119.

For additional Rural Funding Resources see <http://ric.nal.usda.gov/Rural-Federal-Funding-Database>. Also see A Guide to Funding Resources is available here: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/fundguide.html>.

The Blue Cross Foundation Grant program funds, among other things, community walking and biking trails. Go to <http://www.bcidahofoundation.org/>.

Idaho Health & Welfare Community Activity Connection Grants. Go to [http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/IdahoPhysicalActivityandNutrition\(IPAN\)/PhysicalActivity/tabid/1970/Default.aspx](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/IdahoPhysicalActivityandNutrition(IPAN)/PhysicalActivity/tabid/1970/Default.aspx) and <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/UrbanDesignPolicies.pdf>.

Idaho Parks & Recreation grants. Go to <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/about-parks-recreation>.

National Park Service. Go to http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/funding_sources.htm.

USDA Forest Service grants. Go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r4/workingtogether/grants>.

BLM grants. Go to http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/About_BLM.html.

The Army Corps of Engineers is a potential grant fund resource for the sewer collection line project. Contact the Boise Outreach Office at <http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Locations/BoiseOutreachOffice.aspx>, 208-345-2065, or Boise.Office@usace.army.mil.

Sandpoint's downtown has good examples of streets that manage storm water with vegetation. Go to [http://www.cityofsandpoint.com/DowntownStreets/Sandpoint Downtown Streets Design Guide_FINAL_December_2012.pdf](http://www.cityofsandpoint.com/DowntownStreets/Sandpoint_Downtown_Streets_Design_Guide_FINAL_December_2012.pdf). For more information, contact Kody Van Dyke, Public Works Director for the City of Sandpoint, 208-263-3407.

Idaho Smart Growth provides assistance to communities working to become more walkable and bikable as they grow. Go to www.idahosmartgrowth.org. Contact 208-333-8066.

Community Pathways in Idaho Falls. Go to <http://www.communitypathways.com/>. Contact Chris Daly, IFCommunityPathways@gmail.com.

Community Transportation Association of Idaho. Go to <http://ctai.org/>. Contact Dave Dorian, Mobility Manager for District 5, ddoran@ctai.org, 208-241-4379.

Bannock Metropolitan Planning Organization. Go to <http://bmppo.org/>. Contact DaNiel Jose, Bike/Ped Coordinator.

Eastern Idaho Public Health in Idaho Falls. Go to <http://www.phd7.idaho.gov/>. Kaylene Craig, 208-522-0310.

The Idaho Department of Transportation has a website with information and links to ITD initiatives related to bicycling and walking, tips and resources for bicycling and walking in Idaho, information on how bicycle and pedestrian projects are implemented, as well as useful links to other organizations that are committed to bicycle and pedestrian mobility. Go to http://itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/proposals.htm and http://itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/FundingGuide2013.pdf.

The Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota publishes a Gravel Road Maintenance and Design Manual. Go to <http://www.mnltap.umn.edu/publications/videos/gravelroadmaintenance/>.

The Transportation Research Board publishes resources related to selecting chemical treatments for unpaved roads. Go to <http://docs.trb.org/prp/14-3437.pdf>.

Solicit ideas and best practices with other highway districts who have similar challenges, including, for example, Custer County Highway District and Lost River Highway District.

The Local Highway Technical Assistance Council provides a variety of educational opportunities and other assistance to local jurisdictions and transportation agencies in rural Idaho. Go to <http://lhtac.org/>. Contact lhtac@lhtac.org or 208-344-0565.

Federal Land Access Program could be used to fund Phase II of Gem Trail – Boat Dock Trail. Go to <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/id/index.htm>. Contact Dave Jones at Idaho Transportation Department, 208-334-8802.

Idaho Walk Bike Alliance. Go to <http://idahowalkbike.org/>. Call 208-286-1628.

A partial list of Idaho cities and/or counties who have successfully built community or greenbelt-like trail systems includes:

Pocatello/Bannock County	Weiser/Cambridge/Washington County
Driggs/Teton County	Boise/Garden City/Eagle/Ada County
Ketchum/Hailey/Blaine County	Star
Kootenai County/Coer d'Alene Tribe	Middleton
Lewiston	Twin Falls/Twin Falls County
Moscow/Troy/Latah County	Soda Springs
McCall/Valley County	

In some cases, success has been made possible by the creation of a non-profit organization specifically formed to fund and construct a trail or trail system. The Latah Trail Foundation is one example (<http://www.latahtrailfoundation.org/default.aspx?PageID=1>, 208- 874-3860, latahtrail@gmail.com). Other communities have started out by forming a pedestrian and bicycle advisory committee. In nearly every example, success has required the passion, organization, and advocacy of local citizens and community groups.

A rental housing search can be done at the USDA website. Go to http://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/select_state.jsp.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers a tool to search for affordable rental housing. Go to <http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/step2.cfm?state=ID,Idaho>.

The HUD's public housing program was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single-family houses to apartments for elderly families. There are approximately 1.2 million households living in public housing units, managed by some 3,300 HAs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers Federal aid to local housing agencies (HAs) that manage the housing for low-income residents at rents they can afford. HUD furnishes technical and professional assistance in planning, developing and managing these developments.
<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/idaho/renting>

The Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) has a searchable data base for Idaho renters and landlords. IHFA's multifamily finance department has the lending expertise to offer affordable housing developers a full array of financing alternatives. From Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, which offer incentive to developers to build affordable rental housing, to a combination construction/permanent loan, a separate permanent loan through a consortium of banks, or subordinate financing. Go to <http://www.housingidaho.com/>.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program was established to increase the supply of moderately-priced housing in rural areas; ensure that housing is affordable to low- and moderate-income rural residents whose incomes are 115 percent of area median income (AMI) or less; provide housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, and competitive in the market; and foster risk-sharing partnerships with public and private lenders. Under the program, the Agency will provide credit enhancements to encourage private and public lenders to make new loans for affordable rental properties that meet program standards. Go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-Guaranteed_Rental_Loans.html.

USDA has a Rural Repair and Rehabilitation Loan and Grant program. The program provides loans and grants to very low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or modernize their dwellings or to remove health and safety hazards. To obtain a loan, homeowner-occupants must be unable to obtain affordable credit elsewhere and must have very low incomes, defined as below 50 percent of the area median income. They must need to make repairs and improvements to make the dwelling more safe and sanitary or to remove health and safety hazards. Grants are only available to homeowners who are 62 years old or older and cannot repay a Section 504 loan. For Income and Property Eligibility please see the [Eligibility Site](#). Loans of up to \$20,000 and grants of up to \$7,500 are available. Loans are for up to 20 years at 1 percent interest. A real estate mortgage and full title services are required for loans of \$7,500 or more. Grants may be recaptured if the property is sold in less than 3 years. Grant funds may be used only to pay for repairs and improvements resulting in the removal of health and safety hazards. A grant/loan combination is made if the applicant can repay part of the cost.

The Southeaster Idaho Community Action Agency (SEICAA) has an Energy Assistance program. Income eligible participants apply annually for a once per year cash benefit to assist with winter heating bills. For more details, visit their Energy Assistance page at <http://www.seicaa.org/energy-programs/energy-assistance>.

SEICAA has a Weatherization Program that provides energy conservation services to income eligible households in southeastern Idaho. The program is available to those who qualify year round. Renters, as well as homebuyers, are eligible to apply for services. The Weatherization Program helps to increase energy efficiency by concentrating on the problems of heat loss and air filtration. Measures taken to improve energy efficiency may include repairs to broken

windows, insulation, caulking and weather-stripping. In addition to the material improvements made to eligible homes, Energy Conservation Education is provided to participants. Go to <http://www.seicaa.org/energy-programs/weatherization>.

The Idaho Recreational Vehicle (RV) Program is a grant program that helps public entities develop RV facilities. Go to <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/idaho-recreational-vehicle-rv-program>.

See Appendix F for information from Idaho Housing and Finance Association about completing a housing needs assessment and housing plan.

Contact Erik Kingston, Housing Resources Coordinator, Idaho Housing and Finance Association, (ErikK@IHFA.ORG, 208-331-4706) for additional information about assessing housing condition and needs.

Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan. Applicants for these loans may have an income of up to 115% of the median income for the area. Families must be without adequate housing, but be able to afford the mortgage payments, including taxes and insurance. In addition, applicants must have reasonable credit histories. Go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-Guaranteed_Housing_Loans.html.

Rural Housing Direct Loan - Section 502 loans are primarily used to help low-income individuals or households purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to acquire, build (including funds to purchase and prepare sites and to provide water and sewage facilities), repair, renovate, or relocate a home. Go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-Direct_Housing_Loans.html.

The Rural Repair and Rehabilitation Loan and Grant program provides loans and grants to very low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or modernize their dwellings, remove health and safety hazards, complete repairs to make the dwelling accessible for household members with disabilities. Grants are available to dwelling owners/occupants who are 62 years of age or older. Go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-RR_Loans_Grants.html.

Self-Help Housing: The USDA Rural Development (USDA RD) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) combine resources to help very low- and low-income households who construct their own homes. Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership receives funding for the program through USDA Rural Development's Section 502 Mutual Self-Help Housing Loan Program and HUD's regional administrator of Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP). Go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/sfh/brief_selfhelpsite.htm and

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/programs/shop, respectively.

HOME: The HOME Program helps to expand the supply of decent, affordable housing for low- and very low-income families by providing a formula grant to the Idaho Housing and Financing Association (IHFA). IHFA uses their HOME grants to fund housing programs that meet local needs and priorities. IHFA may use their HOME funds to help renters, new homebuyers, or existing homeowners. Go to

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/programs/home/.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) Program is based on Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code. Its purpose is to provide the private market with an incentive to invest in affordable rental housing. Federal housing tax credits are awarded through IHFA to developers of qualified projects. Developers then sell these credits to investors to raise capital (or equity) for their projects, which reduces the debt that the developer would otherwise have to borrow. Because the debt is lower, a tax credit property can in turn offer lower, more affordable rents.

Go to

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/training/web/lihtc/basics.

Non-profit Housing Providers like the Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership are adept at financing and developing affordable housing primarily through the HOME and LIHTC programs described above. Go to <http://www.eicap.org/> or call 208-522-5391. They can also help with weatherization/energy efficiency efforts.

“Shared Equity Models Offer Sustainable Homeownership” is an on-line article that could give the community additional ideas about how to keep existing affordable housing in their community. Shared equity homeownership offers an alternative option to renting and traditional homeownership. The term refers to an array of programs that create long-term, affordable homeownership opportunities by imposing restrictions on the resale of subsidized housing units. Typically, a nonprofit or government entity provides a subsidy to lower the purchase price of a housing unit, making it affordable to a low-income buyer. The most widely implemented subsidy retention programs include community land trusts (CLTs), deed-restricted housing programs, and limited equity housing cooperatives. Go to

<http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/em/fall12/highlight3.html>.

Through its Community Impact Grants program, the Home Depot Foundation provides awards up to \$5,000 in the form of store gift cards for the purposes of housing modifications, repairs,

and weatherization work. Special emphasis is placed on projects that benefit and/or involve veterans. Go to <http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-grant>.

The Federal Housing Administration offers mortgage insurance for Manufactured Homes Parks. Go to

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/mfh/progdesc/homepark207

FHA's Streamlined 203(k) program permits homebuyers and homeowners to finance up to \$35,000 into their mortgage to repair, improve, or upgrade their home. Go to

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/sfh/203k/203kmenu.

Contact Lesley Krone (lkrone@nhsid.org, 208-258-6215), Events & Special Projects Manager at Neighborhood Housing Services, to learn about developing a Paint the Town project.

Building Trust Between the Police and the Citizens They Serve is a publication of the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services in coordination with the International Association of Chiefs of Police. It describes in detail a variety of strategies and best practices related to building trust between law enforcement agencies and residents. It is available for free download at <http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/buildingtrust.pdf>.

Community Policing Defined is also a free publication from the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services. To download, go to

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/vets-to-cops/e030917193-CP-Defined.pdf>.

The U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services maintains a website containing resources, funding information, and training opportunities. Go to

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>.

The Criminal Justice Program at Idaho State University might be able to assist with an evaluation and implementation of community policing strategies. Go to

<http://www.isu.edu/sociology/criminaljustice.shtml>. Contact Program Director Teresa Casey, PhD, at 208-282-2576 or casetere@isu.edu.

The Division of Governmental Services and Studies (DGSS) at Washington State University is a university outreach unit jointly supported by the College of Arts and Sciences and WSU Extension. It serves the applied social science research needs of various governmental agencies. It also supports basic research and grant-related work for faculty and graduate students of the School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs, the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, and the Edward R. Murrow College of Communications. The DGSS is a potential resource for recommendations related to law enforcement. Go to <http://dgss.wsu.edu/Index.html>

or call 509-335-3329.

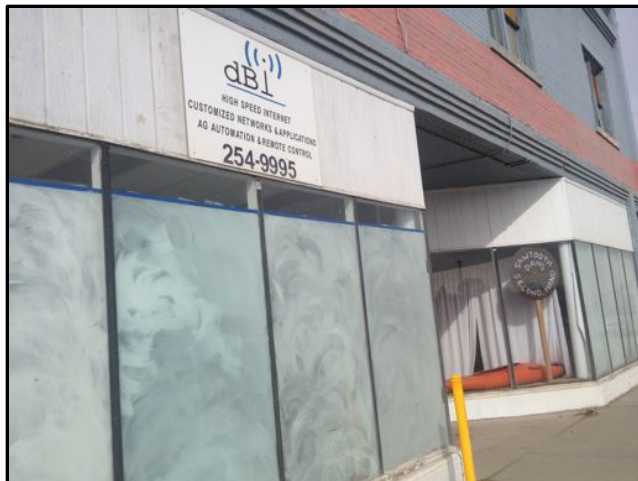
Downtown Revitalization

Community Comments and Concerns

Recognition of Existing Downtown Assets

In conversations with the visiting team, residents and business owners talked often about the qualities of downtown they appreciate. We heard clear recognition that many of these qualities represent assets that can be built upon. Some of them include:

- Specific anchor businesses
- Many businesses have a reputation — extending beyond Aberdeen — for providing high quality customer service
- Library
- Senior center
- People are friendly to each other when downtown
- No stop lights
- ADA sidewalk improvements at intersections
- Architectural character of historic buildings
- Positive memories with specific buildings and the businesses that previously occupied them
- The majority of downtown commercial buildings are owned by people who live in Aberdeen.



The Vacant Building Dilemma

Many Aberdeen business owners and residents expressed concern about the number of vacant commercial buildings in the downtown area. Most people who brought up this concern seemed to be in one of two camps. One group felt that unattractive, “eyesore” vacant buildings should be torn down with the hope that new buildings would eventually be built in their place. The other camp would like to see more emphasis on renovating and reusing

these structures. This second group often described their positive memories of associated with them. Both camps are concerned that people driving through or coming to town are first and foremost noticing the vacant buildings and might be forming an impression that Aberdeen is becoming a ghost town.

Residents want to see more, not less businesses

As in many rural Idaho communities, people in Aberdeen expressed that they did not want to see any more businesses close. The anticipated closing of the Simplot facility might help explain

this concern. Many people told us they do not want more national chain stores that could contribute to the demise of locally-owned businesses.

In contrast, Aberdeen residents want to see a greater variety of downtown businesses so they have the option of doing more of their shopping for goods and services in Aberdeen. Ironically, many in the community shared their opinion that many residents don't think about how choosing to spend money outside Aberdeen hurts the community's businesses.

Street and Sidewalk Maintenance

Primarily business owners, but also residents, expressed their desire to see Main Street and other downtown streets and sidewalks are better maintained, beginning with keeping them cleaner. This comment about downtown street maintenance brought up another concern: the volume and speed of truck traffic on Main Street and related impacts such as dust, noise, damage to asphalt, pedestrian safety, etc. A few people talked with the visiting team about creating (or re-creating) a truck route or by-pass.



Relationship between Businesses and the Community

Many residents, community leaders, and high school students expressed appreciation for the way businesses step up to support youth and school programs, events, fundraisers, and other projects. For their part, some businesses owners we spoke with shared their exasperation about the number of requests they receive. A few expressed ideas about a scenario in which athletic teams and other groups would receive support from businesses in exchange for completing downtown or building improvement project or task. One business owner remarked, *"I saw the girls soccer team do a car wash and it was awesome. I want to see more of that."*

Several people told the visiting team that more businesses and residents need to get more involved if future downtown revitalization efforts are to be successful. *"The same 10 most active business owners at the Chamber can't do it all"*, was one comment recorded by the visiting team.

Residents Looking for More Reasons to Come Downtown

Folks who call Aberdeen home are looking for more reasons to come downtown. They want it to be a more attractive destination for both residents and visitors. As one resident put it, *"Something to bring Aberdeen alive on a Saturday night."* When asked for examples of changes or improvements that would help achieve this goal, the responses below were given most often; many of them relate to the comments and concerns described above.

- More public gathering space
- Trees and landscaping
- Greater variety of businesses
- Better sidewalks, lighting, and signage
- Cleaner streets

Making residents and visitors aware of what’s available downtown

As described under economic development, we heard many people express the opinion that Aberdeen needs to do more to communicate what’s available with respect to goods, services, and other amenities in the downtown area. Such efforts could, for example, encourage people traveling to and staying at Sportsman’s Park to spend more time in the downtown area.

Downtown Revitalization Opportunity Areas

Opportunities identified by the visiting team related to downtown revitalization fall into these three general categories:

- Buildings
- Beautification
- Business

As you consider acting on the opportunities and recommendations presented below, we encourage you to use the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Four-Point Approach to downtown revitalization. See Appendix G for more information.

Downtown Revitalization is abbreviated as “DT” in this section of the report.

Downtown Revitalization Opportunity Area 1: Give older, vacant, and underused buildings and properties a new lease on life

It’s obvious to anyone walking or driving down Main Street — Aberdeen has a number of older buildings. This is a good thing. Some of them are vacant. Others are not vacant, but are the result of deferred maintenance. Some occupied buildings appeared vacant to the visiting team due to absent or minimal signage — but are in fact being partially or fully used.



In many cases, downtown buildings have dated windows and HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems that contribute to high utility costs. A couple of vacant buildings

appeared to have sale prices that on a square foot basis exceed the prices of similar buildings in neighboring communities.

A few vacant buildings appear to have structural and/or environmental issues that may be blocking their redevelopment and occupancy. Possible environmental issues run the gambit from asbestos and lead paint to fuel and chemical contamination from days gone by.

The visiting team hopes the recommendations below will help find new private, nonprofit, and public uses for vacant and underused buildings and improve the condition and reduce utility expenses for all downtown buildings.

Recommendations

DT 1.1 Complete an inventory and analysis of vacant and underused building and properties. This information can then be made available to business owners, realtors, and local, regional, and statewide economic development stakeholders. It would also provide important information if and when downtown revitalization planning moves forward.

This recommendation should be coordinated with similar recommendations found in the economic development focus area (ED 4.3).

DT 1.2 Facilitate temporary uses for vacant spaces. Think outside the walls!

DT 1.3 Pursue brownfields assessment and funding opportunities to redevelop the former gas station and other sites that may contain buried hazardous waste.

DT 1.4 Explore funding and technical assistance resources that could help owners of existing building address maintenance and capital improvement needs.

DT 1.5 Develop a booklet illustrating the architectural character of your existing downtown buildings (as a way to encourage new construction and exterior remodeling to use compatible features and materials). Historical photographs are often helpful in this project.

DT 1.6 See DT 5.4 for ideas regarding downtown revitalizing goal-setting and planning.

DT 1.7 Encourage building owners to investigate the programs and incentives offered by Idaho Power and other energy conservation stakeholder to help lower energy costs. In some cases, building owners may qualify for tax credits and low interest loans, thereby offsetting the cost of improvements and adding value to the buildings.

DT 1.8 Owners of vacant buildings on the market should be encouraged to “stage” their properties the same way a developer might decorate a model home. Staging might include displays of local art or historical artifacts in store front windows or the strategic placement of office furniture or other accessories that highlight the possible uses for the vacant building.

DT 1.9 The owners of vacant buildings up for sale or rent should consider pricing their properties so that the square foot costs are at or below the prices for similar buildings in neighboring communities.

DT 1.10 Buildings available for sale or for rent should be listed on Gem State Prospector, an website hosted by the Idaho Department of Commerce that lists land and commercial and industrial buildings available for sale and rent. Having more Aberdeen listings on this website will help economic developers identify locations for new businesses and expose Aberdeen's building assets to a national audience.



DT 1.11 To the visiting team, several occupied storefronts appear vacant because signs identifying businesses are minimal or not visible at all. Explore low-cost opportunities that would encourage such businesses to install more visible, attractive signage. For example, explore a project in which students and/or artists build visually complimentary signage for businesses to install. Businesses should not assume everyone knows where they are located, especially in the case of visitors.

DT 1.12 Review the City's standards related to signs and determine if any changes or updates are needed.

DT 1.13 Look for opportunities to create a cluster of new retail businesses and attractions within spaces that are connected by internal doorways. The old clothing store (and adjoining spaces) between Central Ave. and Washington Ave. is a primary example. The types of businesses Aberdeen residents would like to see in the future are identified under the "Community Comments and Concerns" section of the economic development focus area. In addition, antique shops, consignment stores, and businesses selling goods produced locally tend to draw visitors. When thinking about potential downtown businesses, communicate with entrepreneurs who own a growing business, but do not have a commercial location.

DT 1.14 Consider the potential of creating an attractive pedestrian walkway in one of your downtown alleys. One alley you might consider is between Central Ave. and Washington Ave. Buildings on both sides of this alley are potential business locations.

DT 1.15 Complete additional building improvement projects by continue and building based on the principles and strategies used to participate in Operation Facelift program developed by the Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization.

DT 1.16 Here is a short list of buildings identified by the visiting team as having potential for restoration and reuse:

- Old clothing store between Central and Washington (mentioned above)
- Old bowling alley
- Two-story building on the corner of Central Ave. and Main Street
- Large commercial building on the corner of Central Ave. and N.1st West Street



Downtown Revitalization Opportunity Area 2: Create a more appealing and vibrant streetscape

In meetings held during the community review, some Aberdeen business owners expressed concerns over the cleanliness of Main Street. While business owners recognize that dirty roads are a fact of life for a rural agricultural community, they believe that the City could and should more frequently sweep Main Street. Business leaders would also appreciate advance notice of street sweeping activities so that they may coordinate the cleanup and upkeep of their sidewalks. Residents expressed a desire to see trees, flowers and benches along Main Street. Other issues noticed by the visiting team are common to most rural Idaho downtowns: cracked sidewalks, drainage issues, and limited lighting. The downtown also lacks visible handicapped parking.

Recommendations



DT 2.1 New street trees and awnings would create a more unified downtown and more welcoming pedestrian environment by providing shade and protection from inclement weather. New pedestrian scale lighting would also make a positive difference.

DT 2.2 Use design to alter driver expectations in conjunction with posted speed limits. Acting on this recommendation involves an evaluation of potential traffic calming measures to create a

more walkable downtown environment. It will also require communication and possibly

completion of a road safety audit with the Idaho Transportation Department. Potential measures include:

- Landscaping
- Gateway treatments
- Curb extensions or bulb-outs at intersections to make pedestrians more visible to drivers and reduce the pedestrian crossing distance.
- Pedestrian crossing flags or pedestrian-activated crossing signals
- Bike lane striping
- Widen sidewalks
- Install center median
- Lighting to increase pedestrian safety after dark
- Convert parking from parallel to diagonal orientation (this conversation would not only help calm traffic; it would also increase the number of parking spaces). It would also likely require reducing Main Street to one traffic lane each direction.

DT 2.3 The City should consider setting a fix schedule for street sweeping. For example, maybe street sweeping takes place on the same day or day(s) of the week each month subject to weather conditions. At the very least, the City should strive to provide advance notice of street sweeping activities.

DT 2.4 Develop a temporary pop-up place making project that occasionally and temporarily creates public gathering spaces within downtown street rights-of-way. Central Ave., Washington Ave., and Lincoln Ave. are all possible locations.

DT 2.5 Develop a program that invites individuals, families, churches, businesses, and civic groups to sponsor flower boxes and benches. Sponsors would not only pay for the cost of the box or the bench but would also be responsible for maintaining their donation similar to an adopt a highway program. Other cities sell engraved bricks and light pole sponsorships as methods for generating funds for downtown beautification.

DT 2.6 Aberdeen should start planning for downtown infrastructure improvements. An ideal time to accomplish these improvements is when the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is doing major work on Main Street. This strategy may produce savings by having streets torn up just once. Often communities have success in accessing Idaho Community Development Block Grant funds when their projects coincide with ITD projects.

DT 2.7 The City should consider creating a downtown capital improvement fund with annual and long-term goals for funding. Starting this fund now for improvements that may take place five to ten years down the road will allow the City to accumulate significant matching funds for grants as well as avoid steep tax hikes and assessments.

DT 2.8 The City should consider creating a disabled parking space or two along W. Central Ave. Parking spaces should be painted and wide enough to accommodate wheel chair lift equipped vans. Sighting the parking in this area would be centrally located and safer than locating this type of parking right on Main Street.

DT 2.9 Pursue opportunities to incorporate public art (e.g. one or more murals, artistic painting of above ground utility boxes) in the downtown area.

DT 2.10 Explore the possibility of establishing an urban renewal area for the purpose of facilitating redeveloping and reusing older buildings and completing other public improvements.

Downtown Revitalization Opportunity Area 3: Develop business opportunities by attracting residents and visitors to the downtown area

This opportunity area include a variety of strategies intended to make downtown Aberdeen a more appealing and attractive destination for both residents and visitors. Collectively, these recommendations will help support existing businesses and encourage the creation of new stores. While we understand that some in Aberdeen believe new businesses could hurt existing businesses, the visiting team feels it can also work the other way. Each new business creates another reason for someone to spend time in downtown Aberdeen. More people spending more time downtown benefits *all* businesses.

Events in the downtown area, community desire for specific types of businesses, the downtown streetscape, customer service, public spaces, marketing, and signage are all addressed by the recommendations below.



The visiting team’s recommendations reinforce the idea that downtown Aberdeen should be thought of as an experience, rather than as a group of miscellaneous businesses. Create the kind of downtown that gives visitors a reason to say, “Let’s spend a few hours here” when they are passing through. We also hope residents in the future will say, “Let’s check out what’s happening downtown today.”

Recommendations

DT 3.1 Many of the streetscape-related recommendations (Opportunity 2, above) will help achieve the goal of attracting residents and visitors downtown.

DT 3.2 On a trial basis initially, encourage downtown businesses to consider extending downtown business hours until 7:00 pm one day per week. Also encourage businesses to be open on Sundays.

DT 3.3 Explore the possibility of setting up temporary or pop up businesses in currently vacant commercial storefronts.

DT 3.4 The City and Aberdeen businesses should increase their use of social media to advertise events, goods and services, and other attractions. More often than not, decisions on where to spend money and time begin with a search of the Internet. Aberdeen is at a disadvantage when it comes to social media. The City's website is dated. According to the date stamp, it was built in 2007 and there is no indication that it has ever been updated. The Chamber's Facebook page is infrequently updated. There appears to be a volunteer-created business directory but no indication that it is current or being maintained. There is no Chamber or City twitter feeds. Many local businesses lack an Internet presence and are not represented on social media outlets like Facebook, Yelp, and Trip Advisor.

DT 3.5 Aberdeen residents are supportive of the community's two signature events: Aberdeen Daze and the Christmas Parade. A core of volunteers associated with the Chamber organizes both events. The success of Aberdeen Daze hinges on word of mouth. The event could have greater community and economic impact if more effort were made to advertise it to the outside world. Some of the youth said the activities associated with Aberdeen Daze are not particularly appealing to them. The visiting team's additional suggestions related to Aberdeen Daze are as follows:

- Invite youth to organize an event associated with Aberdeen Daze. Youth in Aberdeen told us the event doesn't really include them. Also engage youth in marketing for Aberdeen Daze by, for example, establishing a promotional video contest that used YouTube.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to connect with past residents who come back to Aberdeen for the event. Some people (i.e. Aberdeen High School alumni) who grew up in the community may be interested in moving back or supporting ongoing community projects.
- Aberdeen Daze organizers should invite attendees to offer up donations for the pancake breakfast and other freebies. Collected funds could be reinvested into community projects or help defray the cost of future Aberdeen Days events.
- The Chamber should create an Aberdeen Daze business passport. The concept is to get Aberdeen Daze visitors out of the park and into local businesses. The visitor picks up a pre-printed 8X10 piece of paper. This visitor provides their name phone number, address and email. The visitor then visits each of the businesses on the passport getting a stamp or signature at each location. The face-to-face interaction provides the businessperson an opportunity to make a sale. Completed passports are entered into a drawing for a prize or prize package (maybe dinner and a round of golf). The contact information is captured and provided to each participating business for follow-up marketing efforts. Having a central database of the completed passports may also prove useful to event organizers in planning future events.



DT 3.6 The community should consider the creation of a farmers market. The market should start slow (a monthly event that takes place between Memorial and Labor Days to get people use to the concept). The market should be open to both food sellers as well as artisans. A date and time for the market should be strategically selected so as not to compete with markets in neighboring communities. If successful, the market could increase its operation to two or more days per month.

DT 3.7 Other community event ideas (that could be held in downtown and/or bring people downtown) include:

- An arts festival
- A quilting festival
- A celebration of Hispanic culture

DT 3.8 Create a way to provide information about Aberdeen businesses and attractions at Sportsman’s Park and the golf course. Make sure this information is also available at sporting goods and tackle shops in the area.

DT 3.9 It was not clear to the visiting team where visitors would find information about area attractions and activities once arriving in Aberdeen. If one does not exist, establish a physical location where such information can be obtained. It should be on or close to Main Street. Near the library or post office are also potential locations.

DT 3.10 Work with the property owner to make the excellent private museum located near the corner of Oneida Street and N. 1st West available to the public. Start off with just once per month, and then increase availability from there. If this is not feasible, the historic train depot would also make an excellent location for a new museum.



DT 3.11 Work with the State of Idaho and communities in the region to create a rural/agricultural heritage by-way that would parallel Interstate 84. In addition to Aberdeen, communities on this route might include Blackfoot, American Falls, Rupert, Paul, Hazelton, Eden, Shoshone, Jerome, Wendell, Gooding, and Bliss. Once this route is established, a directory of businesses and attractions could be developed. Businesses could compete to be the “Best of...” recognition. For example, the best

hamburger, the best restrooms, the best park, the best museum, the best veteran's memorial, the best water tower, etc. Combine this recommendation with recommendation ED 1.2.

Downtown Revitalization Opportunity Area 4: Plan for future growth that fits your traditional, walkable community

The downtown and neighborhoods of Aberdeen are representative of pre-WWII traditional community design. While you may not have sidewalks on every street, your blocks are short and there are numerous walkable and bikable routes to the downtown, schools, parks, and other destinations. Your existing residential neighborhoods are also relatively compact, compared to low-density, sprawling subdivisions built over the last 30 years in urban areas and suburbs. Whether by design or not, you also have a nicely delineated edge between the 'city' and the agricultural lands surrounding Aberdeen.

The point of this opportunity area is to encourage you to prepare for and encourage future development that uses or at least approximates the same traditional planning principles used to design the townsite originally. Doing so will allow you to maintain your small town, walkable character while keeping your downtown convenient and easily accessible to all residents. It is within this opportunity area that you might also consider additional new housing in or immediately adjacent to the downtown.

Recommendations

DT 4.1 In future long-range comprehensive planning efforts, identify policies and incentives that preserve your traditional small town character with grid streets, short blocks, and compact development. Keeping future growth close to downtown is one of the strategies that will help revitalize Main Street by keeping folks close to those businesses.

DT 4.2 Also as part of long-range planning, the City should evaluate opportunities for annexation of areas that would be appropriate for future development and associated extension of City services.

DT 4.3 Review zoning policies and consider revising to permit housing in the downtown commercial zone district.

Downtown Revitalization Opportunity Area 5: Build consensus and enlist the community in downtown revitalization efforts

Revitalizing Aberdeen's downtown cannot be accomplished by four or five people. It cannot be accomplished by business owners only. It requires the involvement of residents, community leaders, and businesses to develop a compelling vision of a successful, vibrant downtown and to then pursue the implementation of activities intended to realize that vision. This opportunity area also includes recommendations related to the relationship between the business community, city administration, the schools, and various community groups.

Recommendations

DT 5.1 Use the momentum from the community review to engage more residents and businesses in economic and community development efforts. People want to be involved and know that their efforts will make a difference. They just don't know about the opportunities.

DT 5.2 Most locals have little knowledge of the community's many resources. Create a complete inventory of local resources, assets, and activities and distribute it throughout the City.

DT 5.3 Carry on the "Operation Facelift" idea by continuing to involve residents and businesses in downtown clean-up projects (e.g. painting and similar improvements)

DT 5.4 To establish a clear vision, goals, and high priority actions related to downtown, complete a Main Street Improvement Assessment and Action Plan. Several business owners we met told us they were not familiar with the 2012 visioning process that resulted in graphic images and a coloring book.

DT 5.5 An innovative approach to promoting community beautification might be the creation of a Pay to Play Booster Club. The idea is that instead of giving contributions directly to youth groups and service clubs, individuals and businesses would divert those donations to a pooled fund. Donors to the pooled fund would then create a list of downtown clean up and beautification projects with a dollar amount tied to the successful completion of each project. Instead of asking for handouts, groups seeking funds would work for their donation. This effort not only leverages community resources but instills a sense of community service and pride.

DT 5.6 Create an Aberdeen Community Fund under the existing Bingham County Community Foundation Opportunity Fund. This fund would make it easier for businesses and individuals to donate to various community projects and organizations.

Downtown Revitalization Resources

Idaho Commission on the Arts offers grants for a variety of arts-related projects, including murals and arts education. Go to <http://www.arts.idaho.gov/>. Contact Michelle Coleman, Michelle.Coleman@arts.idaho.gov, 208-334-2119.

Idaho Humanities Council offers funding for projects that incorporate cultural heritage. Go to www.idahohumanities.org/.

Idaho Heritage Trust offers technical assistance for preserving older buildings. Go to <http://www.idahoheritage.org/>. Contact Katherine Kirk, 208-549-1778.

Montana Community Development Corporation offers new market tax credits that can help finance building projects. Go to <http://mtcdc.org/loans/new-markets-tax-credits/>.

The Idaho Department of Commerce's Idaho Gem Grant program provides funding for public infrastructure projects that support economic development. Examples of eligible activities

include: construction materials, new and rehabilitative construction, architectural and engineering services, and property acquisition. Grant amounts are up to \$50,000. Go to <http://commerce.idaho.gov/communities/community-assistance/idaho-gem-grants/>. Jerry Miller, jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov, 208-334-2470.

Idaho Main Street program. Go to <http://commerce.idaho.gov/community-programs/idaho-main-street-program/>. Jerry Miller, jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov, 208-334-2470.

National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program. Go to <http://www.nationaltrust.org/community/resources.html> and <http://www.mainstreet.org/>; 202-588-6219, mainstreet@nthp.org, Info@savingplaces.org.

Western Office National Trust for Historic Preservation. Go to www.PreservationNation.org, Sheri Freemuth, AICP, Program Officer, P.O. Box 9107, Boise, ID 83707, 208-891-4121, sheri_freemuth@nthp.org.

The City of Nampa created a revolving loan fund for restoring building facades in its historic downtown. Go to <http://ci.nampa.id.us/downloads/30/FA%C3%87ADE%20IMPROVEMENT%20PROGRAM.doc>.

Southern Idaho Rural Development is involved in successful business creation and downtown revitalization efforts in Shoshone and other southern Idaho communities. Contact Julia Oxarango-Ingram, 208-309-3090, jingram@csi.edu.

“Organizing a Successful Downtown Revitalization Program Using the Main Street Approach” is a book available through the Washington Department of Trade and Economic Development. Go to http://www.commerce.wa.gov/_cted/documents/ID_160_Publications.pdf.

RampUpIdaho is a new effort being developed by a group of folks representing transportation, business, housing, government, economic development and accessibility. The group is planning to compile a list of resources and outline a simple rationale for businesses, chambers of commerce, and other groups to begin thinking more strategically and collaboratively about access. Contact info@rampupidaho.org for more information.

Main Street: When a Highway Runs Through It is an excellent book published in 1999 by the Oregon Department of Transportation to educate communities about pedestrian safety and community design associated with highways within city limits. <http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/main-street/resources/main-street-when-a-highway/>.

Idaho Transportation Department, District 5 office in Pocatello. Ed Bala is the District Engineer, 208-239-3300, ed.bala@itd.idaho.gov. To inquire about completing a road safety audit, contact Brent Jennings, Highway Safety Manager, 208-334-8557, Brent.Jennings@itd.idaho.gov.

Great Rift Business Development Organization. Go to <http://greatriftbusinessdevelopment.com/>. Contact Kristen Jensen, 208-380-1719, kristenrjensen@gmail.com.

To encourage re-use or redevelopment, many cities have completed and are maintaining a vacant building inventory. One example is Hickory, North Carolina. Go to <http://www.hickorync.gov/eGov/apps/document/center.egov?view=item:id=4681>.

Some communities have used New Markets Tax Credits to rehabilitate historic buildings, which then become the cornerstones of their downtowns. Contact Jerry Miller from the Idaho Department of Commerce, 208-334-2650, jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov.

The National Park Service has a historic tax credit that can be paired with New Market Tax Credit. Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>.

The HUD Hope VI Main Street grant program provides grants to small communities to assist in the renovation of a historic or traditional central business district or “Main Street” area by replacing unused commercial space in buildings with affordable housing units. The objectives of the program are to redevelop Main Street areas, preserve historic or traditional architecture or design features in Main Street areas, enhance economic development efforts in Main Street areas, and provide affordable housing in Main Street areas. Go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=235258> or contact Jerry Royster from HUD at: jerry.royster@hud.gov.

Energy Efficiency Research Institute (CEERI) based at Boise State University is a project of the Center for Advanced Energy Studies. It provides student engineers from BSU, University of Idaho, and Idaho State University who conduct industrial assessments and full energy efficiency evaluations. Go to <http://ceeri.boisestate.edu/>.

Rocky Mountain Power provides energy efficiency evaluations. Contact Glen Pond, glen.pond@rockymountainpower.net, 208-359-4285.

The CHS Foundation invests in the future of rural America, agriculture and cooperative business through education and leadership development. The Foundation's funding focuses on the following program areas: cooperative education, rural youth leadership development, farm and agricultural safety, returning value to rural communities, and university partnerships. Go to <http://www.chsfoundation.org/about.html>.

The USDA Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) funds projects dealing with agriculturally related manufacturing and alternative and renewable energy technologies. Go to <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/sbir.cfm>.

Energy Performance Contracting is a performance-based procurement method and financial mechanism for building renewal whereby utility bill savings that result from the installation of new building systems (reducing energy use) pay for the cost of the building renewal project. A "Guaranteed Energy Savings" Performance Contract includes language that obligates the contractor, a qualified Energy Services Company (ESCO), to pay the difference if at any time the savings fall short of the guarantee. Go to <http://energyperformancecontracting.org/>.

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality offers help for brownfield assessments and clean ups. Go to <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/waste-mgmt-remediation/brownfields.aspx>. Contact Eric Traynor, 208-373-0565, eric.traynor@deq.idaho.gov.

USDA's Farmer's Market Promotion Program (FMPP) offers grants to help improve and expand domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Go to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/FMPP>.

For an example of an event in Michigan that builds on local food, art and heritage, go to <http://www.artsandeats.org/index.html>.

Learn about the City of Glens Ferry's downtown revitalization efforts here: <http://glensferryidaho.org/downtown/>. Volunteer labor and financial sponsorship of individual downtown furnishings (lights, benches, etc.) by individuals, businesses, and community organizations significantly contributed to the success of this effort.

Idaho Department of Commerce – Community Development Block Grant Program can fund lighting, street trees, sidewalk, and other downtown project. Go to <http://commerce.idaho.gov/communities/community-grants/community-development-block-grant-cdbg>. Contact Sharon Deal, sharon.deal@commerce.idaho.gov, 208-334-2650 ext. 2137.

Idaho Department of Commerce's *Show Me the Money* funding newsletter. To subscribe, go to <http://idaho.us2.list-manage2.com/subscribe?u=74de75b2fc7e24670e05b0def&id=a1f3c8c6b9> – Contact Jerry Miller at jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov or 208-334-2650, ext. 2143.

Created and maintained by the Idaho Department of Commerce, Gem State Prospector is an on-line inventory of available buildings and properties in the state. Businesses and the real estate agents looking to expand or relocate in Idaho use this website to identify potential sites. Go to <http://www.gemstateprospector.com/>. Contact Jerry Miller jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov, 208-334-2650, ext. 2143.

Several communities are showing family-friendly movies in city parks and downtowns. For examples, go to <http://www.meridiancity.org/movienight/>, <http://cityoflapwai.com/>, and <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Idaho-Movie-Nights/182075851856660>.

Puffy Mondaes (artisan community space). Go to <http://www.puffymondaes.com/classes.php>.

For an article and resources on successful efforts to fill vacant downtown storefront windows with local art, go to <http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/03/using-art-in-vacant-storefronts-to-rebuild-a-small-town's-future/>.

The City of Hailey has created a temporary “pop up” town square within street rights-of-way. Go to <http://thebluereview.org/pop-up-town-square-hailey-idaho/> to read an article describing the project.

In recent years the City of American Falls has completed multi-million dollar complete street project with support from agricultural producers and truckers. Contact Jeremy Piersol, City of American Falls, 208-226-2569, or Kristen Jensen, Great Rift Business Development, 208-380-1719.

For ideas and best practices about organizing a community or downtown clean up fundraiser program, go to <http://www.fundable.org/fundraising-ideas/community-cleanup-fundraisers/>.

The Idaho Chapter of the American Planning offers an annual conference and a variety of on-line resources to help communities and their leaders plan for growth that protects traditional small town character and achieve other community goals. Go to <http://idahoapa.org/>.

The Planner’s Web (formerly known as the Planning Commissioner’s Journal) is an excellent on-line source of information related to comprehensive planning and zoning. It is oriented toward community leaders and planning commissioners. Go to <http://PlannersWeb.com/>.

True West: Authentic Development Patterns for Small Towns and Rural Areas by Christopher Duerksen and James Van Hemert. Published by the American Planning Association (2003).

The Western Planner strives to provide a network of information and education about the unique aspects of planning in the Great Plains and the West. Western Planner is known for its annual conference, bi-monthly magazine, and website. Go to <http://westernplanner.org/>.

The Idaho Transportation Department publishes a funding catalog of federal, state, and local funding opportunities for transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The catalog also includes technical assistance grant opportunities for strategic and comprehensive planning. Go to http://itd.idaho.gov/bike_ped/Funding%20Guide.pdf.

PART V A FOURTH FOCUS AREA

The community selected the three focus areas for the Aberdeen Community Review. This community-driven approach is one of the Idaho Community Review program's greatest strengths.

In this section of the report, the visiting team identifies a fourth focus area. It is typically an area of concern discussed frequently by numerous residents and leaders participating in listening sessions and other meetings during the review, but *not* selected by the community in its application. It is often a subject that is applicable to all three focus areas.

The visiting team has selected Civic Life and Community Involvement as the fourth focus area.

Comments and Concerns Related to Civic Life and Community Involvement

Most of the comments and concerns expressed by Aberdeen area residents during the community review related to civic life and community involvement had to do with either gaps or divisions between people and social groups in the community or engaging citizens through communication, volunteerism, and leadership development opportunities.

Community Divisions

Not unlike many rural communities in southern Idaho, Aberdeen's population has become more culturally diverse over the last two to three decades. This diversification has accelerated in the last 10-15 years. While participation in the Aberdeen Community Review by Hispanic residents was higher in Aberdeen than in other community reviews, the visiting team believes there is much room for improvement in the area of cross-cultural appreciation and understanding. The community will benefit in numerous ways if this progress can be made.

Before and during the Aberdeen Community Review, the visiting team heard both home team members and residents recognize the need for cross cultural relationship-building and understanding. Many people stated or implied a desire to support and participate in this effort, but didn't know what it would look like or how to start.

Desire for Increased Community Engagement

The survey conducted as part of the community review makes it clear: Aberdeen residents want to be more informed about community issues and projects. They also want to be more involved in decisions effecting the community.

During the review, the visiting team heard many leaders of several community organizations express a need to increase volunteer participation. In some cases, such organizations are being kept viable through the efforts of retirement age leaders and volunteers. As a result, younger volunteers are particularly sought after.

The visiting team encourages Aberdeen’s community organizations to consider these general principles related to volunteer recruitment and development:

- ASK people to volunteer.
- Ask volunteers to contribute for a specific project for a finite period of time. When this time period ends, ask them if they would like to continue volunteering.
- Make the role of volunteers clear.
- Celebrate accomplishments.
- Encourage volunteers to contribute their ideas.
- Thank people for their efforts.

Civic Life and Community Involvement Opportunity Areas

Opportunity Area 1: Promoting cross cultural friendship and understanding

This opportunity area is about creating a community in which all residents are authentically welcomed, valued, and invited to participate in community development efforts. In such a community, all have a stake in the future and will be likely to work to ensure its success. Our recommendations below recognize the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity in many Idaho communities, including Aberdeen. The visiting team believes the community should embrace the opportunity to celebrate its bicultural identity that has been evolving for decades. We also heard about other types of divisions or groups within the community. These include, for examples, people who have lived in the community for decades or generations versus “newcomers” who have lived in the community for a shorter period of time

In a community of Aberdeen’s size there is just one path forward, and that path is together, starting today. For those wondering how to start, our first piece of advice would be: make a friend with someone who comes from cultural heritage different than your own. Stereotypes are broken down when people come to know one another. We observed the beginnings of such friendships during the community review.

In the recommendations below, Civic Life and Community Involvement is abbreviated as “CL”.

Recommendations

CL 1.1 Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents and leaders could seek out or create opportunities for collaborative and bilingual partnerships. This might involve common interests such as civic groups, veteran’s organizations, business owners, recreation, hunting or fishing, arts, music, gardening, historic preservation, folklore, etc. And never underestimate the power of sharing food together. Two examples: (1) incorporate Hispanic traditions into Aberdeen Daze, and (2) Leverage the Gem Trail to promote community integration, especially between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. In addition to offering wonderful recreation opportunities, trails provide other

advantages, including a way to bridge different neighborhoods and bring local residents together for a larger purpose.

CL 1.2 Create an information exchange or forum where people from different segments of the community can gain knowledge and skills from each other. Examples include language, home repair and maintenance, cooking, gardening, small-scale crop and livestock ventures, hunting and fishing, etc. This forum can also be used to sell or barter excess garden produce and other items. The library and/or the schools are locations where such cross-cultural learning can take place.

CL 1.3 Those in local government, schools and other federally funded programs should assess requirements related to Limited English Proficiency. Once that is complete, take meaningful steps to remove barriers. In many cases, failure to provide bilingual outreach is a violation of federal law, and noncompliance can be costly and unproductive. Visit www.fairhousingforum.org and click the “Limited English Proficiency” link to learn more about requirements and solutions. More useful information is available from the same site by searching for “What Every County and City Needs to Know.”

CL 1.4 Bring together a small group of residents that reflects the community’s diverse cultures and religious traditions. Over time, this group would create larger opportunities to encourage friendship and understanding between community groups.

CL 1.5 Take the time to celebrate community successes. Sharing meals together (i.e. potluck) is one way to do this. Similarly, find opportunities to accept and value individual differences of community members.

CL 1.6 The City should create a Hispanic Advisory Committee. This predominantly Hispanic committee would develop ideas to reach out and involve Hispanic residents in community affairs and projects.

CL 1.7 Encourage and recruit Hispanic residents to serve on government committees, join nonprofit boards, and otherwise become more engaged in the political process.

CL 1.8 Offer Spanish classes for non-Spanish speakers and English for people who want to learn English at the school or the library.

CL 1.9 If one does not exist, consider creating an interdenominational or ecumenical council. This group of faith leaders would meet regularly, promote civility, and sponsor or otherwise support efforts to heal social divisions and bring the community together. It’s important that such a group reflect the diversity of the community.

CL 1.10 Consider initiating a well-facilitated visioning process to help bring the community together, create a desired vision, and identify steps to achieve the vision.

CL 1.11 In your community development and economic development efforts, look for areas of common interest in minimal conflict; this is where partnerships and grass roots efforts can prove their potential.

CL 1.12 The community might look at what the City of Hailey accomplished by building a skate park at the entrance to the City. The kids have taken ownership of the park, keeping it clean and shoveling the snow off so they can skate in the winter.

Opportunity Area 2: Keeping citizens engaged and informed

Opportunity Areas 1 and 2 are closely related. Residents cannot participate and support community events and projects if they are not aware of them or if they have inaccurate or incomplete information. At the same time, community organizations need volunteers to succeed.

With state and federal funding flat or decreasing, community self-sufficiency is more critical than ever. It's not fair or realistic to place the responsibility for the community's future on the same 10-20 people who seem to be involved in everything. As important as they are, current community and businesses leaders cannot do it alone. New and young leaders must be nurtured to ensure continuity.



Efforts to educate and involve citizens in community issues sometimes fall short of their potential because we tend to think adults can be taught the same top down, lecture-oriented way we remember being taught history in 4th grade. This approach often does not work because it fails to recognize important factors like: (1) the vast experience people have to draw upon and contribute, (2) citizens must decide for themselves what is important to learn and what alternative(s) are best for the community, and (3) people

function best and learn more effectively when they are in a collaborative, we're-all-in-this-together environment.

The visiting team has identified several recommendations that increase public awareness and citizen participation in Aberdeen.

Recommendations

CL 2.1 Create an ad-hoc committee to brainstorm and prioritize strategies to increase the quality and quantity of community information.

CL 2.2 Reach out to and engage the people completed “sign me up” cards during the community review to express their interest in being more involved in community and economic development activities.

CL 2.3 Explore opportunities to create a community newspaper or newsletter. This source of information could be printed, on-line, or both. The paper could, among other things, serve as a one-stop shop for organizations in need of volunteers and individuals wanting to volunteer.

CL 2.4 Develop a strong central community bulletin board where community announcements can be posted (free of charge) to inform the community of important events and activities.

CL 2.5 Reach out to new people as they relocate to the community to engage them as potential volunteers.

CL 2.6 Create a community foundation to organize and coordinate financial and human resources in the community. Community foundations have proven to be successful ways for local residents to reinvest in their communities.

CL 2.7 Create an annual dinner or other event to express appreciation for community volunteers.

CL 2.8 Provide information about events, community projects, and government procedures in both English and Spanish.

CL 2.9 Make better use of Facebook to convey community information. This is a particularly important way to engage and inform youth and young adults. This same Facebook page can be used to promote events to people outside of Aberdeen. Engage students in this project.

CL 2.10 Community leaders should continue developing a positive relationship with Bingham County leaders. Aberdeen residents should be encouraged to become more actively involved in County government.

CL 2.11 Recognize annual high school class reunions as an opportunity to re-connect with and solicit support from alumni who no longer live in the Aberdeen area. For example, provide information to them about community goals and projects and create a vehicle for fundraising. Each class could sponsor a particular project or acquisition, contribute to a fund, or contribute volunteer hours. Reunions are also an opportunity to encourage alumni to return to Aberdeen to live and/or start a business.

CL 2.12 Make past community visioning and planning efforts available on the City website to make it easier for purposes of applying for grants, to refer to them for future processes like the Idaho Community Review, as well as to make them easily available to local citizens and others looking at the area for various reasons.

Civic Life and Community Involvement Resources

The on-line Community Toolbox is a service of the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. This resource offers an extensive variety of educational materials regarding community and organizational development. Go to <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>.

“Social Capital Building Toolkit” by Thomas Sander and Kathleen Lowney is an October 2006 publication of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Go to <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/pdfs/skbuildingtoolkitversion1.2.pdf>.

“Collaborative Approaches: A Handbook for Public Policy Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution”, Oregon Public Policy Dispute Resolution Center, March 2006
<http://www.orconsensus.pdx.edu/documents/CollaborativeApproachesHandbook-March2006.pdf>.

Love Caldwell is a faith-based project to develop opportunities for civic engagement, bridge building, and community service in Caldwell. Go to www.lovecaldwell.org or call 208-459-1821.

Everyday Democracy (formerly Study Circles Resource Center) helps communities promote dialogue and understanding through small group dialogue. Go to <http://www.everyday-democracy.org/en/index.aspx>. Everyday Democracy also publishes ‘Changing Faces, Changing Communities’, which is intended to *help communities face the challenges and meet the opportunities raised by the arrival of newcomers and involve public officials*. Go to <http://www.everyday-democracy.org/en/Resource.23.aspx>.

“Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project”. This is an excellent 2006 publication available to download or purchase at <http://www.publicconversations.org/node/99>.

Idaho National Laboratory’s Community Giving Program funds philanthropic projects that focus on arts and culture, civic and community, and health and human services. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/c3xrqpw> for complete guidelines.

The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD) promotes the use of dialogue, deliberation, and other innovative group processes to help people come together across differences to tackle challenging problems. An impressive variety of resources are available for download at their website. <http://ncdd.org/>, 717-243-5144, info@ncdd.org.

“Women talking to bridge religious divide” is an article published in the January 8, 2005 Deseret News about nine women who came together to build interfaith friendship and understanding in

Utah. Go to <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/600103090/Women-talking-to-bridge-religious-divide.html?pg=all>.

For State resources for bilingual programs under Title III, go to <http://tinyurl.com/7sqsfty>.

This article published by the Center for Rural Affairs highlights the benefits of a culturally blended community. Go to <http://www.cfra.org/ruralmonitor/2011/10/13/look-iowas-first-majority-hispanic-town>.

Several of resources found at the University of Idaho found Extension's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion website. Go to <http://www.extension.org/diversity>.

Idaho Inclusiveness Coalition is a nonprofit organization working to foster diverse and inclusive communities in Idaho. Go to www.idahoinclues.org.

Center for Community and Justice, which works with Idaho communities to address education and health care issues, may be able to offer cultural awareness training to both the Hispanic and Anglo communities. <http://comunidadjusticia.org/index.html>.

"Successful Strategies for Engaging the Latino and Hispanic Population" is a helpful article published by Michigan State University Extension. Go to http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/successful_strategies_for_engaging_the_latino_and_hispanic_population.

"Reaching and Engaging Latino Communities", published by the California League of Cities. Go to <http://www.westerncity.com/Western-City/September-2008/Reaching-and-Engaging-Latino-Communities/>.

Partners for Prosperity has over 10 years of experience in community development throughout eastern Idaho and now other parts of Idaho as well. Go to <http://www.p4peid.org/>. Jessica Sotelo, Executive Director, 208-785-0059, jessicas@p4peid.org.

DiversityWorks! is a consulting firm specializing in organizational development and cross-cultural understanding. Sam Byrd, President, 208-871-2711, sbyrd2@cableone.net.

Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs. Go to <http://icha.idaho.gov/>, 208-334-3776.

Idaho Human Rights Education Center can provide materials and assistance to help foster respect and appreciation for diversity. Go to <http://idaho-humanrights.org/>. Dan Prinzing, Executive Director, 208-345-0304.

Examples of successful Latino-led and focused events in eastern Idaho include the annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration in Idaho Falls (organized by that city's Diversity Council) and the Latino

Food Fair (organized by local Catholic Church members).

Meadows Valley Exchange is a free on-line resource created by the people of New Meadows, ID and surrounding area devoted exclusively to connecting people with those who can fulfill their needs. It's used to communicate information about employment, housing, things to trade/buy/sell, volunteer opportunities, and community events. Go to <http://mvexchange.org/>.

The nonprofit Greater Menan Community, Inc. publishes a monthly community newsletter that may serve as a good example for Aberdeen. Appendix H includes pages 1-3 of the June 2013 issue of the newsletter. To learn more about the Greater Menan Community, Inc., go to www.thegmcinc.org or email mymenaninfo@gmail.com.

“Governments are from Saturn..... Citizens are from Jupiter: Strategies for Reconnecting Citizens and Government” is a publication available from the Municipal Research and Services Center. It is full of strategies the City could use to reconnect with citizens. Contact information for all strategies is provided. Go to <http://www.mrsc.org/publications/textsrcg.aspx>.

PART VI FINAL THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

The visiting team ends its report to the community with the following thoughts. We hope they help you think about what might come next. We encourage you to take advantage of opportunities for continued assistance while at the same time keeping in mind that the future of Aberdeen will be determined by what you, the residents and leaders, do. No one can do it for you.

Becoming an Entrepreneurial Community

Entrepreneurial communities engage all ages and sectors of the community in community improvement efforts. Recognizing the range of skills, abilities, and perspectives of in all segments of Aberdeen's population is the first step. Your success will likely hinge on involving a diverse and representative group of community members to take stock of local assets, gain an understanding of *what is* driving and *what can* drive the area's economy, create a shared community vision, and develop teams to focus on various aspects of that vision.

Many of the opportunities and recommendations described in this report will help Aberdeen and surrounding area become a more entrepreneurial community. For overall guidance and assistance with process, the visiting team urges the community to give special consideration to the recommendations and resources identified in *Part III: Community Listening Sessions* beginning on page 18, the economic development focus area beginning on page 32, and *Part V: A Fourth Focus Area* beginning on page 78.

We also encourage community leaders and residents to "Like" the Idaho Community Review program on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IdahoCommunityReview.

Community Coaching for Grassroots Action

University of Idaho Extension faculty are available to work with Aberdeen residents and leaders to get organized to implement community review recommendations by bringing a cross-section of the community together to identify assets, learn about the economy and what's possible/feasible, create a vision, develop teams, and take action. The program, Community Coaching for Grassroots Action, is designed to build leadership capacity while establishing and moving toward shared goals for the community. The brochure for this program is included as Appendix I. More information may be found at: <http://cd.extension.uidaho.edu/leadership/index.php>. Contact Lorie Higgins, 208-669-1480 or higgins@uidaho.edu.

Why it Matters

Funding from government agencies and non-government organizations from outside the community is often needed to accomplish larger-scale community and economic development goals. As all Idaho communities know firsthand, the amount of funding for public facilities and infrastructure is limited while the needs (and competition for funds) are ever increasing. Funding applications that result from the use of the positive, inclusive, agreement-seeking tools and principles identified in this report are more likely to be approved than applications from other communities that do not benefit from the same level of broad support. In other words, using inspiring planning and project development processes will mobilize resources within the community and generate greater support from outside the community.

A Final Recommendation

In the visiting team's experience, the use of certain principles seem to increase success and build capacity regarding a variety of community and economic development issues and opportunities. We encourage the community leaders and residents of the Aberdeen area to revisit these principles often and apply them when appropriate:

- Start small
- Start with what you have and who you are (i.e. assets) and build from there
- Emphasize volunteerism
- Celebrate each success and honor participants
- Build local capacity to take on larger projects over time
- Embrace teamwork
- Give credit and thanks
- Make it clear that volunteers are local heroes
- Engage youth and young adults in a way that allows them to take responsibility and develop leadership skills

A Last Word.... for Now

Finally, we leave you with the top ten attributes of successful communities. This list was prepared by David Beurle and Juliet Fox, Innovative Leadership 2011 and adapted from the Heartland Centre for Rural Leadership's "20 Clues to Rural Survival".

Top Ten Attributes of Successful Communities

1. Evidence of an inclusive culture

Successful communities are often showplaces of care, attention, history, and heritage. They celebrate their success and have a strong and positive local attitude and support a culture of risk taking and innovation. Diversity is often celebrated and new people are welcomed.

2. Invest in the future – built to last!

People believe that something worth doing is worth doing right. In addition to the brick-and-mortar investments, all decisions are made with an outlook on the future. Expenditures are considered investments in the future, including investments in people. People have their attention on the long-term success of their community.

3. Participatory approach to decision making

Even the most powerful of opinion leaders seem to work toward building a consensus. The stress is on groups, organizations, and communities working together toward a common goal. The focus is on positive results. People, groups, and communities collaborate and share resources.

4. Creatively build new economic opportunities

Successful regions and communities build on existing economic strengths in a realistic way and explore new economic opportunities provided by the ‘new economy’. They actively seek out new opportunities and ideas for new businesses. They look for ways to smooth out the impacts of the booms and busts.

5. Support local businesses

Local loyalty is emphasized, but thriving regional communities know who their competitors are and position themselves accordingly. They look for creative ways to leverage the local economy off the resource sector.

6. Deliberate transition of power to new leaders

People under 40 regularly hold key positions in civic and business affairs. Women (and people from minority groups) often hold positions as elected officials, managers, and entrepreneurial developers.

7. Strong belief in and support for education

Good schools are the norm and centers of community activity.

8. Strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life.

Churches, schools, and service clubs are strong influences on community development and social activities.

9. Willingness to seek help from the outside

People seek outside help for local needs, and many compete for government grants and contracts for economic and social programs. They seek out the best ideas and new people to help build their local community and regional strengths.

10. Communities and regions are self-reliant

There is a wide-held conviction that, in the long run, ‘You have to do it yourself’. Thriving communities believe their destiny is in their own hands. Making their region a good place to live is a pro-active assignment, and they willingly accept it.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: The City of Aberdeen application to Community Review Program
- Appendix B: Community survey form and survey results
- Appendix C: Contact and biographical information for visiting team members
- Appendix D: Aberdeen Community Review master schedule, listening session, and focus area itineraries
- Appendix E: *Community review team addresses Aberdeen's strengths, weaknesses*, Aberdeen Times, March 12, 2014
- Appendix F: Information about completing a housing needs assessment and housing plan
- Appendix G: Summary of National Trust for Historic Preservation's Four-Point Approach to downtown revitalization.
- Appendix H: Pages 1-3 of the June 2013 issue of the Menan, Idaho community newsletter
- Appendix I: Community Coaching for Grassroots Action program brochure

Appendix A: The City of Aberdeen application to Idaho Community Review Program

Please complete this application and return to:
Idaho Rural Partnership
PO Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720 -- (208) 780-5149

A Community Visitation Program

Offered in Partnership by the
Association of Idaho Cities, Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Housing & Finance Association,
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, University of Idaho,
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development, & Idaho Rural Partnership

Please submit the answers to the following questions. Cities with populations under 10,000 are eligible to apply.

The community review program is an excellent in-kind value for its cost. Idaho cities such as Bonners Ferry, New Meadows, Glens Ferry, Nez Perce Tribe/City of Lapwai, and Driggs have recently conducted successful community reviews for under \$2,500. Estimated costs for a community review through a private consulting firm, including salary, travel, lodging, site visit, data collection, and report fees, is approximately \$50,000 for equivalent expertise from 15-18 community development professionals.

Your community must agree to accept the following responsibilities to ensure the success of the review:

- Provide mailing labels for the selected households for the purpose of mailing the pre-review community survey.
 - Arrange for large and small group meeting sites throughout the review with community leaders and citizens.
 - Appoint a home team leader for each of the community review focus areas (economic development + two other areas selected by the community) who will work with the visiting team leaders to plan and coordinate the community review.
 - Arrange community tours and meeting agendas in the three focus areas you identify
 - Pay for postage for the pre-review community survey, group transportation during the community tours, and all team meals. Many communities have partnered with businesses, school districts, and civic groups to share postage, transportation, and meal costs).
 - Suggest lodging locations for the visiting team and supply related information.
 - Publicize the community review to maximize community participation
 - Assist with collection of background information and data prior to the community review
-
- Designate at least two community members to facilitate the follow-up process

Community: Aberdeen, Idaho

Main Contact Person: Mayor Anderson, Linda Balls, City Clerk

Address/City/State/Zip: 33 North Main, P.O. Box 190, Aberdeen, ID 83210

Phone, Fax, Email: 208-397-4161-phone, 208-397-3431 fax, cityclerk@afwireless.com

Economic development is a required focus area for all community reviews. Circle or write in the two other focus areas your community would like to emphasize. Focus areas might include some combination of the following:

Infrastructure

Housing

Land Use Planning

Community Design & Identity

Education

Health Care

Seniors and Youth

Arts, Historic, & Recreation Resources

Civic Life & Community Involvement Transportation

Other Focus Area(s): _____

Names/phone numbers/Email addresses of the three Focus Area Team Leaders:

1. Economic Development: Mary Leisy, 208-244-1449, mary83210@gmail.com and Kristen Jensen, 208-380-1719, kristenrjensen@gmail.com

2. Community Design and Identity: Ben Ledford, 208-397-3439, Ben_Ledford@myers-anderson.com

3. Infrastructure: Mike and Alice Petersen, 208-397-4894, apetersen44@frontiernet.net

In the Focus Areas identified, what specific issues does your community want to address?

1.) Economic Development: We would like to learn about strategies and ideas to promote local employment. Suggestions for bringing in new businesses which could be supported by the small population we have would be desired. We would also like insight from the review team for some ideas for businesses supported by the agriculture industry. Simplot will be closing in May 2014. Any suggestions to help replace that business would be appreciated.

2.)Infrastructure: We would like input on how we can improve our streets and sidewalks, pave all side streets, continue to add to the Gem Trail, upgrade the sewer collection lines, and change our ordinances to meet current needs. Input regarding water metering and funding the additional needed upgrades at the sewer plant would be helpful.

3.)Community Design and Identity:Ways to make the community attractive so the people who work here will also want to live here. The review team may be able to see some hidden treasures that we as residents take for granted or overlook. We would like recommendations on how to capitalize on the assets we already have, and receive input on affordable additions we could make which would enhance our community.

What is the best possible outcome resulting from a community review in your town?

We would like to learn about practical ways to make our city attractive and appealing so those who work here will want to live here as well. Many professional people commute into Aberdeen to work, but they do not live here. We would like to change that. We also would like to learn the strategies we need to employ to keep the community vibrant and growing. We want to make our community more livable, and through the review process we hope to gain knowledge to accomplish that goal. Knowing how to access funding sources for infrastructure projects would also be a desired outcome.

What strategic planning, business development, enhancement, revitalization, clean-up, contracted or consulting efforts have occurred in your community in the last one to three years? (attach additional sheets, documentation, brochures, or report summaries as necessary)

Gem Trail Development	Visioning Workshop
Waster Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Bi-Annual Alley Clean Up
Handicap Accessible Corners on Main St.	New Trees in Park
New Street Signs	Library Kids Room Improvement
Classes at the Library	Operation Facelift
Community Visioning/Artist's Renderings	New Shelter at Posse Park
New Golf Course Club House	Airport Upgrades

Describe any economic development projects the city would like the visiting team to examine. For the purpose of this question, an economic development project is any initiative to attract new business, help retain or expand existing business or improve infrastructure. In your description of the project, identify any funders and partners contacted and/or involved with the project.

The city would like the visiting team to give insight on additional ways to obtain funding to complete additional phases of the Gem Trail project, give input on the current Safe Routes to School plan, share ideas to make existing businesses more attractive, provide advice on how to fund infrastructure improvements in the downtown to make it more desirable, and provide suggestions based on their experiences in other cities and towns as to how empty buildings can be used on the main and side streets. We realize we may not have the population base to support some types of retail businesses downtown, so we would like suggestions for other uses of the buildings which would encourage people to come downtown. We also want direction on ideas to fund the final upgrades to the waste water treatment plant.

What other projects has your community completed in the last one to three years? (Attach additional sheets or information as necessary.)

Bridge Improvements
IFFT Grant Received for the Gem Trail

Please see attached supporting documentation.

We ask that communities participating in the review process provide brief updates on an annual basis. These updates will share progress the community has made as either a direct or indirect result of a community review. IRP will use the information to help future visiting team members adjust their discussions and presentations to better meet the needs of participating communities. This information also helps the partnering agencies and organizations measure the impact of reviews and demonstrate how resources and investments are leveraged through the process. This is critical to maintain support for our work with rural Idaho.

What possible dates do you propose for a community review?

Late fall 2013, November through December.
Early Winter 2014, January through February.

Since we are an agriculture related community, our best participation from the citizens will be during times when harvest and spring planting are completed. Thank you for your consideration.

Mayor's Signature:



Date: 2/27/13

Please complete this application and return to:

Idaho Rural Partnership
PO Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720 -- (208) 780-5149

Appendix B: Community survey form and survey results

ABERDEEN COMMUNITY REVIEW SURVEY

*This survey is being conducted as part of the Aberdeen Community Review happening March 4-6, 2014. Your response will help a team of visiting experts understand issues and opportunities related to economic development, infrastructure, and downtown revitalization. Your response is important to us! Results are confidential and will only be reported as totals with no identifying information. Please complete only one survey per household and respond **by February 14, 2014**.*

Part 1: Infrastructure: In this section of the survey, please rate your satisfaction with various public services and infrastructure. Please mark N/A (not applicable) if you do not use or receive a particular service.

	Highly Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	N/A
1. Condition of city streets	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2. Bicycle and pedestrian access	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3. Availability of sidewalks	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Local law enforcement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. Fire Department	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6. Water services	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7. Sewage treatment services	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. Quality of Aberdeen airport	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. Quality of library	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10. Condition of school facilities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. Quality of K-12 education	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. Availability of general health care	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. Availability of emergency health care/EMS	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
14. Availability of food bank	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15. Availability of day care for children	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16. Availability of Senior programs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17. Availability of drug and alcohol treatment programs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18. Availability of high-speed Internet service	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19. Availability of local arts and cultural opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20. Quality of parks	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21. Availability of recreation programs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Part 2: Economic Development: In this section of the survey, please rate your satisfaction with each of the following aspects of your local economy. Please consider only those businesses or services located within Aberdeen. Please mark N/A (not applicable) if you are not familiar with a particular service.

	Highly Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	N/A
1. Appearance of downtown Aberdeen	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2. Appearance of public buildings	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3. Availability of local jobs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Quality of local jobs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. Variety of local businesses	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6. Level of business involvement in the community	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7. Variety of goods available in stores	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. Availability of job training programs	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. Availability of information and training for people starting new businesses	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10. Housing availability	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. Housing quality	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. Housing affordability	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Part 3: Businesses and Services in Aberdeen: In this section, please tell us how important it is to increase or improve the following businesses and services in Aberdeen.

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
1. Social services such as domestic violence shelter and other emergency services	1	2	3	4	5
2. Adult education services (e.g. G.E.D.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Youth services and facilities (e.g. teen center, skate park)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Retail stores	1	2	3	4	5
5. Professional or personal services (e.g. bank, car repair)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Entertainment and recreation	1	2	3	4	5
7. Aberdeen Gem Trail	1	2	3	4	5
8. Farmer's market	1	2	3	4	5
9. Aberdeen Days	1	2	3	4	5
10. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4 Community Involvement and Information. In this section, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am satisfied with the quantity and quality of information provided by the City of Aberdeen.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with the City of Aberdeen website.(www.aberdeendidaho.us/)	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with the Bingham County website.(www.co.bingham.id.us/)	1	2	3	4	5
4. I would like to be better informed about community issues and projects.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am satisfied with opportunities to be involved in decisions affecting the community.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I generally trust City Council to make decisions for the community.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am happy with my involvement in community issues and organizations.	1	2	3	4	5

8. What prevents you from being more involved in the community? (check all that apply)

- Lack of time
- Family responsibilities
- I am not asked to become involved.
- I don't know how to become more involved.
- Nothing. I am happy with my level of involvement.
- Other _____

9 What prevents you from supporting Aberdeen's locally owned businesses more often? (check all that apply)

- Cost
- Local businesses are not open when I need them.
- Services and products I need are not available in Aberdeen.
- Lack of parking
- Nothing. Supporting Aberdeen's businesses is a high priority to me.
- Other _____

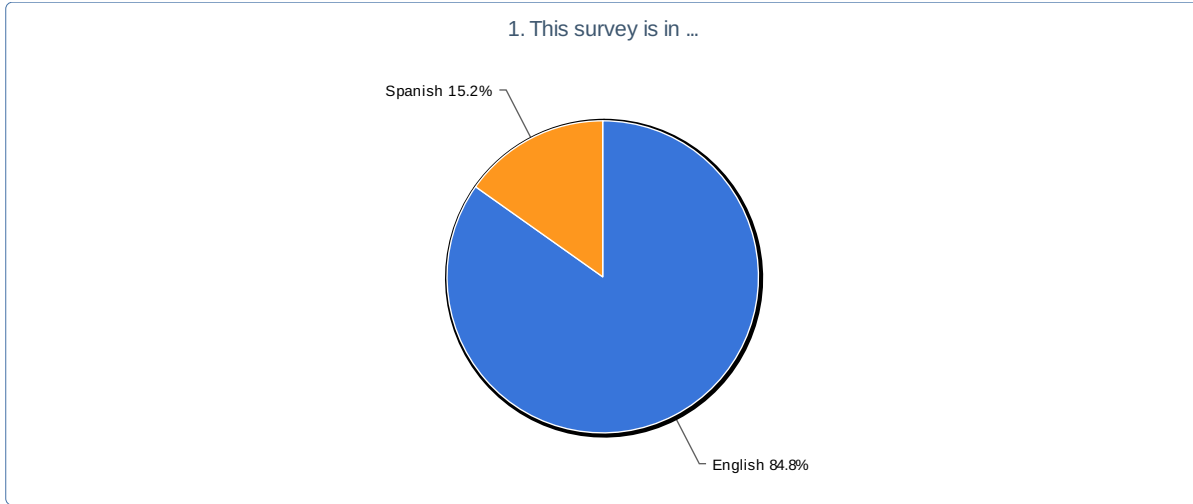
Part 5: Demographics.

- 1. Do you commute to another community to work? Yes No Don't work
- 2. Gender Male Female
- 3. Ethnicity Non-Hispanic Hispanic
- 4. Primary language spoken at home English Spanish Other
- 5. How many years have you lived in Aberdeen? 1-10 11-20 21+

Thank you! In the space below, please describe additional ideas or improvements you think would make Aberdeen a better place for residents and businesses.

Summary Report - Auto Run

Survey: Aberdeen Community Review Tabulator



1. This survey is in ...

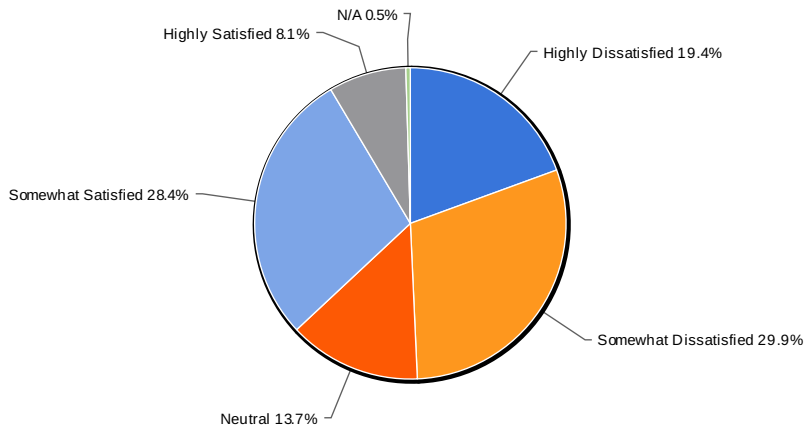
Value	Count	Percent %
English	184	84.8%
Spanish	33	15.2%

Statistics	
Total Responses	217

2. In this section of the survey, please rate your satisfaction with various public services and infrastructure. Please mark N/A (not applicable) if you do not use or receive a particular service.

	Highly Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	N/A	Responses
1. Condition of city streets	21.4% 45	33.8% 71	12.9% 27	24.8% 52	5.7% 12	1.4% 3	210
2. Bicycle and pedestrian access	9.6% 20	26.0% 54	25.5% 53	22.1% 46	9.1% 19	7.7% 16	208
3. Availability of sidewalks	14.5% 31	28.0% 60	22.0% 47	21.0% 45	13.1% 28	1.4% 3	214
4. Local law enforcement	16.4% 35	16.8% 36	26.2% 56	25.2% 54	15.0% 32	0.5% 1	214
5. Fire Department	2.3% 5	4.7% 10	20.7% 44	27.7% 59	42.7% 91	1.9% 4	213
6. Water services	3.8% 8	3.8% 8	17.2% 36	33.0% 69	40.2% 84	1.9% 4	209
7. Sewage treatment services	4.7% 10	1.4% 3	20.9% 44	29.9% 63	37.4% 79	5.7% 12	211
8. Quality of Aberdeen airport	4.3% 9	2.8% 6	23.2% 49	13.7% 29	18.0% 38	37.9% 80	211
9. Quality of library	4.2% 9	3.8% 8	19.2% 41	27.7% 59	31.9% 68	13.1% 28	213
10. Condition of school facilities	6.2% 13	8.1% 17	23.2% 49	32.2% 68	17.1% 36	13.3% 28	211
11. Quality of K-12 education	7.1% 15	17.1% 36	17.6% 37	27.1% 57	15.7% 33	15.2% 32	210
12. Availability of general health care	9.5% 20	15.2% 32	22.9% 48	28.6% 60	16.2% 34	7.6% 16	210
13. Availability of emergency health care/EMS	9.3% 20	13.6% 29	18.7% 40	25.2% 54	26.2% 56	7.0% 15	214
14. Availability of food bank	4.2% 9	6.1% 13	20.8% 44	20.3% 43	22.2% 47	26.4% 56	212
15. Availability of day care for children	13.8% 29	8.6% 18	22.4% 47	8.1% 17	11.9% 25	35.2% 74	210
16. Availability of Senior programs	11.5% 24	7.7% 16	23.6% 49	18.8% 39	13.9% 29	24.5% 51	208
17. Availability of drug and alcohol treatment programs	17.3% 36	5.3% 11	21.2% 44	10.6% 22	9.1% 19	36.5% 76	208
18. Availability of high-speed Internet service	18.9% 39	17.0% 35	21.8% 45	19.4% 40	6.3% 13	16.5% 34	206
19. Availability of local arts and cultural opportunities	17.4% 36	10.1% 21	25.6% 53	23.2% 48	8.2% 17	15.5% 32	207
20. Quality of parks	6.4% 13	12.4% 25	17.3% 35	36.6% 74	21.8% 44	5.4% 11	202
21. Availability of recreation programs	17.7% 37	16.3% 34	26.3% 55	20.1% 42	5.7% 12	13.9% 29	209

3. -1. Appearance of downtown Aberdeen

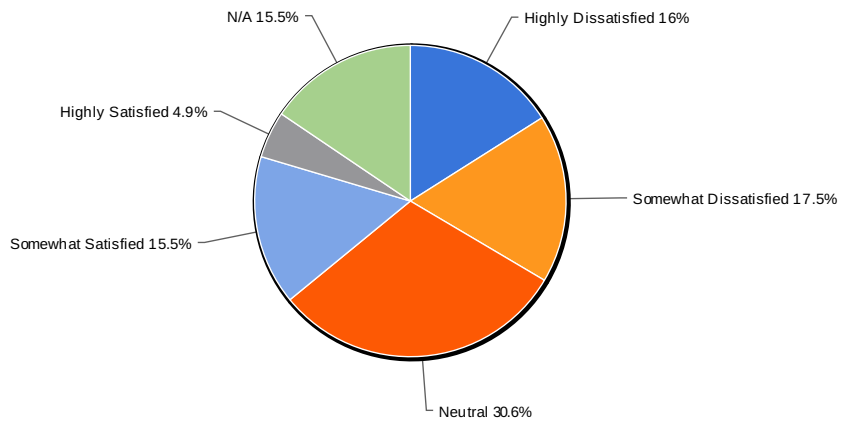


3. -1. Appearance of downtown Aberdeen

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	41	19.4%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	63	29.9%
Neutral	29	13.7%
Somewhat Satisfied	60	28.4%
Highly Satisfied	17	8.1%
N/A	1	0.5%

Statistics	
Total Responses	211

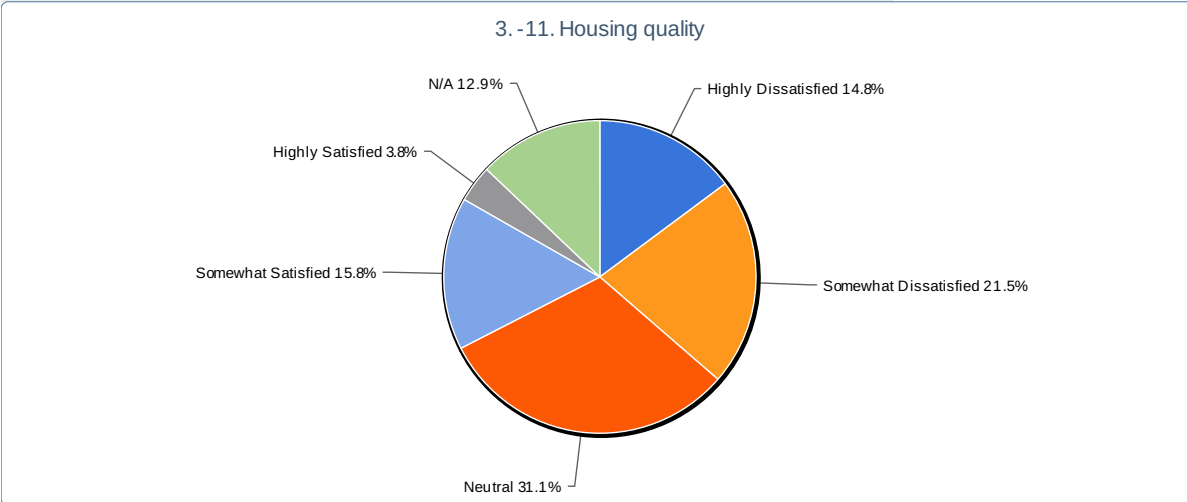
3. -10. Housing availability



3. -10. Housing availability

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	33	16.0%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	36	17.5%
Neutral	63	30.6%
Somewhat Satisfied	32	15.5%
Highly Satisfied	10	4.9%
N/A	32	15.5%

Statistics	
Total Responses	206

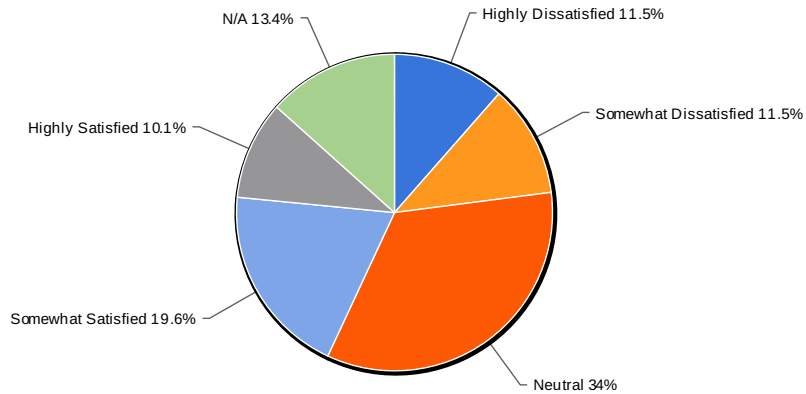


3. -11. Housing quality

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	31	14.8%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	45	21.5%
Neutral	65	31.1%
Somewhat Satisfied	33	15.8%
Highly Satisfied	8	3.8%
N/A	27	12.9%

Statistics	
Total Responses	209

3. -12. Housing affordability

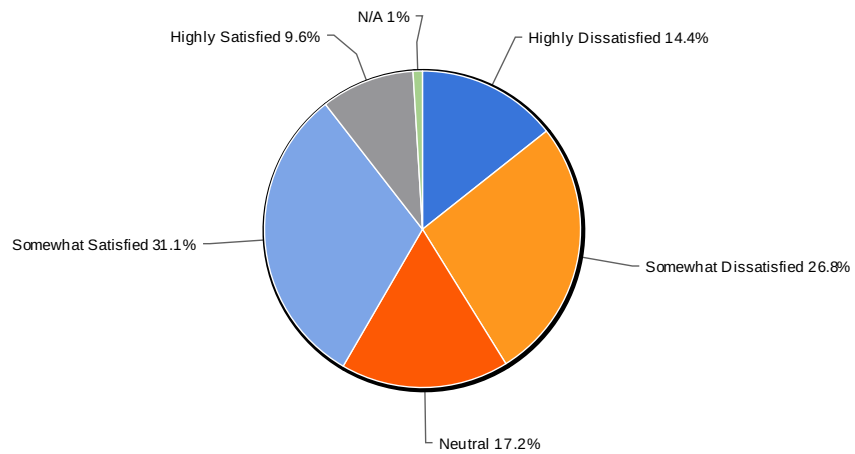


3. -12. Housing affordability

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	24	11.5%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	24	11.5%
Neutral	71	34.0%
Somewhat Satisfied	41	19.6%
Highly Satisfied	21	10.1%
N/A	28	13.4%

Statistics	
Total Responses	209

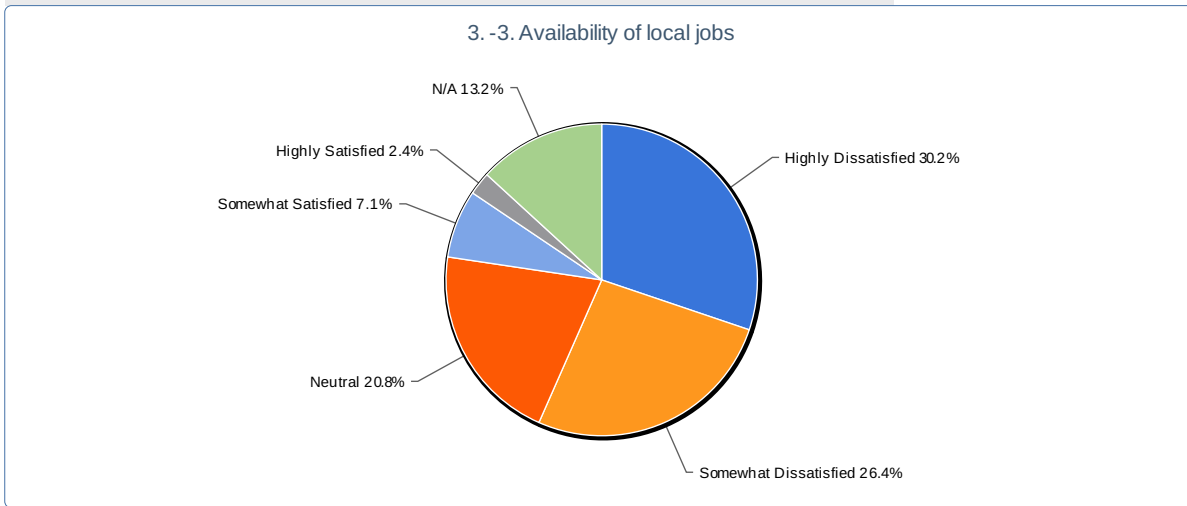
3. -2. Appearance of public buildings



3. -2. Appearance of public buildings

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	30	14.4%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	56	26.8%
Neutral	36	17.2%
Somewhat Satisfied	65	31.1%
Highly Satisfied	20	9.6%
N/A	2	1.0%

Statistics	
Total Responses	209

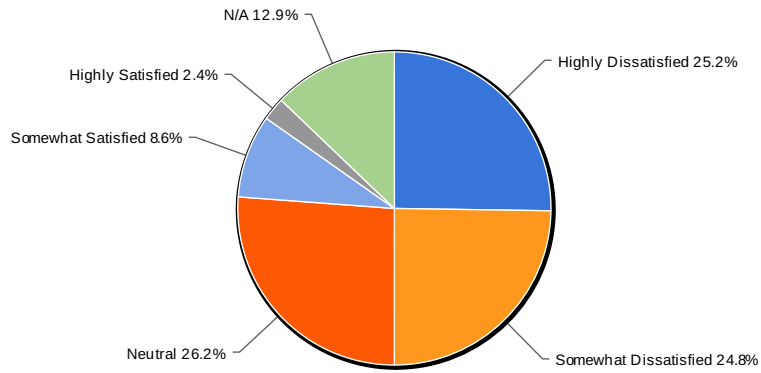


3. -3. Availability of local jobs

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	64	30.2%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	56	26.4%
Neutral	44	20.8%
Somewhat Satisfied	15	7.1%
Highly Satisfied	5	2.4%
N/A	28	13.2%

Statistics	
Total Responses	212

3. -4. Quality of local jobs

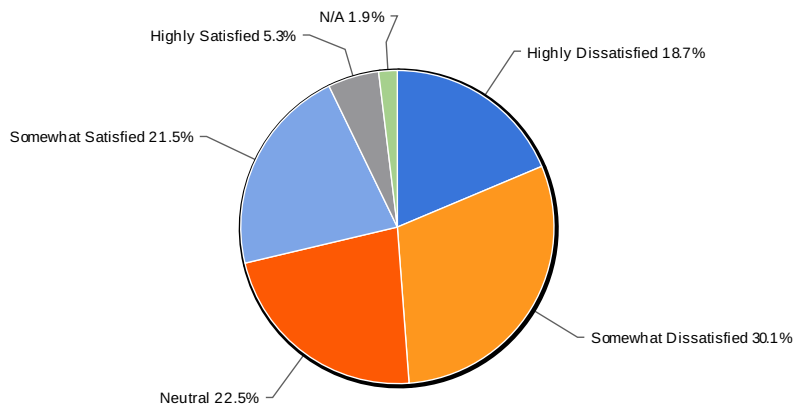


3. -4. Quality of local jobs

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	53	25.2%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	52	24.8%
Neutral	55	26.2%
Somewhat Satisfied	18	8.6%
Highly Satisfied	5	2.4%
N/A	27	12.9%

Statistics	
Total Responses	210

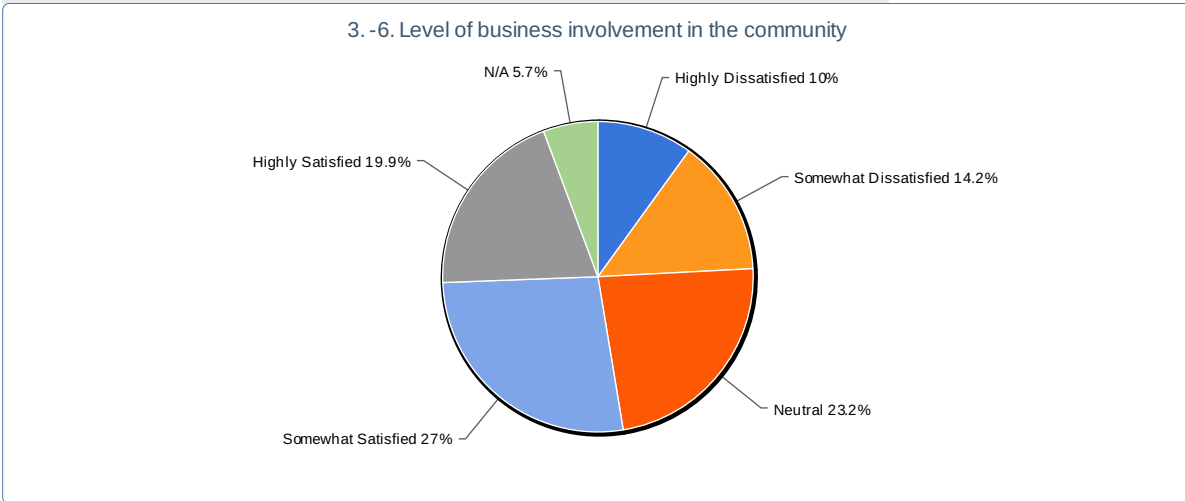
3. -5. Variety of local businesses



3. -5. Variety of local businesses

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	39	18.7%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	63	30.1%
Neutral	47	22.5%
Somewhat Satisfied	45	21.5%
Highly Satisfied	11	5.3%
N/A	4	1.9%

Statistics	
Total Responses	209

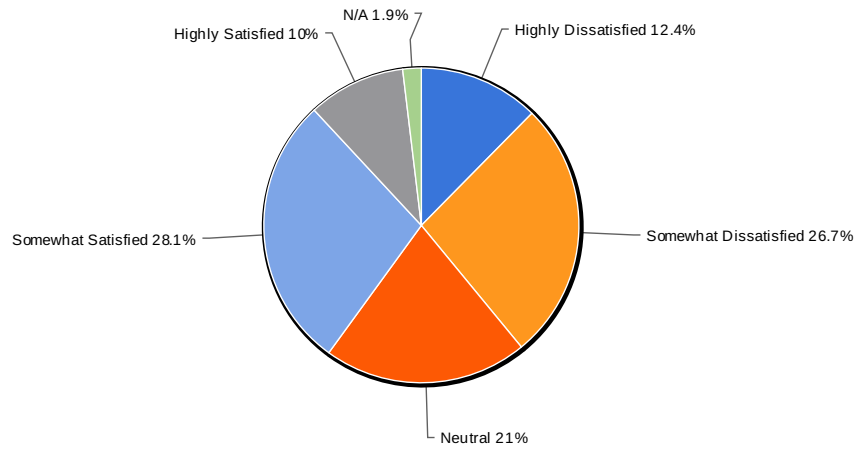


3. -6. Level of business involvement in the community

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	21	10.0%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	30	14.2%
Neutral	49	23.2%
Somewhat Satisfied	57	27.0%
Highly Satisfied	42	19.9%
N/A	12	5.7%

Statistics	
Total Responses	211

3. -7. Variety of goods available in stores

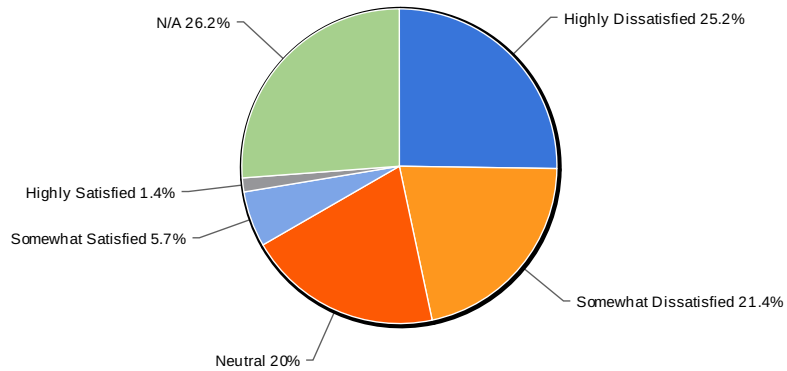


3. -7. Variety of goods available in stores

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	26	12.4%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	56	26.7%
Neutral	44	21.0%
Somewhat Satisfied	59	28.1%
Highly Satisfied	21	10.0%
N/A	4	1.9%

Statistics	
Total Responses	210

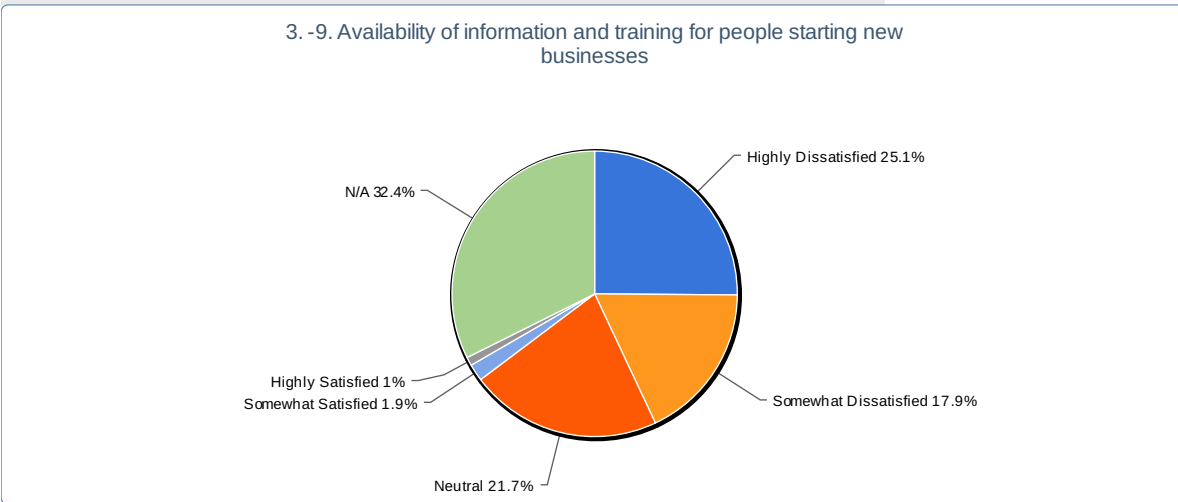
3. -8. Availability of job training programs



3. -8. Availability of job training programs

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	53	25.2%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	45	21.4%
Neutral	42	20.0%
Somewhat Satisfied	12	5.7%
Highly Satisfied	3	1.4%
N/A	55	26.2%

Statistics	
Total Responses	210



3. -9. Availability of information and training for people starting new businesses

Value	Count	Percent %
Highly Dissatisfied	52	25.1%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	37	17.9%
Neutral	45	21.7%
Somewhat Satisfied	4	1.9%
Highly Satisfied	2	1.0%
N/A	67	32.4%

Statistics	
Total Responses	207

In this section, please tell us how important it is to increase or improve the following businesses and services in Aberdeen.

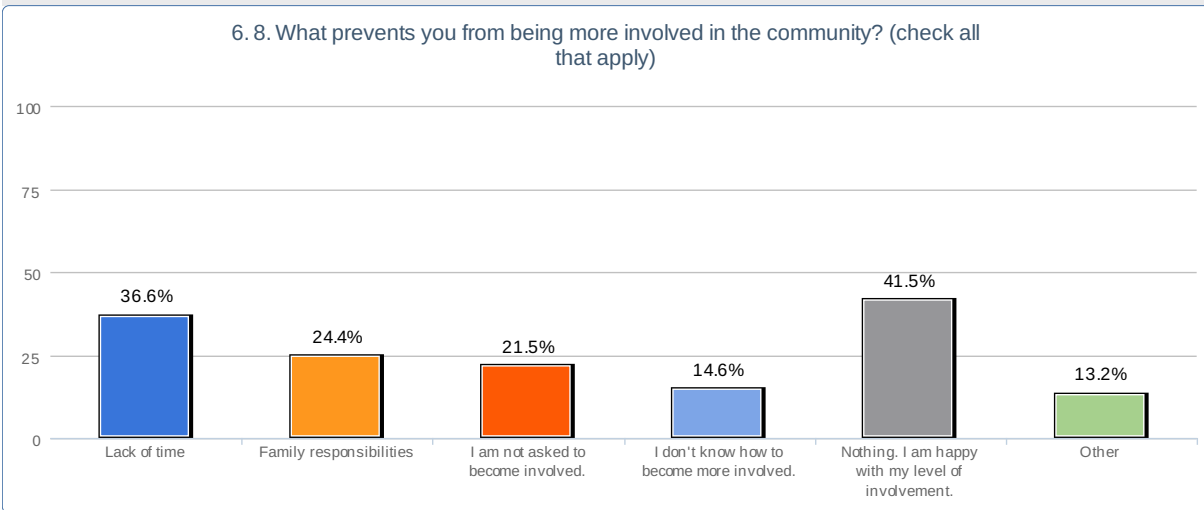
	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Responses
1. Social services such as domestic violence shelter and other emergency services	10.8% 22	6.9% 14	27.9% 57	30.4% 62	24.0% 49	204
2. Adult education services (e.g. G.E.D.)	11.9% 24	7.9% 16	25.7% 52	27.2% 55	27.2% 55	202
3. Youth services and facilities (e.g. teen center, skate park)healthy living (e.g., health fairs, fun runs, etc.)	13.4% 27	8.9% 18	18.3% 37	27.7% 56	31.7% 64	202
4. Retail stores	10.9% 22	5.0% 10	22.3% 45	30.2% 61	31.7% 64	202
5. Professional or personal services (e.g. bank, car repair)	7.9% 16	8.9% 18	24.1% 49	26.1% 53	33.0% 67	203
6. Entertainment and recreation(e.g., composting organic matter)	9.8% 20	3.4% 7	19.6% 40	35.3% 72	31.9% 65	204
7. Aberdeen Gem Trail	8.1% 16	4.0% 8	22.7% 45	36.9% 73	28.3% 56	198
8. Farmer's market	12.8% 26	9.9% 20	30.5% 62	27.1% 55	19.7% 40	203
9. Aberdeen Days	8.3% 17	4.9% 10	15.7% 32	27.0% 55	44.1% 90	204
10. Other	13.3% 6	2.2% 1	13.3% 6	13.3% 6	57.8% 26	45

4. If other is chosen list it here.

Count	Response
1	Aproactive police force: clean up the library.
1	Being charged for service he doesn't get. Feels this is very wrong.
1	Clean up down town and repair sides walks build new sidewalks.
1	Community picnic
1	Need Recreation :all ages and Senior get together to do things.
1	Reasonable Motel Service
1	Stronger enfocement of laws for polluting our beaches and recreational areas.
1	Youth activites
1	a laundry mat would be nice. set a vision for the city.
1	affordable grocery and gas
1	doctors
1	manufacturing and industrial buesinesses
1	sidewalks
1	spruce up the town it looks dead when you come in to it
1	Real estate prices are to high. No community can grow when this issue strangles the local economy.

5. In this section, please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

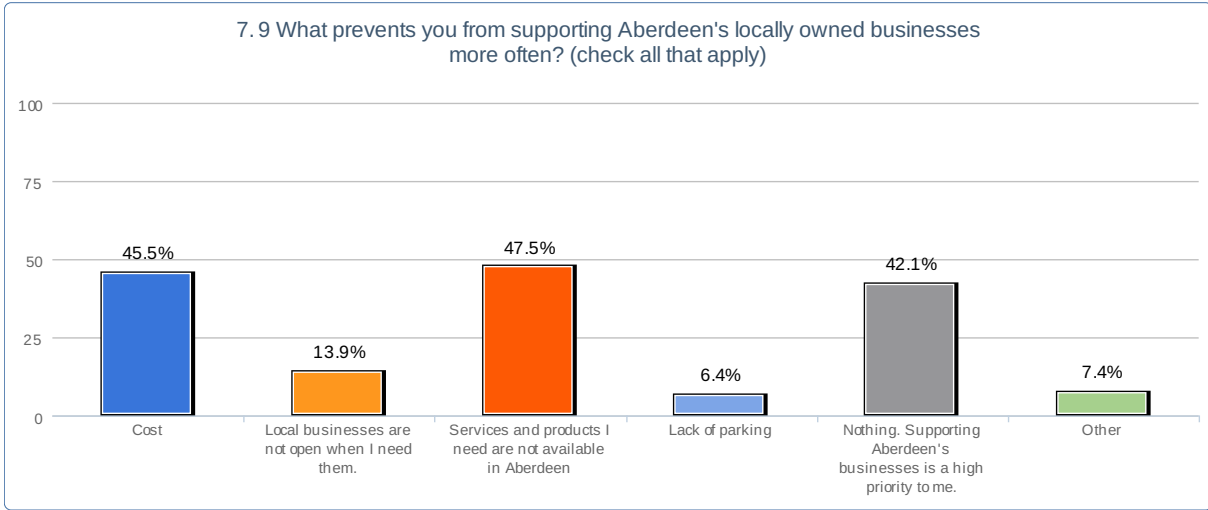
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Responses
1. I am satisfied with the quantity and quality of information provided by the City of Aberdeen.	11.7% 23	11.7% 23	31.6% 62	30.1% 59	14.8% 29	196
2. I am satisfied with the City of Aberdeen website.(www.aberdeenidaho.us/)	9.1% 17	4.3% 8	60.4% 113	17.1% 32	9.1% 17	187
3. I am satisfied with the Bingham County website.(www.co.bingham.id.us/)	6.0% 11	4.3% 8	66.3% 122	15.2% 28	8.2% 15	184
4. I would like to be better informed about community issues and projects.	5.7% 11	5.2% 10	26.6% 51	38.5% 74	24.0% 46	192
5. I am satisfied with opportunities to be involved in decisions affecting the community.	9.7% 19	11.8% 23	34.9% 68	29.7% 58	13.8% 27	195
6. I generally trust City Council to make decisions for the community.	10.4% 20	15.5% 30	24.4% 47	28.5% 55	21.2% 41	193
7. I am happy with my involvement in community issues and organizations.	6.8% 13	8.9% 17	39.3% 75	30.9% 59	14.1% 27	191



6. 8. What prevents you from being more involved in the community? (check all that apply)

Value	Count	Percent %
Lack of time	75	36.6%
Family responsibilities	50	24.4%
I am not asked to become involved.	44	21.5%
I don't know how to become more involved.	30	14.6%
Nothing. I am happy with my level of involvement.	85	41.5%
Other	27	13.2%

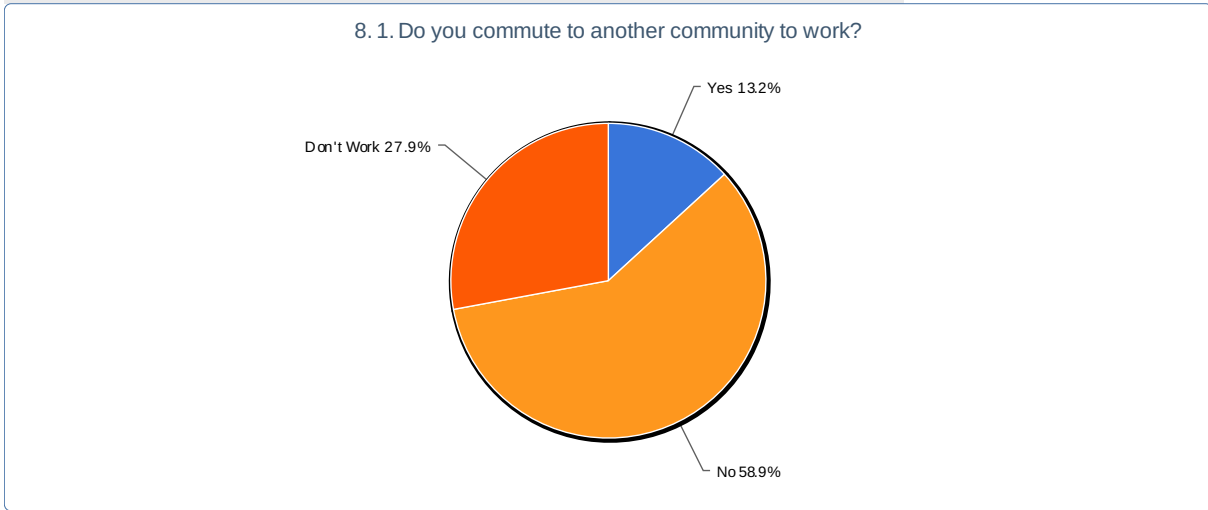
Statistics	
Total Responses	205
Sum	182.0
Avg.	0.9
StdDev	1.0
Max	92.0



7. 9 What prevents you from supporting Aberdeen's locally owned businesses more often? (check all that apply)

Value	Count	Percent %
Cost	92	45.5%
Local businesses are not open when I need them.	28	13.9%
Services and products I need are not available in Aberdeen	96	47.5%
Lack of parking	13	6.4%
Nothing. Supporting Aberdeen's businesses is a high priority to me.	85	42.1%
Other	15	7.4%

Statistics	
Total Responses	202

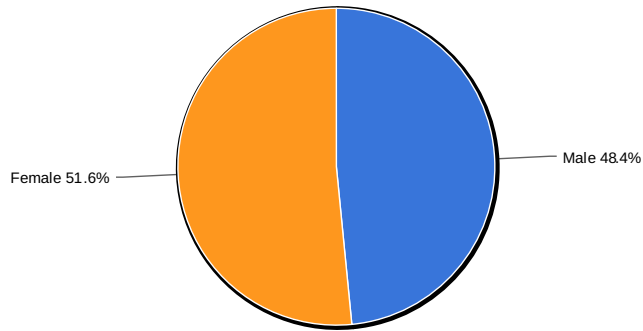


8. 1. Do you commute to another community to work?

Value	Count	Percent %
Yes	26	13.2%
No	116	58.9%
Don't Work	55	27.9%

Statistics	
Total Responses	197

9. 2. Gender

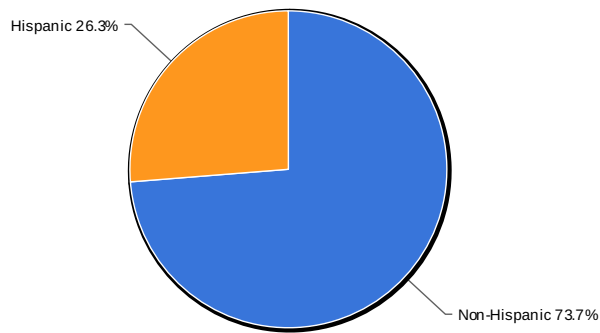


9. 2. Gender

Value	Count	Percent %
Male	93	48.4%
Female	99	51.6%

Statistics	
Total Responses	192

10. 3. Ethnicity

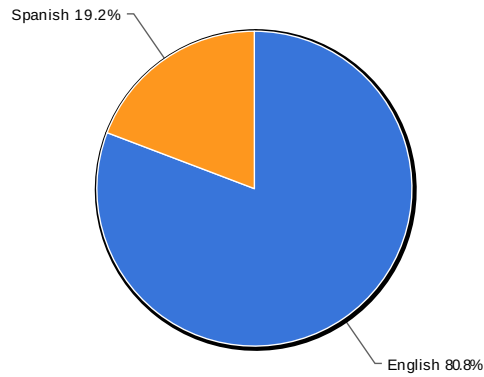


10. 3. Ethnicity

Value	Count	Percent %
Non-Hispanic	146	73.7%
Hispanic	52	26.3%

Statistics	
Total Responses	198

11. 4. Primary language spoken at home

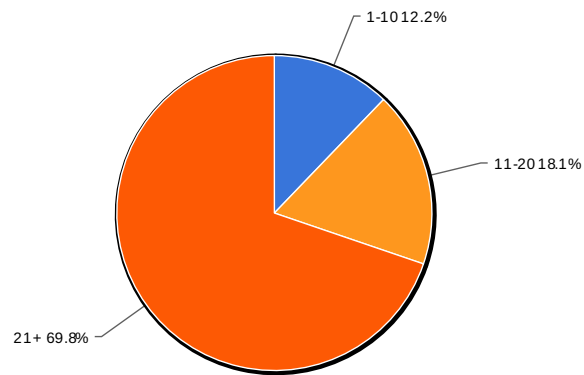


11. 4. Primary language spoken at home

Value	Count	Percent %
English	164	80.8%
Spanish	39	19.2%
Other	0	0.0%

Statistics	
Total Responses	203

12. 5. How many years have you lived in Aberdeen?



12. 5. How many years have you lived in Aberdeen?

Value	Count	Percent %
1-10	25	12.2%
11-20	37	18.1%
21+	143	69.8%

Statistics	
Total Responses	205
Sum	3,435.0
Avg.	16.8
StdDev	7.0
Max	21.0

Appendix C: Contact and biographical information for visiting team members

Economic Development Focus Area

Paul Lewin, Ph. D.

Extension Specialist, Assistant Professor
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
University of Idaho
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Email: plewin@uidaho.edu

Dr. Lewin is an extension and research assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. He has a Ph.D. in Applied Economics from Oregon State University and 14 years of applied experience conducting quantitative and qualitative analysis in development issues in Latin America, Europe and the USA. He possesses a quantitative background in input-output analysis, benefit-cost analysis, and econometrics. He has worked with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and Moody's Analytics. His research field is rural community development. Currently, his research program includes entrepreneurship, rural infrastructure, and dynamic changes of community and small regional economies. He is fluent in English and Spanish.

Kathleen Lewis

Southeast Idaho Council of Governments
214 E. Center Street
Pocatello, ID 83205
Office: 208-233-4535, ext. 4
Email: Kathleen@sicog.org

Kathleen has served as the Executive Director of the Southeast Idaho Council of Governments, Inc. (SICOG) for over fourteen years. Prior to that position she was the Community/Economic Development Director for nine years. SICOG is a regional organization serving the seven counties and thirty cities in southeast Idaho housing the Area V Agency on Aging and is a designated Economic Development District. Ms. Lewis currently is the Chairperson for the City of Pocatello Planning and Zoning Commission and chair of the Economic Development Districts of Idaho. She is involved in multiple community activities including the League of Women Voters and is a member of the Idaho Center for Fiscal Analysis board.

Sonia Martinez

Director
Latino Economic and Development Center
625 W. Pacific, Ste. 2
Blackfoot, ID 83221
Cell: 208-251-0925
Email: soniam@idaholead.org

Sonia has worked toward the advancement of Latinos in Idaho for over 15 years in the areas of housing, workforce development, and education. She graduated from Idaho State University with a BA in Organizational Communications where she later worked as the manager of Continuing Education. Sonia worked for several years for the Idaho Department of Labor in workforce development which led her to become a certified Community and Economic Development Professional. Upon a needs assessment of the Latino Community of Southeast Idaho by Partners for Prosperity, Sonia founded and established the Latino Economic and Development Center, an asset building nonprofit organization.

John Meyers

Boise Field Office Director,
US Department of Housing and Urban Development
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Boise, ID 83712
Office: 208.334.1088, ext. 3002
Email: john.w.meyers@hud.gov

John Meyers has been with HUD for eleven years. Before becoming the Field Office Director in Boise (October 23, 2011) he served as Field Office Director for the Springfield, Illinois, HUD Office. Prior to that, for eight years he directed the Seattle Regional Office. Before joining HUD, Meyers owned and operated a management consulting firm in Seattle, Washington.

Meyers has worked at various levels in both state and federal government. He served terms as: a Regional Public Affairs Officer for (HHS), on state legislative and caucus staffs, and as the chief of staff to a member of Congress.

In 2008 Meyers was appointed as one of only 20 members to the Secretary of HUD's Field Advisory Committee. Earlier he chaired both the Workforce Planning Task Force for his division (Field Policy and Management) and the committee that designed the HUD small office *Peer Consultation Review Process*. Meyers is a veteran of the USAF. He is married with two grown children.

Brent Tolman (*focus area leader*)

Regional Business Specialist
Idaho Department of Labor
127 West 5th Street North
Burley, ID 83318
Office: 208-678-5518, X3120
Email: Brent.Tolman@labor.idaho.gov

Brent has worked for the Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL) for 15 years starting as a workforce Consultant, Supervisor, Manager and most recently as a Regional Business Specialist. Prior to join IDOL he worked in private industry as a production supervisor and Human Resource Manager.

During his time with IDOL, he has been involved extensively in economic development projects and currently serves on the executive board for the Mini-Cassia Economic Development Commission, as well as the board of directors for Region IV Development Association. Brent also served on the board of directors for the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce for seven years including serving as Board President for one year.

Brent is a graduate of Boise State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in Human Resources and a minor in Spanish. Go Broncos! Brent and his wife Cindy live in Burley, ID and are the proud parents of six children, 2 outlaws, and 3 grandchildren. His recreational interests include hunting and fishing, riding horses, and supporting his kids in their various activities.

[Downtown Revitalization Focus Area](#)

Jeremy Field

Office of U.S. Senator James Risch
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Jeremy Field graduated with a Bachelor in political science from BYU in 2003. After graduation he worked for US Senator Craig on the Special Committee on Aging as a Staff Assistant. Following his time in DC, he attended the U of I College of Law, receiving his J.D. in 2007. For the last five years he has worked as Regional Director for US Senator Risch in Southeast Idaho. Currently Jeremy serves on the Bannock Development Corporation board of directors, the Blackfoot Chamber of Commerce board of directors, and is a Chamber Chief in the Pocatello Chubbuck Chamber.

Kerrie Hurd

Lender Relations Specialist
U.S. Small Business Administration
Boise District Office
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Boise, ID 83706
Office: 208-334-9004, ext. 342
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Formerly of USDA Rural Development, Kerrie Hurd transitioned to U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in 2013 as a Lender Relations Specialist. As the previous owner of a loan brokering company, she understands many of the hurdles small businesses face when they try to access commercial credit, from both the lender and the business perspectives. Kerrie is a graduate of the College of Idaho and also serves in the U.S. Army Reserve where her job specialty is public affairs. In her free time, Kerrie enjoys traveling anywhere a plane can land safely.

Jerry Miller, PCED (*focus area leader*)

Economic Development Specialist
Idaho Department of Commerce
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Cell: 208-921-4685
jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov

Born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, Jerry attended the University of Iowa, receiving an undergraduate degree in history and political science and a graduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning. Since 1992, Jerry has toiled in the fields of community and economic development, and is currently employed by the Idaho Department of Commerce as an economic development specialist. Jerry is the co-creator of the Idaho Rural Partners Forums and is editor-in-chief of the Show Me the Money funding newsletter. Jerry serves on the board of the Idaho Human Rights Education Center (the Anne Frank Memorial) and will be a class leader at this year's Northwest Community Development Institute. Jerry's passions include Iowa Hawkeye sports, dogs, movies, travel, blogging, and the performing arts.

Julia Oxarango-Ingram

Director
Southern Idaho Rural Development
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Julia has been involved in community and economic development in Lincoln County, Blaine County, and the Magic Valley for over 14 years. Prior to her present position as the Director of Southern Idaho Rural Development, she was actively involved in creating the Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce. She has also worked for the Hailey and Sun Valley-Ketchum Chambers of Commerce, Arch Community Housing Trust, Habitat for Humanity, and the Blaine County Commissioners. She has led and served on numerous boards and committees related to community and economic development. Julia is also a graduate of the Northwest Community Development Institute.

Deanna Smith

Idaho Smart Growth
910 Main Street, Ste. 314
Boise, ID 83702
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Email: Deanna@idahosmartgrowth.org

Deanna is a Project Manager for Idaho Smart Growth (www.idahosmartgrowth.org), a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is bringing people together to create great places to live through sensible growth. She holds a Charrette Management and Facilitation Certificate from the National Charrette Institute and has over 30 years experience in community work as a facilitator. Her interest in and experience with development controversy started during her five years as East End Neighborhood Association Board President. Since, she has assisted developers and neighborhoods on many controversial projects. She can be contacted at: deanna@idahosmartgrowth.org or (208) 333-8066.

Infrastructure Focus Area**Bill Hays**

Idaho Rural Water Association
6684 W. Overland Road
Boise, ID 83709
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Email: bhays@idahoruralwater.com

Bill has an Associate Degree in Administration of Justice and work as a deputy sheriff for Custer County. He also worked for Thompson Creek Mining and was on the mine rescue team, hazmat responder team, mine fire department and was an EMT with the mine ambulance service. Bill Hays worked for the City of American Falls in the Drinking Water and Wastewater Department. He was responsible for operating and maintaining

well houses, service connections, collection system, wastewater treatment facility and collection of delinquent accounts. He is currently employed with Idaho Rural Water Association. He has been a Circuit Rider for 11 years and holds professional licenses for Drinking Water Distribution, Wastewater Collections, Wastewater Treatment and Backflow Assembly Testing. He also holds a certificate in Utility Management. He provides technical assistance to drinking water and wastewater system regarding policy and procedures, operation and maintenance, compliance and financial issues.

Julie Neff (*focus area leader*)

USDA — Rural Development
725 Jensen Grove, Ste. 1
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As a Community Programs Specialist, Julie Neff works with cities, counties, special districts and non-profit entities to plan, fund, and construct water & waste, and essential community facilities projects. Julie's work has brought over \$10.4 M USDA grant and \$23.5 M below-market rate USDA loan dollars to infrastructure projects in 16 Eastern Idaho Counties. Julie grew up in Blackfoot and feels privileged, after living in other states during her husband's Navy career, to live and work again in Blackfoot and serve Eastern Idaho.

Lori Porreca, PhD

Community Planner
Federal Highway Administration, Idaho Division
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Email: lori.porreca@dot.gov

Lori has over nine years of experience working in the public, non-profit and private sectors assisting communities in a variety of planning and development efforts including policy analysis for agricultural land management, recreation and master plan development, zoning, land use and food policy analysis, grant writing and fundraising, volunteer coordination, and outreach/collaboration with the general public, elected officials, professionals and stakeholders. She has designed curriculum and outreach education for traditional classrooms and community settings. She has six years of experience designing and implementing socioeconomic, land use, policy and community planning studies in local food system assessment, community perception studies, agricultural land use change assessment, natural resource assessment. She has worked with focus groups, individual and group interviews, community and landscape surveys, and has experience writing and presenting reports, factsheets, articles, and plans for public and professional audiences. Lori has a Masters in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning and a Ph.D. in Sociology from

Utah State University. Currently, Lori works as a community planner for the Federal Highway Administration and has responsibility for the livability program.

Priscilla Salant

Director

McClure Center for Public Policy Research

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For the last 25 years, Priscilla Salant has built connections between universities and their statewide constituents, with a focus on rural community development. In her current position, she directs the McClure Center for Public Policy Research, which promotes and conducts research on public policy issues that impact Idaho, the region, and the nation. Priscilla's books include *How to Conduct Your Own Survey* (with Don Dillman, published by John Wiley and Sons); *Guide to Rural Data* (with Anita Waller, published by Island Press); and *Small Towns, Big Picture* (published by the Aspen Institute). She currently edits and contributes to *Idaho at a Glance*, a series of policy research briefs on critical issues in Idaho, including four recent editions on Idaho's growing Hispanic population. In addition, she was lead author on "Community Level Impacts of Southern Idaho's Dairy Industry," which will be included as a chapter in the forthcoming book, *Rural America in a Globalizing World*.

[Listening Session Leaders](#)

Lorie Higgins

Associate Professor and Extension Specialist

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University of Idaho

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Lorie is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at University of Idaho. As an Extension Specialist in community development, Lorie's primary role is to assist Idaho communities and organizations with a broad range of programs and projects. Current work includes a regional effort called *Two Degrees Northwest*, to develop, support and promote cultural industries, building an entrepreneurship training program, identifying impacts of the Horizons community development program, participating in the Idaho Community Review program as a steering committee member and listening session co-leader, and conducting social assessments as part of the UI Waters of the West program. Nationally, Lorie is a leader in the Enhancing Rural Capacity eXtension Community of Practice.

Erik Kingston, PCED

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Idaho Housing and Finance Association
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Erik has managed IHFA's Housing Information and Resource Center since 1998, after serving three years as IHFA's Senior Communications Coordinator. Responsibilities include program development, contract management, community outreach, fair housing education initiatives and strategic planning for a range of housing and community development efforts. He is project coordinator for www.housingidaho.com, co-author of IHFA's *Workforce Housing Toolkit: Simple Steps for Stronger Communities* and author of the *2011 Housing Assistance Guide* for Idaho. Erik is a long-time planning member with the Idaho Community Review Team, board member of the Idaho Rural Partnership, and a graduate and faculty member of the Northwest Community Development Institute. He currently serves as a member and web moderator for the Idaho Fair Housing Forum (www.fairhousingforum.org) the East End Neighborhood Association's Armory Committee (www.reservestreetarmory.com), and the Boise/Eagle Tour de Coop (www.boisechickens.com). He has over 30 years of professional experience in the areas of nonprofit management, grant administration, disability rights, refugee and immigrant empowerment, the performing arts and grassroots community activism. In addition to professional activities, Erik has spent time driving thirsty cattle through dry country and working underground in a Central Idaho hard rock mine. He really likes his current job.

Intern**Josh Hightree**

University of Idaho
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Josh's childhood was split into three six-year chunks with the first in Boise, Idaho, the second in Redmond, Washington, and the third in Salmon, Idaho where he graduated from high school. In 2006 Josh graduated with honors from the University of Idaho with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering and immediately began working at a microchip manufacturing facility in Boise, Idaho – Micron Technology Inc.'s first manufacturing facility. During his seven years at Micron, he witnessed the plant's closure at which time he was transferred to the research area in Boise, which continued to operate. In August 2013, he returned to the University of Idaho to pursue dual Masters degrees in Bioregional Planning and Community Design and in Engineering Management with an emphasis on Civil Engineering. He has a keen interest in resilience of rural communities

in an age of international competition and sweeping technological transitions. In particular, Josh hopes to raise his children in rural Idaho while actively engaging in the community as an entrepreneur and leader.

Leadership, Coordination and Report Writing

Jon Barrett

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Cell: 208-383-9687
Email: clearstory@cableone.net

Jon created Clearstory Studios in 2007 to provide community and economic development, strategic planning, and consensus building services to local and state agencies, tribes, and non-government organizations. He has worked as a community planner, consultant, and Co-Executive Director of Idaho Smart Growth, a statewide non-profit organization. He brings to this work his skills and passionate belief in the transformative power of clear communication. He is a Certified Grant Administrator. In 2004 the Idaho Planning Association named Jon 'Idaho Planner of the Year'.

Mike Field

Executive Director
Idaho Rural Partnership
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720
Office: 208-780-5149
Cell: 208-867-2004
Email: Mike.field@irp.idaho.gov

Mike is a native of Grand View, Idaho. He grew up on an irrigated row crop farm where dairy and beef cows sometimes supplemented the row crops. He attended public school in Grand View and then went on to attend Utah State, Boise State, Brigham Young and Idaho State Universities. He graduated from BYU with a degree in Political Science. He coupled his practical farm experience with his passion for public policy and spent the last 34 years working for three Presidential Administrations, two US Senators and two Governors. His career has focused on issues associated with rural Idaho both in economic/community development and natural resources management. Mike is married to Debbie Field and they are the parents and grandparents of three great kids and five wonderful grandkids.

Appendix D: Aberdeen Community Review master schedule, focus area itineraries, and listening session schedule

Master Schedule

Tuesday, March 4

- 3:00-4:00 pm Bus tour (depart from Mennonite Fellowship Hall, 381 W Washington Ave.)
- 4:15-5:30 pm Home Team Listening Session
Location: Mennonite Fellowship Hall
- 5:30-6:30 pm Dinner
Location: Mennonite Fellowship Hall
- 7:00-9:00 pm Community meeting
Location: Mennonite Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, March 5

- 8:00-8:45 am Presentation(s) relevant to entire visiting team (e.g. community history, infrastructure)
Location: City Hall
- 9:00-11:45 am Focus area meetings and site visits
(see individual focus area itineraries)
- Listening sessions #2 and #3
(see listening session schedule)
- 11:45 -12:45 pm Lunch
Presentation by Steve Love, University of Idaho
Location: Fire Station (provided by El Jaliciense)
- 1:00-5:15 pm Focus area meetings and site visits
(see individual focus area itineraries)
- Listening sessions #4, and #5
(see listening session schedule)
- 5:30-7:00 Dinner
Location: Senior Center
- 7:15-8:00 pm Visiting team debrief meeting
Location: Senior Center

Thursday, March 6

- 8:30-9:00 am Visiting team meeting and brief presentation re: listening sessions
Location: Fire Station
- 9:00 am-12:00 pm Visiting team presentation development
Locations: city hall, fire station, and police department conference room
- 12:00-12:45 pm Lunch
Location: Fire Station
- 1:00-4:45 pm Visiting team presentation development (continued)
- 4:45-5:45 pm Downtime
- 5:45-6:45 pm Dinner
Location: Mennonite Fellowship Hall
- 7:00-9:00 pm Community meeting featuring visiting team presentations
Location: Mennonite Fellowship Hall

***Economic Development Itinerary
Aberdeen Community Review
Wednesday, March 5, 2014***

- 9:00-10:15 am Economic development meeting or site visit #1
Topic: Can he expand? How is his business doing?
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: Quality Meats (John Campbell) - 485 N. 3rd E.
- 10:30-11:45 am Economic Development meeting or site visit #2
Topic: Can they expand? How is their business doing?
Participants: Visiting Team, Home Team, and Hispanic business owners and entrepreneurs
Location: Mexican Store-Elizabeth (Gabina Gonzalez) - 19 E. Bingham
- 11:45 -12:45 pm Lunch
Location: Fire Station
- 1:00-2:15 pm Economic Development meeting or site visit #3
Topic: Look over potato processing plant
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: J R Simplot Company (Bruce Hauber) - 624 Simplot Loop
- 2:30-3:45 pm Economic Development meeting or site visit #4
Topic: Visit with businesses in Aberdeen and surrounding area
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: City
- 4:00-5:15 pm Economic Development meeting or site visit #5
Topic: Can we find businesses to fill the vacant buildings?
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: Look at all vacant buildings in Aberdeen
- 5:30-7:00 Dinner
Location: Senior Citizen Center

***Downtown Revitalization Itinerary
Aberdeen Community Review
Wednesday, March 5, 2014***

- 9:00-10:15 am Downtown revitalization meeting or site visit #1
Topic: Meet with Downtown Business Owners
Participants: TBD
Location: City Hall or Fire Station
- 10:30-11:45 am Downtown revitalization meeting or site visit #2
Topic: Vacant Building & Downtown Walking Tour
Participants: Nancy George (Villager) E.W. Landbatter
Location: Villager Bldg – Fat Cat Auto Supplies
- 11:45 -12:45 pm Lunch at Fire Station
- 1:00-2:15 pm Downtown revitalization meeting or site visit #3
Topic: Meet with Aberdeen Chamber Members
Participants: TBD
Location: City Hall or Fire Station
- 2:30-3:45 pm Downtown revitalization meeting or site visit #4
Topic: Sportsman Park, Gem Trail, Golf Course
Participants: TBD
Location: At the above referenced venues.
- 4:00-5:15 pm Downtown revitalization meeting or site visit #5
Topic: Park near Maverik and vacant Lot South of Town
Participants: TBD
Location: At the above referenced venues.
- 5:30-7:00 Dinner at Senior Center

***Infrastructure Itinerary
Aberdeen Community Review
Wednesday, March 5, 2014***

- 9:00-10:15 am Infrastructure meeting or site visit #1
- Topic:** Collection System
Participants: Visiting Team, Home Team plus Richard Mayer
Location: Sewer Plant
- 10:30-11:45 am Infrastructure meeting or site visit #2
- Topic:** Housing
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: Drive areas in town
- 11:45 -12:45 pm Lunch
Location: Fire Station
- 1:00-2:15 pm Infrastructure meeting or site visit #3
- Topic:** Streets / Sidewalks / Gem Trail
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: Drive and walk some areas
- 2:30-3:45 pm Infrastructure meeting or site visit #4
- Topic:** Storm Drainage
Participants: Visiting Team, Home Team plus Richard Mayer
Location: Drive & walk areas in Aberdeen
- 4:00-5:15 pm Infrastructure meeting or site visit #5
- Topic:** Airport
Participants: Visiting Team and Home Team
Location: Airport
- 5:30-7:00 Dinner
Location: Senior Citizen Center

Aberdeen Community Review
Listening Session Schedule, March 4-5, 2014
(NOTE: All listening sessions are at Mennonite Fellowship Hall)

Tues., March 4

4:15-5:30 pm Home team

Wed., March 5

9:00 – 10:15 Ag Leaders and residents from outlying areas
Cheryl Koopin: 208-681-2229, cherylnikki4272@aol.com

10:30 – 11:45 High School Students
Karalee Krehbiel: 208-251-2625, karaleekrehbiel@yahoo.com

1:00 – 2:15 Social Services, Law Enforcement/First Responders, Faith
Community
Linda Cardona, 208-397-4746, lindacardona950@gmail.com

2:30 – 3:45 Senior Citizens
Jerry Kaiser, 208-397-4202,
aberdeenfirstmennonite@frontiernet.net

4:00 – 5:45 Informal individual interviews with residents around town
Locations suggested by home team leaders: post office,
drug store, Maverik, County Kitchen, Stokes grocery store

6:00 – 7:15 Hispanic Residents
Carmelita Lucero Benitez, 208-241-6823
carmalucero@comcast.net

Appendix E: Community review team addresses Aberdeen's strengths, weaknesses, Aberdeen Times, March 12, 2014

3-12-14

Community review team addresses Aberdeen's strengths, weaknesses

After months of planning and preparing, a community review was held in Aberdeen this past week, where volunteers from around the state visited the community, focusing on three major areas: economic development, infrastructure and Main Street revitalization. Part of the review, prior to the team's arrival, also included finding out from area residents through surveys what they felt was good about Aberdeen and where they felt improvements could be made.

Jan Barnett of Chateauberry Studios in Bozise led the visiting team for the community review. He gave an overview of what occurred so near the process of the review. In a meeting on March 4, he told members of the community about the local teams, how the review was paid for and part of the process.

The cost of the community review was paid for with donations from Montezuma and IHL, plus local community members, Delacell Farms, US Bank, Labo Power, Labo Select and many others not named. Labo Rural Project, which helps communities receive the review, started in 1991 and is a partnership between federal, state, local, tribal, profit and non-profit organizations. They started community reviews in 2000. American Falls had a community review in 2008. Kristie Jensen, executive director for Great Rift Business Development Organization (GRBIDO), helped with the American Falls review and gave valuable advice during the process of applying for the Aberdeen community review.

The Aberdeen City Council has been preparing for the community review for months. They formed committees that worked on items for new economic development, infrastructure and Main Street revitalization. Team leaders for the committees were Mayor Morgan Anderson and council members Mary Leley and Karelle Kuchel-Hansen. The process of the community review began this time last year with the approval of having a community review being done.

Leley, who also serves on the GRBIDO, spearheaded the forming of committees for each group and making plans for the community review. Every council member was involved in the process in some way, whether serving on a committee or providing feedback to the council about different areas.



Community review

Community members listen as Aberdeen Mayor Morgan Anderson talks about the community review and encourages them to actively participate in the process and learn about the visiting team's findings.

Appendix F: Information about completing a housing needs assessment and housing plan

Housing Needs Assessment/Community Housing Planning

v.8.16.2011 Prepared by Erik Kingston, PCED/Idaho Housing and Finance Association erikk@ihfa.org



A common thread among Idaho communities is a need to maintain a range of housing stock affordable to broad segments of the community and its key workforce (first responders, teachers, nurses, retail employees, agriculture workers, etc.). “Affordability” is relative, but generally means housing that requires less than 30% of a household’s budget. Housing costs exceeding this percentage are not sustainable over time, which puts households at risk and strains local social service budgets.

Why it’s important. Affordable housing is key to sustainable economic development, representing a *perpetual wage subsidy* for local employers and *net salary increase* for working households—benefits that remain in the local community as long-term assets. Housing is made more affordable either by increasing wages or lowering housing costs. Employers know that a stable labor force is important for productivity and planning, and that long commute times and financial strain can impact job performance. When households can comfortably meet basic needs such as rent or mortgage payments, there is more left over to invest in the local economy.



The goal of many communities is to create and sustain workforce or ‘community’ housing affordable to people who a.) work for living, b.) provide essential community services, and c.) put the “community” in communities. Achieving a sustainable and diverse range of housing options requires understanding the role of housing in economic and community development, combined with planning and cooperation among many stakeholders. This group might include housing, community and economic development professionals, policy makers, building officials, planning and development professionals, along with business, corporate and community leaders. Together, they must identify local needs and define the scope and direction of planning efforts.

Typically, any housing needs assessment/community housing plan should:

1. Identify the need for the plan and reflect the goals of the local community. This “descriptive” component should create a reliable picture of what currently exists within the plan’s geographic scope (housing market supply and demand, relevant assets and resources, challenges, political/economic dynamics, etc.). Planners learn about a community through data collection, observation and above all, listening to what local residents and stakeholders say. There are two main types of data:

Primary data include information from “live” local sources, commonly gathered in community meetings or public forums; key person interviews; focus groups; and/or household, employer or ‘windshield’ surveys.

Secondary data include information from the U.S. Census, Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, or sources such as utilities, social service agencies and others that track demographics, housing stock and tenure, etc.

2. Analyze demographic, economic and other trends to anticipate future needs. This might reflect current and projected land-use, transportation, employment, and migration patterns.

3. Offer practical strategies and recommendations that can help achieve the stated goals. This “prescriptive” phase is where most communities need help. Although local assets and challenges are apparent to most residents and leaders, the prospect of tackling fundamental community issues can be overwhelming. A plan helps break the issue down into recognizable, manageable components and presents a range of options that have proven effective in similar situations. In some cases, an outside professional can provide valuable objectivity and accountability.

4. List resources available to the community. Several state, federal and private/corporate funding sources can help communities address needs. Increasingly, communities must be more creative in seeking and securing resources, since many traditional government sources are limited.

For more information about the role of housing in strategic economic and community development, or about IHFA’s involvement in community and workforce housing choices, contact IHFA’s *Housing Resources Coordinator* Erik Kingston at erikk@ihfa.org or toll-free at 1-877-438-4472.

Appendix G: Summary of National Trust for Historic Preservation's Four-Point Approach to downtown revitalization

As a unique economic development tool, the Main Street Four-Point Approach® is the foundation for local initiatives to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride.

The four points of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort.

Organization

Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district. By getting everyone working toward the same goal, your Main Street program can provide effective, ongoing management and advocacy for the your downtown or neighborhood business district. Through volunteer recruitment and collaboration with partners representing a broad cross section of the community, your program can incorporate a wide range of perspectives into its efforts. A governing board of directors and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of volunteer-driven revitalization programs. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

Promotion

Promotion takes many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in your commercial district. Advertising, retail promotions, special events, and marketing campaigns help sell the image and promise of Main Street to the community and surrounding region. Promotions communicate your commercial district's unique characteristics, business establishments, and activities to shoppers, investors, potential business and property owners, and visitors.

Design

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors. It takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in a commercial district by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials. An appealing atmosphere, created through attention to all of these visual elements, conveys a positive message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the district's physical appearance through the rehabilitation of historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, educating business and property owners about design quality, and long-term planning.

Economic Restructuring

Economic restructuring strengthens your community's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district. The goal is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers.

Coincidentally, the four points of the Main Street approach correspond with the four forces of real estate value, which are social, political, physical, and economic.

Source: This summary (and much more information) is found at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/#.UT5WqI7UAI>.

Appendix H: myMenan community newsletter, June 2013, pages 1-3

Volume 5 • Issue 6

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Choosing Civility
- Making the Most of Summer
- Raising Chickens
- History of Menan Grocers



Residents of Menan participate in the City-wide Cleanup on May 18

A Monthly Insight into Menan and the Surrounding Area from The Greater Menan Community, Inc.

JUNE 2013

myMenan

CALENDAR

City Council

June 13 • 7 p.m.

County Commissioner Meeting

June 17 & 24 • 9 a.m.

Planning & Zoning

June 19 • 7 p.m.

Cress Creek Hike

June 8 • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

July 4th Participation

Booth Registration

Deadline: July 1

Contact Brenda 403-7773 or Cathy 754-8876 M,W 11-5, F 9-1

Interested in entertaining?

Call Cindy Cunningham 360-0282

myMenan Newsletter Staff

Karie Nelson	Sonja Schaat
Kate Lloyd	Suzu Lloyd
Katrina Deaton	Tamar Reese
Lacie Willmore	Wanda Gallup
Linda Radford	

Civility is a Choice | By Pam Lilburn

We are all stressed with rising prices, unemployment, crowds, and demands on our time. With summer approaching, we can anticipate higher gas prices, crowded highways, and a long list of summer activities to crowd into our short season. We can choose how to deal with these stresses. We can be patient or impatient.



When we are over-whelmed, we often are impatient and treat others rudely. We have seen an increase in road rage because it is an easy quick response. Another effective, but often more difficult strategy, is to be patient, restrain our anger, and respond with kindness. If we would like a more civil society, we should remember what Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

When others are impatient and treat us rudely, we should try to restrain our impulse to get even, and give the other person the benefit of the doubt. We need to remember that others are overwhelmed by the demands of their lives also. By responding with patience, kindness, or a smile, we contribute to a more civil society. The Chinese philosopher Lao-Tse expressed how to attain a more civil society this way:

*If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.*



Junior Explorer Cress Creek Hike

BLM will host another Junior Explorer event June 8 at Cress Creek Nature Trail (1 of 3 BLM sites) from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Kids complete a variety of fun activities to complete a booklet, take the Junior Explorer pledge, become official BLM Junior Explorers and receive their badge!

For more information or to pick up a booklet, stop by the visitor center (425 N. Capital Ave., IF) or contact Chris Deets, 523-1012, cdeets@blm.gov. Booklets also online at http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/environmental_education/education/junior_explorers.html.

Council Bits: May 9 • New Menan Sign Proposed; 4th of July Fireworks Donations Needed | **By Suzy Lloyd**

Police Report

Complaints have been received about late night 4-wheelers speeding along the streets of Menan and crashing stop signs. Officer Keller said they will step up their coverage to try to put a stop to this.

Safe Routes to School

Elaine Clegg, Interim Executive Director of Idaho Smart Growth, acting for the Safe Routes to School assessment grant, made a presentation of their findings to City Council. The visual draft proposal made various suggestions of improvements to the safety of Menan's streets for pedestrians and bicycles, especially more crosswalks with better markings and signage. Feedback was given by Council members and a final draft will be drawn up for recommendations.

Replacement Sign Proposed

Since the Menan sign by the Post Office is showing major signs of age and wear, area resident Renee Fullmer expressed willingness to help replace or revitalize Menan's sign near the post office. It would make a good eagle

project. Nathan Bronson will propose this to potential Eagle Scout Tucker Hancock.

Keller Associates: Jeanne Mecham informed Council that, for the third year in a row, Menan had been turned down for the transportation grant called LRHIP (Local Rural Highway Improvement Program). This grant provides up to \$50,000 to qualifying counties and cities with populations of less than 5,000 to develop a transportation plan and capital improvement plan and would pay for Menan to evaluate the City's roads, sidewalks, pedestrian facilities and growth patterns. It would help identify and prioritize the system needs and develop a plan for maintaining, reconstructing or expanding the transportation system in Menan. It then becomes the basis for seeking other funding to make improvements.

Jeanne said the reason the grant was denied was because the City's accounting method doesn't clearly show budget monies spent on Menan's roads, sidewalks and labor, etc.

Accounting will clearly separate this in the future.

4th of July Update

The City is looking for donations to help defray the cost of fireworks for the 4th. Cathy Harding said donations have dropped way off since Easter but by law no taxpayer money can be used for this purpose so donations, no matter how small, are needed.

Volunteers are still needed to help with the day's events. If you would like to donate even just a small amount of time or effort, please contact Cathy at the City Offices. The theme for the parade this year will be America: Past, Present & Future.

Hwy 48 Intersection Report

Council has received no update from Valley Wide Co-Op since the work meeting on April 18th. Neil Jensen added a short discussion to the agenda by motion and discussed a conversation he had with someone at the ITD. This prompted a decision for a 3-way meeting to be arranged with an official at the ITD, and one member each from the City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission to discuss how to further proceed.



Community Service: Suggestions for Individuals* and Families to Give Back

MIDWAY ELEMENTARY • *Contact Mr. Eric Jensen, 754-8604*

- Relocate one of the baseball diamonds
- Repaint the map/BBall Court Lines/4-Square Lines
- Plant plants on the outside of the new path
- Make signage for native plants on the path/fitness stations/playground.

CITY COUNCIL REVIEWED

- Wayfinding signs on along greenbelt, especially close to the school
- Sharrows (with bicycle sign)
- Create a durable "Welcome to Menan Sign" (possibly including date established & elevation). Collaborate with Renee Fullmer, 754-4388.
- Refinish Town Hall benches
- Develop and build a way to properly store tables at Town Hall
- Build shelves in rooms next to the stage
- Restore Town Hall stage
- Build more picnic tables for July 4th celebration.

GENERAL COMMUNITY • *Ideas generated by general citizens*

- Tree Labels for Trees along Greenbelt

- Distance markers along Greenbelt
- Walking Tour of Historical Places in Menan's History
- Collect & recycle abandoned cars and equipment
- Create paper recycling bins (Other interested citizens are Lorna Wheeler and Stacy Scott)
- Collecting more Menan History. Interviewing and collecting pictures from senior Menan residents.
- Configure & mark Town Hall asphalt for parking line.
- Landscape around Town Hall area.
- Fir in around furnace duct work, Town Hall vestibule.
- Procure stage curtains for Town Hall.
- Install more cabinets in Town Hall kitchen.

Have any ideas of city improvements to add to the list? Send them to mymenaninfo@gmail.com



An example of a wayfinding sign along the Menan greenbelt.

**Possible Eagle Scout projects (2013)*

**The Greater Menan
Community, Inc.
Board**

Juan Deaton
President
351-4584

Tad Haight
Vice-President
754-4927

Laura Schwendiman
Treasurer
754-4143

Ashley Munns
Secretary
317-6518

Jolyn Haight 754-4927
Suzy Lloyd 705-0174
Kristi Moore 754-4293
Karie Nelson 754-4987

Menan City Office

P. O. Box 127

M,W • 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

F • 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

754-8876

Cathy Harding
Clerk/Treasurer

Betty Day
Mayor
754-0066

City Council
Nathan Bronson 754-4589
Kent Clark 313-5600
Neil Jensen 754-4626
Gary Maples 754-4568

Public Works

Matt Walker
569-6701

Sewer
Amos Williams
317-3787

**Jefferson County
Commissioners**

Brian M. Farnsworth
bfarnsworth@co.jefferson.id.us

Jerald Raymond
jraymond@co.jefferson.id.us

Tad Hegsted
rthegsted@hotmail.com

Emily Kramer
County Administrator
745-0868

Midway Elementary Gets a Walking Track

By Brittney Foster, Midway PTO Vice-President

What an experience the last three years has been! It all started with an idea between teachers, the PTO, & Mr. Jensen, the principal. We all thought it would be really neat to someday see a track around the playground at Midway Elementary. Little did I know then just how much work was in store for us over the next three years.

The PTO had just introduced to the school the Pacer Program, a running program done once a week during the students' lunch recess. It was a new idea, and I was very excited to see what would happen. The Pacer program has grown to be more than I ever expected. Because of its success, it was crucial the track be completed so kids would have a place to walk or run.

We began raising money through fundraisers at the school, but quickly found out we would need more help. At the end of last year, I visited with HK Contractors and they gave us a price for the track and a very gracious donation to go with it. We just needed a little more funding and our dream would become a reality. We approached the Jefferson Education Foundation, Spudnik and South Industries. They

were all very generous and gave money to help make up the funds we were still lacking to complete the track. On April 16, 2013, ground was broken and our track was placed in just two days.

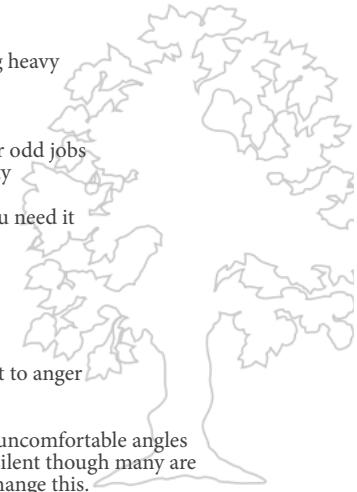
The excitement at the school is something I will never forget. The kids, faculty, and even community have been thrilled. I remember watching as they placed the first little bit of asphalt on the ground and the emotion that took over. Our hard work had finally paid off, and our little school was going to receive the track they had been waiting for.

The track was started on a Tuesday and completed on Wednesday evening. The Pacer Program is done on Thursdays. It was very rewarding to see the overwhelming excitement by all the students and even teachers as they walked on the path. There were smiles all around! It has been a hard and sometimes overwhelming thing to undergo a project like this, but in the end it is so worth it. I am so very grateful for a wonderful school and community who supported an idea to help our children. I feel the track will be used for many more years to come to help encourage and strengthen our children.



How To Build Community | Submitted by Nathan Bronson

- Turn off your TV
- Leave your house
- Know your neighbors
- Greet People
- Look up when you're walking
- Sit on your stoop
- Plant flowers
- Use your library
- Play together
- Buy from local merchants
- Share what you have
- Help a lost dog
- Take children to the park
- Honor elders
- Support neighborhood schools
- Fix it even if you didn't break it
- Have pot lucks
- Garden together
- Pick up litter
- Read stories aloud
- Dance in the street
- Talk to the mail carrier
- Listen to the birds
- Put up a swing
- Help carry something heavy
- Barter for your goods
- Start a tradition
- Ask a question
- Hire young people for odd jobs
- Organize a block party
- Bake extra and share
- Ask for help when you need it
- Open your shades
- Sing together
- Share your skills
- Take back the night
- Turn up the music
- Turn down the music
- Listen before you react to anger
- Mediate a conflict
- Seek to understand
- Learn from new and uncomfortable angles
- Know that no one is silent though many are not heard. Work to change this.



Appendix I: Community Coaching for Grassroots Action program brochure



Contact and Information

Lorrie Higgins, higgins@uidaho.edu
 208-885-9717

Kathlee Tift, kattift@uidaho.edu
 208-799-3054
<http://cd.extension.uidaho.edu/leadership/>

COSTS AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Community costs for the training and facilitation services will vary depending on location and availability of Extension personnel and funding. For CCGA, communities are generally expected to pay most travel costs, but not the salaries of Extension faculty and staff. If a local Extension person is not available for long term coaching, the community may choose to hire a coach or recruit a volunteer. Additionally, communities are expected to recruit participants, as well as advertise workshops and meetings and coordinate venues and refreshments as needed. The Leadership to Make a Difference Institute (LMDI) has some additional staffing and materials costs, but in general, both CCGA and LMDI costs are kept as low as possible in order to make them available to very small communities with very small budgets.







PARTNERS

The University of Idaho Extension Community Development Team, with faculty located in all regions of the state, focuses on leadership, business and economic development, and community design. Co-chairs are Harriet Shalklee (hshalklee@uidaho.edu) and Kathlee Tift (kattift@uidaho.edu). For more information about Extension programs in Community and Economic Development: <http://cd.extension.uidaho.edu/>.

The Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP) joins diverse public and private resources in innovative collaborations to strengthen communities and improve life in rural Idaho. IRP's Idaho Community Review brings experts from across the state to small communities for three days to provide objective observations, recommendations and resources to help communities build capacity, engagement and the local economy. For more information: <http://irp.idaho.gov>.

Leadership to Make a Difference Institute: A collaborative partnership between University of Idaho Extension and the Spirit Center at the Monastery of St. Gertrude, LMDI is designed to assist people in developing confidence in their own leadership abilities and the courage to take action to address community issues. For more information, contact Kathlee Tift (kattift@uidaho.edu).

COMMUNITY COACHING FOR GRASSROOTS ACTION

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION



1 response leadership at one time meant meeting, but today it means getting along with people.
 Mahatma Gandhi

Community Coaching for Grassroots Action (CCGA) is designed to help communities build leadership capacity while developing and implementing a community vision. The program takes a "guide on the side" approach, with Extension faculty supporting community members as they identify their assets, create a vision, build agreed-upon strategies and develop the networks and good working relationships needed for progress toward prosperity for everyone.

University of Idaho Extension builds partnerships to *Ignite, Coach and Sustain* positive change in Idaho's rural communities

CCGA can be implemented in conjunction with the Idaho Community Review process (www.idaho.gov/Home/Community_Review). The review creates a comprehensive inventory of community assets, focus areas for action and menu of strategies and resources for implementing recommendations. The review **ignites** change and engages a broad spectrum of the community in the process. CCGA captures that energy and builds on its momentum through a community **coaching** process.

UI Extension faculty provide neutral facilitation and coach community leaders and action committees as they implement plans in the months following the Review.

LAUNCHING THE PROGRAM

The CCGA process begins with an initial meeting to introduce the program and develop an outreach plan followed by a series of intensive workshops over the course of 2 - 3 months. Typical workshop sequence:

1. Creating a Community Vision Futures Game - Learn to think beyond immediate gains and identify investments in community that will reap long-term benefits.

Understanding the Local and Regional Economy - this is essential for identifying the community's assets and thinking about how to link them for effective economic development.

Building a Vision from Assets - Identifying community assets involves listing the obvious rivers, views, highways and buildings - but it also involves looking at what is working well in the community and the root causes of local successes. This helps the community distill the essence of the best of the community's culture, people, enterprises and leadership and turn that into a vision and focus areas for action.

2. Creating Action Teams & Steering Committee

This workshop series focuses on how to build effective teams and manage meetings and relationships to avoid needless conflict. Once action teams are formed, the group is led through the process of selecting a steering committee and identifying its roles and responsibilities.

From this point, action teams will usually be meeting on their own but will come together regularly for a period of time in order to facilitate communication, enhance individual

and team skills and **sustain positive change**.

COACHING & MOVING FORWARD

In addition to continued facilitation/coaching, capacity-building workshops will be provided as needed/requested by the teams. Topics may include (but are not limited to) >Effective goal setting; >Entrepreneurial communities; >Creating a vibrant downtown business district; >Using social media to support community activities.

LEADERSHIP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE INSTITUTE

This program is for communities wishing to focus on building local leadership capacity and so is designed to assist people in developing confidence in their own leadership abilities and the courage to take action to address community issues through:

- Strengthened skills for leading meetings, working with others, and dealing with conflict.
- Strategies for communicating, partnering and fundraising within communities, and
- Development of a personal leadership plan and strategies for implementing new ideas in current community work.