



SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS COMMUNITY SURVEY II REPORT

**An Analysis Summarizing Results of the
Online Community Survey II**

**Sisters Country Horizons – Our Community Vision
City of Sisters, Oregon
September 2018**

**Prepared by Steve Maher, Steve Maher New Media
NXT Consulting Group • Bend | Portland, Oregon**



NXT Consulting Group
envision.plan.achieve.

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Beginning on July 20, 2018, and continuing through August 20, 2018, the **Sisters Country Horizons** community visioning project conducted an online survey to determine which of an initial slate of 54 strategies – developed through extensive community input and intended to shape Sisters Country’s future for the next 20 years – have the most support in the community.

This survey, the Sisters Country Horizons **Online Community Survey II**, followed on the heels of an initial survey conducted between March and May 2018, which gathered input on the community's core values, challenges facing Sisters Country, and visionary ideas for its future. It was from the first survey, as well as information gleaned from interviews of community leaders, community meetings, and four in-depth community forums, that the initial 54 strategies were generated. Thus, Survey II served as a “testing ground” and form of validation for the strategies developed from earlier community outreach work.

It should be pointed out that both surveys are serving as key steps in creating a long-range vision and action plan for Sisters Country.

The response to Sisters Country Horizons Survey II was robust and surpassed the participation level of the initial survey. A total of 565 people — the vast majority were residents — took Survey II, while 415 took the first survey.

With about 12,500 full- and part-time residents in Sisters Country, the response rate for Survey II was approximately 4.5 percent, which is considered on the high-end for online community surveys.

For the purposes of Sisters Country Horizons and this report, Sisters Country is defined as that part of Deschutes County, Ore., served by the Sisters School District 006. This area includes the City of Sisters, surrounding smaller unincorporated communities and residential areas, ranches and farms, as well Camp Sherman.

Sisters Country Horizons is a visioning project sponsored by the City of Sisters. Deschutes County and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council are project partners. The Horizons project will run through December 2018 and result in a long-range vision for Sisters Country and a plan to achieve it. It will be carried out local government, public agencies, community organizations, and the business community.

The Sisters Country Horizons project would like to thank the hundreds of people who participated in the various forms of community input from March through August 2018. Their willingness to give of their time and opinions signals the depth of caring for Sisters Country and its future.

Steve Maher, Principal, Steve Maher New Media, and a member of the NXT Consulting Group LLC consulting team advising the Sisters Country Horizons project, conducted Sisters Country Horizons Survey II, its analysis and this report, with the support of NXT Consulting Group.

SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS SURVEY II

The questions in Sisters Country Horizons Survey II were divided into four focus areas: **Prosperous Sisters**, **Livable Sisters**, **Resilient Sisters**, and **Connected Sisters**. For each of these themes, more than a dozen major vision ideas – or strategies – were listed. Respondents were told the strategies were developed and refined by Horizons project participants earlier in the year. They were then asked to choose their top five ideas for each focus area. They also had the option of providing additional thoughts or comments for each focus area.

Respondents also were asked their residency. This was done to get a better sense of who was taking the survey. This also allowed us to "cross-tabulate" survey responses from City of Sisters residents and from those living unincorporated and rural areas.

The survey was distributed through social media (with the help of the project's social media partners, including Deschutes County, and targeted Facebook ads); e-mail blasts by Horizons project partners; the Sisters Country Horizons website; traditional media stories including The Nugget; and announcements at community events.

Below are the results and findings from Sisters Country Horizons Survey II. The strategies in each focus area are ranked based on how many "votes" they received (number of times they were chosen by survey respondents). Please note that a collective list of all 54 strategies ranked in order of votes is not presented because not all survey respondents completed each section of the survey, making such a comparison impossible.

The highlighted comments from each section printed below were selected based on their "newness" — they were not necessarily mentioned during Survey I — and their insightfulness. We encourage the reader to look at the Community Input Report found at the Sisters Country Horizons website (www.sistershorizons.org), which includes similar comments from Survey I.

Participation in Sisters Country Horizons Survey II

The Sisters Country Horizons Survey II was launched on July 20, 2018. It remained open for four weeks, concluding on August 20, 2018. Below is a look at who took the survey:

- **565 people** took the survey.
- **98 percent** of the respondents are residents of Sisters Country, including **91 percent** who are full-time residents.
- **37 percent** of the respondents who identified themselves as residents live within the City of the Sisters, and **63 percent** live in unincorporated areas in Sisters Country. Here is how residency broke down for those who self-identified themselves as either a full-time or part-time resident (please note that those who chose 'Other' listed places in the unincorporated areas like Sage Meadow, Holmes Road and Harrington Loop):

- **City of Sisters:** 36.7 percent
 - **Tollgate:** 9 percent
 - **Indian Ford:** 7.8 percent
 - **Crossroads:** 5.9 percent
 - **Camp Polk:** 4.4 percent
 - **Squaw Creek Canyon:** 4.2 percent
 - **Cloverdale:** 3.9 percent
 - **Plainview:** 3.7 percent
 - **Camp Sherman:** 1.9 percent
 - **Black Butte:** 1.7 percent
 - **Panoramic City:** 1.3 percent
 - **Junipine:** 1.1 percent
 - **Aspen Lakes:** 0.7 percent
 - **Fryrear:** 0.6 percent
 - **Other:** 17.1 percent
- **2 percent** of the survey respondents said they live outside Sisters Country. The most popular locations were Bend and Portland. Others said they live elsewhere in Oregon or in other states, including Washington, California, Arizona, Alaska, Colorado, Kansas and Georgia.

Prosperous Sisters Focus Area

This focus area is about creating a Sisters Country that is prosperous for all its residents. It covers such topics as jobs, small business, economic development, and all those local activities that generate income for Sisters: tourism, arts, crafts, culture and community events, outdoor recreation, and more.

Respondents in Sisters Country Horizons Survey II were asked to choose their top five strategies from this focus area for inclusion in the Horizons vision action plan. Below are the results. (★ = a top five ranked strategy in this focus area.)

Strategies for Prosperous Sisters (ranked based on number of ‘votes’):

- ★ **1. Oregon's Artisanal Capital (250 votes).** Develop and promote Sisters Country as the "Artisanal Capital of Oregon", building on its strategic location and spectacular environment, expanding the artisanal economy including visual artists, trades and crafts people, musicians, performance artists, writers, brewers, distillers, and farm-to-table chefs.
- ★ **2. Sisters Makers District (231 votes).** Develop and promote a Sisters "Makers District" in Sisters, where metal crafts, woven crafts, pottery, and arts studios mix with restaurants, coffee houses and craft brew pubs, creating a pedestrian-friendly zone that compliments and expands existing retail on Cascade and Hood avenues.

★ 3. **Four-Season Tourist Destination (219 votes).** Strategically develop Sisters Country's year-round tourism and destination economy, increasing the number of shoulder season and winter events and attractions, such as performances, festivals, and outdoors sports tournaments.

★ 4. **Comprehensive Broadband & Internet (217 votes).** Ensure fast, comprehensive, high-quality broadband and Internet access for all of Sisters Country, identifying service gaps and substandard service areas and working with public and private sector interests to address them.

★ 5. **Forest Service Property Development (210 votes).** Develop a masterplan for a signature development on the U.S. Forest Service property that is compatible with the community's character and identity, combining mixed-used commercial, residential and recreational facilities that anchor and define the community, create new jobs, and provide housing options.

6. **Outdoor Recreational Mecca (206 votes).** Cultivate Sisters Country's reputation as an outdoor recreation mecca with easy access to the Cascades and adjacent wilderness areas, expanding into new recreational niches including ecotourism, aviation tourism, guided outdoor adventures and peak trips, heli-skiing, and yurts for backcountry skiing.

7. **Vocational Education & Workforce Development (202 votes).** Working with Sisters High School and other vocational education and training resources in Central Oregon, create new courses, workplace experiences and apprenticeships to develop and train Sisters Country's emerging workforce.

8. **Entrepreneurial Infrastructure (183 votes).** Develop infrastructure to nurture and support entrepreneurial initiatives in Sisters Country, such as start-up companies and new business ventures, including "live-work" housing, "co-working" spaces, business incubators, and technology support services.

9. **Thriving Agricultural Economy (147 votes).** Support the continued viability of a diversified agricultural economy in Sisters Country, including livestock and hay farming, and the legacy economy that provides the equipment and services it requires.

10. **Sisters Country Agritourism (130 votes).** Explore new and innovative forms of agritourism in Sisters Country that link the area's rural ranches and farms with its arts, crafts and recreational economy, creating unique experiences for visitors to appreciate and participate in rural ranching and farming life.

11. **Arts & Crafts Retreat Center (120 votes).** Consider and support a world-class arts and crafts retreat center, attracting leading practitioners and students to study, learn and practice in a working setting that honors the environment, culture and values of Sisters Country.

12. Sisters Compatible Light Industrial (114 votes). Promote development of new light industrial square footage for lease in Sisters, focusing on recruitment of companies that build on or expand established or emerging industrial sectors and which fit the community's culture and vision for its future economy.

13. Home-Based Businesses (100 votes). Building on Sisters Country's high quality of life and ability to attract entrepreneurial residents with potential to work from home, support the establishment and success of legitimate, permitted home-based businesses and occupations in Sisters Country.

Respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts or comments they might have about a Prosperous Sisters. Here are some comments from that exercise:

Additional comments for Prosperous Sisters:

- “With our unique setting, close proximity and incredible views of the three Sisters, there is no lodging, restaurant or business that takes advantage of that for the local community (other than Black Butte ranch).”
- “Protect the Ponderosa pine trees, which give Sisters much appeal.”
- “For some of the more professional career opportunities in Sisters, focusing on local residents before turning to recruiting from out of town would be a fantastic start. Most of the professional or living-wage careers are filled with folks from out of town or state. It would be wonderful to look for those people within the town to fill those positions first.”
- “St. Charles and BMC need to expand their services, or a third party needs to be established to help care for our community’s medical needs.”
- “With our growing retired and aging population, why not approach a university (University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University, even Oregon Health Sciences University) to create a satellite campus here focused on geriatric and senior health training for doctors, nurses, home-care providers and others entering the growing field of senior health care. Seems like it would be a perfect fit and just the kind of industry that we want to promote here — clean, offering job opportunities, and attracting a new, highly trained work force.”
- “In order to prosper, one must live. There needs to be additional affordable housing for low- and middle-income residents.”
- “Leave the Forest Service land in city as ‘the commons.’ Keep it as parkland with trails, playground, and community space. Focus on tree preservation.”
- “Attract the ‘lone wolf,’ who with technology can work about anywhere but wants quality of life.”

- “I would hate to lose the old roots of our town — the feel of cowboys, family dinners, working hard on the farm, and hunting — as the town branches out.”
- “I do not want to see Sisters become overwhelmed with business and traffic. It will take really intelligent approaches to assure the economic prosperity without killing what is special. I encourage exploration of new ideas that celebrate ‘smallness’ — like home business and artisans. It may be useful to identify other towns that have been successful.”
- “Sisters needs to be more self-sufficient in shopping local. There needs to be more shops for locals. And all city and parks buildings should be sourced locally from local builders, and from our local lumberyard.”
- “Streamline infrastructure (water, sewer, power) development for new businesses, and provide grants for infrastructure.”
- “Adding in systems to make Sisters a model for sustainability, and reducing waste and consumption of plastic and fuel.”
- “Grow the economy but keep the tourists in town, not in the woods.”
- “Let's work on making the community a reasonable place for young families to live, with reasonable employment. Forget the ‘highbrow’ stuff.”
- “Consider community members just as important as tourist dollars.”
- “There are large segments of Sisters Country that do not have cable or reliable Internet. For the safety and health concerns this should be remedied.”
- “I believe Sisters Country needs to get serious about preserving a natural resource, namely its dark skies. Adopting IDA standards for outdoor lighting, and enforcing them, will go a long way to achieving this goal. The community of Black Butte is currently activity seeking IDA certification. Sisters should be doing the same.”
- “We have very few day care options for working parents/grandparents, and we also have an aging community. We have looked at senior services, but I think we could use activities for our youth also, possibly involve SOAR/SPRD in movie nights, a community swimming pool, that could also be used by tourists.”
- “Limit franchise business and big box stores. Keep business local.”
- “After serving on the advisory group for the regional tech alliance of Lane County, Ore., and developing Eugene's Silicon Shire, we found that broadband, business and education alignment, space allotment, and marketing were the essential ingredients to succeed.”

- “Your list reflects the current strength of the arts, crafts and recreational businesses. No doubt this would be a safe direction, but little of that is new. My vote was for everything outside arts community. Sadly, I found very little on enhancing the school district and nothing about enhancing a broad definition of culture beyond arts and crafts.”
- “There is a gap in paid wages vs. livability that a lot of people talk about, but that those who make the decisions do not understand. The struggle is getting more and more difficult for workers and employers alike. It’s nice to dream of these artsy things to introduce into our community, but with loads of art galleries in a tiny town, can we ask more questions that focus on our residents and the livability of our town? I understand the ‘trickle-down’ system will eventually help (i.e., money circulating in our community), but what programs will help the people struggling to stay, live and work here?”
- “We need transportation resources that all people can use regardless of income. I am a senior and had to pay \$80 for a shuttle ride to the Center in Bend to get stitches removed after total knee replacement. I was not eligible for Dial A Ride because my income made me ineligible.”
- “There should be multiple events happening every weekend to bring people to town. Contrary to what a few small business owners think, business only improves when there are many different reasons to get tourists here and keep them here spending their money.”
- “We moved to Sisters for one reason. We love the proximity to open, wild spaces. So the last thing we want to see is more development of our forested lands. Let's rely on an economy that is light on the land such as arts, crafts and music. That's what attracts people to our area. There are lots of places we can go to find industrial wastelands. Let's not turn Sisters Country into yet another industrial park.”
- “More publicity and outreach, perhaps in conjunction with Bend, Redmond and area resorts.”
- “Create tinted-city commute lines (rail, bike paths, hiking, horseback riding trails) to reduce highway traffic, to offer new means of city exchanges, and to create one long conjoined park.”

Livable Sisters Focus Area

This focus area is about creating a Sisters Country that is livable for all its residents. It covers such topics growth and planning, housing, transportation, parks and recreation, environmental quality, biking and walking, and other factors that combine to make Sisters Country such a great place to live.

Respondents in Sisters Country Horizons Survey II were asked to choose their top five strategies from this focus area for inclusion in the Horizons vision action plan. Below are the results. (★ = a top five ranked strategy in this focus area.)

Strategies for Livable Sisters (ranked based on number of 'votes'):

- ★ **1. Walkable Downtown (280 votes).** Continue to expand pedestrian-friendly amenities in Downtown Sisters, encouraging residents and visitors to get out of their cars and walk. Encourage and support evening pedestrian activity in Downtown Sisters.
- ★ **2. Affordable Housing (233 votes).** Increase the availability of affordable housing in Sisters Country, including a comprehensive review of the Sisters Housing Plan (2010), promotion of a diverse mix of housing types, and support for private and volunteer programs that address the issue of housing affordability.
- ★ **3. Integrated Transportation System (210 votes).** Implement the updated Sisters Transportation System Plan addressing changes in local/regional growth and new State transportation policies. Determine a preferred alternative to address congestion on Highway 20 in Downtown, exploring alternate routes and roadway designs, traffic management strategies, bicycle and pedestrian options, signage, and centralize public parking.
- ★ **4. Expanded Trail System (198 votes).** Support Sisters Trails Alliance and the U.S. Forest Service in expanding and integrating bicycle and hiking trails throughout Sisters Country and beyond, connecting unincorporated rural communities with Downtown, linking Sisters to Redmond and Bend, and facilitating appropriate access to recreational areas.
- ★ **5. Parks, Recreation & Greenspace (194 votes).** Identify potential new parks, greenspaces and recreation sites and facilities in Sisters Country to meet the needs of a growing resident population and create new public amenities and visitor attractions. Recognize and honor the City of Sisters' status as a Tree City.
- 6. Planning For Future Growth (183 votes).** Working through City and County comprehensive planning, explore options for future growth and development in Sisters. Identify target areas for new or infill residential, commercial and industrial development, and multi-modal transportation connections.
- 7. View Corridors & Dark Skies (172 votes).** Develop plans and policies to preserve signature view corridors throughout Sisters Country that are integral to the community's character, identity and tourism appeal. Evaluate and improve existing polices to minimize interference with the area's dark skies in urbanized parts of the region while addressing challenges to public safety.
- 8. Compatible Employment Sites (165 votes).** Working through Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO), attract companies for existing light industrial and similar employment

sites in Sisters, focusing on small-to-medium sized companies that build on established or emerging sectors and are compatible with the community's character and identity.

9. Whychus Creek Corridor (161 votes). Continue implementation of the Whychus Creek Management Plan for restoration of the Whychus Creek corridor in Sisters Country, including improved water quality, riparian habitat, fish re-introduction, and recreational and public access.

10. Arts Facilities & Amenities (127 votes). Support continued development of Sisters Country's artisanal culture and economy, including facilities and working spaces that nurture arts, crafts, music and the performing arts, as well as arts-related amenities and services.

11. Sisters Country Livability Forum (123 votes). Working through Citizen4Community, conduct bi-annual public forums to address Sisters Country's continued livability, exploring such topics as growth and planning, economic development, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and quality of life.

12. Improved Regional Public Transit (116 votes). Working through Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), pursue improvement and expansion of regional public transit services serving Sisters Country, providing more frequent service between Sisters and key destinations in Redmond and Bend.

13. Bike Sharing Program (37 votes). Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses to develop and promote a community bike-sharing program in Sisters, making bicycles available for shared use by residents and visitors on a short-term basis for touring in the city and surrounding countryside.

Respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts or comments they might have about a Livable Sisters. Here are some comments from that exercise:

Additional comments for Livable Sisters:

- “We need to pay considerable attention to our older residents, developing improved and expanded services for this growing population group. This includes expanding the quality and quantity of available services for older folks, integrating them into the community, facilitating communication and contact between various age groups, providing increased community support to older residents, etc.”
- “We need a bus/public transit system for Sisters that covers all areas. CET does not provide enough coverage.”
- “Accept that growth is a sign of health.”
- “Having a car-free zone like Zermatt, Switzerland. Reviewing height limitations on pending projects that would interfere with view corridors.”

- “Enabling the Sisters Eagle Airport to establish a noise polluting flight path right over our town including day care centers, the Post Office and dense housing. It's only a matter of time before a plane crashes in town and I fear our fire department does not have the resources to fight a jet fuel fire in town. Find a section of land to trade to move the airport farther away to a safer distance and turn the former airport site into a park with a stage for music.”
- “Protect the neighborhoods from invasion of Airbnb's and short-term rentals. Think outside the box for providing affordable housing with character, interesting architecture, and green spaces.”
- “Improve enforcement of speed zones throughout Sisters.”
- “We should have a noise policy similar to the dark skies policy. Not just for special events, but for development that generates noise.”
- “When you are discussing trails, please add equestrians to your list of users.”
- “Make a ‘green’ bike lane to get from city to city.”
- “Respect privacy of residents in private communities. Provide connectivity by utilizing state, county and city owned roads, not privately owned roads.”
- “Create infrastructure that also supports the natural wildlife, and that takes responsibility to maintaining connected natural areas for all wildlife.”
- “Revisit plans to provide a direct link to Mount Bachelor from Sisters. I seem to remember years ago a plan was drafted to connect Sisters to Mount Bachelor or Century Drive via the creation of a new highway or connector road. However, the plan was ultimately nixed due to fears from Bend businesses and leaders. I do not believe Sisters can seriously consider the idea of becoming a four-season destination without a direct link to Mount Bachelor.”
- “Don't put Habitat for Humanity, low income and dense new housing all at one end of town. Spread it amongst all of Sisters.”
- “The city seems to close up at 5 p.m. It would be nice to have more businesses accessible in the evenings.”
- “Keep it quiet and dark.”
- “Need off-leash dog parks.”
- “Approach Oregon legislators to allow more flexibility in accommodating projected future growth in areas where expansion is limited.”

- “Develop a bypass to relieve the downtown traffic.”
- “The environment and nature bring people to Sisters but we don't do anything as a city to help care for the environment. It is noticeable to tourists and visitors that Sisters is full of disposable plates at events. There is very little composting or recycling evident. There is trash on the roads and in the forest. It's like no one cares about the environment here.”
- “We should coordinate with Bend and Redmond to have one continuous long park to hike, bike, walk, horseback ride or rail to connect our cities separately from (highways) 126, 97 and 20.”
- “Consider other options of housing: tiny homes, mobile homes, land with the ability to put these structures on them.”

Resilient Sisters Focus Area

This focus area is about creating a Sisters Country that is resilient for all its residents. It covers such topics as public safety, health and wellness, social services, fire safety and disaster preparedness, and other initiatives that will help our community to be prepared for unanticipated events or a less certain future.

Respondents in Sisters Country Horizons Survey II were asked to choose their top five strategies from this focus area for inclusion in the Horizons vision action plan. Below are the results. (★ = a top five ranked strategy in this focus area.)

Strategies for Resilient Sisters (ranked based on number of ‘votes’):

★ 1. **Urgent Care Facility (327 votes).** Aggressively pursue establishment of a comprehensive facility in Sisters to provide walk-in urgent care and related ambulatory care and medical services for a rapidly growing population, as well as the increasing numbers of visitors and tourists.

★ 2. **Access to Healthy Outdoor Activities (178 votes, TIE).** Create year-round opportunities for exercise and healthy outdoor activities accessible to both residents of and visitors to Sisters Country, promoting greater community wellness and psychological well-being.

★ 2. **Age-Friendly Community (178 votes, TIE).** Support the increased awareness of an "age-friendly" community in Sisters Country, coordinating key organizations in sharing resources, funding and advocacy including issues of relevance to all ages and abilities.

★ 4. **Fire/Drought Resistant Building & Development Codes (174 votes).** Review and update City of Sisters and Deschutes County building and development codes to improve and enhance the fire and drought resistance of homes, communities and landscapes in Sisters Country.

- ★ **5. Disaster Preparedness & Response (165 votes).** Continue to promote enhanced coordination of disaster preparedness and response efforts in Sisters Country with the statewide network. Improve and enhance free disaster preparedness and socioeconomic resilience training and education programs, working through key agencies including the City, Schools, Parks, Fire District, County Sheriff, ARC, Chamber of Commerce, and local/regional businesses.
- 6. Public Safety Planning & Coordination (159 votes).** Improve and expand interagency planning and coordination among local, State and Federal agencies addressing public safety in Sisters Country, including the City, County, Parks, Fire District, Schools, Forest Services, County Sheriff, and others.
- 7. Communications Connectivity (151 votes).** Improve communications connectivity in Sisters Country with special attention paid to underserved areas, including telecommunication, broadband, mobile and Internet services.
- 8. Pedestrian Safety for Residents, Visitors & Children (150 votes).** Improve pedestrian safety for residents, visitors and children in Sisters, developing safer crosswalks at strategic locations, improving senior and ADA-compliant accessibility, and maintaining and improving safe routes to schools.
- 9. Low-Income Advocacy (129 votes).** Develop a stronger voice for Sisters Country's lower income residents and their needs for housing, health care and other services, developing greater collaboration between the region's existing advocacy organizations such as FAN, Habitat for Humanity, and others.
- 10. Emergency Response Volunteer Programs (127 votes).** Develop new approaches to expand, train and support the pool of local residents serving as active volunteers in support of public emergency response programs and services, including volunteer rural fire fighters in the region, general aviation pilots, Sisters-Camp Sherman fire corps, and others.
- 11. Enhanced After-School Programming (118 votes).** Enhance after-school programming for Sisters School District students, developing shared use agreements to expand the range of organizations, facilities, and activities involved in promoting community resilience.
- 12. Service Providers Quality & Capacity (112 votes).** Explore ways to maintain and improve the quality and capacity of public safety and social service agencies in Sisters Country as the region's population grows, including actions to offset the potential impacts of decreased State funding.
- 13. Emergency & Homeless Housing (76 votes).** Strengthen and enhance the response to needed emergency housing and cold weather shelters in Sisters Country, promoting greater cooperation between social service agencies, nonprofit groups, religious organizations and service clubs, and community volunteers.

14. Sisters Country Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (64 votes). Develop a Sisters Country Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan addendum to the Deschutes County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, providing place-specific information on mitigation issues and strategies for the Sisters Country region.

Respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts or comments they might have about a Resilient Sisters. Here are some comments from that exercise:

Additional comments for Resilient Sisters:

- “We need a mix of ages, races, incomes for a strong diverse community.”
- “With many new residents to the area, Sisters needs to re-evaluate its strategic emergency and disaster plans, and train new volunteers as well as community groups.”
- “Create a relief fund to help low income people with disasters.”
- “Create official street-crossing flags and post them on all corners of Hood, Cascade and Main streets, as well as at the Roundabout. The Sisters Book Club flags are well used and it's time for the City to step up and maintain its own program.”
- “Local law enforcement services along with the support services such as mental health must be expanded as Sisters grows. Taxes for the expansion of services must increase. Some cities in California contract with the local sheriff’s authority to have their own branded uniforms and vehicles. If Sisters is again looking to have their own police department, they should contact Black Butte Ranch to get factual information on costs and the operation.”
- “Working with the city and planning commission to bring in thoughtful master planning to provide our town a long-lens plan and design for holistic improvements in regards to blending livable development with our values.”
- “Focusing on the youth and their success while honoring the elders by creating programs and activities that bridge the generation gap.”
- “Keep Sisters a family and faith-based town.”
- “Explore merging Sisters, Black Butte Ranch and Cloverdale fire districts for efficiency and better operations.”
- “Increase cost-sharing with Deschutes County Sheriff's Office to increase coverage.”
- “Residents need to have reliable Internet. Kids are expected to use wireless devices at school, and many go home to no Internet.”

- “Make plans for additional senior housing that is non-institutional.”
- “Would be great to see some sort of neighbor-helping-neighbor program, something that would give neighborhoods a path to help them bond, work together, communicate better, manage safety/nuisance issues and other neighborhood issues.”
- “We always over plan and under-implement. This must be the fifth or sixth "visioning" exercise since we moved to Sisters in the early 1990s. Pick a few objectives and implement them. Read David Brooks' recent op-ed on community action. Most plans such as this end up in a nice binder on a shelf somewhere, because there is no effective implementation.”
- “Hold a forum twice a year to review accomplishments and continually update strategic plan as needed.”
- “Let’s start a Sisters Posse to help find missing hikers, to patrol streets, etc.”
- “A resilient Sisters looks forward, not backward. We need to prepare for future industries, encourage full-time residency not part-time visitors, and plan for climate change.”
- “Develop medical specialty provider clinics with availability limited to community needs, such as once a week to start.”
- “I am worried about water in Sisters and outlying areas. So many developers are putting in non-native trees and water-thirsty lawns and shrubs. This seems really stupid given climate issues and how many people are moving here.”
- “This is such a magnificent jewel of an area. We must always be mindful of our greatest asset and that is our natural surroundings; our greatest draw and asset must be preserved. Deschutes Land Trust is someone we should partner with — for example, Skyline Forest!”
- “When unwanted traffic is diverted away from any core district of a city it makes for an enjoyable and more resilient experience for all who choose to stay and partake of the city’s walkable districts. Again, offer the option to travelers to stop and enjoy Sisters or to continue on without having to deal with the congestion as is.”
- “To preserve our character and values, we should be looking to examples of other successful mountain communities in Colorado, British Columbia, and Europe.”
- “I would prioritize equity/diversity/inclusion training for law enforcement, city officials and service providers to make Sisters more welcoming and safe for marginalized communities including people of color, LGBTQ people, and those with disabilities.”

Connected Sisters Focus Area

This focus area is about creating a Sisters Country that is more connected, making all its residents feel welcome and involved. It covers such topics as governance and leadership, education and learning, civic engagement and dialogue, volunteerism, and other things that bind us together as a community.

Respondents in Sisters Country Horizons Survey II were asked to choose their top five strategies from this focus area for inclusion in the Horizons vision action plan. Here are the results. (★ = a top five ranked strategy in this focus area.)

Strategies for Connected Sisters (ranked based on number of 'votes'):

★ 1. **Small-Town Atmosphere (312 votes).** Promote the small-town atmosphere and friendly vibe of Sisters Country as the city and region grow, increasing outreach and opportunities for face-to-face contacts, neighbor-to-neighbor cooperation, and visitors-to-locals connections and commerce.

★ 2. **Educational Innovation in Schools (208 votes).** Support the innovative curriculum, unique programming, community-based initiatives, and year-round use of existing facilities of Sisters School District, bolstering the district as the "hub of the community" and connecting its students to the community and beyond.

★ 3. **Multi-Purpose Community Center (204 votes).** Plan, finance and develop a multi-purpose community center in Sisters, featuring year-round programming and opportunities for community members of all ages and abilities to gather and connect, take part in healthy recreation and exercise, and participate in classes, arts, lectures, and community events.

★ 4. **Diversity & Inclusion (152 votes).** Bring Sisters Country's less frequently heard voices into a more diverse, welcoming and inclusive community conversation, fostering greater tolerance in the community helping newcomers as well as long-time residents to feel valued and supported.

★ 5. **School Enrollments (138 votes).** Support Sisters School District in its efforts to increase school enrollments, keeping local students in the District and serving Sisters Country families and the wider community.

6. **Young Adult Participation in Public Affairs (129 votes).** Develop a comprehensive initiative to foster greater participation of young adults in Sisters Country, including representation on City boards, commissions and committees, and other public entities.

7. **New Leadership Training & Development (125 votes).** Develop a deeper pool of leadership, including qualified candidates for public offices, boards and commissions in Sisters Country, through skill building in public administration, policy and planning, budgeting, civil dialogue, decision-making, and related capacities.

8. **Opportunities for Millennials & iGens (118 votes).** Create opportunities for Millennials and iGens (a.k.a. "Generation Z") to remain in and contribute to community life, including employment, affordable housing options, and cultural and recreational attractions.

9. **Managing Conflict in the Public Realm (113 votes).** Form a partnership between public agencies, Citizens4Community, local experts and others to develop new approaches to better manage major disagreements in the public realm and to help avoid "hot topics" from becoming outright conflicts.

10. **Vision Plan Implementation (107 votes).** Promote implementation of the Sisters Country Horizons Vision and Action Plan, including formation of an ongoing Vision Implementation Committee representing key public, private and civic stakeholders identified as lead partners in the plan.

11. **Sisters Country Volunteer Corps (101 votes).** Explore new ways to revitalize the Sisters Country volunteer sector as a foundation of the community, fostering development of a corps of people with time, expertise or passion to contribute, coordinating opportunities for them to give back to the community.

12. **Discovery Center & Museum (100 votes).** Develop a Sisters Country Discovery Center & Museum that welcomes, informs and educates visitors and locals alike on the rich history and traditions of Sisters Country.

13. **Official 'Welcoming City' (56 votes).** Secure designation of the City of Sisters as an official 'Welcoming City' by Welcoming America, committed to creating a welcoming community climate and ensuring the long-term economic and social integration of newcomers.

14. **Regional Communications Hub (53 votes).** Develop a regional information and communication 'hub', coordinating improved outreach and communication of local government and public agencies in Sisters Country, including alignment of major plans and initiatives.

Respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts or comments they might have about a Connected Sisters. Here are some comments from that exercise:

Additional comments for Connected Sisters:

- "With the creation of a Sisters Community Foundation, additional government and foundation funding could be sought to leverage state and federal funds sought to advance any initiatives."

- “Combine the Discovery Center concept with the artist Makers idea and development of the Forest Service property. If it was a truly inspired design, all these elements could come together to create a unique, destination amenity that could function year-round.”
- “How is it that such a wealthy area rich with history and tourism does not have a museum?”
- “Keep Sisters High School the hub of community.”
- “Our community needs a public pool or access to Black Butte’s (pool) in a residential pass agreement, please! Olympic size preferred.”
- “Opportunities for residents to participate and be invited to the table so we are heard and considered as decisions are made.”
- “We need to encourage/support/help and cooperate with The Nugget newspaper which is by far the best connector we have going. We need to make sure it doesn't falter from that mission.”
- “It is interesting and concerning that in your survey there is not one reference to the faith-based community of Sisters. That is where the values for community, caring, and sharing come from. After six years living in Sisters, I get an ever-increasing sense that growth and over promotion are beginning to dominate. A key focus ought to be on the livability/viability for residents; catering to weekend event and solely tourist-related traffic adds nothing more to community than cash flow. Save goes for marijuana and vacation housing. Those are "exploiting" revenue sources that make no long-term commitment to community. Connectedness as you've phrased it really is not defined as community. The strength of Sisters is in neighbors knowing and relating to neighbors, with strong ties to local businesses.”
- “Respect and protect private residential communities. Be inclusive to respect differences in opinions and views. Respect retirees and their vision of retirement. Be cautious of persons who seek and speak their own interest, not those of the general public. None of these survey questions address slowing down growth, as was a commonality discussed at community meetings I attended.”
- “Develop a conference center and hotel.”
- “Involve students at a young age, in volunteering and community activism, encourage teachers/schools to support this.”
- “I would advocate a ‘birth to grave’ view of life in Sisters. All segments, ages, and varieties that make up a community should be honored. I especially support the idea of a community center as a way of creating that opportunity for all ages.”

- “Go back to being a quiet mountain town with its roots based on the logging industry.”
- “Make it possible for those living outside the city but in Sisters Country to run for a city office.”
- “It is critical that the city recognize that solutions to provide low cost housing, RV and camping with amenities is needed to bring in the tourist season labor force needed to staff our restaurants and stores. Such a project would help sustain businesses and ease pressures on the forest.”
- “Increase the role of Parks and Recreation instead of creating a new facility to fund.”
- “I love our small town atmosphere but small towns that close themselves off have a hard time surviving in our connected world. We should be inclusive, and strive to draw as many people to live in our community as we can. If we have a clear, proud identity, we will draw people who identify with that and want to join it, instead of change it or just use us up and move on.”
- “Most ideas in these surveys simply look like more ways to spend other people's money. We have a community center, why would we need a new one? As for Millennials, the ones I have worked with in real estate are well-educated and make good money, and I support including areas they are interested in, however, you always seem to group affordable housing with other good ideas. I am not a fan of low income, affordable housing due to what those places turn into. We built a home in Sisters Country because of how the town is now, and the class of people living here. If I wanted a city focused on lots of affordable housing, we could have moved to Prineville, with tons of affordable housing, lots of drugs, alcohol abuse and high rates of teen pregnancy.”
- “Keeping communication channels open is the most fundamental practice for a peaceful and connected community. These concepts should inform our decisions if that is our goal.”
- “Addressing affordable housing, I am all in favor for the city to implement a CET tax on new residential and commercial construction.”
- “How about including some of the attributes of a community center into our vision for the school district. Currently the high school auditorium serves quite well as a large meeting venue.”
- “Establish a program requiring high school students to do X number of hours of community service.”
- “Most festivals and large events are designed for tourists. Create some festivals and events in off-season for local residents.”
- “We should consider being a sanctuary for illegal immigrants who are not criminals.”

OVERALL FINDINGS FROM SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS SURVEY II

- The first Sisters Country Horizons survey (March-May 2018) found respondents highly valuing the small-town feel of Sisters Country, its commitment to community, and the region's natural environment and associated outdoor attributes. Likewise, respondents in the first survey cited growth, traffic congestion, lack of affordable housing and threats from wildfires as major challenges facing the community. For vision ideas, many cited such amenities and facilities as a community center, a senior center, a community pool, artist colonies, and trails linking the City of Sisters with nearby unincorporated communities.

Many of the strategies that rose to the top during the Sisters Country Horizons Survey II (July-August 2018) mirror these top values, challenges and visions from Survey I. For example, turning Sisters Country into Oregon's Artisanal Capital, a four-season tourist destination and an outdoor recreation mecca were top choices for the Prosperous Sisters strategies; developing affordable housing, integrating transportation, adding more trails and planning for growth were top strategies in the Livable Sisters section; creating an age-friendly community, preparing for wildfires and improving public safety received top marks in the Resilient Sisters section in the survey; and maintaining a small-town atmosphere, developing more innovative educational offerings in schools, and building a community center ranked high in the Connected Sisters section.

- City of Sisters residents and those from unincorporated areas of Sisters Country generally ranked strategies in each of the four focus areas in a similar fashion, but there were differences (for a complete look, see the charts below). In the Resilient Sisters section, city respondents ranked the Pedestrian Safety for Residents, Visitors & Children strategy as the third most important (it is No. 8 in overall rankings) and the Age-Friendly Community strategy as eighth most important (it is No. 2 in the overall rankings). In the Connected section, city respondents moved Multi-Purpose Community Center into the No. 2 spot (it is No. 3 overall). Meanwhile, unincorporated-area respondents moved the Outdoor Recreational Mecca strategy from the Prosperous Sisters section up to No. 2 (it is No. 6 in the overall rankings), moved Expanded Trail System to No. 2 from No. 4 and dropped Affordable Housing to No. 4 from No. 2 in the Livable Sisters section.
- Community challenges such as housing, traffic and growth expressed by respondents in Survey I were again cited frequently in the comments sections in Survey II. For those who did not take Survey I, this was their first opportunity to express their opinions about these issues. The fact that many of the key themes that arose in the first survey bubbled to the top in the second survey adds validity to both questionnaires.

**SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS SURVEY II
RANKING OF PROSPEROUS SECTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies in Prosperous Section	Sisters Country Overall Ranking	City of Sisters Ranking	Unincorporated Sisters Ranking
Oregon's Artisanal Capital	1	1	1
Sisters Makers District	2	2	3
Four-Season Tourist Destination	3	3	4
Comprehensive Broadband & Internet	4	4	5
Forest Service Property Development	5	5	6
Outdoor Recreational Mecca	6	8	2
Vocational Education & Workforce Development	7	6	7
Entrepreneurial Infrastructure	8	7	8
Thriving Agricultural Economy	9	9	9
Sisters Country Agritourism	10	11	11
Arts & Crafts Retreat Center	11	10	12
Sisters Compatible Light Industrial	12	12	10
Home-Based Businesses	13	13	13

**SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS SURVEY II
RANKING OF LIVABLE SECTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies in Prosperous Section	Sisters Country Overall Ranking	City of Sisters Ranking	Unincorporated Sisters Ranking
Walkable Downtown	1	1	1
Affordable Housing	2	2	4
Integrated Transportation System	3	4	3
Expanded Trail System	4	6 (tie)	2
Parks, Recreation and Greenspace	5	3	8
Planning For Future Growth	6	5	5
View Corridors & Dark Skies	7	8	6
Compatible Employment Sites	8	6 (tie)	7
Whychus Creek Corridor	9	9	9
Arts Facilities & Amenities	10	10	10
Sisters Country Livability Forum	11	11	12
Improved Regional Public Transit	12	12	11
Bike Sharing Program	13	13	13

**SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS SURVEY II
RANKING OF RESILIENT SECTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies in Prosperous Section	Sisters Country Overall Ranking	City of Sisters Ranking	Unincorporated Sisters Ranking
Urgent Care Facility	1	1	1
Access to Healthy Outdoor Activities	2 (tie)	2	4
Age-Friendly Community	2 (tie)	6	2
Fire/Drought Resistant Building & Development Codes	4	4	7
Disaster Preparedness & Response	5	8	3
Public Safety Planning & Coordination	6	5	5
Communications Connectivity	7	12	6
Pedestrian Safety for Residents, Visitors & Children	8	3	8
Low-Income Advocacy	9	10 (tie)	9
Emergency Response Volunteer Programs	10	7	11
Enhanced After-School Programming	11	9	10
Service Providers Quality & Capacity	12	10 (tie)	12
Emergency and Homeless Housing	13	13	13
Sisters Country Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan	14	14	14

**SISTERS COUNTRY HORIZONS SURVEY II
RANKING OF CONNECTED SECTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies in Prosperous Section	Sisters Country Overall Ranking	City of Sisters Ranking	Unincorporated Sisters Ranking
Small-Town Atmosphere	1	1	1
Educational Innovation in Schools	2	3	2
Multi-Purpose Community Center	3	2	3
Diversity & Inclusion	4	4	5
School Enrollments	5	5	4
Young Adult Participation in Public Affairs	6	6	8
New Leadership Training & Development	7	7	6
Opportunities for Millennials & iGens	8	8	10
Managing Conflict in the Public Realm	9	11	9
Vision Plan Implementation	10	12	7
Sisters Country Volunteer Corps	11	9	11
Discovery Center & Museum	12	10	12
Official 'Welcoming City'	13	13	14
Regional Communications Hub	14	14	13