



Ashton Community Review

Phase I Report

October 14 – 16, 2018

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Working Together For a Stronger Rural Idaho



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Ashton Community Review Phase I Report

October 14-16, 2018

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

For more information call 208-332-1730 or visit www.irp.idaho.gov
and www.communityreview.org.

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The Main Office
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Ashton Lion's Club
North Fremont High School



Acknowledgements

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Finally, the following organizations supported this phase of the Ashton Community Review by providing meeting space and/or assisting with publicity efforts:

North Fremont High School and Fremont County Joint School District #215

Henry's Fork Foundation

Ashton Senior Citizen's Center

El Rincon Restaurant

Rexburg Upper Valley Standard Journal

Idaho Falls Post Register



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Introduction

This report summarizes the results of activities associated with Phase I of the Ashton Community Review. It is intended to inform and lay the foundation for Phase II activities, provided the community is ready to move forward to this next phase. Phase I activities were initiated in early October and completed in early November 2018. Most of them occurred during an October 14-16, 2018 visit to Ashton by the Phase I visiting team. A detailed schedule of activities for this visit is found in Appendix A.

The Community Review Process: A Brief Overview

The Idaho Community Review is the flagship program of the Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP), a non-partisan collaborative effort to make rural Idaho stronger, healthier and more prosperous. Our public and private sector member organizations and other partners work closely with rural residents and leaders to identify solutions at a local and regional level. We listen and observe, share perspectives, and explore technical assistance and resources appropriate to each community. The process leaves community residents and leaders better prepared to build on shared strengths and work together to achieve common goals.

The Idaho Rural Partnership is part of the Western Community Assessment Network (WeCan) a 3-year, USDA-funded collaboration between IRP and peer organizations in Montana and Wyoming to understand, evaluate, and improve how community assessments work and to help participating communities see greater success in achieving their goals. Go to www.communityreview.org for more information about WeCan. Additional information about the Idaho Rural Partnership and the Community Review program is also found on our website at www.irp.idaho.gov and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/IRP4Idaho/>.

The community review process begins when the community submits a completed application to the Idaho Rural Partnership. Received in February 2018, Ashton's application is found in Appendix B.

Each of the three phases of the community review process provides numerous opportunities for community residents and leaders to share their experiences, knowledge, opinions, and ideas with visiting community and economic development professionals. These professionals comprise what we call the "visiting team." The information gathered throughout the process is recorded (without using names) and used to develop observations, recommendations and resources applicable to the community. A summary of the three phases of the community review process are provided below.

Phase 1: Listen

The **Listen** phase of the community review includes completing a community satisfaction survey, a series of community listening sessions, and an economic and demographic data profile of the community. This profile is included as Appendix C. In the case of Ashton, Phase I also included meeting with community residents and leaders who were involved in a previous community review conducted in 2005 and/or

subsequent U of I Extension-sponsored Horizons Project for the purpose of identifying accomplishments that were directly or indirectly tied to these previous efforts.

To support these activities, Phase I also includes identifying home team leaders and additional residents to serve on the initial home team to help coordinate activities and arrange meals for the visiting team.

Phase 2: Learn

The **Learn** phase of the community review involves a 3-day visit by a larger visiting team of experts from around the state; these experts will help the community explore and develop strategic actions regarding the focus areas identified at the end of Phase I. A second written report containing recommendations, resources, and next steps will be produced upon the completion of Phase II.

Phase 3: Launch

The **Launch** phase provides assistance needed to implement recommendations identified and prioritized during Phase 2. The exact nature of this assistance depends on community needs and issues and is facilitated by IRP and/or partner agencies and organizations. Assistance may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Plan community conversations about issues that need further exploration before charting a direction
- Leadership development training to expand the leader base in the community
- Technical assistance by Phase 2 visiting team members to move projects forward
- Organizational development for teams and steering committees

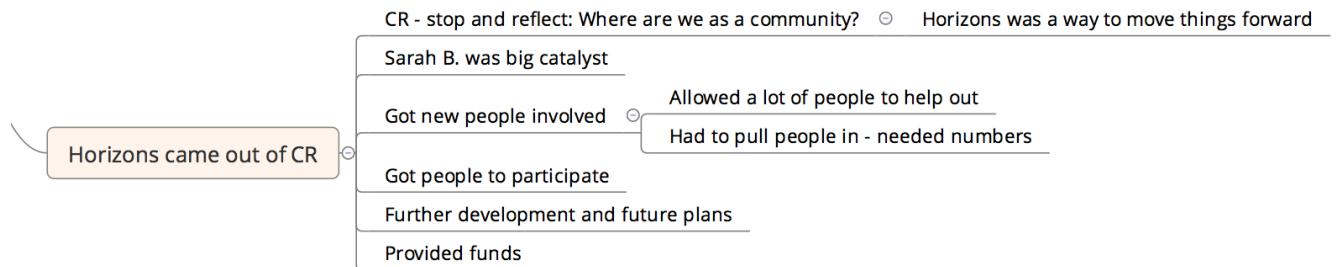


Ripple Effects Mapping Results

Ashton is the first Idaho community to request a 2nd community review. The first Ashton Community Review was conducted in 2005. In subsequent years, Ashton participated in the University of Idaho’s Horizons Leadership for Poverty Reduction program. As part of Phase I of the current Community Review, the visiting team arranged to conduct a “ripple effects mapping” exercise with community leaders and residents involved in the first Ashton Community Review and/or the Horizon’s Project to identify impacts resulting from either or both of these prior initiatives. About 12 people participated in the exercise. In addition to identification of ripples from the two past projects, some discussion focused on ideas for the future. These thoughts are conveyed in grey boxes on the ripple effects map included as Appendix F. The following narrative describes what was learned from the ripple effects mapping exercise.

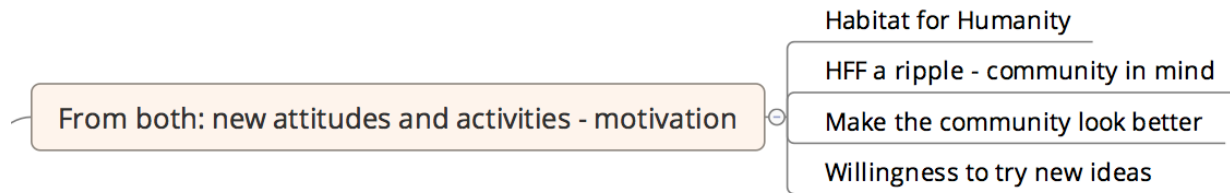
The entire ripple effects mind map is included in Appendix F, but because of the large amount of information included in the mind map, it is not easy to read when sized to 8.5 x 11. Portions of the map are included in the following summary. A digital version of the map is available at www.communityreview.org.

Community Review and Horizons are Intertwined



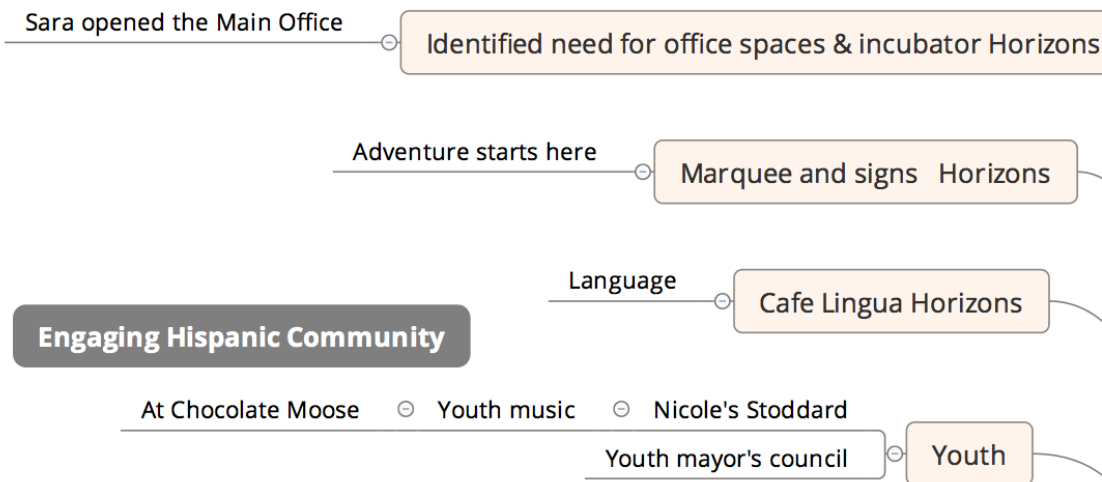
We learned the first Ashton Community Review led to the community application to the Horizons Program as it was seen as a way to further the work started with the review. Horizons provided funds for implementing ideas and got many residents involved, at least for a short time. It was noted many of the ideas emerging from Horizons were also recommended in the CR report. When people and programs are so intertwined it is sometimes difficult to determine the specific origin of ideas. At the end of the day, we hope what matters most is the outcome and not who gets credit.

The Community Review and Horizons Brought New Ideas



Those participating in the ripple mapping exercise credit many of the positive things that have happened in Ashton used both programs, because residents stepped up to make the community look better and try out new ideas. Renovation of the old hospital by the Henry’s Fork Foundation is credited to these programs because leadership was inspired to make a location decision with the best interests of the community in mind. Habitat for Humanity is also a result due to Horizons’ emphasis on poverty alleviation.

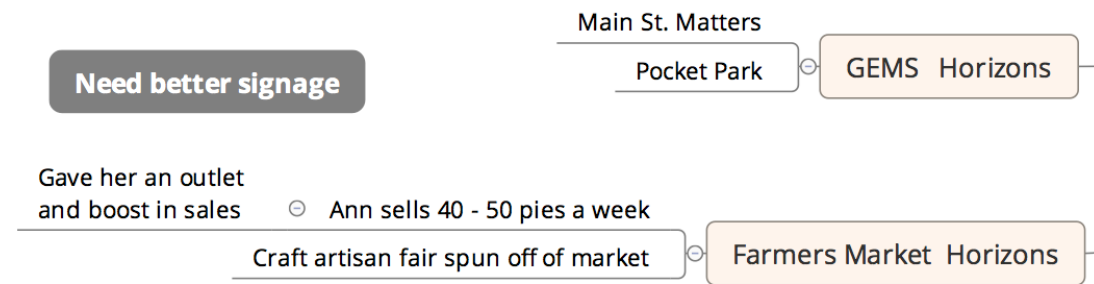
Broad and Lasting Changes



With planning and acting at the heart of the Horizons program, it’s not surprising many of the things viewed positively by the community can be traced back to it. The branding effort resulting in the “Adventure Starts Here” tagline, new signs supporting the brand, efforts to engage Hispanic residents and a focus on youth development are a few of the successes.

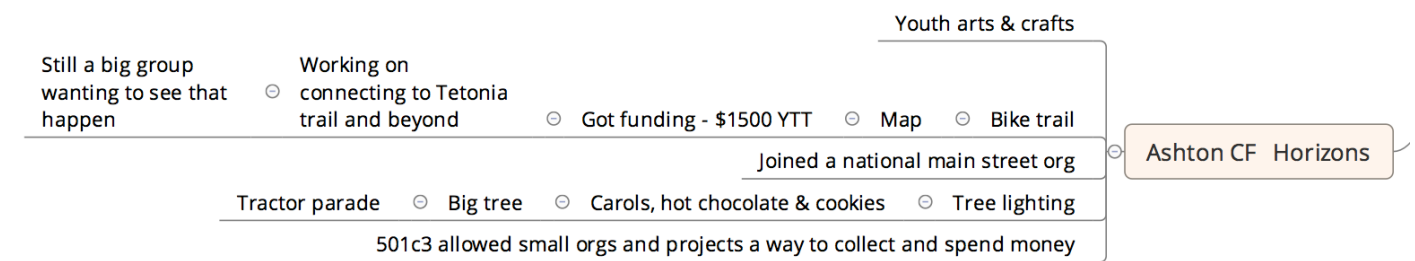
Also, Sara Bowersox was motivated to open The Main Office complex because a need for office spaces and business incubation was identified.

Quality of Life Improvements



Furthermore, the pocket park and farmers market were also a result of Horizons. An important ripple of the market identified by participants is Ann, a local pie maker, gained an outlet for her pies, which resulted in increased sales. The Farmers Market was mentioned as a valued community asset many times during listening sessions held as part of the current community review. Similarly, the pocket park and the improved look of many local businesses were applauded during listening sessions and in comments submitted via surveys.

Horizons Established a Foundation for Long-Term Possibilities



Horizons certainly went beyond the ideas generated by the first community review, which isn't surprising given it was an 18-month program, while the community review entailed a three day community visit by a team of about 15 professionals and associated written report.

Celebratory activities around Christmas increased dramatically and efforts to establish and expand the bike trail were given a boost.

Finally, the Community Foundation established by a Horizons team has been supporting local projects. We also learned this group is interested in expanding the Foundation so it can have a much broader and significant impact on community improvement activities going forward. According to the Ashton Community Foundation website, there are many more ripples from their work than are described here:

The **Ashton Community Foundation** has helped with many projects over the past decade. Some include: organizing G.E.M.S. and the flowers around town, the "Sports Park" (elementary ball fields), raising funds for new curtains at the Ashton Community Center, compiling and making an Ashton Cookbook, raising funds to purchase a new piano at the Ashton Living Center, benches for the pocket park, they raised funds to help the Fremont County Historical Society/Museum pay for their non-profit status, and

did many renovations for the Ashton Community Center before the Library district received ownership of the building.

To learn more about this community-oriented effort, see the Ashton Community Foundation web page on the Chamber of Commerce site: <http://ashtonidaho.com/member-directory/community/ashton-community-foundation>.

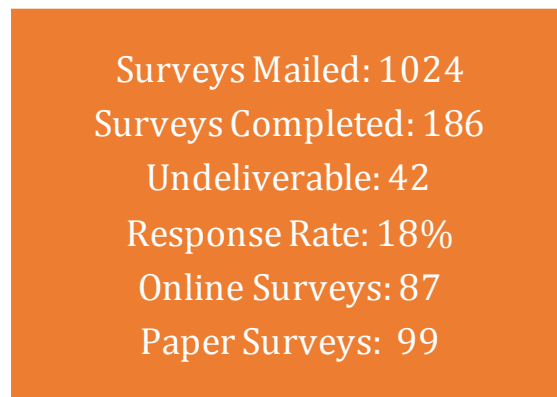
Survey Results

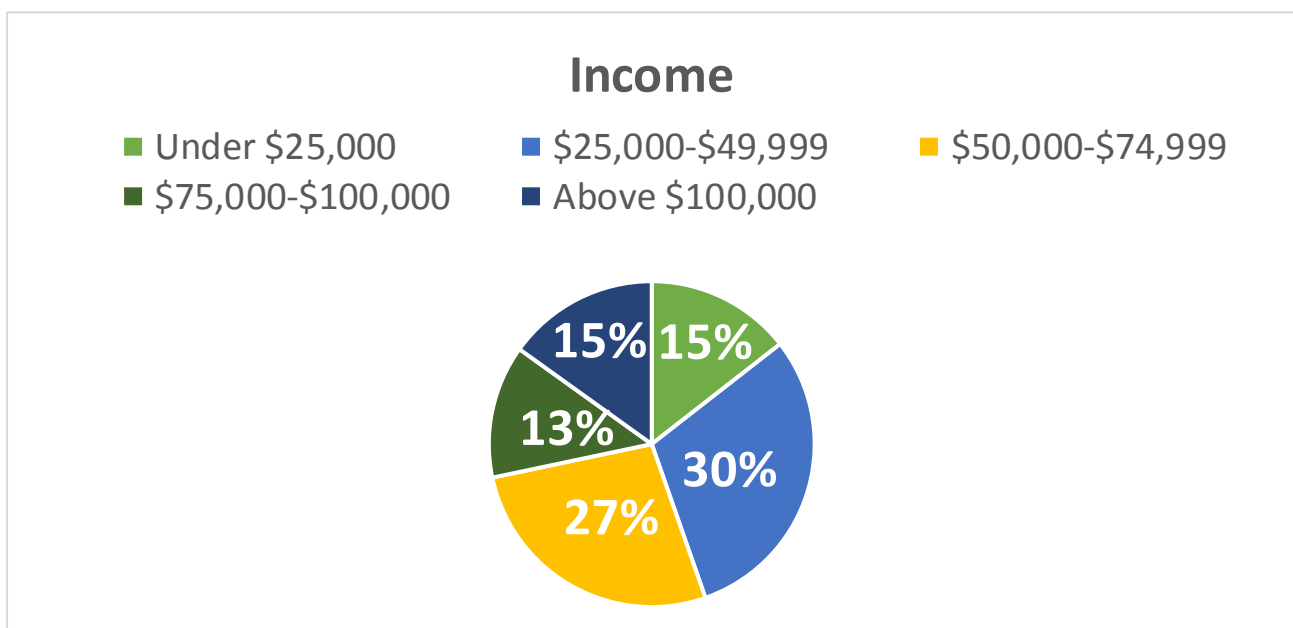
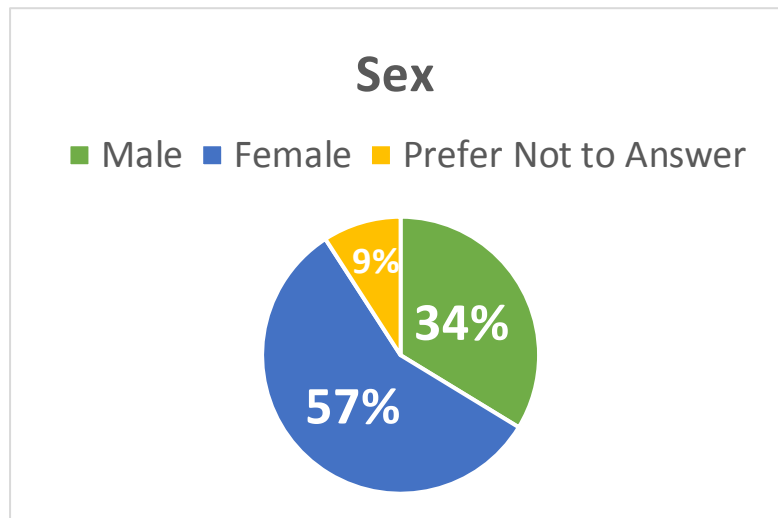
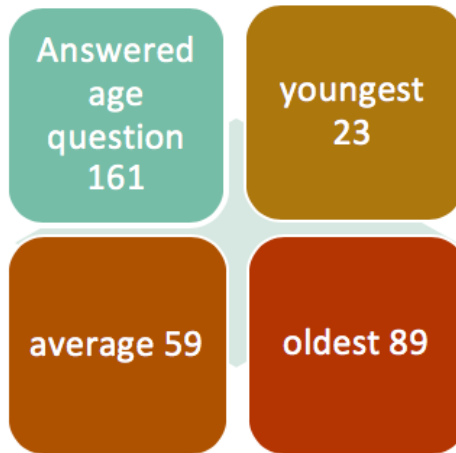
A “Community Satisfaction Survey” of households within the Ashton zip code (83420) was conducted by University of Idaho Extension and the Human Ecology Learning and Problem Solving (HELPS) Lab at Montana State University from mid-October to early November 2018. The survey form is included in Appendix D of this report.

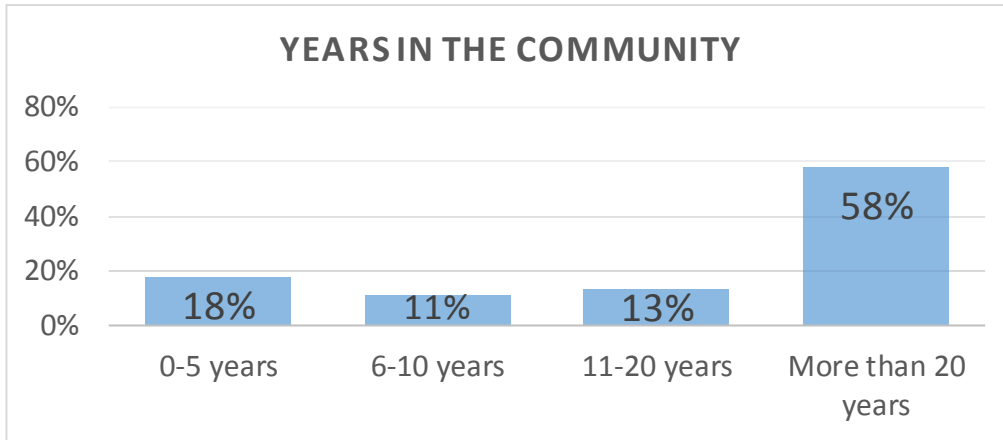
Survey results serve a number of purposes. Quantitative data can serve communities in multiple ways. Results can be used to bolster grant proposals, demonstrate support for new policies and identify valued community assets. Citizen groups and municipalities can use this data as a guide for planning and identifying future initiatives.

In addition, Community Review delivery organizations and partnering Universities use this data to identify common interests and concerns across multiple communities, which in turn helps these organizations develop programs and resources to better assist rural communities. In order to identify commonalities and differences across communities, surveys need to be relatively standardized. Therefore, some questions in a standardized survey may be more or less relevant to particular communities. We appreciate the community’s willingness to assist these service organizations with this important effort.

The following five charts summarize demographic characteristics of the 186 people in and near Ashton who completed a survey.







Survey responses are summarized below for each of the five sections of the survey:

1. Economy
2. Infrastructure and Housing
3. Services
4. Placemaking
5. Leadership

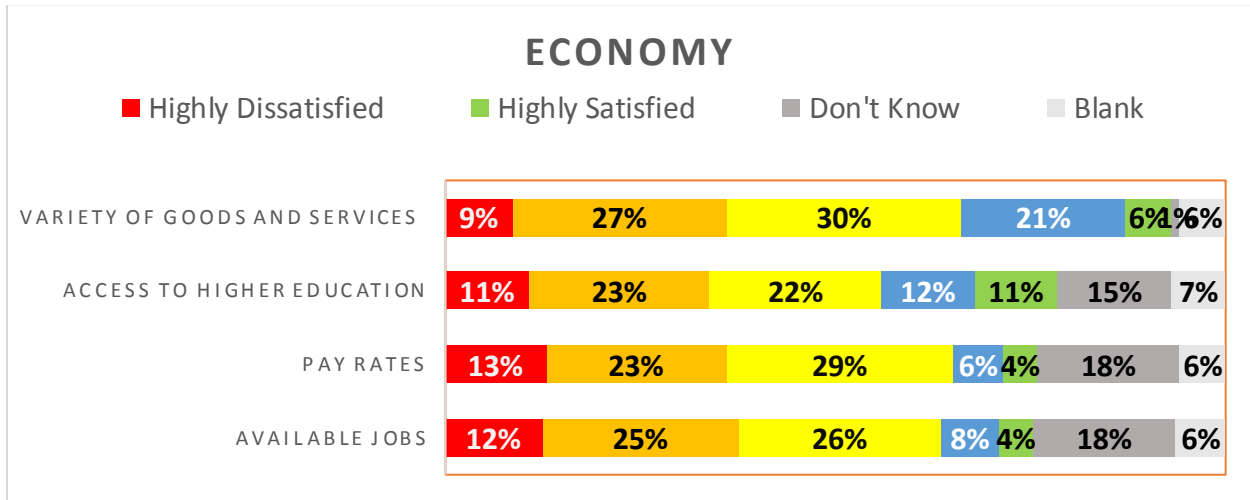
Quotes are taken from written responses to the following two questions included in the survey:

- *Would you like to comment or explain why you rated your satisfaction with any of these public services and community amenities in the way you did?*
- *Would you like to comment on your level of satisfaction with any other public services or community amenities that are not listed above?*



1. Economy

Most respondents were either highly dissatisfied or dissatisfied with economic indicators in Ashton, though many appear to have mixed or neutral feelings as well.



Survey respondents' comments related to the economy centered on jobs, businesses, and taxes.

Availability of local **jobs** was a big concern of survey respondents: many residents need two or more jobs to get by, and many locals have to travel to nearby population centers for work. Specifically, respondents noted a need for more local full-time and sustainable jobs with competitive pay to help draw youth back to the area after college.

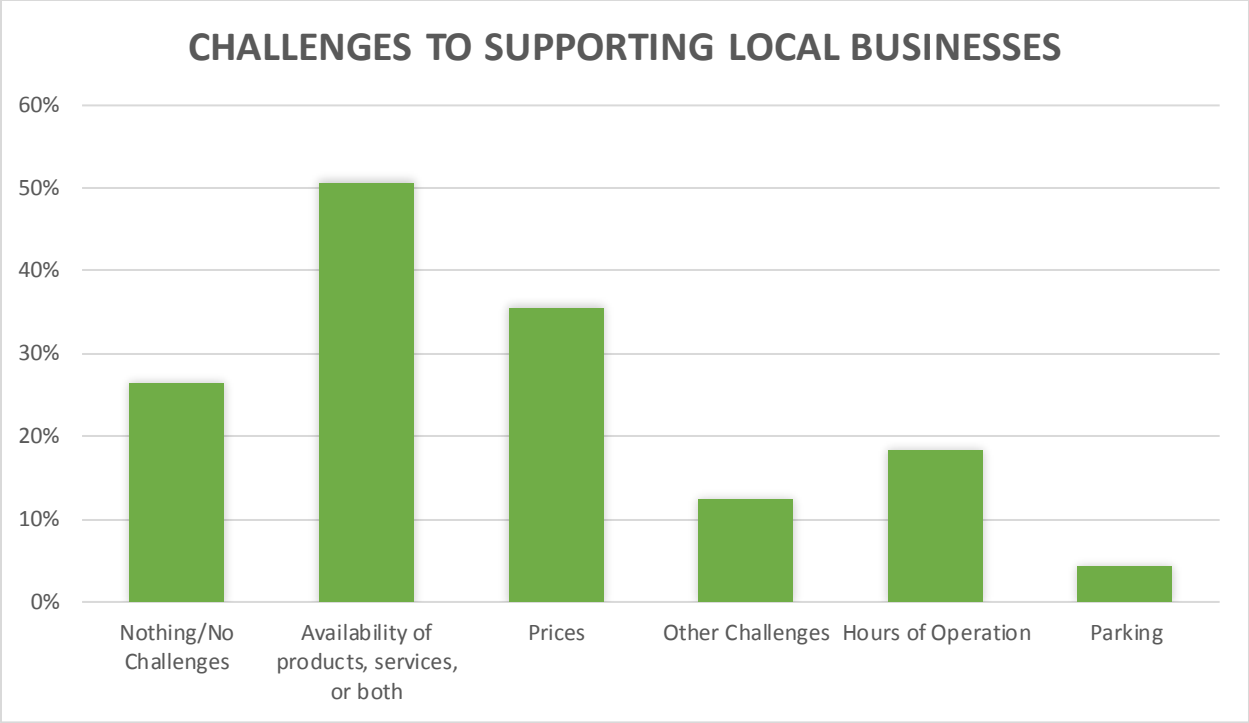
“Our city is in need of...high paying job growth so kids that are leaving have some reason to settle here and raise families here after college or schooling.”

While many respondents said Ashton needs more **businesses** on Main Street, one respondent stated Ashton seems to be rapidly improving its downtown, and many once empty buildings are now being used by job-producing businesses.

In regard to local **taxes**, one respondent suggested the city should implement a resort tax on hotels and Airbnbs for additional revenue. Another respondent disagreed with dramatic tax increases for city business owners, arguing such an increase would force some businesses to shut down and limit economic growth.

Question: Do any of the following factors challenge your ability to support Ashton’s locally owned businesses? (Select all that apply)

Prices and availability of products and services are part of what drives people to shop in several other communities near Ashton.



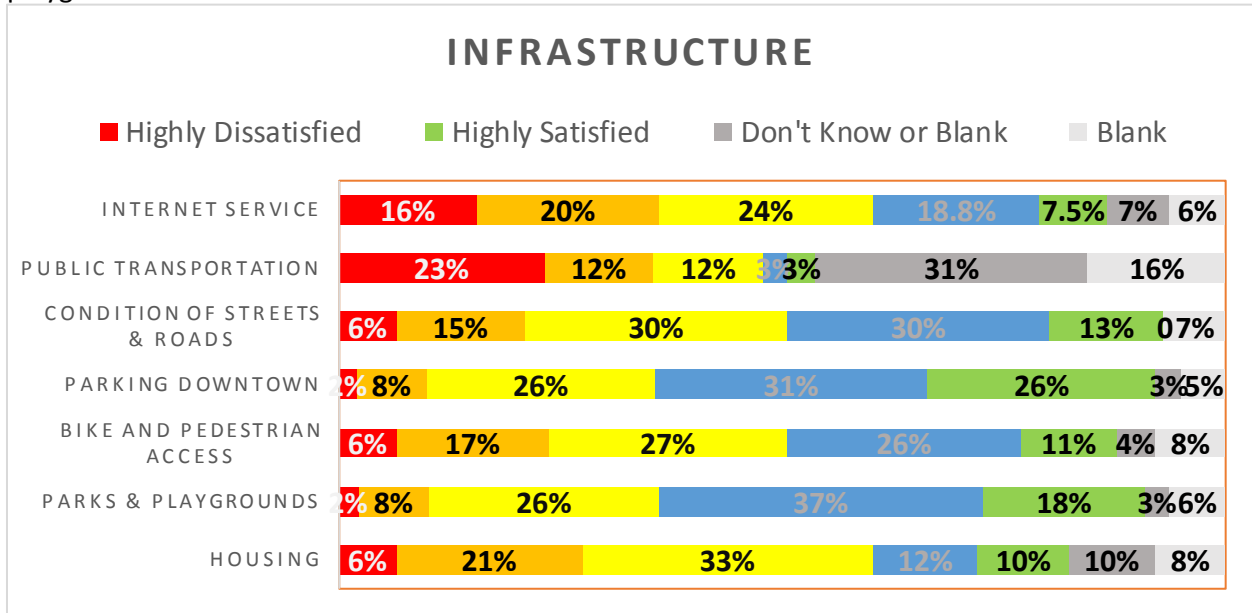
“Other” challenges included difficulty getting across the highway and back to shop at the grocery store, the prices and quality of goods available there, and customer service. Of 17 comments, six had to do with feeling undervalued as a customer.

“Customer service – in some instances I feel like I’m not a big enough or important enough customer.”



2. Infrastructure and Housing

Of all types of infrastructure, Ashton residents are most dissatisfied with internet service and public transportation. The one item with which respondents are more satisfied than dissatisfied is parks and playgrounds.

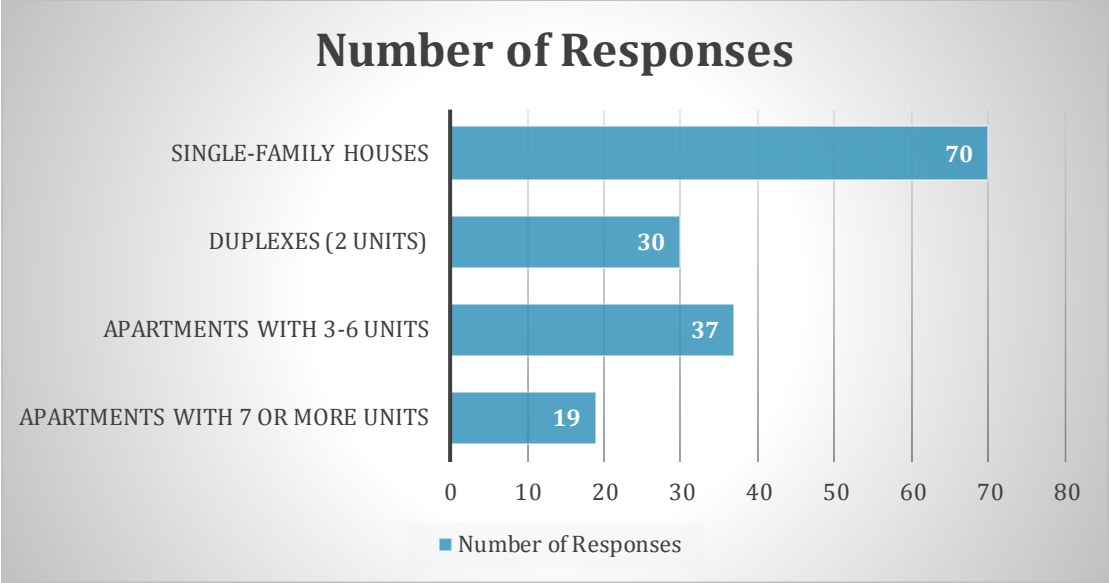


Survey respondents' comments related to infrastructure centered on internet connectivity, housing, and roads and sidewalks.

While the City of Ashton has fiber for **internet connectivity**, survey respondents noted not everyone has access. There are limited options, especially in outlying areas. Comments included “need better service” and “poor service and too expensive.”

HOUSING

Question: Of the following types of housing, which is the most important for Ashton to increase to best meet the needs of people who live and work here?



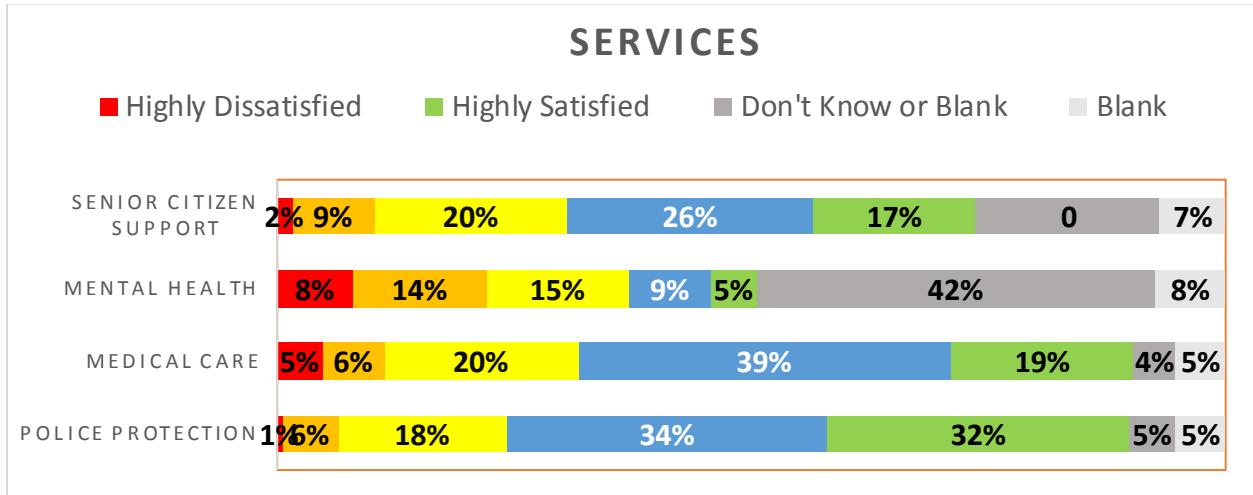
For **housing**, survey respondents noted there is a housing shortage. One respondent was concerned that many homes are now summer homes owned by non-locals who do not keep up their yards during the rest of the year.

Respondents’ comments related to **roads and sidewalks** covered a wide range of topics. While one respondent said Ashton’s road conditions are better than those in Teton County, others provide comments such as:

- The roads are too narrow to accommodate bikes or pedestrians,
- There are no sidewalks adjacent to the highway,
- There is not enough parking on Main Street, and
- Highway 20 needs a much lower speed limit and a stop light.



3. Services



Survey respondents' comments related to services centered on stores, healthcare, public transportation, and services provided by the city and county.

Respondents had mixed reviews of **local stores**. On the positive side, many respondents wrote: (1) the grocery store has fresh produce (which is sometimes local), (2) the hardware and grocery stores are comparable to those in neighboring towns, and (3) Ashton has better places than neighboring towns for dining out. On the negative side, respondents were unhappy there is just one grocery store, which some respondents think it is not up to par. Some suggested Ashton needs a new and bigger grocery store.

For **healthcare**, several respondents commented on the Ashton clinic, which some called “outstanding,” and Ashton Living Center, which one respondent noted is a “step above the rest.” Respondents also complemented the senior center. On the flip side, one respondent thinks emergency services need attention.

Several respondents wrote about the lack of **public transportation**, which means locals often need to drive long distances to meet some needs, access certain services, or commute to work. One respondent wrote the County does not participate in the Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority (TRPTA), which provides rural public transportation in neighboring counties. Thus, many people who are in need of reliable and affordable transportation to access services in nearby population centers have limited or no options for getting there.

Respondents gave mixed reviews of **City and County services**. One respondent said the community had great services of all kinds, while another respondent said they were unhappy with local government services. One respondent said the police are awesome, while another respondent said Ashton needs more police patrols. Several respondents commended those in charge of road maintenance for doing an “absolutely wonderful job” and being responsive. These comments applied to general road maintenance, but especially to snow removal. Another respondent, on the other hand, noted snow

removal is spotty and doesn't occur on the weekend. The cost of public utilities is a concern for several respondents who noted the high cost of their water, sewer, and utility bills.

EDUCATION

Survey respondents' comments related to education centered on general impressions, teachers and counselors, special needs students, and early childhood education.

Positive impressions of local education included comments about K-12 education being of "high quality," and the elementary school being "wonderful" and "fabulous." One respondent liked the small-town friendliness of the local school, and another thought local educators do a great job. **Negative impressions** were mostly related to the secondary grades. For example, several respondents wanted to see changes at the high school, and one respondent thought there would be more options if the County budget didn't have to be split between two local high schools. Respondents wanted to see more classes for students to explore new subjects and more community support for schools.

"Ashton Elementary is a fabulous school with fabulous teachers, although the school district's access as a whole to any counseling for elementary age is non-existent. North Fremont High School, however, is in desperate need of changes."

Respondents had somewhat mixed comments about **teachers and counselors**. While several respondents commented on the high quality and caring nature of teachers, especially at the elementary level, several others noted their opinion the middle and high schools have a mix of good and bad teachers. One even noted students who don't have parental involvement may not get what they need in high school to be successful as they move on to postsecondary education. In addition, counseling at the elementary level is nonexistent. Respondents noted the difficulty of hiring quality secondary teachers in a rural area, especially if new teachers have to move to the area.

"Our schools should have the finest teachers in the world because we have the finest place to live. We need to sell that better and then fight for better pay so that we can keep the best teachers around."

Providing services to **special needs students** is difficult in a rural area. According to one respondent, services in Ashton for special needs children are not adequate, and many families take their special needs children elsewhere for better educational support. Some families even move away, and others choose not to move to the area for this reason.

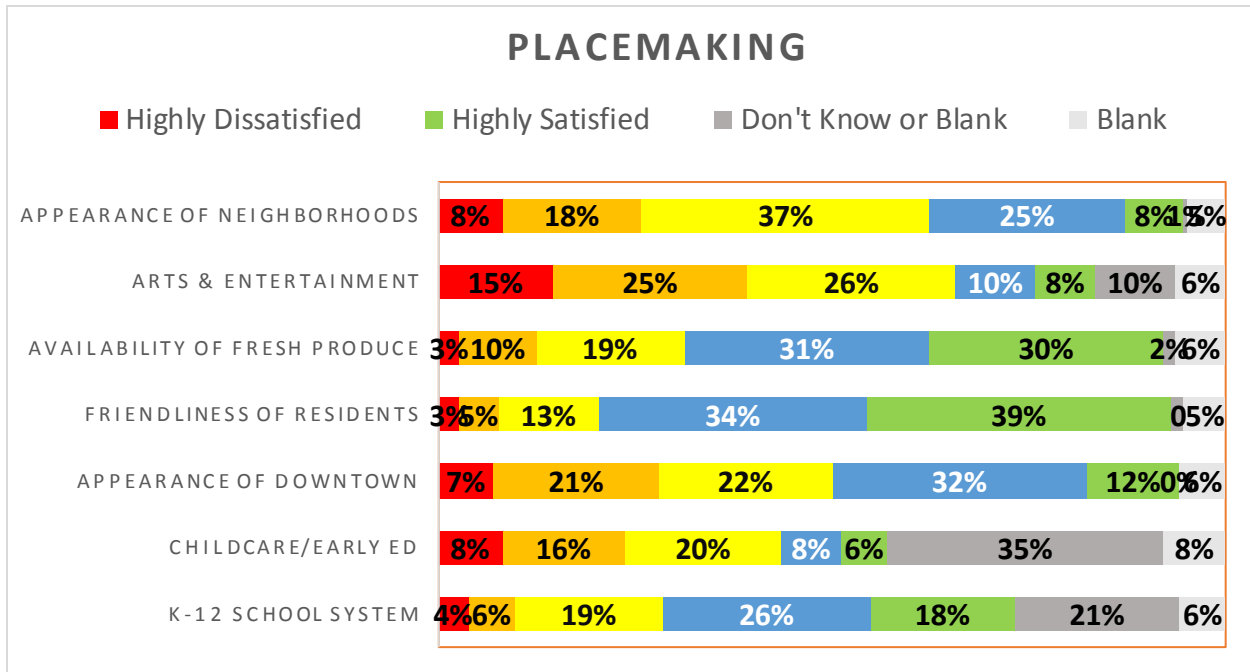
For **early childhood education**, several respondents commented options are limited or nonexistent. There is no daycare or pre-K programs, and babysitters are very expensive and difficult to find.

"I hate that there's no daycare. It is very expensive to get a babysitter and [I] wish there were pre-K."

Finally, one respondent noted the elementary school needs a gym.

4. Placemaking

Respondents were most satisfied with “friendliness of residents” (73% were either highly satisfied or satisfied) and least satisfied “arts & entertainment.”



Survey respondents' comments related to placemaking centered on community support, physical appearance, community assets and liabilities, the potential to attract tourists and retirees, and a community wish list.

Many survey respondents provided very positive comments about **community support**. Examples include:

"Ashton has a wonderful community spirit and supports its citizens and activities. Ashton is a great community. The people are friendly and are so helpful when there is a need in the community."

"I was raised in this small town. I moved back to this small town because of the LACK of the BIG CITY feel."

Survey respondents noted several positive and negative aspects of Ashton's **physical appearance**. Several said they live in a beautiful area and are very pleased with the new medical center, the renovation of the old hospital, and the addition of the pocket park downtown. In residential areas, respondents would like to see fewer vacant homes and fewer yards that need cleaned up.

"My concern is that our community gives a very poor impression because many of the residents have no desire to keep their property cleaned up. There are many abandoned vehicles and piles of junk on lawns. Besides being unsightly, it causes home values to depreciate."

Downtown, respondents would like to see fewer vacant storefronts, and fewer vacant buildings used for storage. While one respondent noted several businesses have improved their appearance, others think downtown needs a "facelift" or "overhaul" and more businesses.

"Downtown storefronts are vacant. Owners use them for personal storage, allow them to get into disrepair but won't/can't sell them in this condition. When they do sell, the new owner seems to do the same thing...storage."

According to survey respondents, **community assets** included:

- "Amazing" and "outstanding" schools, law enforcement, nonprofits, and civic groups
- A senior center that does as much as it can to benefit the community on a limited budget
- Ashton Memorial
- The park and pool
- Great outdoor access
- Interfaith activities

According to survey respondents, **community liabilities** included:

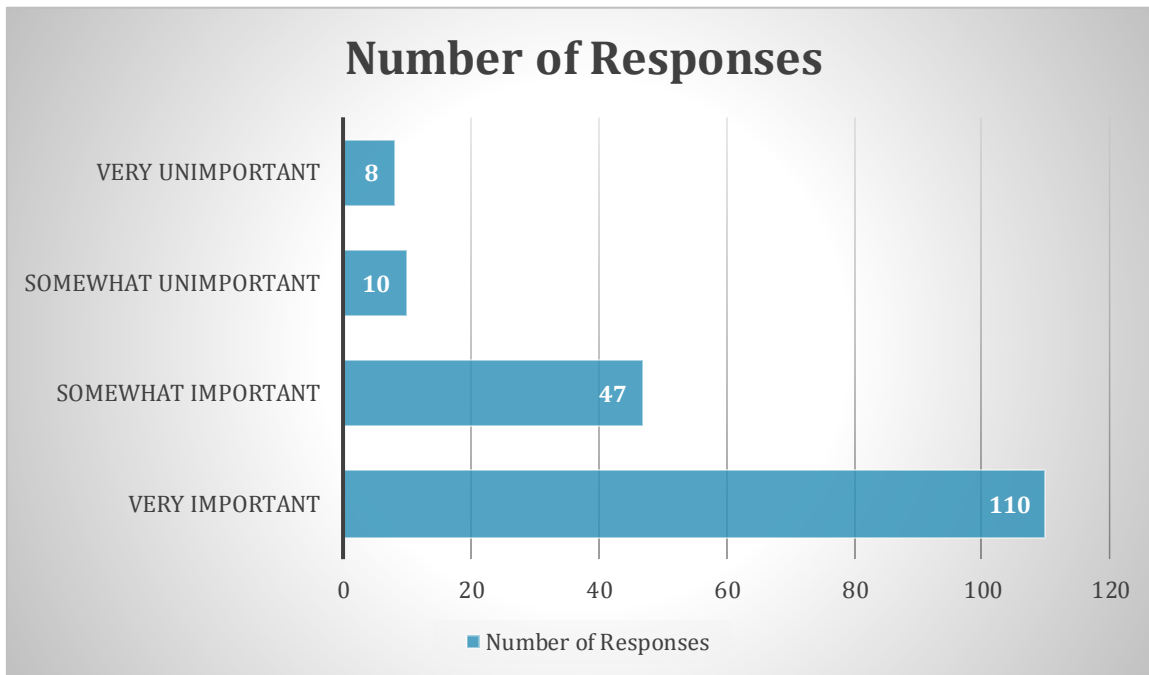
- Long distances to many necessary services
- Few opportunities for arts and culture
- No activities for teens that aren't church affiliated
- Limited shopping
- No movie theater
- Unmaintained snowmobile trails and nonexistent ATV trails in the area

Several respondents noted Ashton has the potential to benefit from **attracting tourists and retirees**, especially with so many people traveling through the area on their way to or from Yellowstone National Park. They suggested there's a need for more hotel space and amenities that cater to tourists, and more should be done to attract retirees. One respondent suggested the city should implement a resort tax on hotels and Airbnbs to generate additional revenue. Drawbacks to tourism include its seasonal nature and the fact many Ashton residents do not want to encourage tourism out of a concern it could change the small town character and further increase housing costs.

“We also have many tourists here and many of them stop at the market. We need to show the tourists we are a thriving modern small community. With Idaho being the #1 state to retire in, Ashton needs to step up to the plate and do more to attract retirees.”

If a **community wish list** was created based on respondents’ comments. It would include a revival of the downtown, a walking/jogging track around the city park, pickle ball courts, drinking fountains in parks and outside schools, and a recreation center with an indoor pool to provide year-round entertainment for families with young children.

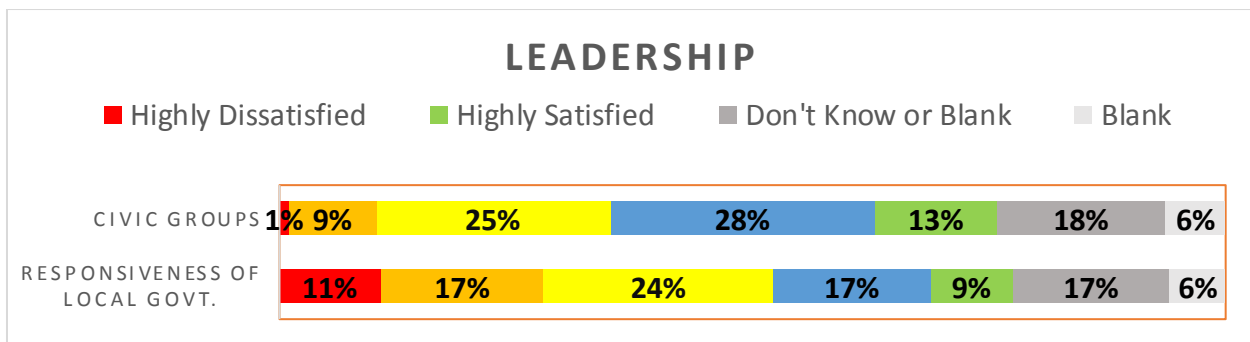
Question: How important or unimportant do you think tourism is to Ashton’s economy?





5. Leadership

Residents are more satisfied with civic groups than responsiveness of local government.



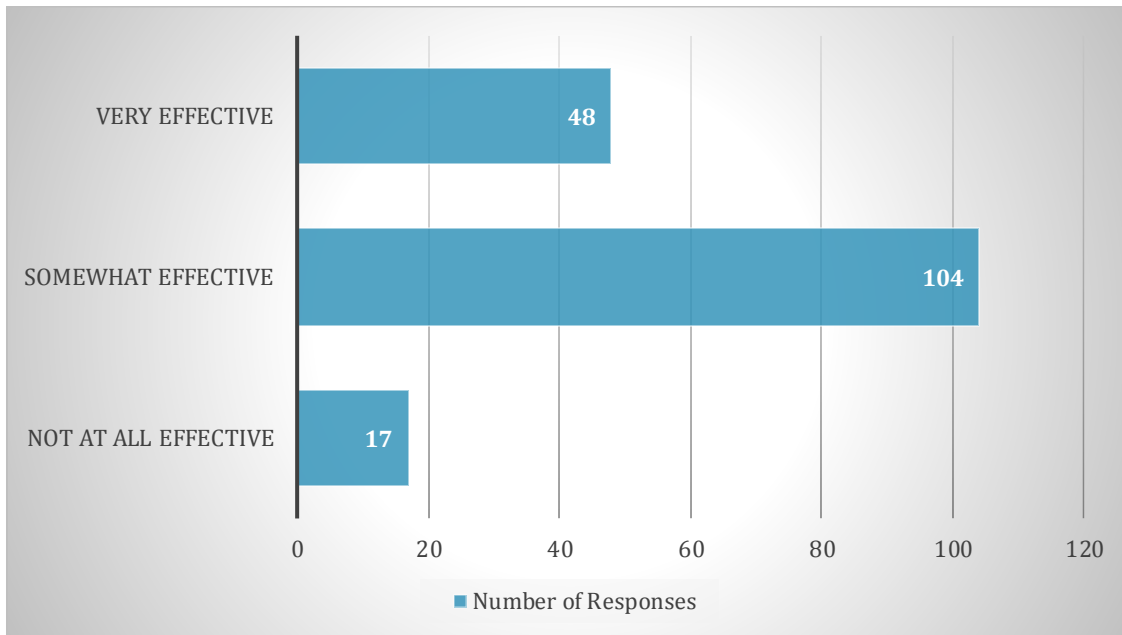
Survey respondents' comments centered on a need for new leadership. Respondents want to see a local leadership system free of nepotism, and one that is inclusive in decision making, with strong, positive communication between different levels of government, and a culture of bipartisanship. Survey respondents would like to see more city ordinances enforced, more action in implementing the city's master plan, and more engagement by local leaders in community happenings. In addition, some respondents would like to see Ashton do a better job of promoting itself.

Most opinions about the influence of local churches were positive. Recent interfaith collaboration and community activities make residents proud of Ashton and makes them hopeful for an increasingly improving town.

“There are a select few citizens who do a LOT in this community. If it weren’t for the additional help of strong local churches, it would be impossible for these few citizens to do all they do.”



Leadership was a topic of another survey question with two parts: one asked respondents to rate how effective residents are at working together to solve challenges as “very effective,” “somewhat effective,” or “not at all effective,” and the second asked for respondents to explain their choice.



Interfaith collaboration was a theme in written responses to this question, as was pride in the fact the community always comes together to help those in need. Some added a desire to see this kind of comm(unity) in other arenas as well.

“Recent activities have improved this area: the community cooperation to help with the roof of the Methodist Church was a big step in the right direction, which has been missing in other potential community cooperative activities.”

"It depends . . . helping those in need . . . off the charts effective. Other areas . . . I feel there is too much bickering, lack of open-mindedness and disrespect for 'outsiders'."

Quite a few commented they feel there is too much complaining and not enough participating:

"Currently, for the most part, those in position to lead our community are actively working to help our community to solve challenges. However, I'm seeing more often lately, the same people trying to help improve the community, while many others in the community either complain if something isn't done, think they are busier than anybody else, or just like to critique and complain about the way someone else does the job and don't feel like working with others in a positive manner."

"Everybody has a way to 'fix' things but they don't want to help."

"There is a small group of individuals who come together to solve problems. Always seems to be the same people. It would be nice to see broader participation."

Some feel cultural and religious differences are the source of inability to cooperate effectively.

"Church people vs. non-members, sportsmen vs. environmentalists..."

One respondent observed, *"It isn't easy getting everyone on the same page,"* and another said *"some are stubborn in their ways and don't like much change."*

It also seems Ashton, like many small communities, suffers from STP (same ten people) syndrome.

"While this community is very good in times of crisis, working to solve more 'ordinary' challenges usually falls to a handful of people."

Others feel there are gatekeepers to leadership roles and decision-making in the community:

"I just feel there is a select group of people who run everything with no regard to the entire population."

"I see as a major problem the exclusion of the Latino families and seasonal workers from consideration of the civic base of the Ashton community. I am not Latino."

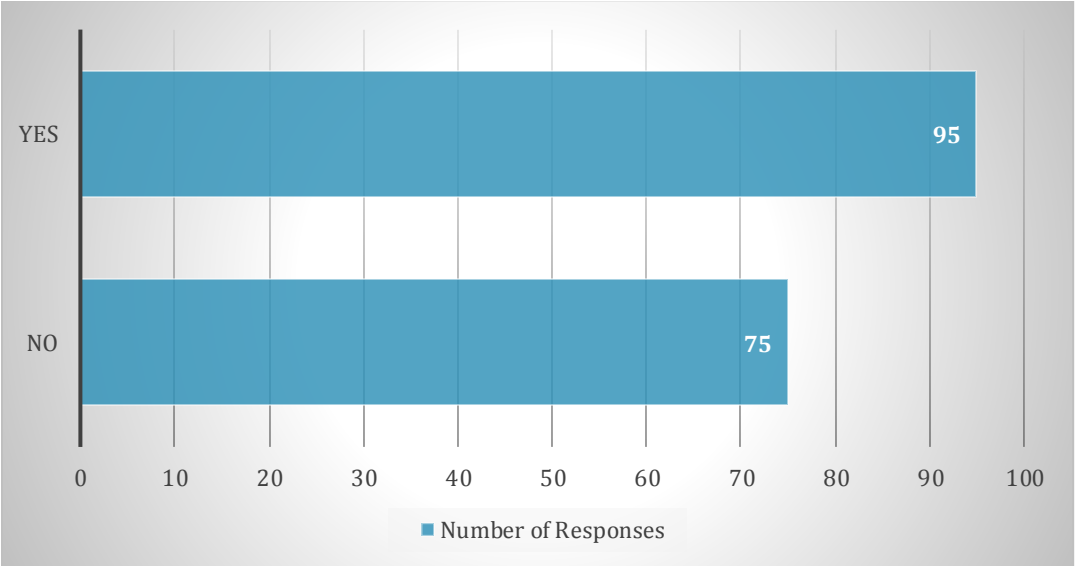
"We need a meeting for ideas and then allow the community members to vote on what they rate as most important."

Finally, this person only had kudos to offer the folks who have been making good things happen in the community:

"I am impressed with how dedicated the people who volunteer with Habitat for Humanity are, and I also admire everyone who has worked to make the pocket park in downtown so beautiful. It definitely enhances downtown."



Question: Have you been involved in a neighborhood or community project in the last 12 months? (For example, youth development, community beautification, fund raiser, etc.)



By far the most common response had to do with time. Thirty three responses were along the lines of "If I had more time." For some this is related to workload and schedule or having small children. The second most common response type had to do with awareness of opportunities or not being asked to help (24 comments). Two other high frequency responses had to do with the focus and impact of

efforts (14) and a perceived lack of inclusive leadership and decision-making (15 comments). Related to this, 12 said living or working out of town impacted their level of involvement and a few of those said they felt less welcomed to join in volunteer efforts because of their residence status. The following are quotes that demonstrate these sentiments.

"I would be involved in more community projects if I knew about them! There needs to be a better way to communicate the projects of Ashton so more people are aware.... Not everyone is on Facebook."

"If it was something to better the community for our kids."

"I felt they were well executed for lasting improvement, with maximum emphasis placed on efficiency in time management."


"I lived in town and had a say in what is proposed."

"There was a sense of inclusion."

"I did not have a two hour commute, five days a week, for a job that pays a decent wage with benefits."

Question: Please tell us the type(s) of projects you have been involved in.

The table on the following page organizes respondents' volunteerism into focus areas and lists the number of times each item was mentioned. High frequency activities are in green typeface.

<p><u>Cultural</u> Museum 2 4th of July 6 Farmer’s Market 4 Flea market 6 Dog Derby 2 Spirit of Christmas 5 Library 1 County fair board 1</p>	<p><u>Youth</u> <i>Boy/Eagle Scouts 11</i> <i>Schools 12</i> PTP 1 Legion Boys State 1 Scholarships 1 Athletics 1 DYW scholarship 2</p>	<p><u>Health and Safety</u> Food Pantry 2 Cancer patient aid 2 NFEF 1 HFF 1 Meals on wheels 1 Patient care 2 Fire dept. 1 EMT 1 Emergency plan 1</p>
<p><u>Community Quality of Life</u> Pool 6 <i>Church (+raise roof) 28</i> Individuals in need 6 Road side clean-up 3 Yard Clean-up 2 Pocket park 5 City projects 3 Sr. Citizen/center 4 Marathon 1 IPPC 1 Civic clubs 1 <i>Habitat 10</i> Neighbors helping 2 Housing 1 Trail maintenance 1 Tin cup 1 Recycling 1</p>	<p><u>Economic Development</u> Chamber of Commerce 3 Grants 1 <i>Fundraisers 17</i> GOP/elections 2 Community foundation 1 Urban Renewal /beautification 9</p>	

Community Listening Sessions

Purpose of Community Listening Sessions

Community listening sessions provided residents an opportunity to express their opinions, experiences, and hopes for the community in an inclusive, non-judgmental setting in which participants feel comfortable speaking openly and honestly about their ideas and concerns. Our goal is to provide the visiting team and the community with the best, most complete information we can about perceptions and priorities of residents and other stakeholders.

The listening sessions are conducted in stakeholder-specific groups to allow the identification of themes that are similar and dissimilar among the groups. We conduct them to learn what's on the minds of a broad cross section of the community. Participants do not debate or compare their responses as each session is conducted. Rather, steps are taken to ensure each participant has equal opportunity to verbally respond to the listening session questions.

The three questions discussed during each listening session are as follows:

1. What don't you want to see in Ashton over the next five years?
2. What do you want to see in Ashton over the next five years?
3. What, who, and where are assets that can benefit Ashton?

Identification of listening session groups

As described in the Community Review Program Guide and Application documents available [here](#), listening sessions are conducted with the following four community stakeholder groups in all community reviews:

- Seniors
- High school students
- Social service providers and faith leaders
- First responders and law enforcement



The community review process provides an opportunity to conduct listening sessions with several other community stakeholder groups. These additional sessions can be used to engage residents who are not regular participants in conversations about the community. Discussion with Ashton home team leaders in August and September 2018 resulted in the selection of the following additional listening session stakeholder groups:

- Hispanic residents
- Business owners (including agriculture)
- Teachers and administrators

In addition to the seven listening sessions identified above, there was an additional community-wide listening session open to all residents of Ashton that took place on Monday night, October 15. Approximately 12 residents participated in this session.

The table below identifies the approximate number of people who attended each listening session. A combined estimated total of 77 people participated in the listening sessions. The visiting team thanks the home team leaders and other individuals identified below for their efforts to invite people to the various listening sessions. A schedule identifying the date and time of each session is found in Appendix A.

Community Listening Session Group	Local Coordinator	Number of Participants
Hispanic residents	Esther Torres	3
Senior Citizens	Beth Wright	8
High school students	Rachel Hatton	22
Social service providers & faith leaders	Desi Larson	10
School teachers & administrators	Drex Hathaway	8
Business owners	Devin Burton	6
Law enforcement & other first responders	Greg Griffel	8
Community-wide session	Home Team Leaders	12
	TOTAL # of PARTICIPANTS	77

How were the listening sessions conducted?

Each listening session lasted up to 75 minutes. The four members of the visiting team facilitated each session and recorded verbal responses to the listening sessions question on computer and flip chart paper. Listening session participants were also invited to write down their responses to the listening session questions on a form created for that purpose.

“Sign me up cards” were distributed at the end of each session to invite participants to express their interest in remaining involved in the community review and other community and economic development efforts going forward. Appendix F contains a list of people who completed “sign me up cards”.

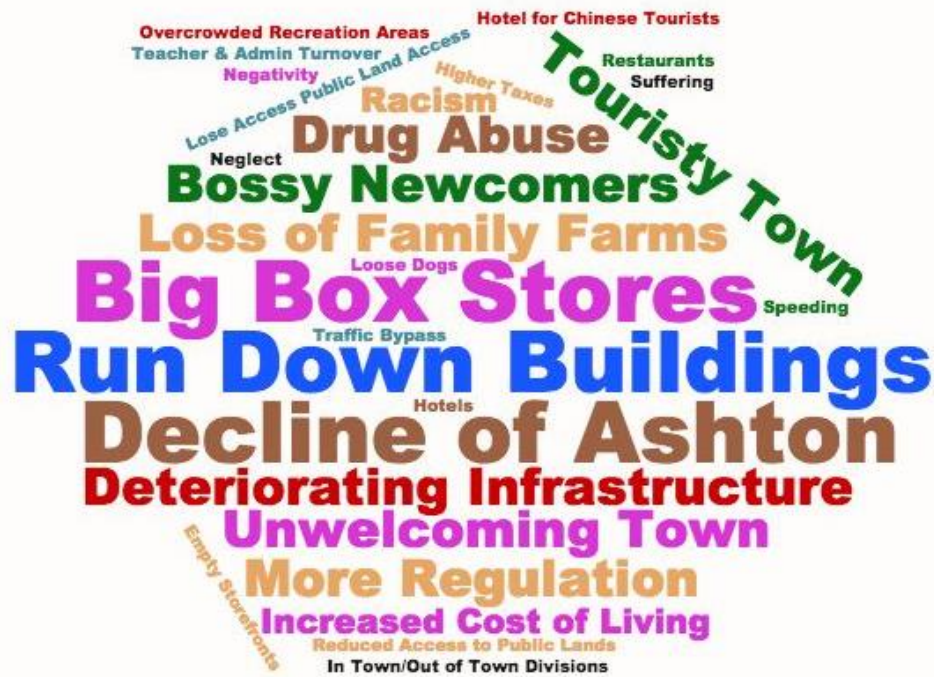
Listening Session Results

Compiled results from the three listening session questions are summarized by the text and word clouds in this section. The word clouds provide a visual representation of answers provided by listening session participants. The larger a word or phrase in the word cloud, the more frequently that answer was given by participants.



What DON'T you want to see in Ashton over the next five years?

The word cloud below is an accurate reflection of statements listening session participants gave when asked what they do not want to see in Ashton over the next five years. The most frequently re-occurring themes across all of the listening session stakeholder groups are summarized by the word cloud below.



Stagnation or Decline

The visiting team uses the terms “stagnation” and “decline” to summarize what many listening session participants talked about when we asked what they do not want to see in Ashton’s future. The following phrases were used most frequently when participants described specific indicators of stagnation or decline.

- Empty downtown buildings and storefronts falling into disrepair
- Losing population, town getting smaller
- Declining infrastructure, including parks and streets

“No one’s going to hang out in a downtown with empty buildings.”

Excessive, rapid growth

Many Ashton residents who participated in the listening sessions also told us they do not want the polar opposite of stagnation: excessive, rapid growth that could jeopardize Ashton’s quality of life and other undesirable impacts. Specific growth-related consequences Ashton residents do not want to see include:

- Loss of friendly, small town feel
- Big city values
- Tourism to dominate town
- Growth exceeding capacity of infrastructure
- Additional government limitations/regulations
- Higher taxes and utility rates

Social division between different groups

Numerous listening session participants do not want to see widening divisions between different social or cultural groups in the community. Examples of such divisions people do not want include:

- Long-time residents and people who have moved to the area more recently
- People who live in town and people who live outside of town
- Caucasian and Hispanic residents

Decrease in vehicle/pedestrian safety

Many concerns about vehicle and pedestrian safety were focused on the Highway 20 corridors, and the intersection of Highway 20 and Main Street, specifically. Listening session participants do not want to see continued vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian accidents in this location. The safety concern is greatest when people and vehicles are trying to cross Highway 20. Residents, and especially school teachers and administrators at North Fremont High School do not want to see the continuation of an unsafe situation caused by what many described as an inappropriately high speed limit in front of the High School.

Unaffordable or unavailable housing

Many listening session participants told the visiting team they do not want to see housing prices increase. They also do not want to see a rapid increase in short term vacation rentals and absentee owners or part-time residents that could reduce housing available to existing and future year round residents.

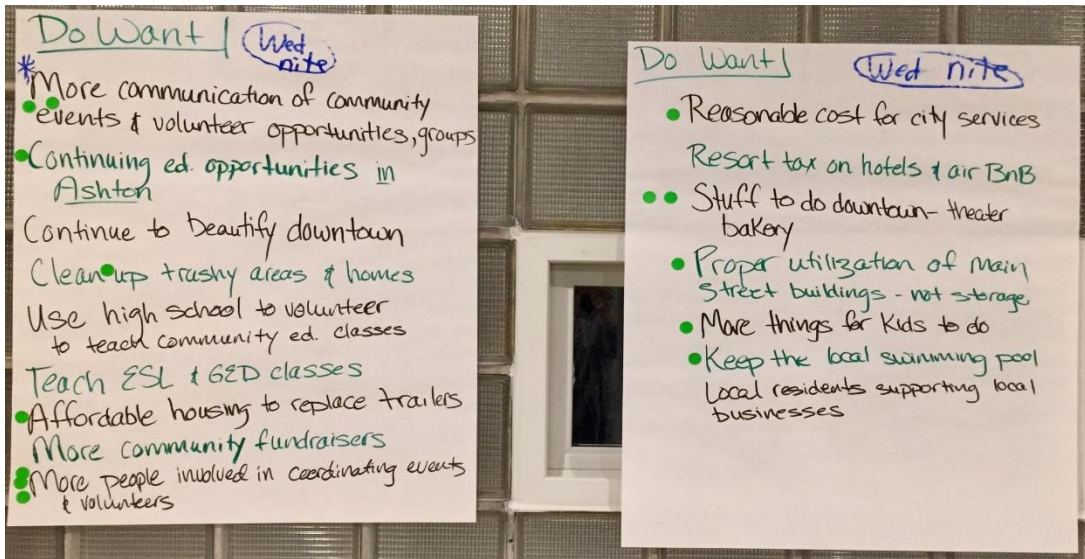
Drugs and alcohol abuse

Listening session participants do not want to see an increase in drug and alcohol abuse and the impact such abuse has on families, youth, and the community overall. Many young people we spoke with, in particular, talked about drug use in response to the “don’t want” question.

What DO you want to see in Ashton over the next five years?

We also talked with community members and stakeholders about what they do want to see in Ashton over the next five years. Overall, participants in the Ashton listening sessions wanted to preserve and enhance the warm and caring nature of the community and to continue the momentum Ashton has experienced since the last Community Review in 2005 and the work done through the Horizons program. Residents love Ashton and would like to focus improvements on Infrastructure and Community Services, Education, Downtown Revitalization and Beautification, Community Collaboration and Involvement, and Jobs and Business Development.

The word cloud below visually represents the most frequent responses listening session participants gave when asked what they want to see in the community.



Improve the Safety of Road Infrastructure

We heard overwhelmingly participants want road safety improvements. Three state highways intersect Ashton's downtown core that provide access to many outdoor recreation activities, and act as important roadways for regional mobility including freight traffic. As a result, Ashton experiences high traffic volumes especially in the spring, summer and fall, and increased speeding in and around the city. Residents were concerned about the amount of speeding and congestion on State Highway 20 especially around the elementary school and at the intersection with State Highway 47. Participants want to see school zone speed limits, signage and enforcement both at the elementary school and the high school, which is located at the intersection of SHs 47 and 32. In addition, participants want to see safer pedestrian crossings from SH 47 (Main Street) across SH 20, particularly so people can reach the grocery store which is located on the North side of SH 20 from Main Street. And in general, many participants talked about wanting to increase the amount of bike and pedestrian infrastructure in and around Ashton. In particular, participants mentioned improved pedestrian crossings across Main Street and at the intersection of SHs 47 and 32. People also discussed providing shoulders on the state highways to improve bike safety and paving a pathway that is currently on the outskirts of Ashton by the railway that goes to West Yellowstone.

“You're taking your life in your own hands when trying to cross Highway 20 to the grocery store. We've had three fatalities on that highway this year.”

Improve and Develop City and Community Services

Participants also want to improve various city and community services. Many talked about the good working relationship among the different emergency response agencies in the city and county, but they would like to improve response times for emergency services by hiring another fulltime EMS responder and police officer. In addition, participants would like to see back-up generators for the high school and city buildings, and a helicopter landing pad for life flights emergencies. Many participants would also like improvements to several non-emergency services such as plastics recycling, facility with conference room for community use, natural gas, cell phone service, and internet and fiber optic cable. Many appreciate the new pocket park on Main Street, but would also like to see the conditions of the city park and tennis courts improved, including a restroom near the park. And in general, residents also would like to see the cost of city services become more affordable. Several participants suggested a resort tax on hotels could help pay for some of these services.

“With Fourth of July and the other activities we have at the park, we need more than stinky old porta-potties.”

Improve Quality and Affordability of Housing

Most listening session participants talked about the lack of affordable housing to rent or buy, and how this makes it difficult to attract young families to Ashton, as well as, support existing lower-income residents. Habitat for Humanity has been working in Ashton to improve homes for families by rehabilitating existing housing stock with volunteer labor from community members. However, even with these efforts, most participants recognized Ashton needs more housing stock including single and multi-family, as well as, more options for lower-income and middle-class income people.

Increase Education Opportunities for Youth

Ashton supports and cares about the future of its youth. We heard in every listening session that youth need more educational opportunities. This included things like more classes at the high school and elementary school, more and better teachers for the growing student population, and preparation and financial support for graduating seniors. In particular, participants would like more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), arts and music courses for students.

“There’s a lot of kids that aren’t into sports and we need more programs for them like music. My son likes music and there is no place for him to go.”

Participants also talked about the need to retain teachers. Many young teachers start their career in Ashton’s schools and then move on to higher salaries in other locations. Others mentioned the need to improve early childhood education and childcare options with an all-day preschool and after-school care, as this often affects young teachers as well. Some participants would like to see parents make school attendance a higher priority because this affects the amount of funding the schools receive from the State and with more funding some of these needs can be addressed.



Resources for Variety of Youth Sports, Recreation and Activities

Participants would also like more resources for sports other than football, wrestling and basketball, which currently receive most of available school funding. Soccer and running were mentioned specifically, but many participants talked about the need for more recreation and sports options for youth in general. Others mentioned the need for things for kids to do after school and a place to hang out such as a skate park, and an indoor facility that could be used especially during the long winters.

“It would be great to have an Art-lab like they have in St. Anthony. It’s SUCH a nice program. I love taking my kids there in the winter.”

Increase Continuing and Community Education Opportunities

Many participants also talked about the need for more continuing and community education options. Due to the long winters and difficult travel, participants would like to see more opportunities for adult education in town. Some suggested using the high school for adult education with volunteers from the community to teach cooking, crafts, woodworking, English as a Second Language, and bilingual education opportunities.

Reduce Drug Use and Increase Support for Kids

We heard from many groups drugs are a problem in Ashton, especially at the high school and there needs to be more awareness, education and enforcement to reduce drug use. Students are particularly concerned about this. They would like to see stronger student body action against drug use in the school. Other participants also mentioned the need for more education and awareness around drugs and suggested a school resource officer.

Continue to Improve Downtown

We heard from most people they are happy with the momentum since the Community Review in 2005 including all the newer improvements, projects and new businesses in the downtown area. In fact, listening session participants want to see a continuation of the ongoing Main Street revitalization. People commented on cleaning up older vacant buildings and finding uses for the storefronts that enhanced Main Street and meet the community's needs. They would also like to see the old high school property cleaned up and developed in a way that compliments downtown. Participants also would like to see downtown beautification with details like fresh flower pots, and the clean-up of junky properties.

"I would love to see Main Street full, and fluffy, and happy."

Capture and Manage Tourism to Benefit Ashton

Participants seem to have a mixed response about tourism and tourists in Ashton. Many recognize tourists are going to be there, but they would like to find better ways to manage the tourism that does exist so that residents can co-exist peacefully during the busy tourist season. Others would like to find ways to better leverage the tourism that does occur to benefit Ashton, especially in the winter when local businesses tend to struggle. Along these lines, some suggested Ashton needs more lodging and hotels, improve the visitors' center, and develop things to draw tourists into town from SH 20 onto Main Street.

"Our environment is not overly commercialized or developed. We're not Disneyland or Yellowstone and I appreciate this."

More Things To Do

In addition to having more to draw tourist, participants want more things to do for the community, especially in the downtown. Some suggestions include a gallery for local artists, a movie theater, a bakery, and movie in the park. In general, people would like to see more options for entertainment.

Plan for the Future Ashton Wants

Many realize Ashton is changing due to growth and tourism in particular. Listening session participants would like to be prepared for that and plan for the change they would like to see. In particular, participants think there should be a plan for growth and for undeveloped land that is beneficial for Ashton. People also would like to better plan to attract families and businesses to the community to ensure that it continues to thrive. The following two comments suggest while Ashton is increasingly being seen as a good place to live and raise a family, there are not enough opportunities for youth who want to stay instead of leaving and coming back later.

“Many of my friends I went to high school are moving back. And their families too. People are moving back.”

“I do get worried because what if my children want to stay here? What are they going to do?”

More Community Involvement and Support

Most people talked about how caring and supportive the Ashton community is. We heard stories about how the community pulled together when there was a crisis, sickness, or project that needed to get done. Listening participants want to enhance this part of Ashton to increase the community’s involvement in political matters and community events. In particular, participants would like to see more volunteering and help with coordinating events from the younger generations (18-30), the Hispanic community, seniors, and all demographics in the community. Participants also would like to see more community participation and financial support for first responders, school activities, and local businesses.

Inclusiveness

Several people specifically commented on the need to create a more inclusive and friendly environment, and to reduce bullying. They would like to see all people whether they live in the city limits or outside, to be treated as part of the community with respect and appreciation. People would like more and better communication with the Hispanic community. People are generally interested in inviting new people to the community, but would like new residents of the community to respect the culture and values of residents who have been in the community longer.

“Diversity is an asset if we take advantage of this blessing and cultivate it. I work with a lot of Hispanic families who have a lot to give.”

Collaboration

Along these lines, participants talked about instances of interfaith collaboration and wanting to continue that. Many people talked about the various religious communities coming together to build a roof for the Methodist Church. Participants want to see groups in the community have a greater willingness to communicate and build shared goals.

Communication

Many participants talked about the need to communicate better about upcoming events in the community. People would like to know about opportunities to volunteer, needs of community members, and information and things to do in the area.

More Opportunities to Serve

Along with this, people are interested in more opportunities to serve the community. High school students were especially interested in this. Some participants suggested creating a volunteer board or community resource council that could track the needs of community members and find people who are able to meet that need.

“There’s so much more out there I could be involved in if I knew it was out there.”

Business Development for Ashton Sustainability

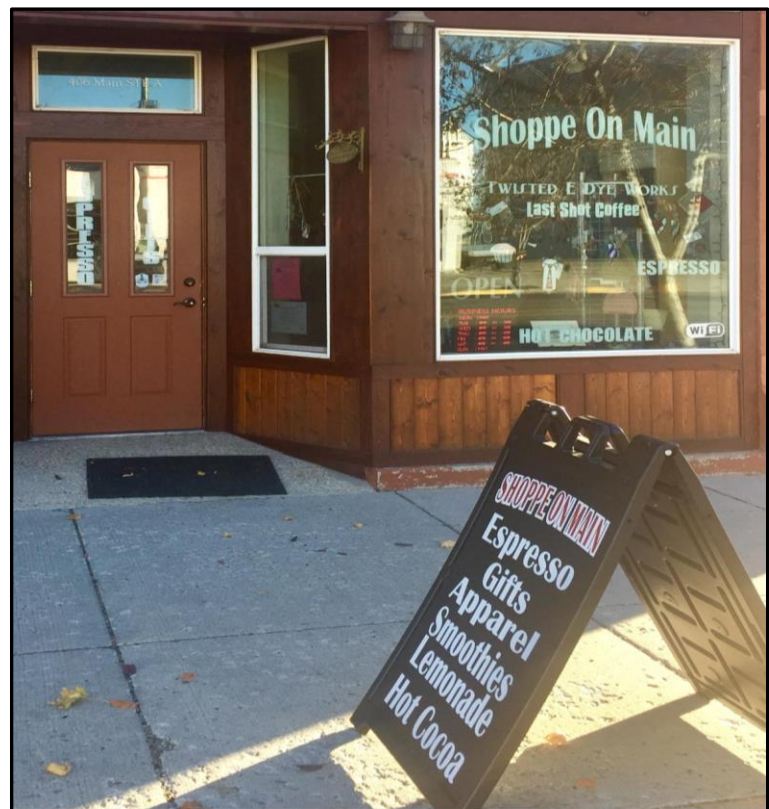
Listening session participants want to see more business development in Ashton to maintain Ashton’s sustainability and independence as a small town. Some suggested leveraging the agricultural industry that already exists in Ashton by diversifying crops, developing value-added products from existing crops and crop by-products. Other suggestions included developing a new scenic tour company based in Ashton, more auto parts stores to create price and product competition, and a 24-hour urgent care facility.

Increase Jobs and Apprenticeship Opportunities

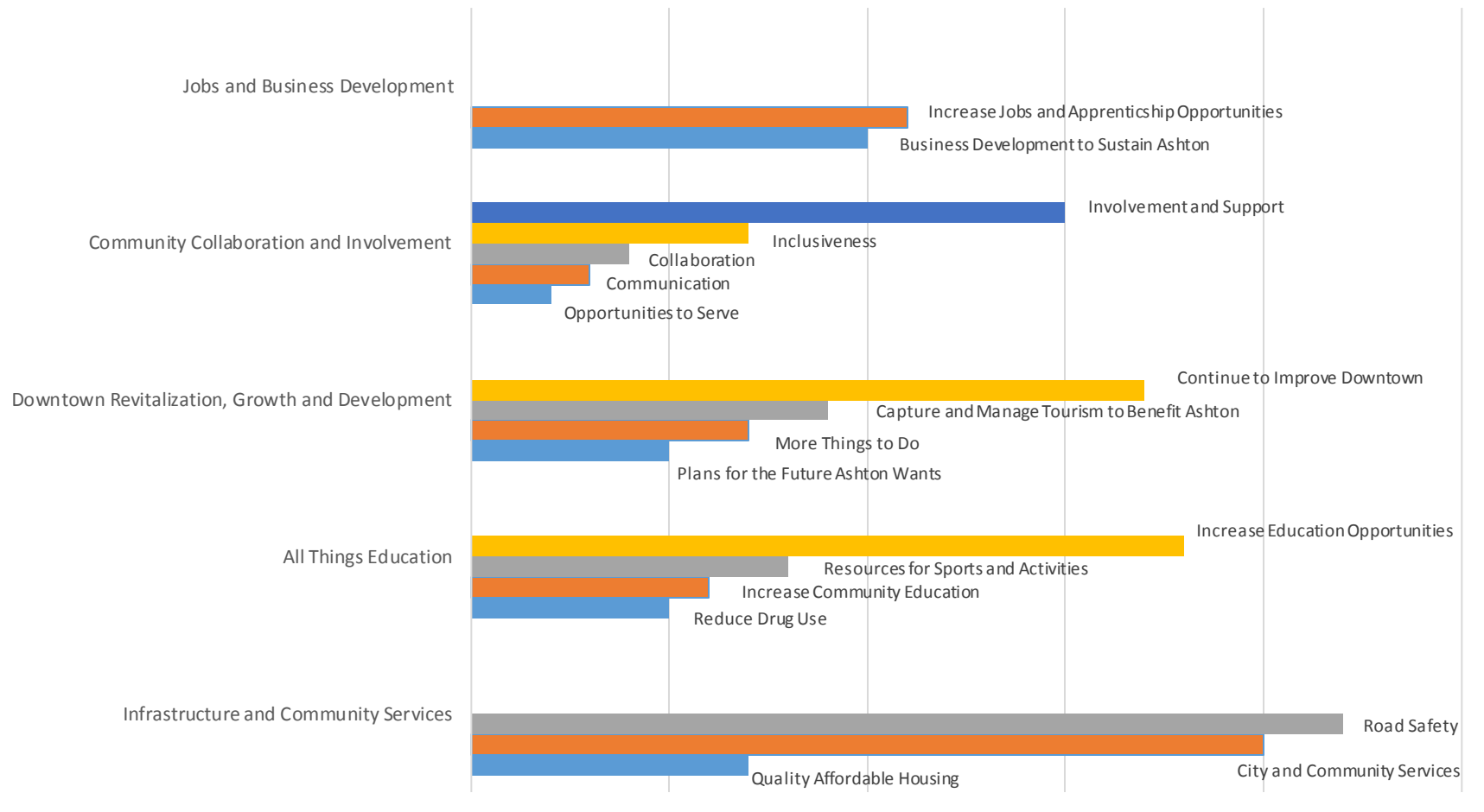
Most participants are interested in job creation for existing residents, for youth so they can stay or return, and for new residents. In particular, participants would like to see more middle class jobs that require a college education and small businesses that pay well, allowing people to remain in Ashton. Participants would also like to see more internships and apprenticeships for youth and more job opportunities generally for high school students.

Summary of Highest Frequency “Wants”

The chart on the following pages identifies the “Wants” listening session participants talked about most frequently.



Do Want Frequencies



Local Businesses

Ashton businesses were praised very highly by participants in the listening sessions. Residents appreciated the businesses' resolve and steadfastness in their ability to survive the cyclical periods Ashton experiences with the tourist seasons. The residents also were very thankful for the local businesses' contributions to their community. They are very involved in community events and always help out with school sports and activities.

Nature and activities

The natural beauty and abundant recreational activities in Ashton was a common theme throughout the listening sessions. Participants loved they could see the Tetons from their front porch and had easy access to Yellowstone National Park, Mesa Falls, and Island Park. They also saw fishing on the Henry's Fork as a tremendous asset for their community which the residents loved but also brought in tourism dollars. ATVing, snowmobiling and "Rails to Trails" were other prominent recreational activities in the area.



Henry's Fork Foundation

Several listening session participants described Henry's Fork Foundation as one of the top assets of the community for various reasons. The Foundation came in and renovated the old, abandoned clinic which resulted in helping beautify Main Street. It also conducts community activities and is a great partner to the city.

"The Henry's Fork Foundation building looks AWESOME!"

Other assets in Ashton

Participants identified the following assets in the community that do not fit into the above categories:

- Medical center and pharmacy
- Churches and diversity of churches
- Parks and community swimming pool
- Library and community center
- Senior living center
- Christmas and 4th of July activities
- Dog Derby
- Farmers Market
- Good schools
- Habitat for Humanity
- Two golf courses

- Good leadership- city and first responders
- Food bank
- Sense of safety in the community/quiet place to live
- No restrictions on freedom
- Teton Fitness
- Agricultural industry
- Police dept., EMS, and fire dept.
- Book clubs and Shakespeare club
- Fish feeding on the Warm River

“It’s not just about doing this and a bunch of money is going to fall in our laps. It’s about teaching us how to do this and people rolling up their sleeves and doing their part.”

Selection of Focus Areas for Phase II

Largely based on our analysis of responses to the question, “*What DO you want to see in Ashton over the next five years?*”, the visiting team suggests Ashton residents and leaders select three focus areas from among the following possibilities:

- Job creation through business creation, retention, and expansion
- Transportation (especially with respect to the Highway 20 corridor)
- Community involvement and communication
- Opportunities for youth, including education, employment, and recreation
- Downtown revitalization
- Housing
- Community infrastructure and services

Here are a few questions offered by the visiting team that might help the facilitate agreement about the three areas that will be the focus of Phase II of the Community Review:

1. Are there some focus areas important to address before others?
2. Which focus area(s) is the community confident it can impact positively in the near term?
3. What has the community already started?
4. What do city council leaders view as the most important focus areas at this time?
5. What groups can be formed and/or what groups exist that can address specific focus areas?

What Next?

Phase II, the “Learn” phase of the Community Review process, involves expanding the home and visiting teams to do some more focused assessment and strategic planning regarding the most prominent concerns and goals identified through Phase I.

The visiting team suggests the near term steps associated with Phase II:

- 1) Establish agreement that the community is ready for and wants to proceed to Phase II.
- 2) Agree on the most significant, highest priority community concerns and goals that will be the focus of Phase II. These topics are referred to as “focus areas”.
- 3) Set the date for the Phase II visit. This visit will likely happen in February or March 2019.
- 4) With designated focus areas in mind, recruit up to 20 additional people to the home team. The visiting team will be expanded to a lesser degree.
- 5) Invite people who completed “sign me up” cards during Phase I to participate in Phase II (see Appendix G).
- 6) Continue raising local financial support for Phase II.



“When you come here, you always seem to leave with a story.”

— Ashton Listening Session Participant

Appendices

- Appendix A Names and contact information for Visiting Team Members
- Appendix B Ashton Community Review Phase I Schedule of Activities
- Appendix C Ashton’s Community Review Application
- Appendix D Community Profile
- Appendix E Community Satisfaction Survey Form
- Appendix F Ashton 2005 CR & Horizons Ripple Effects Map
- Appendix G List of people who completed “sign me up” cards

Appendix A

Names and contact information for Phase I Visiting Team Members.

Jon Barrett
Idaho Rural Partnership
208-332-1731
208-383-9687
Jon.barrett@irp.idaho.gov

Lorie Higgins
University of Idaho
208-669-1480
higgins@uidaho.edu

Shannon Madsen
U.S. Small Business Administration
208-334-9635
Shannon.madsen@sba.gov

Lori Porreca
Federal Highway Administration
208-334-9180
lori.porreca@dot.gov

Appendix B

Ashton Community Review Phase I Schedule of Activities

Prep Timeline

Oct 8 – 12 Work with coordinators to invite target groups to listening sessions:

Hispanic Residents	Esther Torres; peboste03@gmail.com (208)243-7705
Business Owners	Devin Burton; dburton@bankofidaho.net (208)652-3599
Agriculture	Devin Burton; dburton@bankofidaho.net (208)652-3599
Teachers & School Administrators	Drex Hathaway; drexh@sd215.net (208)652-7468
High School Students	Rachel Hatton; rachel@islug.org (208)351-5275
First Responders & Law Enforcement	Greg Griffel; gwriffel@cityofashton.com (208)652-3987
Social Service & Faith Leaders	Desi Larson; desilarson@gmail.com (208)652-7356
Senior Citizens	Beth Wright; ashtonseniorcenter@gmail.com (208)652-3594

Sunday, Oct 14

Afternoon	Visiting Team arrives. Meet at Henry's Fork Foundation @ 3:00 pm.
Afternoon	Driving/walking tour with home team leaders (4:00– 5:00 pm)
5:15 – 6:15	Dinner – Frostop Restaurant
6:30 – 7:15	Hispanic Residents Listening Session #1 – El Rincon Restaurant meeting room

Monday, Oct 15

- 8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast – HFF Campus – Catered by Sunrise Restaurant
- 9:00 – 10:15 **2005 Community Review Ripple Effects Mapping – HFF Community Campus – Lori Higgins**
- 10:30 – 11:45 Senior Citizens Listening Session - Ashton Senior Center – Beth Wright
- 11:45 – 12:45 Lunch - Ashton Senior Center
- 1:00 – 1:30 High School Students Listening Session – North Fremont High School – Rachel Hatton
- 2:00 – 3:15 Social Service Providers & Faith Leaders Listening Session – HFF Community Campus – Desi Larson
- 3:45 – 5:00 Teachers and School Administrators Listening Session – North Fremont High School – Drex Hathaway
- 5:00 – 6:15 Dinner – HFF Campus - 511 Main Restaurant catered
- 6:15 – 7:00 Flex or prep. Time – HFF Community Campus
- 7:00 – 8:30 Community-Wide Listening Session – HFF Community Campus
Breakout Agriculture Listening Session – HFF Community Campus - Devin Burton

Tuesday, Oct 16

- 8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast – Trails Inn Restaurant
- 9:00 – 10:15 Business Owners Listening Session – HFF Community Campus – Devin Burton
Note: This session open to people who own or work for a farm, ranch, or other ag-related business if they cannot make the community-wide listening session on Monday night.
- 10:30 – 11:45 First Responders & Law Enforcement - HFF Community Campus – Greg Griffel
- Noon – 1:00 Lunch – El Rincon Restaurant
- 1:00 – 5:30 Visiting team meets on its own to prepare for community meeting – HFF Community Campus
- 5:30 – 6:30 Dinner – Big Juds Restaurant
- 7:00 – 8:30 Community meeting featuring presentations about the results of the community survey and listening sessions – North Fremont High School

Wednesday, October 17

- 9:00 am Debrief breakfast at HFF – home and visiting team leaders

Appendix C

Idaho Community Review Application Form

The Community Review Program is coordinated by the Idaho Rural Partnership in collaboration with the Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho Housing & Finance Association, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Idaho National Laboratory, University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development, and Association of Idaho Cities.

Communities with populations under 10,000 are eligible to apply, including those communities in which a community review was conducted prior to 2007. Please review the Idaho Community Review Application Guide before completing this application. Type-written responses are preferred to handwritten. Use as much space as needed to answer the narrative questions as completely as possible.

Complete applications must be postmarked or received via email by 5:00 pm Mountain, Friday, March 2, 2018. Our mailing address is 1090 E. Watertower Street, Ste. 100, Meridian, ID 83642. Applications can be emailed to irpcommunityreview@irp.idaho.gov. Call 208-332-1730 with questions.

Name of Community: _____ Ashton, ID (Fremont County) _____

The community review process includes up to three phases. This is the application form for Phase 1.

Home Team Leaders

Below please provide the name and contact information for up to two home team leaders. A minimum of one home team leader must be identified at the time of application.

Name of Home Team Leader #1 (Required): Julie Maurer _____

Mailing address: _____ 1273 N. 3100 E., Ashton, ID 83420

Phone number and email address: _____ (208)346-2895; Julie@henrysfork.org _____

Name of Home Team Leader #2 (Optional): Rachel Hatton _____

Mailing address: _____ PO Box 153, Ashton, ID 83420

Phone number and email address: _____ 208-652-0144; rachel@islug.org _____

Name of Home Team Leader #2 (Optional): Sara Bowersox _____

Mailing address: _____ 1671 Whisper Ridge Rd, Ashton, ID 83420

Phone number and email address: _____ 208-652-0134; saraliz0306@gmail.com _____

Identification of Listening Session Groups and Coordinators

Phase 1 of the community review process includes conducting listening sessions with up to eight specific stakeholder groups in your community. The four stakeholder groups below are required:

- High school students
- First responders and law enforcement
- Social service providers and faith leaders
- Senior citizens

Listening sessions must have a respective coordinator who leads the effort to invite individuals to participate in each session. Below, please provide the names and contact information for four people who have agreed to serve as a coordinator for the required listening sessions:

<u>Required Listening Session Groups</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
High school students	Katelyn Moon	208-351-4147	_____
First responders & law enforcement	Greg Griffel	208-709-1710	_____
Social service providers & faith leaders	Desi Larson	208-652-7732	_____
Senior citizens/elders	Legrand Dixon	208-682-7895	_____

Other Listening Session Stakeholder Groups

In addition to the required stakeholder groups above, listening sessions are also conducted with 3-4 others stakeholder groups in the community. Examples of optional stakeholder groups we have conducted listening sessions with in past community reviews are listed below. Please use an “X” to select up to four groups in your community you would like us to conduct listening sessions with during Phase 1 (in addition to the groups named above). This is a preliminary identification; the listening session stakeholder groups will be reviewed and finalized and coordinators for these optional listening sessions will be identified during the planning process.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hispanic residents* | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teachers & school administrators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current or former elected officials | <input type="checkbox"/> Artists/craftspeople |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business owners | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | |

*Required in communities that have a significant percentage of residents who are Hispanic.

Community Issues and Opportunities

Using a 1-5 scale, with 1 meaning not a priority and 5 meaning very high priority, please indicate how the following issues and opportunities should be prioritized for discussion during the community review process.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retaining & expanding existing businesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Community (design &) identity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting creation of new businesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Education & workforce development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism and marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Community health and wellness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors and youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, historic, & recreation resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land use planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Civic life & community involvement |

1 Downtown revitalization

_Other(s): _____

4 Transportation

Please describe the most significant strategic planning, business development, marketing, infrastructure, and other community improvement efforts that have occurred in your community in the last three years? (Attach additional sheets, documentation, brochures, or report summaries as necessary)

Over the past three years, Ashton has seen some upgrades and improvements within the community. We have seen 3 to 5 older buildings that have been sitting vacant for years be renovated by entrepreneurs to become new businesses filling needs in our community. The last few years our City has been tasked with the need to upgrading our water and wastewater systems. These projects alone have been over 5 million-dollar projects. We have also seen some franchise businesses enter our community along with other new owners opening some empty buildings on Main Street. Our urban renewal board has also had a hand in improvements on Main Street with the installation of a pocket park on the corner of 5th and Main. See the attached Ashton Urban Renewal Agency annual report for more information on the pocket part and other projects.

Every community we visit faces disconnects or conflict among groups. We understand this, and we aren't interested in taking sides or judging. Please identify (in general terms) any recent or anticipated controversies involving local leadership or civic organizations that might be come up during the community review. Are there any circumstances that might limit local participation or implementation of the review or resulting recommendations? How might they be addressed during the review?

The citizens of Ashton are torn between wanting growth and resisting change. Many are adamant that we should not encourage tourism, instead wanting to bring back industries such as logging. In recent years, Yellowstone has seen an increase in Asian tourists. A company from China bought some property in Ashton to build a hotel/restaurant complex catering to these Asian, specifically Chinese, tourists. The populous of Ashton did not welcome this new opportunity, to the point that the company has chosen not to build the complex. This is an example of Ashton's current identity crisis. We have the challenge of finding a way to grow and sustain our community while accommodating two disparate points of view. The citizens on each side of this divide are reluctant to cross it. We must demonstrate to the people of Ashton that we have a vision that embraces the prospects of tourism in our area without sacrificing the traditional culture that means so much.

Thinking back over the last five years, would you say that citizen participation and the community's ability to identify and accomplish goals has:

Increased

Decreased

X Stayed about the same

Not sure

Anything else you want to add about leadership and volunteer capacity in your community?

When thinking about leadership and volunteer capacity in our community, what we know is that we need help! The same ten people that lead our community are the same ones that will volunteer. These people have their own businesses to run, volunteer for other civic positions, and are the ones to volunteer to be a part of projects and committees that better our community. We need more to residents to step up and be active citizens.

Describe any specific economic development projects or opportunities the community 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 to encourage economic development. In your description of the project, identify any funders and partners contacted and/or involved with the project.

We have many needs in Ashton, and we have many opportunities; we must figure out how to match them together. Ashton's Main Street has quite a few vacant buildings that could be developed into new businesses, which Ashton needs. We need to establish an infrastructure and policy which encourages and helps our citizens to invest in these opportunities. Currently, any economic development projects are strictly the individual efforts of the business owners undertaking them.

Briefly describe major community funding initiatives (e.g., grassroots fundraising, grants, levies, bond elections) in the past five years, including outcomes.

- 2010 Water Bond - \$3,604,709 – got another ICDBG for \$500,000 and loan forgiveness grant from DEQ for \$433,060. Ashton built a water treatment plant to address nitrates and replaced water pipe throughout the city.
- 2016 Water Bond - \$4,300,000 – got one ICDBG grant for \$500,000 in 2017 and applied for one for 2018. Loan forgiveness grant from DEQ of \$786,670. Ashton will build a new 10-acre lagoon and upgrade the old sewer lines to address the ammonia discharge limits set by the DEQ.
- See the attached Ashton Urban Renewal Agency annual report and city audit summary for more details on the funding initiatives.

When would you prefer community review activities begin in your community?

As soon as possible

Spring 2018

Summer 2018

Fall 2018

2019

With the Mayor's signature below, our community agrees to accept the responsibilities described in this application form and in the Community Review Application Guide to ensure the success of our community review.

Mayor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

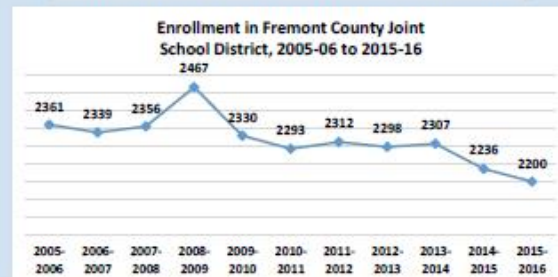
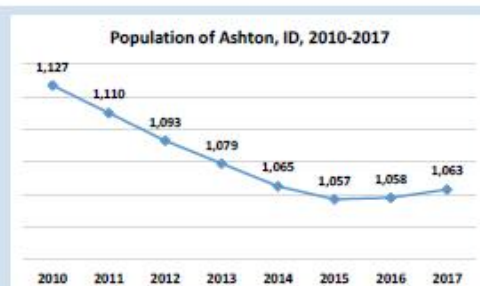
Appendix D

ASHTON, IDAHO COMMUNITY PROFILE



POPULATION

	Ashton City	Fremont County
Total population		
2017, number	1,063	13,094
2010, number	1,127	13,242
Change 2010-2017, percent	-5.7	-1.1
Components of population change, 2010-2016		
Net migration change (in-migrants minus out-migrants)		
Number	---	-773
Percent	---	-5.8
Natural change (births minus deaths)		
Number	---	614
Percent	---	4.6
Population by race, 2012-2016 average, percent of total		
White	91	94
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0
Other	9	6
Population by ethnicity, 2012-2016 average, percent of total		
Non-Hispanic	73	88
Hispanic	27	12
Population by age group, 2012-2016 average, percent of total		
Under age 18	30	28
Age 18-64	52	56
Age 65 and older	19	16
Median age, 2012-2016 average, years	37.3	36.9

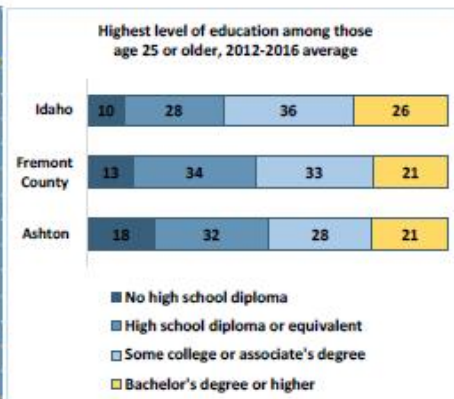


SOURCES: US Census Bureau, US Department of Education

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

	Ashton City	Fremont County	Idaho State
Income			
Per capita income, 2012-2016 average, dollars	18,851	21,196	24,280
Median household income, 2012-2016 average, dollars	38,869	49,973	49,174
Poverty			
Overall poverty, 2012-2016 average			
Number	295	1,475	244,585
Rate, percent	29.2	12.0	15.2
Children living in poverty, 2012-2016 average			
Number	146	595	80,844
Rate, percent	47.4	17.3	19.0
Food Insecurity			
Overall rate, 2015, percent	---	10.9	13.2
Rate among children, 2015, percent	---	15.7	16.7

SOURCES: US Census Bureau, Feeding America



This project is supported by USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Grant #2016-10945. It is part of the AFRI Foundational program.

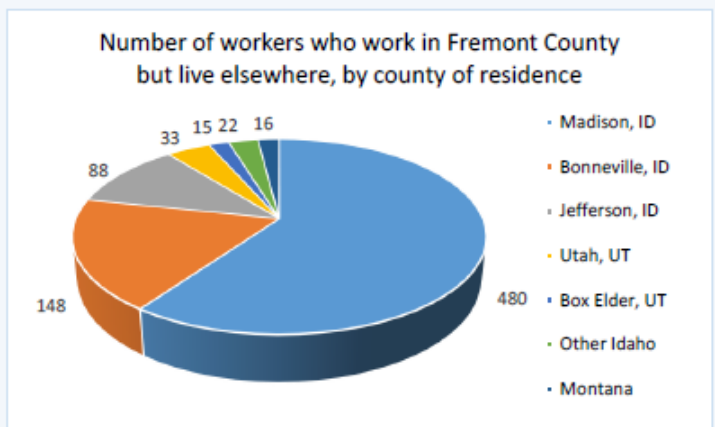
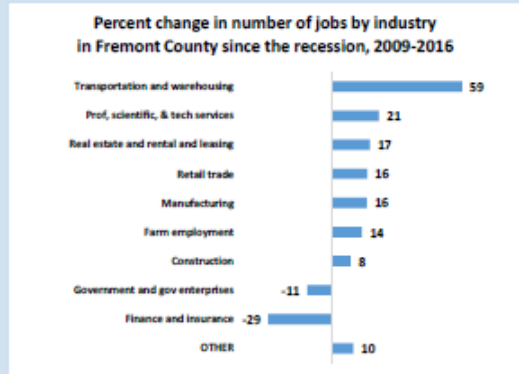
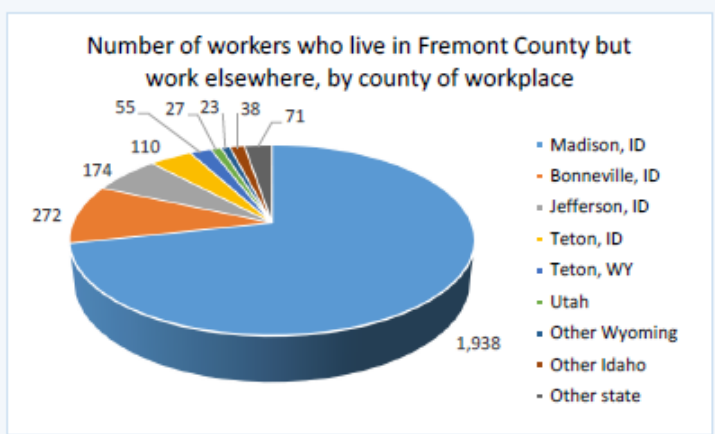
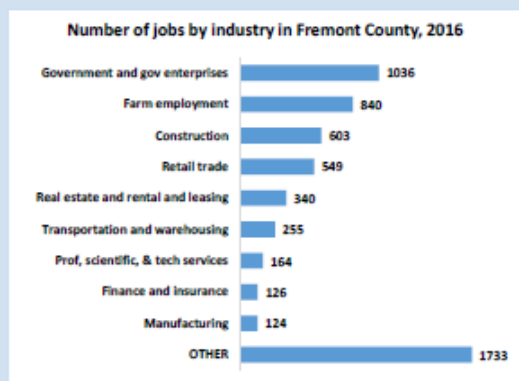
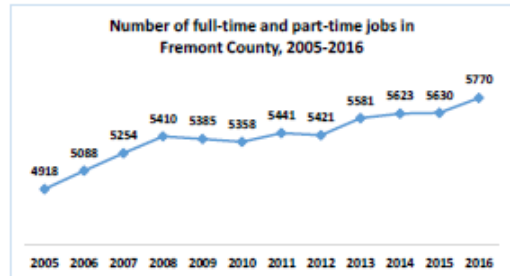


University of Idaho
Extension



ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Ashton City	Fremont County
Full- and part-time jobs		
Total number, 2016	---	5,770
Total number, 2011	---	5,441
Total number, 2006	---	5,088
Change, 2011-2016, percent	---	6.0
Change, 2006-2011, percent	---	6.9
Employment characteristics		
Labor force participation rate, 2012-2016 average, percent	58.0	56.8
Unemployment rate, 2012-2016 average, percent	3.4	5.2
Self-employment rate, 2016, percent	---	43.1
Average annual pay, 2017, dollars	---	33,525
Business establishments with paid employees, by size, 2015		
All establishments, number	---	285
Establishments with 1-4 paid employees, number	---	194
Establishments with 5-9 paid employees, number	---	51
Establishments with 10-19 paid employees, number	---	24
Establishments with 20-49 paid employees, number	---	13
Establishments with 50 or more paid employees, number	---	3



NOTE: "Other" industries include forestry, fishing, and related activities; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; utilities; wholesale trade; information; management of companies and enterprises; administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; educational services; health care and social assistance; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; and other services.

SOURCES: US Census Bureau, US Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Labor

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

	Ashton City	Fremont County
Total housing units, 2012-2016 average		
Number of housing units	458	8,653
Housing tenure, 2012-2016 average, percent of housing units		
Owner-occupied units	71	81
Renter-occupied units	29	19
Housing type, 2012-2016 average, percent of housing units		
1 unit, attached or detached	83	83
2-4 units	2	4
5 or more units	0	1
Mobile home, boat, RV, van, etc.	15	12
Housing affordability, 2012-2016 average		
Households spending 30% or more of income on housing costs		
Owner-occupied units, percent	17	21
Renter-occupied units, percent	66	38



SOURCES: US Census Bureau

RESOURCES

Headwaters Economics, Economic Profile System
<https://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/economic-profile-system/>

- Ashton City – Demographics
- Fremont County – Multiple topics
 - Demographics
 - Socioeconomic measures
 - Agriculture, timber, and mining, including oil & gas
 - Services and tourism
 - Government
 - Non-labor income
 - Public land amenities
 - Federal land payments
 - Wildland urban interface

PROJECT PARTNERS

University of Idaho
 Idaho Rural Partnership

CONTACT INFORMATION

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<http://irp.idaho.gov>

Appendix E

Ashton Community Survey Form

Q1. Listed below are public services and community amenities. Thinking about availability, cost, quality, and any other considerations important to you, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your community? Please circle a number from 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 5 (highly satisfied), or “don’t know.” If you believe an item is not applicable to your community, please feel free to skip it.

	Highly dissatisfied			Highly satisfied		Don't know
a. Local K-12 school system	1	2	3	4	5	DK
b. Childcare/early childhood education programs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
c. Housing	1	2	3	4	5	DK
d. Parks & playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	DK
e. Bicycle & pedestrian access	1	2	3	4	5	DK
f. Condition of streets & roads	1	2	3	4	5	DK
g. Public transportation	1	2	3	4	5	DK
h. Internet service	1	2	3	4	5	DK
i. Appearance of downtown	1	2	3	4	5	DK
j. Appearance of neighborhoods	1	2	3	4	5	DK
k. Police protection/law enforcement	1	2	3	4	5	DK
l. Medical care services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
m. Mental health services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
n. Senior citizen support services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
o. Available jobs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
p. Pay rates (salaries/wages)	1	2	3	4	5	DK
q. Access to higher education (e.g., college, technical)	1	2	3	4	5	DK
r. Variety of goods & services available	1	2	3	4	5	DK
s. Responsiveness of local government	1	2	3	4	5	DK
t. Civic & nonprofit organizations	1	2	3	4	5	DK
u. Arts, entertainment, & cultural activities	1	2	3	4	5	DK
v. Friendliness of residents	1	2	3	4	5	DK
w. Availability of fresh fruits & vegetables	1	2	3	4	5	DK
x. Parking downtown	1	2	3	4	5	DK

Q2. Would you like to comment or explain why you rated your satisfaction with any of these public services and community amenities in the way you did? If so, please provide your comments/explanation here:

Q3. Would you like to comment on your level of satisfaction with any other public services or community amenities that are not listed above? If so, please explain here:

Q4. In general, how effective do you think the residents of your community are at working together to solve challenges?

- Very effective Somewhat effective Not at all effective

Q5. Please briefly explain why you answered the previous question (Q4) in the way you did:

Q6. Have you been involved in a neighborhood or community project in the last 12 months? *For example, youth development, community beautification, fund raiser, etc.*

- Yes → If yes, please tell us the type(s) of projects you have been involved in:
 No

Q7. Please complete this sentence: "I would be involved in more community projects if..."

Q8. Do any of the following factors challenge your ability to support Ashton's locally owned businesses? *Please select all that apply.*

- Prices
 Hours of operation
 Parking
 Availability of products, services, or both
 Nothing/no challenges
 Other challenge(s)—please specify: _____

Q9. Of the following types of housing, which is the most important for Ashton to increase to best meet the needs of people who live and work here? *Please select one.*

- Apartments with 7 or more units Apartments with 3-6 units Duplexes (2 units) Single-family houses

Q10. How important or unimportant do you think tourism is to Ashton's economy?

- Very important Somewhat important Somewhat unimportant Very unimportant

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "People of all races are equally accepted as part of Ashton's community."

- Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Q12. What is your sex?

- Male Female Prefer not to answer

Q13. What is your race? *Please select all that apply.*

- African American/Black American Indian/Alaska Native Asian/Pacific Islander White Other

Q14. What is your ethnicity?

- Hispanic Non-Hispanic

Q15. In what year were you born?

_____ Birth year

Q16. What is your annual household income?

- Under \$25,000 \$25,000-\$49,999 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$75,000-\$100,000 Above \$100,000

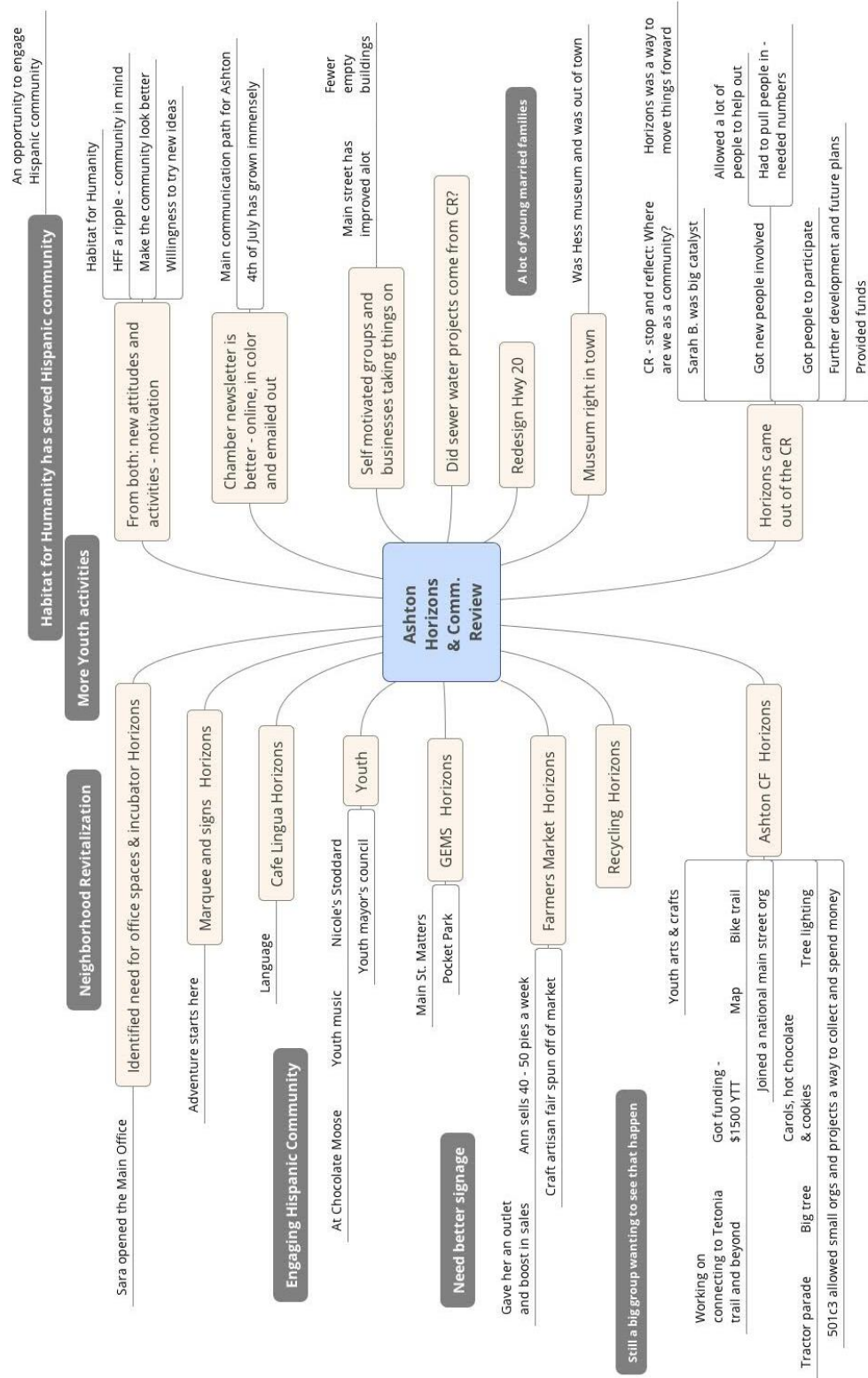
Q17. Do you live within or outside the Ashton city limits?

- Within city limits Outside city limits

Q18. How many years have you lived in Ashton or the immediate area?

- 0-5 years 6-10 years 11-20 years More than 20 years

Appendix F: Ashton 2005 Community Review & Horizons Ripple Map



Appendix G: List of people who completed “sign me up” cards

The following residents of Ashton and surrounding area filled out cards to express their interest in continuing to be involved in future community and economic development efforts.

Nigel Fearn	Suzanne Brady
Genny Knighton	Keith Richey
Mamie Jorgensen	John E. Grube
Lila Martindale	Greg Griffel
Gladys Parkinson	Cathy Miller
Georgia Clark	Letha Whitmore
Clayton Wilson	Ellen Lanx
Hannah McCausey	Andrew Schauerhamer
Linda & Carol Handley	James K. Nash
Alan Baum	Teri Jolley
Garth Blanchard	Michele Omalley
Donna "Katelyn" Moon	JoAnn Richards
Lexi Jeppesen	John Jorgensen
Ross Wynn	Devin Murton
Jack Wynn	Shon Shuldberg
Carson Wynn	Andrew Rogers
Renee Fabanich	Tracy Garcia
Haley Ayers	Jan Stronks
Christy Harshbarger	Sherri Davidson
Desi Larson	Linda Miller
Jim Jorgensen	Wes Owens
Rev. Alex Lissow	Michele O'Malley
Diane Parker	Devin Burton
Leon Martindale	B.J. Hatton
Shauna Woodall	
Sally Alderton	