

COUNTYWIDE SITUATION ASSESSMENT: *LOOKING TO THE FUTURE*

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

February 10, 2017 Bonner County, Idaho

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

The February 10, 2017, *County Situation Assessment: Looking to the Future* workshop brought together high-level stakeholders from around Bonner County to learn about and discuss the findings of the “Situation Assessment of Growth, Land Use, and Planning in Bonner County, Idaho” study conducted during the summer of 2016. Workshop attendees and their affiliations are listed in Appendix A.

The workshop was hosted by Project 7B, a citizen group whose mission is to educate and engage Bonner County residents in constructive dialogue about land use planning and to facilitate collaboration among local entities. It was professionally facilitated by Danya Rumore, a neutral facilitator from the University of Utah Environmental Dispute Resolution (EDR) Program. Funding for the workshop was provided by a foundation grant secured by Project 7B, along with cost match provided by the EDR Program.

The stated purpose of the workshop was to build on the findings of the Countywide Situation Assessment to facilitate productive dialogue about key countywide priorities, opportunities, and challenges, and to explore pathways forward for countywide collaboration. The agenda for the workshop is included in Appendix B.

WORKSHOP WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Molly O’Reilly from Project 7B officially welcomed participants.

The facilitator, Ms. Rumore, then introduced herself and provided the following background for the workshop:

- The University of Utah EDR Program promotes collaboration, mediation, and stakeholder engagement as a means to address environmental and public policy challenges in the mountain west. My personal expertise is in facilitating regional collaboration efforts, as well as efforts related to small town and resort town planning. I am from Bonner County, and it is a pleasure to help stakeholders in this region work together to address key countywide concerns.
- When I say “collaboration,” I mean working together to seize opportunities and address challenges, to coordinate and avoid competing or conflicting efforts, to consider how one entity’s efforts affect others, and to create value through working together. This is not about “compromise;” this is about doing better by working together.
- Like many western regions, Bonner County faces growth and development pressures, as well as concerns about not enough growth, development, or economic activity. The region has a lot to lose if these pressures and concerns are not managed and effectively addressed.
- There seems to be widespread desire to maintain, protect, and enhance the things that make this place special. There also seems to be significant opportunity for stakeholders throughout the county to work together on key priorities and concerns.

Ms. Rumore then gave an overview of the agenda (see Appendix B). She asked participants for their permission to record her presentation for the purpose of training graduate students; no one expressed concern about this. Ms. Rumore then introduced the ground rules for the workshop, which are included in Appendix C. She asked participants whether they had any concern about using these ground rules to facilitate open and productive dialogue during the day. Participants did not express any concerns about the ground rules.

Ms. Rumore explained the workshop would result in a written Workshop Summary, which would include the workshop slides, notes from full group discussion, notes from small group discussion and exercises, and recommended next steps and action items. She noted that Workshop Summary would not attribute any perspectives to particular individuals and that the report would be a public document that could be shared with stakeholders' organizations and the general public.

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS & ASPIRATIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP

Participants were asked to introduce themselves by stating their name, affiliation, and aspirations for the workshop. Aspirations expressed by participants included:

- Engage in productive discussion
- Learn from each other
- Generate good ideas together
- Really listen to each other
- Make sure everyone is heard and respected
- Work together and move forward together
- Come together around a shared vision
- Connect all of the cities and the county
- Acknowledge that we have more in common than not
- Make sure what is going on in the county reflects everyone's interest and needs
- Have a "higher level" conversation about countywide issues
- Figure out how to balance private property rights with planning
- Figure out how to plan in such a way as to balance different land uses and protect the things that make this place special
- Find ways to "bring the public in" and to support broader participation in decision-making
- Avoid "bad" land use planning
- Develop a broad-based view of what people want in the county
- Help Project 7B better understand how the group can help stakeholders work together to address countywide issues

OVERVIEW OF COUNTYWIDE SITUATION ASSESSMENT FINDINGS & POTENTIAL APPROACHES FOR COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION

Ms. Rumore presented the findings of the Situation Assessment, which she conducted with a graduate student from the University of Utah during the summer of 2016. The assessment consisted of in-depth interviews with 30 regional stakeholders representing diverse perspectives and interests. The intent of these interviews was to illuminate the diversity of perspectives, areas of agreement and disagreement,

and opportunities and challenges related to growth, land use, and planning in Bonner County. For information on what was presented, see the slides in Appendix D. See the full Situation Assessment report for more information.

Ms. Rumore also presented information about some potential approaches stakeholders might consider for facilitating regional collaboration on countywide concerns. She described the Zion Regional Collaborative as one possible model. She also introduced scenario planning as a potential approach that could be used to help stakeholders grapple with uncertainty. See the slides in Appendix D.

Discussion of Situation Assessment & Potential Approaches for Countywide Collaboration

Following Ms. Rumore’s presentation, participants were encouraged to ask clarifying questions. They were also asked to share their thoughts on whether the findings of the Situation Assessment resonated with them and whether anything important seemed to be missing from the assessment. Participants shared the following questions and thoughts:

- **Participant question: Can we really control the rate at which we grow? How does scenario planning help with this?**
 - Ms. Rumore clarified that scenario planning is a way to address the fact you cannot control certain things, such as growth or future water availability. Scenario planning involves envisioning different plausible futures or future conditions, and then testing your proposed planning and decisions against those future conditions. She offered to provide additional information and examples of scenario planning after the workshop, if that would be helpful.
- **Participant comment: It seems like a lot of people have recently moved here who think they know what’s best for the area, even better than those who have grown up here. The situation of the cedar grove on Sunnyside provides a good example of this. There are a lot of tensions between “incomers” and “old timers.” There is a lot of fear.**
 - Ms. Rumore noted that the “incomer vs. old timer tension” is present in many rural western communities. People (including both “incomers” and “old timers”) fear losing the things they care about and the things that make places special. These fears and worries should not be ignored, but rather need to be better understood and addressed. She mentioned that this is something to keep in mind as this effort moves forward.
- **Participant comment: People tend to talk past each other. There has been a lot of misinformation, and this is causing problems. People really need to listen to one another and better share information. Better communication is really important.**
- **Participant comment: A lot of the issues mentioned in the Situation Assessment are addressed in the County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan probably needs to be reviewed and updated. Better communication and education about what is in the Comprehensive Plan would probably be helpful.**
 - Ms. Rumore agreed that the County Comprehensive Plan has the potential to be a very valuable tool. She noted that most Situation Assessment interviewees spoke positively about the County Comprehensive Plan. She pointed out, however, that it is possible that people in the room have mixed feelings about the plan and should feel free to share those honest thoughts during the workshop. Such honest dialogue, she noted, is important for making progress on tough issues.

- Another participant commented that it would be helpful to have collaborative meetings around the County Comprehensive plan with different communities throughout the county. It is really important to meaningfully engage the unincorporated areas and smaller communities.
- A participant responded that the Selle Valley and Sagle communities are currently being engaged in discussions about area plans.
- Another participant said he felt the county has not always been very good at listening to people, but that this has gotten better.
- Ms. Rumore noted that effective engagement requires really listening to what is important to people.
- ***Participant comment: It is always a challenge to “engage everyone,” and you can’t really go far enough to make sure everyone is included. We all need to encourage our own communities and neighbors to engage with the county and with each other, and to learn about what is going on. There is a lot more that we can do to include each other and stay involved.***
- ***Participant comment: I think we all get comfortable with “plans” and forget that plans should be living documents. We need to make sure we keep the County Comprehensive Plan updated and relevant.***
 - Ms. Rumore responded that she would like this group to think about “planning” rather than developing “plans” (i.e., documents that often just sit on shelves). Planning requires working together to take action on key issues, as well as updating your plans to reflect changing realities.
- ***Participant comment: We need to have these regional stakeholder meetings on a regular basis. The county wants to hear from and involve the different entities in this room. We should do quarterly meetings, and also review and update the Comprehensive Plan.***
 - Ms. Rumore pointed out that the topic of whether this group should meet again and what it should focus on, if so, would be discussed later in the day.
- ***Participant comment: In the Zion Regional Collaborative example, at what time in the process was a facilitator brought in to work with the group?***
 - Ms. Rumore responded that the University of Utah EDR Program worked with local partners to get that regional collaborative effort going and that the EDR Program has been facilitating the effort ever since. She noted that collaborative efforts can be structured and facilitated in a variety of ways, but that it often helps to have a neutral party facilitate, especially when there are a lot of involved entities and sources of potential tension. She also noted that local buy in and support for the effort is critical, and that local partners need to play a key role in keeping the effort going.
- ***Participant comment: There seem to be a lot of rumors and misinformation floating around. This creates a challenge for meaningfully engaging the public and building public support for efforts.***
- ***Participant comment: The City of Sandpoint and the county have been collaborating on a fiber network to provide high speed internet. There is an opportunity to build on this to support broader collaboration. Maybe others want to champion this effort and maybe we can involve other communities?***

- **Participant comment: The “What’s Happening Up North” Economic Summit is something we can build on. Perhaps we should convene summits like that more often and use focus groups, round tables, and other approaches to make it more effective.**
- **Participant comment: The Idaho legislature is working on a new law that could exempt landowners from rezoning in certain circumstances. This kind of information needs to be shared with each other and the public.**
 - Ms. Rumore noted that it is typical to set aside time at regional stakeholder meetings for individuals and organizations to share concise updates about their efforts and other ongoings that might be of interest to other participants. If a countywide collaboration effort goes forward, it would make sense to set aside time during future meetings for those kinds of updates.
- **Participant comment: The people who are here today are in positions to exercise leadership. Thanks for being here. Please make sure to report back on this discussion to your communities and constituents.**
 - Ms. Rumore noted this a really important point. All of the people here represent different constituents throughout the county. Please be good ambassadors of this regional effort—make sure to accurately and productively share the key takeaways of this meeting and any future meetings with the people you represent and work with. Contribute to sharing good information, rather than misinformation. Thank you all for taking this responsibility seriously.

WORKING BREAK

During the break, workshop participants were asked to share their thoughts via two related exercises.

First, for each of the priorities identified via the Situation Assessment, participants were asked to indicate whether they think (1) this should be a countywide priority, and (2) greater countywide collaboration would be helpful for achieving this goal. The results of that exercise are in Appendix E.

Participants were also asked to use sticky notes to share their thoughts in response to the question: “Are there any additional countywide priorities we might want to consider or work on together?” Participants shared the following thoughts for additional priorities:

- *Planning for contraction as well as growth*
- *Establish a central location where information from county/city/government can be found on any given issue, meeting, etc.*
- *Link websites to one another*
- *Consider other communication forms (other than meetings, online meetings, etc.)*
- *Provide more than adequate notice of meetings*
- *Cohesion in communication, transparency, and more facts to constituents*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

After the working break, participants regrouped for small group discussion. In their assigned groups of 6-7 people, they were asked to discuss the following prompts:

1. *Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities?*
 - a. *Why or why not?*
2. *What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?*
3. *What would countywide collaboration look like?*
 - a. *What kind of approach would be helpful?*
 - b. *Who should be involved?*
4. *Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?*
5. *Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration?*
 - a. *How might those concerns be addressed?*

Each small group had an informal facilitator and a note-taker.

After breaking for lunch, someone from each small group reported out on the key highlights of their small group discussion. The synopsis of each group is provided below. Full notes from the small group discussions are included in Appendix F.

Group 1

There was a lot of consensus in Group 1. They agreed that a countywide collaboration effort would be helpful. They noted that there is a need for public education around land use planning and that people need capacity to participate more effectively in planning-related efforts. They think a countywide collaborative effort could help with that. They think a neutral facilitator for the collaboration effort would be very important. They recommended starting with a manageable list of tasks and taking on one key thing at a time. They think that manageable goals are critical to success. They suggested starting by evaluating existing plans and looking for areas of alignment and incongruence among these plans. It was suggested that the regional collaborative group might want to start by working on issues related to areas of city impact (ACI). In terms of who should be involved in the regional collaborative effort, the group suggested starting with this current group of stakeholders and then including additional people as specific issues and concerns merit.

Group 2

Group 2 agreed that greater countywide collaboration would be helpful. They would like to see collaboration around pursuing common projects. They think regular meetings that involve key stakeholders and connect government with the public would be helpful. Some low hanging fruit identified by the group included working together to expand high speed internet, to conduct a regional mobility study, and to bring businesses to the area and keep them here. They think different ideologies and people’s limited time present some challenges for the effort.

Group 3

Group 3 sees greater collaboration as being helpful for improving information dissemination, as well as for making countywide decisions based on good information. They think it can also help with making sure the “right stakeholders” are at the table and involved when decisions are being made. They think quarterly meetings would be good, and suggested this might include breaking into subcommittees

focused on specific issues and topics. They recommended a neutral professional facilitator assist with the effort. In regards to who should be involved, they thought educators, agriculture and timber representatives, economic development organizations, transportation stakeholders, NGOs, waterfront owners, media, and elected officials should be involved in some way. Low hanging fruit efforts identified by the group included working together to clarify important goals and terms (such as what does “rural” mean?), expand high speed internet, and improve business and economic development throughout the county. Some potential challenges the group identified included the need for whoever convenes to not steer the process and the need to include participants who are representative of the diversity in the county. They emphasize the importance of good communication.

Group 4

Group 4 members agreed that countywide collaboration would be helpful. They think this could help establish countywide priorities and assist with information sharing. They suggested the countywide collaborative group work on developing some sort of clearinghouse for information sharing, which could include things like public meeting notices, notes, and agendas. They identified a need for leadership and leadership development, suggesting that it might be helpful to focus on cultivating leadership among community members. The group would like to find a way to engage a cross-section of the public and include different demographic groups in providing input for the regional collaborative effort. They think that creating some sort of website for sharing information could be a low hanging fruit effort. They would like to see the countywide group meet every one to three months, and think it may need to include more stakeholders. This group felt strongly that the group needs to not “meet just to meet;” instead, it needs to make progress on issues and people need to work together to take action. Members in Group 4 felt strongly that all involved parties need to have a meaningful voice.

Facilitator Summary of Group Work

Following the group report outs, Ms. Rumore summarized the following key themes and areas of agreement:

- There seems to be widespread consensus that a countywide collaborative effort would be helpful, and that the “right” people need to be engaged.
- People seem to agree that meeting quarterly is appropriate. This means that the next meeting should be in about three months.
- It sounds like people think this group should come together to share information, talk through regional issues, and work together to develop joint strategies. It needs to not “meet just to meet;” it needs to make real progress on issues.
- Early on in the effort, it will be important to prioritize the goals and focus areas of this effort.
 - For example, will we focus specifically on affordable housing? Do we want to do some type of visioning for the county?
- People seem to agree that it would be helpful to have a one-stop-shop source of good, clear, factual information. Perhaps we can work together on developing an approach and resources for sharing information throughout the county?
 - It is worth noting that everyone here represents different entities and constituents. You all need to be ambassadors for sharing good information—both about this collaborative effort and about countywide issues more broadly.

- In terms of who should be involved, people seem to agree that this effort should be as inclusive as possible. That is a best practice for collaborative efforts in general. That said, it probably makes sense to think about a tiered approach, in which there is a high level group representing key stakeholder groups—a group similar to what we have here today, which we might call a “coordinating council”—and efforts to engage a broader public, such as through hosting public roundtables, summits, and other forums. We can discuss this more down the line.
 - For now, it sounds like there is agreement that the Bonner County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC) should be involved. They were invited to attend but were not able to make the workshop.
- At the next workshop, we will likely want to clarify the purpose of this countywide collaborative effort (including clarifying what the goals of the effort will be) and how we want to work together. We also will revisit who should be involved and make sure that everyone who needs to be is “at the table.”
- There appears to be widespread agreement that a neutral facilitator will be helpful for moving this effort forward in a productive direction. The EDR Program is committed to helping get this effort going. Once it is “off and rolling,” we are happy to stay involved or to thoughtfully transfer it to a local facilitator.
 - The EDR Program is committed to working with Project 7B and other local stakeholders to pursue funds to keep this effort going. Facilitation is likely to be the main cost. Other main costs will likely include food and space for meetings.
 - *Participant comment:* Bonner County has meeting space available that can be used for free, which can help keep the cost of this effort as low as possible.

CLOSING

Ms. Rumore concluded by reminding participants that there will be a Workshop Summary, which will share the main points of discussion and key takeaways of the workshop. The facilitation team will also work with Project 7B and local stakeholders to schedule the next workshop, which will likely be in May 2017.

Molly O’Reilly from Project 7B thanked everyone for attending. She noted that Project 7B is here to be a resource for countywide stakeholders. She encouraged people to use the provided notecards to share their thoughts and suggestions for how Project 7B can be as helpful as possible. She also encouraged people to notify Project 7B if there are public meetings going on or other information that should be shared with the public; Project 7B is happy to spread the word via the group’s website and social media.

POST-WORKSHOP ACTION ITEMS

- The facilitation team will work with Project 7B to organize a second countywide stakeholders workshop for some time in May 2017.
- The facilitation team will work with Project 7B and countywide stakeholders to secure resources for an ongoing countywide collaboration effort.
- Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the Ms. Rumore if they have any questions, concerns, or ideas regarding this workshop or next steps for the effort.

APPENDIX A: Workshop Participants and Affiliations

Name	Organization
Aaron Qualls	City of Sandpoint
Alicia Abbott	Panhandle Building Contractors Association
Carol Curtis	Project 7B
Carol Jenkins	Project 7B
Clare Marley	Ruen-Yeager & Associates
Dan McDonald	Bonner County
Daniel Shlaferman	Project 7B
Danya Rumore	Facilitator/University of Utah EDR Program
Erik Brubaker	City of Ponderay
Glen Bailey	Bonner County
Harold Hilton	City of Clark Fork
Jason Johnson	Bonner County
Jeff Connolly	Bonner County
Jodi Kramer	Co-facilitator
Julie Meyer	Equinox
Kate McAlister	Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce
Larry Bledsoe	City of Hope
Linda Ayers	City of Priest River
Milton Ollerton	Bonner County
Molly O'Reilly	Project 7B
Nancy Lewis	City of Kootenai
Raphael Barta	Selkirk Association of Realtors
Reg Crawford	Project 7B
Rick Larkin	City of Ponderay
Saegen Nieman	Bonner County
Shelby Rognstad	City of Sandpoint
Steve Temple	Project 7B
Susan Drumheller	Project 7B

The following individuals planned to attend but were unable to join:

Name	Organization
Annie Shaha	City of Dover
Greg Snow	City of Priest River
Jennifer Stapleton	City of Sandpoint
Jim Martin	City of Priest River
Trecy Carpenter	City of East Hope

APPENDIX B: Workshop Agenda

Countywide Situation Assessment: Looking to the Future

Friday, February 10, 2017 9:00am-1:00pm
Tango Café



AGENDA

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: *To facilitate productive discussion about countywide priorities and identify opportunities and challenges for countywide collaboration*

8:45am	Arrive and settle in
9:00—9:20am	Welcome and workshop overview
9:20—9:40am	Introductions and aspirations for the workshop
9:40—10:30am	Overview of findings from the Situation Assessment
10:30—10:45am	WORKING BREAK
	<i>EXERCISE: Participants share their thoughts on countywide priorities and opportunities for collaboration</i>
10:45—11:50am	Small group discussion: How to move forward?
	<i>Discussion questions:</i>
	<i>1. Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities? Why or why not?</i>
	<i>2. What are the benefits and greater countywide collaboration?</i>
	<i>3. What would countywide collaboration look like?</i>
	<i>a. What kind of approach would be helpful?</i>
	<i>b. Who should be involved?</i>
	<i>4. Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?</i>
	<i>5. Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration?</i>
	<i>a. How might those concerns be addressed?</i>
11:50—12:10pm	GET LUNCH & RETURN TO SEATS
12:10—12:45pm	Full group discussion: How to move forward?
12:45—1:00pm	Closing and next steps

APPENDIX C: Workshop Ground Rules

The facilitator used the following ground rules during the workshop to help participants engage in open, productive dialogue.

RESPECT EACH OTHER

- Listening is important
- One person speaks at a time
- No interrupting

RESPECT THE GROUP

- Every idea is worthy
- Make your points succinctly
- Everyone has an equal right to talk

IT'S OK TO DISAGREE - AGREEABLY

- Challenge ideas, not people
- No “zingers” or cheap shots
- Disagreement is an opportunity to learn

KEEP THE CONVERSATION CONSTRUCTIVE

- Explain your reasoning
- Keep an open mind
- Avoid passing judgment

BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENERGY YOU BRING INTO THE ROOM!

Countywide Situation Assessment *Looking to the Future*

February 10, 2017



Countywide Situation Assessment *Looking to the Future*

WELCOME

- Find your name tent, put on your name tag, and settle in
- Help yourself to coffee and pastries



BACKGROUND

Environmental Dispute Resolution (EDR) Program:

- Based at the University of Utah
- Promotes collaboration, mediation, and stakeholder engagement as a means to address environmental and public policy challenges in the mountain west

Expertise in:

- Professional neutral facilitation
- Regional collaboration efforts
- Small town and resort town planning concerns

Not to mention...

- I'm from Bonner County

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

To facilitate productive dialogue among countywide stakeholders about:

- Key countywide priorities
- Opportunities (and challenges) for countywide collaboration
- Pathways forward for countywide collaboration

WHEN I SAY “COLLABORATION”

I mean:

- Working together to seize opportunities and address challenges
- Coordinating efforts
 - Avoiding duplication or competing efforts
- Considering how one entity’s efforts affect others
- Creating value through working together
 - Not compromise

WHY WE ARE HERE TODAY

Like many western regions, Bonner County:

- Faces growth and development pressures
- Has a lot to lose if those pressures are not effectively managed and addressed

There seems to be:

- Widespread desire to maintain, protect, and enhance the things that make this place special
- Significant opportunity to work together on key priority issues and concerns

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Introductions and aspirations for the workshop

Overview of Situation Assessment findings

WORKING BREAK

- Share your thoughts on countywide priorities and opportunities for collaboration

How to move forward?

- Small group discussion
- Full group discussion

LUNCH

Closing and next Steps

GROUND RULES

To facilitate open and productive dialogue

1. Respect each other

- Listening is important
- One person speaks at a time
- No interrupting

3. It is OK to disagree – agreeably

- Challenge ideas, not people
- No “zingers” or cheap shots
- Disagreement is an opportunity to learn

2. Respect the group

- Every idea is worthy
- Make your points succinctly
- Everyone has an equal right to talk

4. Keep the conversation productive

- Explain your reasoning
- Keep an open mind
- Avoid passing judgment

5. Be responsible for the energy you bring into the room

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE WORKSHOP: WORKSHOP SUMMARY

- **This will include:**
 - Notes from our discussion and exercises
 - PowerPoint slides
 - Recommended next steps and follow-up
- **Nothing will be attributed to any individual**
- **This will be a public document**
 - You can share it with your councils, organizations, etc.

INTRODUCTIONS

In 30 seconds or less:

- Your name, organization, and title
- Your aspirations for the workshop
- What's your favorite thing to do in summer?

OVERVIEW: SITUATION ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

GOALS OF THE ASSESSMENT

- Illuminate the **diversity of perspectives** related to growth, land use, and planning
- Identify areas of **agreement** and **disagreement**
- Identify **opportunities** and **challenges** for **countywide coordination** and **collaboration**

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH DIVERSE STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES

Stakeholder groups

- Municipal elected officials and staff
- County elected officials and staff
- Professional planners
- Surveyors
- Developers
- Real estate agents
- Builders and contractors
- Conservation organizations
- Bonner County Economic Development Corporation
- Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce
- Panhandle Health District
- State of Idaho elected officials

Jurisdictions

- City of Clark Fork
- City of Dover
- City of Hope
- City of Kootenai
- City of Ponderay
- City of Priest River
- City of Sandpoint
- Bonner County
- The unincorporated areas of:
 - Sagle
 - Selle Valley
 - Sunnyside

FINDINGS: COUNTYWIDE PRIORITIES

Interviewees commonly identified the following as countywide priorities:

- **Preserve and enhance community character and cohesion**
 - Small town feel of communities
 - Friendliness
 - Community-oriented residents
- **Make Bonner County a place where people in all stages of life can afford to live, work, and play**
 - Affordability of housing and cost of living
 - More year-round employment
- **Foster and invest in building a vibrant economy**
 - Year-round employment in diverse jobs
 - Attract businesses and keep them

FINDINGS: COUNTYWIDE PRIORITIES (cont.)

Interviewees commonly identified the following as countywide priorities:

- **Preserve and enhance the county's rural character**
 - But what does rural mean? This merits further discussion.
 - Residential?
 - Working landscape?
- **Protect the county's water quality and water bodies**
 - Lakes, rivers, and drinking water
- **Preserve the county's green space, natural beauty, and opportunities for recreation and hunting**

FINDINGS: COUNTYWIDE PRIORITIES (cont.)

Interviewees commonly identified the following as countywide priorities:

- **Develop in a thoughtful, intelligent, orderly, responsible way**
 - Growth is likely unavoidable
 - Although many people want to "close the door behind them"
 - How do we grow in a way that protects the things we hold dear and doesn't create new problems?
 - Avoid sprawl
 - Leverage existing services
 - Avoid unnecessary burdens on services and tax payers
 - Be a place that "does it right"
 - Learn from places that did not "do it right"
 - Capitalize on the benefits of growth
 - Such as economic development

FINDINGS: COUNTYWIDE PRIORITIES (cont.)

Interviewees commonly identified the following as countywide priorities:

- **Balance private property rights with community concerns**
 - Private property rights are important and should be protected
 - How do we achieve “proper regulation” and avoid “over regulation”?
 - How do we balance individual freedoms with community wellbeing?
- **Make government as efficient, effective, and transparent as possible**
 - Ensure effective two-way communication with the public
 - Maintain proper checks and balances
 - Engage stakeholders in reviewing systems to ensure they are as effective and efficient as possible
 - Digitalize records, such as deeds and septic permits

FINDINGS:

SOURCES OF COUNTYWIDE TENSION

- **Differing perspectives on private property rights, freedom, and personal responsibility**
 - How do you balance individual freedoms and community concerns?
 - Will people act responsibly without government insight?
- **Differing perspectives on countywide growth**
 - Inevitable?
 - Desirable?
 - What risks does growth present and how should we manage them?
- **Differing perspectives on economic development and fiscal responsibility**
 - What is the right balance between short-term and long-term economic choices?
- **Strong political ideologies**
 - Strong perspectives in the county, including new factions with loud voices

FINDINGS: SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Interviewees identified the following specific concerns:

- **Concerns associated with recent Bonner County Planning changes**
 - “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”
- **Risk of unsustainable development in Areas of City Impact (ACI)**
 - County and cities should work together to plan and manage growth in ACIs
- **Risk of sprawl and unsustainable growth**
 - Risks include loss of rural character and open space, increased cost of services, increased cost of living, and increased car dependency
- **Risk of a “buyer beware” situation for properties and buildings**
 - Local policies should be in place to protect landowners (current and future), developers, and neighbors
- **Concerns associated with affordability of housing and living**
 - What is driving increased housing/living costs?

FINDINGS: SPECIFIC CONCERNS (cont.)

Interviewees identified the following specific concerns:

- **Threats to water quality**
 - What role for government and policy in making sure people “do the right thing” regarding septic and other threats to water quality?
- **Concerns associated with divisive politics**
 - Desire to keep this area a place where people can talk things through civilly and “work things out”
- **Geographic areas of particular concern**
 - Lakefront properties
 - Corridor along Highway 95
 - Selle Valley

FINDINGS: COORDINATING AND WORKING TOGETHER

Almost all interviewees saw great value in **improved communication, coordination, and collaboration among local governments**.

There was general agreement that more **structured collaboration among jurisdictions** would be **beneficial** and **worth pursuing**.

Interviewees generally saw **significant value in stakeholder and public education and engagement** around growth-, development-, and planning-related concerns.

FINDINGS: BENEFITS OF IMPROVED COLLABORATION

Interviewees identified the following benefits of improved countywide collaboration:

- **Improved communication and exchange of information among jurisdictions**
 - Help ensure everyone is “on the same page,” build trust, and improve working relationships
- **Ability to create value and implement innovative solutions**
 - Such as by bringing together different ideas and perspectives
- **Increased focus on common concerns and interests**
- **Improved ability to work across differences**
- **Potential integration of services, where appropriate**
 - Might increase efficiency and result in cost savings
- **Cohesion of planning and land use efforts among jurisdictions**
 - This can help avoid conflicting, duplicated, and “piecemeal” efforts

FINDINGS:

BENEFITS OF IMPROVED COLLABORATION (cont.)

Interviewees identified the following benefits of improved countywide collaboration:

- **Development of a countywide vision and coherent strategy for achieving that vision**
- **Creation and exploration of county growth, development, and land use scenarios to inform current and future decisions**
- **Improved ability to identify, pursue, and secure funding for local and countywide projects**
- **Ability to jointly pursue and achieve countywide priorities**
 - Such as economic development, affordable housing, and water quality
- **Better engagement of and resource sharing with the small communities and unincorporated areas in the county**

FINDINGS: EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION

A number of interviewees mentioned the following “successful” examples of countywide collaboration, and said they would like to see more of these kinds of efforts:

- Spot Bus
- Highway 2-200 effort
- Trail planning / Trailmix

FINDINGS: POTENTIAL APPROACHES FOR COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION

Suggestions from interviewees:

- Bonner County Area Transportation Team (BCATT)
 - A good model to learn from
- Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative
 - Another good model to learn from
- Regional Council
- Quarterly Growth Summits
 - Make sure unincorporated areas are effectively represented
- Some municipalities may eventually want to explore the option of merging
- Facilitator and/or administrative support might be helpful

FINDINGS: POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Collaborative processes take time **and can be cumbersome**, even if they are ultimately effective
- Jurisdictions have **their own processes and procedures** for doing things, which can make it hard to collaborate on certain things
- There have been **“turf wars”** in the past, which may make some people **suspicious or opposed to countywide efforts**
- You **need to ensure all entities are effectively represented** in whatever collaboration effort is created
- Each government entity has authority over its own jurisdiction. Collaborative efforts **should not compromise jurisdictional authority** or lead to **“decision making by committee”**

ONE MODEL: ZION REGION COLLABORATIVE

- **Quarterly meetings of key regional stakeholder representatives**
- **Purpose:**
 - To bring together stakeholders to proactively and collaboratively identify and take action to address current and emerging issues in the Zion region.
 - To achieve this goal, the effort will facilitate information sharing and coordination among regional stakeholders, as well as joint development and implementation of regional strategies. The effort will aim to build consensus around courses of action and mobilize diverse resources to support implementation.
- **Professionally facilitated**
- **Subcommittees:**
 - Developing strategy proposals for specific areas of concern (transportation, camping and recreation, etc.)

ANOTHER APPROACH: SCENARIO PLANNING

- Collaborative development of “potential futures” for the county
 - E.g., Rapid growth / slow growth
- Evaluation of countywide strategies against those potential futures
- Work toward “robust” countywide strategies for addressing key issues

Questions? Clarifications?

Do these findings resonate with you?

Are we missing anything important for today's conversation?

Working Break

Voting exercise For each of the countywide priorities identified, indicate whether you think:

- This should be a countywide priority.
- Greater countywide collaboration would be helpful for achieving this goal.

Sticky note exercise Use sticky notes to share your thoughts:

- Are there any additional countywide priorities we might want to consider and/or work on together?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss (and try to reach agreement on) the following:

- Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities?
 - Why or why not?
- What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?
- What would countywide collaboration look like?
 - What kind of approach would be helpful?
 - Who should be involved?
- Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?
- Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration?
 - How might those concerns be addressed?

Grab some lunch!

**Please be back in your seats by
12:10pm**

REPORT OUT: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

What did your group agree on (or disagree about):

- Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities?
 - Why or why not?
- What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?
- What would countywide collaboration look like?
 - What kind of approach would be helpful?
 - Who should be involved?
- Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?
- Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration?
 - How might those concerns be addressed?

FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

- How, if at all, would countywide collaboration be helpful?
- Should we move forward with a countywide collaboration effort? If so:
 - What should this effort look like?
 - What should it focus on?
 - Who should be involved?
 - What should the next meeting focus on?
- Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?
- What concerns do we need to address in moving forward with countywide collaboration?

NEXT STEPS

RECAP

- Key takeaways, action items, and next steps

WORKSHOP FOLLOW UP

- Leave productive suggestions for P7B on notecards
- We will send out:
 - A workshop summary, including slides and notes from the workshop, discussions, and exercise
- P7B is pursuing funding for follow up efforts
- The EDR Program is committed to helping get this effort off the ground, if this is what the group wants

Final questions, thoughts or ideas?

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THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

APPENDIX E: Results of Priorities “Voting” Exercise

Priority	Is it a countywide priority?	Countywide collaboration would be helpful for addressing this issue?
Preserve and enhance community character and cohesion	12	12
Make the county a place where people can afford to live, work, and play	15	15
Foster and invest in a vibrant economy	14	13
Preserve and enhance the county’s rural character	15	12
Protect water bodies and water quality	16	15
Develop in a thoughtful, intelligent, orderly way	12	11
Preserve the county’s greenspace, natural beauty, and opportunities for recreation and hunting	14	15
Balance private property rights with community concerns	13	11
Make government as effective, efficient, and transparent as possible	14	12

APPENDIX F: Notes from Small Group Discussion

Group 1

Q: Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities? Why or why not? What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?

- Like idea of interjurisdictional collaboration
- Would help to understand preferences of people living in different areas of county
- Would help to get facts on which to base decisions
- Would help to have all comp plans and vision statements of NGO's and other organizations in one place to get a full overview
- Need ideas on how to reach public better, maybe info in tax statement with scheduled public meetings, public workshops, as everyone opens that envelope
- Historical forms of engaging public are fading and not everyone has access or interest in electronic communications
- Communication issues with the public are the biggest challenge
- We need to identify those areas where collaboration would be most effective
- Collaboration would help to build trust between us
- Citizens don't attend commission or council meetings unless they are upset and then are often ill informed

Q: What would countywide collaboration look like? For countywide collaboration, what kind of approach would be helpful?

- Start with this large group and look for areas of collaboration and then which folks would be involved in those areas
- Both county commissioner and city council member stated they get information and concerns from the public that have been filtered through front desk folks, secretaries. (This seems like an internal problem that they should address, but apparently haven't, and are concerned about it)
- Planner stated that there is a disconnect between what the public comes into the planning office concerned about, and what is discussed in large meetings
- Need for an unbiased facilitator to get all the cards on the table, help prioritize what we collaborate on, and report our results to the media
- Use the newspaper to report updates on our progress and thus offer "good news"
- Include a letter with our news/calendar in water bill or tax bill
- Collaboration will lead to action items and research items, then assignments, then reports. This process builds relationships
- Too many meetings create a log jam
- The collaborative first needs a set of objectives

Q: Who should be involved? Who is missing from this effort?

- The "customers" the planning department works with (where the real problems are revealed)
- Water, sewer, major employers
- Fish and Game, US forest Service
- Economic development groups
- Title companies
- Bring in community stakeholders relative to the issue being worked on

- Continue to invite all cities even though they can't or won't attend
- BCATT setup is good-not too large or small, have specialty meetings where experts are brought in

Q: Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?

- Public education about planning. Education will bring planning away from politics
- Get more involvement from planning staff (they have expertise and ideas not often sought out)
- ACI's
- Smaller projects rather than large, like the comp plan
- Fiber optics and ideas for economic development

Q: Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration? How might those concerns be addressed?

- Growth, but if we plan for growth, it will be less threatening
- Avoid the “corridor” look like Coeur d'Alene
- Putting all business on Hwy 95 is a mistake
- Managing expectations of participants as codes must be followed
- Collaboration can only make suggestions and that must be recognized
- What we have been talking about sounds “huge!”

Group 2

Q: Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities? Why or why not? What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?

- Yes it would be helpful.
- It's currently hard to know what the issues are for each entity in the county because everyone is busy and they don't see each other or communicate on a regular basis.
- Helps government entities in the county know what other entities are doing
- Helps constituents know what's happening at the county level
- Provides an opportunity to develop shared projects and goals
- Provides an opportunity to simplify and develop consistency among requirements for things, like building permits, that are common to all jurisdictions
- Protecting water quality (this was not a universally agreed upon issue)
- Protecting job growth
- More effective planning for growth (whatever the growth turns out to be)
- Could make development in areas of city impact go more smoothly

Q: What would countywide collaboration look like? For countywide collaboration, what kind of approach would be helpful?

- Important for county to get input from local residents
- Regular meetings between government representatives, need to decide what “regular” means
- Use multiple channels to make contact with people / residents

Q: Who should be involved? Who is missing from this effort?

- Representatives from each governmental entity
- Representatives from prominent community groups

Q: Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?

- Regular meetings between government entities
- A regional mobility study to see how people move in and out of the county for work, play, etc.
- Better Internet in rural areas
- Bringing more businesses to the area and intern programs to replace an aging workforce. NIC might be able to help.
- Ensure new businesses match the local culture.

Q: Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration? How might those concerns be addressed?

- Finding the time to do it
- The group must prioritize collaboration
- Inflexible ideology that hinders collaboration
- Focus on shared values and be open minded

Group 3

Q: Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities? Why or why not? What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?

- Overall better information and understanding
- Ensure accurate information is shared with the public
- Ensure the public has better access to accurate information
- Ensure rural areas within the county are represented
- There is a lot more common ground than people realize
- Way to educate folks on what policy exists
- Make major topics easier to tackle
- Results would reflect and preserve the diversity of perspectives found in the county

Q: What would countywide collaboration look like? For countywide collaboration, what kind of approach would be helpful?

- Regional workshops with city and county officials facilitating that effort.
- Create networks to share information
- Quarterly or bimonthly meetings at the beginning
- Dive into major topics, with a point person in charge of each topic
- Create small focus groups to capture the diversity of public perspectives
- Chamber of Commerce can disseminate monthly newsletters and website updates to an email group
- Facilitator at each meeting
- Diverse committees
- Make a communication plan to ensure shared information isn't perceived as biased
- Possible communication networks: Bonner Bee, Sandpoint Reader, social media, Mike Brown on the radio, Chamber of Commerce radio hour, KRFY
- Media outlets may attend with the caveat of NO attribution

Q: Who should be involved? Who is missing from this effort?

- Religious organizations to help share information
- Waterfront homeowners
- Certain tax groups
- Lake Alliance (Sletager)
- Panhandle Health District
- Lakes Commission
- BCATT
- Paul Kusche
- Employers that have moved here such as Quest and Kochava
- Farm community organizations and timber groups

Q: Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?

- Defining rural
- Developing common vocabulary
- Water quality
- Brainstorm

Q: Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration? How might those concerns be addressed?

- Perception of partisanship
- That there is enough diversity of perspectives represented
- Getting REAL facts out

Group 4

Q: Would it be helpful to collaborate on countywide priorities? Why or why not? What are the benefits of greater countywide collaboration?

- Unanimous agreement that yes, it would be helpful
- Get people on the same page, starting with rural areas
- Get input from citizens for recreation and economic development
- Talking to each other to reach goals
- Develop a way to maintain the region’s “ambience”
- Collaboration on road maintenance issues
- Rural and urban areas need to coexist and influence one another positively
- We all impact one another
- Enhanced communication to the public
- Good things come from more ideas, greater citizen involvement, and more agencies involved
- Allows for better growth management in terms of economic, housing, and transportation issues
- Understanding each other’s fears
- Avoid leapfrog growth
- Establishing priorities and keeping government on task

Q: What would countywide collaboration look like? For countywide collaboration, what kind of approach would be helpful?

- Two fold approach: Leadership and communication with the public
- Have one source countywide to find out what the meeting dates, agenda and minutes are for both city and county governments and agencies
- Find ways to get a more representative sample than just the most vocal proponents or opponents
- Monthly or quarterly meetings

Q: Who should be involved? Who is missing from this effort?

- Residents for particularly contentious issues
- Seniors
- Rural places
- Other taxing districts (sewer, water, school)
- Economic interests (realtors, banks)

Q: Are there any “low hanging fruit” opportunities for countywide collaboration?

- Trailmix was a good example of collaboration
- Areas of city impact provide lots of opportunity
- Updating building codes, communicating potential changes to builders and buyers

Q: Do you have any concerns about greater countywide collaboration? How might those concerns be addressed?

- Compromise reached without citizen input
- Fear collaboration is compromise
- What are citizens giving up
- Adding another layer of meetings and talk (bureaucracy)
- Collaboration could help with this if taken seriously
- Doesn't take on outside facilitator to collaborate to meet citizen needs