SISTERS COUNTRY VISION

2020-21 Annual Progress Report
ABOUT THE VISION

Sisters Country Vision is a community visioning project designed to help Sisters Country position itself for the future, retaining the things we value most while considering what we may need to change going forward. This community conversation, started in 2018, helps us identify clear, positive directions for the future and involve local organizations, businesses and residents in making them happen. Approximately 2,000 community members participated in the original visioning project in 2018, culminating in the creation of a Vision Action Plan in early 2019.

At the heart of the Vision are 20 core strategies, which fall under four focus areas: Prosperous, Resilient, Livable, and Connected Sisters. Now, implementation projects are underway in all four Vision focus areas – from “low hanging fruit” to more ambitious projects. This report is designed to help you understand what progress has been made to date, and who’s involved in moving vision projects forward.

HOW DOES THE VISION WORK?

The Sisters Country Vision is community-led, meaning that no single leader or entity is solely responsible for making progress on vision strategies. Instead, there is community-wide collaboration between multiple partners, including local government, local agencies and special districts, non-profit organizations, businesses, and individual community members.

The Sisters Country Vision can be a useful tool for both organizations and community members:
- For organizations, the Vision is an important tool in work plan priority-setting and provides valuable data for grant applications and other types of funding proposals.
- For community members, the Vision is a tool for focusing and directing momentum to be responsive to community needs and allocating resources to help make them happen.
ABOUT THE V.I.T.

In July 2019, the Vision Implementation Team (VIT) was formed. The purpose of the VIT is to serve as a collaborative table for making and tracking progress on the Vision. VIT members meet every other month to share updates on progress, identify and dissolve barriers, identify and secure funding for project implementation, and coordinate and collaborate on community outreach and education. The VIT is critical to maintaining strong positive relationships among key vision partners, and ensuring that community leaders are accountable to the community's vision. Visit www.sistersvision.org to see the roster of 2020-21 VIT members.

The VIT is supported by staff from the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), and in 2020-21, the RARE Americorps Program. The VIT members also worked together to create this annual report, providing a regular update to the rest of the Sisters Country community on Vision progress.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & GRANT RECIPIENTS

Starting in 2019, the VIT began sponsoring the Community Partner Grant Program, with funding from the Ford Family Foundation Institute for Community Building. Community Partner Grants have helped organizations not affiliated with the VIT to make progress on Vision strategies, support new and emerging projects that are well aligned with the Vision, and catalyze community-led action. The following organizations have all received a Community Partner Grant from the VIT:

- AFSC (Age Friendly Sisters Country): to purchase general liability insurance coverage.
- STARS (Sisters Transportation and Ride Share Service): to fund background checks for new volunteers, so they could expand their volunteer pool during COVID-19.
- Three Sisters Historical Society: to produce 13 additional historical plaques for the downtown area, expanding on their self-guided historic walking tour; and to create and print a brochure that informs residents and visitors about the various images in the new Sisters 75th anniversary mural.
- SPRD (Sisters Park and Recreation District): to offset the cost of a new Spanish language class, offered at low cost to all Sisters Country residents.
WHAT'S IN A YEAR?

The Vision Implementation Team (VIT) was half-way through their second year of work together when COVID-19 public health regulations put a halt to in-person interactions, events, and other types of community engagement. As everyone was learning how to pivot during these unprecedented times, the VIT and other community partners working on Vision projects had to make some adjustments, including:

- Projects were put on hold, in favor of higher-priority projects.
- Some resources were redirected away from Vision projects to address emerging needs.
- The VIT shifted to virtual (via Zoom) bi-monthly meetings.
- The VIT canceled planned community engagement events, designed to educate and get the community's volunteer-power involved in implementing the Vision.

As the VIT now enters its third year implementing and evaluating progress on the Sisters Country Vision Action Plan, the team is excited to re-engage with one another and the community.

IMPORTANT TERMS & DEFINITIONS

There are some key terms that will be helpful to understand as you review this plan:

- **Focus Area**: One of 4 broad categories used to organize the 20 Vision Strategies. They are: Prosperous, Resilient, Livable, and Connected Sisters.
- **Vision Strategy**: One of 20 broad goals in the Vision Action Plan. Each focus area has 5 strategies.
- **Vision Project**: Individual projects or "action items". Projects are organized under the strategy they support most directly.
- **Vision Partner**: A community member or organization, not affiliated with the VIT, working independently to make progress on one or more Vision strategy.
- **Completed Project**: A Vision project that has been deemed complete by the lead partner(s) working on it.
- **Active Project**: A Vision project that one or more partners are currently working on, but has not yet been completed.
- **Inactive Project**: A Vision project that no one is working on currently. Some inactive projects may be picked up again in the future, while some may eventually be removed from the Vision Action Plan if the project is determined to be un-feasible.
PROSPEROUS SISTERS
Boosting and sustaining the community prosperity of Sisters Country.

STRATEGIES
- Four-Season Tourist & Visitor Destination
- Oregon's Artisanal Capital
- Sisters Makers District
- A Vibrant and Diverse Local Economy
- Forest Service Property Development

ACTIVE PROJECTS
- **Forest Service Property Development**: Acquisition of East Portal. Lead: City of Sisters.
- **Forest Service Property Development**: New Ranger Station Design. Leads: City of Sisters & USFS
- **Four-Season Tourist & Visitor Destination**: Increase overnight stays in shoulder seasons. Lead: Chamber of Commerce.
- **Four-Season Tourist & Visitor Destination**: Fall & winter events, Sisters Harvest Faire & Music, Arts & Culture Month. Lead: Chamber of Commerce.
- **Oregon's Artisanal Capital**: Sisters Artist Studio Tour (October 2021 and April 2022). Lead: Sisters Arts Association

WHO'S INVOLVED?
- **Project Leads**: Chamber of Commerce, EDCO, City of Sisters, Sisters Arts Association
- **Supporting Partners**: USFS, Sisters Folk Festival, Sisters Roundhouse Foundation, The Nugget, FivePine Lodge

Debbie Newport (R) has championed many efforts to improve the lives of children in Sisters Country. She promotes a prosperous community through her instrumental support of local non-profit organizations, including the Sisters Folk Festival, Circle of Friends, and C4C.
PROSPEROUS SISTERS

ACTIVE PROJECTS, CONTINUED

- **A Vibrant and Diverse Local Economy**: Determine inventory needs and best location for future light industrial lands. Leads: City of Sisters & SCED
- **A Vibrant and Diverse Local Economy**: Bring regional youth internship program, Youth Career Connect, to Sisters. Leads: SCED & Sisters School District
- **Sisters Makers District**: Makers District marketing plan. Leads: Chamber of Commerce & SCED
- **Oregon's Artisanal Capital**: Expand Public Art Installations. Lead: Sisters Arts Association

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- **Forest Service Property Development**: Rezoned north and middle Parcels. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Sisters Makers District**: Delivered a virtual/hybrid annual "Made in Sisters" event. Lead: SCED
- **A Vibrant and Diverse Local Economy**: Successfully rezoned private property for new 15-acre light industrial development. Lead: SCED
- **Four-Season Tourist & Visitor Destination**: Expanded the "My Own Two Hands" Auction, doubled fundraising in 2021. Lead: Sisters Arts Association
- **Oregon’s Artisanal Capital**: Sisters 75th Anniversary Mural. Lead: Sisters Arts Association

INACTIVE PROJECTS

- Forest Service Property Development: Design Symposium, Feasibility Study & Advisory Committee. This project moved forward faster than anticipated, so these associated projects are now unnecessary!
- Sisters Makers District: City of Sisters has decided not pursue an "official" designation or zoning changes, but various partners will continue to support informal marketing and promotion.
- Permanent Multi-use Events Center: On hold, as the community focuses on developing the Multi-use Community Center.
- Winter Festival: To host a winter festival will require an indoor events center with a larger capacity than currently available.
- Ice Rink & Fly Fishing Pond: No work started to date.
- Regional Events Partnerships: Partners are focused on local partnerships for now.
RESILIENT SISTERS

Keeping Sisters Country safe, supporting our neighbors, and being prepared for future challenges.

STRATEGIES

- Urgent Care Center
- Communications Connectivity
- Age Friendly Community
- Fire/Drought Resistant Building and Development Codes
- Disaster Preparedness and Response

ACTIVE PROJECTS

- **Fire/Drought Resistant Building and Development Codes**: Retrofits to Critical Infrastructure. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Urgent Care Center**: Assessing potential buildings and partners. Leads: Deschutes County & SCED
- **Fire/Drought Resistant Building and Development Codes**: Oregon State Legislature Adoption of recommendations. Leads: Fire District & Deschutes County
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: Annual Fire Free program expansion. Lead: Deschutes County
- **Communications Connectivity**: Improve broadband connectivity to underserved areas. Leads: SCED & COIC
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: Community food security – goal of adding “hot meals” to local free food programs. Lead: C4C Volunteers Elizabeth Kirby & Mandee Seeley

WHO’S INVOLVED?

**Project Leads**: Deschutes County, SCED, SPRD, City of Sisters

**Supporting Partners**: Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District, DLCD, Project Wildfire, AFSC, COIC, Mosaic Medical, Your Care, St. Charles

For the Sisters COVID-19 immunization pop up clinic, Chief Roger Johnson immediately volunteered the fire station and his crew.
RESILIENT SISTERS

ACTIVE PROJECTS, CONTINUED

- **Communications Connectivity**: Black Butte School District Community Broadband Needs Assessment. Lead: COIC
- **Age Friendly Community**: inventory of facilities and programs, categorized by age. Leads: SPRD & AFSC
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: HB 2927-making Office of State Fire Marshall an independent agency. Lead: Fire District
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: SB 762- wildfire preparedness bill. Lead: Fire District
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: Expand the Zone Haven Emergency Alert program, pilot study in Deschutes County and Jackson County. Lead: Fire District

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- **Communications Connectivity**: Worked with internet service providers to improve service to unserved (Camp Sherman) and underserved areas of Sisters. Lead: SCED
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: Created COVID resource share (hosted at www.sisterscommunity.org) to provide consistent and reliable information to the public. Lead: C4C
- **Age Friendly Community**: Developed new, one-stop community calendar (hosted at www.sisterscommunity.org). Leads: C4C, SPRD, and many others
- **Disaster Preparedness & Response**: Published two educational preparedness inserts in the Nugget (in Spanish and English). Lead: Fire District

INACTIVE PROJECTS

- Urgent Care Center: Partners worked diligently to develop a "Plan A" proposal, but this work unfortunately didn't pan out in 2021. It's now back to the drawing board, as we work to identify 1) a location, and 2) an operational partner (provider). With COVID, this was understandably sidelined by health care partners, who had their hands full!
- Economic Uses of Forest By-products: no work to date.
- Models for Active Forest Management: ongoing work, no significant progress in 2020-21.
- Sisters-Specific Regulatory Framework: pending passage of bills by Oregon legislature.

Sisters School District Superintendent Curt Scholl allowed an interagency incident management team (IMT) overseeing the Green Ridge Fire to use Sisters Middle School as an incident command post. By ensuring that safety protocols around COVID-19 would be adhered to, the IMT was able to use a strategic area for fire command, an important factor in managing the Green Ridge fire.
LIVABLE SISTERS

Making Sisters Country more livable for all & improving local amenities.

STRATEGIES

- Walkable Downtown
- Affordable Housing
- Integrated Transportation Options
- Expanded Trail System
- Parks, Recreation & Greenspace

WHO’S INVOLVED?

Project Leads: City of Sisters, USFS, Deschutes County, SPRD

Supporting Partners: Sisters School District, USFS, ODOT, Sisters Trails Alliance, Deschutes Trails Coalition, AFSC

ACTIVE PROJECTS

- **Walkable Downtown**: Downtown Lighting/Dark Skies Initiative. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Walkable Downtown**: Pine Street multi-use pathway project. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Walkable Downtown**: Annual snow removal contract finalized. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Affordable Housing**: Sisters Housing Plan update. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Parks, Recreation & Greenspace**: Creekside Riparian Project. Lead: City of Sisters.
- **Expanded Trails System**: Deschutes County Rural Trails System Plan and Implementation. Lead: Deschutes County
- **Integrated Transportation Options**: Deschutes County Transportation System Plan update. Lead: Deschutes County
- **Integrated Transportation Options**: Sisters Shopper Shuttle. Lead: COIC & Cascades East Transit
- **Affordable Housing**: Regional Housing Summit (Oct. 2021). Lead: COIC

AFSC (Age Friendly Sisters Country) stepped right up during COVID to launch the Sisters Transportation and Ride Share (STARS) program, offering free rides to those who cannot drive in Sisters Country.
LIVABLE SISTERS

ACTIVE PROJECTS, CONTINUED

- **Expanded Trail System**: Mt. Jefferson wilderness trail bridge. Lead: USFS
- **Parks, Recreation & Greenspace**: Inventory of community assets. Leads: SPRD & City of Sisters
- **Parks, Recreation & Greenspace**: New partnerships to aid in expanding use of current assets (i.e. SPRD and the Sisters Athletic Club). Lead: SPRD
- **Parks, Recreation & Greenspace**: Planning and development of the prospective Woodlands Project. Leads: City of Sisters, SPRD & Private Developer

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- **Affordable Housing**: Dedicated up to $400,000 funds for workforce housing. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Integrated Transportation Options**: Completed acquisition of property for Locust/Hwy 20 Roundabout. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Integrated Transportation Options**: Completed and implemented Traffic Safety Audit. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Parks, Recreation & Greenspace**: Completed Lazy Z conceptual design, integrated into the Wastewater Master Plan update. Lead: City of Sisters
- **Affordable Housing**: Awarded two years of funding from Central Oregon Health Council to pilot a new Regional Housing Council, to work on shared strategies for Affordable Housing in Central Oregon. Lead: COIC
- **Integrated Transportation Options**: Completed Cascades East Transit Regional Optimization Study. Lead: COIC
- **Expanded Trail System**: Green Ridge Trail re-route. Lead: USFS

INACTIVE PROJECTS

- Pedestrian Flag Program: no work to date.
- "Hey, let's walk there" Initiative: no work to date.
- Tree planting & re-planting: ongoing effort, no significant work in 2020-21.
- Greenspace & View Corridor: Assets inventory & standards. The City reviewed this concept as part of the Sisters 2040 Comprehensive Plan update, but no other work has been started.
- Activity Bus Route Needs Assessment: no work planned, may not be needed with the creation of the Sisters Shopper Shuttle and STARS.

Mandee Seeley restarted the Sisters Houseless Networking group to connect with our houseless neighbors in order to provide resources to meet their needs.
CONNECTED SISTERS
Creating opportunities for community members to connect, collaborate, and support one another.

STRATEGIES
- Small Town Atmosphere
- Innovation & Distinctive Programming in Schools
- Multi-Purpose Community Center
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Leadership Training & Development Emphasizing Youth

WHO’S INVOLVED?
Project Leads: C4C, SPRD, Sisters School District, Chamber of Commerce
Supporting Partners: Ford Family Foundation, Roundhouse Foundation, St. Charles Foundation, The Nugget, AFSC, Circle of Friends, C4C Community Builders

ACTIVE PROJECTS
- **Small town Atmosphere**: Monthly Let’s Talk! group discussions. Lead: C4C
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Community resource guide of social services (to be hosted at www.sisterscommunity.org & a printed guide in English & Spanish). Lead: C4C
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Create a restricted fund for interpretation and translation that is shareable with other organizations. Lead: C4C
- **Multi-purpose Community Center**: Community Conversations to determine best use/desired uses of future location. Leads: Sisters School District, SPRD & C4C
- **Youth Leadership Training & Development**: Free summer programs for youth in the parks, first round of this program completed Summer 2021. Leads: SPRD & City of Sisters

Community volunteers meet in an airport hangar due to COVID, to begin planning for the new community website which launched in December 2021. Check it out at: www.sisterscommunity.org
CONNECTED SISTERS

ACTIVE PROJECTS, CONTINUED

- **Small Town Atmosphere**: Increase shoulder season sports tournaments. Leads: SPRD & Sisters School District

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- **Small town Atmosphere**: Hosted 10 Spanish-language community conversations. Lead: C4C
- **Small town Atmosphere**: Developed & launched new community website (www.sisterscommunity.org). Lead: C4C
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Hosted Latino Community public safety convening, to explore issues of public safety and other community needs & develop strategies to address needs. Lead: C4C
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Hosted “What does it mean to be white in America?” free virtual workshop available to all Sisters Country residents in fall 2020. Lead: C4C
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Secured grant funds from St. Charles Foundation for Spanish ad (for the community website) in the Nugget and for simultaneous translation during zoom calls. Lead: C4C
- **Multi-purpose Community Center**: Passed the new school bond, opening up the possibility of utilizing the old elementary school for a future community center. Lead: Sisters School District
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Created new, low-cost community Spanish language class. Lead: SPRD & VIT Youth Member Hattie Tehan
- **Diversity & Inclusion**: Translated weekly social media posts for the Sister Community Website. Lead: VIT Youth Member Hattie Tehan

INACTIVE PROJECTS

- Community Hub Activities: not a good fit for COVID year, no work completed this year.
- Schools Marketing & Crowdfunding Campaign: no longer a priority for the District (enrollment is increasing steadily!)
- Community HR database: some early exploratory work completed, but no project lead at this time.
- Annual School "pitch night": no work to date.
- Community demographics assessment: no work to date.
- Mentorship Program: no work to date.
- Existing leadership barriers: no work to date.