

An aerial photograph of a mountain town. In the foreground, there are several large, modern buildings with dark roofs and stone accents, likely hotels or resorts, surrounded by parking lots. A road winds through the middle ground, which is filled with smaller houses and a large green golf course. The background features steep, forested mountains with patches of snow under a cloudy sky.

Our Big Sky

COMMUNITY VISION AND STRATEGY

04 November 2019
Advisory Committee Recommended Draft



photo credit: Big Sky Resort

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Big Sky Resort Area District (BSRAD) was approached to initiate, fund, and administer this Plan. Although tasked with the Plan's facilitation, the Board has not provided influence over outcomes. A subcommittee and staff graciously assisted in coordination, communication, and management of the process. Appreciation is extended to this BSRAD Subcommittee and Staff.

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A volunteer Advisory Committee (AC) was appointed to listen and absorb the community's feedback, represent the community's constituencies, assist in getting word out, and be solution-oriented. Appreciation is extended to these Advisory Committee members.

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SUPPORT & ADOPTION

The Big Sky Community Visioning Strategy is an official document. Vision, strategic, and growth plans are generally adopted, managed, and administered by municipalities. Since Big Sky is unincorporated, it is recommended that the Plan be adopted by the following entities serving Big Sky to verify their responsibility in its implementation. In addition, to remain effective among changing local, regional, and global conditions, the Plan is to be amended by the following entities per the monitoring process outlined in Chapter 3.

Counties

Gallatin County Commission
Madison County Commission

Big Sky Districts

Big Sky Fire Department (BSFD)
Big Sky Post Office (BSPO)
Big Sky Resort Area District (BSRAD)
Big Sky School District (BSSD)
Big Sky Transportation District (BSTD)
Big Sky Trails, Recreation, and Parks District (BSTRPD)
Big Sky Water and Sewer District (BSWSD)
Big Sky Zoning Advisory Committee (BSZAC)

Non-Profit Organizations

Arts Council of Big Sky (ACBS)
Big Sky Chamber of Commerce (Chamber)
Big Sky Community Food Bank (BSFB)
Big Sky Community Housing Trust (BSCHT)
Big Sky Community Library (BSCL)
Big Sky Community Organization (BSO)
Big Sky Discovery Academy (BSDA)
Big Sky Rotary Club (BSRC)
Big Sky Skating and Hockey Association (BSSHA)
Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center (BHBSMC)
Gallatin Canyon Women's Club (GCWC)
Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance (GISA)
Gallatin River Task Force (GRTF)
Montana Land Reliance (MLR)
Morningstar Learning Center (MLC)
Visit Big Sky (VBS)
Warren Miller Performing Arts Center (WMPAC)
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
Women In Action (WIA)

Corporations

Big Sky Owners Association (BSOA)
Big Sky Resort
Moonlight Basin
Spanish Peaks Mountain Club
Town Center
Yellowstone Club


Foundations

Moonlight Community Foundation (MCF)
Spanish Peaks Community Foundation (SPCF)
Yellowstone Club Community Foundation (YCCF)



photo credit: Big Sky Chamber

“In the future, Big Sky will be built out, but in a way that preserves the natural beauty of this place and is sustainable, ensuring it will be here for generations to come.”



Executive Summary

THIS PLAN IS A COMMUNITY-BUILT VISION. Developed through a dynamic, grassroots effort, the result is unprecedented—the first community-wide plan for Big Sky. The Plan champions the priorities and values of the people through four vision themes. It is forward thinking and defines what we collectively want for our future.

THIS PLAN IS PART VISION AND PART STRATEGIC PLAN. Strategies, initiatives, and projects tier from each vision theme, and work to solve community issues. This plan is not intended to serve as our community's annual budget, but instead is a long-term vision that influences our 10-year project priorities. Degrees of funding will vary as matching funds are secured, private sectors and other agencies take on vital projects, and new funding sources are identified. The Plan should not be used to preclude the support of any initiatives. Instead, the Plan provides more in-depth insight into whether funding initiatives are aligned with the community's vision.

Our project initiatives are both practical and aspirational, allowing us to tackle issues addressing health, safety, and welfare, as well as items that many communities do not adequately address, including residency and mental health. Many of these project initiatives represent things that people want to see more of and do not necessarily highlight the things that are already done well.

This Plan is adaptable, especially as project initiatives are completed, circumstances change, and new initiatives are identified to better meet our vision, strategies, or unforeseen challenges. Project initiatives and projects will need to be monitored annually, with projects being completed, added, and removed to continue to meet our community's needs.



Our People

A COMMUNITY OF WELCOMING, LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE—FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, FACES NEW AND OLD, THAT SEEK PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND TO HELP ONE ANOTHER.



Our Character

A COMMUNITY DRIVEN BY ITS SHARED VALUES THAT OFFERS A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, STEWARDSHIP, AND A SENSE OF PLACE TO ALL.



photo credit: Josh Pelczar

Our Recreation

A COMMUNITY OF OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS COMPRISED OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE HERE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY WITHIN MINUTES OF THEIR DOORSTEP.



Our Natural Environment

A COMMUNITY NESTLED IN THE CENTER OF PRISTINE NATIONAL FOREST AND ABUNDANT WILDLIFE THAT IS ACTIVELY WORKING TO GROW, WHILE ADVOCATING FOR PRESERVATION OF ITS SURROUNDING ECOSYSTEM.

VISION, STRATEGIES & PRIMARY PRIORITY INITIATIVES

PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Coordinate the development of affordable rental housing.
- Coordinate the development of affordable home ownership.

IMPROVE & MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support Water and Sewer District management and expansion of services.
- Support Transportation District management and expansion of services.

SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Provide support to emergency services (fire, EMS, sheriff, etc.).

SUPPORT & ENHANCE SOCIAL SERVICES

MAINTAIN & EXPAND PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE SERVICES

SUPPORT INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

- Support small business efforts to gain economic stability.

PRESERVE A COHESIVE, BUT DISTINCT CHARACTER THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

- Facilitate placemaking and enhance the community's assets through planning, design, and management of public spaces.

PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY/ENGAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE OPTIONS

- Research and present benefits and drawbacks of different forms of governance.
- Encourage and facilitate citizen engagement and awareness through development of a communication strategy/plan.

PROVIDE RESIDENTS WITH CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

EMBRACE BIG SKY'S DNA AS A DESTINATION, BORN OUT OF A VISITOR ECONOMY

EXPAND & ENHANCE PATHWAYS & TRAIL CONNECTIONS

- Expand pathways and trails.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.

PROVIDE ALL-SEASON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Support indoor recreational opportunities.

INCREASE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO SERVE RECREATION & MOBILITY

PRESERVE & ENHANCE PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS & WATERWAYS

IMPROVE & DEVELOP NEW PARK SPACES & GATHERING SPACES

PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT & NATURAL RESOURCES

- Protect and conserve open space.

PROTECT & ENHANCE OUR WATER RESOURCES

- Protect and conserve waterways.

WORK TO BECOME A SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITY

- Improve and expand evacuation and resiliency planning and education.

OUR EVOLUTION AS A COMMUNITY

OUR BIG SKY IS A UNIQUE PLACE. The official designation is a Census Designated Place that straddles two counties per the US Census Bureau. Seven special districts, 23 nonprofits, over 100 homeowner associations, hundreds of private sector businesses, and countless, dedicated volunteers are engaged in managing the framework of our community. As the population has grown, the projects and programs required to serve us, the citizens and visitors of Big Sky, have also increased. Today, Big Sky has a year-round population of nearly 3,000. With rapid population growth of 21% in five years (3x faster than Aspen and Sun Valley and 5x faster than Jackson Hole), Big Sky is experiencing a boom in population, visitation, and second-homeownership. In addition, we have an increasingly commuter-based workforce.

It should be noted that Big Sky is not close to maximum capacity. In 2018, the total primary and secondary residences in Big Sky equaled 4,320. Through the year 2023, 771+ residential units are planned at existing master-planned developments. This does not include new local residential construction, smaller developments, and future developments. For example, the Yellowstone Club estimates it is two-thirds through build out. Moonlight Basin is one-quarter and Spanish Peaks is one-third through build out. Many Big Sky developers have master plans in place, and the residents of Big Sky are at an inflection point, collectively realizing we would like a voice in what Big Sky looks like in 10 to 20 years.

The tool in place for citizens of a municipality is a growth policy. It is intended to guide present and future development through citizen feedback. Montana state statute requires municipalities to evaluate their growth policies every five years to accurately reflect the community's situation, needs, and goals as well as re-evaluate demographic and economic trends. Being unincorporated, Big Sky does not have this tool or requirement. However, through this Plan, we now have a vision and strategy representing our community.

It is evident that we are diligently working to protect what makes Big Sky special through volunteerism on nonprofit and special districts boards. These nonprofits and special districts have commissioned numerous studies and their success is critical to Big Sky. Each study has been specific to its organization and function without an overarching strategy, but silos of needs. This Plan is the first of its kind, a community-wide vision and strategy for our community. In the four decades since Big Sky's inception, an overarching plan for Big Sky has not been completed. Why now?

*"Big Sky should
be a model
outdoor-living
community."*

WE ARE TRANSITIONING FROM A RESORT TO A COMMUNITY.

Of the projects identified by community members, a version of "improved governance" was the fourth highest-ranking after housing, environmental conservation, and recreation. Also, 91% of the 200+ third questionnaire respondents would support educational outreach to understand

governing autonomy and incorporation.

The path to improved governance will take time; initially it will be a hybrid of efforts, and the outcome may or may not include incorporation. What we know today is that the success of this Plan's implementation is dependent on varying degrees of a governing structure.



**IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAN IS THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.**

**THE PLAN CHALLENGES EACH OF US TO HOLD
DECISION-MAKERS ACCOUNTABLE BY STEPPING UP,
PLAN IN-HAND, AND MOVING FORWARD.**





photo credit: Big Sky Chamber

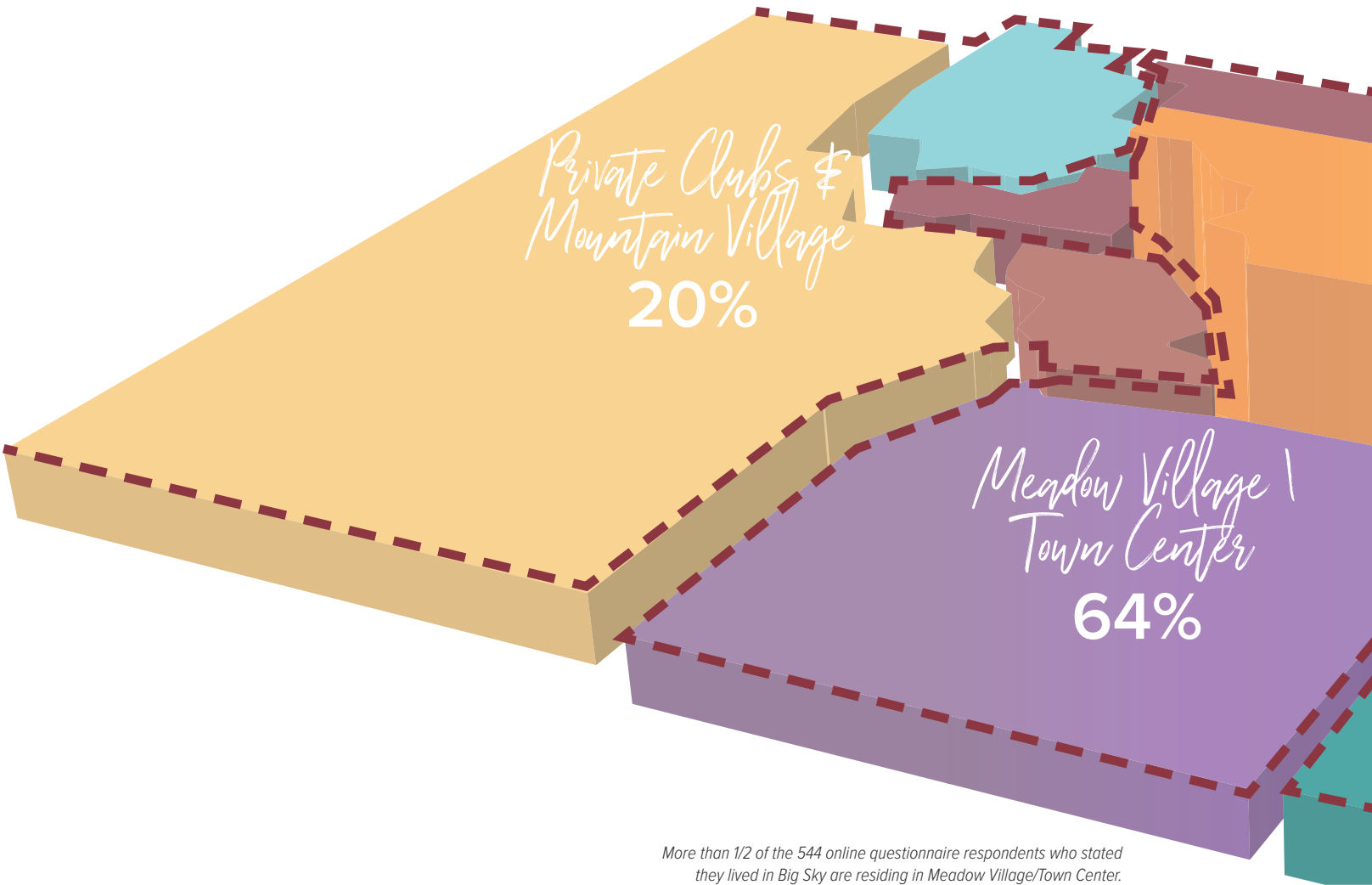
"Everyone comes from somewhere else in Big Sky; What they have in common is that they care deeply about its future."



Big Sky Talks

CHAPTER 1

BIG SKY IS A SPECIAL PLACE. Home to nearly 3,000 residents and many visitors, we chose Big Sky because of its people and character, and its recreational and natural amenities. Voices from every corner of the Big Sky community informed this visioning process and contributed to the development of strategic priorities. Engagement included board members, agencies, the development sector, environmental groups, local workforce, second-homeowners, and community members from all walks of life. Our goal was to show that each person represented and reinforced the culture of Big Sky—their input truly does matter.

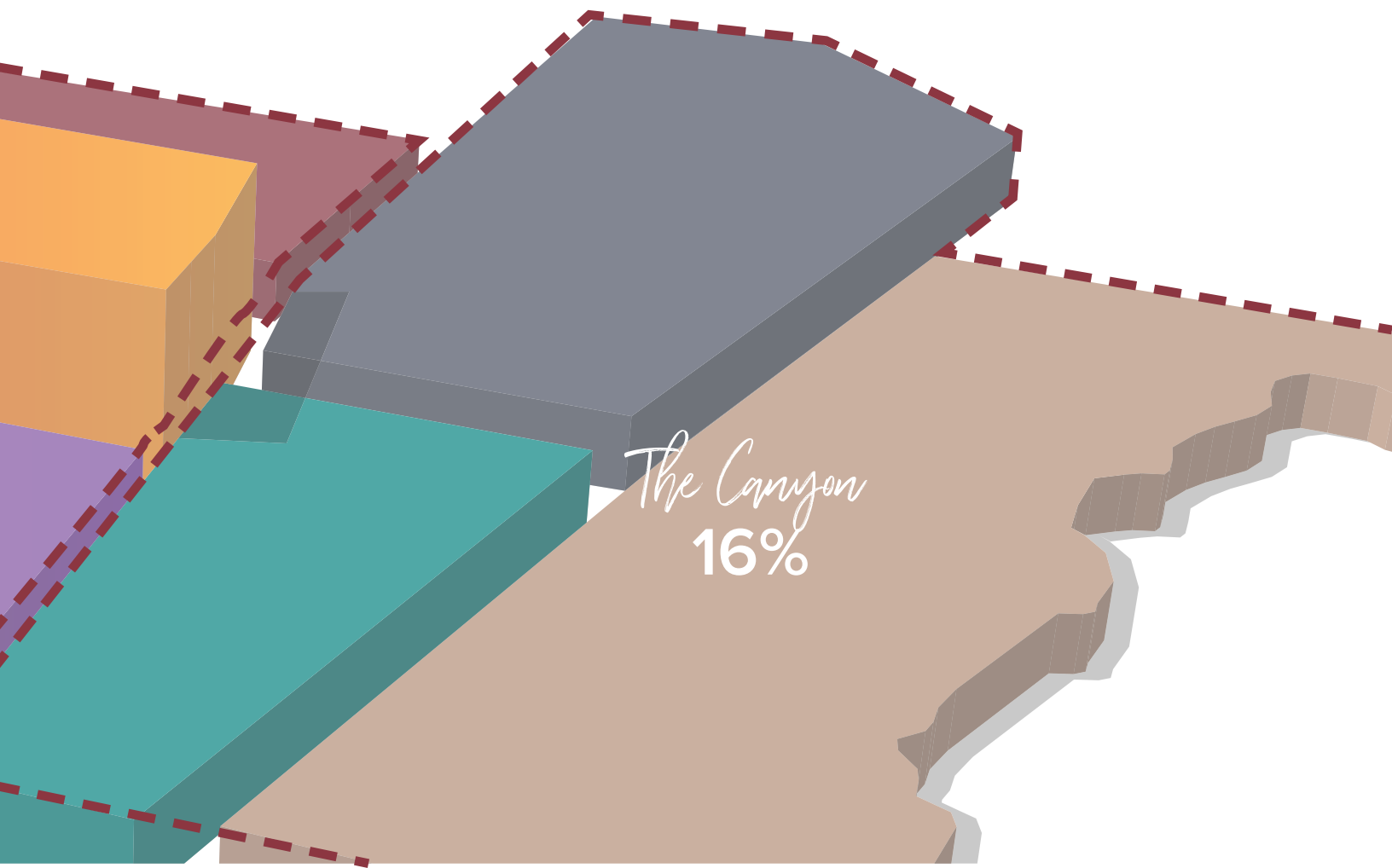


AN INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE

A plan-specific website was created and it hosted information, questionnaires, and other interactive opportunities to engage participants. Over 3,000 people visited the website throughout the process—a number greater than Big Sky’s population.

EXTENSIVE EXPOSURE

Invitations were sent to email lists, posted on bulletin boards throughout the area and online, included in community organization newsletters, topped restaurants and bars by coasters, and advertised in the local newspapers, *Explore Big Sky* and the *Lone Peak Lookout*.



ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS

150+ people participated in one-one-one interviews and small group sessions (comprised of seven to fifteen community members at a time). These intimate conversations lead to discussions about the values, opportunities, issues, and challenges facing the community.

PUBLIC EVENTS

Text polling, social media, online questionnaires, face-to-face conversations at local softball games, multiple farmers markets, high school football and volleyball games, the Mountain Filmfest, Camp Big Sky, presentations at Joint Commissioners Meetings and the Community Building Forum, and local hangouts, including the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill and Beehive Basin Brewery were all utilized throughout the process.

The Our Big Sky process fueled a community-wide conversation. In addition to the incredible number of people engaging in person and digitally, the overall exposure of this process was incredible, reaching thousands of individuals.

The outreach process included three phases that built upon one another, during which specific questions were asked through online questionnaires and polls. From the vast array of answers, common themes emerged. The information provided guided the community vision and strategic plan.

THE OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

COMMUNITY EVENTS

"Polaroids
& Pints"
at Gallatin
Riverhouse
Grill & Beehive
Basin Brewery



2020
Appropriations
Meeting

Joint County
Commission
Meetings

Community
Softball Games



Farmer's
Markets
MountainFilm
On Tour

High School
Football &
Volleyball
Games

over 350
people were involved
through engagement at
community events

IN-PERSON MEETINGS



One-on-One
Interviews



Advisory
Committee
Meetings

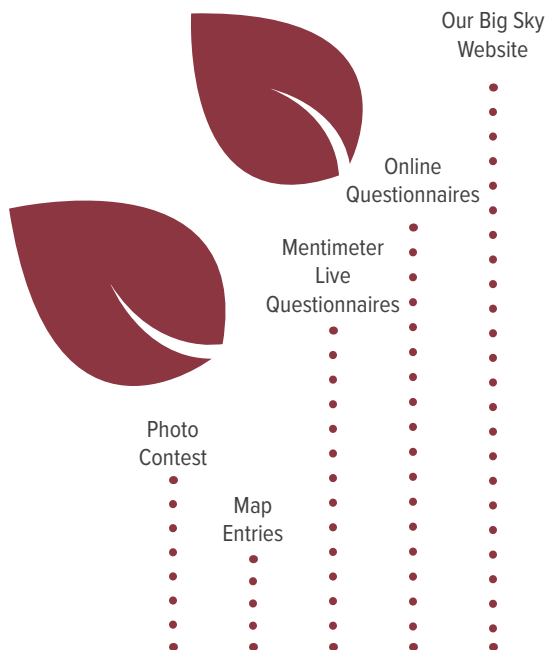


Small Group
Sessions
at Buck's T-4,
Water & Sewer
District, Big
Sky Resort, The
Wilson Hotel

Camp
Big Sky

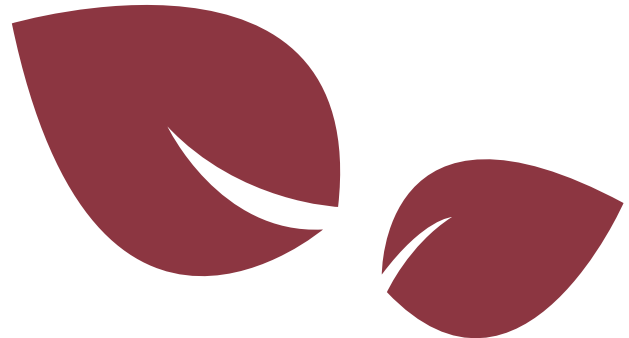
over 200
people were involved
in meetings and
one-on-ones

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

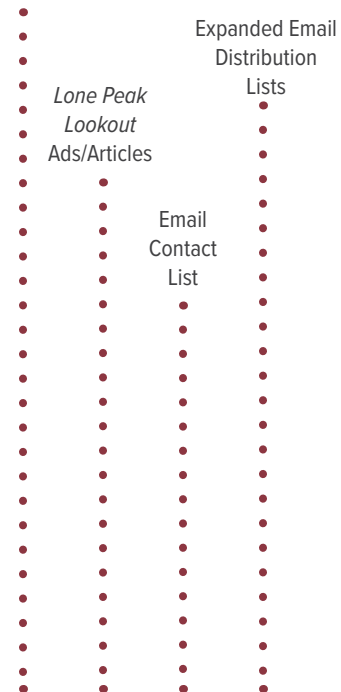


nearly 800
responses were completed
online, through menti, or
in the photo contest

EXPANDED AWARENESS



Explore Big Sky
Ads/Articles



thousands
had access to the plan
through print media and
email notifications



photo credit: Big Sky Chamber

At the 2010 census, there were 2,308 people residing in Big Sky—a population density of 10.1 people per square mile. Nearly ten years later, estimates are closer to a population of 3,000.



Big Sky Now

CHAPTER 2

WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHERE ARE WE GOING? The first visitors to the Big Sky area were Native Americans during their seasonal search for resources. By the early 1900s, a few ranchers began building cabins and staking out homesteads. For the next 70 years, Big Sky was home to this group, until 1973, when NBC newscaster Chet Huntley opened Big Sky Resort.

Big Sky is located approximately midway between West Yellowstone and Bozeman on US Highway 191, just 15 miles from the northwestern border of Yellowstone National Park, and 50 miles from the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport.

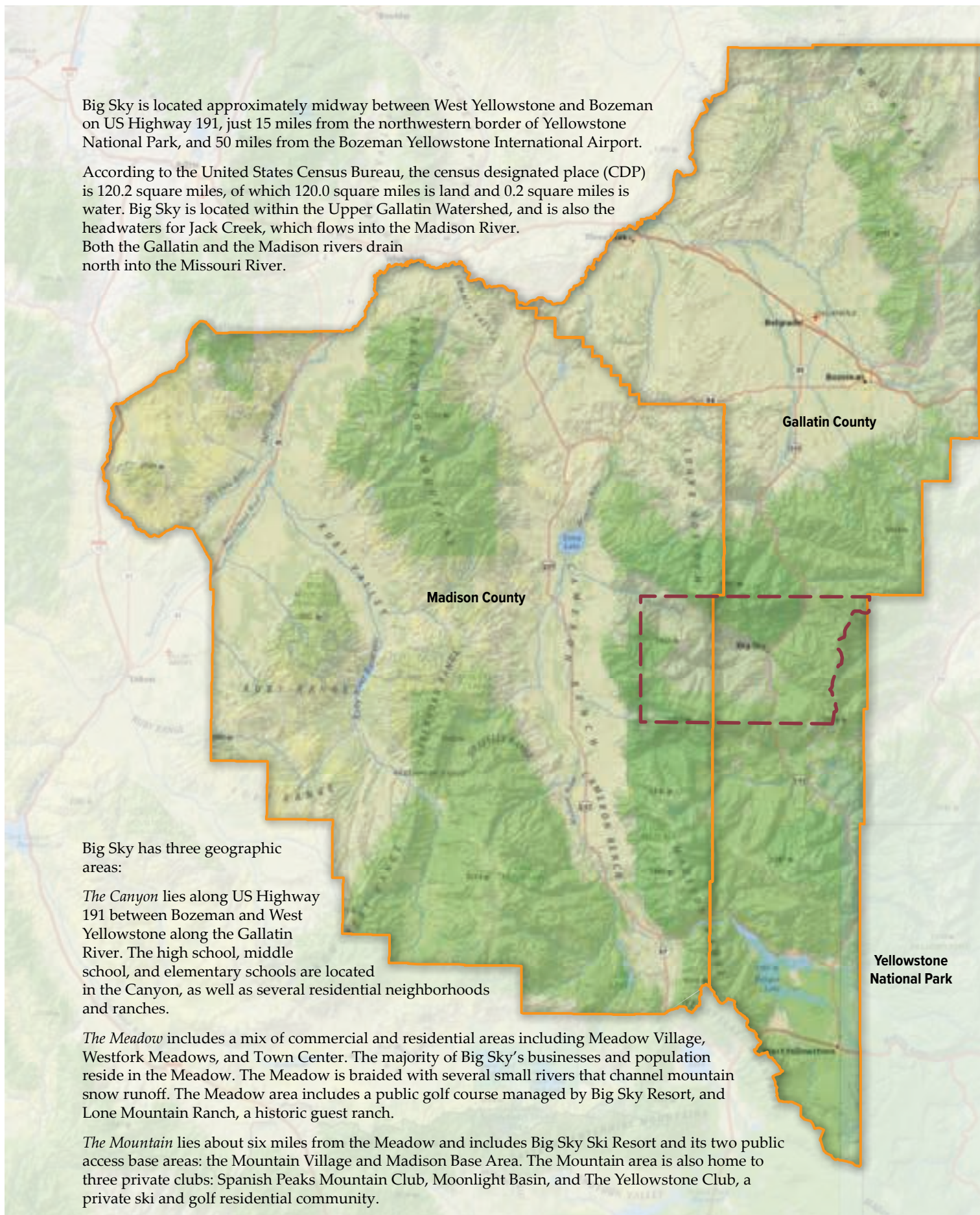
According to the United States Census Bureau, the census designated place (CDP) is 120.2 square miles, of which 120.0 square miles is land and 0.2 square miles is water. Big Sky is located within the Upper Gallatin Watershed, and is also the headwaters for Jack Creek, which flows into the Madison River. Both the Gallatin and the Madison rivers drain north into the Missouri River.

Big Sky has three geographic areas:

The Canyon lies along US Highway 191 between Bozeman and West Yellowstone along the Gallatin River. The high school, middle school, and elementary schools are located in the Canyon, as well as several residential neighborhoods and ranches.

The Meadow includes a mix of commercial and residential areas including Meadow Village, Westfork Meadows, and Town Center. The majority of Big Sky's businesses and population reside in the Meadow. The Meadow is braided with several small rivers that channel mountain snow runoff. The Meadow area includes a public golf course managed by Big Sky Resort, and Lone Mountain Ranch, a historic guest ranch.

The Mountain lies about six miles from the Meadow and includes Big Sky Ski Resort and its two public access base areas: the Mountain Village and Madison Base Area. The Mountain area is also home to three private clubs: Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, Moonlight Basin, and The Yellowstone Club, a private ski and golf residential community.





Employment

Big Sky Resort is our largest employer, and one of the biggest in the state of Montana. The next largest employers in the area include the private clubs of The Yellowstone Club, Spanish Peaks Mountain Club, and Moonlight Basin. Outside of the resorts and private clubs, small businesses, including restaurants and clothing, gift, grocery, and outdoor sporting stores, serve local residents and visitors. As with many communities experiencing growth, a major local industry in Big Sky includes construction and trade companies, architects, property managers, and real estate agencies.

Business & Tourism

The Big Sky & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Information Center is located at the intersection of US Highway 191 and Lone Mountain Trail. The facility provides a home for the Chamber of Commerce and Visit Big Sky, the official destination marketing and management nonprofit organization for Big Sky. It includes information for the Big Sky area and Yellowstone National Park. It also houses a small museum that highlights the area's homesteading, ranching, and tourism history. The freestanding museum in Big Sky is The Crail Ranch Homestead Museum in the Meadow area.

A community of outdoor enthusiasts goes hand-in-hand with embracing Big Sky's DNA, having been born a tourist destination and largely dependent on a tourism economy. Visit Big Sky works to develop and promote Big Sky as a year round, outdoor recreation-based destination.

Infrastructure

The Water and Sewer District, Gallatin and Madison counties, the Big Sky Owners Association (BSOA), and 100+ HOAs provide our horizontal infrastructure, maintenance, and services. The Transportation District, Post Office, and Community Housing Trust develop and manage integral, non-municipal services.

Health & Emergency Services

Local health services include the Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center and pharmacy. In addition, we are served by a medical clinic, two dentists, physical therapists, and chiropractors. The local Big Sky Fire Department provides emergency medical services. Sheriff services, 911, and Search and Rescue are provided by Gallatin County.

Schools & Community Services

The area is served by Big Sky School District #72, a K-12 public school district, and Big Sky Discovery Academy, a PreK-12 non-profit private school. Morningstar Learning Center is the non-profit, full-time, state-

licensed daycare and preschool serving Big Sky. The Big Sky Chapel serves a number of religious denominations. The Big Sky Community Food Bank assists the food-insecure. Plans to address the behavioral and mental health in our community are forthcoming.

Parks & Recreation

The Big Sky Trails, Recreation, and Parks District partners with the nonprofit Big Sky Community Organization to expand, enhance, and manage our trails, parks, and forthcoming Community Center. The 44-acre Big Sky Community Park features ball fields, a skateboard complex, a disc golf course, areas for biking and Nordic skiing, and hosts a children's summer day camp. The Montana Land Reliance works to convert private lands to public open spaces in the area. The Wildlife Conservation Society is working to make Big Sky Bear Aware. The Gallatin Invasive Species Alliance collaborates with and educates the community to stop the spread of noxious weeds and invasive species. The Gallatin River Task Force monitors the Big Sky watershed, streamside vegetation, improves recreational access along the River, and hosted the water management forum.

Culture & Arts

Big Sky's public gathering and cultural spaces include the Community Library, providing thousands of books and public technology access, the Lone Peak Cinema, and The Warren Miller Performing Arts Center. Restaurants, breweries, bars, and coffee shops act as secondary gathering spaces and help foster our sense of community.

A Community Center is expected to open within the next few years and will include multi-use recreation areas, learning and fitness rooms, an arts and cultural center, an outdoor refrigerated ice rink (managed by the Big Sky Skating and Hockey Association), and an outdoor music pavilion. In the summer, The Arts Council of Big Sky presents weekly free music concerts and the Town Center hosts a weekly farmers market. Several art galleries feature the work of local and regional artists. In recent years, additional entertainment opportunities have settled in Big Sky including Pro Bull Riding, TEDx, Big Sky Big Grass, and Moonlight Musicfest.

Private Sector Foundations

Three private sector foundations in Big Sky include the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation, Spanish Peaks Community Foundation, and Moonlight Community Foundation. In addition, the Big Sky Rotary Club and its Foundation, the Gallatin Canyon Women's Club, and Women In Action, support local initiatives and manage programs and projects.



VALUES AND VISION SET THE STAGE FOR PROJECTS.

The vision statements set a structure for a series of strategies. The strategies are supportive of the vision statements and are to remain static through the five-year planning period. As our community continues to grow, it must decide how to capitalize on change while recognizing that its future wellbeing is affected by the decisions and policies made today; Big Sky Moves Forward, will help prioritize that effort.

Why are our common values important? When asked early on what the community loves about Big Sky, key themes were obvious—ultimately creating the overarching vision themes: Our People, Our Character, Our Recreation, and Our Natural Environment.

Endless Outdoor Activities
Fun-Loving, Like-Minded People
Access to Nature • Inspiring Scenery
Community Involvement • Friendly
Small Town Character
Personal and Economic Opportunity
Uncrowded • Secluded • Mountain Life
Unique Location • Community Events
Housing Affordability
Water and Sewer • Traffic Safety
Pathways • Workforce Housing
Indoor Recreational Opportunities
Dining and Retail Opportunities
Short-Term Rental Limits
Sustainable Growth Management
Well-Connected • Healthy
Accessible to All
Beautiful • Sustainable • Thriving
Environmentally-Conscious
Natural Beauty Preservation

Our People

A COMMUNITY OF WELCOMING, LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE—
FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, FACES NEW AND OLD, THAT SEEK
PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND TO HELP ONE ANOTHER.

More than any other vision theme, Our People is where most of us believe there is room for improvement. After all, community is created by Our People. This vision encompasses public services and infrastructure. It is where the majority of public funding resources are allocated, and it is where Big Sky's public, private, and nonprofit agencies constantly collaborate.

Strategies & Initiatives

PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

As our population has grown, the projects and programs required to serve residents and visitors have increased. Workforce housing, both rental and ownership, is essential to becoming the community we desire. Availability of suitable housing is essential not only to providing excellence in the service sector, but economic resiliency. In addition, a broad array of housing options is recommended to provide for a variety of age groups, such as those just starting out, those wishing to make a lifestyle move, and those starting a second career.

IMPROVE & MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Many public and private projects and programs are not possible without additional water development and improvements to the current wastewater system. Upgrading the water and sewer treatment system, addressing septic and small community systems, expanded water and sewer into the canyon, and developing strategies for mitigation of water rights are included in the project list.

Transportation services and infrastructure continue to be an area of concern for us. Many road safety infrastructure improvements will be provided by the much-needed TIGER Grant and a transit center will be provided by the forthcoming Community Center. However, expanded regional connections and bus frequency, transit alternatives including ride-sharing and multimodal hubs are among the projects suggested. We support efforts to improve public transit and roadway safety.

SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Key services from Big Sky's special taxing districts provide a high quality of life for residents and visitors. From emergency services to education, these districts are encouraged to continue their high-level operations and forward-thinking planning. This Plan further cements that Big Sky's special districts are providing vital and worthy services to Our People.

SUPPORT & ENHANCE SOCIAL SERVICES

The strategies recognize social services as integral components in the social and economic success of Big Sky. Extended affordability to the workforce including young families and middle management remains a priority for us.

MAINTAIN & EXPAND HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The behavioral, mental health, and substance abuse issues facing Big Sky, and mountain communities across the Rocky Mountain region, are complex. Public health, in its entirety, has been identified as a core element of communities that thrive. The opportunity to create a healthy community and shape a better place for future generations, is an admirable recommendation.

Our Character

A COMMUNITY DRIVEN BY ITS SHARED VALUES THAT OFFERS
A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY,
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, STEWARDSHIP,
AND A SENSE OF PLACE TO ALL.

Whether it be America's Alp, Basecamp to Yellowstone, the Biggest Skiing In America™, or Private Powder, Big Sky has earned many titles showcasing the awe-inspiring elements that make it special. It is Our Character that is the backbone of our authentic community. Everyone from the ski bum to the retired CEO can feel at home here. Retaining our beloved sense of place and quality of life is paramount to our residents and visitors.

The opportunity to grow and mature, maintain an inclusive community, plus set the standard for quality amenities, is the challenge before Big Sky today. Thoughtful, intentioned guidance with this plan-in-hand will help keep decision-makers on track.

Strategies & Initiatives

SUPPORT INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

To further create economic sustainability, it is important that our businesses and the amenities they provide, grow into a strong, vibrant retail and dining experience. Critical to Big Sky's economic success is the viability and sustainability of our businesses. Therefore, supporting local businesses, entrepreneurship, and continued efforts to broaden and diversify businesses will contribute to resiliency and to help limit shoulder seasons. Most importantly, economic growth and availability of diverse housing work in tandem and are critical to accommodate the needs of our current businesses by supporting a local workforce.

PRESERVE A COHESIVE, BUT DISTINCT CHARACTER THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

A considerable amount of work has already gone into leveraging growth to provide a higher level of service to both residents and visitors. From the business community to the many social, economic, and cultural activities, Big Sky is actively working to enhance our sense of community while attracting visitors. This eclectic effort is commendable and adds to Big Sky's unique sense of place and character.

PROVIDE RESIDENTS WITH CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Big Sky nonprofits are actively striving to engage a wide range of community members across generations and income ranges through cultural opportunities by fostering a culture of creativity. The Arts Council's Music in the Mountains Series, the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center, and the Community Library bring people together, provide gathering places, and opportunities for connection. As Big Sky grows and evolves, the number and variety of these opportunities where people meet, greet, and interact outside of home or work environments will need to expand.

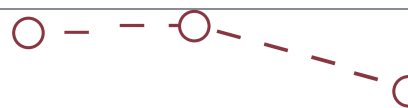
PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY & GOVERNANCE OPTIONS

Transparency is increasingly important in our Big Sky community. Especially important is reaching out to groups that might not always have had a voice in community leadership circles. Through robust engagement, community leaders should aim to educate all corners of the community and grow emerging leaders, especially from within populations that may not have participated previously. Many of the recommended projects focus on new ways to ensure continuous dialogue and improve the transparency of decision-making.

We are at a point in Big Sky's trajectory where we, Big Sky's community members, have a strong desire to be involved in shaping Big Sky's future. The decisions today will impact Big Sky's evolution. Likewise, this Plan's success is dependent on an administrative capacity for adhering to the long-term vision.

EMBRACE BIG SKY'S DNA AS A DESTINATION, BORN OUT OF A VISITOR ECONOMY

Advocate for Big Sky as a year-round destination with recreational and cultural opportunities for all users.



Our Recreation

A COMMUNITY OF OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS COMPRISED OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE HERE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY WITHIN MINUTES OF THEIR DOORSTEP.

Big Sky is firmly rooted in its relationship to the surrounding national forest, its trails and parks, access to the Gallatin River and its tributaries, the ski resort, and spectacular mountain views. This relationship is both our past and our future. It is critical to integrate this relationship into every aspect of our community's decision-making process.

It should also be noted that businesses based on recreation in Big Sky rely on land and waterway access to allow them to innovate and succeed. These recreation-based businesses build a stronger economic base for our community and as discussed under Our Character.

As Big Sky moves forward, everyday recreation is to be thoughtfully integrated into the community's lifestyle. To accomplish this we should focus on making nature accessible and providing four-season opportunities.

Big Sky attracts residents and visitors alike because of the recreational lifestyle we offer. The attraction is not only the variety of activities, but also the ease of accessing those activities. It is important to make it easy for everyone to access recreational opportunities.

Strategies & Initiatives

EXPAND & ENHANCE PATHWAYS & TRAIL CONNECTIONS & PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS & WATERWAYS

Regional coordination with public and private partners is critical to enhancing and expanding sustainable access. Strategies concentrate on expanding and enhancing our pathways to improve connectivity, safety, and mobility. These strategies improve what we have, ensure there are no gaps, and connect our community with adjacent public lands. They also include new and improved access points to our waterways, the maintenance and expansion of our park system, and increased transportation options to serve recreation.

PROVIDE FOUR-SEASON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & IMPROVE & DEVELOP NEW PARK & GATHERING SPACES

Further strategies complement development projects and gathering spaces to integrate Our Recreation into indoor, all-season development opportunities. More purpose-driven social space is needed in Big Sky. In our community, where many residents live in compact spaces, whether by choice or by economic necessity, the provision of new types of community spaces could provide both a needed amenity as well as a social space. This includes considering safe indoor recreation and gathering spaces for our youth, young families, seniors, workers, residents, and visitors.

INCREASE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO SERVE RECREATION & MOBILITY

Short-term project strategies are necessary to achieve the long-term vision like providing new transportation options to access our recreational amenities including trails, rivers, and parks. There are many ways to harness local resources to improve our community or add new opportunities to stimulate thoughtful progress to serve the community's residents and visitors. Aspirational projects include the trail connecting Big Sky to Yellowstone National Park or a gondola connecting the Town Center to Mountain Village.



Our Natural Environment

A COMMUNITY NESTLED IN THE CENTER OF
PRISTINE NATIONAL FOREST AND ABUNDANT WILDLIFE
THAT IS ACTIVELY WORKING TO GROW, WHILE ADVOCATING
FOR PRESERVATION OF ITS SURROUNDING ECOSYSTEM.

It is an honor to live, work, and play in this pristine environment. As the community grows, the stresses on our surrounding natural environment increase. It is our desire as a community that social and economic needs of both present and future generations not come at the expense of Big Sky's surrounding natural environment. It is a tall order, but not impossible, to provide the quality of life that we, the residents and visitors, expect and desire while preserving our surrounding natural environment. In addition, we must be diligent in proactively addressing the impact of natural disasters.

Strategies & Initiatives

PROTECT & ENHANCE OUR WATER RESOURCES

The strategies recognize that Big Sky is a true upper watershed headwaters community. The Gallatin River and its tributaries flow through the community providing blue-ribbon-waterways for world renowned cutthroat trout fisheries. In addition, the watersheds that flow from the area provide drinking water for people downstream. As a headwaters community, Big Sky aspires to set the bar for the highest standard of responsible water use. However, this oftentimes demands moral and cost decisions tied to development. To mitigate those issues, this Plan serves as testament that protecting and conserving Our Natural Environment is the will of the Big Sky community. The community's development standards should act as an extension of this will by enforcing policies and encouraging water conservation and efficiency.

PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Big Sky is located within a wild, natural environment, which inherently creates conflict. Appreciation and protection of the environment means implementing policies controlling the impacts that our actions have on the forest and wildlife, as well as sensibly preparing for the impacts they can have on us.

Whether it is a bear rooting through your garbage or increased light pollution drowning out the starry night sky, growth in this natural environment will

create issues that require the application of clear and concise policies. We should work to protect habitat, wildlife, movement corridors, and scenic vistas. When development occurs, it should be sized, located, and designed to avoid or limit impacts to wildlife and the natural environment.

WORK TO BECOME A SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Big Sky is poised to put into practice what it values—a sustainable relationship with Our Natural Environment. Short-term this is possible by the strategies that concentrate on expanding our open space and improving our natural habitat. These strategies protect our world-renowned rivers and streams and the aquatic habitats that support our fisheries. Further, these strategies include wildlife friendly design requirements and vegetation management. Big Sky is also primed to work towards community-wide sustainability, including reducing our environmental footprint, conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and increasing recycling.

If our community is to thrive in this sensitive and pristine environment, we must lead sustainable and resilient lives ourselves. The strategies focus on lessening our imprint and impact on the natural environment, as well as preparing for and reducing the risk from natural disasters. Resiliency projects will need to address the entire community including emergency access, evacuation plans, and hazard mitigation.

The culture of our community should make it obvious to both residents and visitors that there is a valued relationship with the natural environment in Big Sky. In other words, it is not only for recreation and economic benefit, it is an extension of who we are in development and lifestyle. Above all, Big Sky is in part defined by the imprint that its natural environment leaves on everyone who spends time here. That relationship demands creating and maintaining conditions in which people and nature can exist in harmony.





photo credit: Big Sky Chamber





Big Sky Moves Forward

CHAPTER 3

IDEAS RANGE FROM SIMPLE TO ASPIRATIONAL, short- to long-term, and require coordination, new funding sources, and partnerships with multiple agencies. This plan is a resource for the entire community and a guide for decision-makers to understand the community's priorities, support its vision, and work together to best serve Big Sky.

These strategies illustrate where we will focus our energy and capital. It is not intended to serve as our community's annual budget, but instead as a 10-year vision that influences priorities and allocation of long-range funding. While the vision and strategies are enduring, flexibility increases with our project initiatives and representative projects. While some project initiatives are more straightforward to implement, others will need pre-planning and a longer-term approach. Our project initiatives allow us to tackle issues addressing health, safety, and welfare as well as items that many communities do not adequately address, including residency and mental health. Some of these project initiatives represent things that people want to see more of and doesn't necessarily highlight the things that are already done well (i.e. cultural opportunities, tourism, and fire and public safety).

This Chapter should not be used to preclude support of any initiatives. Instead, it provides more in-depth insight into whether funding initiatives are aligned with the community's vision. This Chapter is adaptable, especially as project initiatives and projects are completed, circumstances change, and new initiatives are identified to better meet our vision, strategies, or unforeseen challenges. **Most importantly, our action plan must remain community-driven and guided by regional and community partnerships to be successful.**

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS FUNDED BY MULTIPLE SOURCES

County Property Tax. Property tax and mill levies are collected by Gallatin and Madison counties and distributed locally through services or on behalf of the special districts like the Fire or School Districts.

Philanthropy. The many non-profit organizational entities, businesses, and three private foundations have the ability to fundraise. Philanthropy is a growing revenue source for Big Sky.

State and Federal Grants. Big Sky's capacity for funding goes beyond the local governing entities to state and federal grants, for example, the TIGER grant.

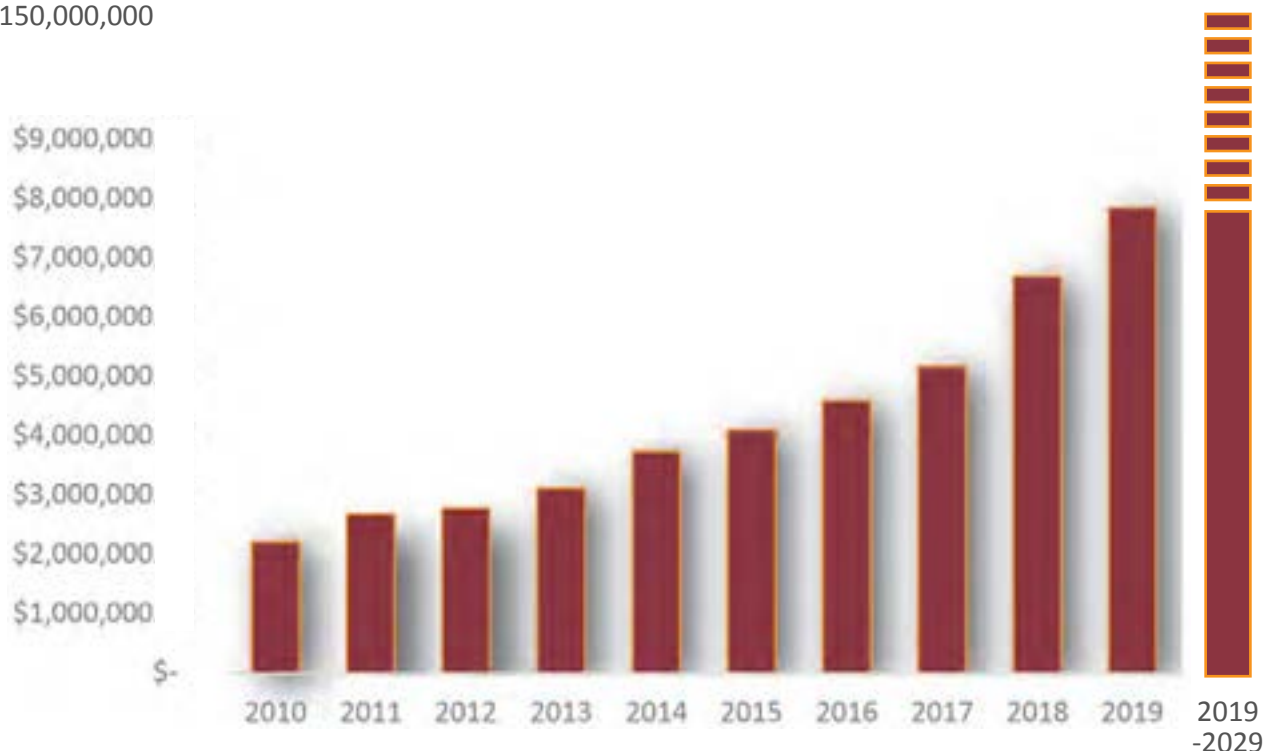
Resort Tax. The resort tax is an important supplementary source of tax collected and distributed locally. This plan focuses primarily on resort tax funding since it has been the primary source of capital and operational funding for the community.

Collection of Resort Tax. Businesses located within the boundaries of the BSRAD are required by law to collect the 3% resort tax on all luxury goods and services sold with the exception of specific exempted items. All rental agreements for lodging facilities, except rental agreements for a duration longer than 30 days, are subject to the 3% resort tax. The tax is remitted by local businesses to the BSRAD monthly or quarterly. As of 2019, the resort tax has generated more than \$68 million for the community of Big Sky.

Appropriation of Resort Tax. The Board appropriates funding to community projects and services annually. If an organization or its programming is located within the boundaries of the BSRAD and provides a service, program, or project that provides for the public health, safety, and welfare, tourism development, and infrastructure of the BSRAD community, it may apply for an appropriation of resort tax funds. Over the past 20 years, \$10.14 million was appropriated to the Fire Department, \$7.25 million to the Water and Sewer District, and \$7.24 million to the Transportation District.

The purpose of the appropriation request must be within the District's Ordinance No. 99-01, as amended, and must benefit the community at large. The applicant must be a governmental unit, corporation, or limited partnership with the capability of being legally bound by the Appropriation Agreement. Submitted applications are open for public review to learn what services, programs, and projects entities are seeking to accomplish. In a series of public meetings, the Board clarifies and appropriates funding. This will now be enhanced by new processes and this plan.

\$150,000,000



Resort Tax Collections, 2010 to 2019, future estimate based on a continued average growth rate from 2010 to 2019

OUR VISION IN ACTION—STRATEGIES & INITIATIVES

Our Big Sky in its entirety should be used to understand and make decisions on where to focus our resources. Think of the plan chapters as Big Sky's home (refer to diagram below):

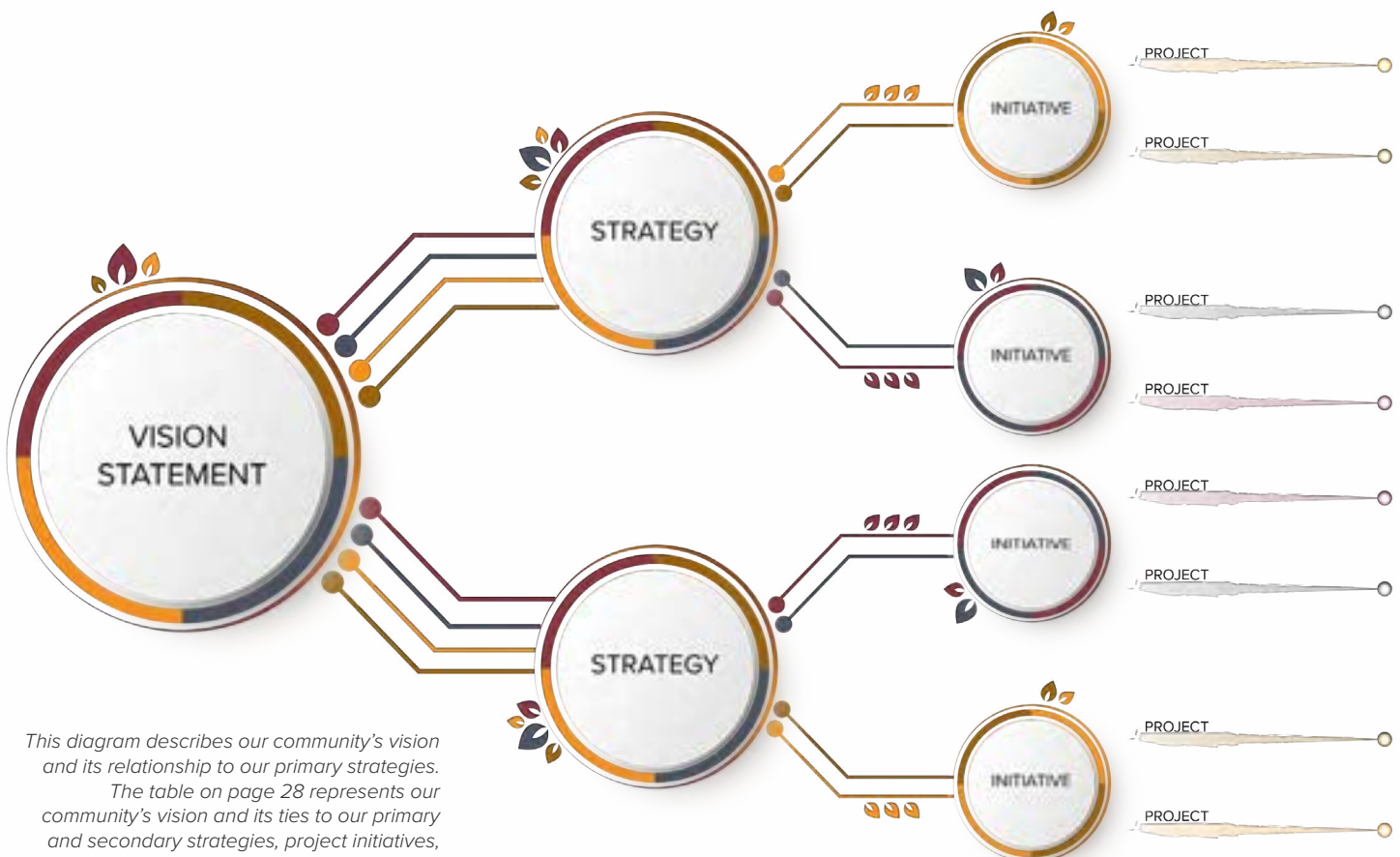
1. **VISION STATEMENTS** are the foundation—independent and static;
2. **STRATEGIES** are the framework—supportive and inflexible;
3. **INITIATIVES** are the finishes—accessible and adaptable; and finally,
4. **PROJECTS** are the furnishings—changing and evolving over time.

The vision statements are expanded into a series of strategies, which are then achieved by initiatives and changing projects.

Initiatives represent how we will achieve the vision and are listed in a general order. They also fall into two categories, primary and secondary.

PRIMARY INITIATIVES address factors that are both important and urgent. These initiatives are important due to public sentiment, consistency with the vision, relation to existing plans, as well as urgency addressing health, wellness, risk, and scarcity.

SECONDARY INITIATIVES help support the primary initiatives and the corresponding vision.



This diagram describes our community's vision and its relationship to our primary strategies. The table on page 28 represents our community's vision and its ties to our primary and secondary strategies, project initiatives, and responsibility. Together, they illustrate our transition from a resort to a community.

Our People's primary strategies build on families and friends, faces new and old, with actions that increase our personal connections and help one another and ensure our health and safety. The strategies recognize that it is our residents and employees that create our community. Workforce housing, both rental and ownership, is one of our top strategies and is essential to becoming the community we desire. This strategy includes assistance with a variety of programs and support to construct additional units, as identified in the housing study. These strategies are not possible without additional water development, water conservation, and improvements to our wastewater system. As our community grows, other services that support a high quality of life, from education to emergency services, must come along with it. This will continue to include a focus on fire and other services, including operations, equipment, and replacement as illustrated in the ten-year budget. Secondary strategies focus on what we need to keep our community healthy, from daycare and the library, to mental health. These strategies will be undertaken by private, nonprofit, and public entities throughout Big Sky, from the Canyon, to the Meadow, and the Mountain. Key private workforce housing projects will be located throughout the community with close proximity to the place of employment. Other targeted housing projects will focus on a location closer to community services in the Meadow and the Canyon.

Our Character's primary strategies are driven by shared values that include projects offering a higher quality of life, access to opportunity, sustainable economic prosperity, stewardship, and a sense of place to all. These strategies focus on how we govern ourselves, create new ways to ensure continuous dialogue, foster a culture of creativity, improve the transparency of decision-making, address funding, and the provision of services. Our strategies support projects that create an environment that is truly Big Sky by supporting local businesses, entrepreneurship, and spaces for us to gather and express the character and culture of our community. Secondary strategies include supporting our art, music, and cultural activities, all of which are essential for a vibrant community.

Our Recreation includes projects that allow us to play within minutes of our doorstep. The strategies concentrate on expanding and enhancing our pathways to improve connectivity, safety, and mobility. These strategies improve what we have, ensure there are no gaps, and connect our community internally and with adjacent public lands. This is complemented by recreation projects that provide all-season recreational opportunities ensuring safe indoor recreation opportunities for our youth, elderly, families, workers, residents, and visitors. Our secondary strategies serve to provide new transportation options to access our amenities. They also include new and improved access points to our public lands and the maintenance and expansion of our park system. These strategies will be undertaken by private, nonprofit, and public entities throughout Big Sky, from the Canyon, to the Meadow, and the Mountain. Key vertical construction for use by the entire community will be focused more toward the Meadow and Canyon areas.

Our Natural Environment strives to preserve and enhance the larger area that our community is located within as well the wildlife that coexists with us. The strategies concentrate on expanding our open space and improving our natural habitats. These strategies protect our world-renowned rivers and streams and the aquatic habitats that support our fisheries. The strategies recognize that for our community to thrive in this sensitive and pristine environment, we must lead sustainable and resilient lives. Strategies focus on lessening our imprint and impact on the natural environment, including water, energy, emissions, and preparing for and reducing the risk from natural disasters. Secondary strategies include wildlife friendly design requirements, vegetation management, and an increased focus on sustainability and light pollution. These strategies will be undertaken by private, nonprofit, and public entities throughout Big Sky, from the Canyon, to the Meadow, and the Mountain. Key sustainability projects will focus on our built environment and our sensitive natural resources and waterways. Resiliency projects will need to address the entire community, including emergency access, evacuation plans, and hazard mitigation.

STRATEGY 2: PROVIDE FOUR-SEASON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGY 1: PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

STRATEGY 2: IMPROVE & INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY 1: EXPAND &
ENHANCE PATHWAYS &
RAIL CONNECTIONS

STRATEGY 1: PROTECT
WILDLIFE HABITAT &
NATURAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY 2: PROTECT
& ENHANCE OUR WATER
RESOURCES

STRATEGY 3: WORK TO
BECOME A SUSTAINABLE &
RESILIENT COMMUNITY

STRATEGY 1: SUPPORT
INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESS

STRATEGY 2: PRESERVE A COHESIVE
BUT DISTINCT CHARACTER
THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

STRATEGY 3: PROVIDE
TRANSPARENCY &
GOVERNANCE OPTIONS











STRATEGY 3: SUPPORT
HIGH-QUALITY COMMUNITY
& EMERGENCY SERVICES

STRATEGY 2: MAINTAIN
STRUCTURE









photo credit for Recreation Strategy 1: Casey Clay

Our People

ID#	Initiatives	Cost Range	Responsibility and Partners
STRATEGY 1. PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING			
 P1	Coordinate on development of affordable rental housing.	\$\$\$	BSCHT, BSWSD, private sector, counties, state and federal resources
 P3	Coordinate on development of affordable home ownership.	\$\$\$	BSCHT, BSWSD, private sector, counties
STRATEGY 2. IMPROVE & MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE			
 P2	Support Water and Sewer District management and expansion of services.	\$\$\$	BSWSD, HOAs, private sector, counties
 P7	Support Transportation District management and expansion of services.	\$\$\$	BSTD, Chamber, VBS, BSCO, HOAs, private sector, counties, state
 P10	Improve and expand cellular and/or fiber infrastructure.	\$\$	Chamber, private sector, counties
STRATEGY 3. SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES			
 P4	Provide support to emergency services (Fire, EMS, Sheriff, etc.).	\$ - \$\$\$	BSFD, Gallatin County Sheriff, Gallatin County Emergency Management, Search and Rescue
 P5	Support the school district, post office, and community library management and expansion of services.	\$-\$\$	BSSD, Post Office, BSCL
STRATEGY 4. SUPPORT & ENHANCE SOCIAL SERVICES			
 P6	Address affordable daycare, food bank access, and other social services.	\$ - \$\$	BSFB, MLC, BSDA, WIA
 P9	Promote behavioral and mental health programs and substance abuse programs.	\$ - \$\$	BSCO, WIA, BHBSMC, counties
STRATEGY 5. MAINTAIN & EXPAND PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE SERVICES			
 P8	Support expanded local preventative healthcare services.	\$\$	BSCO, BHBSMC, private sector

Our Character

ID#	Initiatives	Cost Range	Responsibility and Partners
STRATEGY 1. SUPPORT INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES			
 C2	Support small business efforts to gain economic stability.	\$\$	Chamber, VBS
STRATEGY 2. PRESERVE A COHESIVE, BUT DISTINCT CHARACTER THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY			
 C1	Facilitate placemaking - enhance the community's assets through planning, design, and management of public spaces.	\$	BSCO, ACBS, VBS, HOAs, private sector, counties
STRATEGY 3. PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY/ENGAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE OPTIONS			
 C3	Research and present benefits and drawbacks of different forms of governance.	\$	BSRAD
 C4	Encourage and facilitate citizen engagement and awareness through development of a communication strategy or plan.	\$	BSRAD, Citizens' Committee (future)
STRATEGY 4. PROVIDE RESIDENTS WITH CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES			
 C5	Support cultural opportunities.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	ACBS, VBS, WMPAC, private sector
STRATEGY 5. EMBRACE BIG SKY'S DNA AS A DESTINATION, BORN OUT OF A VISITOR ECONOMY			
 C6	Advocate for Big Sky as a year-round tourism destination.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	VBS, private sector








Legend:

Cost over a 10-Year Period: \$ = < \$4M; \$\$ = \$4M - \$8M; \$\$\$ = > \$8M









 = Primary Initiative;  = Secondary Initiative

For a listing of acronyms under Responsibility and Partners, refer to the list of Acknowledgments

Our Recreation

ID#	Initiatives	Cost Range	Responsibility and Partners
STRATEGY 1. EXPAND & ENHANCE PATHWAYS & TRAIL CONNECTIONS			
 R1	Expand pathways and trails.	\$\$\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, private land managers, counties,
 R2	Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	BSCO, BSTD, HOAs, RIDs, Big Sky Resort, private sector, land managers
STRATEGY 2. PROVIDE FOUR-SEASON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES			
 R4	Support indoor recreational opportunities.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, BSWSD, sport NPOs
STRATEGY 3. INCREASE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TO SERVE RECREATION & MOBILITY			
 R5	Investigate alternative transportation options that promote recreation.	\$\$\$	BSCO, BSTD, VBS, private sector
STRATEGY 4. PRESERVE & ENHANCE PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS & WATERWAYS			
 R3	Focus on land and water access spaces and develop provisions.	\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, Chamber, VBS, GRTE, state government, USFS
STRATEGY 5. IMPROVE AND DEVELOP NEW PARK & GATHERING SPACES			
 R6	Expand and improve parks.	\$\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, BSSHA, HOAs, counties
 R7	Create public gathering spaces.	\$\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, VBS, ACBS, WMPAC, BSCL, churches, private sector

Our Natural Environment

ID#	Initiatives	Cost Range	Responsibility and Partners
STRATEGY 1. PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT & NATURAL RESOURCES			
	NE1 Protect and conserve open space.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, Chamber, VBS, GRTF, MLR, counties, state government
	NE3 Promote wildlife conservation and wildlife-friendly design.	\$ - \$\$\$	BSCO, VBS, GISA, WCS, counties
	NE8 Support invasive species efforts and education.	\$	BSCO, BSTRPD, GISA, GRTF, counties
STRATEGY 2. PROTECT & ENHANCE OUR WATER RESOURCES			
	NE2 Protect and conserve waterways.	\$ - \$\$	BSWSD, VBS, GRTF, GISA, Jack Creek Preserve, counties
STRATEGY 3. WORK TO BECOME A SUSTAINABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITY			
	NE4 Improve and expand evacuation and resiliency planning and education.	\$\$ - \$\$\$	BSFD, VBS, Sheriff, Gallatin County Emergency Management, Search and Rescue
	NE5 Address drought and fire fuel mitigation and resiliency planning.	\$\$	BSFD, Gallatin County Emergency Management
	NE6 Initiate new sustainability measures (including climate change).	\$\$	BSWSD, BSCO, Chamber, VBS, GRTF, BSTD, HOAs, private sector, counties
	NE7 Reduce light pollution throughout the community.	\$	Chamber, VBS, HOAs, WCS, private sector, counties

Legend:

Cost over a 10-Year Period: \$ = < \$4M; \$\$ = \$4M - \$8M; \$\$\$ = > \$8M

 = Primary Initiative;  = Secondary Initiative

For a listing of acronyms under Responsibility and Partners, refer to the list of Acknowledgments

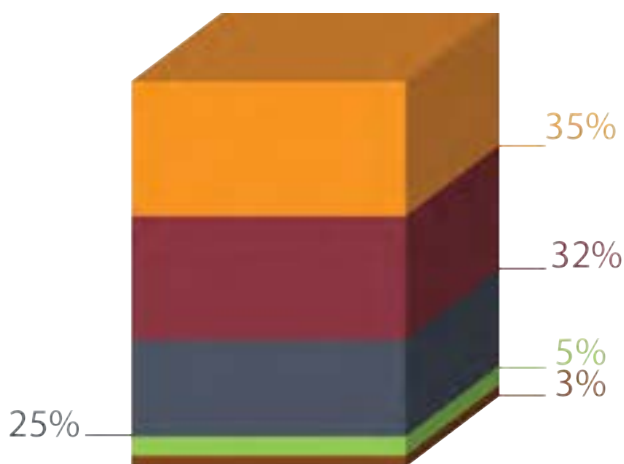
BUDGETING FOR STRATEGIES & INITIATIVES

Representative projects for each initiative can be found in Appendix 1, which also provides a general order of magnitude of costs, where available. A 10-year project budget (operations and capital) by vision statement and strategies are seen on these two pages. This 10-year budget provides the public with an understanding of where our community efforts and funds may be applied, and includes the need to provide essential services.

This budget is only a general guide, as appropriations and allocations are done annually and assisted by bonding. Degrees of funding will also vary as matching funds are identified, private sectors and other agencies take on vital projects, and new funding sources are identified. Funding is an act of collaboration and coordination, and focuses primarily on resort tax funding, but recommendations are included to inform funding capacity.

This budget allows the space in which to begin the discussion; funding for most primary strategies and key secondary strategies is anticipated to be available over the next 10 years. Key aspirational projects will be possible if projected revenues are higher than expected and additional funding partnerships are identified.

OUR PEOPLE



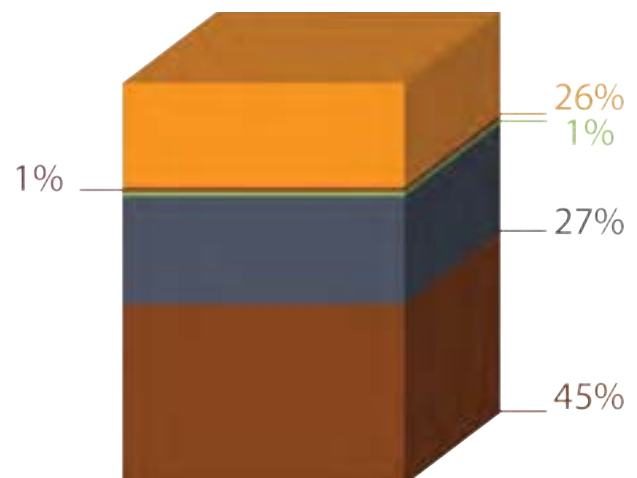
Primary:

Strategy 1: Promote the Development of Affordable Housing.
 Strategy 2: Improve and Maintain Infrastructure.
 Strategy 3: Support High-Quality Community and Emergency Services.

Secondary:

Strategy 4: Support and Enhance Social Services.
 Strategy 5: Maintain and Expand Preventative Healthcare Services.

OUR CHARACTER

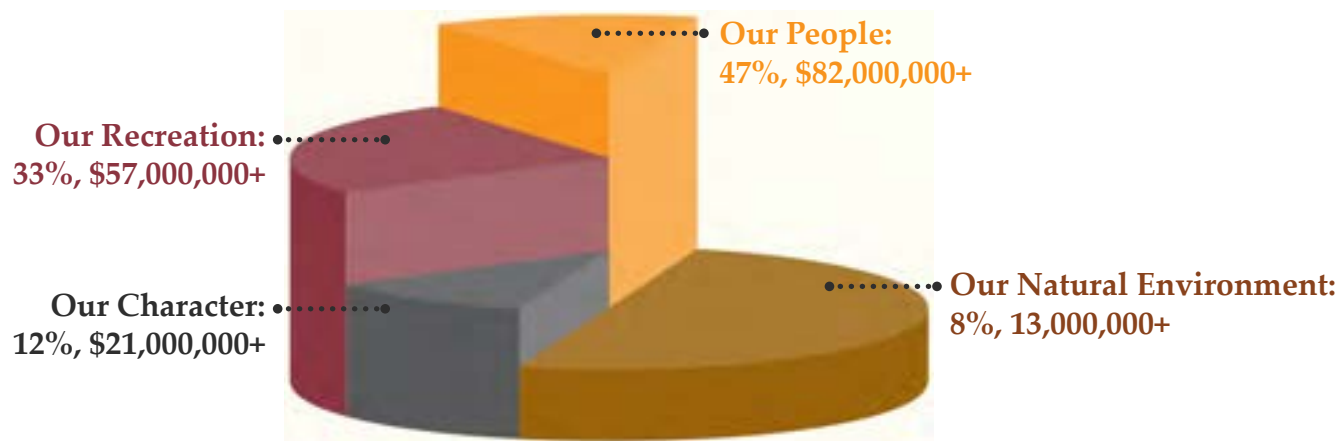


Primary:

Strategy 1: Support Independently-Owned Small Businesses.
 Strategy 2: Preserve a Cohesive, but Distinct Character.
 Strategy 3: Provide Transparency and Governance Options.

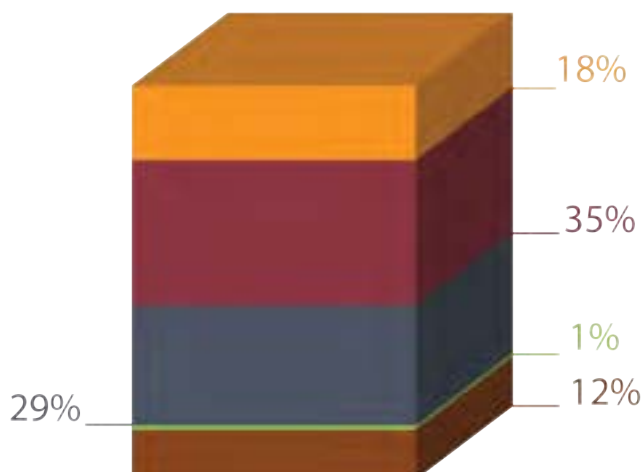
Secondary:

Strategy 4: Provide Residents with Cultural Opportunities.
 Strategy 5: Embrace Big Sky's DNA as a Destination, Born Out of a Tourism Economy.



The pie chart above represents the estimated total project cost for each vision theme. Each vision theme's estimated projected cost is broken down below, by strategy. For example, Our Recreation, Strategy 1, represents 18% of the overall estimated projected cost of the entire vision theme. The remaining four strategies round out the 82% of the \$57,000,000 estimated projected cost of the projects located within the Our Recreation vision theme.

OUR RECREATION



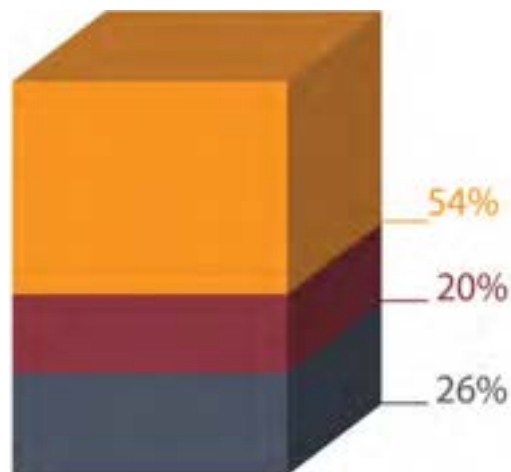
Primary:

Strategy 1: Expand and Enhance Pathways and Trail Connections.
Strategy 2: Provide Four-Season Recreational Opportunities.

Secondary:

Strategy 3: Increase Transportation Options.
Strategy 4: Preserve and Enhance Public Access to Public Lands and Waterways.
Strategy 5: Improve and Develop New Park and Gathering Spaces.

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Primary:

Strategy 1: Protect Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resources.
Strategy 2: Protect and Enhance our Water Resources.
Secondary: Strategy 3: Work to Become a Sustainable and Resilient Community.

FUNDING THE POTENTIAL GAP

The budgeting process documents current and ongoing challenges and opportunities facing a community. The ability to address issues and implement change improves the well-being of the community's residents. Two sources of revenue are available to local governments, including tax revenue and non-tax revenue.

For Gallatin and Madison counties, property tax revenue includes the taxable value of the property plus mill levies. In Big Sky, resort taxes are an important supplementary source of local tax. The resort tax funds capital improvement projects and annual operational budgets. Following the legislative session in 2019, Big Sky may now vote on an up to **1% increase in resort tax** to fund specific infrastructure projects.

The following funding structure is dependent on varying degrees of governing structure.

The counties, BSRAD, and Big Sky's special districts also have access to the following **non-tax revenue sources**:

- » Fees for services
- » Fines and forfeitures (*for select special districts*)
- » Interest earned on idle funds in interest-bearing accounts
- » Inter-governmental transfer payments from state and federal governments such as payment-in-lieu, infrastructure grants, and entitlement distribution

Following are the **special districts** allowed in Montana not currently in Big Sky:

- » Local Improvement and/or Road Improvement (construct and maintain county roads; and outside of existing Rural Improvement Districts)
- » Industrial (fund infrastructure development)
- » Business Improvement (promote investment and trade)
- » Park Maintenance (maintain municipal parks)
- » Hospital (medical services and boarding homes for the aged)
- » Special Improvement or Rural Improvement (fund construction of public facilities)
- » Solid Waste Management (collect and dispose of solid waste)
- » Urban Transportation (supply transportation facilities/services)
- » Water Quality (protect ground and surface water)
- » Multi-Jurisdictional Service (provide joint county/municipal services)

Following is a list of possible and/or underutilized **funding resources** for Big Sky:

- » Additional impact fees
- » Additional taxing options for existing and new districts
- » Corporate support
- » Maximization of state-shared revenues like the lodging tax
- » Federal and state operating and capital grants
- » Fees for culture, special events, and recreation programs and services
- » Formal assessment of property taxes collected in Big Sky and use in the two counties' budgets
- » Inclusionary or linkage requirements for housing with fee in lieu options
- » Licenses, permits, and fees, including general business licenses, building permits, and fees, animal license, etc.
- » Special assessments like per-unit-charges and stormwater assessments
- » State innovation grant
- » Philanthropy (individual, corporate, and foundations)
- » Private business and foundation grants
- » Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD)
- » Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)
- » Voluntary real estate transfer assessment

Indebtedness may be incurred locally by the counties, Resort Tax District, and special districts including the school, fire, water and sewer, transportation, and trails, recreation, and parks districts.

Big Sky's capacity for funding goes beyond the local governing entities' ability to **fundraise** among the many non-profit organizational entities, businesses, and three private-sector foundations.

A study to formally review potential funding sources, diversify opportunities, and align values-to-needs, specifically between the private foundations and resort tax, would be beneficial. Funding sources for community projects and programs will become increasingly crucial beyond resort tax collections. Also, a campaign that promotes the benefits of additional funding sources (including taxes and fees) may be needed.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT

Big Sky is a unique place. Two counties, seven special districts, four advisory boards, 23 organizational entities, nearly a thousand business owners, three private-sector foundations, plus state and federal agencies collaborate to sustain functional infrastructure for our growing Big Sky.

This is a unique plan. Implementation is the responsibility of the entire community with specific administrative roles for managing entities. The Plan challenges each of us to make day-to-day decisions consistent with these strategies by minimizing wildlife impacts and shifting modes of travel. It empowers each of us to hold decision-makers accountable by stepping up, plan-in-hand, when boards, governments, and other organizations fall short.

Administration of plan is on the desk of the BSRAD. Its Board and staff responsibilities include:

- » Annual funding appropriations informed by this plan
- » Facilitating public review for new strategies and project initiatives as necessary
- » Facilitating the five-year plan update and processing plan amendments

Key regulatory components of the plan fall to Madison and Gallatin Counties for administration. Local planning board and county planning staff responsibilities include:

- » Review land development regulations, zoning maps, and other plan implementation measures for consistency with this plan
- » Assist in strategy implementation, including recommendations for new code

County Commissions and staff responsibilities include:

- » Make decisions informed by this plan
- » Help support the funding necessary to implement the plan's strategies
- » Work with neighboring jurisdictions to identify regional solutions to transit, transportation, and housing issues

Local governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and stakeholders play a crucial role in making any project happen in Big Sky. Their responsibilities include:

- » Work together to pool resources and find mutually beneficial solutions toward community goals
- » Collaborate and plan for appropriate project and program service delivery
- » Coordinate major capital projects
- » Contribute to the feasibility of strategies, project initiatives, and projects
- » Gather data to monitor and analyze the success of current strategies and the feasibility of proposed strategies and keystone indicators
- » Monitor community perception and satisfaction with this plan
- » Ensure the plan remains an accurate reflection of the community vision

Please note: State and Federal agencies will continue to be critical for transportation improvements, and levels of responsibility will vary depending on the way Big Sky decides to govern itself.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

The Plan gives us, full and part-time residents, employees and whomever loves Big Sky and is interested in ensuring its future success, the tools to align resources and decision making so that we do not run from uncertainty but embrace it. It is intended to inspire stakeholders to a common goal and to guide policy and resource allocation decisions. Used properly, it will outlast short-term philosophical shifts to ensure the community's progress continues along a path consistent with its residents' shared values. By the same token, the Plan is transparent and will continue to engage the community. To ensure results and accountability, adaptive management and monitoring programs with keystone indicators is necessary.

The adaptive management and monitoring program is meant to influence both short- and long-term planning. While the community vision and strategies remain consistent, implementation at the project level must be dynamic and responsive to environmental, social, and economic challenges. The program should respond to changing community needs, time-sensitive requirements, and new studies.

A brief annual monitoring report will be produced each spring, highlighting successes and reporting on the keystone indicators. The best available data will be used, or a qualitative assessment will be provided. This is a chance to celebrate the community's work. It gives the ability to be transparent, one of the critical strategies desired by the community. The community will review successes and indicators allowing us to adapt annual budgeting to further meet the community vision.

Recommended annual indicators are listed by vision, at lower right. As keystone indicators, they also give an indication of community health. Other annual indicators could be used from other sources to supplement this information. Indicators are:

- » Relevant to the vision and strategies of the Plan
- » Reliably accessible annually
- » Understandable to the community

This Plan is adaptable, adjusting as the community grows. A five-year plan check-in will be used to provide a more significant review, and allow the opportunity to reflect and adjust key strategies, project initiatives, and projects. This monitoring milestone ensures that time is given for project completion and time to determine if critical elements of the vision are not being met. The five-year check-in will consist of three components: a report that looks back at our indicators over the last five years and highlights where we have been successful and where we have not, a survey to determine the community's perception of efforts to-date, and a plan audit of what works in the plan and what adjustments are needed.





KEYSTONE INDICATORS

Keystone indicators are symbolic and help us illustrate the observable effects over time that demonstrate success and provide high-level measures that gauge effectiveness. Keystone indicators enable us to monitor effects over time, and should be looked at, not individually, but together to indicate overall community conditions. Indicators are fluid, and can be adjusted or modified over time to better reflect indicators that work well. These indicators are tied to annual and ten-year budgets as they allow us to emphasize key strategies to improve indicators.

OUR PEOPLE	Number of Workforce/Local Housing Units	Gallons per Day (GPD) of Treatable & Available & Water Use per Capita	Population Number of Evacuation Plans & Education Programs Traffic Counts/VMTs/Mode Split
OUR CHARACTER	Number of Small Businesses Resort Tax Collections	Number of Placemaking Areas & Features	Public Satisfaction of Decision-Making & Services
OUR RECREATION	Miles of Pathways & Trails	Number of Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Features	Square Footage of Public Indoor Recreational Amenities & Number of Program Participants
OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Acres of Open Space & Parks Conserved	Water Health	Environmental Health (<i>per future studies and plans, including climate action and sustainability planning</i>)

OUR EVOLUTION AS A COMMUNITY

BIG SKY IS AT A CROSSROADS

This document is the first of its kind—a community-wide vision and strategy for Big Sky.

The official designation by the US Census Bureau describes Big Sky as a Census Designated Place that straddles two counties. Seven special districts, 23 nonprofits, over 100 homeowner associations, multiple private sector businesses, and countless, dedicated volunteers are engaged in managing the framework of the community. As the population has grown, the projects and programs required to serve us, the citizens and visitors of Big Sky, have also increased.

The primary public sector funding for capital projects and operational expenses is the resort tax. Requests for funding generally surpass collections. However, fiscal year 2020 was unique; the Board elected to fund part of the gap by authorizing bonding.

Big Sky's entities have commissioned numerous studies, and each has been specific to its organization or special district. With over 50 completed studies and plans in its collective file, the entities serving Big Sky are diligently working to protect what makes Big Sky

special and plan for growth. Success is critical to the entities that commissioned the plans as well as to the greater Big Sky community. Currently, all the plans function without an overarching strategy, they are silos of needs. In other words, each entity is a puzzle piece in the greater operational picture of maintaining a functional Big Sky.

Montana state statute requires municipalities to evaluate their growth policies every five years to accurately reflect the community's situation, needs, and goals as well as re-evaluate demographic and economic trends. Municipal growth policies are intended to guide present and future development. Being unincorporated, Big Sky does not have this requirement and does not have a formal growth policy. It does however, now have a vision and strategy representing the community. In the four decades since Big Sky's inception, an overarching plan for Big Sky has not been completed. Why now?

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP IN THIS GROWTH EVOLUTION?

The community will evolve by initiating the strategies, initiatives, and projects in this Plan. The planning process ensures that the community's values align with the community's roadmap for the future.

Of the 150+ projects written-in by community members, a version of "improved governance" was the fourth highest-ranking after housing, environmental conservation, and recreation. 91% of the 200+ third questionnaire respondents would support educational outreach to understand the benefits and drawbacks of governing autonomy or incorporation.

The path to improved governance will take time; initially it will be a hybrid of efforts, and the outcome may or may not include incorporation. The following recommendations will put Big Sky on the path to an improved governing structure.

Step 1: Education

Commission a third party, possibly the Local Government Center at Montana State University Extension, to provide a website and printed brochures of the benefits and costs of governance options. It should address the following capabilities:

- » Compare and contrast county and municipal governments and their design by state law and include the different powers associated with each
- » Building code enforcement and development regulations and accountability
- » Dedicated voice and representation for the community
- » The addition of expanded funding sources for community projects and programs including the potential of property tax exemptions for residents and, separately, an outline of the required budgetary process
- » Citizen engagement and transparency
- » Leadership including election information and municipal staff required accountability
- » Law enforcement including maintaining the current interlocal agreement as well as clarity on open container options
- » Autonomy from the county government
- » Determine if the current system or other governance options, if established, allows for more significant financial savings and efficiencies at a district and individual scale

Step 2: Begin Better Governing Autonomy

- » Based on the education outreach, add governing bodies/positions that would be funded by Big Sky, but serve at the county level. In addition, this would be an opportunity to incorporate the findings of the Local Government Center at Montana State University dated May 2018, which excluded consideration of incorporation to achieve autonomy.

Step 3: Invest in Additional Methods of Transparency

- » Establish a newsletter distribution and open town hall meetings to report the progress of the community toward improved governance.
- » Continue to host joint County Commission meetings bi-annually.

Step 4: Fund Formal Investigation of Governance

- » Create a representative citizen's committee.
- » Commission a third party to outline a path to governance, including a timeline and cost.
- » Survey the community members to determine if the path to additional local governance is desired.

Note: As the administrator of this Plan, BSRAD may need to add or contract with additional staff to facilitate the aforementioned process.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAN IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

THE PLAN CHALLENGES EACH OF US TO HOLD DECISION-MAKERS ACCOUNTABLE BY STEPPING UP, PLAN IN-HAND, AND MOVING FORWARD.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY OF BIG SKY, WHOSE ENTHUSIASM AND DEDICATION CREATED THIS PLAN.

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