



Big Springs, NE

Goals & Strategies 2022

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Introduction

The goals and strategies in this document will help us focus resources and energy to grow and improve as a community. It's based on the public input gained from surveys, interviews, open house meetings, and on-going conversations.

This document is *action* oriented- meant to be written-on, revised, and updated. Volunteers, government, and associations all work together to make these things a reality.

What matters most: These are the things that are most important to the community. They shouldn't change much over the years. They can be a kind of check-list for new goals & strategies to make sure they support what's most important to residents.

Goals, Outcomes, & Strategies:

- Goals are the *big picture, long-term* things you want to see in your community. They answer the question, "What do we want the community to be like?"
- Outcomes are what you want to *see happen* as a result of your actions, and should show *how* you're going to achieve your goals- what does the community need to increase, decrease, or improve to make its goals a reality?
- Strategies are what the community will actually *do*. Not just what it wants to see- like "increase business" (that's an outcome)- but what will you actually *do* to increase business in your community? These are shorter-term and might need updating more often.

As the community makes progress, it should update the "Work Plan" in the grids in the back of the document. The full list of goals, outcomes, and strategies in the first half of the document can be used to help identify the strategies to tackle next.

What matters most

The following are some of the most important themes that have come up. All goals and strategies should work together to accomplish the following vision.

Big Springs will be a place that...

- **Preserves and celebrates its history**, protecting the unique sites & buildings and remembering the legacy of those who came before us
- Maintains a **small town feel & atmosphere**, a quiet, peaceful town a lot can be accomplished by working together with volunteers, that's free from overburden of red-tape
- Is a **great place for youth**, providing safety, activities, many ways to be involved, and freedom to learn and grow to be the future of the community.
- Has a **spirit of community**- with caring people, kindness, working together, a friendly place where people know their neighbors, new and old, and enjoy coming together.
- Has **thriving businesses and opportunities**, a town that invests in people willing to take a risk and build up their potential, and supporting local businesses

Community Goals and Strategies

Business

Many existing businesses are important to the life of the town: Herbers, Tire shop, Bank, Post Office, Library, Gunsmith, the B&B, Beauty Shop, Grain Elevator, Truck Stops, Campground, Equipment, Spahn Marine, are all examples.

20 years ago, there were more businesses, in particular the grocery, hardware store, bar, gas station, and restaurant were important.

Today, many of the businesses residents previously relied on are no longer here. More people commute for work and shop in the towns where they are employed. Fewer farmers has also decreased the number of unique businesses in the area.

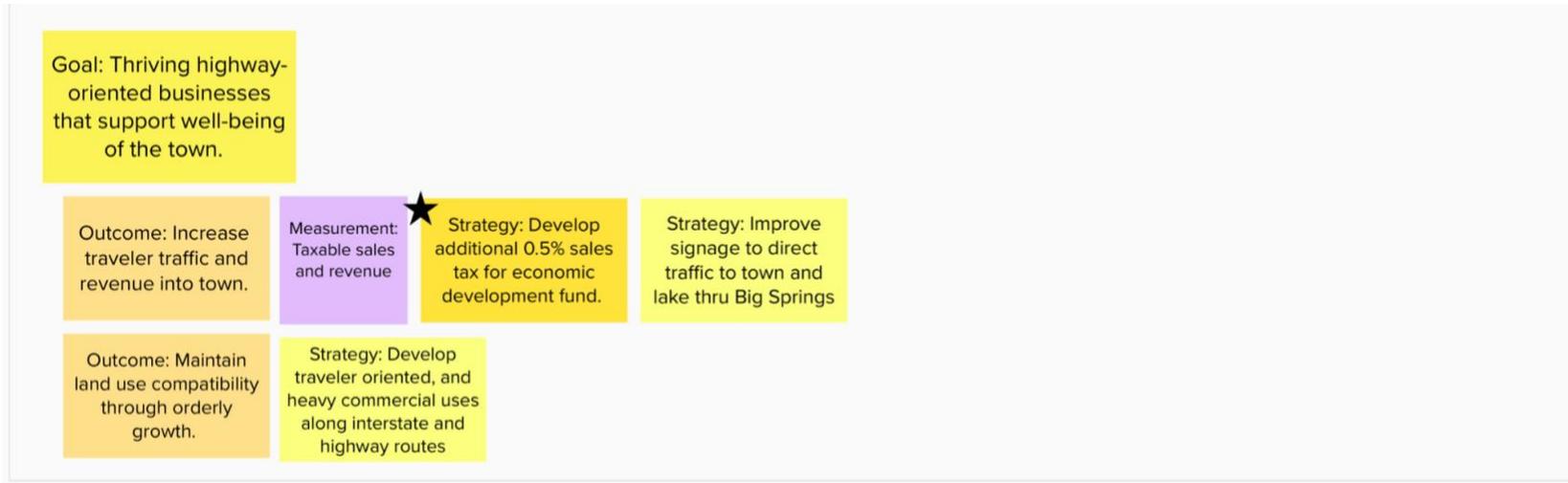
If nothing is done differently in the coming years, there are fears that businesses will continue to close without new ones coming in behind them. Loss of businesses would not only lead to fewer job opportunities and potential loss of population, but fewer things to do and places to get together for everyone in the community.

To achieve its desired future, Big Springs wants to grow the business community, in particular by supporting entrepreneurs, make downtown a nice place to be and open up new downtown businesses. A grocery store, bar, restaurant, and donut shop are some specific ideas for new businesses. The following are suggested goals and strategies for growing businesses.

Business: All Goals & Strategies

★ Priority from Jan 21st Meeting





Housing

Big Springs currently has quiet residential areas that are generally well maintained. Several run-down properties in town negatively affect safety, appeal, and vibrancy of the town. Keeping the town clean and inviting is a priority for all. A few rentals exist but more are needed. Some areas suitable future new residential development exist west and north of town.

20 years ago, housing was perceived to have similar challenges to the current situation.

Today, the town is safe and peaceful, but not as clean as it could be. Homes are generally well-kept but some nuisances are a concern. Owners of run down properties sometimes live out of the area and it seems aren't interested in selling so properties can be revitalized. There's a lack of rentals and places for new families to live. Finding a balance between effective nuisance enforcement and not over-burdening residents or existing resources is a perceived challenge.

If nothing is done differently, it is thought that housing will remain stagnant or decrease. Some local and regional trends could impact housing demand and supply in the coming years. These trends include 1) possible growth from new residents from Colorado or new residents drawn by the lake, 2) turn-over of housing from older adults, 3) an increasing number of families who live out of town but send their kids to school in Big Springs, 4) new housing needs as residents age, and 5) a potential increase in absentee owners as ownership changes hands.

In the future, Big Springs wants to provide more housing options for people to live here. Top priority is working together to improve the appearance of the town and provide new housing by renovating houses in disrepair. Big Springs wants to see new rentals and new owner occupied housing, as well as options for aging residents keep quality housing and remain a part of the community.

Housing: All Goals & Strategies



Entertainment & Recreation

Big Springs has many amenities of which to be proud and several community-wide events that make living in Big Springs fun. These include the Veterans Memorial, the parks, the pool, the Bull Fry, Homecoming, Alumni Weekend, Christmas events, the Farmer's Market, Museum, events at the school, and others.

20 years ago, there were more kids sports teams. Events like alumni weekend and homecoming seemed to be better attended and more people were involved. School activities and the pool have been pretty consistent over the years. People like "Grandpa Jimenez" really took care of things.

Today, conditions of amenities and events seem to have declined some. However, events like the Fourth of July celebration and Big Springs 125th Celebration were successful. Lake Mac continues to be a draw and travelers stop at the park. Updated amenities like the weight room, new volleyball court net, and sprinklers by the pool have been good improvements.

If nothing is done differently, there will be fewer events and fewer people involved in the future. Fewer businesses in town means that there may be less money and support to sponsor events.

In the future, Big Springs imagines more involvement in events and improvements to amenities. The following goals and strategies are some ideas for improving use and condition of amenities, adding new features, and offering quality events.

Entertainment & Recreation: All Goals and Strategies



Leadership & Involvement

Leadership in Big Springs comes from a lot of different places, including the Fire Department, its churches, the schools, the village government, local volunteer boards, and among neighbors.

20 years ago, there was more competition for elected positions, giving voters more options. More local employment seemed to bring in more younger families and volunteers.

Today, leadership and involvement seems to have decreased some. Big Springs is getting but there is no extra support. The Fire Department is a bright spot and is doing well. On elected boards, Big Springs needs to encourage more people to step forward to give voters an option and increase diversity.

If nothing is done differently, the town risks drying up. Without strong leadership and some changes, Big Springs risks just being an interstate stop and a bedroom community.

In the future, Big Springs needs urgent action. It needs to encourage more people to run for elected positions and stronger mentoring ties to younger generations to improve leadership. The following goals and strategies will help improve leadership of the community and get more “do-ers” involved to work together on action steps.





Work Plan: All Themes

Goal: Vibrant and thriving business community in downtown Big Springs.

| Strategy (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcome (What we want to see happen) |
|--|--|--|
| Get to know and interview existing business owners and people who might have skills/ideas for a new business to understand their aspirations and needs if they were to grow. | List of people wanting to start businesses and needs for expansion or start-up More connected business owners & community | Increase the number and productivity of small businesses in town |
| Compile a list of opportunities for business financing and resources for assistance, make a list available | Business start-up and expansion go-to resource, easily available @ Village Office and elsewhere (Bank) | Increase the number and productivity of small businesses in town |
| Get to know and interview downtown commercial property owners to learn their intentions and wishes for their properties. Send the list to people in the group who can divide the names, reach out and share the information | List of downtown properties willing to have a new business tenant or willing to sell to a new business. | Increase the number and productivity of small businesses in town |

| Lead people | Other networks to engage | Boards/leaders to keep informed | Deadline/next check-in on progress |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | |

Business Strategies “on-deck”:

Outcome: Increase places to get together through business and place design

Strategies:

- Work with publicly owned buildings and existing owners to co-locate a gathering place type business in existing space
- Mural project- silos or on brick building, with area art teacher (Carlson, Nordike, Oslen) and possibly students
- Sidewalks cleaned

Outcome: Increase the number and productivity of businesses in town.

Strategies:

- Improve internet speeds and options, Starlink might be a better option, fiber currently being laid
- Specific place for businesses to get start-up resources
- Change/review zoning rules for business

Outcome: Increase % of occupied storefronts downtown.

Strategies:

- Encourage development of new storage units and provide alternative to old buildings as cheap storage space (business opportunity)
- Incentives/help to revitalize storefront appearance

Outcome: Increase visitor traffic & revenue in town

Strategies:

- Develop sign for lake off of interstate, work with NDOT, Game and Parks

Goal: Attractive and diverse options to provide housing for the future of Big Springs.

| Strategy (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcome (What we want to see happen) |
|--|--|--|
| Get to know and talk with vacant/run-down residential property owners to understand intentions and wishes for their property Clean-up area- free roll-off dumpsters more often; ask local groups/youth to volunteer for clean-up work Look into vacant property registry- tool for moving properties that are vacant but not nuisances | List created & maintained of residential properties open to renovation/selling Clean-up days planned for community | Improve appearance, safety, & occupancy of neighborhoods |
| Develop a community fund to support housing rehab projects Find examples of other community funds, investment clubs who have done this | New members recruited to fill out board Fund developed, fundraised to acquire, renovate, & sell dilapidated residential properties First project in the pipeline | Increase new owner-occupied residential housing |

| Lead people | Other networks to engage | Boards/leaders to keep informed | Deadline/next check-in on progress |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | |

Housing Strategies “on-deck”:

Outcome: Improve appearance, safety, and occupancy of neighborhoods

Strategies:

- Coordinate in-home care and services to help elderly stay in their homes as they age

Outcome: Increase the number of rental units

Strategies:

- Revamp zoning to allow for multi-family housing near downtown
- Host training for residents interested in developing rental properties

Goal: Provide amenities that add beauty & quality of life for people of all ages.

| Strategy (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcome (What we want to see happen) |
|---|---|--|
| Kick-off project to renovate pool and park, possible replacement and inclusion of splash pad; work with new Tree Board Research funding & technical assistance opportunities for pool and park updates | Group assembled and plan created for pool and park renovation List of funding and technical assistance opportunities created | Increase park & pool usage through updated features and consistent maintenance |

Goal: Vibrant, cohesive social life that reflects our unique identity.

| Strategy (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcome (What we want to see happen) |
|---|--|---|
| Lunch Bunch: Make lunch for all people, anyone can come eat or volunteer, publicize this opportunity Coordinate community events to share time/resources | Lunch hosted and attended Bring together event organizers at meeting to coordinate and plan | Increase activities for all ages through consistent programming |

| Lead people | Other networks to engage | Boards/leaders to keep informed | Deadline/next check-in on progress |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
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Entertainment & Recreation Strategies “on-deck”:

Outcome: Increase tourist traffic through historical sites

Strategies:

- Signage to better direct travelers to attractions (depot, spring, park, etc.)

Outcome: Increase activities for all ages through consistent programming

Strategies:

- Use existing facilities (ex. Library, pool, depot) to host new programming, especially for youth
- Involve youth and new volunteers in Alumni weekend and 4th of July events
- Republish historical books: 125th anniversary book- published in 2009, pamphlet from Deuel County Historical society of BS, copyright 1972

Goal: A positive, collaborative culture of volunteering

| Strategy (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcome (What we want to see happen) |
|---|--|--|
| Develop a standing, quarterly gathering to share updates and coordinate involvement “Standard operating procedure” created for organizing community events, so organizers in the future can more easily pick it up and run with it | Quarterly meetings held, with diverse people & networks invited Clean-up days planned for community | Improved coordination among all people & groups. |

Goal: Inclusive & consistent communication

| Strategy (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcome (What we want to see happen) |
|---|--|--|
| Coordinate with Village to develop new website with possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calendar of events ● Link to the Scoop ● List of landlords ● Current info for zoning/permits, contact info | Website launched with community help for content | Improved communication |

| Lead people | Other networks to engage | Boards/leaders to keep informed | Deadline/next check-in on progress |
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Goal:

| Strategies (What we will do) | Outputs (What we create) | Outcomes (What we want to see happen) |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| | | |

| Lead people | Other networks to engage | Boards/leaders to keep informed | Deadline date/next check-in on progress |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
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All Ideas for Action

| Source | Idea | Theme |
|--------------------|--|----------|
| Initial Interviews | General store (grocery and hardware) | Business |
| Initial Interviews | Grocery Store on Main Street | Business |
| Initial Interviews | Grocery Store, | Business |
| Initial Interviews | Grocery store. | Business |
| Initial Interviews | Hardware + Grocery Store Combined model could be promising, have it on main street on main drag- Find an entrepreneur to help buy the building, get it going | Business |
| Community Survey | Getting a grocery store/hardware store | Business |
| Community Survey | Fix up the buildings on Main St. | Business |
| Community Survey | get a grocery store and a place for a good sit down meal | Business |
| Community Survey | A grocery store would be wonderful. | Business |
| Community Survey | using Phelps Hotel as a coffee shop/gathering place | Business |
| Community Survey | Carwash | Business |
| Community Survey | Gas station with a small amount of groceries or hardware | Business |
| Community Survey | Bar or restaurant | Business |
| Community Survey | General Mechanics Shop | Business |
| Community Survey | bowling alley for cosmic bowling or regular bowling | Business |
| Community Survey | mini arcade | Business |
| Community Survey | bakery and deli shop. | Business |
| Community Survey | Coffee shop | Business |

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| Community Survey | antiques, what not shops | Business |
| Community Survey | A place to sit & visit over a cup of coffee | Business |
| Community Survey | tavern | Business |
| Community Survey | ice cream shop | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Change zoning downtown | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Grocery store- start with new building? | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | <u>Consistent rules, apply equally to everyone</u> | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Increase sales tax .5% | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Internet problems- esp in rural areas; go to nepadd.com-mapping-initiative/ | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Resources @ city office for biz start up | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Welcome packet w/ city ordinances | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Get rid of “alley police” | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Better relationship between town and country | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *List of people interested in selling buildings | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Have village reach out to property owners | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Target casino/ keith county employees as commuters | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Knowledge of biz funding | Business |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Place for businesses maybe start-up get resources etc. | Business |
| Community Survey | The town needs an incentive to attract businesses to come here. We live right next to the largest interstate system in the entire US. This would be ideal for an industry to come here right in the central part of the United States prefect for shipping anywhere. Getting an investor to put in housing and simple warehouses so companies on the East or west coast could drop or pickup product in a central location of US. The amount of people/companies looking for warehouse space right now in the United States is crazy. | Business |

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| Initial Interviews | Memorial Hall- | Entertainment |
| Initial Interviews | Pool maintained | Entertainment |
| Initial Interviews | Community Building that could serve some kind of meals. | Entertainment |
| Initial Interviews | longevity of pool and staff | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | One thing to focus on is the pool. It is something that not many small towns have anymore. It would also be nice to get a business here in town. Kind of a full service mini mart kind of thing. We really miss the store. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | Our park needs a new slide that metal always burns your skin a little more stuff to add to the park for kids fix up the volley ball court so kids and families to enjoy playing volley ball better picnic tables . | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | A better facility for the public to rent or use for gatherings. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | If there are kids events at the library, such as a summer reading program, I do not hear about or ever know about them. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | youth centers | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | Splash pad for the kids. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | Bike or hiking trails. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | Splash pad at the park. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | school games made more public | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | The pool needs help, especially the baby pool | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | We need to fix up the swimming pool and have it open more hours | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | Pool needs some repairs. | Entertainment |
| Community Survey | I would like to see the continued activities, such as 4th of July, car shows &Christmas activities. | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Splash pad in place of little pool | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Grant to renovate pool/splash pad | Entertainment |

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| Jan 21 Workshop | Grant, NE- ideas and Ogallala too, look at their ideas | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Pay respects to Riley Lintz still with Pool | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Swim lessons | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Skate park/ice skating | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Events at Library- summer reading | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Offer projects to SPK SCIP* | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | More planning @ events | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Organizing events/volunteers- standard operating procedure | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Shooting range | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | More fishing/hunting | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Bike trail/walking trail | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Golf course improvements | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Community hall- renovate? | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Baseball/softball diamond | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Fix up volleyball and basketball courts | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Use/advertise Big Springs Billboards More | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Pool/parks | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Tourism \$ advertise | Entertainment |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Big Springs Community Weight Room- increase use | Entertainment |
| Initial Interviews | Houses for teachers | Housing |
| Initial Interviews | Housing: places to rent | Housing |
| Initial Interviews | a few empty houses that could be "low hanging fruit"- (How to get owners to sell?) | Housing |

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| Initial Interviews | Group home- some outside government money to serve youth who need a place to go when they can't be at home- like Mosaic in Kearney | Housing |
| Initial Interviews | Habitat for Humanity be a possibility for residential redevelopment? | Housing |
| Initial Interviews | Utility extension study for new residential/commercial | Housing |
| Community Survey | Enforcing clean up of the homes that are inhabitable or resemble storage yards | Housing |
| Community Survey | clean up east 4th street houses and lots, it's getting better but still could use some work; when there are school activities to our new school it needs attention! Enforce old laws on books and who will do it! | Housing |
| Community Survey | Safe, clean peaceful house, neighborhoods to live-- Neighborhoods that have wrecked unlicensed cars, trailers full of salvage items tires, household appliances, old broken unuseable and unlicensed trailers & boats. The company hired to notify violators only does part of the town each year, so a resident is cited and then they have three more years to continue the junk and violations. This needs to be done continually and large fines levied against the homeowner if non compliant for second offense. Also, some of these homes are using their property as a business in a residential zoned area. Fine them and cease to operate a salvage operation business. | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Explore ability to put TIF in place | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Block house- renovate or tear down | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | House on Main (Pine) opportunity | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Condemn abandoned houses/ enforce code | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Housing investment club | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Home Rehab Projects | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Sheriff | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Create list of properties that owe back taxes | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Main Street clean up | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Develop golf-course for new housing | Housing |

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| Jan 21 Workshop | Village board involvement | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Revamp village spending (nuisance control) | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Get Big Springs Community Foundation Fund involved | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Rentals and Home Buyers | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Volunteers to help with rehabbing homes | Housing |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Develop committee of private citizens to help meet housing needs | Housing |
| Initial Interviews | P&Z enforcing rules (thinks there's limited capacity to enforce) | Leadership & Involvement |
| Initial Interviews | Big Maps that we can use all the time | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | The dog at large is a problem in town. We cannot walk in town without more than one dog charging at us, around many areas in town. Have the city council change their rules on dogs at large. There should be a sheriff/deputy on call 24/7 in Big Springs for immediate response to large and small problems such as dogs. I would like to see the continued activities, such as 4th of July, car shows & Christmas activities. | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Finding the people who know how to obtain grants for community services | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | It seems there are several facebook pages. 1 place to look for information would be nice. Maybe a once a month flyer mailed to everyone? | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | A letter | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Newsletter for town communication | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Newspaper like we used to have, Julesburg Advocate/Big Springs Enterprise | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Via mail for town communication | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | To improve communication in town Use the big springs board by the railroad tracks. Flyers in the mail. | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | The marquees for communication | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Mail for communication | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Email for communication | Leadership & Involvement |

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| Community Survey | Put the minutes of board meetings and other events on the Big Springs social media page. If the village is not in charge of the one page now available on facebook, then the village needs to design and set up one for all information. There could be a drop box like a p.o. container for board questions that could be addressed in the meetings. Meetings could have a time to answer patrons questions without patrons being able to participate to keep it civil. | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | city website | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Mail for communication | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | Include aluminum in recycling | Leadership & Involvement |
| Community Survey | See above. Plus improve the town look. Maybe school art class could paint welcome to BS on one of the buildings, recognize allyson carlson in our town before she's gone. | Leadership & Involvement |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *Need more entry level jobs | Leadership & Involvement |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Find a way to target work from home employees | Leadership & Involvement |
| Jan 21 Workshop | *People with a vision and do'ers to execute | Leadership & Involvement |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Need to attract people specialized in a trade | Leadership & Involvement |
| Jan 21 Workshop | Maybe a trade school | Leadership & Involvement |
| Initial Interviews | Street paving | Roads |
| Community Survey | Revamp road maintenance strategy and resources needed | Roads |
| Community Survey | Pave all of the streets in town would be terrific. Continue to maintain the parks and pool, maintain the pond, the Memorial, and individual home property upkeep. | Roads |
| Community Survey | Paving streets would improve the appearance of the town, continue to encourage property owners to clean-up their properties; Thank you steering committee for all of your work preparing this survey. | Roads |
| Community Survey | Internet is horrible-we have used multiple providers. Try to get some of the COVID money for cabling or offer a company such as ALLO to run lines into BigSprings. | Utility |