

February 1, 2026

Sidney

Strategic Plan

2026-2036

DRAFT



Table of Contents

1 Our Planning Journey: Process and Inputs.....	1
A. Purpose of the Strategic Plan	1
B. The Planning Process: From Concept to Commitment.....	1
C. Key Inputs Shaping Our Direction	2
2 The Strategic Direction: Themes, Goals, & Strategies	3
A. Cohesive Vision: The Town Transformed	3
B. Strategic Pillars	3
C. Goals and Strategies	5
Pillar 1: Core Community Infrastructure and Connectivity	5
Pillar 2: Local Jobs, Strong Businesses, and Quality Housing	7
Pillar 3: Essential Services and Accessible Community Life	9
3 Implementation: The Two-Year Priority Action Program.....	11
A. Priority Action Program Overview and Summary	11
B. Resources and Financial Stewardship	12
4 Monitoring, Reporting, and Next Steps.....	14
A Appendix A: Two-Year Priority Action Program	15
Town Lead Strategies.....	15
Town Supported Strategies	18
B Appendix B: Existing Conditions Report.....	20
Demographics and Socioeconomic Profile.....	20
Housing Conditions and Affordability	21
Families and Households.....	22
Economic Profile and Labor Force	23
C Appendix C: Public Survey Summary Report.....	24
Major Takeaways and Core Strategic Actions.....	24
Conclusion	25
Summary Charts	26

The Town of Sidney Strategic Plan

A Message from the Council

Welcome to the Town of Sidney's new Strategic Plan for the Council. This plan is a critical roadmap that reflects a commitment to responsive, transparent, and forward-thinking governance. It is the culmination of months of dedicated planning, research, and, most importantly, listening to our residents.

This plan focuses on three core strategic themes—areas where we believe targeted action will yield the most significant long-term benefit for our community. The two-year priority action program detailed in Appendix A provides a clear, measurable commitment to the specific projects and initiatives we will undertake, ensuring we deliver on the vision you helped us create. We look forward to working together to make Sidney an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

Acknowledgment

Gavin Parrett, Town Board Member

Sharon Rancourt, Town Board Member

Rebecca Adams, Town Board Member

Lisa Parrett, Clerk-Treasurer

Chris Bradford, Steering Committee Member

Josie Kral, Steering Committee Member

Sam Politano, Steering Committee Member

Lee Weyant, Steering Committee Member

Amy Roe, Kosciusko County Town Coordinator

Dawn Wilkinson, Kosciusko County Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO)

Zach Dripps, Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG)

A. Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan sets the priorities for Council and staff, guiding the allocation of limited financial and human resources over the next 5 to 10 years. It acts as the framework for the annual budget process and provides accountability to the public. It intentionally focuses on new, high-priority initiatives that advance our community's future and address critical challenges, rather than detailing the extensive day-to-day core services the Town already provides.

B. The Planning Process: From Concept to Commitment

This Strategic Plan was developed through a comprehensive, structured process, facilitated by MACOG (Michiana Area Council of Governments). The process was organized into four distinct phases, ensuring input from Town representatives, the Steering Committee, and the broader public at every critical juncture.

-  **Phase 1: Initiation.** The process began with a Pre-Kickoff Meeting between MACOG and Town representatives to discuss project deliverables and administrative tasks, and to identify key stakeholders to serve as the Steering Committee. This was immediately followed by the Steering Committee Orientation & Kickoff, during which member roles and responsibilities were established and initial perspectives on the Town were gathered to officially launch the planning work.
-  **Phase 2: Discovery.** The discovery phase focused on gathering data and defining foundational concepts. This included launching a Public Survey to gather residents' general impressions and future goals. The Steering Committee then participated in exercises to identify the Town's Strengths and Challenges, summarizing them into a list that highlighted opportunities for strategic action. Finally, the committee utilized this public and internal data to identify the Core Themes that guide the entire plan.
-  **Phase 3: Strategize.** This phase translated vision into action. Through focused meetings, the committee engaged in Action Strategy Development, creating a comprehensive list of short-term and long-term strategies to build upon strengths and reinforce core themes. MACOG then assisted in finalizing and prioritizing this work, resulting in the Two-Year Priority Action Program, detailed in Appendix A, which outlines attainable steps for the next two years. The outcome of this phase was the establishment of an Implementation Guide & Draft Plan to monitor progress and summarize the work.
-  **Phase 4: Commitment.** The final phase focused on external validation and formal adoption. The draft plan was brought to the public for final review and feedback during a Public Comment & Open House period, ensuring alignment with community needs. Following any necessary revisions, MACOG assisted the Town with Final Plan Development & Adoption, making it the official guiding document for the Council term.

C. Key Inputs Shaping Our Direction

The Strategic Plan is directly shaped by two critical reports: the Existing Conditions Report and the Public Survey Summary Report (see Appendix). These documents provide a clear picture of our challenges, strengths, and the community's non-negotiable priorities.

What We Learned from the Data

- **Demographic Shift:** Sidney is an older community (Median Age 54) with a significantly lower Labor Force Participation Rate (46.2%) compared to the County, indicating a need to attract and retain younger, working-age residents.
- **Economic Disparity:** The Median Household Income is substantially lower (\$46,827 vs. \$73,922 County), which is likely the driver of the high owner-cost-burden rate (21.3%) despite low median home values (\$97,500).
- **Housing Stock Challenge:** A high housing vacancy rate (31.9%) and low property values suggest an urgent need for housing rehabilitation and a strategy to repurpose blighted or vacant properties.
- **Bedroom Community Status:** With only 13 local jobs for a labor force of 43 employed people, Sidney functions heavily as a commuter community, highlighting the urgency of local business and job development.

What We Heard from the Public

The public survey yielded a highly representative sample (23% participation) and defined three core directives:

1. **Fix the Foundations:** The most pressing issue is the state of the Town's basic services. Deteriorating infrastructure (specifically sidewalks) was the single most frequent concern in open-ended responses. Investment in roads, sidewalks, and water/wastewater systems is a non-negotiable top priority.
2. **Grow the Future:** Residents recognize the need for Economic Vitality, with a high level of concern about the difficulty of attracting new businesses and a lack of job opportunities. There is also a strong demand for Enhanced Public Safety resources and solutions to social challenges (substance abuse).
3. **Preserve the Character:** The community's core strengths—a safe, peaceful, quiet, and friendly environment—must be protected. New recreational investments should prioritize family-friendly, passive spaces like playgrounds and parks.

The Strategic Direction: Themes, Goals, and Strategies

This plan is structured around three core pillars designed to strengthen our foundation while simultaneously investing in our people and prosperity.

A. Cohesive Vision: The Town Transformed

In the future, we envision a town transformed. Our Main Street will be a vibrant downtown hub with thriving local businesses, attractive storefronts, and a safe, welcoming environment for pedestrians. This revitalized core will be supported by a diverse range of safe, affordable housing, with blighted properties replaced by new homes and well-maintained residences. Residents will enjoy new recreational opportunities, including a central community park and connections to a regional trail system. Our transportation network will be safer and more accessible for everyone, with improved pedestrian crossings, clear markings, and mobility options for our senior residents. All of this while offering essential community services that protect and serve our residents. We will foster a well-informed and connected community through modern communication tools and robust public safety systems, ensuring our town is a great place to live, work, and invest for decades to come.

B. Strategic Pillars

The Strategic Plan is organized around **Three Core Pillars** that guide all goals and resource allocation:

1. Core Community Infrastructure and Connectivity

This pillar is dedicated to strengthening the physical backbone of our community. It moves beyond simple maintenance to ensure our foundational systems are durable, safe, and ready for future growth. Priorities include upgrading essential services (water/sewer planning), establishing reliable mobility networks (streets, trails, and sidewalks), fixing critical barriers, and implementing a sustainable funding model for the responsible care of all town assets, including the welcoming aesthetic of our downtown.

2. Local Jobs, Strong Businesses, and Quality Housing

This pillar drives economic stability and quality of life by addressing the critical link between employment and housing. The focus is on implementing data-driven strategies to support and attract businesses, fostering an entrepreneurial environment that creates local jobs, and ensuring a stable, diverse, and sufficient housing supply for all residents. This includes programs aimed at preserving existing homes and turning blighted properties into new homeownership opportunities.

3. Essential Services and Accessible Community Life

This pillar is focused on improving public safety, communication, and accessibility. It explores building modern facilities (a new Town Center/Community Hub), improving the reliability of police and emergency response, and enhancing services that ensure universal access for all residents. Key strategies include bridging the digital divide through improved communication tools and launching a reliable ride service to support our seniors and others who need essential transportation.

By focusing our efforts and resources on these three areas, we will establish a clear path forward, ensuring our town is not only a great place to live today but is strategically positioned for growth and prosperity over the next decade.



C. Goals and Strategies

Pillar 1: Core Community Infrastructure and Connectivity

Focus: Strengthening the physical foundation, mobility networks, and the downtown public realm.

Goal 1.A: High-Quality Streets, Trails, and a Welcoming Downtown

Achieve a seamlessly connected system of streets, sidewalks, and trails that prioritizes safety, accessibility for all users, and a cohesive, attractive downtown environment.



Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Create and Implement a Sidewalk Improvement Plan	- Conducts an inventory and assessment of current sidewalk and curb ramp conditions. - Coordinate with INDOT for all SR 13 improvements. - Complete all priority sidewalk connections/repairs. - Review and update the ordinance addressing sidewalk maintenance and snow clearing.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Develop an SR 13 Corridor Safety Plan	- Initiate a study using community charrettes to identify safety issues for the community, specifically addressing the SR 13 corridor and the railroad crossing. - Create a phased approach to incorporate strategies in infrastructure improvement projects.	Mid-term (3-5 years)
3. Create an Attractive Downtown Design Standard	- Create a Visual Design Guide for Downtown, including streetscape enhancements, improved lighting, and facade recommendations. - Review and update Downtown-Specific Town Ordinances addressing property maintenance and aesthetics.	Mid-term (3-5 years)
4. Partner with Businesses to Implement Downtown Improvements	Develop and launch a Downtown Facade/ Streetscape Grant Program to support private property improvements aligned with new design standards.	Long-term (5+ years)
5. Extend Trail Connections To and From Sidney	Work with the Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board to include future trail connections to Sidney when updating the Greenway & Blueway Master Plan.	Long-term (5+ years)

Goal 1.B: Planning for Our Water, Sewer, and Land Needs

Resolve critical barriers related to essential services, utilities, and land readiness to support future growth and development across all sectors.

Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Plan for Future Water and Sewer Needs	Commission a Master Utility Study focusing on the viability and cost of a public water system, alongside necessary improvements for wastewater management.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Identify and Prepare Town Land for Development	- Develop and publish an Available Property/ Building Inventory. - Formalize a Land Annexation Plan for bringing prime land into town limits.	Mid-term (3-5 years)
3. Implement Master Utility Study Priorities	- Assess the recommendations presented in the Master Utility Study and establish community priorities. - Identify and apply for funding sources for high-priority projects.	Mid-term (3-5 years)

Goal 1.C: Responsible Care of Town Parks & Recreation

Implement a long-term funding and maintenance model to ensure the longevity and quality of all public facilities and recreational assets.

Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Finish Building Our New Park and Garden	- Identify and select new park parcel(s). - Create and finalize a basic Town Park Plan. - Secure and install park equipment. - Establish the Community Garden.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Create the Team and Plan to Fund Long-Term Care of the Park	- Establish a Parks & Recreation Committee. - Develop and implement a standardized Maintenance Schedule/Protocol. - Research and apply for non-local funding for parks, trails, and long-term maintenance needs.	Short-term (1-2 years)

Pillar 2: Local Jobs, Strong Businesses, and Quality Housing

Focus: Building economic stability, supporting local businesses, and increasing the supply and quality of housing..

Goal 2.A: Support Local Businesses and Attract New Jobs

Establish key economic data, improve market readiness, and cultivate a robust, localized support ecosystem for entrepreneurs and small businesses.



Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Identify the Businesses Our Town Needs Most	• Initiate an Economic Feasibility Study focusing on essential businesses and regional services. • Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for target businesses. • Analyze Broadband/Cellular Service Gaps to ensure adequate mobile coverage.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Create Support and Space for New and Existing Businesses	• Establish a Formal Business Community Group. • Secure and Renovate a Space for a Business Incubator. • Launch the School District Business Incubator Partnership.	Mid-term (3-5 years)

Goal 2.B: Growing Our Housing Options

Significantly increase the availability of development-ready land and units to meet current and future demand for diverse housing types.

Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Ensure Utilities Can Handle New Homes	• Conduct a Master Utility Study specific to housing growth to understand the capacity and requirements for essential services in potential growth areas.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Prepare Town Land for New Housing Development	• Create a Public-Facing Inventory of Vacant/ Blighted Properties. • Engage Large Landowners Surrounding the Town Limits to discuss growth potential and utility extension requirements.	Mid-term (3-5 years)

Goal 2.C: Helping Residents Own and Maintain Their Home

Preserve the quality of existing housing stock and create clear, attainable pathways and support programs for new and current homeowners.

Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Launch a Home Repair and Preservation Program	• Research and Adopt a Home Repair Assistance Program Model. • Formalize Partnership with Habitat for Humanity/Local Service Groups. • Launch and Market the Home Repair Assistance Program, prioritizing seniors and those with disabilities.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Turn Blighted Properties into New Homes	• Adopt a Strategic Property Acquisition Policy. • Target and Acquire at least a Priority Blighted Property. • Issue an RFP for the Redevelopment of the Acquired Property.	Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Pillar 3: Essential Services and Accessible Community Life

Focus: Modernizing public facilities, ensuring comprehensive public safety, and enhancing communication and mobility access.

Goal 3.A: Ensuring a Safe Town and Emergency Readiness

Implement strategies to ensure comprehensive public safety, including formalizing a consistent law enforcement presence and enhancing community-wide emergency preparedness infrastructure.



Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Enhance Emergency Preparedness	• Secure Funding and Install a Tornado Warning Siren. • Pursue enhanced training opportunities and equipment for EMS response • Budget for the replacement of equipment to maintain high-quality service • Explore the Fire Department Helipad Partnership.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Improve Consistent Police and Safety Coverage	• Formalize a Local Police Substation Agreement with Pierceton PD to define minimum on-site presence and utilization of space in town.	Mid-term (3-5 years)

Goal 3.B: Stay Connected and Make Services Easy to Reach

Bridge the digital divide and ensure comprehensive two-way civic communication while establishing reliable mobility solutions to ensure equitable access to essential services and community life for all residents, particularly seniors.

Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Set Up Essential Town Website and Online Tools	• Launch an Official Town Website and Social Media Accounts. • Implement a System for Online Payments.	Short-term (1-2 years)
2. Create Clear Rules for Engaging with Residents	• Adopt a Formal Community Engagement Protocol that defines standards for public meeting announcements, complaint handling, and responses to online engagement.	Mid-term (3-5 years)
3. Launch a Reliable Ride Service for Seniors	• Conduct a Senior Transportation Needs Assessment. • Formalize a Partnership and Service Agreement with KABS. • Launch and Promote the enhanced KABS Service.	Mid-term (3-5 years)

Goal 3.C: A Central Place for Town Services and Community Hub

Develop a centralized, modern community facility to serve as a hub for civic life, programs, and public services.

Strategy	Action Step Components	Time Frame
1. Explore the Feasibility of Town Offices and Community Building	• Commission a Community Facilities Feasibility Study to determine whether a new building is needed, and, if so, where it is located, what services it provides, and construction cost estimates. • Finalize Land Use and Design for the facility for efficient, consolidated services.	Mid-term (3-5 years)
2. Secure Capital Funding to Build the New Center	• Develop a Long-Term Construction Funding Plan that identifies state/federal grants, loans, and local capital contributions.	Long-Term (5+ years)

3

Implementation: The Two-Year Priority Action Program

This section outlines the immediate and strategic actions the Town will undertake in the first two years to implement the Strategic Plan.

A. Priority Action Program Overview and Summary

The Two-Year Priority Action Program translates the high-level goals into specific, measurable tasks with assigned responsibilities, budgets, and timelines. This program is critical for establishing momentum and ensuring accountability for the foundational work prioritized by the community.

The Two-Year Priority Action Program outlines the short-term strategies listed in the previous section and the phased action steps required to achieve them over four half-year periods, beginning in January 2026 through December 2027. The Priority Action Program was developed from a series of community engagement activities and meetings with the Steering Committee.

I. Town Lead Strategies are initiatives driven by the Clerk-Treasurer, Town Council, and relevant committees, and include:

- **Core Community Infrastructure and Connectivity**
 - **Goal 1.A.1 (Sidewalk Improvement Plan):** Focuses on prioritizing routes, securing funding (CAP & K21 Funds), issuing an RFQ for contractors, construction, and a ribbon cutting for a completed sidewalk network connecting residents to the new Town Park.
 - **Goal 1.C.1 (New Park and Garden):** Involves hiring a consultant, public input, approving a final park plan, securing funding (CAP & K21 Funds), issuing an RFQ, construction, and a grand opening for the park and community garden.
 - **Goal 1.C.2 (Long-Term Park Care):** Establishes a committee to research and present recommendations for funding and maintenance strategies for the new park, potentially leading to the creation of a formal Parks & Recreation Committee or Board.
- **Local Jobs, Strong Businesses, and Quality Housing**
 - **Goal 1.B.1 & 2.B.1 (Master Utility Study):** Focuses on documenting water and wastewater concerns, applying for an OCRA grant, hiring an engineering firm, creating a steering committee, finalizing the study, identifying priority projects, and researching funding for implementation within the next two years.
- **Essential Services and Accessible Community Life**
 - **Goal 3.B.1 (Town Website and Online Tools):** Aims to establish a new website and social media presence, including researching options, exploring an online bill-paying platform, and setting rules and guidelines before launch.

II. Town-supported strategies are goals accomplished in partnership with external organizations:

- **Local Jobs, Strong Businesses, and Quality Housing**
 - **Goal 2.C.1 (Home Repair and Preservation Program):** Partners with Kosciusko County Habitat for Humanity to apply for grant funding for their new Home Repair Program, connect eligible homeowners, and continue promotion of the program.
 - **Goal 2.A.1 (Economic Feasibility Study):** Involves working with KEDCO to secure funding, issue an RFQ for a consultant, and form a steering committee to conduct a study identifying essential businesses. The outcome will be a finalized study and a Request for Proposals for target businesses.
- **Essential Services and Accessible Community Life**
 - **Goal 3.A.1 (Enhance Emergency Preparedness):** Includes Town/Township representatives attending Kosciusko County Emergency Management meetings, researching funding for key initiatives (like tornado warning and enhanced EMS training/equipment), coordinating with the Township on budgeting, and implementing these strategic initiatives.

The complete, detailed Two-Year Priority Action Program, including quarterly milestones, lead departments, and full resource allocations, is detailed in Appendix A.

B. Resources and Financial Stewardship

Successful implementation of this plan relies on maximizing the Town's fiscal strength and leveraging external partnerships and funding sources.

1. Financial Commitment and Accountability

The Two-Year Priority Action Program should be fully integrated into the Town's annual financial plan. All necessary resources, including staff time and dedicated consulting budgets, will need to be prioritized by Council. In many cases, the Town will need to seek additional funding sources to complete these strategies. The Town Council should monitor the completion of the strategies by tracking budget expenditures alongside project status to ensure fiscal accountability.

2. Key Implementation Partners and Funding Sources

The scale of this Strategic Plan requires collaboration with external governmental entities, non-profit organizations, and regional partners to secure competitive funding and specialized expertise.

Partner/Resource	Role in Implementation
MACOG (Michiana Area Council of Governments)	Continued technical assistance, planning support, grant writing, and guidance on regional resources.
KEDCO (Kosciusko Economic Development Corp.)	Securing funding for and leading the Economic Feasibility Study (Goal 2.A), and issuing the Request for Proposals for target businesses.
Kosciusko County Habitat for Humanity	Formal partner in launching and administering the Home Repair and Preservation Program (Goal 2.C.1) for eligible seniors and residents.
KABS (Kosciusko Area Bus Service)	Essential partner for the formalization and promotion of the Reliable Ride Service for Seniors (Goal 3.C.3).
Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board	Collaboration on Extending Trail Connections to the regional network (Goal 1.A.5).
Kosciusko County Area Plan Commission	Provides assistance and guidance in evaluating land available for development (Goal 1.B.2 & Goal 2.B.2), review site plans in adherence to the Zoning Ordinance, and implementing design standards in the Downtown (Goal 1.A.3)
OCRA (Office of Community and Rural Affairs)	Primary target for securing planning grants for the Master Utility Study (Goal 1.B.1) and potential construction grants for the capital infrastructure projects.
INDOT (Indiana Department of Transportation)	Primary target for securing grants to maintain and update roads and potential partner in undertaking the SR 13 Safety Study (Goal 1.A.2).
IDNR (Indiana Department of Natural Resources)	Primary target for securing grants to plan, install, and maintain trails and parks, especially in future trail connections in the County (Goal 1.A.5)
IFA (Indiana Finance Authority), EDA (Economic Development Authority), & USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Rural Development	Potential State and Federal sources of funds for infrastructure improvement projects, including capital projects related to housing and economic development.
CAP & K21 Funds (Community Amenities Program/Local Foundations)	Critical non-local funding sources for New Park Construction (Goal 1.C.1) and Sidewalk Improvement Construction (Goal 1.A.1).

4

Monitoring, Reporting, and Next Steps

The Strategic Plan is a living document. We commit to a consistent monitoring and reporting cycle to ensure we stay on track and remain responsive to emerging community needs.

- **Quarterly Updates:** Staff will provide Council with quarterly status reports on the progress of all actions in the two-year program.
- **Annual Review:** Council will formally review the entire Strategic Plan annually, allowing adjustments to priorities, timelines, and resources based on completed work and changing circumstances.
- **Public Accountability:** The Town will publish an annual progress report summarizing achievements, budget use, and key deliverables for public review.

A

APPENDIX A Two-Year Priority Action Program

The following table outlines the comprehensive action program for the period from January 2026 through December 2027. Each action step is aligned with the Strategic Goals and identifies the lead Town officials and external partners responsible for successful completion. The Priority Action Program was developed from a series of community engagement activities and meetings with the Steering Committee.

I. Town Lead Strategies

These strategies are primarily driven by the Town's representatives (Town Council and/or the Clerk-Treasurer). However, various strategic partners will assist the Town in implementing each action, ensuring progress over the following two years.

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners
Goal 1.A.1 Create and Implement a Sidewalk Improvement Plan <i>Success Metric: Completed sidewalk network connecting residents to the new Town Park.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 - Prioritize sidewalk routes to incorporate with the Park Plan. - Apply for CAP & K21 Funds for Construction Costs. Jul-Dec 2026 - Once funding is secure, issue an RFQ for qualified contractors to build the sidewalks. - Depending on the schedule, construction may begin. Jan-Jun 2027 - Construction continues, plan ribbon cutting. Jul-Dec 2027 - Host ribbon cutting for sidewalk completion.	- Clerk-Treasurer - Town Council - MACOG - Kosciusko County - K21 & OIRI Committee

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners
Goal 1.C.1. Finish Building our New Park and Garden <i>Success Metric: Successfully open a new park in Sidney</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 - Hire a consultant to create a new park plan, including public input. - Approve Final Park Plan - Apply for CAP & K21 Funds for Construction Costs. Jul-Dec 2026 - Once funding is secure, issue an RFQ for qualified contractors to build the park. - Depending on the schedule, construction may begin. Jan-Jun 2027 - Construction continues, plan grand opening. - Discuss the community garden plan and installation Jul-Dec 2027 - Host grand opening for park and community garden.	- Clerk-Treasurer - Town Council - Park Committee - MACOG - Kosciusko County - K21 & OIRI Committee
Goal 1.B.1 Plan for Future Water and Sewer Needs Goal 2.B.1 Ensure Utilities Can Handle New Homes <i>Success Metric: Complete and approve the Master Utility Study to better understand current and future utility needs for growth and development.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 - Document water-related issues and concerns at the existing wastewater facility. - Collect data and support from residents on concerns with local water utilities (including a public hearing). - Apply for OCRA Master Water Utility Planning Grant Jul-Dec 2026 - After funding is approved, finalize an agreement with a qualified engineering firm to conduct the study. - Create a steering committee to lead the development of the Master Utility Study. Jan-Jun 2027 - Finalize and approve Master Utility Study. - Work with engineers to identify priority projects to implement the Master Utility Study. Jul-Dec 2027 - Research funding opportunities and plan the Town budget to implement a project within the next two years.	- Clerk Treasurer - Grant Administrator (MACOG) - Engineer/Consultant

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners
Goal 3.B.1 Set Up Essential Town Website and Online Tools <i>Success Metric: Completed new website and social media pages to share relevant town information.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 • Invite the Kosciusko County Technology Director to present at a Town Council meeting about website options. • Explore incorporating an online bill paying platform on the new website. • Research Social Media rules, requirements, and best practices from other small communities. Jul-Dec 2026 • Review and evaluate options presented to create and host a town website. • Approve and launch a new website, including an online bill paying platform. • After establishing proper rules and guidelines, launch the Town Social Media page(s). Jan-Jun 2027 • Regularly review and maintain website and social media presence. Jul-Dec 2027 • Regularly review and maintain website and social media presence.	• Clerk-Treasurer • Town Council • Kosciusko County Technology Director
Goal 1.C.2. Create the Team and Plan to Fund Long-Term Care of the Park <i>Success Metric: A clear strategy to fund the long-term maintenance of the new park facility.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 • None Jul-Dec 2026 • Establish a committee interested in the new park to participate in the planning process. • The committee begins researching long-term funding and maintenance strategies for the new park. Jan-Jun 2027 • The committee prepares a presentation for the Town Council with recommendations for maintaining the park. Jul-Dec 2027 • The committee implements recommendations from the Town Council. • The Town Council considers creating a formal Parks & Recreation Committee or Board.	• Park Committee • Clerk-Treasurer • Town Council

II. Town Supported Strategies

These strategies are priorities of the Town, but will be implemented primarily with the efforts of various strategic partners. The Town's objective is to partner with these organizations to ensure the programs are delivered effectively for the Town's benefit and its residents.

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners
Goal 2.C.1 Launch a Home Repair and Preservation Program <i>Success Metric: The Kosciusko County Home Repair Program will benefit local residential properties by ensuring essential home repairs are completed.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 • Work with residents to create a list of potentially eligible homeowners for the new Habitat for Humanity Home Repair Program. • Kosciusko County Habitat for Humanity applies for grant funding to support their new Home Repair Program. Jul-Dec 2026 • After funding is approved, partner with Kosciusko County Habitat for Humanity. • Connect eligible homeowners with the New Home Repair Program. Jan-Jun 2027 • Continue to promote and connect eligible homeowners with the New Home Repair Program. Jul-Dec 2027 • Continue to promote and connect eligible homeowners with the New Home Repair Program.	• Kosciusko County Habitat for Humanity • Town Council
Goal 2.A.1 Identify the Businesses Our Town Needs Most <i>Success Metric: Complete and approve Economic Feasibility Study identifying essential businesses and regional services that could be located in Sidney.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 • None Jul-Dec 2026 • None Jan-Jun 2027 • Work with KEDCO to secure funding and issue an RFQ to select a consultant to conduct the Economic Feasibility Study. • Identify a steering committee to lead the development of the Economic Feasibility Study. Jul-Dec 2027 • Finalize and approve the Economic Feasibility Study. • Work with the consultant and KEDCO to issue a Request for Proposals for the target business.	• KEDCO • Consultant • Town Council

Strategy	Action Steps	Partners
Goal 3.A.1 Enhance Emergency Preparedness <i>Success Metric: The Sidney-Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Department will receive enhanced training and equipment to continue providing high-quality services.</i>	Jan-Jun 2026 - Town and/or Township representatives should regularly attend Kosciusko County Emergency Management meetings to continue to coordinate and utilize shared resources. Jul-Dec 2026 - Research funding opportunities for key strategic initiatives, such as tornado warning and enhanced EMS training and equipment. - Coordinate with the Township on planning the budget in the following year to include equipment and training to keep high-quality services. Jan-Jun 2027 - Based on funding available or grant funds received, implement the key strategic initiatives to enhance emergency preparedness. Jul-Dec 2027 - Based on funding available or grant funds received, implement the key strategic initiatives to enhance emergency preparedness.	- Jackson Township Trustee - Sidney-Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Department - Kosciusko County Emergency Management Department - Town Council

B

APPENDIX B Existing Conditions Report

Executive Summary

The Town of Sidney presents a distinct set of demographic, economic, and housing characteristics when compared to Kosciusko County. As a very small community (Population: 104), Sidney exhibits a significantly older population (Median Age: 54 vs. 39) and a considerably lower educational attainment (6% college-educated vs. 24.6% in the County).

Key challenges for the Town include housing affordability and supply, as evidenced by a high owner-cost burden rate (21.3%) and a substantial vacancy rate (31.9%), coupled with median home values that are less than half the County's. Economically, Sidney is characterized by a lower Labor Force Participation Rate (46.2%), likely due to its older population, and a Median Household Income (\$46,827) that is significantly lower than the County's (\$73,922).

1. Demographics and Socioeconomic Profile

Sidney is a small, aging community with a profile substantially different from that of the County at large.

Metric	Sidney	Kosciusko County	Comparative Analysis
Population	104	80,357	The Town is a micro-community within the County.
Median Age	54	39	Sidney's population is significantly older than the County average.
Percent College Educated	6%	24.60%	The Town exhibits a much lower rate of college-level educational attainment.
Percent BIPOC	8.70%	14.30%	The Town is less racially and ethnically diverse than the County.
% Income on Housing & Transportation	58%	55.50%	Town residents allocate a higher percentage of income to essential costs.

Key Findings:

- **Aging Population:** The high median age in Sidney (54) suggests a community with a large proportion of retirees, which impacts the local labor force and demand for certain services.
- **Educational Attainment:** The significant gap in the college-educated population may indicate challenges for workforce development and for attracting younger, skilled professionals.

2. Housing Conditions and Affordability

Sidney's housing market is characterized by lower values, older stock, and concerning issues related to cost burden and vacancy rates.

Metric	Sidney	Kosciusko County	Comparative Analysis
Median Home Value	\$97,500	\$200,300	Home values are below the County average, suggesting potentially lower-quality stock or market stagnation.
Percent Cost Burden - Owners	21.3%	11.3%	Owner-occupied households in Sidney are nearly twice as likely to be cost-burdened (spending >30% of income on housing costs) as the County average.
Percent Vacant Housing	31.9%	17.7%	The high vacancy rate suggests potential blight, a lack of market demand, or a significant number of seasonal/unoccupied homes.
Percent Owner-Occupied	70.2%	77%	Sidney has a lower homeownership rate than the County.
Median Year Built	1975	1975	Housing stock is generally the same age as the County's.
Total Housing Units	69	38,587	The number of housing units is very low, consistent with the small population.

Key Findings:

- **Affordability Crisis:** Despite low home values, the cost burden for owners is high, likely a direct consequence of the Town's low Median Household Income.
- **Housing Stock Challenge:** The combination of low median value and high vacancy suggests an urgent need for housing rehabilitation, market incentives, or a strategy to address vacant properties.

3. Families and Households

Household dynamics in Sidney reflect its older demographic and lower-income characteristics.

Metric	Sidney	Kosciusko County	Comparative Analysis
Median Household Income	\$46,827	\$73,922	Sidney's income is substantially lower, highlighting an economic disparity with the County.
Families with Related Children Under 18	14.9%	26.8%	The low percentage is consistent with an older median age and fewer young families.
Households Below Poverty	6.4%	9.8%	Interestingly, the Town has a lower percentage of households below the official poverty line than the County; however, this must be interpreted in light of the high cost burden rate.
Average Household Size	2.2	2.5	Smaller household sizes are typical of older populations (fewer children).
Total Households	47	31,747	The Town comprises only 47 households.

Key Findings:

- **Significant Income Gap:** The median household income is approximately 63% of the County's, indicating a substantial economic disadvantage for Town residents. This is likely the driver of the high owner-cost burden rate (Section 2).
- **Lack of Young Families:** The low percentage of families with young children suggests a demographic challenge in attracting and retaining younger working-age residents, who are crucial for the long-term vitality of the local community and its school systems.

4. Economic Profile and Labor Force

Sidney's economy is characterized by a low labor force participation rate, consistent with its demographic profile, and limited local employment.

Metric	Sidney	Kosciusko County	Comparative Analysis
Labor Force Participation Rate	46.2%	64.7%	The Town's labor force participation is significantly lower, primarily due to a large share of the population that is "Not in Labor Force" (50 residents 16+), a common trait of retirement-heavy communities.
Number of Jobs	13	36,605	The extremely low job count indicates that Sidney is primarily a bedroom community with minimal local commercial activity or industry.
Unemployment Rate	0%	4%	The 0% unemployment rate may be statistically volatile due to the small Labor Force (43 people), but it suggests that all people actively seeking work are currently employed.
Total Employed	43	40,150	All members of the Town's labor force are employed, likely commuting to jobs outside the Town.

Key Findings:

- **Reliance on Commuting:** With only 11 local jobs for a labor force of 43 employed people, Sidney functions heavily as a **"bedroom community,"** where the majority of workers must commute outside the Town for employment.
- **Economic Base Deficiency:** The minimal job base (11 jobs) and the low Labor Force Participation Rate (46.2%) suggest the need for strategies to encourage small-scale commercial development, support entrepreneurship, and attract working-age residents to bolster the local economy.



APPENDIX C

Public Survey Summary Report

The future development and governance of the Town of Sidney must be guided by the needs and desires of its residents. To inform the development of the upcoming Strategic Plan, which will serve as the guiding document for the next 5 to 10 years, the Town conducted a comprehensive public survey. This survey was made available both online and in print, distributed to every household in the town between spring and fall 2025.

Purpose: The primary purpose of this report is to consolidate and analyze public input, ensuring the final Strategic Plan is rooted in what matters most to the community.

Response Rate: The survey yielded 24 completed responses. Given the Town's population of approximately 104 residents, this represents a 23% participation rate, providing a robust and highly representative sample of the community's voice.

Major Takeaways and Core Strategic Actions

The data points to a clear strategic direction focused on Infrastructure Renewal, Economic Vitality, and Community Preservation.

1. Infrastructure Renewal: The Critical Priority

The most pressing issue identified by residents is the state of the town's basic services.

Finding	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Context
Highest Challenge	Deteriorating Infrastructure (13)	The keyword "sidewalks" (11 mentions) was the single most frequent word in all open-ended responses, indicating a severe problem with pedestrian mobility.
Top Improvement	Improved Infrastructure (12)	Confirms that investment in roads, sidewalks, and water/wastewater systems is the non-negotiable top priority for the next decade.

Strategic Action: Allocate significant and immediate resources to comprehensive infrastructure repair and replacement.

2. Economic & Social Vitality

While residents enjoy the affordable cost of living, they perceive vulnerability in the local economy and an increasing number of public safety challenges.

Finding	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Context
Economic Vulnerability	Deteriorating Infrastructure (13)	Residents recognize the need for "More Local Business" (8) to create local jobs and services, preventing the town from becoming solely a commuter community.
Public Safety	Improved Infrastructure (12)	The keywords "drugs" (4 mentions) and "station" (4 mentions) reinforce the need for more substantial public safety presence and resources (police/fire).

Strategic Action: Develop a targeted plan to attract businesses and invest in public safety resources to address social challenges.

3. Community Strengths and Quality of Life

The community's identity is defined by its small, quiet, and friendly nature—attributes that must be preserved through careful, measured growth.

Finding	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Context
Core Strengths	Safe and Peaceful Environment (12) and Strong Sense of Community (8)	The qualitative keywords "quiet" (10 mentions) and "small" (9 mentions) underscore that any strategic growth must be implemented to protect the town's tranquil atmosphere.
Recreation Needs	Playground Equipment (15) and Adding Parks (9)	Indicates a high demand for family-friendly, passive recreational spaces.

Strategic Action: Leverage the town's strengths as a peaceful community. When developing new recreational facilities, prioritize those that serve youth and families (e.g., playgrounds, benches, covered pavilions).

Conclusion

The residents of Sidney have provided clear, actionable input. The Strategic Plan for the next 5 to 10 years has a definitive foundation:

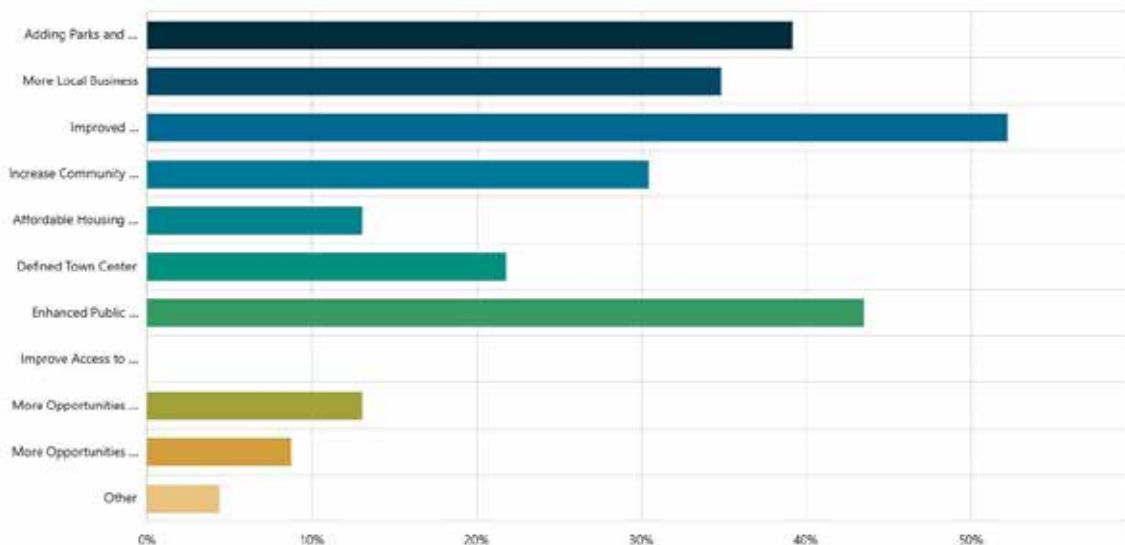
- 1. Fix the Foundations:** Make immediate and sustained investments in infrastructure, particularly sidewalks.
- 2. Grow the Future:** Implement a comprehensive economic development strategy to attract businesses and create job opportunities.
- 3. Preserve the Character:** Protect and amplify the community's primary assets—its safety and small-town quiet.

This report provides a strong evidence base, ensuring that the Town of Sidney's guiding document aligns with the public's highest priorities.

Summary Charts

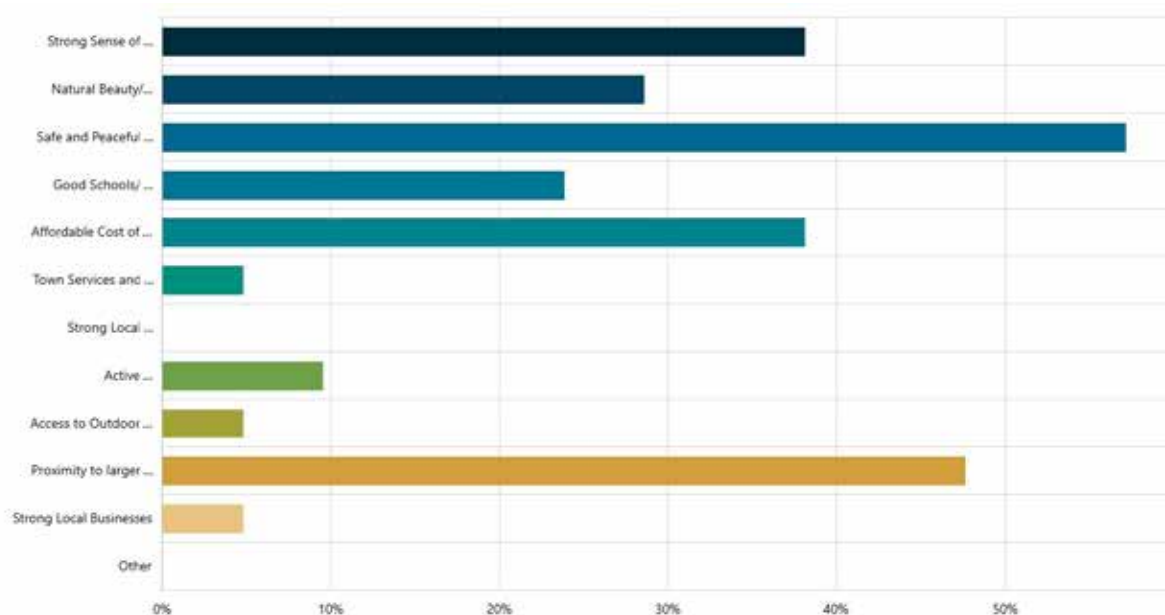
What specific improvements would you like to see in Sidney? (Select top three)

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Adding Parks and Recreational Activities	39.13%	9
More Local Business	34.78%	8
Improved Infrastructure (e.g. roads, sidewalks, water/wastewater)	52.17%	12
Increase Community Events and Activities	30.43%	7
Affordable Housing Options	13.04%	3
Defined Town Center	21.74%	5
Enhanced Public Safety (e.g. Police, Fire, EMS)	43.48%	10
Improve Access to Healthcare	0%	0
More Opportunities for Youth	13.04%	3
More Opportunities for Seniors	8.70%	2
Other	4.35%	1
Total	100.00%	23



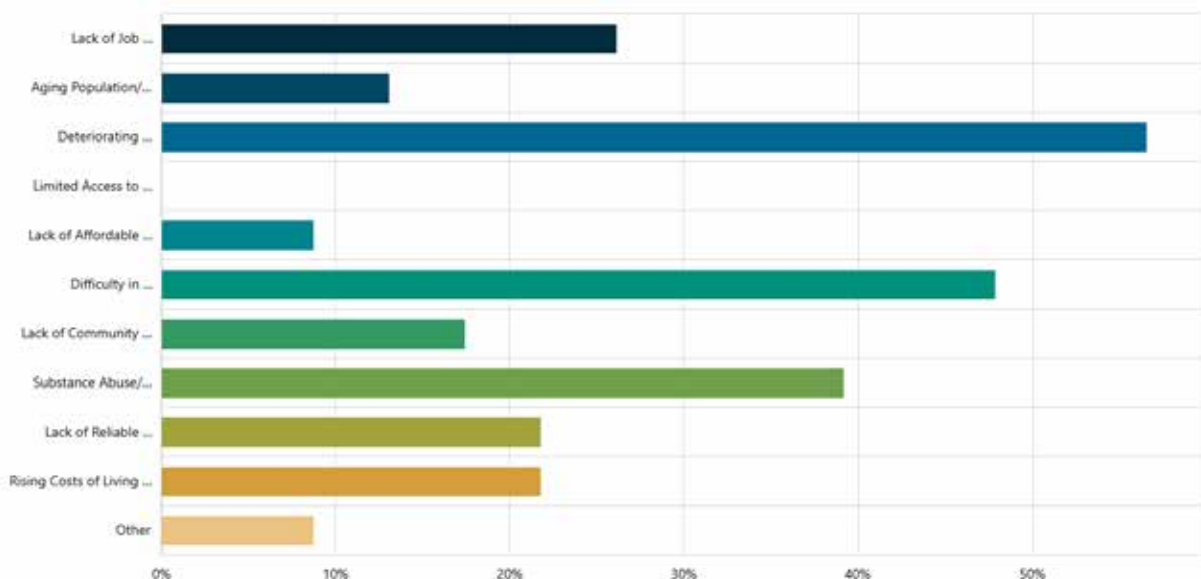
What are Sidney's greatest strengths as a community? (Select top three)

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Strong Sense of Community/Friendly Atmosphere	38.10%	8
Natural Beauty/Scenic Environment	28.57%	6
Safe and Peaceful Environment	57.14%	12
Good Schools/ Educational Opportunities	23.81%	5
Affordable Cost of Living	38.10%	8
Town Services and Communications	4.76%	1
Strong Local Traditions/Culture	0%	0
Active Volunteerism/Community Involvement	9.52%	2
Access to Outdoor Recreation	4.76%	1
Proximity to larger towns/cities	47.62%	10
Strong Local Businesses	4.76%	1
Other	0%	0
Total	100.00%	21



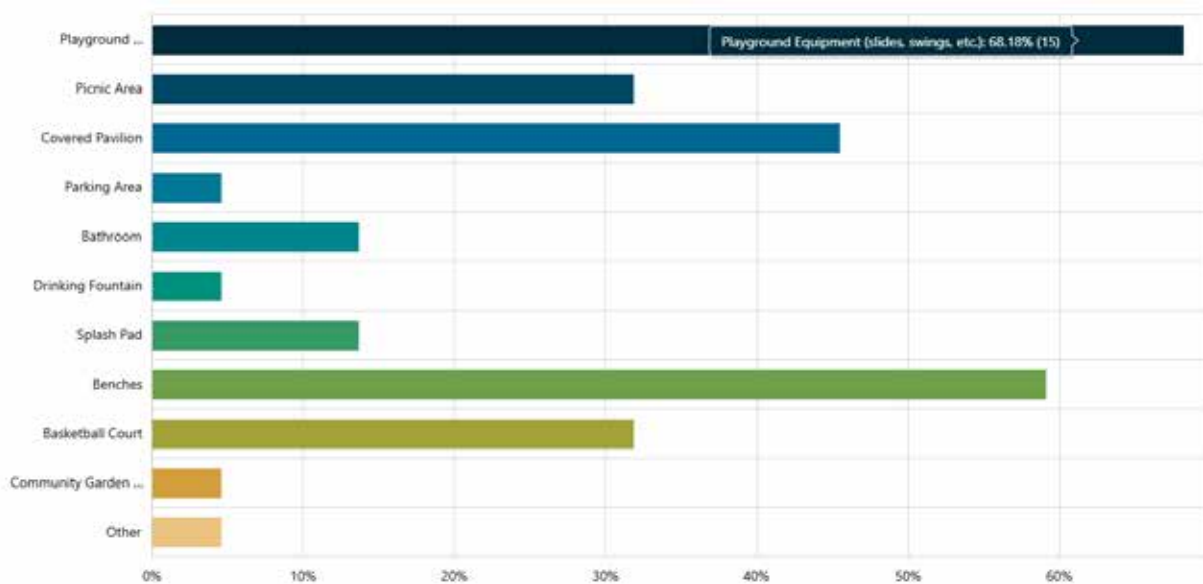
What are the biggest challenges facing Sidney that we need to address? (Select top three)

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Lack of Job Opportunities	26.09%	6
Aging Population/Declining Youth Population	13.04%	3
Deteriorating Infrastructure (e.g. roads, water infrastructure)	56.52%	13
Limited Access to Healthcare	0%	0
Lack of Affordable Housing	8.70%	2
Difficulty in Attracting New Businesses	47.83%	11
Lack of Community Amenities	17.39%	4
Substance Abuse/Drug Problems	39.13%	9
Lack of Reliable Internet/Broadband Access	21.74%	5
Rising Costs of Living (e.g. housing, utilities, gas prices, etc.)	21.74%	5
Other	8.70%	2
Total	100.00%	23



Which of the following amenities would you most like to see in a new park? (Select top three)

Answer Choices	Percent	Count
Playground Equipment (slides, swings, etc.)	68.18%	15
Picnic Area	31.82%	7
Covered Pavilion	45.45%	10
Parking Area	4.55%	1
Bathroom	13.64%	3
Drinking Fountain	4.55%	1
Splash Pad	13.64%	3
Benches	59.09%	13
Basketball Court	31.82%	7
Community Garden Plots	4.55%	1
Other	4.55%	1
Total	100.00%	22





Sidney

Strategic Plan

2026-2036