



**SUCCESSFUL  
GARDINER**

IT'S WORTH IT!



April 2019

# SUCCESSFUL GARDINER PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

# Contents

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I. Introduction .....	2
II. Gardiner's Community Values .....	2
Why Identify Values? .....	2
III. Gardiner's Concerns .....	4
IV. A Vision for Gardiner .....	6
V. What the Youth Said .....	7
VI. What's Next? Community Workshops May 7 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> .....	7
Appendix A   Demographics of Participation .....	8
Appendix B   Comment Frequency .....	9
Appendix C   Youth Results .....	10
Discussion Questions: .....	10
Agreed Upon Common Themes/Most Important .....	10
Individual Input .....	11
Appendix D   1993 Successful Community Results .....	15
Appendix E   Excerpts from Community Input .....	16
VALUES .....	16
ISSUES .....	18
HOPES .....	22

## I. Introduction

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Successful Gardiner is working to ensure Gardiner is the authentic, vibrant, and healthy community that we all love. To do that, we want to engage all of the community in a dialogue and problem-solving process to clarify what we want for the future, identify our barriers and opportunities for achieving our vision, and agree on a road map to get there so we can take action before it is too late.

Successful Gardiner is led by a coalition of community organizations and leaders volunteering their time to make this project happen. This leadership group oversees Future West, a non-profit providing technical and facilitation assistance.

- Bear Creek Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Gardiner School District
- Gardiner Food Pantry
- Greater Gardiner Community Council
- Northern Yellowstone Education Foundation
- MSU Extension
- Park County
- Resort Tax Board

Between January and April 2019, Successful Gardiner collected community input that utilized an online survey, postcards, interviews, and a youth event at the school. The community was asked:

- What do you love about living in Gardiner in why is that important to you?
- What concerns do you have for the future?
- What hopes do you have for the future?

Additionally, youth were asked two additional questions:

- What would make Gardiner a better place to grow up?
- What would make you want to return here later on in your life if you left?

A total of **229** individuals were reached during this effort and that input is summarized in this report.

Interviews	51
Surveys	128
Postcards	29
Youth Event	18
Email	3

## II. Gardiner's Community Values

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### Why Identify Values?

So, what do we mean by shared community values and why do we care about them? These are what we care most about in our community – the customs, characteristics and places that create Gardiner's unique sense of place. It defines who we are as a community and by identifying them, provides us a mechanism for acting in a way consistent to these beliefs. All of us - individuals, organizations, and government – need to work together to maintain what makes Gardiner special and to grow and change in a way that is more consistent with these community values.

Our values are enduring and have changed little over the decades. How well we feel we are stewarding different values however has. Our goal is to create an action plan that outlines what we can do to ensure these values are protected and strengthened over time.

In Gardiner we are:

## **1. A Connected and Caring Community**

We value being a community where we know our neighbors, are personal and friendly, and support each other when in need.

## **2. Good Stewards of Yellowstone**

As the original gateway to the national park, we value the beauty and wildness of the Yellowstone ecosystem and the exceptional playground the Gallatin, Absarokas, and Yellowstone River offer as our backyard.

## **3. Civically Minded and Engaged**

We value the willingness of people to work together and collaborate towards the betterment of our community.

## **4. A Unique Small Town**

We love being a small town whose location and local character still respects its heritage and uniqueness setting it apart from other places.

## **5. A Great Place for Families**

We value being a great place to raise a family where we support young people through a strong educational foundation and a safe environment.

## **6. A Safe Community**

We value living in a small town where familiarity builds trust, we can express ourselves and embrace our differences, and have opportunities to be financially secure.

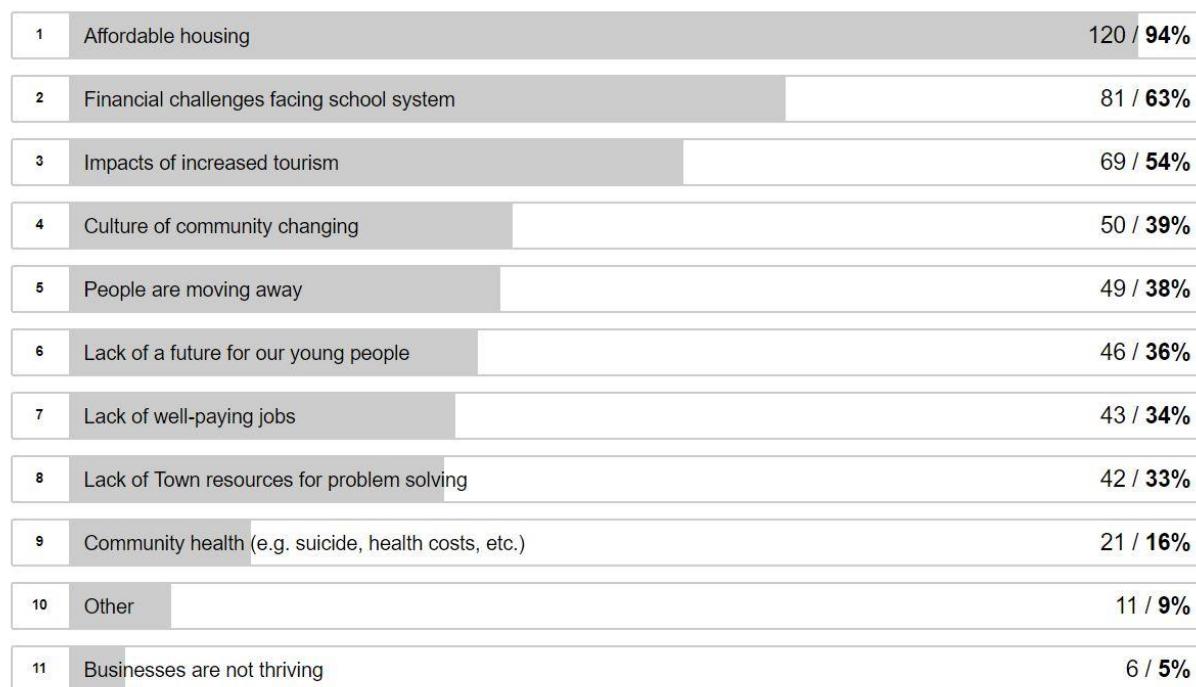
### **III. Gardiner's Concerns**

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Overwhelmingly, the primary concern was housing affordability and maintaining an authentic community. Community members are concerned that the scale of tourism is negatively impacting the intangible elements that define the sense of community that people love. They fear Gardiner is going to be overrun by tourism, hotels, and vacation rentals and a market that prices locals out. As a result, there is a tremendous sense of loss of community in Gardiner. We feel we have lost friends, neighbors, landmarks and community character, traditions, and more. We expressed a need to not only address the physical planning issues, affordable housing being key, but also strengthening our social sector through bringing people together, both new and longtime residents, to build social bonds and work towards a regeneration of the community. Of the 128 respondents for the online community survey, they ranked concerns as follows:

What do you think are the 5 most significant issues or challenges facing Gardiner?

128 out of 128 people answered this question



When combined with all the other input, the key themes that emerged from all the comments were:

Question: What are your concerns for the future?	
Affordable Housing	221
Economy	97
Education	84
Tourism Impacts	80
Manage Growth & Change	53
Demographic Change	52
Governance	49
Health	26

In reviewing all the community input, the following common concerns emerged.

<b>COMMUNITY CONCERNS SUMMARY</b>	
<b>Costs of Living Too High</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing affordability</li><li>• Housing availability</li><li>• Need better wages</li></ul>	<b>Threats to Community Character</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not know neighbors anymore</li><li>• Influx of seasonal workers and visitors</li><li>• Too many vacation rentals destroying neighborhoods</li><li>• Loss of families moving out due to high costs of living/lack of housing</li><li>• Redevelopment of funky and unique structures/places with newer less unique places</li><li>• School viability threatened by loss of families</li><li>• Not enough common community events to bring everyone together and build connections</li><li>• Sense that everything is lost and that it is too late to act</li></ul>
<b>Economy Not Diverse</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dependence on summer tourism and lack of year-round economy</li><li>• Hard for business to thrive in winter/off season</li><li>• Not enough opportunities for youth employment</li><li>• Not enough diversity in businesses focused on local community</li></ul>	<b>Community Cohesion Strained</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disagreement on how to solve problems allowing problems to get worse</li><li>• Blaming for loss of community, not solving issues</li><li>• Visitors not always aware of community values and disrespectful</li></ul>
<b>Inadequate Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capacity of stormwater infrastructure inadequate</li><li>• Poor condition of roads</li></ul>	<b>Governance and Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Need some sort of system to allow for more control over growth</li><li>• Need more communication or transparency in how resources spent</li></ul>
<b>Unsustainable Tourism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure carrying capacity exceeded by tourist in summer</li><li>• Too many tourists in summer</li><li>• Too many short-term rentals</li></ul>	<b>Lack of Availability of Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gaps in medical services</li><li>• Lack of certain types of businesses</li><li>• Not enough for young people to do</li></ul>

## IV. A Vision for Gardiner

A community vision is a combination of two basic elements:

- An understanding of the community's timeless unchanging core values, and
- A clear picture of what it wants for its own future – both huge and audacious goals and incremental actions.

So, what did we say we wanted for the future?

COMMUNITY VISION	
<b>A Vibrant Year-Round Economy</b>	<b>Well-Functioning Infrastructure</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create balanced tourism</li><li>• Develop a year-round diverse economy with thriving local business</li><li>• Develop a town investment fund for business district</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safe pedestrian &amp; biking routes in and around town</li><li>• Better stormwater management</li></ul>
<b>Managed Growth to Protect Community</b>	<b>Gardiner Is Authentic</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create local leadership structure (e.g. city council, community council, etc.)</li><li>• Develop a plan for the community</li><li>• Utilize our limited land wisely</li><li>• Use zoning to protect town from short term rentals and hotels</li><li>• Utilize ordinances to protect character (e.g. dark skies, regulate short term rentals, prevent sprawling mcmansions, increase density, protect neighborhoods, etc.)</li><li>• Historic or unique structures/places protected</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A place where people can live, work, and raise a family</li><li>• Vibrant neighborhoods with year-round residents</li><li>• Quality housing that is affordable<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Large employers (school, NPS, Xanterra, hotels) support and develop housing for employees</li><li>◦ A public land swap create land for housing</li><li>◦ Incentives for property owners to meet local housing needs</li><li>◦ Taxes and fees on short term rentals to fund housing program</li><li>◦ Land and/or properties bought to provide permanent housing for residents (FT and seasonal)</li></ul></li><li>• More public spaces like a community center and park</li></ul>
<b>A Great Place for Youth &amp; Families</b>	<b>The Sense of Community Is Strong</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programming for youth</li><li>• Opportunity for future generations to live here</li><li>• A stable school that continually strives to support a high-quality education</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regenerate our sense of community by bringing the community together more in annual events</li><li>• Mentor new leaders</li><li>• Welcome new people into community</li><li>• Build commitment to problem solving through civil dialogues</li><li>• Foster community involvement</li><li>• Create pride in community appearance</li></ul>
<b>High Quality Community Services</b>	<b>The Ecosystem Is Healthy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop better medical services</li><li>• Create more recreation amenities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Live in balance with wildlife</li><li>• Restored landscapes</li></ul>

Some additional, more specific ideas included:

- Irrigate Clesson Hayes Ranch
- Stephens Creek into irrigated lands
- Turn railroad grade into a bike trail
- Develop a community center or create “community school” with access to sports during winter (basketball, volleyball, etc.)
- Upgrade track and field
- Develop access to cross country skiing up Eagle and Bear Creek
- More law enforcement patrols
- Develop a library with free internet
- New businesses (donut shop, gas station, more diverse food options, car wash)
- Support more arts and culture like art spaces, public art, wilderness film festival, cultural events
- Clean up weeds around the gateway

## V. What the Youth Said

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Near the end of April, 11th graders at the school participated in a conversation about Gardiner. They identified individually why they love Gardiner, what makes it a great place to grow up. They were asked to work collaboratively to discuss concerns and hopes for the future. Their ideas echoed the other input collected. However, they place a stronger emphasis on mental health. The following are their collective priorities.

1. A desire for more youth-oriented activities available in town (with a long list of ideas generated).
2. Concerned about lack of mental health support for youth and for the community
3. There is a desire for more youth-oriented summer jobs opportunities.
4. Affordable housing and survival of the school are linked. The school needs more kids. Families need a place to live.
5. Develop Gardiner to be a great place to live by making it about locals.

All the youth input is in Appendix C.

## VI. What's Next? Community Workshops May 7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

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Successful Gardiner will host a two evening **community action forum May 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>** to continue the dialogue about creating the future we want. This forum will focus on building agreement on next steps and priorities for action. Look at Successful Gardiner's [Facebook](#) page and [website](#) where we are sharing ideas for strategies for us to achieve our vision. Check out our project updates, webinars, and project documents for resources on affordable housing, community planning and character preservation, governance options, and more!

We thank you for your participation to date and hope you will continue to be part of Successful Gardiner going forward.

[www.successfulgardiner.com](http://www.successfulgardiner.com)

## Appendix A | Demographics of Participation

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We collected participation data on surveys and postcards to compare against our community's demographics to measure community representation. Interviewee demographics were not collected. Not all respondents answered demographic questions.

### Age

	Total Respondents	Percent of Total	Gardiner
< 18	20	11.98%	15.59%
19-44	73	43.71%	31.06%
45-64	63	37.72%	42.15%
> 65	11	6.59%	11.20%

### Income

	Total Respondents	Percent of Total	Gardiner
<\$10K	5	3.36%	12.5%
\$10-24999K	9	6.04%	9.5%
\$25-49K	44	29.53%	22.6%
>\$50 - 99999K	59	39.60%	44%
>100k	22	14.77%	11.3%
<\$35K	10	6.71%	

In Gardiner, 26% of the population earns less than \$35K. In this survey, 16.1% of respondents earned under \$35K.

### Community

	Total Respondents	Percent of Total
Fulltime	137	92.57%
Part-time	10	7.43%
Visitor	0	

### Length of time in community

	Total Respondents	Percent of Total
Gardiner	98	64.47%
Jardine	11	7.24%
Mammoth	21	13.82%
Park County	13	8.55%
Other	9	5.92%

### Length of Residency

	Years	Percent of Total
Up to 5	36	27.69%
6 to 10	28	21.54%
11 to 15	19	14.62%
16 to 20	10	7.69%
21 to 30	25	19.23%
30+	12	9.23%

About 51% have lived in the area for more than a decade.

## Appendix B | Comment Frequency

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Note: This is not a statistically perfect frequency analysis. Many qualitative comments had multiple themes. To understand the general sense of community input, comments were assigned a theme once. The assessment was trying to get a general sense of what people valued, what their concerns were, and hopes and whether there were strongly emergent and shared themes.

Question: What do you love about living here and why?	
Value Metathemes	
Landscape	60
Sense of Community	59
Small town	29
Authentic	10

Question: What are your concerns for the future?	
Concern Metathemes	
Affordable Housing	221
Economy	97
Education	84
Tourism Impacts	80
Manage Growth & Change	53
Demographic Change	52
Governance	49
Health	26

Question: What is one hope you have for the future? What do you want Gardiner to be like in 25 years?	
Wish Metathemes	
Affordable Housing	216
Economy	97
Education	79
Tourism Impacts	75
Manage Growth & Change	53
Demographic Change	52
Governance	49
Health	21

# **Appendix C | Youth Results**

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## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What do you love about growing up in Gardiners?
2. Why does that matter to you?
3. What are the places in the community that you like?
4. Where do you play or hang out?
5. Where do you go for support?
6. What makes Gardiners youth friendly today?
7. What would make Gardiners more youth friendly in the future?
8. What is at least one wish you have for the future of Gardiners?
9. What would make you want to come back here if you left?
10. What would make Gardiners a better place to grow up as a young person?

## **Agreed Upon Common Themes/Most Important**

*Summary of commonalities among five youth break out discussions.*

### **1. A desire for more youth-oriented activities available in town**

- More activities for teens our age
- Increase youth infrastructure (entertainment)
- Integrate park into school lessons more
- Better library!
- Give kids a reason to go outside
  - A better park
  - A movie theater
  - Sports fields/courts
- A community recreation area/pool
- More youth friendly activities
  - Ice cream truck
  - Aquarium
  - Skate park
  - Taco truck
  - Get a zoo with zebras
- More activities for teen our age
- Entertainment options (mini-golf, trampoline park, bowling alley, laser tag)
- Water park, movie theater, places for youth to hang out
- Since everything is so tourist centered, we don't have anything to do in our free time without spending a lot of money that most of us do not have

### **2. Concerned about mental health support for youth and for the community**

- Increase mental health outreach
- Better/more school support (listen to the youth!)
- Increase support for people in need (in community)
- Increase mental health outreach
- Child care organization with counseling

- More support for people
- 3. Youth oriented summer jobs opportunities.**
- More job opportunities and diversity
  - Students are raised to be hard working because of lack of opportunity makes them work harder
  - Jobs are taken by foreigners not local high school kids in the summertime
  - Job opportunities for teens
- 4. Housing and survival of the school.**
- Family housing (affordable!)
  - Increase family housing (affordable!)
  - More affordable housing, less vacation rentals
    - Get kids that go to school here living in Gardiner
    - Hang out with friends
  - Not enough housing hurts us because it means no more kids come and our school gets no money, so we get less benefits
  - Less vacation rentals
- 5. Develop Gardiner to be a great place to live.**
- Sings in Gardiner telling people to not pet the elk
  - Increase maintenance on the roads (Stone Street)
  - Less bars and more family friendly restaurants
  - Better/cheaper/not tourist restaurant and shops
  - More food options
  - Wishes:
    - Lose at least one bar (too many drunks)
    - More public lands
    - Younger children to be more respectful
  - Shopping
  - Places with regular clothing
  - Target
  - Support local companies
  - Keep Arch park original
  - Railroad through Gardiner (highlight historic aspects)
  - Community Center (remodeled or destroyed) put to better use
  - Delivery/takeout > City Brew
  - Expand the Gardiner market

## Individual Input

- Mental health for adults
- Youth friendly area
  - Better park
  - Movie theater
- More affordable housing
- Less bars more friendly restaurants

- Local recreation area
- Shopping place
- More youth available activities or common area
- By the river
- Have places where it is not just bars, but more for youth like a bowling alley
- The sports and athletics in the school
- Make homes cheaper so people who go to school here can live in Gardiner and hang out with their friends
- River!!!
- A more friendly park/playground
- River!!
- Family, friendly
- Hunting, fishing, off-roading, and hiking accessibility
- I share the same love for the outdoors
- I don't have one unless (unreadable)
- The Travertines or up Bear Creek
- My old teacher
- They got the chance to experience their childhood with out technology (10<sup>th</sup> grade and up)
- More opportunities to broaden horizons
- Family
- Bring back a movie theater
- Get an arcade, or anything not a bar or summer rental
- Restaurants are good
- More music-oriented events
- I like that there are many places to go and explore. Driving through mountains, tree, and see the animals (It calms my stress)
- I love Jardine and all the restaurants in town.
- Jardine and the river
- There is a pharmacy which is convenient.
- Small town/same problems
- I love that Gardiner is small. It gives me more of a secure feeling. However, it is a bit too small. Our youth grow up surrounded by respectful hardworking adults. But I am starting to see those values not (unreadable) into these 12-year olds and under.
- Gardiner has barely anything for a teenager to do. We are always going to other places to go to the mall or whatever else that we do. Gardiner is a really bland place when you have been here forever.
- There is not enough housing. We have so many hotels and restaurants that there are not enough affordable homes for more potential students.
- I love the small town feel that Gardiner has although it is losing that feeling with everything being so focused on tourism nowadays.
- I wish that we would stop putting in so many hotels, vacation rentals, and restaurants. We are turning into West Yellowstone. People cannot move here because they cannot find an affordable place to live.
- In the summer there is nothing to do here without having to spend money we don't have as teens. Something that we could do such as a park would be nice.
- When I come back, I don't want to see Gardiner as a tourist town, I will not live or even retire here if it is touristy like West Yellowstone.

- I have the sense of community and the great group of friends that I have grown up with
- Sports connect me to my community
- I love the arch and the arch park. I also like the river and surrounding mountains of Gardiner. I also love Park Street. I am also very excited about the newly opened Yellowstone Hotsprings.
- I mostly hang out at friends houses and on Park Street.
- More activities for youth my age is important. I have to drive to Bozeman for most activities.
- The land, the park, the people and town's history.
- My school, my parents, the land.
- The market, the basketball court, football field, the wonderland.
- The sports fields/courts.
- A teacher
- Sports
- Small hometown vibes
- Outdoor recreation/hunting
- K-Bar, (unreadable), area
- The market, river, at friends places
- Jardine, Mammoth (during winter)
- Sports, hiking
- Sense of community
  - Outdoors
  - The people in and feel of the town
  - Location
- Family, sports, connect me to my community
- Arch Park and the Arch, the Yellowstone River, Park Street, the Bridge, coffee shops, all the local restaurants and (unreadable)
- Jacob's house, tube the Yellowstone, hike in the Park
- Family, friends
- The people in it who care for the kids
- The school/extracurriculars
- Arch park. The grocery store. My house. Yellowstone pizza co (mozzarella sticks!)
- My house. Friends houses. Sometimes Arch Park.
- No (unreadable)
- The school/raft places
- A better school, entertainment things
- Better school and more opportunities
- More classes, sports, other activities
- More family housing (to house more youth)
- More activities in general (we literally just have rafting and hiking)
- Unique experiences
- Going to school – city trips
- EPI and expedition Yellowstone make each classmate seem closer to a story
- Arch Park
- My house
- The fact that there is a school that receives community support

- More infrastructure for young people (green spaces, possibly a tennis court/etc.)
- More restaurants that are not tourist
- That it does not become overrun with vacation rentals and bars
- School and different community events keeps me connected
- I am often at the school events or sports
- Friends and family are my support
- Having a good school and close community makes youth friendly. Also having good role models who are community members.
- Keeping youth involved in the community will help them in the future.
- Opportunities for their future and start before leaving here or have opportunities to stay and be successful.
- I would like to see Gardiner have more housing and less vacation rentals. The vacation rentals take away living for people who get jobs in Gardiner.
- In Gardiner, I love the mountains and general outdoors. I am connected to the community because of my job. I like Jardine for drives and the coffee shop I work at because of the old guys I drink coffee with. I hangout at my house. I like Gardiner because of being with I knew as I grew up.
- The small town vibes
- Sports
- The restaurants
- My house
- My family or teachers
- A place where kids can go and hang out as a group
- More places to hang out more things to do
- More things to do and more food options
- More things to do, affordable housing, less vacation rentals
- I would like to see Gardiner have more opportunities for the youth. I have chosen a path that I love and am passionate about but have not got much support with it. I hope Gardiner will branch out and experience new things while still staying Gardiner.
- Gardiner is a small town, so everyone knows each other. For the most part, people are friendly here. I like the river and the basketball courts.
- I hang out at friends' houses, (unreadable)
- Youth friendly because there are kids here, so the community supports them.
- An indoor gym would be good.

# **Appendix D | 1993 Successful Community Results**

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In 1993, the Gardiner community participated in a 1.5 day Successful Community Workshop. These are the primary results for comparison.

## **Community Values**

- Heritage
- Economy
- Recreation
- People/Community
- Opportunity to enjoy nature
- Access to public land for recreation
- Pristine environment (air, forest, water, no pollution)
- Abundance of wildlife
- Quality of Life (friendly, rural, peaceful, small town nature, dark skies)
- Peaceful (lack of noise, shoulder season,
- Clean
- Engaged and participatory
- Safe (lack of crime)
- A real town

## **Concerns**

- Uncontrolled development and lack of planning
- Lack of communication
- Church Universal and Triumphant
- Too many people
- Lack of local control/representation
- Big outside money
- Not enough local resources for investment

## **Hopes: To maintain quality of life and values**

- Better understand relationship with natural environment around Gardiner
- Reduced polarization and greater tolerance with an atmosphere for collaborative problem solving
- Some more local control for more economic development and slower growth
- Smaller percentage wanted:
  - a local paper to improve communication
  - improved infrastructure
  - stable economy
  - affordable housing
  - cultural and continuing education
  - opportunities for improved transportation services

## **Recommended Actions**

- Better communication
  - Expanded community newsletter to provide more timely information
  - Better use of the Park cable and TV channel to convey information
- Expansion of the Steering Committee to become a citizens committee bringing together diverse interests
- Develop of a land use map of Park County and the establishment of baseline database of economic, demographic and land use information
- A land use plan
- Greater participation in federal land use decisions
- Better use of enterprise
- A write up of what was learned

# **Appendix E | Excerpts from Community Input**

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These are excerpts from surveys, interviews, and postcards that demonstrate the emergent themes for Gardiner's values, concerns, and hopes.

## **VALUES**

### **A Connected and Caring Community**

- we're the sense of a sense of community here, you know, just like the people, people of all stripes and persuasions in terms of their politics and that kind of thing. But uh, in the end, people really stick together here in spite of differences are, you know, me really. It really is. Yeah. It's unique in that way I think. And like I say, there's only small town I've ever lived in. I think it's probably common in many small towns.
- I love that people are willing to help you out or lend a hand when you need it, you just have to ask. I think that for the most part nobody is a stranger.
- I feel Gardiner is a community that does help its own. This is demonstrated through caring for the sick and dying, helping in the shutdown, and those who volunteer. It may not be Gardiner of the past but it's still there.
- I love that Gardiner is a gateway town to so many cool things, but is still a small, caring community rather than just a bunch of tourist traps.
- I love the small accepting community there. We all belong!

### **Good Stewards of Yellowstone**

- What I love most about living here is access to wild areas. Having public land and access to rivers for fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, skiing is the main reason I moved here. Also, the wildlife. I like having bears and wolves as well as the elk and bison, not only for hunting purposes but for the value of their presence. Lastly, I came because it is a small town. I was looking for a close knit and proud community.
- I love Gardiner because we are close to the wilderness and it's where I grew up
- The wildness! There's no place like this in the world. Folks from all over the world come here to see the nature and wildlife. Who can say that they see bald eagles, ospreys, bison, elk, pronghorn, big horn, wolves from their living room? No one outside of the Gardiner Basin. This is an incredible treasure to be protected, because the concrete jungles the rest of the world lives in is bad for the climate and people's mental and physical health.
- I love that it is in the epicenter of the Yellowstone Ecosystem. It is a highly educated community of adults and children. the opportunities to recreate outdoors is immense.
- I love living in Gardiner for many reasons. Mainly having Yellowstone and surrounding state land as my playground. And because everyone in (almost everyone) town is friendly and looks out for one another.

### **Civically Minded and Engaged**

- I think there's always going to be that contingent of people ... They're set. Their kids or the kids have moved away and they're like, "Not my problem." But I think from my experience most people I run across care about this area and appreciated and respect it. This area seems to draw a lot of people like that. They're just good people that want to leave things better than they find them. Thankfully.
- Gardiner has a great sense of community. It always pulls together.
- Small community who has everyone's best interest at heart; great people.
- The small-town feel knowing most of my neighbors, and I like that when someone is in need we'll just throw a big fundraiser and hire a band and raise roof and have some food and raise money for them.

- The community and the people! There are such wonderful people here who are always making things happen in the community.

### A Unique Small Town

- You know, my first memory of Gardiner was just loving this funkiness of Gardiner that it was a little bit, because it wasn't fancy, It was just kind of, just good people. And I felt like the first time I came in I think I went to the Blue Goose of all places because that was like the big place to go back then and it was almost like walking into Cheers like everybody knew everybody. Yeah everybody. Yeah, you know like say hi to everybody and that's one of my first memories is being in the blue goose all places. And how fun that was that everyone knew each other and the even though they might disagree on politics, I think everybody kind of agreed to disagree. And it was funky, but it was fun.
- Gardiner has character. It's funky & definitely NOT sterile suburbia. It's small & has proximity to Yellowstone NP. Gardiner has interesting topography because of the Gallatins on one side & the Absarokas on the other, with the Yellowstone River down the middle. It's important to me that I be close to Yellowstone & surrounded by wild & beautiful public land where I can ski & hike. I like the friendliness of local residents & living among friends who value wild public land as much as I do.
- The down-home feel (not overly commercialized) and the access to the outdoors, mainly via public lands. This combination is hard to achieve and easy to lose. Gardiner currently has it but seems to be at the cusp of losing it as it becomes harder for the people who work here to live here.
- The love people and small-town feel. Love the lack of chain restaurants and locally owned businesses.
- Gateway to Yellowstone that isn't a huge tourist trap. It's a real community.
- I love the small hometown feel
- Being able to walk anywhere. I need to go. Knowing the business owners by name. Even if I choose not to participate in any group activities, I still feel part of the community.

### A Great Place for Families

- our family...it was just so cool how quickly this Community embraced us. And what wasn't just tolerant or like hey, this is the new people but like making sure we had what we needed that we you know, just we're taken care of and that. We were learning that we were, you know, just avoiding some of the pitfalls of you know for me there was just an immediate connection an immediate Community maybe part of that was because we came here with why a to work ...then that translated really into like our girls starting school and they were terrified they would have you know, no friends, be the oddballs...right away that she made friends and they started in sports and it was great that they had a school that they could move to and really kind of be made to feel like an outsider that you know initially but right away, she had friends that were in a couple weeks spending the night. That's what I really liked about Gardiner and just you know right away for me personally.... it was such a wonderful place to come and learn and feel safe and feel like, you know, our kids were okay at school and they went away and it was just, you know, we've never had to worry about anything here about.
- The family feel and closeness of many people. My husband and I are both from states far away and so is the rest of our family. Having a family feel means a lot to me especially while raising 2 young daughters. They feel we have a Montana family here in Gardiner

### A Safe Community

- It's a place where I can have a range free kid.my son can go out, he can play, he can, uh, build forts. He can walk a mile or a half a mile. Um, and no one calls social services on me saying that I'm neglecting my child and

that I am putting him in danger. Uh, I joke with my family that I actually fear more animal predators than human predators here. But it is true, you know, um, when you live in a town and it is small like Gardiner, you know the face and you know who belongs to whom. And it has happened where my son was with his grandmother and they were here and someone stopped them on the road, on the sidewalk and said, who are you? Because this is ... and you are not his mother nor his father. And now granted that happened when he was about four or five, but still that someone watching out for your child and that kind of community is, is a big draw.

- It is safe, friendly, and surrounded by natural, wild beauty which helps keep my family healthy physically and emotionally.
- Bigotry or hatred or you know racism or some of the things that you know, ... <we left a place> with like violence, you know, some of the girls, kids they went to school with had knives in their lockers in sixth grade and just bullying and I know some of that stuff may happen at some level any school but is very nice to know that we come to a place that we were safe, our kids were safe. It was safe place to learn, safest kind of place express yourself. So that was that was paramount for us.

## ISSUES

### Cost of Living too High

- The biggest issue is affordable and quality family housing. Part of the small town feel I am used to and wanting is the pride that comes from generations of families residing in a community. With the lack of housing it's hard for generations of families to stay. In direct connection with this, is that lack of an enforcing authority. I hear of all these ideas as it pertains to housing, but short of the county enforcing those restrictions there is no way to enforce them.
- Affordable housing is a really big issue. The greed of developers and some business owners is ruining our town. I am starting to hate the words "vacation rental". It's sad that families with children and young people can't afford to live here.
- Housing is the top, it is a downward cycle. No housing, families can't live here, jobs are unfilled, school numbers decline=less funding.
- Affordable housing so families can move, work, live and thrive here. As more families are able to live in our community the enrollment at the school will increase
- Lack of housing for local people and too high of rents. Caused by those buying up Gardiner just to make money and not be part of the community to help those that live here.
- Lack of affordable housing! It makes it very difficult for someone like myself who would like to move here and settle and contribute to our community and economy.
- Affordable housing is the biggest challenge facing Gardiner. Most of the other issues on the list above are in some way related to lack of affordable housing (e.g., when families can't afford housing in Gardiner, they move away, which means there are fewer children in the community and the school suffers as a result). A vibrant community must have affordable, long-term housing.
- So much of the community is becoming vacation rentals and there is nowhere for the locals to live, especially affordable options. This affects everything from who can take jobs (not young people/families) to how long people can stay (no one can establish roots/families because they have to move every 6 months). The park is only becoming more popular and there's a greater need for tourist accommodations, but Airbnb type housing is not the solution. With the increase in interest, there's also an increase in the number of people needed to serve them, but these people can't find places to live. Commuting from Emigrant or Bozeman is not a viable option.

- My family and I have a lot to good to bring the Gardiner community, as do most, however the complete lack of housing will likely have us moving in the next year.
- Affordable housing for families...we need families to move here, get involved, contribute to our town. Our school desperately needs more students. Tourists have become the priority
- Good paying jobs, it is very expensive to live here, \$10/hour jobs will NOT cut it
- Affordable Housing and Financial Challenges Facing the School. The school is a central hub for many community activities in a small town as well as the shaper and molder of our children. It is also a major employer of high-quality jobs in the community. The financial challenges of the school have added to a significant level of discontent with many staff members of the school which will eventually impact our students as well. As long-term teachers retire it will become increasingly difficult to hire and retain high quality teachers given the stressful environment and discontent as well as the challenges associated with young teachers finding adequate and affordable housing. The slippery slope of families moving away and lower enrollment make the financial challenges greater and both issues end up working together to make the situation worse.
- Housing and tourism are the most important. Housing is the bases of all the problems. VRBOs are making it so that there is no available, affordable housing
- Affordable housing and people moving away. Because we lack affordable housing, and long-term housing in general, people are leaving Gardiner to live in places they can not only afford, but they can actually find a house to buy that they can afford. This is contributing to the school's \$ issues as enrollment is falling, and our lack of community, and even small things like sidewalks not being shoveled. I think these problems are partly because Gardiner is landlocked, there's nowhere to expand to, and because of lack of zoning on excessive vacation rentals.

### **Threats to Community Character**

- I don't know what the answer is there, you know fit if I think that people that don't live here year-round shouldn't be able to own multiple vacation rentals. Don't think that's right. I think you know just because someone has the money doesn't make it right. But you know, what's the limit? We've got some locals that own, you know, a fair portion of Gardiner and they can sell that to whoever they want...I think that would help is you just do not going to keep good people living in wall tent year-round. We're going to keep you know, it's going to hurt us on education. It's going to hurt us, you know on everything.
- Affordable housing - part of what makes it a great community is the diversity in people's perspectives. If only the wealthy or people who don't mind living in poverty because the diversity in salaries doesn't correspond to the diversity in costs of available housing can afford to live here, then the town will lose out.
- There are jobs, and because of housing the wages are not unreasonable for the work. The constantly increasing vacation rentals is at the core of most issues. Some of them would be affordable housing, if it weren't so easy to make money on vacation rentals. Towns like Crested Butte have significant taxes and fees for vacation rentals, and it has reduced them. We have a lot of hotels now, so it is time to stick up for locals. In some cases it is locals converting housing into vacation rentals. If it weren't so easy, that might change. I don't have neighbors anymore. And that makes me want to leave Gardiner too. I had more of a community in a huge city!
- Right not it feels like my street has already lost neighbors. I have very few neighbors left that are year-round neighbors. there are more vacation rentals from popping up every day and that concerns me that I don't really know my neighbors anymore. There's a lot of you know just strangers on the street that I don't know and if that continues to progress I feel like you know, the whole town. will shift from being a place where, you know,

we are all part of almost like this a large family to being more of a you know, not a town anymore, just a tourist destination; like any town in Florida, that's what it feels like.

- Gardiner school was a vibrant part of the community providing exceptional education. This has changed due to demographics in Gardiner. More older residents without children and younger park service workers who do not have children. The #1 industry in Gardiner is tourism and Park Service. This has not changed. Demographics have.
- Our small-town atmosphere has changed dramatically, even in the last two years: noise, people, development. So sad how our neighborhoods are full of vacation rentals and other businesses that they are no longer neighborhoods. Gardiner residents are being displaced by outsiders that want to make money by turning people's homes into hotels.
- Schools are number one because young people will not come to Gardner without good schools. To attract upper level employees, doctors, for Yellowstone, you need good schools, but affordable housing is the other side of the equation.
- The school financial issues stem from the decrease in enrollment due to families moving out of the area, with no families coming in due to a lack of affordable housing. Without a stable school this will not remain a vibrant sustainable community.
- Housing. No housing will collapse the community to the point businesses can't run and the complete loss of the community atmosphere
- Lack of ANY housing. Affordable yes, but really just some real housing available for rent or purchase would help bring families back. Without housing we cannot have families, and without families you cannot build a community.

### Economy Not Diverse

- This town could benefit from more affordable housing, or any housing at all. There aren't many options cheap or expensive to rent. Gardiner's whole economy could benefit by having better housing that draws skilled people to town, who could help support the thriving and growing of Gardiner.
- it seems like most of our economy is driven by summer only. businesses aren't staying open in the winter and they can't, there's just not enough, not enough to keep things going. Um, so I think those are the chief challenges that I see. For sure.
- I have a lot of trouble finding help. Absolutely, 100%, that's the worst part of any business is finding somebody to help.—everybody's a different generation. How many folks do you end up getting help with it during the summer months. I hire a five people.
- no industry except for Yellowstone Park, which impacts everything
- Lack of a future for our young people
- We cannot have a workforce without clean and affordable housing.

### Community Cohesion Strained

- You don't see it, you don't see it as much until something like this happens. Um, I think before it, he felt that community thing a lot. But I don't know how, I don't know a lot of the people in town anymore. And I'm, I've been here a long time. I've been here a long time. Yeah. I mean, before you knew everybody, you knew everybody's kids. You knew everybody. Everybody worked. And it's not, it's not like that anymore. The turnover is just so much. The community gets into groups, you know, it gets divided and you don't, you don't get that until something like this happens. It's nice to know it's still there. Right. But you don't see it like you did before.

- How do we need to act in order to succeed this time? I am unaware of what goals were set or have been achieved in the past. In talking with people who have lived here nearly 30 years they can't speak to community goals ever being set, and if so those goals being for a subgroup of the community. In order to succeed on any goals takes consensus, maybe not 100% consensus but a majority for sure. With the lack of generations of families that becomes more difficult as everyone comes from their perspective of wherever it is they came from. Then for those that have been here for any length of time they feel as if the "new" people are trying to change the community in which they have spent a large part of their life and sometimes without any consideration for them.
- You're going to have to get some affordable housing somewhere. Because if you want to do it, if you want to do it by community, you can't do it through zoning and you can't do it through incorporation. You know cause you will never get the buy in together and decide what Gardiner wants for Gardiner.

### **Inadequate Infrastructure/Lack of Availability of Services**

- please plow all streets (even side streets) so water (melting snow) will drain more efficiently!
- We need a full-time maintenance person and at least one part time person to help assist that person in the Summer. There is garbage on the streets, the sidewalks are covered in sand and gravel, weeds are growing in the cracks of the sidewalks, the neighborhoods need to be plowed in the Winter and sidewalks cleared. We need more trash bins throughout town as well. I truly believe there is enough work for a full time, year-round maintenance person in our town!

### **Governance and Leadership**

- I have always been a supporter of the towns being incorporated so that there could be zoning or some sort of law and order as to what people are building and where they're it. And maybe like zones that aren't, are just for residential housing. Yup. I don't know if that would help. The whole time we lived in Gardiner, I felt I could never get over why there was like half the town wanted to be incorporated. Half the town did not. And having lived in on a street where I watched year after year, they used to be rentals for year-round residents turn into vacation rentals. I just, it, it really was bad for us as, as a homeowner to have people that didn't respect us because they were only there for a week. They were on vacation, so they didn't care if they were up late drinking or shooting off fireworks.
- I think that whole thing would be totally up to the County planning board and I think and to give and to convince the County planning to do something to slow that down..... I think there's a I think there's a group of people like you and I that care about the surroundings and just not the township of Jardine. We care about what it's going to affect around it the outer the outer part of it and then I think there's people that just don't care what it's going to hurt around it. All they care about is chunk of land right here and what they're going to put in how much money you're going to make off it.
- I think the vast majority especially of the new blood and around here realizes that eventually some changes are going to have to come make you know, and one thing that worries me or doesn't worry me but I've thought about is I feel like we as a community can either get a plan and make a change of work towards a change or we can have that someone make that change for us at some point, you know, if we don't I don't know how much leverage the state or you know other how much they can. You know, I just worry if we don't have a plan someone else will.
- Gardiner needs to be incorporated and people cannot move here families w/out housing options and a good school. They will not move here
- Lack of community governance and lack of affordable housing. One directly affects the other

- Lack of zoning, vacation rentals
- I think the lack of any local government, which I see as both good and bad has stood in the way of preventing our current situation. But, is exactly the kind of issue that divides the community. None of these organizations has any enforcement authority to implement any plans they may have.
- The biggest issue is affordable and quality family housing. Part of the small town feel I am used to and wanting is the pride that comes from generations of families residing in a community. With the lack of housing it's hard for generations of families to stay. In direct connection with this, is that lack of an enforcing authority. I hear of all these ideas as it pertains to housing, but short of the county enforcing those restrictions there is no way to enforce them.

### **Unsustainable Tourism**

- The impact of tourism and lack of resources to deal with it are the main reasons why Gardiner is struggling to remain the same or be better. More importantly there is no consensus on how to get things done.
- Tourism is replacing and becoming more valuable the community. Politics are restricting the livelihoods of locals and their businesses.
- impacts of tourism, we need to be part of the destination, we are so close to the park entrance
- the change to a "nightly rental of homes" is killing our community
- My personal top two priorities are affordable housing and the impact of tourism. I make \$16 an hour and have two months of mandatory unpaid leave each year. As much as I would like to buy a home here, I just can't afford it, so I'm left to rent. My current rent is \$1350 a month and I think the landlord could get more for the place if he wanted to. I have been lucky enough to split the place with a roommate to make it more affordable. I feel lucky to even have found a place. I understand that long term rentals have always been a problem in Gardiner, but I see so many houses sit vacant all winter because they have been converted to vacation rentals. I understand the economic incentive for vacation rentals, but I believe the current trend will eventually price everyone who can't afford a half million dollar home out of Gardiner. I am afraid Gardiner will more and more turn into one big hotel. But even if my fears don't come true the move toward vacation rentals over long term rentals means that the town will have fewer long term residents and more underpaid seasonal work force, a work force that justifiably does not have strong ties to the town.
- We're a dying town with not enough people to pitch in to the work of being an actual community; we're failing our kids, safety issues, it's all just tourists or second home owners (or retirees with enough money to buy here). Too much promotion without enough education.

## **HOPES**

### **Vibrant Year Round Economy**

- I hope to see a balance of tourism and a thriving year round community.
- I think that if we can acknowledge that we are a tourist town and embrace that, then we can say okay, we are tourist town, but we are also a community. And how do we balance those two things?
- Thriving businesses and a strong community.
- A balance between tourism and other economic drivers. Support for essential jobs in education, service, community development, and safety.
- A town not dependent on the park and the tourist industry.
- A thriving community all year not just in the summer catering to tourist.
- I hope for a year round destination for tourists.

- A thriving, year-round population, with more year-round businesses; good public facilities to deal with the tourists; more reasonably priced housing

### **Well-Functioning Infrastructure**

- As for what I hope for, is a family oriented community with solid, safe and organized infrastructure, that is up to the task of hosting the multitude of visitors that grace us with their presence.
- We need more parking, proper rain water drainage in our neighborhoods. The school needs more funding! I would like to see a new track/football field, a community swimming pool, a new and improved library with free internet access, adult education courses. More sheriff patrol and funding and a clinic.
- We need more money spent on infrastructure.

### **Managed Growth to Protect the Community**

- So people are constantly proposing new ideas for the community center, whether it be independent yoga classes or chili cookouts, you know, I think that needs to be kept and I don't know how we promote that, but I love that aspect of it that people just feel empowered to make this the place that they want to see it made into.
- A community not filled with vacation rentals. A vibrant community where many of the people who work in town actually can live in town. A community that knows better than to bite the hand that feeds it.
- A thriving community with a strong school with residents who can both live and work within 10 miles. Even if many businesses rely on tourism dollars, the workers and community members can afford to live here and most of the housing is for owners or long-term renters and only a portion is for overnight guests and vacation rentals.
- I hope for a strong, supportive, family-friendly community, with a strong job economy and affordable housing for long-term residents. I hope for a community that embraces tourism while still valuing long-term residents.
- Affordable housing for locals. Cap on number of rental properties. No (unreadable) mountain mining
- There is a real housing crisis in this community. Affordable and even simply available housing is scant and there is no incentive for home owners to retain extra housing for local needs. I recommend greater tax incentives for those who choose to rent to locals, families, and seasonal workers. Higher taxes to vacation rentals where funds go to Gardiner community recommended. Better good options would be good too.
- To still have a majority of the businesses being locally owned and operated. To see families staying here and being comfortable staying here rather than struggling to find affordable housing and decent paying jobs.
- I beautiful thriving community. Affordable housing becomes available. employers start paying decent wages so families can live.
- I believe Gardiner would benefit from incorporating as a town. That would allow leaders to better plan for changes in Gardiner.
- I would like to see Gardiner to become incorporated and more regulation around big investors purchasing housing and turning them into vacation rentals. I would like to see more rental housing for local workers. I would like to see a drastic reduction and curfew on fireworks! No one can sleep for weeks when they are sold. I would like to see our schools funded better too.
- I would like to see zoning implemented in Gardiner. This would include restricting commercial activity (e.g. vacation rentals and motels on residential streets).
- I hope we have zoning in place and limits on vacation rentals.

- I envision an incorporated Gardiner with a governing body that can help make decisions, implement projects, and support the needs of a changing community. With incorporation, proper planning and decision making can be made and the community could adapt to changing trends in visitation.
- I hope that there is some regulations preventing vacation rentals from pushing everyone out of rentals. I hope that brings back a sense of community.
- Community planning that is sustainable and that supports families and year-round residents. In other words, developing a long-term plan.
- I think Gardiner should minimize light pollution and become a dark sky community. Signs like the gas station and hotels are obnoxious and distract from our beautiful night sky.
- I hope it becomes more beautiful and more attractive to the tourists. I hope there are more activities and it grows a little bit bigger. Newer buildings and Better architecture would be nice, keep the western style but make it prettier. More street lights, street hanging flower baskets ( like Downtown Bozeman), better food, different food, why not a movie theatre, more grocery stores.

#### **Gardiner is Authentic**

- A real community of real people. Not a community of transient tourists.
- I do believe that will come together, you know to actually push for change and work together as communities to find what will hopefully be best for the whole Community. Not just a few individuals who have to have a lot of money...So I feel like if we could get people to have a positive outlook in the sense of we could get people to feel...So if we could get you know over that hump, you know as Community to be able to say listen, you know people that live and work here have say. Yeah, then we want to embrace that. They might have the answer. And you know, they might have an idea that we haven't thought of or they might be the one that will actually do all the leg work for us.
- Residents who plan to live in Gardiner for many years and care about its future. Dialogue between people who have different goals and values (assuming we can hold onto and support diversity).
- A unique Yellowstone Destination that offers a true western vacation experience to travelers from around the world. Quality restaurants and downtown businesses that can provide jobs for people who live in the community. Not like Jackson Hole...Gardiner should be a place that feels like Montana people live here. Not full of second homes and vacation rentals.
- That the community is thriving. That it doesn't just become a seasonal place for tourists to come. That tourists will look at our community with admiration and aspire to live here as well. That our school is still a coveted place to attend and work.
- For Gardiner to stay the same.

#### **A Great Place for Youth and Families**

- As for what I hope for, is a family oriented community with solid, safe and organized infrastructure, that is up to the task of hosting the multitude of visitors that grace us with their presence.
- A thriving town with families and local people still living here.
- I guess as a dream, it would be nice to see Gardiner thriving as a family-based community. With the opportunity for generations to live here if they choose and not have to leave for work.
- I hope for better opportunities for young people. Housing that is affordable so young people can afford to build their family.

#### **Sense of Community is Strong**

- A clean, small community with some diversity in downtown (shops, restaurants, etc.), but still a community that knows each other.
- I love this type of dialogue and I feel like Town Hall meetings and that incorporate more of this instead of just legalese talk so that people know that there are other folks out there who have the same sentiments and are open to sharing those types of ideas about our community.
- I do believe that will come together, you know to actually push for change and work together as communities to find what will hopefully be best for the whole Community. Not just a few individuals who have to have a lot of money...So I feel like if we could get people to have a positive outlook in the sense of we could get people to feel...So if we could get you know over that hump, you know as Community to be able to say listen, you know people that live and work here have say. Yeah, then we want to embrace that. They might have the answer. And you know, they might have an idea that we haven't thought of or they might be the one that will actually do all the leg work for us.
- I envision a community growing with nightly activities to aid folks feeling like they are in a community.
- A vibrant diverse (age, socio-economic status, etc.) community of year-round residents with a stable school population. A strong arts council that brings in unique arts programming into the community and school. A school that seeks to continue growing and improving, and has enough money to support arts and PE.
- I hope that there is money to take care of things such as the community center, and spaces for art and culture. I would like to see art installations, public art works, and the community taking advantage of this amazing location and hosting Wilderness Film Festivals, bringing cultural events etc.

### **High Quality Community Services**

- A safe community where people can grow a family and recreate outdoors
- We need more parking, proper rain water drainage in our neighborhoods. The school needs more funding! I would like to see a new track/football field, a community swimming pool, a new and improved library with free internet access, adult education courses. More sheriff patrol and funding and a clinic.
- Community center for winter time play- gym , pool, tennis courts, skating, aerobics, etc.

### **Ecosystem is Healthy**

- Thriving community that continues to co-habits with the local wildlife
- The land and wildlife protected, but space in town optimized to provide affordable housing and high density tourist accommodations.
- An ecologically responsible and diverse community of passionate individuals who enjoy the GYE.