



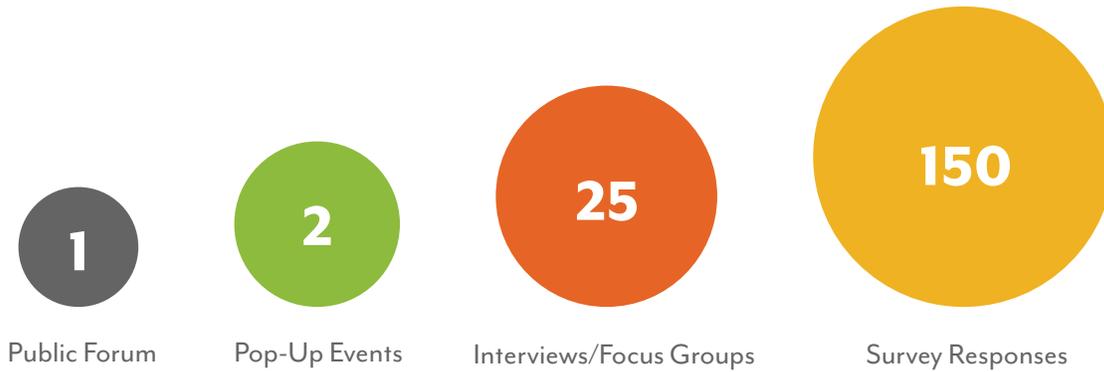
Engagement Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public engagement is one of the most critical components to the planning process. A plan is only as good as the input from the community. Civic 4 launched the public engagement phase for the Siren Area Economic Development Plan in September 2019. From September to November the public was able to provide feedback on the future of the community. To try and reach as many people as possible, Civic 4 held two pop-up events, a public forum and hosted an online survey. In addition, with the coordination efforts of the Village's Economic Development Direct, Chris Moeller, Civic 4 was able to meet with 25 different individuals and organizations to gain more direct insight into various challenges and opportunities facing the Siren area.



The goal of the public engagement process was to understand the needs and desires of the community and then translate those into goals, initiatives and actions in the Economic Development Plan. Outlined below are the key takeaways from the engagement phase followed by preliminary goal concepts that act as a starting point to a larger discussion with the Siren Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Key Takeaways

- The challenges that Siren has faced in the past and continues to discuss today are validated in the results of the engagement phase, including: need for more housing; opportunity for more sustainable wage jobs; and a desire for different kinds of education programming to support trade positions.
- On top of those ideas that have been validated was the understanding that tourism is an important part of the future of the Siren area and it needs to be recognized as such.
- Lastly, the community is very proud of the place they choose to live or work. Transitioning marketing away from tourism and into a direction that focuses on how to build a successful and fulfilling life in the area may help to target a younger, year-round demographic.

Preliminary Goal Concepts

Become a leader in rural housing initiatives

Create a hub for trade education and employment

Transform Main Street into a community destination

Cultivate and support entrepreneurial businesses

Increase the number of young families living in the community year-round

Be recognized as a four-season community for residents and visitors

Create an identity that stands out among the Burnett County communities

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

To better understand the culture, pride, and challenges facing the Siren community, we conducted 25 interviews with different individuals and interest groups that have invested in the Siren area. Despite the wide range of perspectives and stakeholders, our conversations often led to the same themes, which have uncovered a lot of cohesion between the challenges and motivations that Siren citizens have been operating under. The challenges that steadily surfaced through the interviews included: quality workforce, affordable housing, and local investment. While faced with these challenges, the people we interviewed also voiced their Village pride by showing there has already been a lot of thought as to how to build a stronger Siren community. Through focus on community-centered growth, cohesion between organizations and governments, and investment in the trades, the people of Siren wish to build a resilient community that gives them the sustainability to live in a place where small town familiarity and Northwoods culture can be home year round.

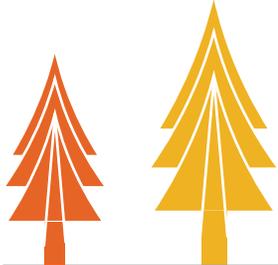
Individuals & Organizations Interviewed

Siren Seniors | Chamber of Commerce Board | Hospitality/Tourism | Motorized Sports Group | Northwest Passage and BAAG | Town of Meenon | St. Croix Tribe | DSI | North States | Siren High Schoolers | Burnett County Development Association | Julie Fox (Tourism) | Kelsie (Roosevelt Hills Event Center) | Professional Services | Jonathon Richie (County Sentinel) | Industrial Businesses | Town of Siren | Silent Sports Group | Jack Rabbit Sawmill | Village of Siren | Ann from Administration | Edina Realty | Local Pharmacy | Returning Alumni | Construction Businesses

Major Themes



The following pages display the key takeaways from all interviews as they relate to these major themes. More detailed interview notes can be found in Appendix A.



Quality workforce

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Drug abuse is a large barrier to employment for working-aged residents.
- A better connection between the high school and employers who hire part time may fill the gap of needed casual employment.
- Wages are becoming inflated due to labor shortage, and there are a lot of different ideas of what a living wage is.
- Social welfare appears to be more beneficial than available jobs
- There is a lot of opportunity for upper level employment as well as blue collar jobs

Affordable housing

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The current housing stock needs drastic improvements, and many need to be brought up to code.
- There is a need for all housing: low income, transitional rentals, affordable single-family, upper-class single-family, and assisted living.
- The lack of quality housing options is a deterrent from population growth.
- Housing availability is shared through unofficial networks: majority word of mouth
- Some businesses have taken on the responsibility of providing housing for their staff, successfully done by Northwoods Passage.
- Labor and materials cost is a deterrent from new housing.
- Who is responsible for the housing market needs to be addressed.

Community-centered growth

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Cost of storefronts is a deterrent from new business; a co-op style store or “pop-up shop” venue would take at-home businesses to brick and mortar.
- Integration of the arts into festivals and events will build culture.
- Networking: A young professionals group to network and share experiences would build social capital.
- Entrepreneurial efforts: An informative-style club that teaches success as a new business owner would build skills and success.
- A community center would benefit every age and income level resident.
- Focus on a non-alcoholic venue like a bowling alley, gym, library, winter recreation would make Siren a better place to live.
- By providing more services for the locals, tourists will think of Siren as a viable place to live and better market the town to year-round residency.

Community Coordination

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- All the small Villages (and the Tribe) largely operate as silos despite the fact that they are all operating with the same challenges. It is believed that success comes from healthy competition and cohesion between entities will save money and build a stronger economic base for the county as a whole.
- Tourism and economic development may be more successful if addressed at a county-level
- Larger conversation worth having is how law officials operate as separate entities or the viability of combining high schools.
- Partnering with other Villages, the Tribe, and the County will build the overall strength of the area.

Investment in Trades

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The trades both pay well and are in high demand in the Siren Area and Burnett County.
- Building up the trades program in high school may encourage young adults to stay in Siren after graduation.
- Training in the trades both builds the workforce for existing companies as well as gives young adults the tools to be self-employed.
- There has already been proven success of trades in high school at Webster; a safe investment for Siren.
- Training in the trades has the ability to serve under-employed adults as well; provide them with skills to earn a higher wage (perhaps paired with soft skills/employability training).

Local Investment

KEY TAKEAWAYS

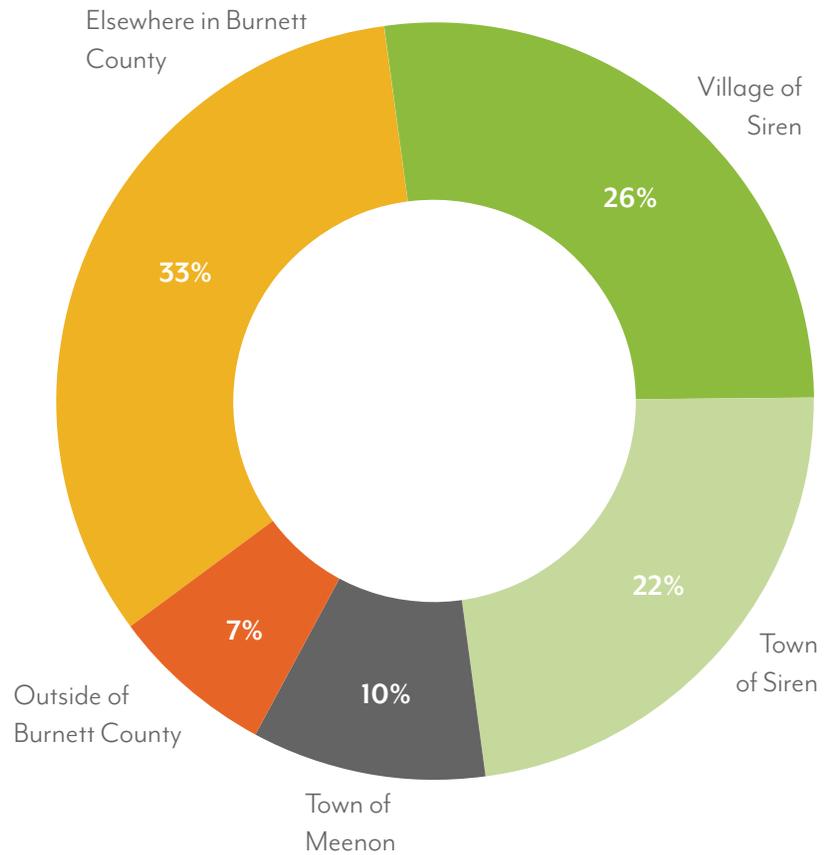
- There is a need for marketing of local businesses to the Siren community.
- Investment in the arts and revival of festivals will build culture.
- Community responsibility to face the drug problem needs to be acknowledged.
- Cohesion between tourism efforts and manufacturing/industry will better build the marketable aspect of Siren as a place to live.
- A change in culture to be more accepting of new residents is needed.
- Healthy competition and local support will build the economic base of Siren's businesses.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

To better understand responses throughout the survey, a series of demographic questions were asked at the very end. An overview of these responses are provided up front in this report to be able to best consider the results.

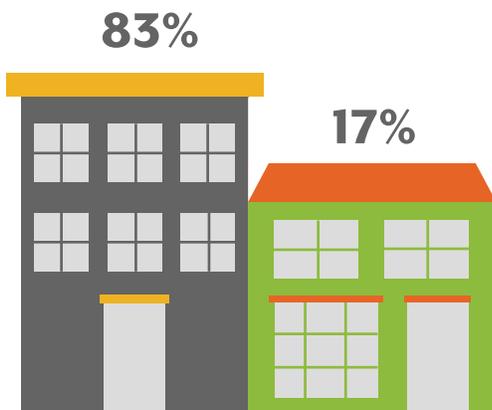
Residential Location

Respondents were asked to identify where they reside. Over 25% of all respondents live within the Village of Siren followed by 23% that live within the Town of Siren. A majority of respondents (33%) actually live elsewhere in Burnett County but most likely frequent the businesses and services within the Village of Siren.



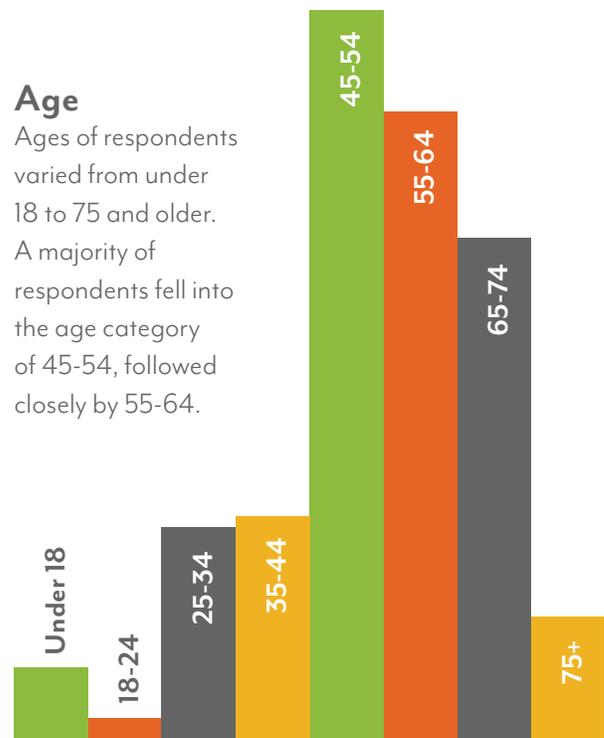
Business Ownership

17% of all survey respondents identified themselves as a business owner in the Siren area. 83% of respondents are not business owners.



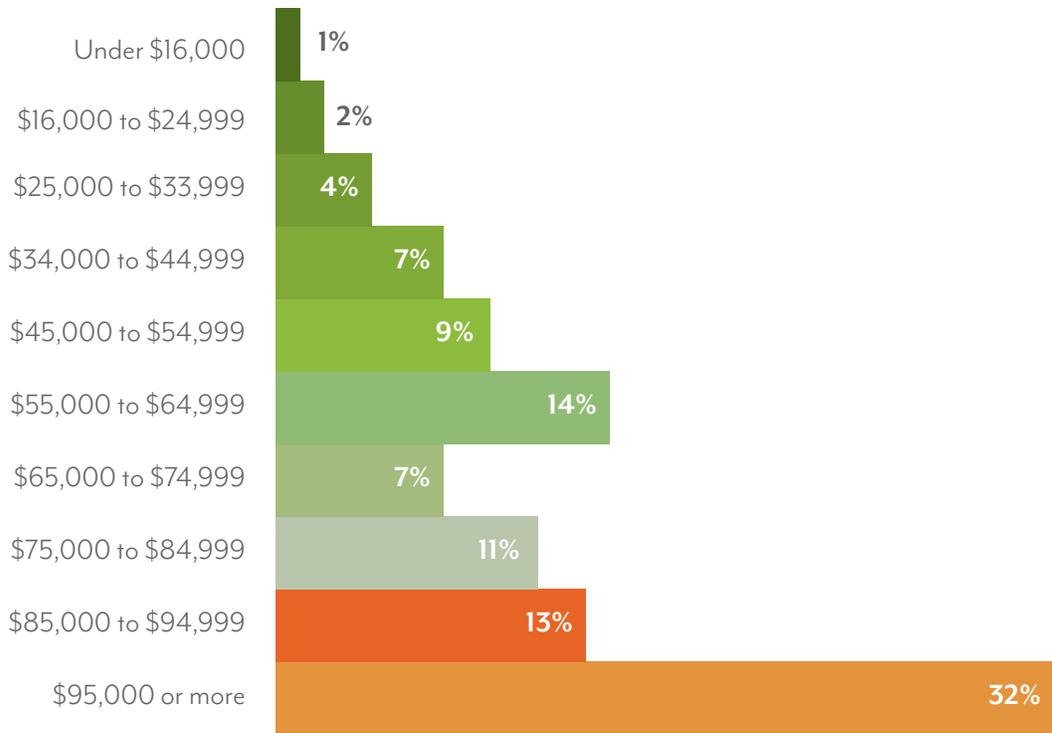
Age

Ages of respondents varied from under 18 to 75 and older. A majority of respondents fell into the age category of 45-54, followed closely by 55-64.



Income

Income levels in the Siren area are reflective of many different types of residents. From year-round residents to retirees and seasonal residents, the survey may incorporate responses from all types of residents. This should be considered when looking at the income responses below.



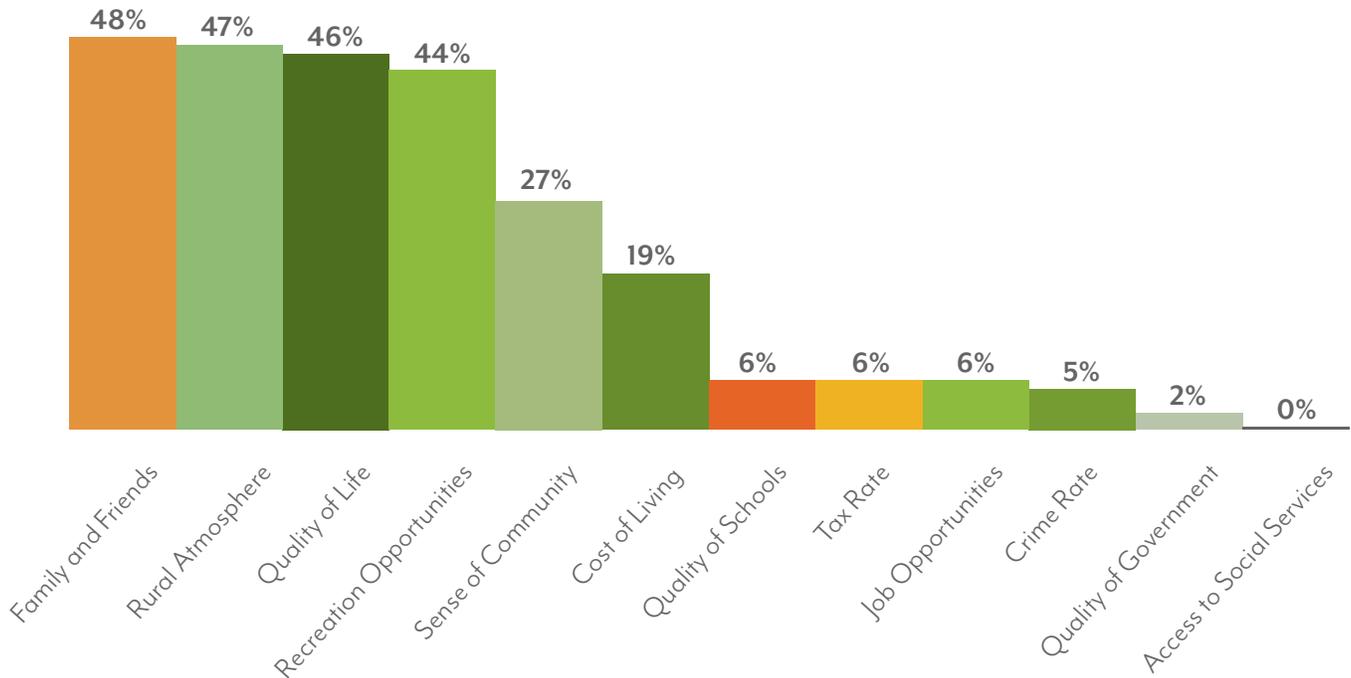
Priorities by Income Level

All survey respondents were asked what the number one economic development priority should be for the Siren area. Overall, the **survey showed that growing Industrial and Manufacturing opportunities was the top priority.** However, it is important to look at the breakdown of responses by income level to understand the needs of various households.

Income < \$35,000	#1) Growing Industrial/Manufacturing Opportunities #2) Tie between Developing Affordable Housing and Encouraging Local Entrepreneurship
\$35,000 - \$55,000	#1) Growing Industrial/Manufacturing Opportunities #2) Encouraging Local Entrepreneurship #3) Developing Affordable Housing
\$55,000 - \$75,000	#1) Encouraging Local Entrepreneurship #2) Increasing Recreation and Tourism #3) Growing Industrial/Manufacturing Opportunities
Income > \$75,000	#1) Growing Industrial/Manufacturing Opportunities #2) Increasing Recreation and Tourism #3) Encouraging Local Entrepreneurship

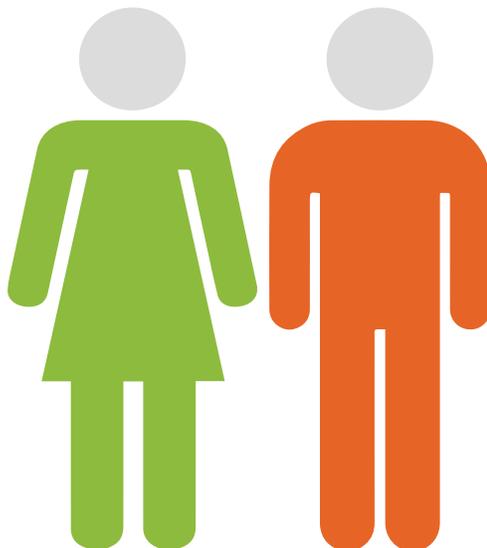
Reasons for Living/Working in the Siren Area

There are many different reasons for why people choose to live and work where they do. The following responses were collected for why people choose to live and/or work in the Siren area. Respondents were able to choose three reasons.



Reasons by Age

A breakdown of the top reason for living and working in the Siren area by age shows the differences among demographics. Younger people selected Friends and Family the most while the older generations chose Quality of Life. The millennial generation (represented primarily within the 25 - 44 age group) selected Quality of Life and Recreation Opportunities. This helps to shed light on the concept that the millennial generation is interested in finding a place they enjoy living more than finding the best job opportunity.



Under 25

Friends and Family

25 - 44

Tie for Quality of Life and Recreation Opportunities

45 - 64

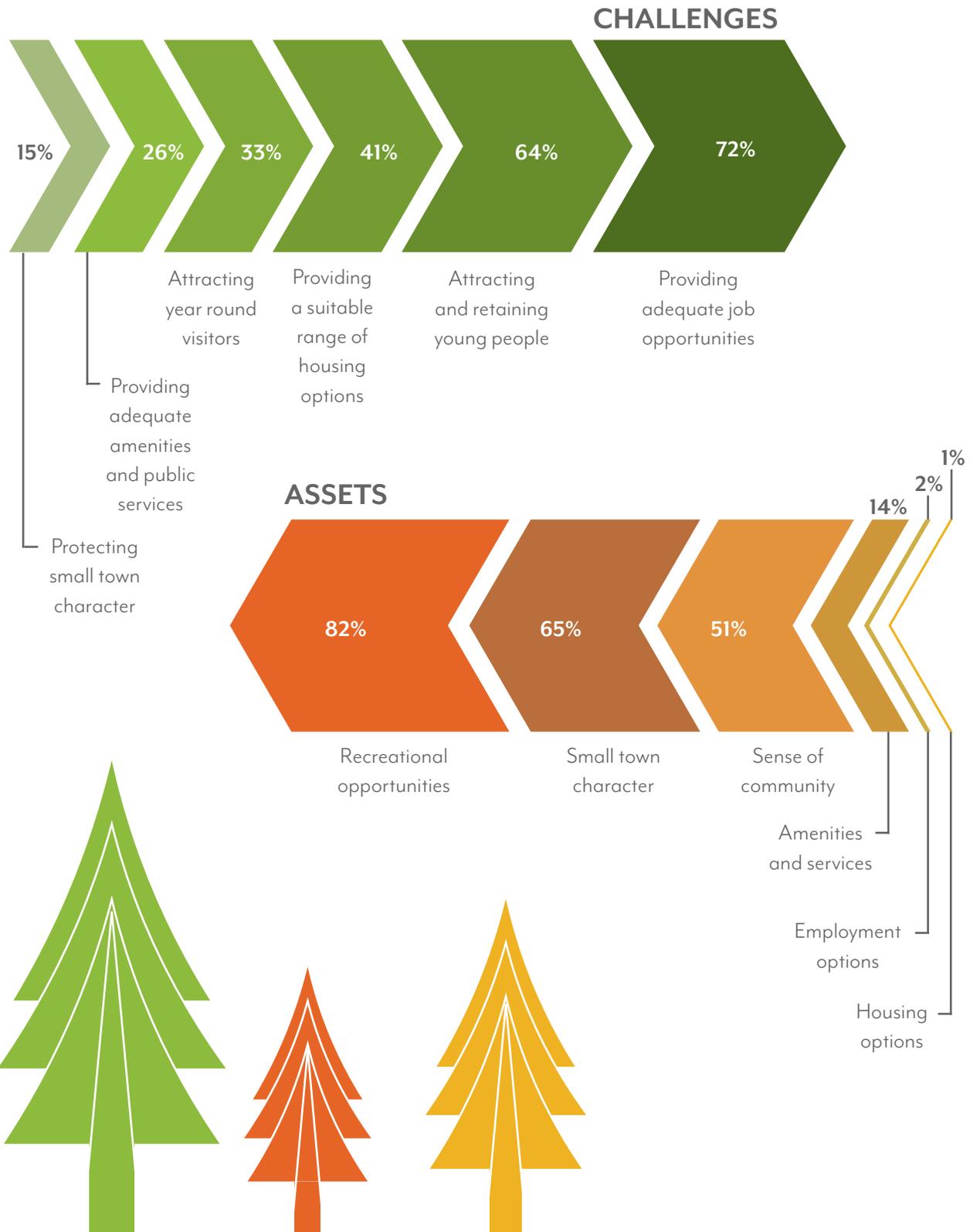
Rural Atmosphere

75 and over

Quality of Life

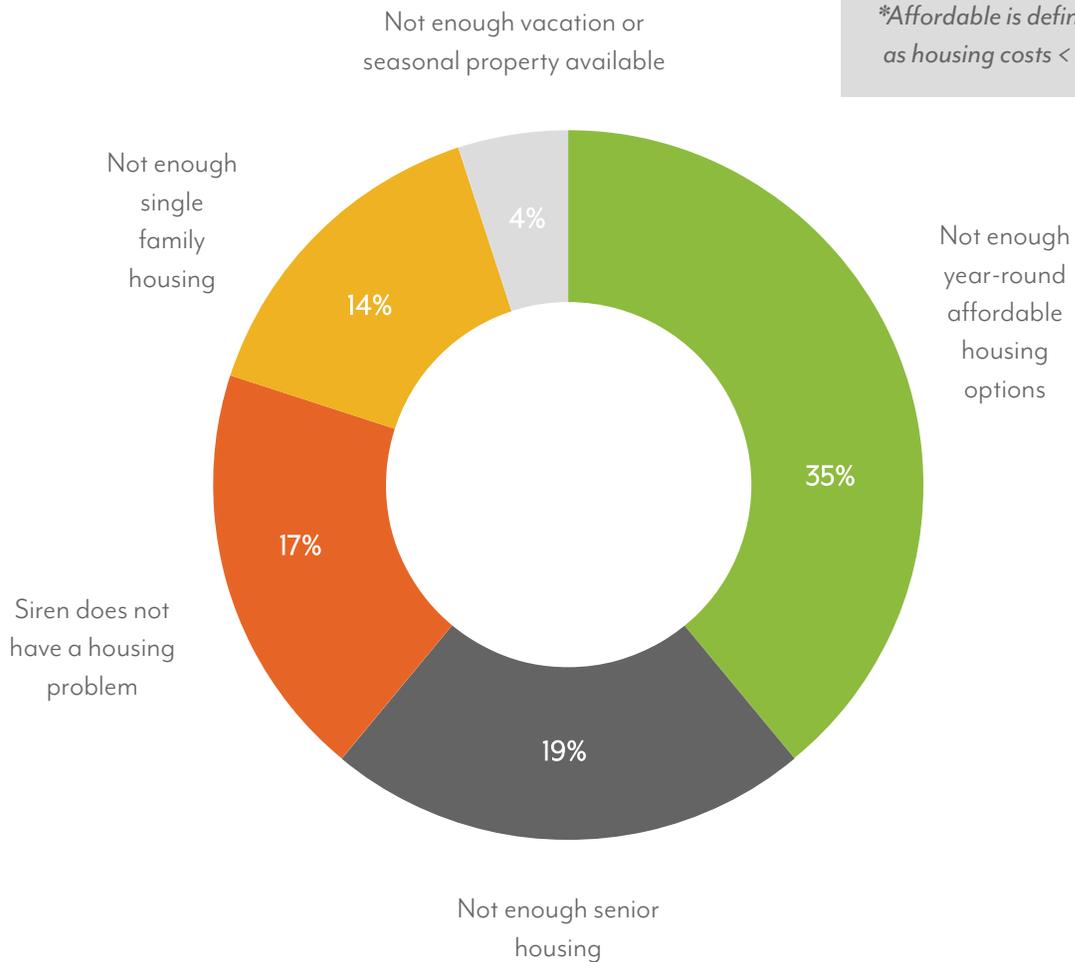
CHALLENGES & ASSETS

According to survey respondents the Siren area faces the biggest challenges in providing adequate job opportunities, attracting and retaining young people and providing a suitable range of housing options among others. However, the area does have a myriad of assets that can be used to attract people to the area and grow the opportunities available. A breakdown of survey responses to the challenge and opportunities questions is below. Percentages reflect respondents ability to choose 3 options:



HOUSING

While housing did not emerge as the #1 priority in the previous questions, qualitative data from interviews, focus groups and open ended survey questions reveal it to be an important factor in the area's ability to attract and retain young people. The survey asked respondents what the biggest housing challenge is within the area. The number one response was that there is not enough year-round affordable* rental housing. The remaining challenges and their prevalence are outlined in the chart below:



Respondents were asked about what role the government should play in providing affordable housing options. The number one response was to offer incentives (like tax breaks) to developers.

- #1) Offer incentives (like tax breaks) to developers
- #2) Help build cooperative relationships between developers and business owners
- #3) Improve regulations and zoning ordinances
- #4) Educate the public on housing issues
- #5) Assist with land purchases for future housing development

Housing Prices

Comparing responses for household size and what respondents consider affordable rental costs led to a matrix of information. The survey collected enough information to share averages from households ranging from 1 to 5 people. The following table shows the average rents identified as affordable for various household sizes.

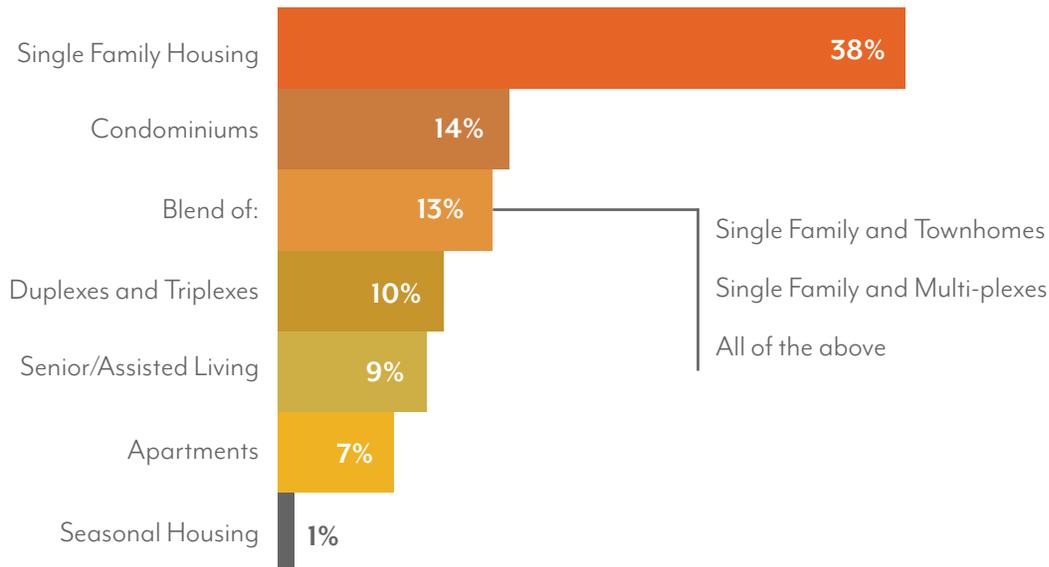
Household Size	Average Affordable Rent	Top Affordable Home Price
1 person	\$825	Not conclusive*
2 people	\$835	\$125,000 - \$150,000
3 people	\$965	Price < \$150,000
4 people	\$1,055	\$125,000 - \$150,000
5 people	\$1,235	\$175,000 - \$200,000

* Responses were evenly split between all housing price options.

The data collected in regards to affordable home prices should only be used for informational purposes and as a start to understanding appropriate price ranges for future housing options. There was not enough information collected to consider the results a true representation of community needs.

Housing Options

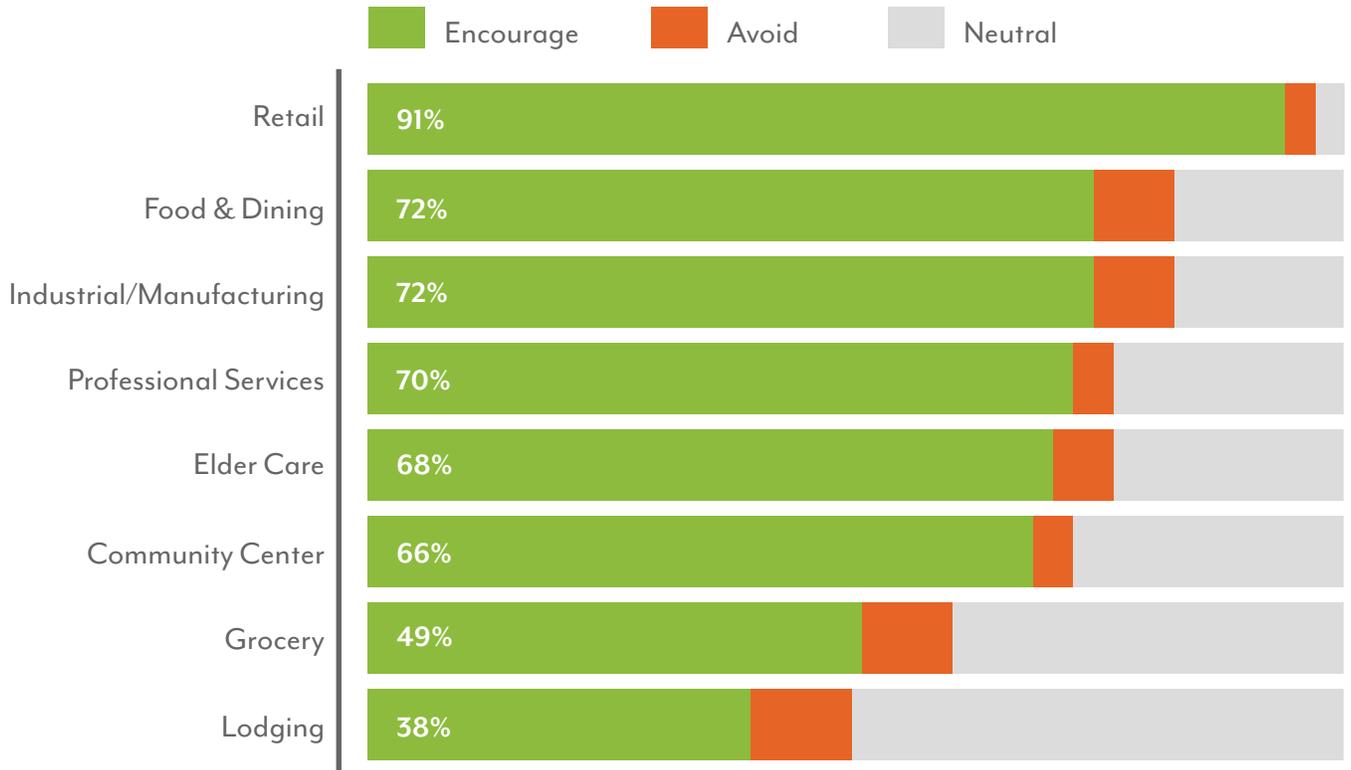
Various housing options were presented to survey respondents to determine what types of housing should be pursued in the future. The results indicated that the top housing type to pursue in the future is single-family housing. This is an interesting data point considering the number one housing challenge facing the Siren area was not enough year-round affordable rental housing.



It is clear that from the housing data that there is a need for affordable housing. Whether that takes shape in single-family homes, apartments or senior living, the need is there. While single-family homes stood out as critical to the future it is still important to consider all housing types.

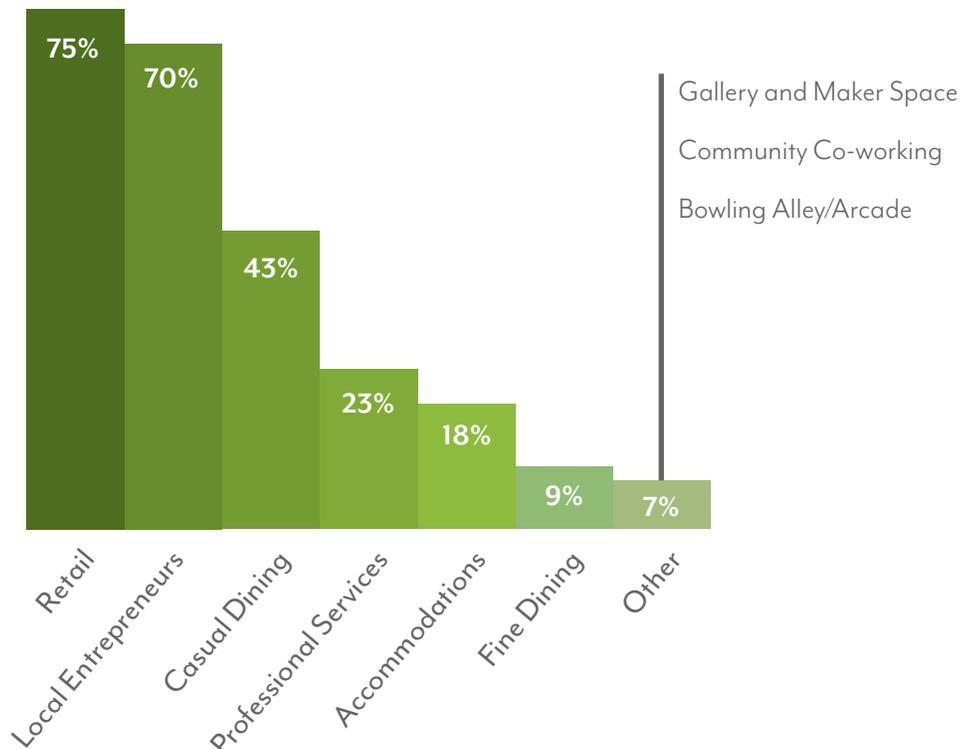
BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

Business and employment was a hot topic during the interviews and focus groups. We asked a lot about what types of businesses the Siren area needs to attract to become a more sustainable community. The survey helped to put our questions into a quantitative format. The following chart shows what types of businesses the community would like to encourage or avoid. Retail was the top response while lodging took last. The second chart shows the types of businesses the community would like to see fill up the empty storefronts along Main Street.



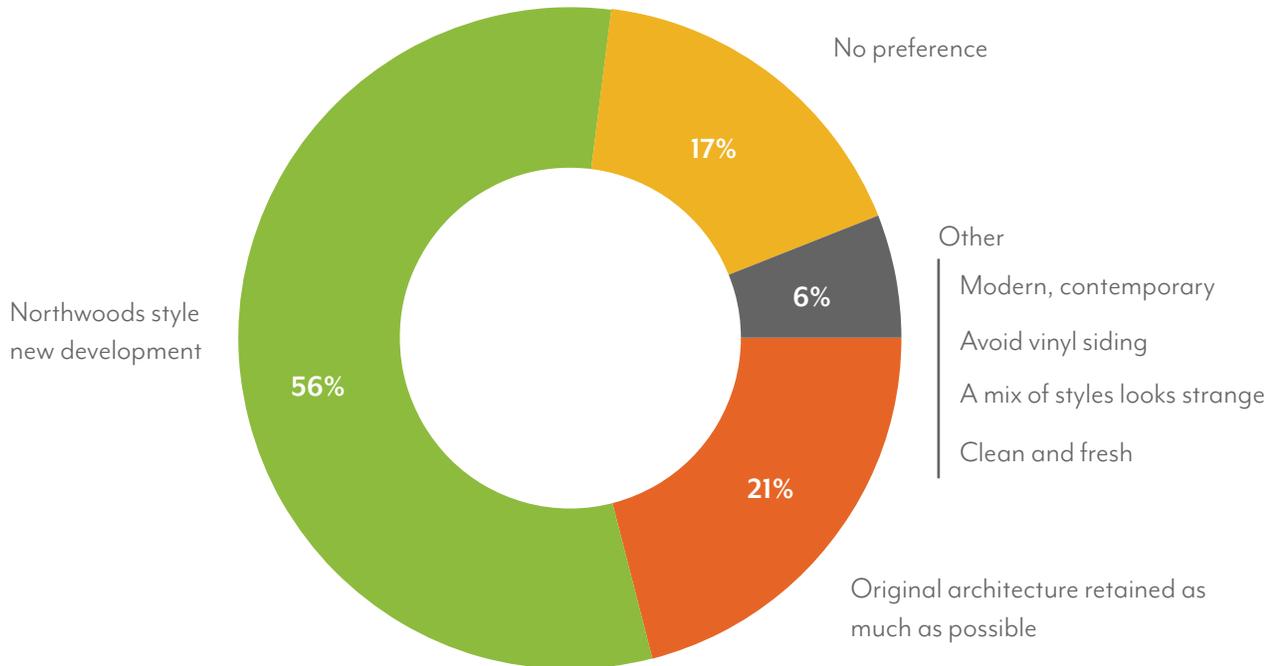
Main Street Businesses

While it is clear the community is looking for more retail businesses in general, they are also looking for retail establishments to fill some of the empty storefronts on Main Street.



Architecture

An important part of understanding what the future of the community could look like is actually thinking about what the community could look like. The survey asked respondents what type of architecture they would like to see more of along Main Street. Overwhelmingly the Northwoods theme stands out as a key component of the future aesthetic of Main Street.



Barriers to Entry

The final question posed regarding business and employment was about the barriers that businesses face when trying to enter into the market in the Siren area. The responses varied from not having a decent workforce to housing to the seasonal challenges. A selection of responses is provided below and the full list can be found in Appendix B.

“We need to be more forward thinking. Young professionals want to live in a progressive community where fitness and quality of life is important”

“Up front costs, lack of local quality employees and every day consumers.”

“The look of the town is “old” it should be clean, upscale.”

“The community does not seem to have a forward vision & a qualified workforce. We need to look at other small communities that are thriving and then look at how we can expand growth in Siren. I believe we can build off of our strengths and grow!”

“Stubbornness and reluctance to change from the locals.”

“Seasonality issues. Unless we can get more people to visit year-round, we’re not going to be able to sustain many more new businesses.”

“People stay in hotels in Siren, but go north for outdoor motorized recreation. Businesses open where the tourists are.”

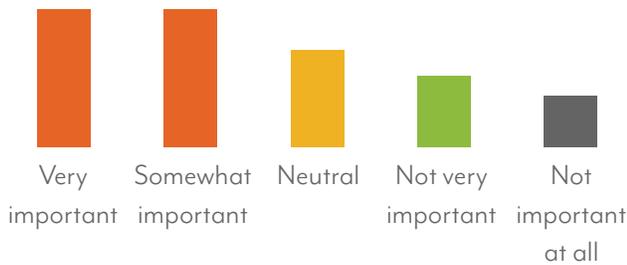
“Need to do more to draw people to Siren from surrounding areas i.e...events, gatherings unique business storefronts.”

RECREATION

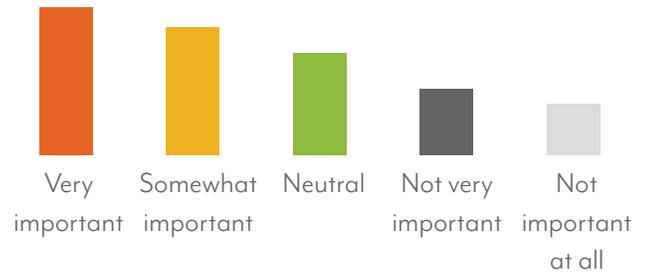
Recreation has already been determined to be an asset to the Siren area and a key reason for why people choose to live in the area. The survey asked respondents the following question with the corresponding responses:

As it relates to attracting and retaining young people, how important are the following recreational options to the Siren area?

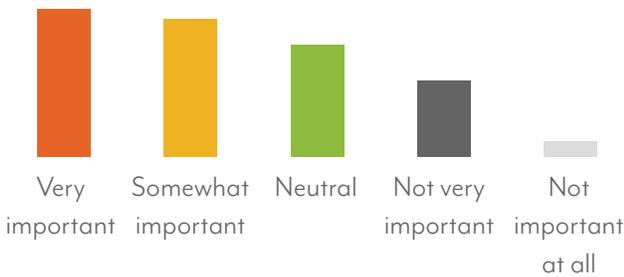
A network of pedestrian pathways through the Siren area



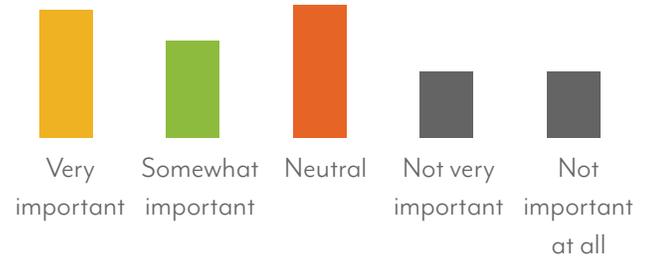
A network of bike pathways through the Siren area



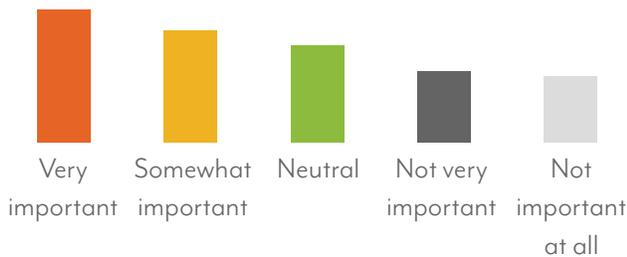
Increase in winter recreation options



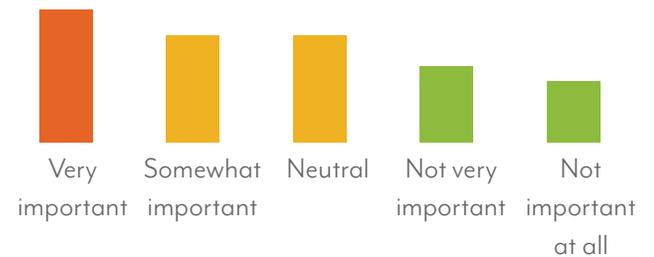
Development of non-motorized/silent sports trails



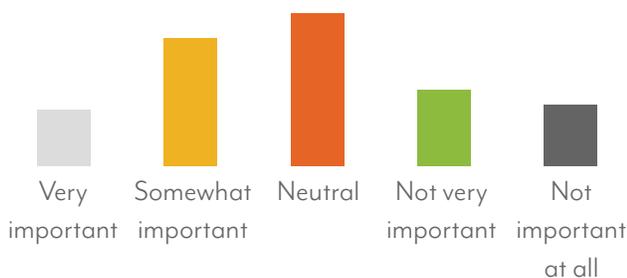
Development of motorized sports trail(s) (ATV/snowmobile)



On-street bike lane connections to the Gandy Dancer State Trail



Development of community gardens



Represents majority response

Double colors represent the same percentage of response

Gandy Dancer

Respondents were asked for their opinions on how the Gandy Dancer State Trail can be a larger part of the area's recreation offerings. The responses varied from opening up the trail to motorized sports and keeping it as a silent sport destination. The comments selected below represent ideas about how to better utilize the trail in its current state. The full list of responses is provided in Appendix B.

"Using motorized vehicles and having it be lit in some places so people feel more safe using it."

"This is one of the greatest assets in our community and it is underutilized. If the silent sports folks are as passionate as they say, let's promote the heck out of this trail, like trails in southern WI and MN. If not, open it up to ATVs. Either way, it's an under-used resource and needs to be promoted."

"The Gandy is fine the way it is. Leave it alone. Motorized vehicles get it in the winter and silent sports in the summer. It can't be a shared trail - it won't work. Stop wasting time and energy to make it in to something it can't ever be."

"Assure the trail remains non-motorized from April 1 to December 1. Promote biking and hiking on the trail with improved trail-heads in each of the towns along its path. Provide bike racks at local businesses. Provide safe access to the trail with town bike lanes and / or bike paths. Encourage bike oriented businesses near the trail (food, ice cream, brew pubs, bike shops)"

"The Gandy Dancer is an asset that needs to be celebrated, branded and promoted. Summer time use on other mid western rail trails are booming because they are embraced by the communities in which they run through. All the communities along the Gandy Dancer, along with the Friends of Gandy Dancer and our Dept of Tourism can collectively work towards launching new and improved promotional materials to highlight the trail and all the surrounding amenities. Cycling groups spend money, love to complete entire trails on a vacation and stay in hotels and appreciate good shopping and dining. Siren has all of these things and can capture more dollars if seen as a destination. The Gandy Dancer is the only safe, alternate transportation corridor in Burnett. Protecting it as such should be of primary concern. Motorized vehicles have access everywhere else."

"Just keep growing the Gandy's non motorized summer use. It is what the new generations are looking for, and we already have it."

"Host events that let people use the trail for free or a reduced cost for a day. We think it's fine to have group events use the trail one day a year (like a car show) BUT we don't want to see the trail motorized like it is in Danbury. The trail in Danbury is all torn up."

"Encourage snowshoeing and snow biking during the winter. Have organized events like a snow shoeing "walk" or chili feed at the end around a bonfire (like at the Forts) or at a sponsoring tavern."

"Better and more access points to businesses from the trail so users can make frequent stops. If the Gander is kept for "silent" use, then an alternate trail for motorized vehicles (like ATVs) use should be built to be connected to Polk County and points north, again with easy access to local businesses."

Winter Recreation

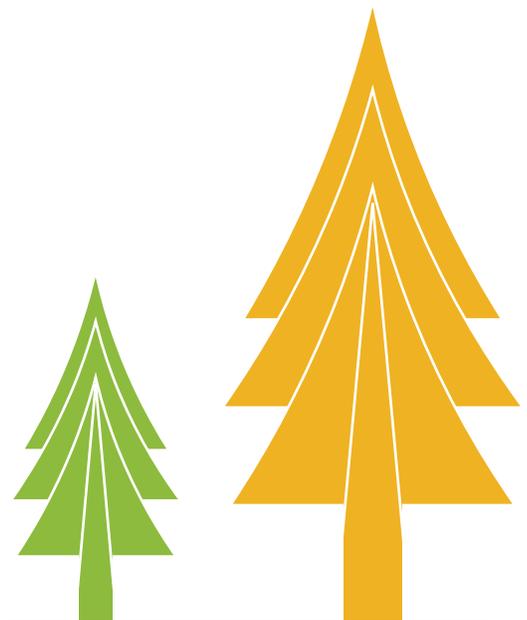
The survey asked what types of winter recreation opportunities are missing in the area. Ideas spanned from an increase in snowshoeing and skiing trails to a sledding area and events. A brief list of the most popular responses are below. A full list of all responses is provided in Appendix B.

- Increase amount of cross-county ski trails
- Build outdoor ice skating rink
- Create a sledding hill
- Develop a snow sculpture contest
- Build an indoor recreation center for people that do not or cannot recreate outdoors in the winter
- Create more winter trails for ATV and UTV
- Utilize the hockey arena for more free skate, curling or similar opportunities

Additional Recreation Opportunities

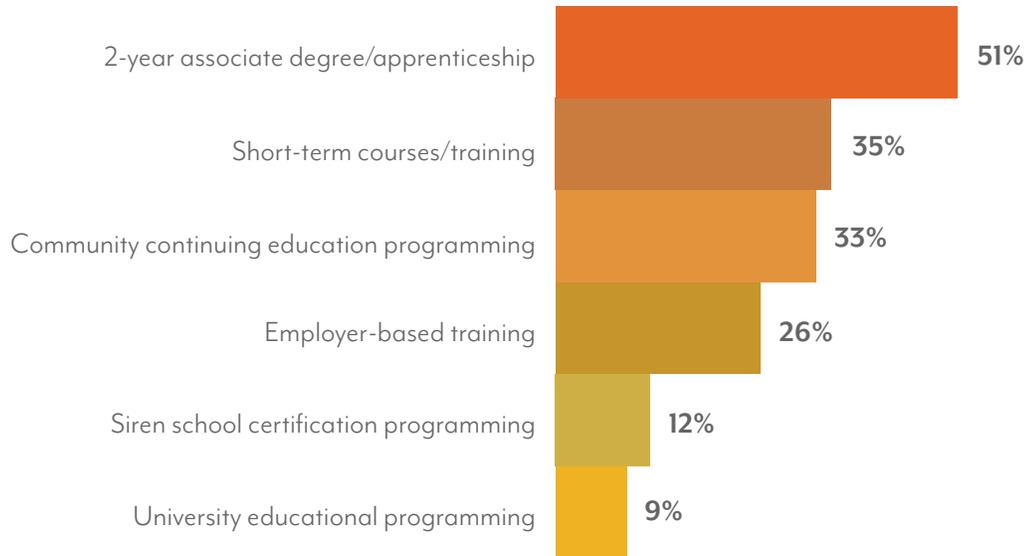
Aside from winter recreation, the survey also asked respondents if there are general recreation opportunities missing in the area. The following list represents a majority of the ideas presented. A full list of all responses is available in Appendix B.

- Swimming pool
- Kayak and canoe rentals
- Large indoor gymnasium
- Sidewalk connecting Clear Lake to Town
- Pickle-ball and Tennis courts
- Dance studio
- Maker space
- Rustic camping along the Gandy Dancer
- Mountain bike trails
- Disc golf course
- Outdoor sport fields (soccer, football, etc.)
- Organized fitness classes
- Dog park
- Bowling alley
- Place for teens to gather



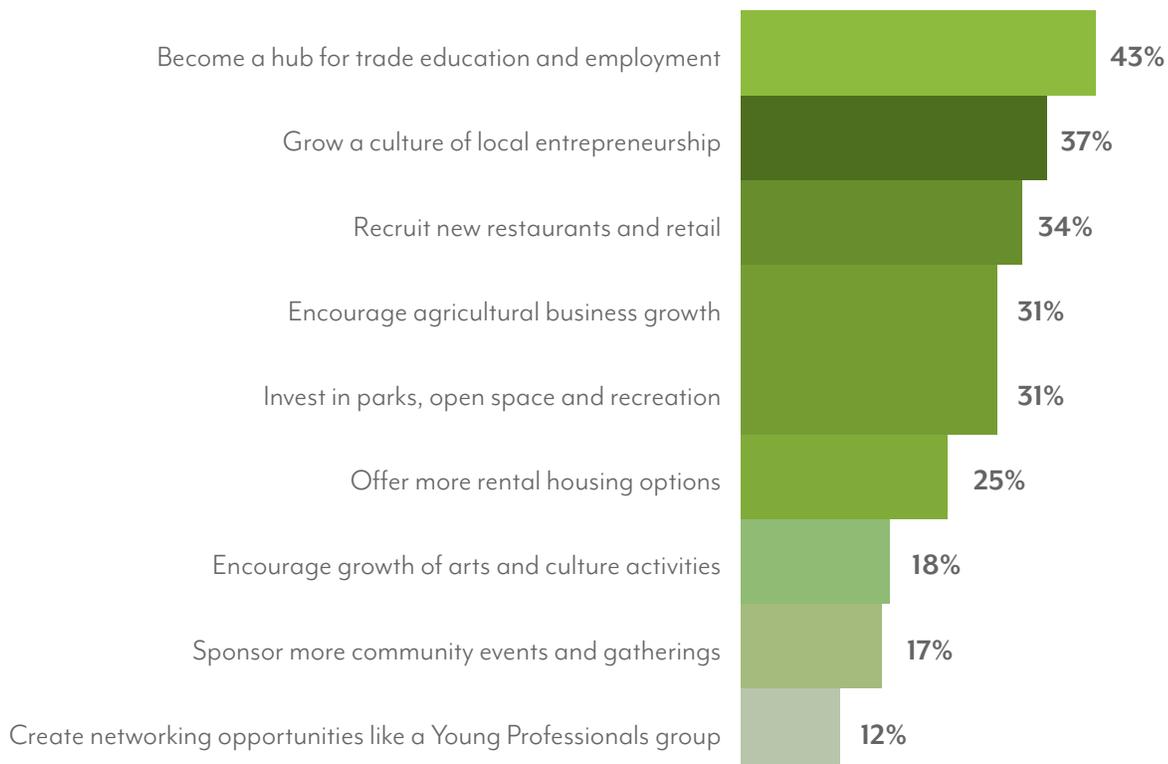
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Education is an important part of the future. The survey asked respondents what types of education opportunities they would like to see available in the Siren area. A 2-year associate degree or apprenticeship was the top response followed by short-term courses and trainings. The lowest response was University educational programming.



Attracting and Retaining Young People

A key component of the entire planning process, especially for the Siren area, is to better understand how to attract and retain young people. A challenge in a place like Siren, the survey asked the question directly to respondents - what would you like to see the Siren area do to attract and retain more young people? The top response was becoming an educational hub for trade and employment.



OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

At the very end of the survey respondents were given the opportunity to share general thoughts on the future and what they are passionate about when it comes to changes to the area. Many people took the time to share the most important topic on their minds and many of the responses echoed what was heard in the interviews and focus groups. A selection of responses is provided below while the full list can be found in Appendix B.

Are there any issues or opportunities going on in the Siren area that you are passionate about?

“I love the fact that we live in a small town where our neighbors care about each other and help each other. We have a police force that is always helping out no matter who we are or what we need. Everyone has time to stop and say hello if they know you or not.”

“These issues are issues that apply to all the communities in Burnett County. I would wish to see all the work Siren is doing shared with the entire county.”

“The issue of drugs and the lack of work ethic. People need to show up for work. That needs to be taught at home and in the schools. (since the children are unlikely to get it at home).”

“Siren is an example of Americana...put more budget into a marketing campaign...develop new property codes to encourage housing for tiny houses, vrbo and airbnb for year round tourism.”

“Siren is a safe and beautiful community. Unfortunately it does not offer many opportunities for young people to live and work. It can feel very isolating for young adults and families. Need to develop networking and opportunities to bring young adults and families together to develop networking. Schools can be very beneficial in this area.”

“Meeting the needs of both quiet sport and motor sport enthusiasts - both are important and shared use of the Gandy would drive the quiet users away.”

“Love the 4th of July parade..although some new events may be nice Love the St. Patrick’s Day...again..some new events to gather more people.”

“Like many people, keeping the Gandy non motorized. No big corporate CAFO's- local family owned CAFO's are a different story. We need to actively protect our natural resources and this beautiful area. Once polluted, it takes a long time to restore, if possible. Keep our water clean. Water is life, our life.”

“I have always believed in entrepreneurial spirit and approach. We need housing and developments that have High end, medium and duplexes to rent. Mix in some lower cost single family homes as well. Students and young people need to see careers in area that they are passionate about vet science, agriculture, high tech, manufacturing and more.”

“I am passionate about protecting the Gandy Dancer State Trail and being involved in promoting health and wellness in our communities. We have too many obese people and unhealthy habits in our midst that are putting pressure on our health care systems, etc. Keeping the trail non-motorized in the summer is also the environmentally friendly thing to do. Preserving what few quiet spaces we have is critical.”

“Great leadership, partnerships, village board, chamber, businesses, economic development committee. Continue to foster these relationships. This ED plan is a great first step. Thank you.”

Open-Ended Survey Questions - Continued

What is the number one thing you think the Siren area should prioritize in the future?

"This is really hard - but overall I think our biggest issue is that we're a retirement community. It's good for the short term but bad for the long term. If Siren were a more appealing place to live/work for young professionals, I think that's part of a long-term population shift. With broadband internet availability, many of the types of positions once available only in metro areas are now made possible from anywhere."

"Support current businesses by buying locally, attract forward thinking people to get involved in economic development and local politics....Attract and maintain new businesses."

"Support and promote tourism. That is what has made our community a successful area in the past and we need to keep that going and promote the next generations interest into our community to growth with the times."

"Revitalize the original downtown area. Make it a destination within a destination."

"Personally I would like to see more business growth, entrepreneurs, shopping , restaurants, community activities. But I think the area needs to increase its tax base to increase revenue for County growth and programs."

"People come here because they want to escape the bustle and hassle of the city. Please preserve our natural woodland and lakes environment and small town community atmosphere. Small retail specialty shops are paramount to our community."

"New manufacturing. This brings in people and then you will see growth. The community can show the businesses that people can work and live in a rural area with land. Build a home and have that big garage. They will want good food, schools, doctors and a community atmosphere. "

"Make Siren a destination. You have a very good start but Siren needs to be a hub where people want to go during the day or for the weekend."

"Identify bicycle and pedestrian trail/route connections now and secure them for the public and for our future."

"Housing and community development"

"Good quality affordable housing...the entire country is struggling with this right now, we could be a leader...maybe utilize some existing empty spaces."

"Get new businesses to come to our community. Push for a Kwik Trip. Affordable grocery store - that is in town!"

"Bring in some trade education, short term and inexpensive to help the local economy."

"I believe we should prioritize the attracting of young families and professionals. They will be the backbone of any long terms growth this area sees."

"As a community, we need to do a better job of keeping our youth involved with helping our elders and disabled. Community service instead of just sports."

"Adding arts component to activities. Making the town look like you need to park the car and walk to see all there is to see and do."

APPENDIX A

Full details and notes from all interviews and focus groups. Notes are broken into the key takeaway categories as outlined in the beginning of the report.

Quality workforce

Hospitality/Tourism: High school students don't seem to have to work anymore; parents give handouts. Middle aged employees don't really exist, so most employees are in HS or close to retirement. If a middle aged person does come in and apply, they probably have a barrier, like drug use, jail time, lacking soft skills. There are no 30-40 year olds available to work and drugs are the main reason.

Town of Meenon: A lot of people will work a job for a few weeks, make enough to survive, then leave. Drug use. Heroin in the tribe. 2 deaths this summer. Meth and cocaine out of control. Randy's company stopped doing drug tests because otherwise they would have no workforce. Finally, they had enough applicants and out of 11 people they tested, one came out clear. Grantsburg gets a lot more state help for "rural, depressed area"

Construction: Everyone booked out up to two years for new projects. Can't get enough people to come and work for them.

Tribe: Drug addiction. Treatment facility. Poverty is systemic, drug addiction is inherited. Need to focus on prevention not intervention. County-wide drug treatment facility. Develop a sense of community wellness, put responsibility in families that they need to live a healthier life. Take a step away from tourism and focus on family wellness

DSI: It's hard to find people that will dedicate to work. If you don't have a disability, you need to be producing enough work to pay their wages, and it's hard to get people to show up. They pay \$12.50-\$13/hr. "Wages can't solve our problems." Drug issue has a lot to do with employment problem.

North States: Main challenge is with keeping employees, can't do drug tests because of the cost (\$300) and they find 1 out of 10 that pass and probably cheated the system. People drift in and out, people generally last 6 mos to a year. Average 10 empty positions, and there is a rotation to work over the weekend too, offer a lot of double time. There won't be success without more people. The welfare programs are too beneficial, and meth too prevalent. All the manufacturing businesses circulate around the same 100 or so drug addicted employees that get hired and quit. But they can't not hire them because there's no one to hire.

Burnett County: Drug use is highly impactful. Third to half of the youth had some touch with Health and Human Services at one time. They're mainly working on displacing them from the community. Softec has given people from drug court free education and then a job, but only 4 or 5 are still holding a job. People go back to their friends' or family's house and start using again.

Wedding/Venues: Seasonal staff are hard to find. The notion of starting with nothing doesn't seem to exist with first-jobbers. Not a lot of them have to pay for their things so they don't have urgency to work. When they first opened, there was a relationship with the parents and they wanted their kids to work on their days off. Doesn't exist now. Even the adults have less work ethic because social services are so good. They hire whoever will show up. Don't let parents do interviews for their kid.

Professional Services: Hard to find qualified people. Had applicants come in then not show up. When asked how to get people to show up, Sarah gets yelled at for being too tough. Ten years ago there may have been 50 applicants to a business, but now maybe 5. Experienced people are almost impossible. A lot of transitional employees. People who work for a few years before looking for something bigger, or on the verge of retirement. Increasing salary. People don't want to make too much otherwise they might lose their free healthcare.

County Sentinel: Drug use: A lot of functioning drug users that work in the dollar stores and gas stations. Employers putting an ad in have to be careful whether to put "drug testing" because it severely limits employee candidacy. 3.5 employees. He does all the writing could use help. Have partnered with the high school for interns but lack of interest.

Industrial businesses: They all share the problem of employees. IMS's nearest retail is Oconomowoc. People literally ask for \$20/hr + cleaning lady included. SI uses temps, temp agency. Temp agency isn't very reliable or consistent. Needed 20 employees, have gone through 200 or more. Burnett Dairy is a competitor. Competitive benefits are hard to offer. IMS pays for 60% of employee's healthcare. Have had to raise their prices to pay for more benefits. Internet and giving parents have made a workforce that expects everything. People aren't interested in working with their hands. They have strong core groups. 20% go in and out the door. Hard drugs are getting worse. Heroin, Cocaine, and meth. Meth is the worst.

Town of Siren: With any new business, need to attract new populous. If people saw there was a chance for good wages they would move here. Need more bigger businesses. Employ 30-50 people. Burnett Cty highway was a big employer but smaller now. Don't know if they have any vacant houses. Young kids don't want to work. Polk-Burnett can't find summer work. Kids don't want to work weekends. They're given expensive things and don't understand work ethic.

Jack Rabbit: The wages needed for a good employee base is not profitable and a third of their staff wasn't showing up each day so they had to overstaff to keep positions filled. Drug problem is to blame. A lot of people don't apply because of drug testing or cheat the system. Any EDP needs to include a way to combat the meth problem. If they're not on drugs, they think they don't need to show up for work. Production incentive: get \$30 a week if you come five days a week. That didn't work either. Trying to take a logical solution to illogical people. Go talk to employers who pay over \$15/hr and ask if they have the same problems. They say that even at \$20/hr they are having the same problems.

Village Board: Employers can be providing housing. Hard to work in Siren because of the hourly cost as well as insurance quality so many people living in Siren commute to the Cities. They have also realized that parents have different expectations for their kids.

Village Staff: A lot of help-wanted ads in the paper, but commonly believed to be part-time, minimum-wage, no benefits type job. People job-hop because they can't afford to live on that wage so they are constantly looking for a little bit more. Doesn't have to do with "can't stick to one job and earn a promotion" but that starting wage is unsupportive to begin with. The Village has focused on tourism type business for the last ten years and been ignoring those that do live and are trying to survive within the Village. Have ignored the living wage type jobs that could support the current population. A good half of the Village people don't pay their water and heating bill between Oct and April because it's a public service and won't be shut off. Most people are seasonal employees so they can't pay in the winter anyways.

Real Estate: They see an issue with the unemployed. And people asking a ton of money because they can't afford the housing. They have interaction with unemployed young couples with children that can't get out of the rut. As well as the people who get so many welfare benefits that they choose not to work. They think social workers don't report their people to keep their job.

Affordable housing

Siren Seniors: Assisted living and memory care in one unit. More assisted living/nursing home so people don't have to move later in life.

Chamber of Commerce: Apartments get various people with different backgrounds, in and out in a month, couch crashing and not wanting to share that they live there.

Hospitality/Tourism: Nelson's, McNally's, Parker, Nexen need managers and people with computer skills. But lack of housing for families to move here.

NWP: Housing does deter new hires from making the move. NW does everything they can to not make it a deterrent. Relocating is difficult especially with the housing shortage. So they try to provide free housing as much as possible. The higher level employees (therapists/psychiatrists) generally commute from Duluth or the Cities and so they don't last long. Finding housing is mostly through realtor sites and word of mouth (who you know).

Town of Meenon: Village has no role in owning or operating any housing operations. Any upgrades to the village should be contracted out to a third party. Huge housing shortage. What exists is not very nice. Webster had a subsidized housing for old people. Because of the shortage, people abuse the system for low income, maybe making unhealthy blending in apartments or subsidized housing. Long term assisted living facility is needed. How to get financial help in one of the poorest cities in the state

Tribe: More renting options for young people who aren't ready to buy. Tribe has their own housing authority. Don't house their employees, housing in the tribe in general needs to be addressed. Their communities are very spread out, making transportation a priority. Homelessness an issue, families living together.

DSI: Took two months to find a rental. \$750/mo for a two bedroom house. Limited housing for people with disabilities. Apartments in Siren are very low income, children running around screaming, people not working, drugs, theft. Advertising for housing mostly through FB or word of mouth, just watching for someone to move out. A lot of "slum lords." Large mix of quality of housing. Landlords will accept Section 8 knowing that they will get paid which lowers the quality of housing stock for everyone.

Burnett County: Need transitional housing. Have enough slum lords. More specifically Section 8 housing to avoid more slum lords. Need more of those in between houses that are nicer without breaking the bank. Have lost professionals moving to the area due to no available housing. Demand for single family housing, but none. But he is encouraging \$150K to \$275K for the double income professionals.

Professional Services: No housing options, hardly anything for rentals (all the surrounding villages). Grantsburg has a waiting list. It's not financially incentivizing to build new apartments, cost of materials are too high. Communities won't provide support for construction group to come in, they're scared of low-income housing. Can't fill a construction work group anyways because so few people pass a background check. Lack of senior housing for widowed or now dependent adults. Need something in that \$150K range. People don't want change so townhomes or condos are generally blocked from being discussed

County Sentinel: Finding housing was difficult, lives in a two family condo, rents, and got his place because it was the house of the guy whose job he took. People can't afford to buy or rent here and have to work multiple jobs.

Industrial Businesses: Industry and housing has to happen at the same time before bringing people in. Unstable home lives make very unstable work lives. Need affordable housing to stabilize families in order to get people to show up for work. (Go in to pay their electrical bill?)

Lumber Mill: Would lend their employees enough money for security deposits so they could afford housing. Lost maybe \$800 over 4 years. Had to stay in a camper park when they first opened the company then rented in Voyageur Village before a friend referenced them to a house on Crooked Lake. Put ad in a paper, put ad in store windows of storefronts and toured rat holes until they found it.

Village Board: Emphasized that the Village bought land. Medium priced housing for white collar workers. Not getting any county or state support for housing so want to form their own committee to get grants for housing.

Village Staff: Stuck at current tax level. Very few buildings built since 2007. Very little land available to build on. Tewalt Rd. will help. Believes job growth and housing needs to happen concurrently.

Real Estate: Need apartments. Needs to be in town, can't have it on well and septic. Family-size apartments. Get calls all the time on rentals. Transitional housing, want to rent first if they're new to the area. A lot of industry, but no housing for people to come to the jobs. People living an hour away then coming here for work. Would be hard to build under \$200K but people call looking for \$150K to \$200K. Many need to be brought up to code to be affordable and livable.

Construction: 80% of business is outside of Siren because Siren is too poor to invest in their properties (except cabin homes). Housing challenges are that there is no help. Materials are lessening but still very high. Affordable housing doesn't make sense to build because of high construction cost. People trash their rentals. Very few available lots in Siren and the good ones are very expensive. To make rentals worth the money is to buy a manufactured modular home and put it on a small lot. Get one used for even less. Multi-use apartment building with higher income rentals on top. Webster is planning to build senior housing.

Community-centered growth

Chamber of Commerce: Many people selling products out of their house over the internet. If we provided a cheap space for them to sell in town we could increase store fronts that would include businesses like: cbd oil, board games, clothing, resale, jewelry, fishing rods, and much more. Need to get young professionals together in Burnett County and network businesses, make a stronger support base.

NWP: NW Passage has been a hub for the art culture. Finding ways to integrate into other festivals and events happening in the area. Popularize classes. Make them like a destination place. They are thinking of opening the gallery on Fridays and include vendors and food trucks. Development at NWP could be like an arts colony. Spark to a lot of new things. Artist in residence come in.

Tourism: People are choosing where to live first, then looking for the job. Having a strong tourism base further incentivizes new families to move here because they may have come here for a vacation and know what activities and social interactions exist. "Tourism is the front door to economic development." Allows you to showcase your town. Need to have a connection to the place in order to move here. Need to fully advertise the attractive areas of town. Through research people choose where they want to live. This place has so much to offer. Entice new people- how do you let them know this is a great place to live. Quality of life- experience life in Burnett County. Also, the broadband and high speed internet access. Great place to live if you work remotely.

Tribe: Entrepreneurial type business style. There are a lot of self-employed people in the area, so providing the resources and support needed for young people to start their own businesses. A lot of struggling family businesses can be a burden to take over. Having the knowledge and financial resources to grow a business. Been a growth in relationship among the small villages and the tribe. Rise in tourism has benefited everyone. Tourists' interests have changed, a lot more outdoorsy activities supported and a lot more seasonal homeowners. The old Four Winds would make a great bowling alley.

DSI: DSI wants to be more engaged with the community and would be open to building up the community garden program. Pretty active rotary group and Lion's Club that would support them. They want a rec center for the younger kids. Need better activities to keep kids away from meth.

Siren School: Bowling alley. A better gym/community center or a YMCA. Kids brought up that DSI people would use a YMCA as well because Anytime Fitness isn't very accessible. Community Center would entertain kids.

Professional Services: Young Professional's Group (casual, after 5pm on a predictable day) or any sort of networking group to help build business and social capital.

Industrial Businesses: B&C sees tourism as an asset to economic development. It promotes the businesses that locate here. But it isn't taken as seriously as it could be. If there was a better workforce, it would improve the experiences tourists have. The community is a very collective group. What powers do individuals maintain that they need to let go? SI says that with door knocking selling, it'll be easier when the older generation is gone. They don't support new business and growth. People are supportive of their businesses but won't actually provide the support a new business like B&C needs. Talk the talk, maybe not walk the walk. Those in charge really drag their feet. You have to be very aggressive to expand business, put up a sign, etc. They also don't buy their products.

Lumber Mill: In order for community to do better, need to get meth addicts the help they need or get them out of the community.

Village Staff: Library (can't afford it), outdoor skating rink, community pool, a Shop-Ko style store. A bus to the grocery store. Walking track at the Hockey rink.

Real Estate: Mental health and wellness anything. Seasonal depression, healthy option to a bar. 100 Women Who Care. The Passage art classes open to public. The tourism room tax: where does it go? A YMCA style community center. Suggested opening the high school. Burnett County Play groups at the Clinic but it's during the day. Everything closes down before 5. Bar Yoga? A resource for the unemployed in the County to get them out of the house. Training, support, health and wellness. A program to make unemployed feel like they're worth something to get back to work. Grocery delivery/ transportation to

Medical: Get asked for donations a lot. Would be willing to donate if it related to their cause. Would be interested in investing in a gym. Want to build an indoors farmer's market

Returning Alumni: Mentor program for new businesses and new people to build social capital. How to break into existing business connections. Young Professionals group to build social capital

Community Coordination

Hospitality/Tourism: Grantsburg and Webster should talk to Siren about doing one summer fair that would be more impressive than each doing their own.

Town of Meenon: Combine high schools in different villages. They do want to see a better relationship with Siren where they can act more like a city than separate village entities.

Burnett County: Focused on how we can partner with surrounding towns and villages to avoid overextending and dealing with different agendas. All the different towns have different police officers. 3 chiefs for 3 villages. Total population is 16,000. His main focus is convincing people to combine forces to better reach the overall population. His economic developer will be in charge of helping all the towns and supporting their initiatives.

County Sentinel: Grantsburg, Webster, and Siren have a lot of animosity between them, and plan festivals on the same days as each other. Improvement could come from combining things. County fairs. School districts would never happen. It's been talked about for 40 years but won't happen, even though class sizes are drastically shrinking.

Tourism: Tourism taken for granted and not marketed more effectively or focused on. Tourists aren't focused on whether a business is in a chamber or what county they're in. Often tourism is over sectionalized and it doesn't allow for the full advertising every business could get. Encourage communities to embrace tourism as a legitimate way of building economy rather than an economic savior after it's too late.

Town of Siren: What would make tourists stop and shop? A place to process meat (from hunting). Or a multi-purpose business strip mall. Should encourage the Tribe to fill their strip mall.

Village Board: The county has been very disinterested in tourism and economic development until recently. They are hoping that with partnership with us will piggyback with the county and have higher level support.

Investment in Trades

Town of Meenon: Large lack of people trained in the trades. New people with no experience have a hard time accepting a lower wage than those with years of experience. Need people to get into training programs and commit. Plumbers/electricians/HVAC- bring tech every Saturday to the high school. Can't hire anyone with that type of experience. Can't expect the same wage as someone who has 43 years experience.

Tribe: Tribe has support for community and trade schools, especially free. Young adults need support. Trades, construction, tarring driveways, working outside. Seasonal, plowing. Market to women to get trained in the trades.

North States: growth of trade classes, pushing employability skills, growing work ethic among the schools.

Professional Services: They like the idea of getting people a degree before they graduate high school so they can start working in a professional field right away. After hours training even. There's a split between what the jobs in Siren needs and how the school educates their students. Don't necessarily get the computer skills they need. Sarah said she would offer discounted classes to get people basic computer usage skills to improve job prospects. The system gives people money to live on instead of some sort of training to get them back into the workforce. Feels like the system is trying to keep people in poverty. Scholarships to get kids to go to tech school.

Industrial Businesses: Webster school has introduced their own trades program and it's very successful. Giving out full scholarships to send kids to vocational and trades school. Same with Luck. Siren should encourage an emphasis on the Siren school to prioritize the trades. Getting kids a certificate before they graduate. Make the classes profitable. A lot of opportunities to make good money from a trades training. Machinists, wood working, CNC, electrical. By starting the trades path and over-training kids when they're young can help to break the systemic cycle of drugs.

Town of Siren: Webster and surrounding schools have been expanding their partnerships with tech schools to expand employment opportunities for graduates. They suggested short-term employment for kids so they can try a bunch of different jobs to find a passion. Work-study program. Tie it into graduation. Especially in the service industry as it teaches personality, multi-tasking, humility.

Construction: Union-driven schools keep Burnett Cty kids out. "Grow your own" employees at the electric co-op apprenticeship program. Electric co-op has a power distribution program. Recruit kids young (20) who have a clear vision of living in the woods and can hunt and fish outside of work.

Local Investment

Chamber of Commerce: Need better marketing of businesses for those that live in Siren.

Hospitality/Tourism: Siren locals don't make use of local businesses. Grantsburg community is very supportive of their local businesses. Siren's Chamber of Commerce is very good. Grantsburg's chamber is very unresponsive. Siren people are very stuck on online shopping. Siren needs to focus on getting their locals to support their own town. Advertise Siren to its own people.

Arts: Only gallery in Burnett County. They have helped with art exposure. BAAG's gallery in the Shops at the Lodge in Siren was very successful until they got driven out. BAAG only art group in the area with longevity. 33 members. There have been 2 art festivals in Siren that both were a big draw but they didn't have enough outside support to keep it going. In general, the arts groups don't get much support from the city. Businesses don't attend their events. Want to market and advertise themselves more. Potential for partnership with Chamber but it needs a leader.

Industry: With the change into focus of tourism and retirement, leaves no room for manufacturing. There needs to be a change in the workforce culture to grow manufacturing.

Siren School: Festivals could be bigger. Could be more community involvement. Drug use. Drug use is systemic, how to get kids with a bad home life out of the house. The police are not well-staffed. Sometimes only one police officer for the county. A short bus that went up past the round about to shuttle kids that live farther away into school. Kids drop out from truancy/ drugs and get moved to ALC. "graduate early"

Weddings/Venues: A lot of the festivals have been going on for so long that people are skipping them more and more. They're not bringing in new people and town feels stagnant. When Chris first started there was a lot more support and excitement to keep growth going, especially in festivals. But without more support for Chris, it has lost stamina. Need to see investment by the next generation to settle down, start businesses, get involved in the local government.

County Sentinel: It's difficult because everyone knows your an outsider and maybe don't treat you the same.



Professional Services: Business is pretty new and it's been hard to build a client base. Social media advertising, sandwich board, didn't work. People that live here have a routine and don't check out new businesses. People primarily learn about things by word of mouth or referral.

Village Board: New Sheriff that is very on top of responding to drug calls. The drug people are spending all their time in Danbury and Grantsburg. Residents don't want change, have a problem accepting new people.

Village Staff: Doesn't have the knowledge between all the "connections." There are a lot of "core people" that are separate from the law. They can break ordinances or not get fined because of some familial connection. Council meetings are at 2PM on a Thursday.

Real Estate: Small business loans should be focused on. Commercial Real Estate, very difficult to get sold. A lot of bar/restaurants for sale but the young couples who could buy them can't afford a \$300K house.

Returning Alumni: Easier to work in the community if you knew all the connections. Need locals to invest in tourism businesses to make them more profitable to their employees. Importance of all businesses building each other up: healthy competition. "Let's support someone we like" - a connection we have to curate for new business people that come to the area. Small town "tread lightly" or good business may be taken away.

APPENDIX B

All open-ended survey responses. Responses are sorted by question and type of response.

In your opinion, how can the Gandy Dancer trail become a larger part of the area's recreation options?

Focus on Silent Sports

- "The Gandy is fine the way it is. Leave it alone. Motorized vehicles get it in the winter and silent sports in the summer. It can't be a shared trail - it won't work. Stop wasting time and energy to make it in to something it can't ever be."
- "The Gandy Dancer is an asset that needs to be celebrated, branded and promoted. Summer time use on other mid western rail trails are booming because they are embraced by the communities in which the run through. All the communities along the Gandy Dancer, along with the Friends of Gandy Dancer and our Dept of Tourism can collectively work towards launching new and improved promotional materials to highlight the trail and all the surrounding amenities." "Cycling groups spend money, love to complete entire trails on a vacation and stay in hotels and appreciate good shopping and dining. Siren has all of these things and can capture more dollars if seen as a destination. The Gandy Dancer is the only safe, alternate transportation corridor in Burnett. Protecting it as such should be of primary concern. Motorized vehicles have access everywhere else."
- "The Gandy Dancer is already a large part. Just leave it alone. There is no way to make everyone happy. The ATV/ snowmobile people will not ever be satisfied if "silent sport" people are using the trail. Ever. The "silent sport" people will not be happy if anything motorized goes on the trail. Ever. It is a dead issue - quit ramming it down the throats of everyone else who could care less about it. Let it be. It works the way it is. Focus on something else if you are going to spend the money."
- "Keep ATVs/UTVs off of this particular trail for safety's sake and to protect the trail itself. Make a little room for cross country skiers or fat-bikers. Snowmobilers take up the entire corridor but it's supposed to be open to skiers too."
- "Rental of bicycles and sources of food by mom & pop stores as well as chain eateries."
- "Quit the constant bickering over who should get to use the trail. Silent sports in summer; motorized in winter. Multi-use should not be discussed; it is not feasible. There are routes for summer travel for at/utv."
- "Putting atvs on same trail as bike people would be same danger as snowmobilers and cross country skiers on the winter snowmobile trails! Dumb idea and death will happen. More"
- "Promote the silent sports like Hayward does. We have plenty of motorized routes"
- "Promote it. Promote what's near it. The gandy is a family friendly, safe place to walk and bike and run. Tout the fact that it's non motorized, family friendly and beautiful scenery. It's also cheap. You don't need fancy equipment to use it. In this day and age of climate change we do not need more motors."
- "Promote it more. Hold nonmotorized events on it"
- "Organized bike rides for a variety of levels - example: group ride for older women; Group ride for teenagers, etc."
- "Only pedal bikes in the summer; no atv's."
- "Offer bike loans or rentals for visitors. Keep motorized use off the trail. Advertising."
- "More planned activities for silent sport activities. Activity with lunch in Siren"
- "More bicycle events. No fees."
- "Marketing to bicycle users and creating "rest stops"."
- "Keep it not motorized in the summer"
- "Keep it non motorized. It's a great biking/hiking trail. And it would only be a go hum ATV trail, and ATV access would eliminate the qualities that make the Gandy great for biking/hiking."
- "Keep it for walking ,running, biking in the spring through fall, and, use it in the winter for snowmobilers."
- "Keep it as a bike trail but also develop ATV trails to connect to the Danbury trails."
- "keep as is"
- "Just keep growing the Gandy's non mortorized summer use. It is what the new generations are looking for, and we already have it."

- “Host events that let people use the trail for free or a reduced cost for a day. We think it’s fine to have group events use the trail one day a year (like a car show) BUT we don’t want to see the trail motorized like it is in Danbury. The trail in Danbury is all torn up.”
- “educate, promote and maintain it for quiet sports - shared use displaces quiet sport users”
- “Continue to utilize the Gandy for it’s intended seasonal uses. Promote the community as a Gateway Community to the Gandy and the diversity of activities that can be done while on the Gandy.”
- “Capitalize on the biking boom in this country. Communities that have this kind of resource use it to promote their towns for the natural experience, commuting, hiking, biking, birding. The Gandy is a State Trail - take advantage of this and make it the focus of tourism. Use other popular state trails (check out Minnesota too) as models of how it works. Use HEALTHY lifestyles as part of any tourism promotion.”
- “Assure the trail remains non-motorized from April 1 to December 1. Promote biking and hiking on the trail with improved trailheads in each of the towns along its path. Provide bike racks at local businesses. Provide safe access to the trail with town bike lanes and / or bike paths.” “Encourage bike oriented businesses near the trail (food,ice cream, brew pubs, bike shops)”

By opening it up to motorized vehicles

- “Using motorized vehicles and having it be lit in some places so people feel more safe using it.”
- “to much input. I think we should have it be an open rec trail and open to everyone and anything. Up keep is on anything and that is our main trail. To many people trying to regulate use. If you are promoting use you don't want to ban people.”
- “Open to year round ATV use”
- “Open to ATV's”
- “Open to ATV, UTV”
- “Open to ATV and UTV's. With a permit.”
- “Open The Gandy to ATV/UTV summer use”
- “Open it up too all types of users”
- “Open it up to the thousands of UTV / Snowmobilers that pour money into other Counties, because Burnett County is not "UTV / Snowmobile Friendly" anymore! We're losing so much revenue to more "open" and "user friendly" counties, it's a shame! We should be tapping into that revenue vein BEFORE they can pass through our County on their way to Washburn, Sawyer, Douglas, etc.”
- “Open it up to motorized ATVs when not used by snowmobiles.”
- “OPEN IT UP TO ATVs”
- “Open it up to atv and utv riding. The amount of revenue for our local businesses will be amazing. There is a bar just 6 miles south of siren that has a book that all the snowmobile riders sign when they stop for a bev and burger. One year they had more than 5000 signatures and thats just some of the people signing in. REALLY missing the boat on the revenue that can be generated”
- “Open it to year round use by utv/atv!”
- “Open it to ATV/UTV's”
- “Open it to atv use”
- “Open for year-round motorized traffic”
- “open Burnett County to connect with Polk County and Danbury.”
- “Making it a multi use trail so all people can enjoy it”
- “make it less strict on snowmobilers and ATVs. Police it more.”
- “Make it available!!!”
- “If possible, offer more useable options for the trail.”

- "I feel that the Gandy Dancer trail could be used during the summer by ATVs and UTVs 50 inches wide or less. With accommodating speed limits to cyclists and ATV/UTV trail users."
- "I believe it would help to have ATVs ride it in the summer BUT. I think it looks really bad around the gandy at Danbury and the ditch going to the gas station. It would bring so much dust and tore up grass. Maybe make it open to only electric golf carts,"
- "Have it more readily available throughout the whole year so people can use it whenever they so choose. Examples are have it open to walkers, hikers, bicyclers, ATV/UTV usage, snowmobiles/snow machines, etc. year round and to have people report any problems if any on the trail itself and to have either a bi-weekly to monthly check of the trail to make sure it is in proper working condition."
- "Biking and ATV/UTV usage"
- "Allow motorized vehicles."
- "allow more users - there are multi-use trails that work just fine all over the state. Motorized and silent sports people can get along just fine."
- "Allow four wheelers."
- "Allow ATV's"
- "allow atv,s"
- "Atv/UtV"
- "ATV use in the summer"
- "atv and utv travel"

By allowing horses

- "Develop the area provide amenities for non ATV riders, Horse Trails, and other types"
- "open to more people.... ATV, horse back..."
- "Allow horses on it in the summer"

Middle Ground/Not sure

- "This is one of the greatest assets in our community and it is underutilized. If the silent sports folks are as passionate as they say, let's promote the heck out of this trail, like trails in southern WI and MN. If not, open it up to ATVs. Either way, it's an under-used resource and needs to be promoted."
- "Not sure of additional options"
- "not sure"
- "No comment"
- "I am not sure."
- "Don't know"
- "Siren needs to reach out to the state and the county via a cooperative management plan so the trail is well-maintained, safe, and inviting to all users AND those who live or work near the trail."

By focusing on promotion

- "Promote the family use in summer. Not sure people know how beautiful and family friendly it is."
- "Promote it more, work with business owners to create events/deals (For example, a bar if "Frederic had a bike event where patrons rode the trail and visited several other establishments)"
- "Promote it more, have events to draw visitors"
- "Offer more recreational events such as community races, events, walks, rides etc..."
- "More advertising. some places to stop. Ice cream shop etc. Other trails have these things." "When you bike through on trail there is nothing to encourage you to come into town. Even if there were pop up stands by gandy trail"
- "I think we need more activities that draw people to the trail. We often take for granted what is in our own back yard."

- "I think it needs to be advertised/ promoted more."
- "Hold more community events which use the trail."
- "Have races and such."
- "Encourage snowshoeing and snow biking during the winter. Have organized events like a snow shoeing "walk" with a booya or chili feed at the end around a bonfire (like at the Forts) or at a sponsoring tavern."
- "Better publicity. Organized events"
- "Better promotion of the trail"
- "Advertisement, hold a variety of events held on the trail, access"
- "Advertise it more...social media"

Improve access points/connectivity

- "Better and more access points to businesses from the trail so users can make frequent stops If the Gander is kept for "silent" use, then an alternate trail for motorized vehicles (like ATVs) use should be built to be connected to Polk County and points north, again with easy access to local businesses."
- "Advertising. Signage on all major roads pointing to the Gandy. Better developed access point/parking area off Hwy 70."
- "Clear and sign more areas to direct to the trail access. In general need more access points."
- "More access points outside of city limits"
- "Improve access points, maintain park-like spaces near the community and businesses, consider additional events to heighten awareness and use. KEEP IT NON-MOTORIZED."
- "It should be a gateway to all new trails and towns with fun and creative signage. It needs development at the intersections of roads and trail to encourage development for People stop at or let them know what is near to them. Get with the local business to help them create more businesses from the trail system. It also needs to be a multi use trail. Please put in place a system to monitor it with the businesses to see how it is working and can be improved on EACH YEAR!"
- "if possible create a network of trails off the gandy"
- "Develop parks, picnic areas, disc golf courses, etc. adjacent to the trail with easy access from the trail and promote them."
- "connecting trails"
- "Bike rental facilities; stops along route for family friendly meals or refreshments; other bike routes that attach/link to gandy dancer from all directions; attached hiking trails w places to secure bikes;"
- "Bike groups walking trails to go to the gandy"
- "Better bars and restaurants along the trail"
- "Better access and maps, maybe business app with gps"

Pave it

- "pavement and restrict motorized vehicles"
- "PAVE IT SO BICYCLISTS CAN USE IT PLEASE!"
- "Pave it to attract more bikers. It is a very difficult path to bike for miles. I have done it. Talk to Minnesota, where many paths are paved and I'm sure you will find higher traffic on those trails vs the unpaved trails of Wisconsin"

Other comments

- "Not charge people to ride bikes on the trail."
- "Improve condition of surface, better lighting, keep it usable for snowing, cross country skiing, etc."
- "Could tie in well with a recreational center and downtown shops. Main Street)"

What types of winter recreation opportunities are missing in the area?

None

- "None"
- "None"
- "None"
- "None"
- "None"
- "None"
- "not sure"
- "None. Siren does a good job, but ice fishing, snowmobiling, etc. are very weather dependent. Can't control Mother Nature. Lodge Area and BYHA do a great job getting people into town with hockey all winter. Tournaments every weekend."
- "none its all available"
- "I don't think any are really missing just that mother nature isn't always consistent and personally it is hard to plan a winter getaway to our area because we may have a lot of snow or we may have none"
- "Don't know"

Skating rink

- "Outdoor skating rink"
- "Outdoor skating rink"
- "Skating rinks, outside"
- "Outdoor skating more public events"
- "Outdoor ice skating/broom ball/hockey rink with a warming house"
- "Outdoor ice rink, safe places for youth to do things, attractions that people want to see without needing alcohol."
- "outdoor ice rink sledding hill"
- "ice skating oval on an area lake"
- "ice skating and hockey games { trials } on lakes, not in a building."
- "Broomball."
- "~ice board sailing on the lakes when the ice is thick enough ~additional ice-skating opportunities with rentals and lessons ~pond hockey for kids just for fun"
- "outdoor skating rink; decent sledding hill"

Winter Carnival

- "Snowshoe, X-ski, Ice Fishing Guides and Tours of Area Lakes, Snowmobile Race, Car Ice Races, Ice Sculpting, Snow Sculpting, Winter Carnival"
- "Winter carnival. Ice sculpture events."
- "Need to have a better Christmas in the Park...Ice castle? Ice Sculptures?"
- "Improve trails for ATV and Snowmobiling. Put a fun out door ice skating Rink and trail system and cross country trail on crooked lake. Figure out how to keep the ice as clean as a Zamboni machine. Have ice house village, encourage design. Make Siren a Christmas town with a parade. Advertise all of this in the twin cities and make it a like a Webb lake parade."
- "Ice Castles...Ice racing"
- "a village of siren ice fishing contest"

Rental Business

- "Xcountry ski rentals; snowshoe rentals; trails through out area; ice fishing tournaments; sledding w tow rope facilities; Ice castle /festivities like st paul?;"
- "We could really use a rental business - snowshoes, skis, etc for silent sports."
- "Rental of snowmobiles, sleds, toboggans."
- "Need rental business so more can participate in the existing cross country skiing, snow shoeing, etc. in the area."

Indoor Activities

- "Warm facilities for walking all times of day in doors"
- "Things for our youngsters to do - roller skating, bowling, youth center, indoor amusement park type venues!"
- "Sports programs for adults using the school gym."
- "Major high school events such as track meets, playooof football games, walk for life, etc.. A modern facility at the high school would be beneficial."
- "Indoor events to accommodate people who do not want to snowmobile or ice fish."
- "Indoor activities... Concerts, theater, arts"
- "indoor activities ,rock wall etc."
- "Better utilization of the hockey arena, inside rec opportunities i.e. non bar rec center with ping pong, darts, pool etc."
- "Dart leagues are very popular."
- "Curling. Promote more ski trails and winter biking."
- "Curling center"

Winter motorized vehicles

- "Winter trails open to ATV/UTV"
- "Siren needs a link to the ATV trails in the Danbury area. The Gandy Dancer should remain for bikes ONLY, but an ATV link should be built adjacent to the Gandy Dancer."
- "Promoting snowmobiling and developing trails"
- "Better access and upkeep of snowmobile trails: think of Hayward and Cable; they are huge winter destinations because x country skiers and snowmobilers flock there. More groomed ski trails. Better use of the Siren hockey arena! Have more well-publicized fun skating events there to use that sheet of ice when hockey teams aren't using it. Really publicize high school hockey games for spectators as a fun thing to do on a weekend. Maybe grill brats and have hot cocoa outside once in awhile. But first spiffy up the arena sign - it badly needs paint - and make the parking lot more inviting."
- "ATV's on the Gandy"
- "ATV's"
- "ATV/UTV trails like the snowmobiles have. Grooming the gandy for cross country skiing."
- "atv utv"
- "ATV trails..."

Silent Sports

- "Skiing"
- "Skiing"
- "Skiing"
- "Cross country skiing"
- "Cross country skiing"
- "XC ski and snow shoe trails."
- "X country ski trail nearer to Siren"
- "Snowboarding/skiing"

- "Snow shoeing and cross country skiing"
- "Sledding area for kids"
- "Skiing, snowshoeing, sledding"
- "skiing, snow shoeing/cross country skiing."
- "Skiing and biking."
- "Perhaps more cross-country ski trails could be developed, separate from the snowmobile trails... both having access to local business. Maps to both should be available at all businesses."
- "More x courty ski trails."
- "More cross country ski trails"
- "Maybe some cross country skiing/snow shoeing paths. The gandy is for snowmobiles and ATV's in the winter so some places for people who what to go snow shoeing or cross country skiing would be good addition. Otherwise there are lots of options for people who like winter activities."
- "maybe more cross country ski trails"
- "Groomed trails for non- motorized sports, outdoor skating rink off of Crooked Lake that is maintained."
- "Groomed cross-country skiing trails"
- "Groomed and lighted cross country ski trails."
- "Cross-country skiing and a trail system. i.e. Ice age trail is a good example to draw active young people."
- "Cross-country ski trails."
- "Cross country skiing-groomed and dedicated trails for both types. To a lesser degree skijouring and snowshoeing"
- "Cross country skiing trails."
- "cross country skiing trails and easily accessible ice fishing."
- "Cross country skiing areas, outdoor ice skating rinks in multiple locations."
- "Cross Country Ski Trails. Snowshoe Trails. Fat Biking. If you build and promote it "they will come". Hayward area is doing a great job of promoting winter recreation, businesses thrive in winter due to quiet sport enthusiasts."
- "Cross country ski trails, especially lighted trails (even lighted parking lots) near town that attract families. Fat bike trails. (For some reason people like to ride fat bikes in the winter. Go figure.) Friendly places to eat and drink. Bars that cater to people who just drink to get drunk aren't attractive to most families and active people who certainly don't mind a drink but..."
- "Cross country ski trails Indoor pools Sliding hills"
- "Cross country ski trails In door walking areas in the winter"
- "Cross country ski trails are a big draw in counties surrounding Burnett. Why not here?"
- "cross country ski trails"
- "Cross country ski races, winter festivals/ family activities Outdoor ice rink"
- "cross country ski and hiking"
- "Cross country ski / snow shoeing trails Community night out"
- "Designated snowshoe trails. Designated cross country ski trails."
- "Dedicated Cross country ski trails."
- "A skiing/tubing place, snowshoeing trails, ice-skating rink, etc."
- "Fat biking"
- "Quiet sport trails, sledding, outdoor ice skating, ice racing?, hot air balloons?, indoor opportunities, too, like bowling, music/bands/dances, etc."
- "Organized silent sports. Spontaneous snow sculpture in the park Kite flying on the frozen lake"

Are there any other recreational opportunities not currently available that you would like to see in the Siren area?

No

- No
- "No"
- "No"
- "No"
- "No"
- "Unsure"
- "Not sure"
- "No."
- "No comment."
- "I am not sure."

Large Gym/Community Center

- "Would love to see a larger gym with more features (fit for gymnastics and trampolines - could also be used by the school to practice)"
- "Everyone is always looking for space for what ever you like to do indoors. Ping pong, 500, bridge, handball, pickle ball, mah jong, cribbage, a place for tournaments for these indoor games."
- "we need a large community center. Indoor activities are huge up here especially in the winter.. Usable, dedicated Pickleball courts with co-ordinated play times."
- "Bowling alley, and a YMCA."
- "A place for teens to have fun,"
- "Indoor community pool"
- "I'm more of an indoor person during the cold months, so I'd LOVE an indoor walking track! Or even if the Siren school gym was open during evenings for walking the perimeter like a track. For those of us who like to walk for exercise but can't in the winter because of ice and cold, this would be awesome!"
- "I would like to see Siren school have a sport such as swimming, and compete with other schools. It would give kids more to choose from. Not all kids can play football or basketball."
- "Zip lines Swimming pool (year round) for exercise"
- "Indoor swimming: a pool would open doors to all kinds of fitness, competitive, and fun activities for all ages year 'round. This would be part of a community center complex that would have racquetball and other racket sports courts, indoor walking/running track, volleyball courts - multi-use area for other indoor activities and entertainment."
- "More organized classes open to the public: aerobics, yoga, other types of opportunities for a variety of levels. (And not just for people who belong to anytime fitness- more community based)."

Rental Center

- "yes, would like to have the opportunity to rent kayaks and canoes on crooked lake"
- "snowshoe rental"
- "Rental of wave riders and other water sports."
- "Rental for silent sport recreation: canoes/kayaks, bikes, SUP"
- "Rental boats, kayaks, wind surf. A beach beach area."
- "Canoe and kayak rentals on crooked lake. Bike rentals"
- "If you want to promote silent sports in Siren, we should have bike rental on the Gandy."

Pickle Ball

- "tennis courts, pickle ball"
- "Pickleball courts for the fastest growing sport in the country."
- "Pickleball courts"

Outdoor Recreation

- "An outdoor ice rink that is lighted and maintained so it is affordable for all to use. Groomed cross country ski trails"
- "outdoor swimming pool, disc golf course"
- "outdoor swimming pool"
- "outdoor games where anybody can go and play like soccer nets, an area to go rock climbing and maybe canoe/kayak rental place so consumers can rent and/or purchase a canoe or kayak to use hourly at a certain charge or to rent it for the day."

Biking promoted

- "Mountain biking, both summer and winter trails."
- "Mountain bike trails single track"
- "More varied bicycle trails."
- "Biking and skiing paths"
- "Bike trolley...peddal pub Hot Air balloon festival"
- "Safer paths for biking. Cleaner lakes. No wakes on lakes during high water seasons. Make jet skis illegal in small narrow areas of lakes."
- "Wider shoulders on roads to allow for safer biking off trail. Siren sponsored events on the Gandy Dancer."
- "Rustic camping along the Gandy and the Ice Age Trail. Geocaching. Mountain bike trails: especially along the Gandy to provide destinations and variety along the Gandy."
- biking, water sports, walking, hiking - even if currently available - facilitating, advertising, promoting"

Other

- "They have enough events, they just need to be promoted more"
- "Saturday Night Rock and Roll Cruise from Webster to Siren to Shell Lake to Spooner. All four towns part of it."
- More family fun things like zip line park"
- "Dog park or walking paths"
- "Develop trails on golf courses for xc skiing."
- "Curling in the hockey rink."
- "City sponsored events to get and keep kids, families, seniors active and healthy."
- "Bowling; swimming pool; library"
- "Better and better advertised parking locations along the Gandy. Most people now just park off the side of the road, out of town tourist might not feel comfortable doing thst."
- "ag. tourism. Tied together with harvest festival and farmers markets."
- "A water park, a brewery, upscale shopping along Main Street."
- "We would like to see a sidewalk connecting Clear Lake to town."

Promotion for motorized sports vehicle

- "Opening the Gandy to utv/atv."
- "Open Gandy Dancer to ATV/UTV for summer use"
- "ATV's on the Gandy Dancer trail."
- "atv utv"
- "Atv use on the gandy"
- "More ATV roads open"
- "The ATV tourism is huge. Siren does not get any of that tourism. Development of local trails that link Siren to other communities like Webster, Hertel, Alpha, Danbury, or Spooner would create an attraction to that recreational group."
- "Racing, snowmobile, motor cross, auto these people love the rural areas."

Are there any other recreational opportunities not currently available that you would like to see in the Siren area?

Visitor Focused Growth

- "We need a bakery, pizza restaurant"
- "Siren needs a nice downtown. Currently it's not great...few shops. Should be more like Spooner aesthetics wise as well. Draw people there. Right now there's no draw downtown for tourism. Need a few supper club like restaurants... sick of the burger/pizza joints. Draw in more tourists"
- "More options of good food."
- "I think we need to promote and encourage tourism to maintain our seasonal business and hope it promotes the next generation to want to visit up here with their young families~ not as much people moving up here as we are still and probably will always be a small town with where we are located. I think there are plenty of jobs if the people want to work. We have the necessities, I think personally the newer generation needs constant stimulation and things to do on their lap or they don't do it so more draw for entertainment. Maybe wineries, breweries activities on our lakes, recreational trails, hiking trails etc."
- "Additional retail, food & dining options are also an attraction - for locals and non-locals."
- "Businesses that draw clients with more money to spend to increase growth"

Resident Focused Growth

- "We need a good blend of unique well managed businesses. A larger clinic would be good as well as orthodontist office."
- "We have a good selection of food and dining and lodging already, we need places for people to work and affordable housing so they will stay in the area"
- "Walmart needed"
- "Some type of stores, clothing, sports, etc. Something above the dollar store quality."
- "Siren businesses over charge for too many things, especially for groceries. Many people with money choose to go to St. Croix Falls, Duluth or the cities to shop. There are no reasonable places to shop around here."
- "Need better power company and internet companies"
- "Lacking a natural foods type store"
- "It would be beneficial to have a grocery store back in the town of Siren."
- "more diverse grocery offering perhaps"
- "Find needs and support new businesses to fill empty spaces. Retail, Support Restaurants in Area and add some new favor or new option, we have all the medical but promote them, Elder Care at KAPES but expand, Manufacturing (Homes), Wood Related, High Tech"
- "A lot of revenue is lost as residents must travel 30 plus miles to shop for everyday needs. Area has few affordable family resteraunts that are clean and comfortable. More businesses also means more jobs for all ages."
- "Competing for manufacturing facilities is hard. Manufacturing will go either where the land is cheap or the work-force has the desired skills. Don't sell our land to the lowest bidder because they will only attract a no-skill workforce. There's a lot of cheap land within 200 miles of Siren. If Siren can't attract young, skilled people it will be another dying community. Young, skilled workers can often bring their own jobs with them because they work remotely. However they are attracted to areas that offer diverse, affordable housing, access to travel (Mpls/St Paul Int'l Airport) and the type of recreation that they want (biking, skiing, etc.). As far as elder care goes...this area is aging quickly. The elected officials better figure out how they are going to handle that in the next 10 years or things are going to get messy."
- "Better law enforcement and bigger jails."

Manufacturing

- "More industry to reduce the taxes and provide area jobs. Provide industry incentives in the form of reduced taxes and land, provide training for employees and help market the business."
- "Manufacturing business is fine if it comes with engineering, high tech, and higher paid management positions. Not just line jobs."

More Businesses

- “Your survey read pretty one sided. I have been in this county for over 20 years and I can count on one hand what has changed in the community. We need new development to make any changes. The people need to encourage development of business and work with the businesses on what will be needed to help them grow. This will help keep the younger people to stay. Then you will see change!”
- “We will soon have 3 more empty buildings on Main Street...have to go to Rice Lake, Cambridge or St Croix Falls to shop!!!”
- “We definitely need to encourage retail businesses. Siren is slowly losing these one, by one. The small town will get so small, it will disappear”
- “To encourage any type of business/municipal growth must first establish zoning guidelines, standards for current businesses in terms of physical appearance, signage, road access, etc.”
- “Promote all types of business. To pick and choose your own likes causes bitterness. Remember the target market of visitors to the area. Arts ect. are great, but do those visitors spend as much locally as young professionals?”
- “Perhaps there’s a way to reach out to small-footprint “clean” businesses that are looking for a branch or satellite site that fits into the environment we can offer. Seek out start-ups with business ideas that fit Burnett County. Avoid businesses that create toxic waste or consume/need large amounts of natural resources like water, sand or timber.”
- “I think business development would bring jobs in, enabling young people to remain in the area, providing more opportunity than just a seasonal restaurant or grocery position.”

Community Center

- “Strongly encourage a community center for variety of uses - kids and youth programming as well as options for adults and seniors. Classes, activities, exercise options, crafting groupsetc. The area also needs more shopping retail businesses. There are NO options for purchasing clothing or shoes for children or adults other than leaving the area to shop. More dining options in the Siren area . More variety needed.”
- “Some form of recreational center could allow for community members (kids) a place to go when the weather is bad and do activities and tourist . Rock wall , sports, classes , etc. Built at west end of main street could revive main street.”
- “My tops would be a community center with walking track and also more restaurants or a bakery. A clothing store would be nice too.”
- “Grocery shopping is difficult for seniors (or the infirm) without transportation since the main grocery store moved north. Fortunately Trader Bills has filled that void with “affordable, fresh” groceries. A community Center with an indoor pool would be very helpful for exercise for all. It would also provide additional meeting space.”
- “I love Tesora. I hope it remains as a local, great, healthy restaurant. A person can only eat so much bar food. Bar food is not necessarily healthy. We have enough bars/liquor in the area. And as previously mentioned, a community center is THE thing, a very important project for all citizens to use and enjoy no matter your age or interests.”
- “Community center with fitness equipment, pool etc for people to use during winter months. Buy and add onto the old Fourwinds store.”

Community Focused Growth

- “I would LOVE to see a library in town. Children/ families in Siren rarely use a library because it is not located in our town.”
- “Healthier and locally sourced food would be good. Having a way for it to be within the community and stay within the community. Possibly having an indoor community garden that could be used year round to encourage a healthier lifestyle and fresh ingredients.”
- “What do young professionals need in communities they want to live in? Better movie options- perhaps a period of classic or art films. A digital way to share local activities. One stop location.”

Avoid

- “Whose going to pay for a Community center? People are taxed enough - the people who work for the local/county government can't get their current jobs done without adding to them.”
- “The development opportunities could be great but the current property taxes are high so I would hope anything that is done is not done by property tax increases. That will hurt building and property improvement. people will get taxed out of their homes or first time home buyers will not be able to afford homes.”
- “Not sure focus should be on the young. Siren will never attract them, too small. Consider middle age and beyond and retirees.”
- “I feel there are a lot of food and dining already.”
- “For current population I think the professional services are adequate”
- “Current staff running the town are not capable of managing a community center. Concentrate on feasible things not pipe dreams that a larger community could handle. Who will pay for these things - current taxes are too high now”
- “Avoid smoking and vaping shops.”

Other

- “Small town businesses all across the US have suffered with the popularity of online shopping. Small towns like Siren must recreate themselves with forward thinking individuals who represent a cross section of the community. In my opinion understanding what people want and need does not come thru a survey. A focus group of business owners, educators, retirees, cabin owners and other “progressive” thinkers will best serve the community in growing Siren's economy.”
- “Is ‘Hospitality’ meant to mean ‘lodging’ or ‘accommodations’? Seems confusing as ‘Food/Dining’
- I believe is also part of ‘Hospitality’. Perhaps needs clarification.”

What do you see are roadblocks or obstacles that stop new businesses from choosing Siren or its surrounding area?

Taxes

- “Taxes”
- “Taxes”
- “Tax incentives”
- “High taxes. Village board likes to protect current businesses and is not very accepting of new business that might compete with their favorites”
- “High taxes”
- “.? Business rental rates too high?”
- “Health care costs.”

Young People

- “Young business owners and lack of housing opportunities”
- “We need to be more forward thinking. Young professionals want the live in a progressive community where fitness and quality of life is important”
- “The lack of diversity. Young professionals are missing. Education/ remind people to use the local convent services vs traveling. Use them or end up with empty store fronts.”

Housing

- “Staffing, housing, lack of transportation.”
- “Limited affordable housing”
- “Housing, local jobs, shopping (grocery and home goods)”
- “no place to live.”

Seasonality

- "The ebb and flow of seasonal visitation, unpredictable snow conditions."
- "Year round labor, customers"
- "Winters are hard for any business in this town we survive from tourists visiting make people here all year round"
- "To much shopping on Amazon or driving to Walmart. Hard to survive the winter. Less tourists"
- "The seasonal traffic of business. I think things might slow down too much in the winter for some businesses to survive."
- "Small population in the winter, high property taxes."
- "Small customer base, only "busy" season is summer"
- "Seasonality...there must be terrible fluctuations in income."
- "Seasonality issues. Unless we can get more people to visit year-round, we're not going to be able to sustain many more new businesses."
- "Not enough people"
- "not enough business during of peak season"
- "The current businesses struggle during our winters. It's tough to make a go of it in the winter."
- "Small town and seasonal business"
- "Lack of people here in winter"
- "it being more of a seasonal -tourism town"
- "That other than the busy summer months with the extra cabin people, their business may not thrive from October through May when Siren quiets down. Another roadblock could be its distance from any big town; at least an hour drive or more to bigger towns. Or maybe with Spooner and Hayward being more popular cabin destinations, that many people are just passing through."
- "Not enough tourist traffic in winter to sustain some businesses"
- "History of businesses starting and closing scares people off"
- "Highly seasonal area Availability of workforce"
- "Can't be supported when non-residents are gone!!! Take a look at what happened at Four Winns...A&W was begged to go in there!!!"

Workforce

- "The lack of people willing to work. Businesses having to close for want of help."
- "The community does not seem to have a forward vision & a qualified workforce. We need to look at other small communities that are thriving and then look at how we can expand growth in Siren. I believe we can build off of our strengths and grow!"
- "Small, undereducated labor pool; not enough people living in the area during the winter to keep retail businesses and restaurants afloat; limited discretionary income for too many residents"
- "Probably lack of employees."
- "Lack of workers Lack of local entrepreneurs"
- "Lack of qualified employees"
- "Lack of credible, skilled workers willing to work."
- "lack of available labor"
- "Lack of adequate employees."
- "Labor force availability."
- "Economic development support like financial incentives, trained labor force and reduction of drug problems."
- "Lack of educated labor pool. Difficult location for shipping logistics."
- "Up front costs , lack of local quality employees and every day consumers."
- "Availability of workers."
- "Hard to find good workers. Need to pay more and offer benefits to compete with welfare programs. Make it better to work, than to stay home and collect assistance."

Livability

- "The cost of starting a new business."
- "the ability to make a living"
- "Low population, low incomes"
- "Low income of winter residents"
- "Lack of income residents poverty"
- "lack of good paying jobs"
- "The size of population around the area along with the amount of money that is around."
- "Population growth has been stagnant/slightly declining."
- "A town "identity" that attracts people to visit and live here. Where is the library, art center, bookstore, food coop? In other towns."
- "Economy , poor county to run business year round. Average income of those living here."
- "high land costs. everyone wants to be between the stop lights and the park. frontage roads north of village limits are a joke. Either have them the whole way or not at all and maybe take care of them. Huge washouts/holes."
- "For one, they can't charge an arm and a leg - like Peggy's did. The biggest road block is that people with money choose to take their business to larger towns."

Local Government

- "Town government is and always has been the roadblock."
- "To many rules in permits."
- "Local governments - too many/too few, outdated legal requirements, lack of cooperation with other entities/towns, etc."
- "Leadership that is resistant to change."
- "Does the city/county government encourage new businesses?"

Current Business Landscape

- "We have such a odd variety that it is hard to pick a business to add to our town that will have an easy time succeeding. For example, the 3 gas stations we have. Holiday thrives, fourwinds gas station is good because it isn't right in town, but where the marathon is now, the gas stations always have a hard time thriving."
- "Visibility, access. Main street usually gets driven by while people are headed somewhere else. Strip malls along the highway get minimal stops."
- "Siren is a small area - with a high poverty rate. Obstacles would be attracting enough business with reasonable / affordable pricing for local residents. The Country Store is lovely - but mostly utilized by tourists- not locals. Prices are high and merchandise is more related to gifts and trinkets. Siren needs a "variety" type of store (clothing, shoes, home necessities etc) that is geared toward Local residents not tourists. Yourchucks is a good example but the staff are extremely unfriendly and merchandise is outdated - need something similar that is geared toward younger families and carries more updated merchandise like clothing, shoes and houseware."
- "there are no customers here - people do a lot of online shopping because costs are too high at local venues"
- "The struggle to get people to stop and make Siren a destination and not just a drive through to there destination. To make enough income to make a business a success is very hard! The need to make Hwy 35 going through siren attractive enough for people to want to stop!"
- "The look of the town is "old" it should be clean, upscale."
- "Tend to think it is just a pass through area to the northeastern part of Wis."
- "People stay in hotels in Siren, but go north for outdoor motorized recreation. Businesses open where the tourists are."
- "online shopping, one-stop shopping in larger towns "
- "Not much there now."

- "Not directly accessed, have to turn off 35/70. Looking down mainstreet from 35/70, appearance not attractive to draw people in"
- "I imagine that some businesses don't believe they will have the traffic flow needed to succeed. It's difficult to entice folks to locate on Main Street when half the storefronts are empty. Encourage outlying businesses to relocate to Main Street with some financial or tax incentive? People need to eat so securing a wonderful eatery that sources and showcases local food products would be amazing. People drive 30-60 miles for such dining options!"

Other

- "Not having the gandy open to atv utv"
- "Need to do more to draw people to Siren from surrounding areas ie...events, gatherings unique business storefronts."
- "Many family owned businesses, when seniors retire, no one to take over a d businesses close. Great deal of property is Native American and not available,,missing construction workers, handymen, retail services , one stop shopping places."
- "Internet"
- "Financing is needed for new. Trades to do projects. Many local businesses of trades are poor at customer service. They ignore your phone calls, never show up and many tick you off. If you can find someone to do electrical, heating/cooling, home repairs, and plumbing, don't let them leave because they may not come back."
- "Capital"
- "Advertising - promotion Qualified applicants"
- "1. Money 2. Not enough traffic is a big concern 3. Big companies don't want to franchise out their business because they don't trust the people here to run it. 4. Way to many drugs in area for people to want to be in this area"
- "~Availability of fast, reliability internet and other digital.electronic connectivity so tech-related workers who currently work in urban areas would want to move here and telecommute or run their businesses from home. ~Affordable housing ~New car sales and service ~Public servants to are averse to progress and manageable change, growth. and want to keep the area "as it is.""
- "Small Town mentality, not wanting to change what is the status quo"
- "Stubbornness and reluctance to change from the locals"
- "Drug problem, gambling problems, people not kind to outsiders, taxes"

Are there any issues or opportunities going on in Siren that you are passionate about?

No

- "No"
- "No"
- "No"
- "None that I know of."
- "n/a"

Festivals

- "Silent sports on the Gandy Love the planed festivals-July 4, summer fest, fall fest, races."
- "Love the 4th of July parade..although some new events may be nice Love the St. Patricks Day...again..some new events to gather more people"
- "Maintaining the festivals, encouraging volunteers"

Maintenance of Gandy Dancer

- “Long term growth and strong community: I understood that the Gandy was going to be considered to be open to ATV’s in the summer. I believe that is short sighted. That may bring in some additional summer traffic but not long term growth. I believe we need to attract young families and young professionals. Making that a family friendly environment I believe will do that. The younger generation is more “eco” friendly so I don’t believe ATV’s will see the long term growth Siren needs or wants. We need people who are going to live here and be strong community members that support our businesses year round not just on weekends. I know this can be tough because it forsaking a short term gain. I believe looking at the long term would provide growth that is sustainable and supports the entire community.”
- “The Gandy Dancer trail is incredible. Don’t wreck it!!”
- “Keep ATVs/UTVs off of the Gandy. Build a pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (even if just designating bike/pedestrian areas with paint on the roads) to keep us safe and active no matter our age.”
- “Keeping atvs off the handy dancer trail. Home town pride. Good schools”
- “Less atv trails and more physically active recreation”
- “Keep the Gandy Dancer trail non-motorized. Work toward a consistent look for the community, businesses, signage. Try to minimize urban sprawl. Continue beautification efforts; it makes a difference!”
- “I am passionate about protecting the Gandy Dancer State Trail and being involved in promoting health and wellness in our communities. We have too many obese people and unhealthy habits in our midst that are putting pressure on our health care systems, etc. Keeping the trail non-motorized in the summer is also the environmentally friendly thing to do. Preserving what few quiet spaces we have is critical.”
- “Please do not open the Gandy dancer trail to ATV’s. It would interfere with the peace and solitude we seek and why we are here. It has ruined the badlands area and the Namakogan River area in Burnett county for those of us who previously enjoyed it.”
- “Promoting people powered activities on the Gandy Dancer. Stopping Factory Farms from moving to our area (CAFO’s)”
- “Limit the noise and dust from atv’s. The expand fitness silent sports activities.”
- “meeting the needs of both quiet sport and motor sport enthusiasts - both are important and shared use of the Gandy would drive the quiet users away -”
- “Like many people, keeping the gandy non motorized. No big corporate CAFO’s- local family owned CAFO’s are a different story. We need to actively protect our natural resources and this beautiful area. Once polluted, it takes a long time to restore, if possible. Keep our water clean. Water is life, our life.”
- “Don’t motorize the Gandy. Also, prevent lakes from having contamination and milfoil. There really needs to be beautiful trees planted along Highway 35 in Siren. The town looks so stark. We love the northwoods look too, but there needs to be more trees.”

Education

- “Our school and their programs.”
- “Love the strong education young people receive at Siren and the modern feel of the town is certainly something to build on.”
- “The school and the Gandy Dancer group,”
- “growing Ag. Tourism ,Farmers markets, taking advantage of consumer change in eating habits and wants. Can allow for working poor to at least supplement income in the short term small business in the future .”
- “I wish we had more opportunity’s we need people who could offer trainings for jobs (cpr,first responder)”

Prevention of Illegal Activity

- "Issue: DRUGS...the police are doing a GREAT job trying to clean-up Burnett County...ONLY to have a JUDGE that WON'T through the book at the CRIMINALS!!!"
- "Extreme drug use"
- "Crime"
- "The issue of drugs and the lack of work ethic. People need to show up for work. That needs to be taught at home and in the schools. (since the children are un-likey to get it at home)"
- "The fact that there are drugs of all sorts running rampant throughout this beautiful town and the fact that we know where most of it is coming from and we do not do anything to stop it."
- "We need more police officers"

Growth of Business

- "we are involved in bringing more activity to the Burnett County airport."
- "Try to encourage supporting the local business we have now."
- "The quality of life in Siren and the tourism that is vital to our survival will be grossly negatively affected if surrounding agricultural zoned areas do not revise livestock citing ordinance that will not allow 1000+ size CAFOs invade our area. To ruin the air, water, and property values, not to mention the additional traffic & wear & tear on roads and also the noise will ruin our life here as we know it. THIS is our first priority and if not addressed, nothing else matters."
- "Siren is an example of Americana...put more budget into a marketing campaign...develop new property codes to encourage housing for tiny houses, vrbo and airbnb for year round tourism."
- "Siren is a safe and beautiful community. Unfortunately it does not offer many opportunities for young people to live and work. It can feel very isolating for young adults and families. Need to develop networking and opportunities to bring young adults and families together to develop networking. Schools can be very beneficial in this area."
- "Keep Tasora running. Need a fine restaurant. Also need a Walmart type mega store for price competition"
- "I have always believed in entrepreneurial spirit and approach. We need housing and developments that have High end, medium and duplexes to rent. Mix in some lower cost single family homes as well. Students and young people need to see careers in area that they are passionate about vet science, agriculture, high tech, manufacturing and more."
- "I feel that over the years most bar and restaurants have as gone down hill. These places clearly show that the owners have no pride of ownership. The food and service are sub pare and the buildings are not maintained!"
- "Growth"
- "Becoming a ghost town with businesses closing(meat market, clothing and gift store, furniture store). Stagnant restaurants with no change in menus,. Current places are not kept up so are shabby and falling apart."
- "Tourism. I think it's low-hanging fruit - and I can't tell you how many people I've spoken to who have purchased a second home here after years of camping or visiting. It's great for our tax base."
- "It is very important to keep all the real estate in and around the Siren area in a taxable base."

Opening Gandy to Year-Round Use

- "opening the gandy to atv utv"
- "Opening the Gandy Dancer trail to ATV/UTV usage"
- "opening Gandy Dancer to year-round motorized traffic"

Other

- "Winter activities"
- "We need a sidewalk between town and the Clear Lake park"
- "These issues are issues that apply to all the communities in Burnett County. I would wish to see all the work Siren is doing shared with the entire county."
- "The traffic is so heavy going through town on 35. I don't even want to stop and shop because of traffic trying to get bake out on 35. A possible light?"
- "Its small but nice. Not much to do if you don't like motorsports."
- "I love the fact that we live in a small town where our neighbors care about each other and help each other. we have a police force that is always helping out no matter who we are or what we need. Everyone has time to stop and say hello if they know you or not."
- "I am very disappointed that our wonderful Siren farmers market is located in such a poor location. The farmers market has the potential to get people to stop and visit Siren rather than drive through. Relocate the farmers market to promote Siren and our local entrepreneurs."
- "Great leadership, partnerships, village board, chamber, businesses, economic development committee. Continue to foster these relationships. This ED plan is a great first step. Thank you."
- "Development of affordable housing and encouraging people to shop locally."
- "Developing opportunities for bicycling community"
- "Community choir at Christmas."
- "Community center and pool"
- "Arts, education, and getting young people to want to put roots down here."

What is the number one thing you think the Siren area should prioritize in the future?

Housing

- "Housing"
- "Housing for young families."
- "Housing and community development"
- "Good quality affordable housing...the entire country is struggling with this right now, we could be a leader...maybe utilize some existing empty spaces."
- "good housing for all Young people move out. Seniors move in then move out. There is more outgoing than incoming."
- "Senior village housing: single story cottages designed for seniors (wide doors, no stairs, etc) built around a commons and multi-use central building, with connecting walking paths and transportation to local stores and services. Such a village concept could also be used to build compact single family homes that are progressive in using energy-saving and environmentally compatible building materials and designs. I.e. solar panels, geothermal heating, etc."
- "affordable senior housing"
- "Affordable housing & larger retail store."

Tourism

- "Tourism"
- "Upgrade the town to make it more appealing and promote Siren more for visitors"
- "support and promote tourism. That is what has made our community a successful area in the past and we need to keep that going and promote the next generations interest into our community to growth with the times"
- "Recreation and tourism"
- "Make Siren a destination. You have a very good start but Siren needs to be a hub where people want to go during the day or for the weekend."

- "Come up with clever ways to get the many people who drive thru Siren to stop...at least once each season!"
- "A focus group that examines how to continue to grow Siren as a destination rather than a drive through town."
- "Year round activities, Siren is so full in the summer with tourist we need to focus on keeping that going year round."

Next Generation

- "Youngest generation of residents, provide jobs, educational training, and affordable housing so they want to stay in the area"
- "Young people are the future and are creative with creating ecommerce and web based businesses."
- "This is really hard - but overall I think our biggest issue is that we're a retirement community. It's good for the short term (above answer), but bad for the long term. If Siren were a more appealing place to live/work for young professionals, I think that's part of a long-term population shift. With broadband internet availability, many of the types of positions once available only in metro areas are now made possible from anywhere."
- "The growth of the community don't forget the childless family's it's hard for childless family's if no tax breaks given to them also. Childless family's are as important to a community too"
- "Children"
- "Bringing professional people in to the community who are going to stay."
- "Attracting young families to the area, we don't need more low income housing. We need to attract working families and professionals"
- "Attracting new jobs and businesses and opportunities for young folks to stay in the area and raise their families."
- "As noted above, I believe we should prioritize the attracting of young families and professionals. They will be the backbone of any long terms growth this area sees."
- "The future of the small town! Keeping it alive for the next generations."
- "Quit living in the past"
- "Bring in some trade education, short term and inexpensive to help the local economy."

New Business

- "NEW BUSINESS"
- "Economic growth"
- "Economic growth"
- "Welcoming new business."
- "Walmart type store"
- "variety of businesses"
- "Support current businesses by buying locally, attract forward thinking people to get involved in economic development and local politics....Attract and maintain new businesses"
- "Revitalize the original downtown area. Make it a destination within a destination."
- "Retail growth"
- "Recruitment of business and industry."
- "Personally I would like to see more business growth, entrepreneurs, shopping , restaurants, community activities. But I think the area needs to increase its tax base to increase revenue for New small businesses"
- "New manufacturing. This brings in people and then you will see growth. The community can show the businesses that people can work and live in a rural area with land. Build a home and have that big garage. They will want good food, schools, doctors and a community atmosphere. Like you were asking about at the beginning of the survey"
- "New businesses that will provide job opportunities."
- "More retail...brings jobs and shopping traffic to our area..not being the poorest county in WI would be nice"
- "Make up its mind - are we going to have businesses that only cater to tourists or are they going to start caring about the locals too."
- "Jobs.... Industrial development. Young people need jobs"

- "industry"
- "Getting more retail businesses"
- "Get new businesses to come to our community. Push for a Kwik Trip. Affordable grocery store - that is in town!"
- "Get businesses here"
- "get and retain business"
- "Fill the empty retail spaces ASAP"
- "Encourage people to attend a church."
- "Growth and promoting our community."
- "Businesses need to do better at marketing"
- "Bringing in more retail."
- "Bringing in more businesses that are successful to grow the community."
- "Small retail specialty shops are paramount to our community."
- "A decent downtown"
- "Create opportunities for businesses that offer solid middle-class wages and have growth potential to locate or relocate in Siren"
- "Grocery store"
- "Quality Jobs Jobs Jobs . (Small Business) The rest will come."

Community Centered Growth

- "County growth and programs."
- "More things to do, and bigger activities like a fair or something."
- "Make it a great place for people to live and work in, the businesses will follow."
- "Maintain the safe, quite small town environment currently enjoyed. The people moving here from the TwinCities area always comment on the peacefulness of the town."
- "Having an open mind and hearing all it's residence's choices/voices/opinions even if it goes against our elected officials personal preferences."
- "Adding arts component to activities. Making the town look like you need to park the car and walk to see all there is to see and do."
- "community center, recreational trails open to more"
- "We need a way to socialize evenings/weekends without having to go to a tavern."
- "People come here because they want to escape the bustle and hassle of the city. Please preserve our natural woodland and lakes environment and small town community atmosphere."
- "As a community. we need to do a better job of keeping our youth involved with helping our elders and disabled. Community service instead of just sports"

Other

- "The economic status - help the poor."
- "spend money wisely. This economic development initiative is a waste of money to develop a plan that will do nothing but sit on a desk. Fix the streets, keep the parks updated, stop the police officers from pulling over everybody that stops at a bar/restaurant and you might get somewhere in this town. There's potential but the police keep everyone out and the boards waste money on stupid things like this as opposed to doing something about the lake levels."
- "Reign in the police department- they act like overlords who drive away people from town"
- "Protecting residents from invasive CAFO Corporations which are NOT family farms and anything that would remove our quality of life, air, water, and make our properties impossible to sell."
- "keep our town clean of trash.If our streets and yards are clean I think the people will be happy to live here."
- "Identify bicycle and pedestrian trail/route connections now and secure them for the public and for our future."
- "Getting people off of assistance and into full time jobs"

- "Update electrical aspects."
- "Be respectful and sensitive to people's needs which means managing hot button topics with integrity. I have not been impressed with the Siren Village Board of Supervisors."
- "1. Gandy Dancer trail is underutilized and needs to be promoted. Pick one: silent sports or ATV and make it BIG. 2. Schools need to consolidate. Hate to lose the DRAGONS, but it's not efficient or good for kids or community to have a school with just 25 kids/class. Not sustainable. 3. Make lilacs the signature of Siren. Go bold. Make them everywhere. Not just live plants, but statues, like the big walleye in Hayward and Paul Bunyan. Have a signature symbol that people come here to see. Lilacs everywhere. 4. Annex Hwy 35/70 north of town into the village and make that Siren's new Main Street commercial corridor. Make it beautiful and functional, with greenspace, paths and access roads. Like an urban village. (Not a cluster mess like hill in SCF).
- Link to state trails to share in ATV tourism"
- "ATV's on the Gandy"
- "Opening the Gandy Dancer trail to summer atv/utv."
- "Keep the gandy nonmotorized"
- "Keep the Gandy non motorized"
- "Silent sports"

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shaping our future