

JOSEPH

MAIN STREET

STRATEGIC

PLAN

2024-2027



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- Goals
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The Joseph Main Street Committee wishes to acknowledge and thank community members, City of Joseph representatives, and the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District who participated in meetings and surveys related to this plan. This project was partially funded by Business Oregon Rural Opportunity Initiative Program.

Committee Members

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Wallowa County Museum (Jude Graham)	The Josephy Center (Dera Stewart/Cheryl Coughlin)
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INTRODUCTION

Strategic Planning Process

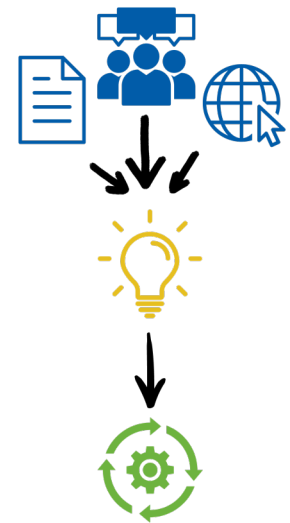
This strategic plan will guide the committee's work from 2024 to 2027. It is designed to be a dynamic document with priorities that could change annually. It includes the committee's mission, the vision for Joseph's downtown area, goals for downtown, and strategies and objectives to achieve those goals.

Our strategic planning process has three primary phases:

Phase 1— requires **input** from existing data (such as previous plans or demographic information) and the community (community assessments, survey responses). This information allows us to identify our downtown's assets, challenges and opportunities.

Phase 2— involves using the information collected from the previous phase to **develop** mission and vision statements, goals, strategies, and objectives. This phase also includes drafting the plan and obtaining community feedback.

Phase 3— involves adopting the plan by the committee or city and creating an annual work plan to **implement** strategies.



Main Street Model

Our planning process and committee structure is based on the Main Street approach. Main Street America™ developed the Main Street Four-Point Approach® to help communities improve their downtown area. There are four essential parts:

- **Economic Vitality:** enhance economic opportunities
- **Design:** quality design and attractive neighborhoods
- **Promotion:** effectively promote businesses and events
- **Organization:** develop a sustainable organization

This approach involves developing strategies to revitalize downtowns in each of the mentioned areas. Communities are encouraged to use existing resources or assets to identify and implement solutions to a downtown's challenges.



CURRENT CONDITION

Context

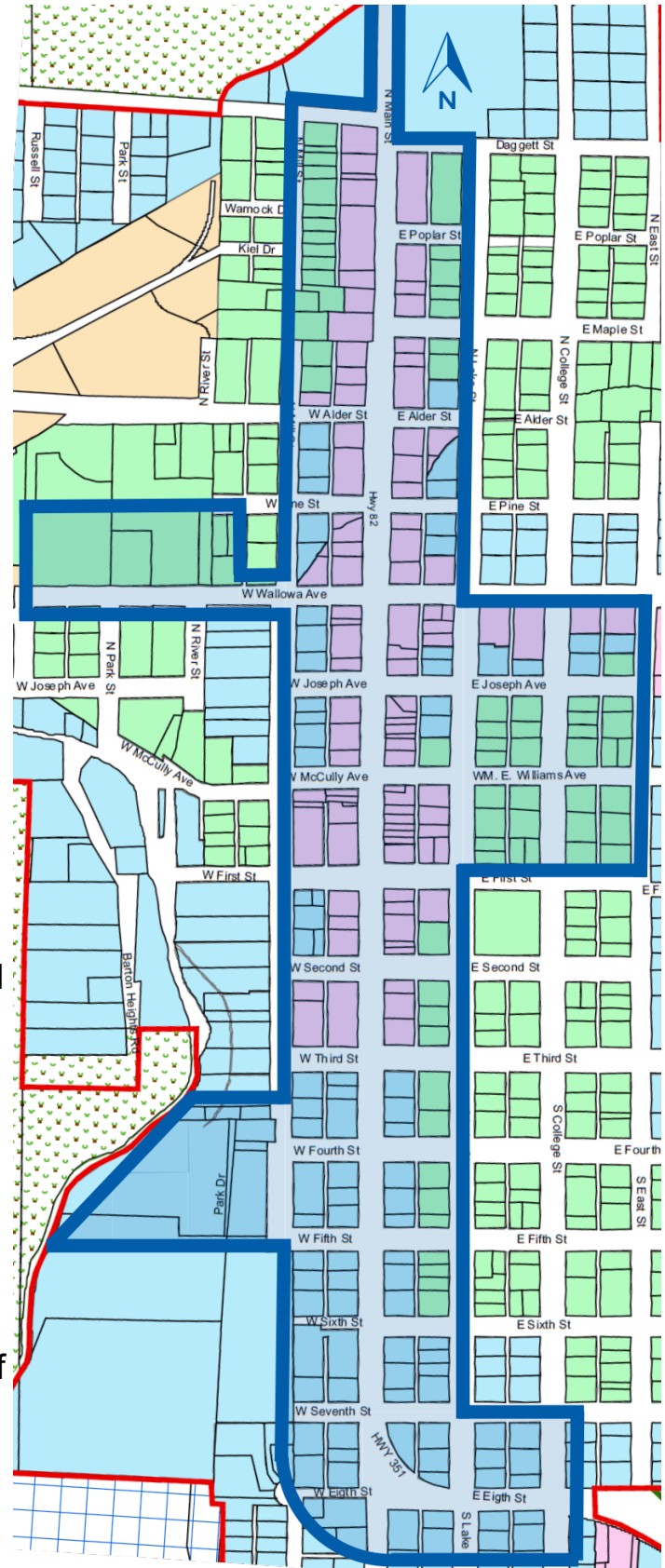
The mountain town of Joseph, OR is home to about 1,194 residents (US Census 2022). The city is close to Wallowa Lake State Park, Eagle Cap Wilderness, Hells Canyon National Recreation Area giving access to outdoor recreation. Joseph's economy rely on the increase visitor traffic seen between Memorial Day to Labor Day, helping business owners get through the slower winter months.

Joseph's beautification efforts in the late 1990s was a response to the declining timber industry. Since then, the city received state and national recognition from Travel Oregon, the New York Times and the Travel+Leisure Magazine. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Wallowa County was mostly open to the public, attracting more visitors. Joseph has become more widely known not just across Oregon but the U.S and beyond.

In 2023, the Joseph Main Street Committee was formed under the Wallowa County Rural Regional Main Street program to improve the downtown.

The committee sent out a survey to residents to gather input for this strategic plan. After reviewing the results, two more surveys were sent out to gain further feedback from teens and seniors. When comparing the 3 surveys, there is a noticeable overlap pertaining to the lack of awareness of community events and the desire of residents wanting to be involved. Residents also worry about the safety and accessibility of streets and shops in the community due to the influx of visitors the city attracts, leading to congestion, blind spots, and pricing of local goods.

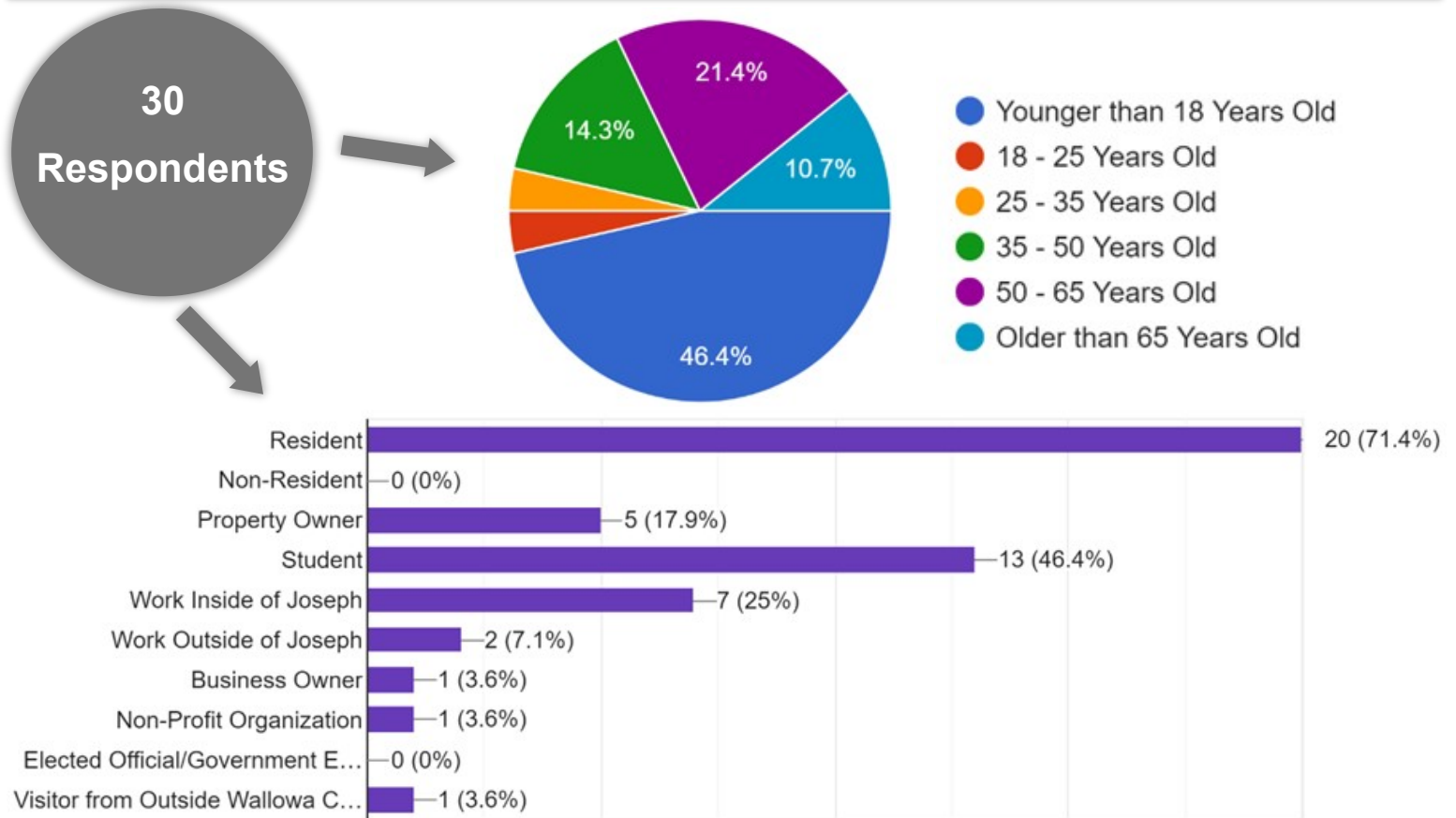
Joseph, OR Main Street Area



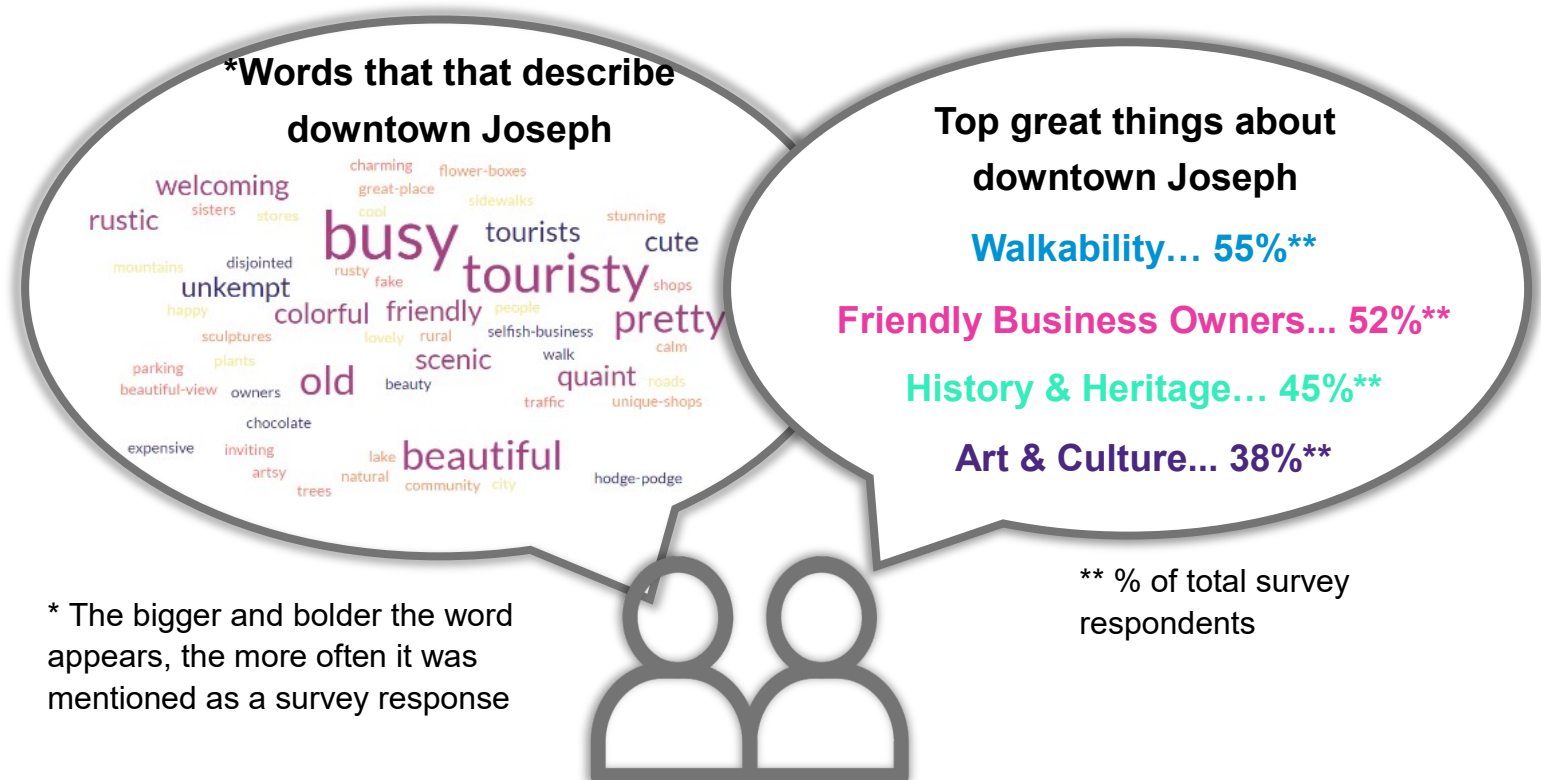
Base Map Credit: Wallowa County GIS Department

2023 Community Assessment

Main Street Survey Statistics for all Residents

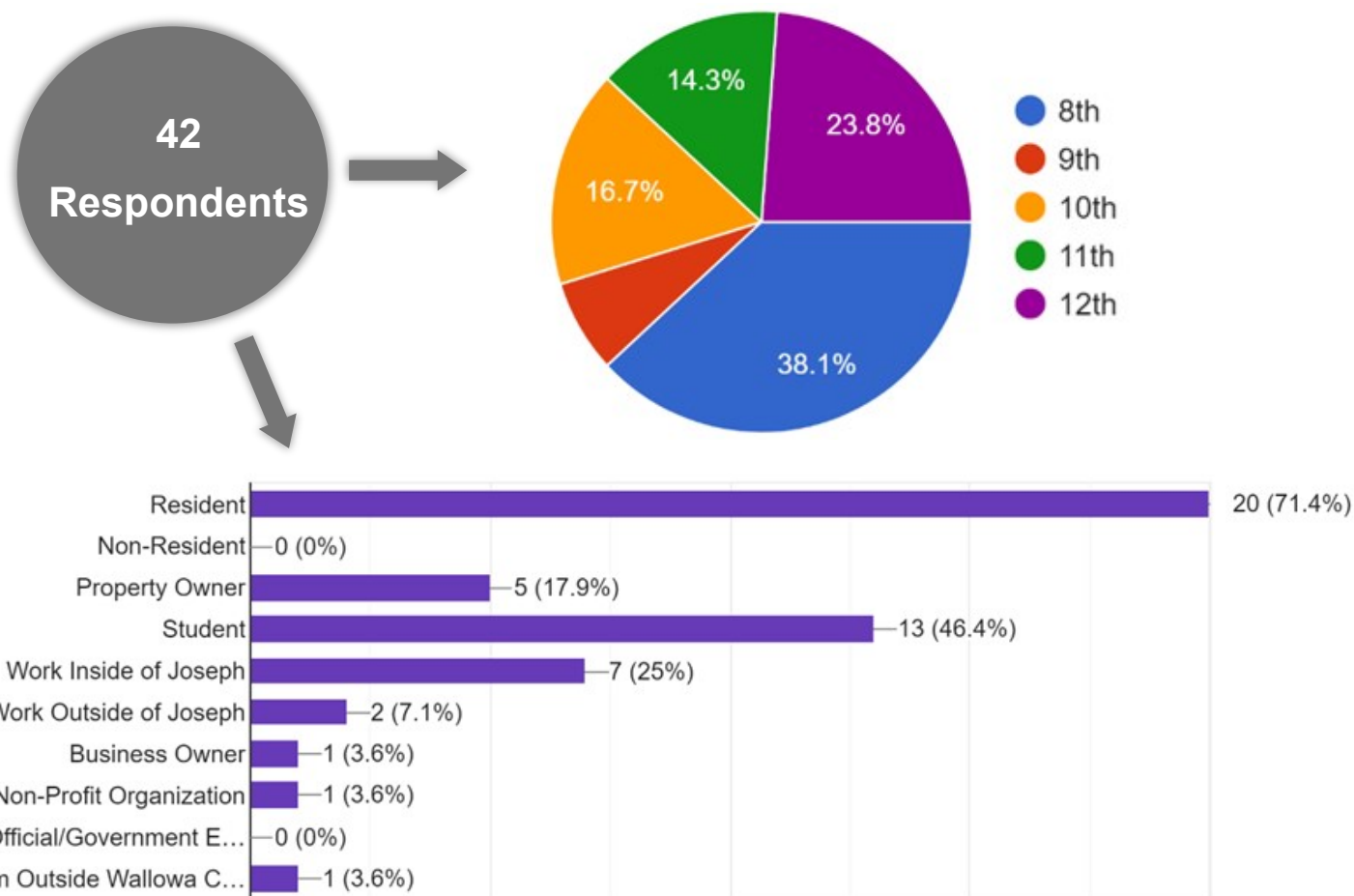


Community's General Attitude towards Downtown Joseph



2023 Community Assessment

Main Street Survey Statistics for Teens: Grades 8th-12th

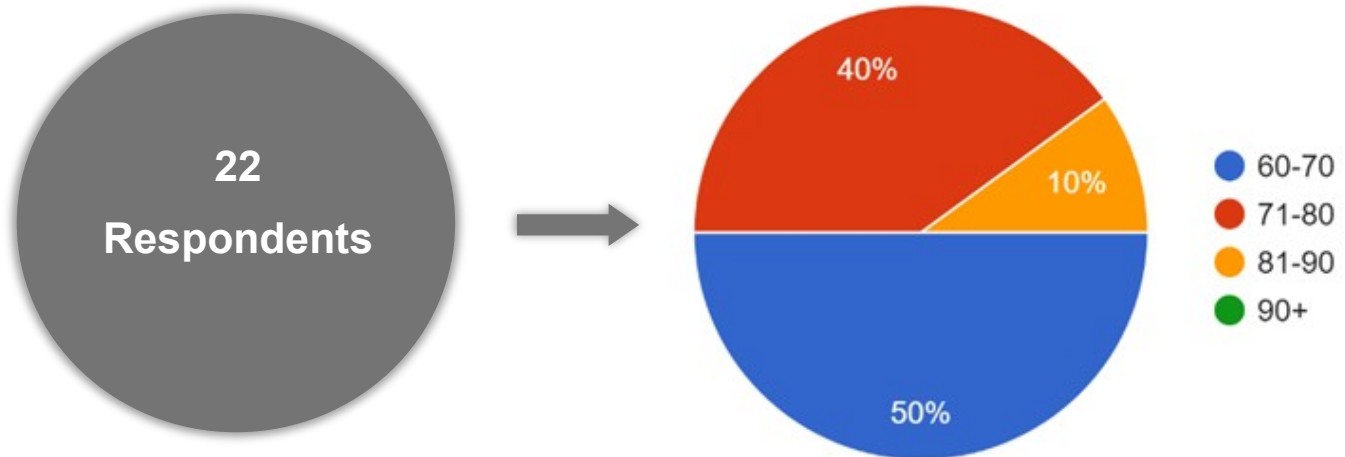


Key Takeaways

- 43% of teens said that having someone to attend an event with and knowing who else is attending the event affects their decision to attend the event.
- 76% of teens said that school announcements are the best ways to communicate upcoming activities to them.
- During the school year, 62% of teens are most likely to attend an activity during afternoons on the weekends.
- 50% of teens said they would be interested in attending a workshop based around self-improvement

2023 Community Assessment

Main Street Survey Statistics for Seniors: Ages 60+



Key Takeaways

- 68% of seniors get their information from either word of mouth or The Chieftain.
- Many seniors expressed a difficulty in getting information and would appreciate if someone told them directly about opportunities and events.
- 59% of seniors would like more live music and are interested in being involved in additional clubs.
- Many seniors discussed needing transportation to events or earlier events so they aren't driving in the dark.
- 45% of seniors requested additional benches on Joseph main street.

Identified Assets

Art and Culture

Joseph's rich history, tied to the Nez Perce Tribe, has a heavy influence on local artists. Many are inspired by the area's history and landscape, and this can be seen in many of the galleries who showcase local art and in the bronze statues adorning the streets. Community gathering activities throughout the year include live music and art classes at various establishments.

Variety of Retail Amenities

Joseph's main street has several boutique shops offering specialty products, where local skills and innovation shine through. Joseph is equipped with medical clinics, dining choices, and a public shuttle system, enhancing the town's convenience to amenities. The Joseph Chamber of Commerce provides additional marketing support and opportunities for local business, attractions and events.

Welcoming and Friendly Environment

The vibrant ambiance of a small town contributes to a welcoming atmosphere that embraces both locals and tourists in Joseph. Engaging with friendly shop owners eager to share their narratives fosters a sense of belonging and community.



It's nice that [Joseph] is geared towards pedestrians and that now there is a nice sidewalk (thanks to ODOT!) from my neighborhood to Main Street so that it is safe and PLEASANT to walk to downtown. Also, LOVE the sidewalk dining options!

~ Survey Respondent

Proximity to Outdoor Recreation

Joseph's proximity to Wallowa Lake, the Eagle Cap Wilderness and other natural wonders draws outdoor enthusiast from all over. Visitors have easy access to hiking, camping, fishing, and boating, providing endless opportunities for exploration and adventure. This proximity also enhances the town's appeal, giving people a small mountain town experience.

Clean and Aesthetically Pleasing

In 2001, Joseph spearheaded a \$3.5 million project aimed at enhancing the downtown. This involved installing new lighting, renovating sidewalks, installing rustic benches, establishing public parking lots and restrooms, and featuring numerous bronze statues crafted by local foundries along the streets.



Photo Credit: Wallowa County Chieftain

I love seeing the beautiful bronzes every time I walk down the street. And the flowers!

~ Senior Survey Respondent

Identified Challenges

Public and Traffic Safety

Vehicles speeding through town, congestion, the misuse of side streets as thoroughfares, and parking issues all raise public and traffic safety concerns. Main street's predominantly angled parking arrangement, contributes to blind spots for vehicles maneuvering in and out of parking spaces and potentially endangering pedestrians who may not be seen while trying to cross streets.

It would be nice to see more public parking off the main street. I love the public parking behind Joseph market but it is rarely used. I try not to park on the main street because it is hard to see when backing up off the main street when you are leaving and I hate all the cars in the way during parades and events down the main drag.

~Survey Respondent

Well-Advertised Activities and Events for all Ages

There are only a handful of effective communication channels for promoting events and activities, resulting in restricted attendance numbers. Also, the range of events tailored to diverse interests and age groups is narrow, leading to many residents expressing feeling excluded from the town's activities.

Affordable Shopping Options for Basic Goods

Given its focus on tourism, Joseph has primarily boutique shops offering high-end, quality merchandise. However, this makes it challenging for residents to find essential items such as everyday clothes and undergarments, household and school supplies, and toiletries. Essential items that are available often come at marked-up prices.

Maintenance and Upkeep

The presence of litter in Joseph, coupled with the maintenance of flower boxes and other public spaces, detracts from the town's aesthetic appeal. Confusion regarding the responsibility for the upkeep of the flower boxes adds to the challenge, underscoring the importance of town cleanup efforts as a top priority for residents.

Perception of Tourism

Some of the negative perception of tourism has been attributed to infrastructure not keeping up with the increase in visitors. Issues from the influx of people have led to congestion in stores and on roads, long wait times at local restaurants, limited parking throughout the area and other inconveniences that effect everyday life.

The planter boxes in town have gotten over grown and unhealthy, we need to have upkeep on them. Tourists are speeding through our towns and climbing on the statues, this needs to stop before someone gets hurt. There are also no affordable places we can get essential things like school supplies, clothes, and other essential items at an affordable and reasonable price.

~Survey Respondent

Identified Opportunities

Increase Community Activities and Dedicate a Gathering Place

Identify and secure a dedicated space to serve as a central community center to help increase variation of community events and bring residents together.

Improved Traffic Control and More Accessible Parking

Work with city and state agencies to work on traffic control measures and discuss the options for either restructuring parking or adding additional parking lots. Increase awareness of the existing parking lot off Wallowa Highway.

Increase Access to Basic Affordable Goods Locally

Encourage diversification of products to include essential items among local businesses. Utilize vacant storefronts to attract new businesses, addressing existing gaps in the market.

Develop Informational Channels

Solicit community feedback to determine the most effective methods for distributing information about events and resources to residents.

Street Beautification

Hold an annual flower box or town cleanup day. Continue to maintain the aesthetic and promote sustainable tourism.



Photo Credit: Joseph Chamber of Commerce

I see a successful downtown Joseph as having natural beauty, artistic values, public gatherings, bigger community involvement, and culturally significant art

~Survey Respondent

I would love to help clean up around town, Help take care of younger kids if needed after school, planting, helping elderly, and etc.

~ Teen Survey Respondent

Please have more events that are free to enjoy and involve the community.

~ Senior Survey Respondent

The maintenance is being mildly fixed by the sidewalk project, but downtown is still slightly messy and needs a better upkeep system. We don't have a lot of signage pointing out items/ places of cultural importance/interest.

We have a lot of tourism in Joseph, and although it provides income it makes the town less enjoyable for locals.

~Survey Respondent

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission

Joseph Main Street Committee's mission is to foster a lively, family-friendly downtown where art, retail, and culture converge to enrich the lives of residents and visitors. We aim to cultivate a vibrant community that reflects its unique spirit and diversity.

Vision

Joseph Main Street is a vibrant cultural hub, blending art, retail and amenities. Our downtown has a dynamic and inclusive feel that attracts and serves both locals and visitors alike.

Values

Community Engagement

We are committed to uniting the diverse demographics of our community through events while valuing community feedback and suggestions in every decision we make.

Cultural Enrichment

We are committed to showcasing our rich history and the artistic culture of Joseph.

Safety and Well-being

We are committed to cultivating a community based around safety and a healthy lifestyle for residents and visitors.

Aesthetics and Cleanliness

We take pride in the look and atmosphere of Joseph through maintaining the beauty of not only the landscape but the look of our streets and storefronts.

Welcoming and Inviting Atmosphere

Through our efforts we will ensure both residents and visitors feel included, appreciated, and supported.



Photo Credit: Chief Joseph Days Rodeo

GOALS & STRATEGIES

As mentioned in the Introduction, our goals and strategies have a foundation in the Main Street Approach. Our annual workplan is informed by our objectives.



Goals

1. Increase access to underserved needs within the community.
2. Enhance both residents and visitor experiences on Joseph Main Street.
3. Encourage and strengthen community engagement and volunteerism.

Strategy #1

Implement traffic control measures

DESIGN

Objectives

- Collaborate with the City of Joseph and local authorities to address traffic and parking concerns by December 2025.
- Collaborate with other communities in Wallowa County to research options for public transportation, ride-hailing, and taxi services by March 2025.

Strategy #2

ECONOMIC
VITALITY

PROMOTION

Attract and retain businesses that fulfill essential needs

Objectives

- Research ways to work with businesses to diversity their product offerings by December 2025.
- Support 2-3 initiatives that will encourage residents to buy local goods and services.
- Utilize empty store buildings to attract new shop owners who will carry goods not found elsewhere in Joseph by June 2026.

Strategy #3

DESIGN

PROMOTION

ECONOMIC
VITALITY

Implement events and activities that all age groups will enjoy

Objectives

- Host or support at least 1 event a year that focuses on residents less than 18 years old.
- Host or support at least 1 event a year that focuses on the older residents of the community.
- Host or support at least 1 multigenerational event a year.
- Arrange transportation options for events and activities.

Strategy #4

ORGANIZATION

DESIGN

PROMOTION

ECONOMIC
VITALITY

Support sustainable tourism

Objectives

- Encourage responsible tourism behavior, such as respecting local customs and traditions, minimizing waste, and supporting locally owned businesses.
- Find ways to mitigate overcrowding in businesses, traffic congestion and parking so residents will have less stressors during the busy season.

Strategy #5

ORGANIZATION

PROMOTION

Continue to encourage volunteerism and community participation

Objectives

- Maintain 100% participation rate where all volunteer positions are filled for each event and activity.
- Promote events and opportunities through county-wide bi-monthly WCRRMS newsletters, NEOEDD newsletters and other media outlets.