



SEELEY LAKE Community Meeting

OCTOBER 22, 2024

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Welcome and Introductions.

SEELEY LAKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL



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Set the Stage. Why are we here?

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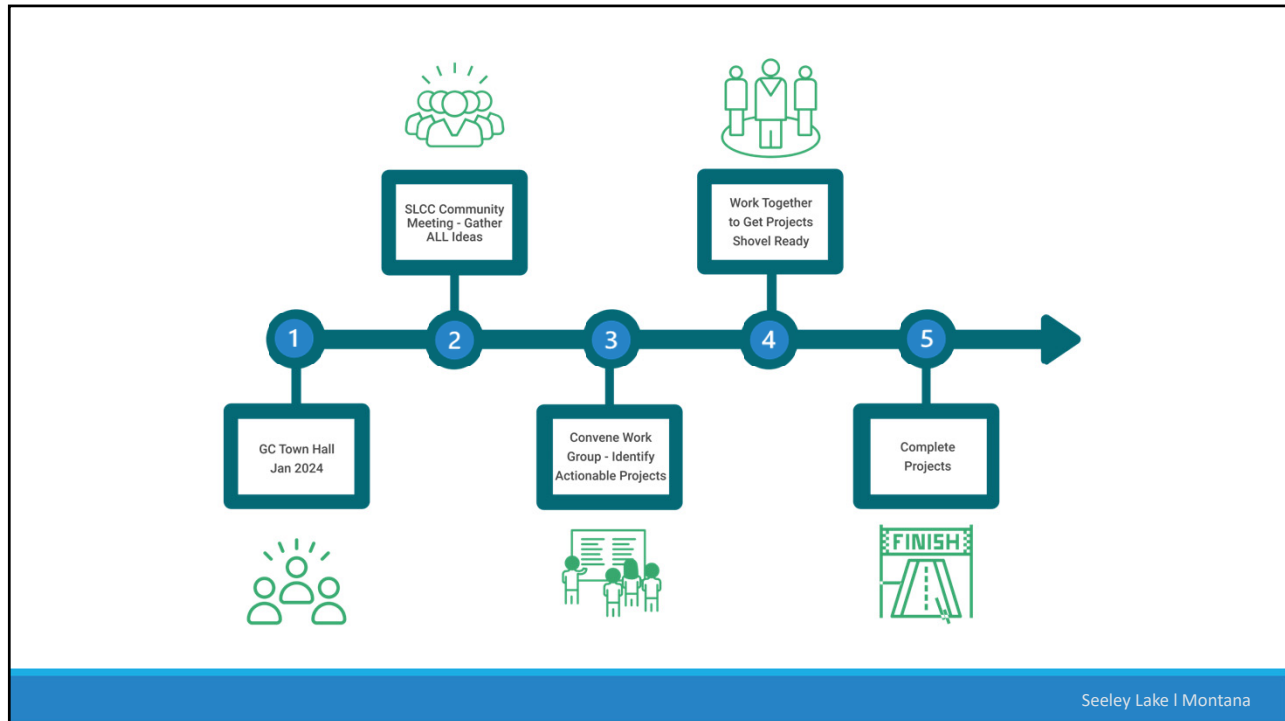
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Project Timeline.

WESTERN MONTANA'S GLACIER COUNTRY

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Survey Purpose and Results.

WESTERN MONTANA'S GLACIER COUNTRY

Complete Survey Results Available in Print on Tables

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Survey Overview

Four Questions: A total of **148 responses** (paper and digital)

Purpose: To **capture diverse perspectives** from residents, business owners, seasonal homeowners, and visitors about the **strengths** and **challenges** facing Seeley Lake.

Context: Seeley Lake is deeply connected to its natural surroundings and traditions of hard work and independence. However, it faces modern challenges like workforce shortages, rising costs, housing pressures, and balancing tourism with growth.

Goals:

- **Understand** the community's priorities and concerns.
- Identify **opportunities** for preserving small-town values while adapting to economic and social changes.
- Encourage **collaboration** to **create** sustainable solutions for long-term prosperity.

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Question #1

What strengthens your pride in Seeley Lake?

- Please share what you love most about Seeley Lake. This could include its natural beauty, sense of community, local traditions, or anything else that makes you proud to call Seeley Lake home.

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Q1 - What Makes Seeley Lake Special

Top Themes

- Natural Beauty
- Sense of Community
- Recreational Opportunities
- Small-Town Atmosphere
- Preservation of Public Lands and Natural Resources

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Q1 - What Makes Seeley Lake Special

NATURAL BEAUTY

Key Points:

1. **Mountains, lakes, and forests** are consistently mentioned as reasons for pride.
2. The community values the **pristine wilderness** and **wildlife diversity**.
3. Outdoor activities such as **hiking, skiing, and fishing** are tied to the beauty of the landscape.
4. The beauty of Seeley Lake fosters a deep connection between people and their environment.

STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Key Points:

1. Residents express pride in the **way people help each other** in times of need.
2. Local traditions and events, such as the **4th of July parade** and **farmers' market**, bring people together.
3. A **caring attitude** is at the heart of the community: people recognize the **willingness of others to step up**.
4. Non-profit organizations, schools, and churches **collaborate to support families and children**.

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Q1 - What Makes Seeley Lake Special

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Key Points:

1. Seeley Lake offers a wide range of **outdoor recreation**: skiing, hiking, kayaking, fishing, and more.
2. Public lands and forests are cherished for their **accessibility** and **versatility**.
3. The ability to enjoy **both motorized and non-motorized activities** (e.g., snowmobiling and hiking) is a significant source of pride.

SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE

Key Points:

1. Residents appreciate the **quiet, peaceful** environment.
2. The town's **history** and **local traditions** foster a strong sense of belonging.
3. **Familiarity among residents** leads to a strong feeling of safety and trust.
4. Many mention the **lack of traffic** and large-scale development as positives.

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Q1 - What Makes Seeley Lake Special

PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC LANDS

Key Points:

1. Seeley Lake's commitment to protecting its **public lands** and **natural resources** is a point of pride.
2. The balance between development and conservation is highlighted by the **community's resilience** and commitment to **sustainable land use**.
3. **Logging and land management** efforts have helped maintain the environment's health.

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Q1 - What Makes Seeley Lake Special

Vision for Seeley Lake's Future:

1. Residents feel a deep sense of pride in their **natural surroundings** and the **tight-knit community**.
2. The ability to **enjoy recreational opportunities** and maintain **small-town traditions** remains vital.
3. The future of Seeley Lake relies on **preserving its natural beauty** while fostering a **strong, united community**.

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Question #2

When you think about Seeley Lake in 5 years, what are your hopes and dreams?

- State what you want the future of Seeley Lake to be.

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Q2 - Future Hopes for Seeley Lake

Top Themes

- Infrastructure Development (sewer, housing)
- Economic Growth and Sustainability
- Preservation of Natural Beauty and Small-Town Feel
- Community Safety and Unity
- Improved Public Services and Facilities

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Q2 - Future Hopes for Seeley Lake

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Key Points:

1. **Sewer system** was the most frequently mentioned need. Many respondents stressed the importance of **sewer infrastructure** to enable both **economic and environmental improvements**.
2. The need for **affordable housing** is critical, especially for working families. There is concern about housing becoming accessible only to the affluent.
3. Improved **roads, sidewalks, and crosswalks** were also highlighted.
4. Respondents envision **cleaning up rundown areas** to enhance the town's overall appearance.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Key Points:

1. Hopes for Seeley Lake's future include **economic development**, but with a focus on **sustainability**.
2. Respondents want to see new **businesses and employment opportunities**, especially industries that offer good wages and do not negatively impact the environment.
3. Many expressed hopes for **small-scale industries and local business growth**, particularly in the downtown area, without becoming overly commercialized.
4. The reopening or repurposing of the **mill site** was mentioned as a potential economic driver.

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Q2 - Future Hopes for Seeley Lake

PRESERVATION OF NATURAL BEAUTY AND SMALL-TOWN FEEL

Key Points:

1. While residents support growth, they also want to **preserve Seeley Lake's natural beauty**.
2. Maintaining the **small-town atmosphere** and keeping Seeley Lake from becoming overly **tourist-focused** or **commercialized** is crucial.
3. Many expressed concerns about **protecting natural resources** like lakes, forests, and wildlife from overdevelopment.
4. There is a desire to **balance tourism** with the needs of the local population.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND UNITY

Key Points:

1. **Crime reduction**, particularly addressing drug problems, was a key concern.
2. Respondents hope for a **safer community** with improved law enforcement and a sense of security for all residents.
3. **Community unity** remains a top priority, with a call for inclusiveness and less divisiveness, regardless of political or economic background.
4. **Youth engagement** and activities, such as a youth center or more collaboration between community organizations, are seen as essential for fostering long-term community bonds.

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Q2 - Future Hopes for Seeley Lake

IMPROVED PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Key Points:

1. Hopes for new or improved **public facilities**, including an **indoor pool**, **pickleball courts**, and expanded **recreational facilities**.
2. The need for better **healthcare access**, including more comprehensive **medical services**, was also mentioned.
3. Improvements to **educational facilities**, as well as ensuring the continued success of **local schools**, were highlighted.
4. Respondents expressed a need for **senior housing** and assisted living facilities to accommodate the aging population.

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Q2 - A Vision for Seeley Lake

Key Points:

1. The future of Seeley Lake hinges on **finding the right balance** between growth and preserving what makes it unique.
2. **Infrastructure, economic opportunities, and community safety** are critical for a thriving future.
3. The community remains hopeful for a future where Seeley Lake can be a **welcoming, sustainable, and vibrant place to live** for generations to come.

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Initiatives and Projects.

MONTANA ACCESS PROJECT

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Group Exercise

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Q3 - Initiatives for Community Improvement

Key Points:

1. Residents provided ideas for **specific projects to improve Seeley Lake.**
2. The projects range from **short-term actions**, such as **beautification and recreation**, to **long-term infrastructure projects.**
3. These projects reflect the community's vision for **sustainable growth** and **enhanced quality of life.**

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Q3 - Short-Term Projects (1 - 2 Years)

BEAUTIFICATION AND RECREATION

1. **Town Beautification:** Clean up main street, enhance landscaping, and create a more inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors.
2. **Trail Development:** Expand and improve hiking, biking, and snowmobile trails to attract eco-tourism.
3. **Park Development:** Create or improve parks, adding picnic areas, playgrounds, and green spaces for community use.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. **Small Lodging Options:** Build bed-and-breakfasts, cabins, and RV parks to support tourism without overwhelming the town.
2. **Community Clean-Up Initiatives:** Organize volunteer-based clean-up efforts to keep public spaces tidy, especially during tourist seasons.
3. **Support for Local Businesses:** Develop small businesses that align with outdoor activities (e.g., equipment rental, guide services).

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Q3 - Long-Term Projects (3+ Years)

SEWER AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. **Sewer System Installation:** A critical long-term project for environmental protection and future development.
2. **Resort Tax:** Propose a resort tax to fund infrastructure projects like the sewer system, with contributions from tourists.
3. **Bridge Repair:** Projects like restoring the Boy Scout Bridge to ensure accessibility to recreational and residential areas.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. **Affordable Housing Development:** Build housing at the mill site or other available locations to support working families and young adults.
2. **Repurpose the Mill Site:** Transform the closed mill into a clean industry hub or recycling facility.
3. **Vocational Training Programs:** Establish a vocational school to train locals in skilled trades (e.g., plumbing, mechanics).

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Q3 - Long-Term Projects (3+ Years)

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

1. **Chamber of Commerce:** Establish a Chamber of Commerce to support and promote local businesses.
2. **Attract High-Tech Industries:** Bring in cloud services or other remote work industries to diversify the economy.
3. **Incentives for Small Businesses:** Offer incentives for locals to open businesses aligned with Seeley Lake's outdoor and eco-tourism focus.

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Q3 - Initiatives for Community Improvement

Vision for Community Improvement:

1. By **focusing on short-term projects** like beautification and trail expansion, the community can **see immediate improvements**.
2. At the same time, **long-term projects** like the sewer system, affordable housing, and economic diversification will **lay the groundwork for future growth**.
3. These initiatives, taken together, ensure that Seeley Lake remains a beautiful and sustainable place for both residents and visitors.

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Supporting and Engaging with Each Other.

EVERYONE

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Question #4

How can the community better support and engage each other to support the needs of Seeley Lake?

- State how community entities, including local government, organizations, public land agencies, businesses, and residents, can more effectively communicate, collaborate, and support the needs and interests of Seeley Lake.

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Q4 - Building Stronger Connections

STRATEGIES FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 1. Create a centralized community website:** A community website was suggested to post news, events, meeting minutes, and updates, making information accessible.
- 2. Regular community meetings:** Monthly or quarterly meetings to discuss local concerns, foster collaboration, and share updates on projects.
- 3. Town newsletters:** Circulate newsletters by email or print to ensure everyone is informed, especially those not active on social media.

STRENGTHENING CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION

- 1. Annual gatherings of local organizations:** A yearly meeting between non-profits, businesses, and government agencies to discuss goals and coordinate efforts.
- 2. Collaboration on common goals:** Focus on shared initiatives, such as **housing** and **infrastructure**, by pooling resources and expertise.
- 3. Create a community-wide event calendar:** A unified calendar of events to prevent overlap and maximize participation in community events.

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Q4 - Building Stronger Connections

BUILDING COMMUNITY UNITY

- 1. Address wealth disparity:** Encourage more engagement from both newer residents and long-term locals through events and volunteer opportunities.
- 2. Involve the whole community:** Ensure outreach to all socioeconomic groups, including retirees, young families, and business owners.
- 3. Overcome political divides:** Focus on local issues and practical solutions to reduce political polarization and encourage cooperation.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

- 1. Expand community events:** Respondents called for more events like **Winter Fest**, **snow sculptures**, and **pond hockey** to foster engagement and tourism.
- 2. Business support groups:** Regular meetings for local business owners to collaborate and support each other's growth.
- 3. Chamber of Commerce:** Form a **Chamber of Commerce** to support local businesses and drive economic development.

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Q4 - Building Stronger Connections

COORDINATING WITH PUBLIC LAND AGENCIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. **Joint planning efforts:** Work with public land agencies and government on shared projects, such as **forest management** and **RV waste disposal**.
2. **Address concerns with Missoula County:** Many respondents suggested working on a more collaborative relationship with the county or exploring secession as an option.
3. **Create a legal entity for the town:** Some respondents supported incorporating Seeley Lake as a town to better access funding and have more local control.

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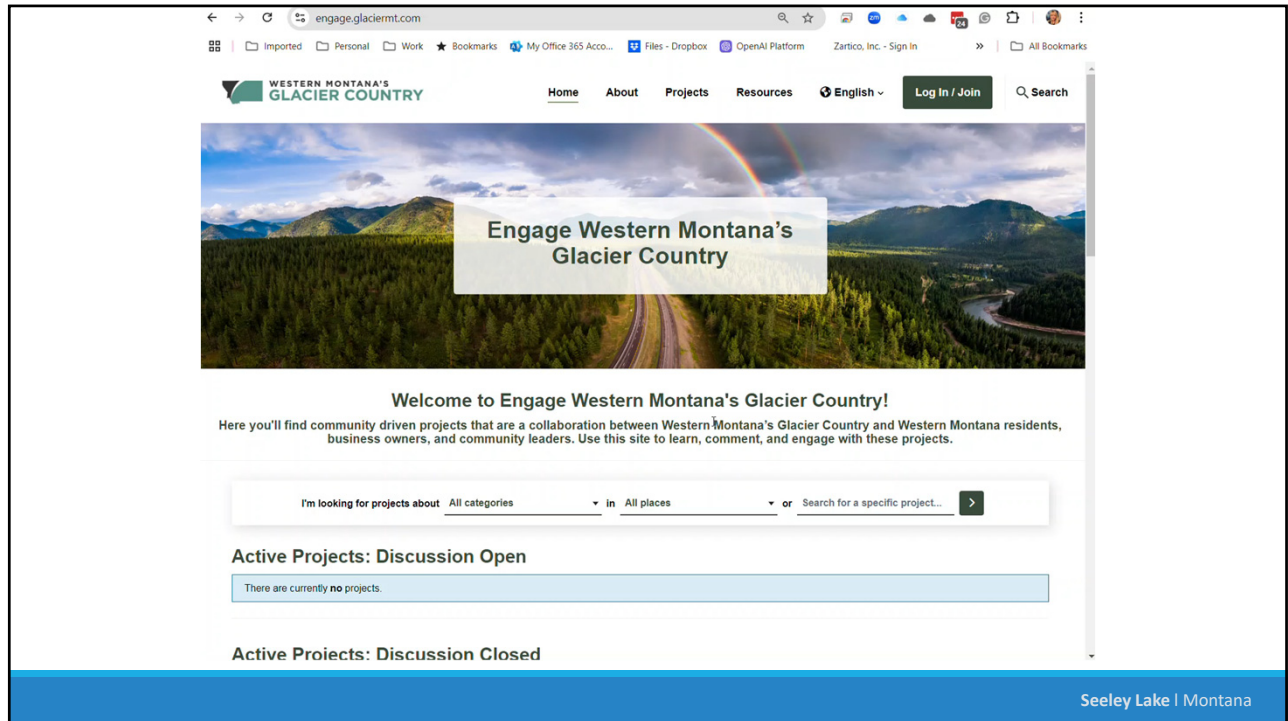
Q4 - Building Stronger Connections

Vision for Fostering Engagement and Growth:

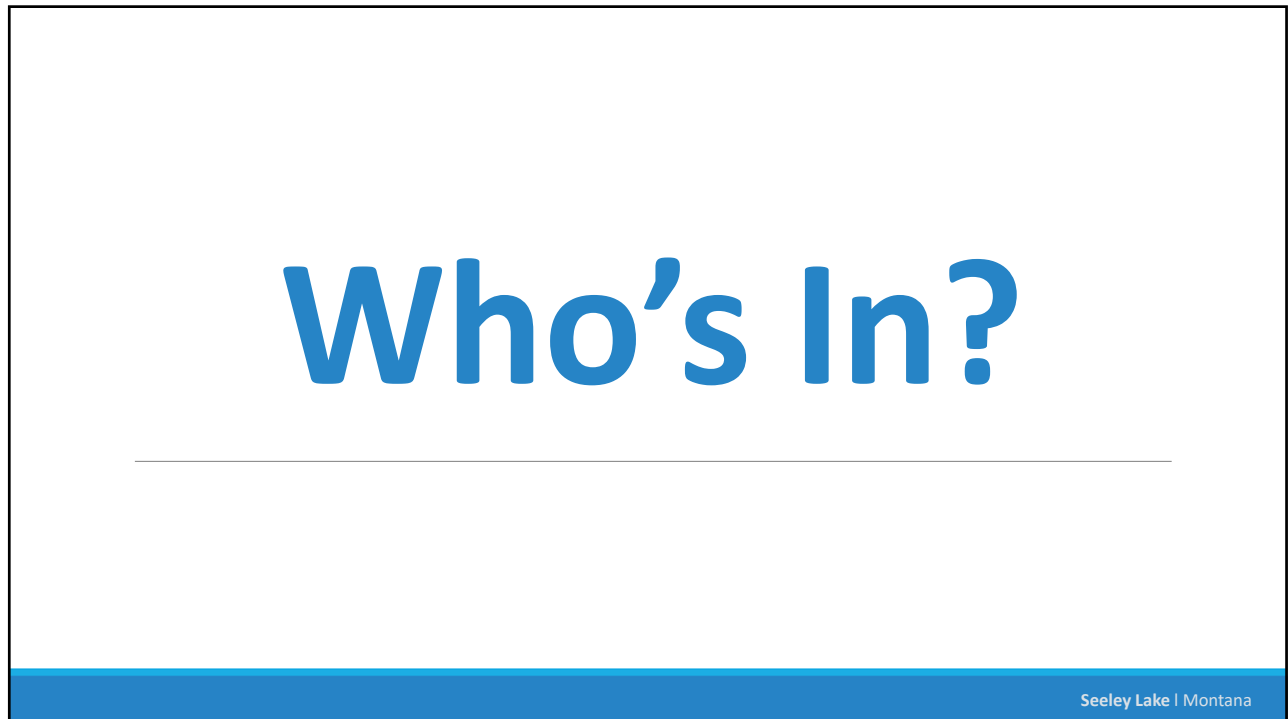
1. The community needs to work on **clearer communication, stronger collaboration, and greater inclusivity**.
2. Seeley Lake can foster a more united and engaged community through regular meetings, better information sharing, and inclusive events.
3. Collaboration with external partners, including public land agencies and county officials, will be essential to support long-term growth and address key issues like **infrastructure** and **public services**.

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Wrap Up and Sign Up.

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