

We were in the Thriving La Pine group which covers Health Care, Social Services, and Food Access. Amongst the six other groups there is overlap as well.

Amanda and I were there from our group, Erin Heyl from the DPL was there, Courtney from the LP Health Center, Becca from St. V's, a gentleman who was just there from the community, and a woman who started Home More, a nonprofit to help assist people experiencing homelessness to get their needs met and move into more stable housing rounded out the Thriving La Pine group.

At the beginning of the day, we heard a short overview of all that had been done to get to this point. A group was formed to help guide the development and growth of Newberry County and in order to get community input and buy-in they started with a survey, hosted informational nights around hot topics which lead to focus groups and another community survey. (They also hosted events about the Darlene 3 fire and fire insurance) The work at this event was based on all the feedback to this point. The event organizers also had someone from Sisters and Deschutes County present the Sisters Area strategic plan document that had recently been completed and they are still using to guide development and use to get funding.

Thriving La Pine looked at six strategies to help meet the identified needs of the community.

They included:

1. Increased access to health care, including a 24 hour emergency hospital
2. Increased access to mental health services, in particular for youth.
3. Increase access to fresh, healthy food.
4. Work with the regional partners to expand services for homeless people
5. Open a drug and alcohol treatment center.
6. Open a pharmacy in Sunriver area.

Our group was able to give feedback on the wording of the initiatives and give our opinion if these were in fact needed and addressing the needs of the community. We also talked about the timeframe each one would take. Our group did add a suggestion to increase education about healthy food as well as storage and usage ideas.

All of the participants at the event were given a sticker to vote for the top "game changer" strategy for all of the other groups.

For Thriving La Pine, our game-changer was increasing local access to health care and opening an ER, however, the access to healthy food came in a close second for the large group. This suggests there is a lot of room to increase access to foods for our Newberry County residents.