



Oregon's Kitchen Table – Grant County – John Day Future Vision

Background

A team of community leaders from John Day and throughout Grant County, in partnership with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT), conducted an online consultation in June 2017 to engage residents of, business owners in, and visitors to John Day to weigh in on possible strategies to help make John Day and all of Grant County as economically strong and vibrant as possible. John Day is considering how to create a vision for the future that both supports the traditional economy and creates opportunities for residents to innovate and expand into new economic frontiers. The community leaders working on this project imagine a future in which residents create lasting prosperity for the whole community by both respecting tradition and taking advantage of future opportunities in new and emerging markets.

The OKT consultation provided some background on Grant County's visioning efforts and asked a series of questions about potential projects, a potential vision for John Day, and community values. A series of demographic questions also informed the team who responded to the survey.

330 participants responded to the survey, with 325 people participating online and 5 completing paper surveys. The community-based team conducted the outreach, and OKT also invited its members to participate. About half of all participants identified John Day as their primary community, with 14% stating their primary community was outside of Grant County and 10% identifying Prairie City as their community. The vast majority of participants either live in John Day or visit John Day more than once a week.

The raw data was processed and analyzed by OKT staff. The following analysis includes a summary of results as well as an annotated survey attached as an appendix. Results in the annotated questionnaire (Appendix A) may add up to 99% or 101% due to rounding.

Oregon's Kitchen Table: Oregon's Kitchen Table is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University, and was created by a group of non-partisan, non-profit community organizations dedicated to helping Oregonians have a voice. Oregon's Kitchen Table is a



place for Oregonians to share their ideas, opinions, beliefs, and resources to improve Oregon and our communities. www.oregonskitchentable.org

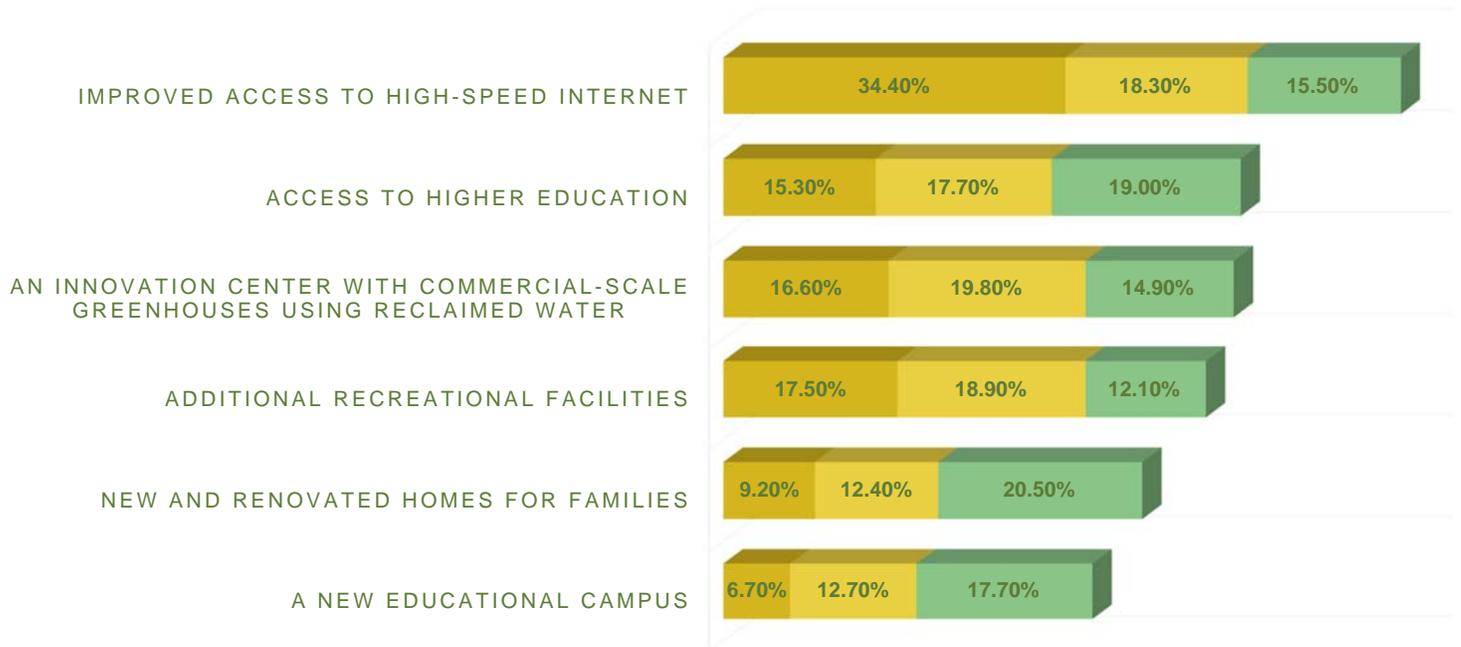
Overview of Results

Overwhelmingly, participants supported improved access to high speed internet. In addition to ranking improved internet service highly vis a vis other projects, several participants also wrote comments emphasizing the importance of high speed internet both for them personally as well as to attract new businesses and individuals who can work from anywhere via the internet.

Participants reacted also positively to a future John Day that included a focus on both recreation and adventure travel as well as innovations in agriculture, food production and education. About a third of participants ranked the following two statements as most accurately reflecting their opinions: “John Day should become a hub for outdoor recreation and adventure travel in Eastern Oregon” and “John Day should become an innovation center for agriculture, food production, and education.” Projects related to those two categories also rose to the top.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

■ Rank #1 ■ Rank #2 ■ Rank #3



Participants were given the opportunity to leave additional comments regarding **any other project that they thought was extremely appealing to them**. Common responses centered around a library building, a community recreational center / pool, forestry related employment, expanding and developing bicycling or hiking trails, and food-related businesses.

EXCERPTED COMMENTS

"New Grant County Library building"

"Community recreational center. Living here would be much more enjoyable if there was more activities to do, especially in the winter months. I think a rec center can provide so many opportunities and activities for all ages in the community!"

"Managing and utilizing the forests, allowing more loggers to get back to work, getting our mills running again, more support for the Forest Service to manage our forests productively - supporting their thinning and burning projects that help keep forests healthy, keeping forests open to grazing. Uniting to utilize and preserve the wonderful natural resources this county has instead of everyone fighting and blaming each other and allowing outside interests to make decisions that negatively impact our county."

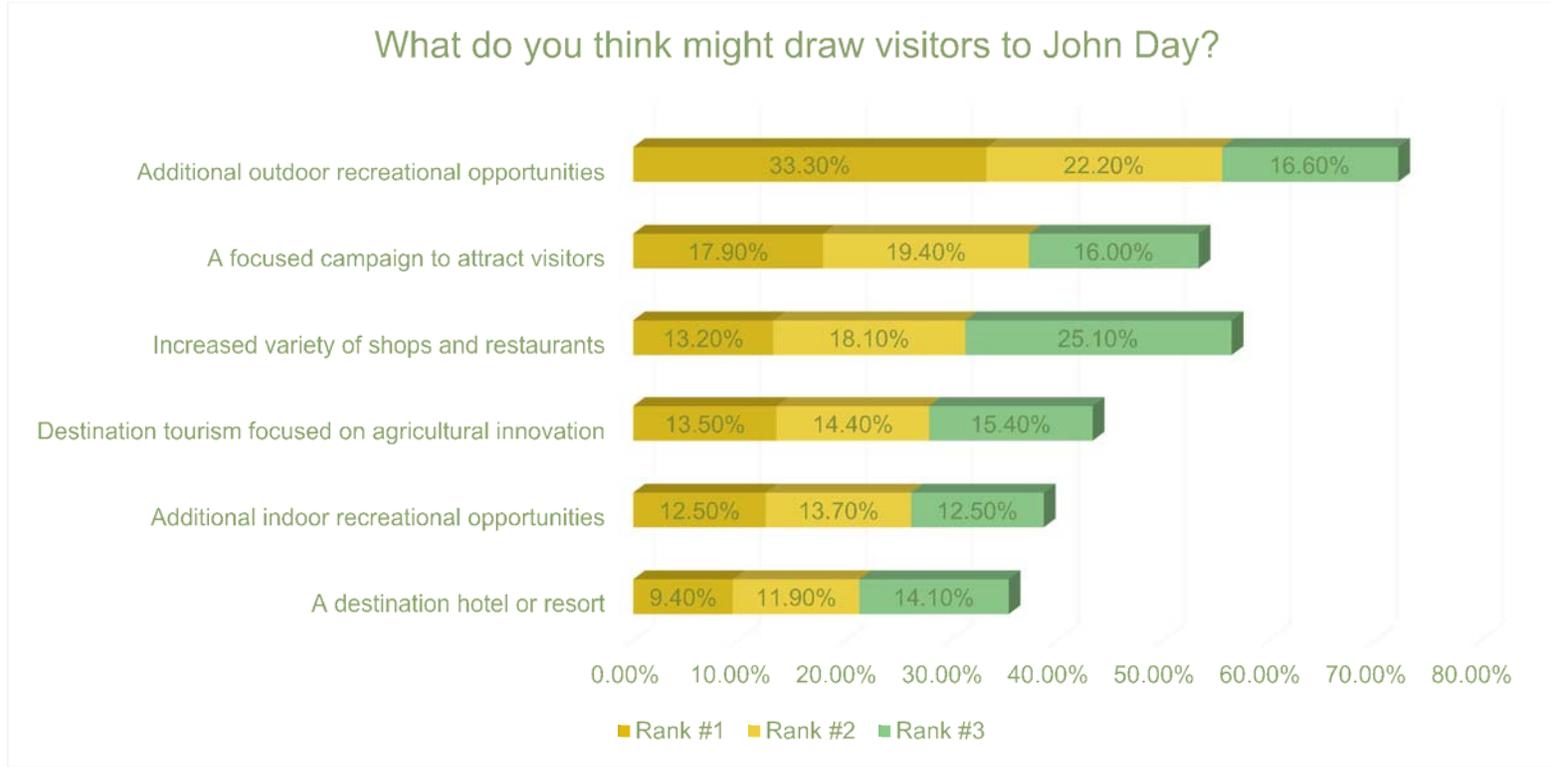
"I would like to say I wish in a way our little community could stay as is because I love living in a small town and more people here could mean more problems, more crime, but more people could also be good as far as more jobs and more positive opportunities. I like the focus on traditional natural resource industries but I think things could always be improved for the better for both people and for wildlife and habitat. Logging and ranching has always been a big part of life here and should always be in my opinion."

"The piece that is forgotten is that there is nothing here locally when it comes to retail. No clothing, shoes or quality variety."

†All responses to this question were provided to the Grant County team and are available upon request from OKT.



When considering what might draw more visitors to John Day, there continued to be strong support for recreational opportunities, though this time on outdoor recreation. A focused campaign to attract visitors and an increased variety of shops and restaurants also rose to the top.



Participants were given the opportunity to leave additional comments on **what else they thought was important to consider in drawing visitors to John Day**. Common responses include a need to improve buildings / facades in downtown, a focus on historical heritage sites and aspects in the county, artistic / cultural events or focus, more trails / outdoor recreational access, re-opening hot springs, and an increase in shopping opportunities. Some participants voiced concerns about how visitors may view safety in the area. Among some commenters there was also a desire not to emphasize more tourism as an economic driver.

EXCERPTED COMMENTS

"Kam Wah Chung seems to bring in quite a few people. Could the Chinese heritage be expanded on to increase that tourism to Grant County. Also by the same token we are the largest city to the Fossil Beds. How can we encourage those visitors to come on up to John Day and spend some time... Shuttles back and forth so they can enjoy the scenery?"

"An emphasis on our art and artisan communities."

"Tourism is not healthy for our economy, too many service low paying jobs associated with it. Plugs up our roads and by ways with recreational tourism."

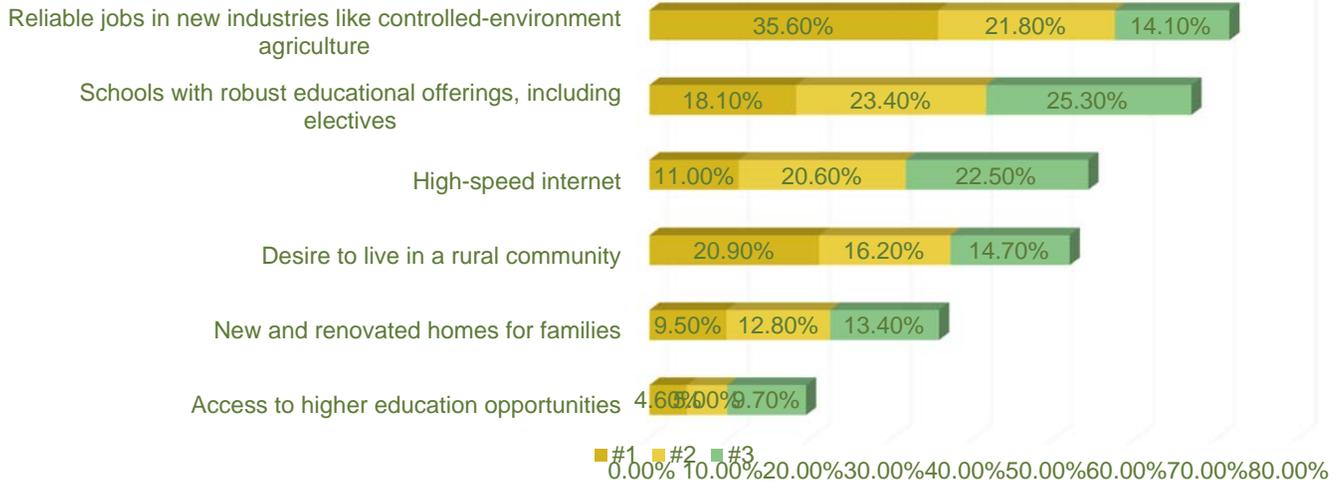
"Increased outreach and commercialization of the current opportunities and the 'rural experience' would bring increased tourism without any additional infrastructure or program enhancement."

"Re-opening one of our local hot springs"

†All responses to this question were provided to the Grant County team and are available upon request from OKT.

In considering what might draw people to live in John Day, participants again highly ranked innovative agriculture-related jobs. While high speed internet had been ranked earlier as very important, participants ranked it in the middle of factors in this question.

What do you think might draw people to live in John Day?



Participants were given the opportunity to leave additional comments on **what else they thought might draw people to live in John Day**. Common responses include a desire to see more healthcare options and childcare, as well as repeated concerns about public safety, diversity and increase in shopping options, and a recreational center of some kind.

EXCERPTED COMMENTS

“More medical care options in terms of primary care physicians, specialists, pediatricians, etc. There is nowhere to go except the hospital and the clinic. Most people I know leave town to see physicians, both internists and specialty care. That could deter people from moving here or staying here.”

“Lack of child care, especially for infants, is lacking in Grant County and needs to be addressed. Young families need quality, reliable child care to commit and invest in a community.”

“Grant County must find a way to distance itself from the current atmosphere of anti-government sentiment, and support of extremism which exists here. Community leaders must step up and work toward this.”

“The ability to work remotely would be a key for many families. Many people who grew up there would love to come home but there is no industry that fits their education and experience.”

“My experience is that in order to be reliable and realistic, new jobs need to be based on specific community assets or growing existing businesses. Reliable employment is important for new families that might move here.”

[†]All responses to this question were provided to the Grant County team and are available upon request from OKT.

Finally, participants were asked what **else they would like to see happen in John Day to ensure a vibrant and prosperous future**. As in other sections, participants repeated their desire for more shopping options, and a recreational center / pool. Several participants also expressed a desire to emphasize the current assets of John Day and the county and to focus instead on creating a welcoming community that introduces those assets to potential newcomers. These responses were reflected in the types of headlines that participants preferred (~1/3 each): “John Day: Respecting History & Embracing Opportunity” and “John Day: Live & Work Where Others Come to Play”.

EXCERPTED COMMENTS

“A variety of opportunities for employment like small businesses and e-commerce. Don't base future only on visitors and the service industry.”

“More safe programs for teens and youth.”

“Many people come to visit our county and area because of its relaxed atmosphere and friendliness as well as the beauty of the area. Make big changes as this survey suggests and we will lose a lot of these people as well as change our way of life and atmosphere of our county!!!!!!”

“Whatever area of growth and opportunity happens it needs to happen with respect for the current community.”

“John Day could have a few large "open house" events that invite groups out to experience JD.”

“Stop focusing on providing opportunities to the few who are already successful. Start focus on bringing new opportunities for new people, and things that keep them here like year round indoor/outdoor recreation.”

“The BIG thing is another grocery store to bring down the cost of food and create competition. IF the cost of living was not so high I think more people could come to live matched with job opportunity. Between the high cost of basics like food and fuel and lack of jobs I am not able to live near my family that live in rural John Day.”

*All responses to this question were provided to the Grant County team and are available upon request from OKT.



Appendix A. Grant County – John Day Future Vision – Annotated Survey

INTRODUCTION

Like many communities in Oregon and around the country, John Day is considering its economic future. Recently, a team of community leaders came together to consider possible strategies to help make John Day and all of Grant County as economically strong and vibrant as possible. As part of that process, the team is considering a number of ideas to strengthen and diversify the economy. They want to hear from you about your values and priorities!

Please take a few minutes to provide your input. This survey should take you less than 10 minutes to complete.

BACKGROUND

John Day is the most populous city in Grant County. As of the 2010 census, there were just over 1,700 people living in John Day, down from a high of just over 2,000 people in 1980. John Day—like all of Grant County—has a proud heritage as a natural resource-based economy. Over the years, that economy has receded, and Grant County’s population has declined as a result.

Today, John Day is considering how to create a vision for the future that both supports the traditional economy and creates opportunities for Grant County residents to innovate and expand into new economic frontiers. The community leaders working on this project imagine a future in which Grant County residents create lasting prosperity for their families and community by both respecting tradition and taking advantage of future opportunities in new and emerging markets.

But, reaching that vision will take everyone. So, we need to hear from you! We need as many John Day and other Grant County residents as possible to share their opinions. A report summarizing your input will be provided to the workgroup and others working on economic development and will be available to the public on Oregon’s Kitchen Table’s website (www.oregonskitchetable.org). All answers will be confidential and will not be associated with our name or contact information, per the privacy policy.

QUESTIONS

1. As you consider the future of John Day, which statement most accurately reflects your opinion? Please select one.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=323
John Day should become a hub for outdoor recreation and adventure travel in Eastern Oregon.	36%
John Day should become an innovation center for agriculture, food production, and education.	35%
John Day should make aggressive efforts to recruit internet entrepreneurs who can work from anywhere in the world.	17%
John Day should stay pretty much as-is, focusing on traditional natural resource industries.	12%



2. How important is it to you that Grant County have better access to high-speed internet?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=327
Very Important	80%
Somewhat Important	15%
Somewhat Unimportant	2%
Very Unimportant	2%
Don't Know / No Opinion	1%

3. As you think about some of the projects under consideration, please rank your priorities, with 1 being the most appealing and 6 being the least.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	Most Appealing (#1)	2 nd Most Appealing (#2)	3 rd Most Appealing (#3)	4 th Most Appealing (#4)	5 th Most Appealing (#5)	6 th Most Appealing (#6)
Access to higher education	15%	18%	19%	14%	17%	17%
An innovation center with commercial-scale greenhouses using reclaimed water	17%	20%	15%	15%	16%	17%
A new educational campus	8%	13%	18%	24%	22%	16%
New and renovated homes for families	9%	12%	20%	19%	20%	18%
Additional recreational facilities	17%	19%	12%	16%	15%	21%
Improved access to high-speed internet	34%	18%	15%	12%	9%	11%

Is there any other project under consideration you know about that you think is extremely appealing?

Comments available in separate file.



4. What do you think might draw visitors to John Day? Please rank your priorities, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	Most Important (#1)	2 nd Most Important (#2)	3 rd Most Important (#3)	4 th Most Important (#4)	5 th Most Important (#5)	6 th Most Important (#6)
Additional indoor recreational opportunities	12%	14%	12%	16%	22%	24%
Additional outdoor recreational opportunities	33%	22%	17%	10%	11%	7%
A destination hotel or resort	9%	12%	14%	23%	20%	22%
Increased variety of shops and restaurants	13%	18%	25%	21%	13%	9%
A focused campaign to attract visitors	18%	19%	16%	17%	18%	11%
Destination tourism focused on agricultural innovation	14%	15%	15%	13%	16%	27%

Is there anything else not mentioned that you think might draw visitors to John Day?

Comments available in separate file.

5. What do you think might draw people to live in John Day? Please rank your priorities, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	Most Important (#1)	2 nd Most Important (#2)	3 rd Most Important (#3)	4 th Most Important (#4)	5 th Most Important (#5)	6 th Most Important (#6)
New and renovated homes for families	9%	13%	13%	19%	19%	26%
Schools with robust educational offerings, including electives	18%	23%	25%	17%	11%	5%
High-speed internet	11%	21%	22%	15%	15%	15%
Reliable jobs in new industries like controlled-environment agriculture	36%	22%	14%	15%	8%	4%
Desire to live in a rural community	21%	16%	15%	15%	20%	13%
Access to higher education opportunities	5%	5%	10%	19%	26%	36%



Is there anything else not mentioned that you think might draw people to live in John Day?

Comments available in separate file.

6. Imagine that you are reading a newspaper or magazine five years in the future. Which headline appeals to you the most? Please select one.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=323
John Day: Live & Work Where Others Come to Play	35%
John Day: Respecting History & Embracing Opportunity	32%
John Day: The #1 Rural City in Oregon	15%
John Day: An Innovation Gateway	12%
John Day: Winner of 2022 Google e-City Award	5%

7. What else would you like to see happen in John Day to ensure a vibrant and prosperous future?

Comments available in separate file.

8. What do you consider to be your primary community in Grant County?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=329
John Day	51%
Canyon City	12%
Granite	2%
Long Creek	<1%
Monument	<1%
Mount Vernon	4%
Prairie City	10%
Seneca	3%
Unincorporated Grant County	3%
My primary residence is outside of Grant County	14%



9. If you do not live in John Day, how often do you come to John Day?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=290
More than once per week	39%
A few times a month	4%
Once a month	2%
Less than once per month	14%
N/A (I live in John Day.)	41%

