

# Dillon Community Conversations

Final Report & Recommendations

Town Council Presentation | Keystone Policy Center

**5**

Community Forums

**8**

Months of Engagement

**100+**

Community Participants

**230**

Survey Respondents

# How We'll Use Our 2.5 Hours Together

## 01 Setting the Stage

Purpose, process, and what we're here to do

15 min

## 02 What the Community Told Us

Four through-lines across all five conversations

40 min

## 03 Checking In

What resonates? What surprised you?

20 min

## 04 The Recommendations

Community-grounded priorities for Dillon's future

25 min

## 05 Where Do We Go From Here?

Council priorities and the work ahead

35 min

## 06 Closing

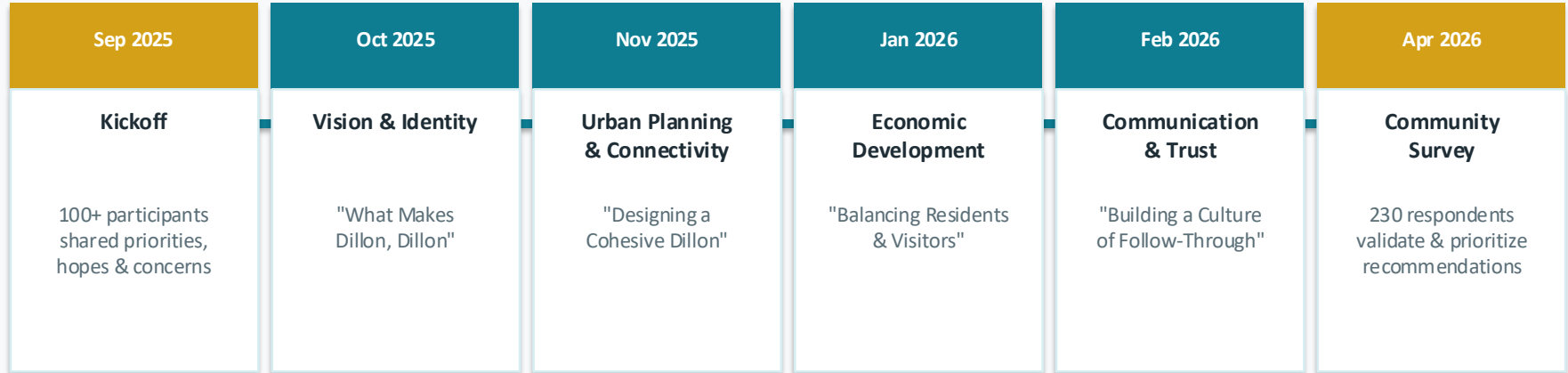
Reflections and next steps

15 min

# What This Session Is — and Isn't

- ✓ This IS a chance to understand what Dillon's community said — deeply and honestly
- ✓ This IS a space for council members to share their own priorities and hear each other
- ✓ This IS the beginning of a strategic conversation, not the end of one
- ✗ This is NOT a debate about past decisions
- ✗ This is NOT a rubber-stamp exercise
- ✗ This is NOT the last conversation — it's an invitation to keep going

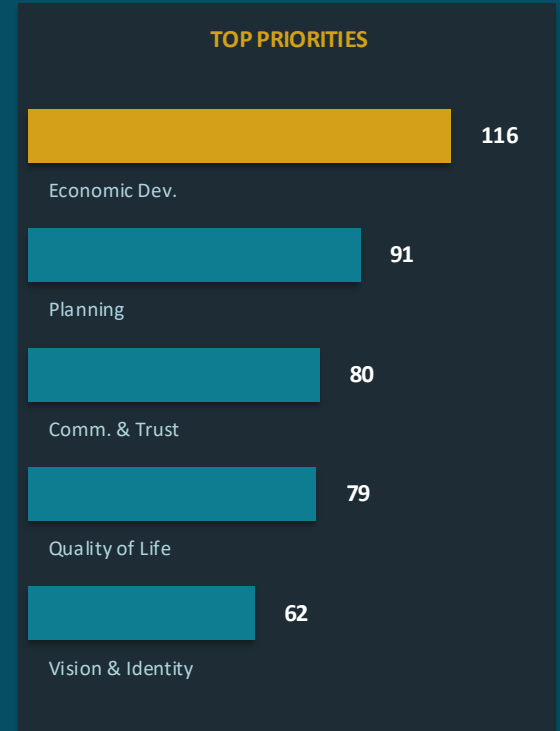
# A Process Grounded in Community Voice



*Topics for each meeting were directly shaped by what community members said at the kickoff — this was not a predetermined process.*

# What the Community Told Us

Four through-lines across eight months of conversation



Through-Line 1 of 4

# Dillon has an identity worth protecting

*"Dillon's identity is deeply tied to its natural surroundings. The views and the lake are not just scenic — they are central to the community's character."*

— Year-round resident

*"I moved to Dillon 40 years ago. There were more shops back then. Now there is almost nothing to draw people in."*

— Year-round resident, 40+ years

*"The loss of Arapahoe Cafe and Pug Ryan's is devastating. There appears to be no plan to recreate that vibe."*

— Part-time resident

## Key themes:

- Strong pride in lake-centered, small-town character
- Building height & view protection surfaced constantly
- Loss of beloved local businesses felt viscerally
- Fear of becoming 'another Silverthorne'

Through-Line 2 of 4

# The town core needs economic activation — and the community wants urgency, not more planning.

*"This is more just blah, blah, blah — talking instead of doing. Our anti-business mindset will result in continuing decay."*

— Year-round resident

*"Dillon runs on a tourism economy — period. We invested in a marina and amphitheater, then choked off the development that would make them pay off."*

— Business owner

*"Economic Development is a layer cake. One action in isolation does not move the needle. It is a deliberate practice."*

— Year-round resident & business owner

## Key themes:

- Economic Development was #1 community priority — by a wide margin (116 mentions)
- Frustration with 'pass-through' status despite marina, amphitheater, farmers market
- Deep tension between protecting small-town feel and enabling the growth that sustains it
- Clear call for proactive business recruitment, not just passive support

Through-Line 3 of 4

# Connection matters — physically, socially, and between the town and its residents.

*"Walkability is great — but where are people walking to? I'm more interested in what's going to be built within this walkable infrastructure."*

— Part-time resident

*"The amphitheater is the art space most likely to bring vibrancy and walkability to the town core. It's hard to reconcile being pro-arts with being ambivalent about it."*

— Part-time resident

*"We need something going on in Dillon for most Wed–Suns of the year. Not big things — but a lot of small things that create vibrancy."*

— Business owner

## Key themes:

- Dillon feels physically disconnected — marina, amphitheater, core don't link up
- Amphitheater is polarizing: greatest asset for many, quality-of-life threat for neighbors
- Small community gatherings (not just big events) consistently requested
- STR owners, part-time residents feel their voices are underrepresented

Through-Line 4 of 4

# Trust has to be earned through follow-through, not just promised through communication.

*"I feel like these things have been said before. What is needed is ideas to make them reality — even the new council is failing on this."*

— Year-round resident

*"Recommendations without a time-bound action plan are useless. The gap is accountability."*

— Part-time resident

*"Communication & Trust got the highest ratings — but only if follow-through actually happens. We've heard this before."*

— Survey data synthesis

## Key themes:

- Communication & Trust was the highest-rated section (avg 4.23 / 5.0)
- But the ask isn't better tools — it's evidence that input leads to action
- Zoning, development, and budget decisions feel opaque and inconsistent
- Community wants to see how their voice connects to decisions made

# How Well Did the Recommendations Land?



Scale: 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest)

# What Resonates?

## Discussion Prompt

Share one thing from what you just heard that:  
surprised you • confirmed something you already believed • or that you want to understand better

*Each person shares — no debate, no rebuttals. Just listening.*

→ New council members: this is your equal moment. Your fresh perspective is an asset, not a liability.

→ Returning members: notice where the community voice confirms or challenges your priors.

→ Everyone: we're building shared understanding, not consensus — differences are welcome.

# The Recommendations

What 230 community members are asking Dillon to prioritize

Vision & Identity

Planning & Connectivity

Economic Development

Quality of Life

Communication & Trust

## Vision & Identity

*Anchor all decisions in who Dillon is — and protect it proactively*

- 1 Define and adopt a clear 'Dillon Identity Statement' as a genuine decision-making filter — not just aspirational language.
- 2 Prioritize protection of natural assets — lake views, mountain sight lines, dark skies — including clear, enforceable standards for building height and design.
- 3 Sustain and invest in community traditions and cultural assets: arts, music, events, farmers' market, and local gathering spaces.
- 4 Support a balanced, year-round community that actively considers residents, workforce, second homeowners, and families alongside visitors.
- 5 Pursue growth that reinforces Dillon's character — recognizing that responsible development is not the enemy of small-town identity, and that a vibrant, economically healthy town is part of that identity.

★ *Key addition: Building height and design standards named explicitly as tools for protecting Dillon's identity.*

## Planning & Connectivity

*Move from plans to action — connect people to places worth going*

- 1 Translate existing plans into clear, time-bound implementation roadmaps (1-, 3-, 5-, 10-year) — publicly visible and regularly updated.
- 2 Align all projects and development decisions with defined goals, not evaluated in isolation or on a developer-by-developer basis.
- 3 Prioritize walkability and connectivity — safer crossings, pedestrian-friendly design, stronger links between marina, amphitheater, and core — while ensuring meaningful destinations at the end of those connections.
- 4 Establish clear design standards that preserve human-scale development, protect sight lines, and give developers predictability and residents assurance.
- 5 Improve wayfinding and signage to help residents and visitors discover all Dillon has to offer.
- 6 Invest in placemaking and public spaces that create a more vibrant, connected town center.
- 7 Explore mobility solutions — e-bike infrastructure, parking strategies, event shuttles — that reduce congestion without pushing more cars into the core.

★ *Key addition: Connectivity explicitly linked to destinations — walkability only works if there's somewhere worth walking to.*

## Economic Development

*#1 Community Priority | 116 individual mentions*

- 1 Treat economic development as an urgent priority — the town core's decline is not a slow-moving problem.
- 2 Actively recruit and retain businesses — particularly restaurants, retail, and destination experiences — through proactive outreach, streamlined permitting, and meaningful incentives.
- 3 Support and retain existing small and local businesses through grants, technical assistance, and direct engagement— they deserve at least as much attention as attracting new ones.
- 4 Strengthen Dillon as a destination by improving visitor experience and connections between events, marina, amphitheater, and local businesses.
- 5 Welcome responsible outside investment where it advances community goals — being development-friendly and maintaining small-town character are not mutually exclusive.
- 6 Encourage a complementary mix of businesses that creates a resilient, year-round economy with anchor destinations that drive foot traffic.
- 7 Improve business visibility and marketing — signage, directories, coordinated promotion.
- 8 Establish regular, accessible reporting on the town's fiscal health so the community understands the relationship between economic decisions and long-term sustainability.

*★ Key additions: Urgency named explicitly. Outside investment welcomed directly. Fiscal transparency connected to economic decisions.*

## Quality of Life

*Resident well-being as a foundational priority — including the hard conversations*

- 1 Establish resident quality of life as a foundational priority — meaning impacts on residents are actively assessed, not addressed only when complaints arise.
- 2 Develop a clear, fair framework for managing the impacts of major attractions and events — including the amphitheater — that balances economic benefit with neighborhood livability, with consistent standards for noise, crowd flow, parking, and community communication.
- 3 Preserve and enhance community amenities — parks, recreation, arts, events — including small-scale, low-cost community gatherings that reinforce Dillon's sense of connection.
- 4 Support a diverse, year-round community by addressing workforce and housing needs in a way that complements — rather than displaces — the commercial vitality of the town core.
- 5 Maintain Dillon's small-town scale and feel — recognizing that scale, design, and height matter as much as use, and that residents' investment deserves to be protected.
- 6 Actively manage short-term rental impacts while recognizing STR owners as stakeholders in Dillon's economic health who deserve clear, consistent communication and fair regulatory treatment.

*★ Key additions: Amphitheater named directly with a framework approach. STR owners recognized. Small community events included.*

## Communication & Trust

*Highest-rated section (4.23 avg) — the ask is follow-through, not just better tools*

- 1 Develop a centralized, user-friendly communication system — website with calendar, project tracker, FAQs, and clear updates — the go-to source for what is happening in Dillon and why.
- 2 Proactively communicate decisions and timelines in plain language — including not just what was decided, but how it connects to community priorities and input.
- 3 Close the feedback loop explicitly and consistently — when community input is gathered, report back on how it was used, what changed, and where tradeoffs were made. This is the single most important factor in building trust.
- 4 Establish and share clear town priorities and goals, grounded in community input, so residents have a stable reference point for evaluating decisions over time.
- 5 Increase transparency in decision-making — including how zoning, development, and budget decisions are made and at what stage community voice can meaningfully influence outcomes.
- 6 Clarify roles, responsibilities, and points of contact so residents know who to go to and what to expect.
- 7 Expand and improve participation options — robust virtual access, multiple meeting times, ongoing digital engagement — so involvement isn't limited to those who can attend in person.
- 8 Establish an annual community forum where residents hear directly from town departments on the state of the town: finances, progress on priorities, and what's coming next.

★ *Key addition: Closing the feedback loop named as a formal commitment. Annual state-of-the-town forum recommended.*

# Council Priorities

Given everything you've heard today — from the community and from each other — what are the 1–2 areas where you believe Dillon most needs to make progress in the next 2–3 years? And why?

*Take 2 minutes to write your answer privately, then we'll share out.*

### What the community has done

- Showed up — 100+ in person, 230 survey responses
- Named their values, fears, and hopes honestly
- Validated the draft recommendations (avg 4.1/5)
- Identified Economic Development as the urgent priority
- Asked to be part of what comes next

### What the work ahead requires

- Translating priorities into time-bound plans
- Making decisions that visibly connect to community input
- Establishing accountability measures the public can track
- Building the trust that comes from consistent follow-through
- Staying in conversation — not just at the end of a process

# Thank You

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