Bozeman is growing, and every neighbor has a stake in what comes next. In December, we partnered with the City of Bozeman to launch "Ideas for Change Bozeman", inviting you to share priorities in your own words, and see where you and your neighbors find common ground away from the noise. This first phase was about listening, not deciding, to build an honest, community-led foundation for our live civic dialogue.

To make sense of this volume of input, the project team used a combination of human review and analytical tools.
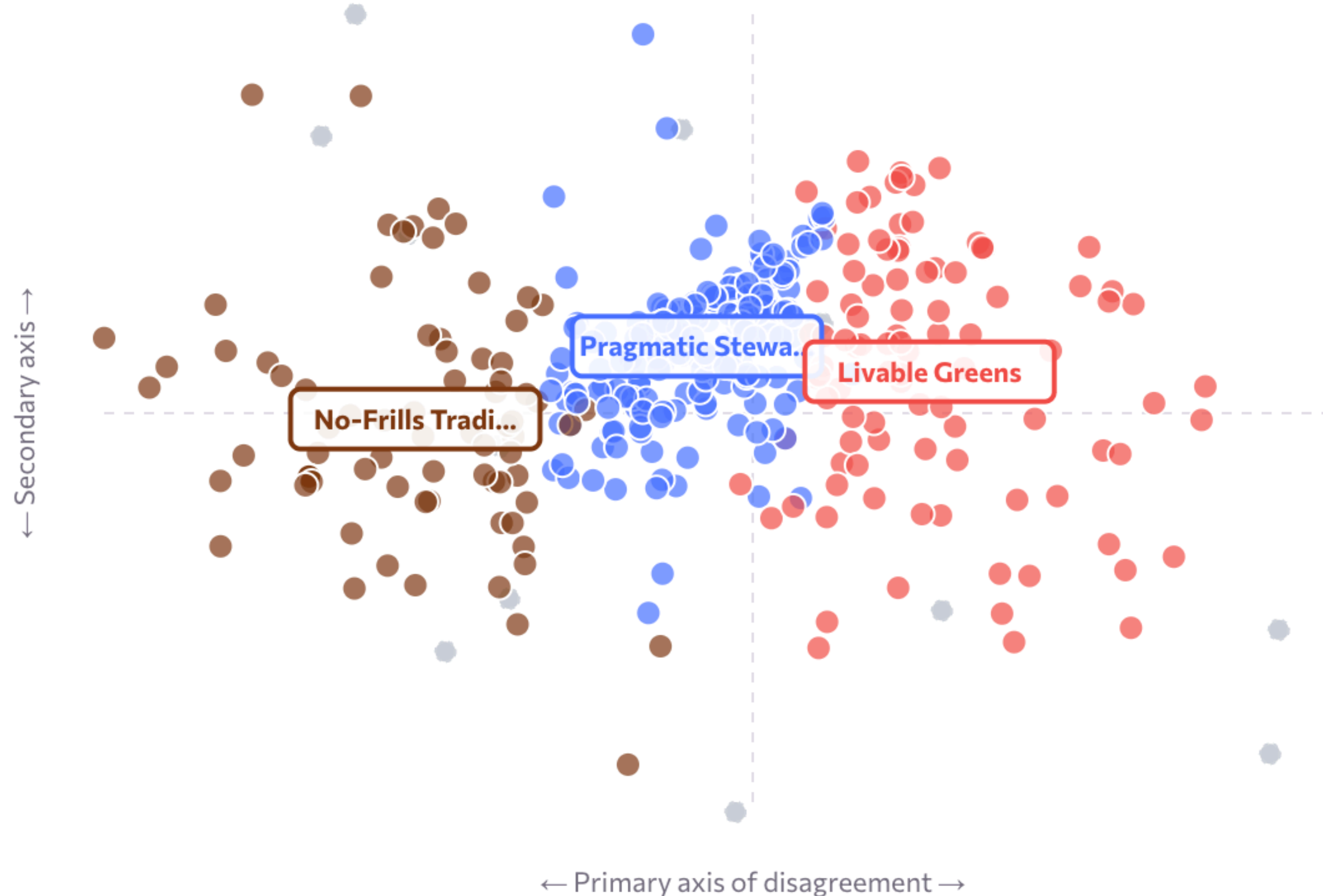
These tools helped:
- Group similar ideas together
- Identify themes that appeared most frequently
- Highlight ideas that received support from residents with different perspectives

Importantly:
- All findings were reviewed by people for accuracy and clarity. Technology was used to summarize patterns—not to replace judgment or decision-making.

Our analysis identified three distinct clusters of participants based on their voting patterns

← Secondary axis →

Pragmatic Stewa..

No-Frills Tradi...

Livable Greens

← Primary axis of disagreement →

The groups shown here are not political parties, demographics, or fixed categories. They are analytic groupings based solely on how people voted on ideas within the platform, used to understand where ideas find support across differences. Many residents hold views that span more than one group.

PRAGMATIC STEWARDS

200 users - Avg 50 votes/ user

They prioritize practical quality-of-life improvements - especially transit, neighborhood amenities, and resource conservation - while resisting surveillance-style enforcement and big, flash or ideologically charged initiatives

IDEAS *for* **CHANGE**

MAKE OR BREAK ❓

Activate cameras at traffic lights to ticket cars running red lights.

This group: 16% vs Others: 67% **51% gap**

Practical mobility upgrades (regional transit, bike safety, airport access)

Neighborhood livability and community infrastructure (trees, west-side civic spaces, pools, after-school programs)

Housing accountability and anti-speculation measures (vacancy tax, STR limits, higher non-primary taxes)

Long-term environmental/resource stewardship (water capacity planning, recycling, shared-tool libraries)

Skepticism of punitive/automated enforcement and gimmicky projects (traffic cameras, tolls, celebrity branding)

SUPPORTS

Dog owners should not be allowed to leave dog waste on trails. Pack it out polic...
90% approve

Plant more trees in public areas.
75% approve

OPPOSES

Use land along the public parks to create shipping container pop ups for local r...
66% oppose

Activate cameras at traffic lights to ticket cars running red lights.
64% oppose

LIVABLE GREENS

97 users - Avg 98 votes/ user

They prioritize a greener, safer, people-first Bozeman with strong regional transit, protected biking and walking, and public investments that build community while managing growth and second-home impacts.

IDEAS *for* **CHANGE**

MAKE OR BREAK ❓

Fund and operate a mobile healthcare van to reach underserved populations, including the homeless, l...

This group: 71% vs Others: 18% **53% gap**

People-first mobility (regional transit, protected bike lanes, safer streets)

Urban greening & biodiversity (trees, pollinators, native species, dark skies)

Community-serving public investment (parks, libraries, rec centers, after-school programs)

Housing fairness & local stability (vacancy/second-home taxes, STR limits, workforce housing)

Pragmatic governance over extremes (oppose drastic cuts, total bans, or symbolic culture-war proposals)

SUPPORTS

Plant more trees in public areas.
94% approve

Increase the public transit options from Livingston to Bozeman; Bozeman to Belgr...
92% approve

OPPOSES

Open a traditional private school with no woke ideologies or religious affiliati...
73% oppose

Introduce non-native species like Komodo Dragons to the area both for hunting pu...
70% oppose

NO-FRILLS TRADITIONALISTS

76 users - Avg 84 votes/ user

They prioritize basic rules and fully funded core city services while resisting growth, cultural signaling, and new taxes or city-led social, housing, and placemaking initiatives.

IDEAS *for* **CHANGE**

MAKE OR BREAK ❓

Subsidize housing for nurses, teachers, police, firefighters etc. These important jobs have low star...

This group: 16% vs Others: 68% **52% gap**

Back-to-basics governance (core services first)

Law-and-order enforcement (especially dogs/leash and cleanliness)

Anti-growth / anti-density development sentiment (especially apartments)

Low-tax, low-intervention approach (skeptical of new funds, mandates, and programs)

Cultural conservatism and preference for government neutrality on symbols

SUPPORTS

Dog leash laws need to be enforced especially on in town trails and paths
75% approve

Educate people about current leash law. Enforce waste removal laws.
74% approve

OPPOSES

Require affordable workforce housing
97% oppose

Create a neighborhood entrepreneurs fund to seed walkable local restaurants and ...
94% oppose

The goal wasn't just to see what is popular—it's to find where people agree even when they disagree elsewhere.

We are looking for the specific ideas that receive support across residents with different priorities and perspectives.

These are called "unifying ideas." Unifying ideas can help communities move forward together.

Unifying ideas are

ideas with majority support across all identified groups.

TOP 10 UNIFYING IDEAS

These ideas received the highest majority support across all three groups, indicating the community largely agrees on these practical, quality-of-life improvements.

Housing & Development

Create a community fund to buy surrounding ranch land when owners put it up for sale, to prevent greedy coastal developers from continuing their demolition of the valley. Increase conservation easements!!

| 60% Overall Support | Unity Score: 32 | Lowest Group: 63% |

Stop approving development of apartment complexes until vacancy rate goes below 8%. Incentivize in-fill with small, single family homes much like the Story Mill (Bozeman Yards) development.

| 61% Overall Support | Unity Score: 29 | Lowest Group: 55% |

Introduce zoning laws to ensure new construction is cohesively designed (think Big Sky or Jackson WY aesthetic). To avoid cooperate looking buildings that would fit in back east, but don't have Montana character.

| 62% Overall Support | Unity Score: 29 | Lowest Group: 60% |

Quit giving concessions to developers. They will build here anyway.

| 71% Overall Support | Unity Score: 29 | Lowest Group: 60% |

Taxes

Reduce burden on homeowner property tax

| 63% Overall Support | Unity Score: 31 | Lowest Group: 56% |

Use more of the bed tax from hotels for supporting our schools and less on destination marketing

| 77% Overall Support | Unity Score: 29 | Lowest Group: 58% |

Infrastructure & Public Safety

Get the highway traffic, ie: trucks, off Main St.

71% Overall Support   Unity Score: 49   Lowest Group: 75%

Aggressively enforce bans on phone use while driving.

81% Overall Support   Unity Score: 37   Lowest Group: 67%

Dog owners should not be allowed to leave dog waste on trails. Pack it out policy.

85% Overall Support   Unity Score: 61   Lowest Group: 80%

Start enforcing speed limits and texting while driving…especially downtown before we have a massive tragedy. It's very rare that I see ANYONE pulled over in town unless there's an accident. The income can be used to add more police and BFD

63% Overall Support   Unity Score: 31   Lowest Group: 57%

TOP 10
UNIFYING IDEAS
(continued)

Finding common ground on practical improvements is the first step in moving past the noise of typical social media. However, listening at scale also reveals deeper "resonant" themes—issues that appeared frequently across all groups, even when neighbors disagreed on the specific solution.

Resonant issues represent the core challenges the community faces, and help us to decide what will work through together as we move from digital voting to a live deliberation.

Resonant issues are

Underlying issues raised frequently across all groups, even if they don't agree on the best solution.

THE THREE MOST RESONANT ISSUES

1
Housing Affordability

- Add Subsidize Housing for Essential Workers (427 Votes)
- Establish a City Land Bank & Housing Fund (315 Votes)

**64 IDEAS
11K VOTES**

2
Infrastructure & Traffic

- Create a City Parking Fund for Garages (289 votes)
- Launch a "Safe Streets" (Woonerf) Program (283 Votes)

**45 IDEAS
6K VOTES**

3
Environment & Resources

- Expand the Community Gardens Network (426 Votes)
- Planting more trees in public areas (335 votes)

**34 IDEAS
4K VOTES**

Housing Affordability

stands out as the primary focus area for the live dialogue. It received nearly twice the volume of community engagement as the second most resonant issue.

Selecting a single topic for our live dialogue helps us:

- Create focused, productive dialogue by moving past broad concerns to specific solutions.

- Explore tradeoffs in detail, giving residents the space to weigh different paths forward.

- Produce clearer insights that provide City leadership with a deeper understanding of community values.

The purpose of this work is to complement existing civic processes by widening who gets heard and identifying areas of shared concern that merit deeper dialogue.

Participation in Ideas fo Change is voluntary. The results reflect the perspectives of residents who chose to take part in this phase.

While the City of Bozeman is collaborating by receiving the final report, it does not shape the ideas submitted, the analysis, or the conclusions.

Thank you for sharing your voice. If you are interested in participating in the live dialogue, sign up at **ideasforchange.org/bozeman**

We hope to see you there.