

STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting #3 Summary



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Plan For Our Future, Rooted In Our Past

MEETING INFORMATION

Date: February 10, 2022

Time: 6:00-8:30 PM

Location: Commissioners Chambers (415 East Main Street, Emmett) and Zoom

ATTENDEES

Steering Committee Members

- ✓ Nita Barnard
- ✓ James England
Steven Ethington
- ✓ Glenn Flaherty
Palla Garringer
Walker Harrison
- ✓ Jon Robertson
- ✓ Dan Spanfelner
- ✓ Teena Turner
Brad Turpen
- ✓ Justin Vickery
- ✓ Stephanie Weldon

County Planning Team

- ✓ Jennifer Kharrl, Planning Director
Michelle Barron, Associate Planner
- ✓ Neal Capps, Director of Roads & Bridges

Consultant

- ✓ Miriam McGilvray, Logan Simpson
- ✓ Olivia Cvetko, Logan Simpson
- ✓ Nick Foster, Kittelson Associates
- ✓ Ted Kamp, Leland Consulting

This meeting was open to the public to listen; however no public comment was taken.

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Introduction

1. There was a quick round of introductions, including introducing Nick Foster from Kittelson Associates who is leading the transportation section, and Ted Kamp from Leland Consulting who is focusing on economics.

Discussion

1. **Revised Vision and Format Options (20 min)**
 - a. Based on the comments from Steering Committee Meeting #2,
 - b. Format Option 3 is a big favorite.
 - c. The changes clearly reflect
 - d. First bullet point: "heritage" is a little loose. Consider changing to "Preserve our agriculture land and rural lifestyle."

- i. Split out agriculture in its own bullet. Add separate bullet for Rural Character
 - e. Question about where “community” is represented. Feeling like Emmett has a great community and there’s not a bullet that represents that.
 - i. Everything represents the Gem County community. Don’t need to represent Emmett specifically.
 - f. Invest in opportunities for all generations. What does that mean on the ground?
 - i. It’s not just a retirement community, and helps us understand that we should include opportunities for youth too.
 - g. Do we want the semicolons? Prefer no punctuation.
- 2. Opportunities and Choices Review (1hr 20 min)**
- a. Purpose of the conversation:
 - i. Are these the right (most important) questions and topics to ask the public?
 - ii. For each question, are these the right scale and breadth of choices to consider?
 - iii. For residents to make informed decisions, what additional information would be helpful to include? (i.e. data, case studies, graphics)
 - b. Land Use Question: How could the County better guide new development?
 - i. Option C: prime soil is so subjective. Use “valley floor”
 - 1. Could use national USGS data set for soil quality
 - 2. Where are the most crucial agricultural areas to preserve? In the Plan, we can make sure it’s analyzed and clear where those areas are.
 - 3. For the sake of the question and to be understandable by the public, still use the term “prime soil”
 - ii. How large of a lot do you need to have a productive farm. 5 acres is hard to actually farm.
 - iii. Are there other ways the County can help guide predictability for future growth?
 - 1. The new Emmett Area of City Impact will be changing, but there will be an updated intergovernmental agreement between the County and the City.
 - iv. Add areas that could support more growth with infrastructure and roads. Where the road infrastructure is already in place and could support additional growth.
 - c. Land Use Question: What is appropriate coordination for development within Emmett’s Area of City Impact?

- i. None of these options are mutually exclusive. Select all options that are appropriate to consider.
 - ii. Question
 - iii. The water connection option as a requirement may need to be in a tighter
 - 1. County may not be able to require that unless they annex
 - iv. Consider additional new option to require annexation if you develop next to the city.
 - v. Concern about well water availability. Having to drill new or deeper wells.
 - vi. Is there any load on the sewer system? Is there a risk of that failing? May need to coordinate with the City to understand their utility capacity and extension plans.
- d. Land Use Question: Mapping Exercise for where industrial, commercial, and mixed-use areas are appropriate.
 - i. What does Mixed-Use actually look like? Does it have a residential component, or is it only non-residential mixed use?
 - ii. Should we use a visual preference exercise to help show what we mean by these different types of use?
 - iii. Mixed Use is kind of a wasted zone. 1 acre min. You can have a house and retail or office (not industrial). Everything needs a conditional use permit.
 - 1. Question should be asked where does mixed use belong – show where they already are on the map. No need to redefine what mixed use is.
 - iv. Should we be asking about residential density under land use question or mapping exercise?
- e. Housing Question: Would any of the following subdivision alternatives be appropriate to pursue? If so, where?
 - i. Six or seven PUDs were approved before the market crash, but nothing ever happened because of the crash.
 - ii. Support for the Clustered option. It's a popular tool in other rural communities.
 - 1. Clustering was discussed during the last Land Use Plan but never gained traction.
- f. Housing Question: What else would you like to see the County do to support affordable housing?
 - i. Need to remove "expedited development review" as there isn't a separate review process for affordable housing.

- g. Economy Question: Targeted Industry Clusters vs. Industry Diversity
 - i. We have room for a lot of different kinds of businesses, but do we have the capacity to have attract certain businesses.
 - ii. If we caste a wide net, we may be surprised by new industries and their synergy with what we already have.
 - iii. Could change “diversity” to “variety” for clarity. It’s not a diversity program or recruitment program.
 - iv. Want business that align with our community and the current workforce
 - v. Having just one thing doesn’t sound like economic resiliency
 - vi. What is the question that the public needs to answer?
 - 1. Could this be formatted as a slider scale?
 - 2. And maybe have a comment box?
- h. Economy Question: Grow Local Businesses vs. Attracting Desirable Employers
 - i. Could do the same sliding scale.
 - ii. Not real big on the language. May not need all the background. Explain it more simply to the public. Add the background in the sidebar considerations.
 - iii. Retention, attraction, and retention.
- i. Economy Question: Agritourism Approach vs. Agribusiness
 - i. Could do both of these, but one side is about visitors/tourist and the other is helping farmers get into another value-added industry (i.e. food manufacturing)
 - ii. How would the agribusiness be represented in the Comprehensive Plan? A policy statement to show support for that type of industry.
- j. Transportation Question: How would you prioritize the following items, from highest to lowest?
 - i. Transportation is closely aligned with land use
- k. Transportation Question: How should the County prioritize maintenance vs. transportation system expansion?
 - i. “Transportation system expansion” should be clarified to be “road expansion”
 - ii. The context is very helpful on this one.
 - iii. “Would you like to see more of the same types of roads (i.e. gravel) or would you like to see roads built to a higher standard?”
- l. Transportation Question: How should Gem County pursue transit service to address these priorities (i.e. prioritize vanpool vs. fixed route service)?
 - i. A regular bus service probably doesn’t have a huge demand. Seems little outside of the scope for Gem County.

- ii. Would this be more appropriate for Emmett's Plan?
 - iii. Rephrase it like, "did you know we have a van pool? Is that something that you would consider using?"
 - iv. Or rephrase, "what potential transportation would you find useful?"
 - v. Do we need a mass transit program?
- m. Recreation and Open Space Question: How can the County increase access to open space and recreation opportunities?
 - i. Would options B and C fit under a Master Pathways Plan? A Pathways Plan is more of a strategic plan for a full system, funding sources, and projects. B and C could come out of A.
 - ii. How do you create the necessary easements and pathways? County doesn't have a great dedication program.
 - iii. Include equestrian and non-motorized trails option
- n. Recreation and Open Space Question: How can the County improve or enhance use and access of County recreation facilities?
 - i. County is teamed up with Idaho Fish and Game and built additional bathroom facilities. Trying to get more.
 - ii. There is a cost differential. Fairgrounds is a pay to use facility.
 - iii. There's a homeless encampment on the trail near the shore. Add better lighting, visibility, or safety?
 - iv. County does good job with bathrooms and Fairgrounds.
- o. Recreation and Open Space Question: How should the County work to provide more parks and open space?
 - i. Option A: should be any subdivision or does is that too urban?
 - ii. Option B: add grants
- p. Recreation and Open Space Question: How can the County improve use of public lands and minimize private trespassing?
 - i. Option A: include private land management agencies
 - ii. Train people to read the signs
- q. Ag and Natural Resource Question: Which of these regulatory changes and preservation measures would you support, if any?
 - i. Add deed restrictions
- r. Ag and Natural Resource Question: What is your level of support for the County to protect our natural resources in the following ways? (sliding scale 1-5)
 - i. Add dark sky ordinance option
 - ii. Remove Option A and rework the Considerations, as there are regulations in place to require that based on the irrigation rules

- iii. Should we want to create preservation along our river and surrounding areas (not necessarily for tourism, but as preservation of the river as a natural resource)?
 - s. Education Question: What should the County's role be in supporting educational providers?
 - i. Better access to library? Financial access to it. Funding options.
 - ii. Add Considerations to include what "Safe Routes to School Initiatives" are
 - t. Services and Utilities Question:
 - i. What are other counties doing for other alternative energy sources? Solar panels feel like a private property thing, but what other large-scale facilities would we even consider.
 - ii. Don't like the first question.
 - iii. Curious about what public thinks about broadband infrastructure. County is already in discussion about broadband infrastructure.
 - iv. Should the County and City combine services? One fire department?

Next Steps

- 3. Next SC meeting: March 10. Consider moving next meeting to be held on March 14 or 15, so consultant can attend in person for a hands-on workshop of the Future Land Use Map.
 - a. Miriam will send out meeting notes and a quick Doodle Poll to determine the best time to reschedule the next meeting.
- 4. Public Engagement:
 - a. In-Person Workshop: March 15, 6-8PM @ Carberry Elementary School
 - b. Virtual Workshop: March 16, 6-8PM
 - c. Online Survey: March 14 – April 1



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Plan For Our Future, Rooted In Our Past

Steering Committee Meeting #3

February 10 @ 6:00PM

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Discussion
 - Revised Vision and Format Options
 - Opportunities and Choices Review
3. Next Steps
 - Next SC meeting 3/10 (consider rescheduling)
 - Community Workshop 3/15

Revised Vision and Format Options

Which format option is preferred?

Are there additional text changes needed?

Draft Vision: Format Option I

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Vision

Gem County is a community of caring and friendly neighbors working together to preserve and foster our beautiful rural landscapes and quality of life.

Guiding Principles

- Rich agriculture and rural heritage
- Responsible growth
- Resilient local economy
- Reliable infrastructure
- Quality affordable housing
- Opportunities for all generations
- Healthy lifestyles and recreation
- Protected natural resources

Draft Vision: Format Option 2

Gem County is a community of caring and friendly neighbors working together to preserve our rich agriculture and rural heritage, coordinate responsible growth, support a resilient local economy, build and maintain reliable infrastructure, enable quality affordable housing, invest in opportunities for all generations, reinforce healthy lifestyles, and protect our open space and natural resources.

Draft Vision: Format Option 3

Gem County is a community of caring and friendly neighbors working together to preserve and foster our beautiful rural landscapes and quality of life.

Together we will:

- *Preserve our rich agriculture and rural heritage;*
- *Coordinate responsible growth;*
- *Support a resilient local economy;*
- *Build and maintain reliable infrastructure;*
- *Enable quality affordable housing;*
- *Invest in opportunities for all generations;*
- *Reinforce healthy lifestyles and recreation; and*
- *Protect our open space and natural resources.*

Opportunities and Choices Review

Are these the right (most important) questions and topics to ask the public?

For each question, are these the right scale and breadth of choices to consider?

For residents to make informed decisions, what additional information would be helpful to include? (i.e. data, case studies, graphics)

Land Use Choices

Considerations:

The use of Priority Growth Areas in the current plan has created leapfrog development and a lack of predictability for landowners.

Depending on the density and location, new development can increase pressure on existing infrastructure, require significant system improvements, and/or change the character of an area.

Q: How could the County better guide new development?

- A. Remove the Priority Growth Areas concept from the plan
- B. Allow new 1-ac or 2-ac lots only within the Emmett Area of City Impact (closest to existing infrastructure and future service expansion)
- C. Allow 5-ac+ lots on land that **is not** on prime soil for agriculture in the Valley
- D. Other (write-in)

Land Use Choices

Considerations:

Emmett's Area of City Impact (ACI) is intended to identify the City's future municipal service boundary and future annexation areas.

[show a map of the Emmett ACI with this question]

Q: What is appropriate coordination for development within Emmett's Area of City Impact?

- A. Align development standards with the City
- B. Allow smaller lots (1-2 acres)
- C. Require water connections/infrastructure to lot-line on new construction
- D. Better define the Area of Emmett City Impact boundary and requirements in the intergovernmental agreement
- E. Other (write-in)

Land Use Choices

Considerations:

New development is generally more cost-efficient near existing road and utility infrastructure. More intense types of uses may also need access to municipal water.

Commercial and industrial uses benefit from direct access from major roadways, and some industrial uses may need access to railroads or highways to easily transport goods.

Mapping Exercise: We will ask the public where appropriate areas are in the unincorporated areas of the County for the following types of development:

- A. industrial development (green stickers)
- B. commercial development (red stickers)
- C. mixed uses (orange stickers)

Housing Choices

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Considerations:

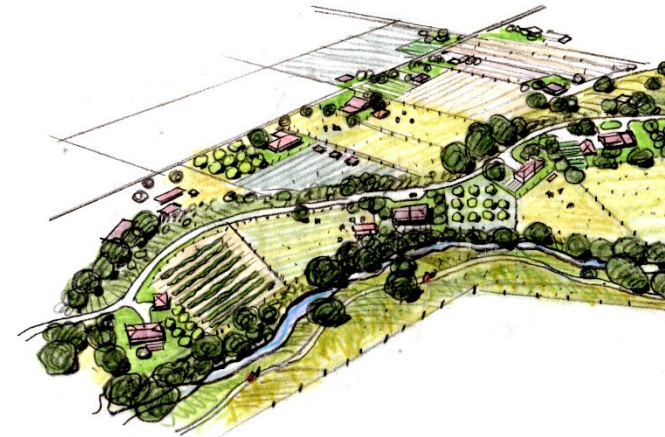
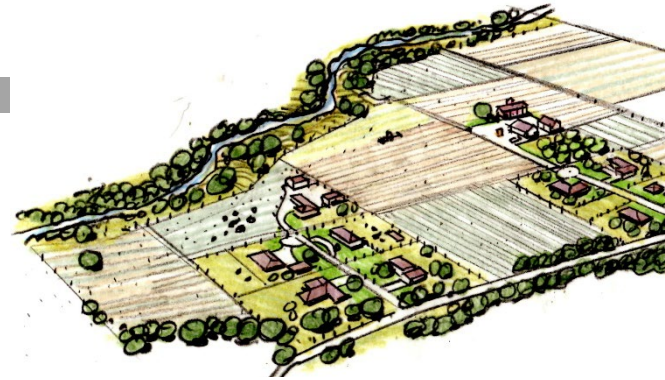
Clustered Developments could provide for smaller lots that require less maintenance, while preserving open space for future generations.

PUDs are already a zoning tool in Gem County, though rarely used.

There is a current policy that mentions “creative subdivision designs” to support a variety of housing types and developments.

Q: Would any of the following subdivision alternatives be appropriate to pursue? If so, where?

- A. Clustered Developments with Shared Open Space or Conservation Easements
- B. Planned Unit Development (PUD)
- C. Other (write-in)



Housing Choices

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Considerations:

The cost of housing is rising in Gem County, as it becomes a more popular area to relocate. There are concerns that this is pricing local residents out of their neighborhoods. Median Home Values in Gem County are increasing at about 17% per year.

Q: Did you know that Gem County uses several methods to promote and encourage affordable housing such as allowing accessory/secondary dwelling units, offering expedited development review, and allowing manufactured homes in residential zones? What else would you like you see the County do to support affordable housing?

Economy Choices

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Targeted Industry Clusters

Different regions have different strengths. Encourage multiple businesses that operate within one or two industry clusters to raise the efficiency of infrastructure and distribution channels, boost Gem County's reputation and brand identity, and helps forge links with other related industries already targeted in the region.



How to foster the best combination of industry activity to leverage local strengths and limit boom-bust risk?

Spread Risk Through Diversity

Promote a variety of industry sectors within the county to lower the exposure to industry-specific business cycle downturns.

Physical proximity of supply chain partners is somewhat less important that it once was, so don't limit the range of business types by overly narrow industry targets.

Economy Choices

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Grow Local Businesses

Focus on existing firms. Connect local entrepreneurial start-ups and existing home-grown companies with resources like grant-finding, industry intelligence, and promotional assistance. Build a sense of local ownership and loyalty that fosters job growth through retention and expansion.



How to prioritize resources put towards economic development goals of retention/expansion versus attraction of new firms?

Attract Desirable Employers

Firms outside Gem County, whether already in the Treasure Valley region or elsewhere in the world, often look to expand through a site-selection process. Actively recruit such employers, with or without public incentives, to grow the local economy more selectively, by pursuing industries and facilities with attributes approved by the community.

Economy Choices

Agritourism Approach

Promote visitor-oriented rural farming activity designed to provide recreational and educational opportunities, with on-site hospitality services and reduced-scale agricultural operations. This can be a more realistic and profitable way to preserve legacy farm traditions without intense mechanization or other ag-industrial infrastructure incompatible with growing residential uses.



How to balance these opposing ideas for preserving farm heritage with limited resources?

Innovate with Agribusiness

Encourage innovative approaches to local agriculture and food-related manufacturing to help maintain the viability of Gem's orchards and other specialized farms at a scale that helps preserve substantial acreages of historical farmlands. Changes like conversion of crops to locally specialized varieties of hops, cherries or other orchard products, can be actively promoted by the County and could be linked to specific specialty food products manufactured in county.

Economy Choices

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Shared City/County Development Guidelines

Gem County and Emmett could gain infrastructure efficiencies and reach common goals through more formal cooperation in development policy.

Create a shared set of negotiated, specific guidelines to provide clarity on issues such as:

- how development density should be geographically distributed,
- how properties should be served by existing or needed infrastructure, and
- what sorts of employment and other commercial development should be pursued in what area



What is the right balance of City-County competition versus cooperation?

City/County “Healthy Competition”

Developers, land-owners, and residents (current and prospective) should be free to choose which jurisdiction best suits their needs, with County and City setting policy in direct response to their own constituents.

Maintain independence in governing and planning across jurisdictions to protect individual property rights and freedom of market choices. Trust that competition will stoke real estate activity and ultimately “lift all boats”.

Transportation Choices

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Considerations:

The County has very limited funds and currently has trouble keeping up with maintenance needs.

Q: How would you prioritize the following items, from highest to lowest?

- A. Pathways
- B. Safety
- C. Transit Service
- D. Roadway Expansion
- E. Maintenance

Transportation Choices

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Considerations:

The Development Impact Fee Program could be used to fund expansion projects, while the Capital Improvement Program could be prioritized for maintenance or safety projects (and to leverage the Development Impact Fee Program for expansion).

Road maintenance has been noted as a priority in the previous plan and in the public outreach. At the same time, managing growth is a key concern.

Q: How should the County prioritize maintenance vs. transportation system expansion?

Transportation Choices

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Considerations:

Transit can encompass a variety of services that are tailored to a community's needs. Vanpools are flexible, small-scale services that connect commuters between Gem and neighboring counties. Fixed route services require additional investments, but can serve local and regional trips, within Gem County and with neighbors. Increasing transportation options can reduce the burden of personal vehicle ownership, reduce traffic congestion, and support local economic prosperity.

Supporting housing affordability and increasing local economic vitality were identified as priorities for Gem County residents.

Q: How should Gem County pursue transit service to address these priorities (i.e., prioritize vanpool vs. fixed route (bus) service)?

Recreation and Open Space Choices

Considerations:

Identifying and prioritizing pathway opportunities throughout the County may necessitate new funding opportunities, such as federal grant programs and the Development Impact Fee Program and the Capital Improvements Program. Additionally, partnerships with government agencies, residents, and other stakeholders, such as the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, could be pursued. Creating a Countywide Pathways Plan was identified in the previous plan.

Increasing recreational opportunities and access to open space was identified as a high priority for Gem County residents, especially along and connecting to the Payette River.

Q: How can the County increase access to open space and recreation opportunities?

- A. Develop a Master Pathways Plan
- B. Evaluate feasibility for a greenbelt trail or additional trails along the Payette River
- C. Evaluate feasibility of Rails-to-Trails OR Rails-and-Trails programs
- D. Other (write-in)

Recreation and Open Space Choices

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Considerations:

The County owns and operates the Gem Island Sports Complex and Fairgrounds.

Q: How can the County improve or enhance use and access of County recreation facilities?

- A. Paved parking
- B. Improved maintenance on walking paths
- C. Restroom facilities
- D. Other (write-in)

Recreation and Open Space Choices

Considerations:

The County doesn't currently play a large role as a recreation provider. There are municipal parks owned and operated by Emmett, and the Gem County Recreation District that are larger providers in the region.

Q: How should the County work to provide more parks and open space?

- A. Require park or open space dedication in subdivisions or master plans over 40 acres
- B. Direct acquisition (purchase) of land that is less suitable for development
- C. Expand recreation amenities at existing facilities
- D. There is not a need for more County parks and open space
- E. Other (write-in)

Recreation and Open Space Choices

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Considerations:

43% of the land in Gem County is publicly owned. Through outreach, it was mentioned that access to these lands is often confusing, leaving some to trespass on private property.

Q: How can the County improve use of public lands and minimize private trespassing?

- A. Collaborate with public land management agencies to improve signage
- B. Collaborate with public land management agencies to improve/increase recreation access points (trailheads/campgrounds/etc)
- C. Increase awareness of recreation etiquette by providing information on where to find appropriate access and how to identify public spaces vs private
- D. Other (write-in)

Ag and Natural Resources Choices

Considerations:

Some regulations can hinder the success of otherwise viable agriculture, there are also measures the county can take to preserve viable agriculture.

Q. Which of these regulatory changes and preservation measures would you support, if any?

- A. Protection of agriculture through acquisition, bonding, conservation easements, tax districts, impact fees, etc.
- B. Support flexibility in land uses in agricultural areas such as produce stands, truck farms, event venues, agritourism, seasonal activities, and worker housing
- C. Identify land uses that may be compatible with and support continued agricultural operations, and include them in the County Code land use tables
- D. Facilitate low-cost water and power to agricultural operations
- E. Other (write-in)

Ag and Natural Resources Choices

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Considerations:

When landowners divide irrigated lands into parcels of any size, there are no current requirements to provide easements for new irrigation supply ditches and new drainage systems to reach all new parcels.

Q: What is your level of support for the County to protect our natural resources in the following ways? (sliding scale 1-5)

- A. Allow existing supply ditches and drainage systems to have easements to benefit all parties in the event of a subdivision
- B. Develop ridgeline protection standards to mitigate development impact on scenic views
- C. Develop sensitive area standards to protect/mitigate impact to natural open space, wildlife habitat, and sensitive lands

Education Choices

Considerations:

The Emmett Independent School District is an independent taxing districts and not funded or managed by the County. There is opportunity to support school facilities through transportation and land use decisions.

Q: What should the County's role be in supporting educational providers?

- A. Support Safe Routes to School initiatives and investment
- B. Coordinate growth expectations with the school district to plan for future facility needs
- C. Other (write-in)

Services and Utilities Choices

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Considerations:

Q: Should the County encourage alternative energy sources? i.e. solar panels

Q: Should this plan focus on expanding broadband infrastructure?

Next Steps

SC Meeting: March 10, 2022

- Hands on Future Land Use exercise
- Prefer to have in-person with consultant – consider rescheduling for 3/14 or 3/15

Community Choices Workshops

- In Person March 15 @ 6-8 PM @ Carberry Elementary School
- Online March 16 @ 6-8 PM via zoom