

CITY OF LIBBY
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 24, 2022 @ 6:00PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL

CALL TO ORDER:

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call
- Welcome

NEW BUSINESS: Each new agenda item will be introduced by the mayor (or assigned liaison) with a description of the item and explanation for the recommended action. Following council discussion on each item will be an opportunity for public comment prior to any action taken. **Public comment is limited to 3 minutes concerning the agenda item being discussed only.**

The Libby City Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing to solicit public comments on the proposed City of Libby Growth Policy updates prior to the Planning Board's adoption of the draft document and submission of the growth policy to the City Council. After consideration of the recommendations and suggestions elicited at the public hearing, the Planning Board will make a recommendation to the City Council by resolution.

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:

ADJOURNMENT:

Notes:

The manner of Addressing Council:

- Each person, not a Council member shall address the Council, at the time designated in the agenda or as directed by the Council, by stepping to the podium or microphone, giving that person's name and address in an audible tone of voice for the record, unless further time is granted by the Council, **shall limit the address to the Council to three minutes.**
- All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and not to any member of the Council or Staff with no personal remarks allowed.
- No person, other than the Council and the person having the floor, shall be permitted to enter any discussion either directly or through a member of the Council, without the permission of the Presiding Officer.
- Any person making personal, impertinent, or slanderous remarks or who shall become boisterous or disruptive during the council meeting shall be forthwith barred from further presentation to the council by the presiding officer unless permission to continue by granted by a majority vote of the council.

ATTENTION:

To access this meeting electronically with ZOOM,
Dial: 253-215-8782
Meeting ID: 4042719951
Password: 151041
Posted: 10/20/22

City of Libby 2022 Growth Policy
(Draft 2, for Planning Board review)

IMAGINE LIBBY
-2032-



October 2022



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VISION STATEMENT

The Vision Statement, updated in 2022 from the 2010 Growth Policy Vision Statement, has been developed to define the kind of place City officials and citizens want Libby to be 10 years in the future. In considering this Vision Statement, it is important to understand its perspective, context, and role in the Growth Policy. The Vision Statement expresses citizens' aspirations for the future of Libby. It is written in the perspective of someone who, in 2032 and later, is observing the character of Libby and reflecting on the past 22 or more years of progress – progress guided in part by the Goals and Action Plan in the Growth Policy.

The Vision Statement also expresses values and motivations of Libby citizens. The Goals and Action Plan sets out in detail how we intend to achieve the vision.

Vision Statement – Imagine Libby 2032

The City of Libby reflects planned growth consistent with the social and cultural values of its citizens. Libby is a safe, healthy, friendly and attractive community that fosters a sense of belonging and pride. The Downtown is the vibrant and charming heart of the community. Libby is committed to advancing commerce, tourism and recreation, and to supporting high quality and continuing education. Libby provides a diverse economic base, efficient public services, and a variety of housing options. New development and redevelopment are encouraged in areas where public services can be provided and the historic and cultural heritage of the City can be preserved and enhanced. The integrity of natural and scenic resources is maintained and enhanced to protect and maintain Libby's high quality of life. Libby promotes citizen involvement, open responsive government and recognizes the value of partnerships with citizens and other governments in Northwest Montana.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Those directly involved with the process of drafting and adoption of this updated Growth Policy include:

City Planning Board Members

Kristin Smith, Chair
Roberta (Bobbi) McCanse
Mark Andreasen
Jennifer Nelson
Christine Anderson

City Council Members

Gary Beach
Melissa Berke
Zachariah McNew
Kristin Smith
Hugh Taylor
Brian Zimmerman

City Staff

Samuel Sikes, City Administrator
Leann Monigold, City Clerk-Treasurer

City Mayor

Peggy Williams

The City of Libby and planning consultants from Land Solutions, LLC also give **thanks to all individuals and organizations** who assisted with this project by providing data and information, being interviewed, for participating in focus groups and the public processes, and offering valuable comments every step of the way. Special thanks go out to the following:

Libby Area Chamber of Commerce

Lincoln County

For grant funding and administration, and being crucial resources, special thanks also go out to the following:

Montana Department of Commerce, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and Montana Main Street Program

Land Solutions planners Dave DeGrandpre and Joel Nelson thank Alex Bramlette for assistance with compiling information for the existing conditions, trends and projections.

Sources and Photograph Credits

Many thanks also go out to the sources listed and those who provided photographs as listed throughout this Growth Policy. Photos without credits were provided by the City of Libby and Land Solutions, LLC.



INTRODUCTION

What is a Growth Policy?

A Growth Policy is:

- ✓ A community's vision for how it sees its future
- ✓ A community's vision for how and where it wants to grow
- ✓ An official statement of public policy to guide growth and change

A Growth Policy is not:

- A regulatory document
- Stagnant – rather, it is a dynamic document that changes with the community

What Growth Policies Address:

A growth policy addresses the following community aspects:

- ✓ Land use
- ✓ Population
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Economic conditions
- ✓ Local services
- ✓ Public facilities
- ✓ Natural resources, including sand and gravel resources

...and any other topics included by the Planning Board. This Growth Policy covers

THIS GROWTH POLICY IN A NUTSHELL:

The City of Libby and surrounding area is a unique community that faces interrelated challenges including a shortage of affordable housing and essential workers. The City's ability to solve these issues is limited, but the City can provide a business and development friendly atmosphere to spur economic development. With a strong downtown and City infrastructure and services, the City is ready to support efforts to create new housing and welcome new businesses and workers. With downtown being the heart of the community, this Growth Policy includes a robust emphasis on downtown planning and revitalization efforts, with the City being a leader of those efforts.

This Growth Policy's Goals and Action Plan provides the implementation tools for achieving our community vision. It is the heart of the City's plan for growth and success, and includes considerable and targeted actions to face community challenges.

those topics, and downtown planning is a major component of this document.

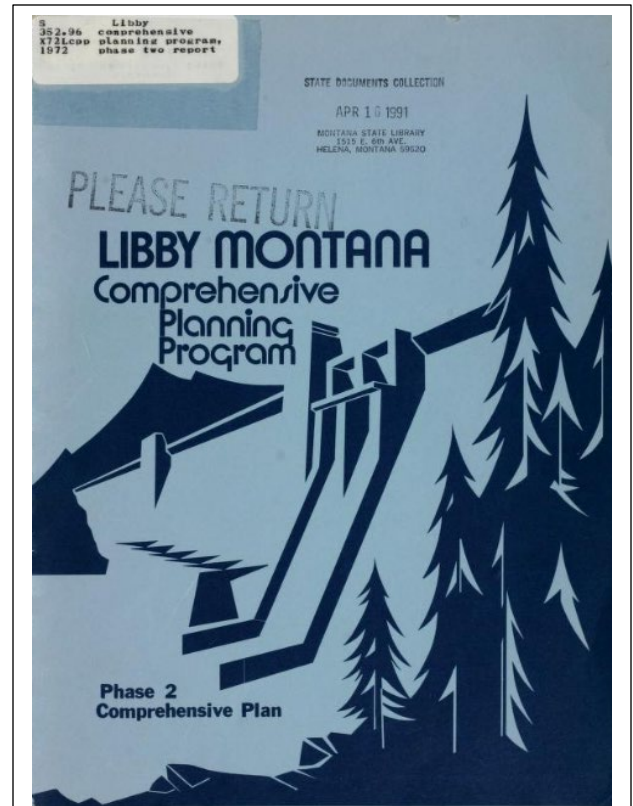
A growth policy also includes an inventory of existing characteristics or facilities; projected trends; goals, policies and implementation strategies to achieve goals; and intergovernmental coordination strategies.



The term “growth policy” was introduced into Montana law in the late 1990s. In state law, the terms, “growth policy”, “master plan”, and “comprehensive plan” are interchangeable.

A growth policy is a broad body of public policy, primarily focused on community growth and development issues. While it is not a regulatory document in and of itself, once adopted it forms the basis for use in regulations or programs to implement the growth policy. For example, a growth policy does not *zone* property, rather, it provides a starting point for a community to adopt or amend zoning regulations. Land may be zoned and regulations written and enacted based upon recommendations contained in a growth policy. Growth policies are explained in the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) in Title 76, Chapter 1, Part 6.

The Libby Growth Policy is an official public document adopted by the City of Libby as a guide for future growth of the City. The primary purpose of developing the Libby Growth Policy is to help the public and local officials define objectives, set their priorities, and seek solutions to long term issues. The Growth Policy is not a law or regulation, but rather the adopted policy when making land use decisions for the community. The City Council must be guided by and give consideration to the general policy and pattern of development set out in the Growth Policy. In addition, new development proposals should be evaluated in terms of their compliance with the goals and objectives of the Growth



1972 Libby Comprehensive Plan cover;
archive.org

City of Libby Growth Policy



Photo courtesy of Bill Caldwell, 2010

A revision to the 1972 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted November 1, 2010

2010 Libby Growth Policy cover



Policy. The plan is intended to be the guide to physical development in the community.

A secondary function of the Growth Policy is as a reference source containing demographic, economic and quality of life information about the City, and the availability and timing of certain infrastructure improvements.

The Growth Policy provides a sense of direction, a broad overview of where a community is (existing conditions) and where it is going (by way of identifying trends and projections, as well as future desires). It may be thought of as a way of assuring that a community's health, safety, and general welfare are promoted by striving for a better, healthier, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing environment in which to live. The Growth Policy provides a consistent framework for legislative and administrative action, always steering the City toward the desired future.

In short, over the 10 year planning horizon of the Growth Policy, its contents will be referred to again and again as the City Council, Planning Board, various City

departments, non-profits, and the public make comments and decisions on laws, rules, and regulations and programs. Always, the underlying motivation will be to see to it that the City of Libby in 10 years is as close as we can make it to the City of the future described in the Vision Statement.

"It should be emphasized that this Comprehensive Plan (Growth Policy) cannot serve its intended purpose – as a guide for community growth – without the support of citizens of the area. Implementation of the Plan (Policy) will require the adoption of zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and community wide programs of renewal, code enforcement and beautification. All of these things cannot function without the support of an enthusiastic and enlightened citizenry." (City of Libby Comprehensive Plan – 1972; and as cited in the 2010 Growth Policy)

The same continues to hold true today!

With that said, welcome to Libby – let's get to know Libby and get into the plan – Imagine Libby 2032.





LIBBY LOCATION

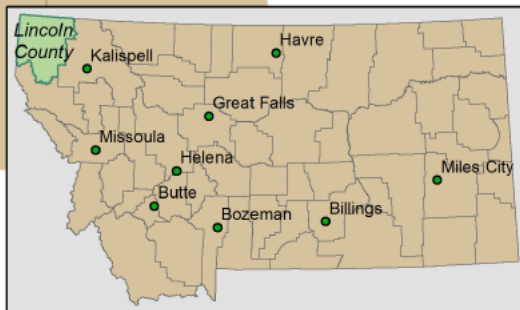
As shown on Map 1, the City of Libby is located in far northwest Montana. The City is the county seat of Lincoln County and largest city in the County. Being a small town that is relatively remote, Libby residents rely on regional trade centers such as Kalispell, Montana and Spokane, Washington and surrounding areas when availability of local products is limited.

The City of Libby is located in a narrow valley that carries the Kootenai River. The City is surrounded by forest land and the Cabinet Mountains.

Recreational amenities and wild places abound in this location. It is a destination for those seeking opportunities to hike, fish, hunt, ski, boat, attend social events, view wildlife, take in the scenery, just pass through, and enjoy countless other activities.



LOCATION:
The City of Libby is located in central Lincoln County at the junction of US Highway 2 and MT Highway 37. Lincoln County is located in the northwest corner of the State of Montana, with the Idaho panhandle to the west, and Canada to the north. Libby is 90 miles (1 ½ hours) from Kalispell, MT, and 160 miles (±3 hours) from Spokane, WA.



MAP 1: LIBBY LOCATION



LIFE OF THE GROWTH POLICY

To Imagine Libby, the Growth Policy needs to identify how far into the future to imagine. State law refers to the “life of the growth policy”. The 2010 Libby Growth Policy identified a “20-year planning horizon” from its 2010 adoption, and included a Vision Statement for Libby 2030. With this document being an “update” to the 2010 Growth Policy, and given the somewhat unpredictable times during the Growth Policy update process, the Libby Planning Board determined early on to establish a working growth policy life of 10 years. With adoption in 2022, the Growth Policy reflects a City vision out to 2032.



Photo courtesy of Libby Area Chamber of Commerce



*Cover Photo from 2010 Libby Growth Policy.
Photo courtesy of Bill Caldwell, 2010*



PLANNING AREA

State law refers to the “jurisdictional area” of a growth policy, which the City of Libby considers the “Planning Area”. The 2010 Growth Policy identified a Planning Area of the area within the Libby City Limits and the unincorporated land within one mile. The Libby Planning Board determined early in the growth policy update process to continue to consider the Planning Area as the area within the City Limits and unincorporated land within one mile. Map 2 depicts the City of Libby and surrounding area within one mile as the updated jurisdictional area – the growth policy Planning Area.

The City has a logical interest in guiding the land use and development patterns both within and immediately outside the City Limits to ensure efficient provision of services and cost-effective capital

improvements. Portions of the Planning Area may become annexed to the City during the 10-year planning horizon.

The Planning Area includes lands where urban services are already provided or are likely to be readily and/or efficiently provided over the course of the next 10 years. Many of the County residents in the Planning Area currently have access to City services and resources such as the local street network, water and sewer service, and facilities such as public parks and emergency services. Although these residents are not physically located within the City, they create a demand for City services. It is important for the City to plan for growth in surrounding areas to better understand demands on its resources, and to adequately provide services to people, if and when they become City residents.

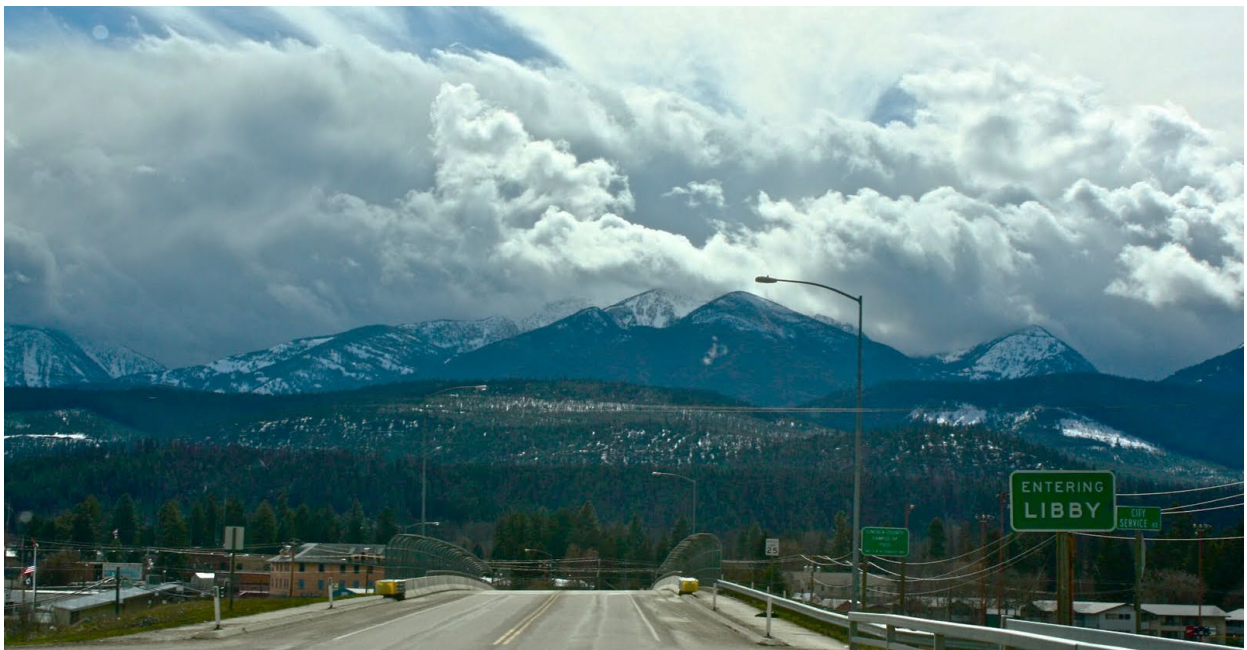
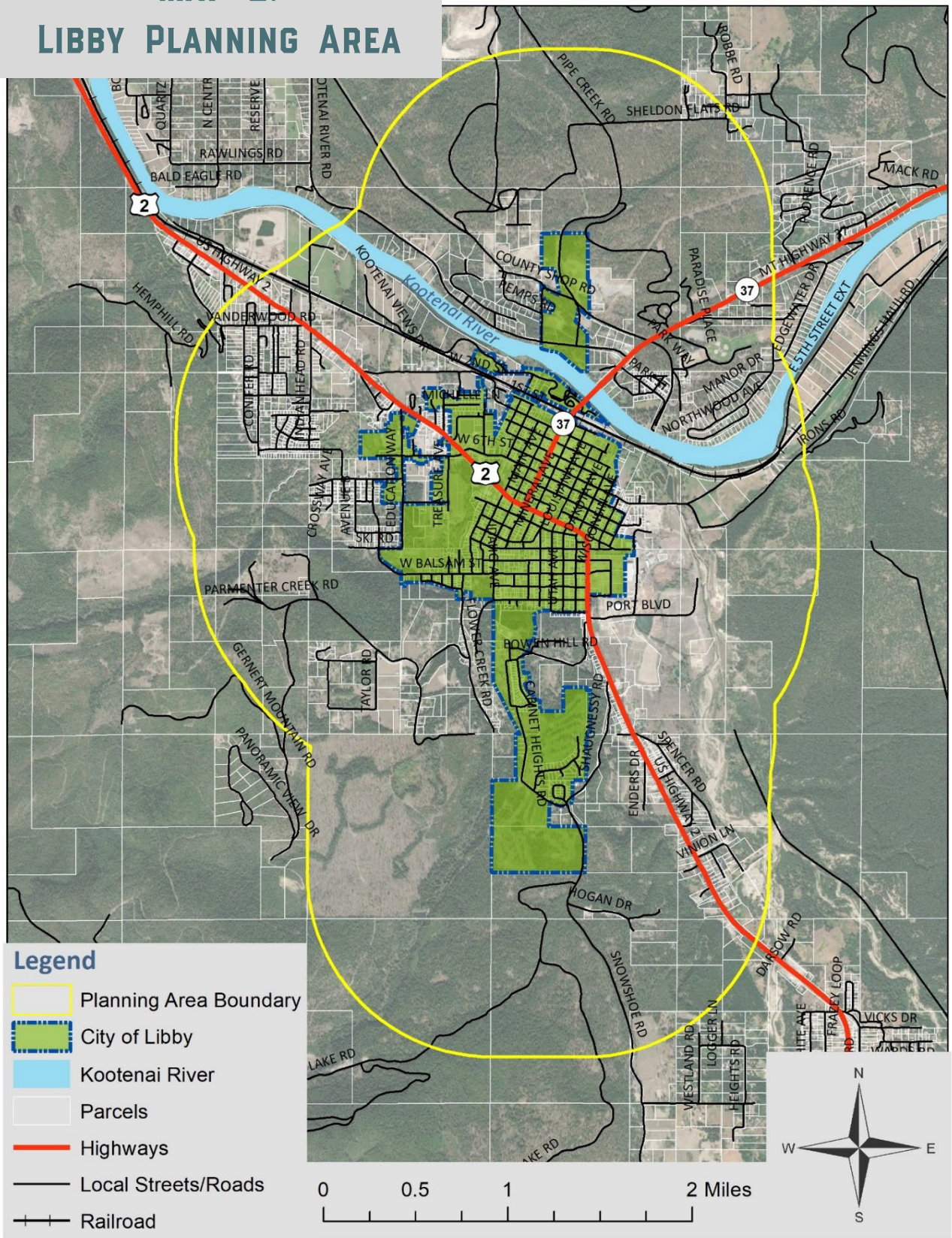


Photo courtesy of Libby Area Chamber of Commerce



MAP 2: LIBBY PLANNING AREA





ADMINISTRATION

Administration of the Growth Policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the City of Libby, with some implementation done in cooperation with partners. The City of Libby has a charter form of government with a Mayor and a six member council who set policy and regulation, ordinances and resolutions, and establish an annual budget. Libby has a City Administrator as well as support staff that oversees the day-to-day operations of the City which include water and wastewater utilities, streets, parks, cemetery, and police department. The City currently has 24 full-time employees, two seasonal employees, and 10 part-time employees, which include three firemen, 6 City Council members and the Mayor.

The City’s planning functions are carried out in a number of ways, particularly in the past year while these updates to the Growth

Policy were written. Recently, the City has attempted to cover planning services previously done through interlocal agreement with the Lincoln County planning staff, by hiring a staff planner to administer the Growth Policy and planning regulations. It is not known how planning services will be handled in the coming years, but the City will typically have a professional planner in some capacity, be it a staff employee, through interlocal agreement, or through other contract. The planner should coordinate the City’s implementation of the Growth Policy with close consultation with the City Administrator, Planning Board, and the Mayor/City Council.

Accomplishments since 2010

The success of a growth policy is measured by how the document was implemented following adoption. Several actions and



Libby City Council and staff in early 2022



implementation measures of the 2010 Growth Policy and its Goals and Action Plan have been fulfilled. Of note:

- ✓ The City's website has been kept substantially up to date as detailed in the actions.
- ✓ Streetscape improvements in the downtown area have been partially done.
- ✓ The City updated the Capital Improvements Plan, with the last update completed in 2020.
- ✓ The City has implemented the Capital Improvements Plan.
- ✓ The City has improved enforcement of City codes.
- ✓ The City updated the zoning code per the 2010 Growth Policy and 2005 Downtown Plan.
- ✓ The City adopted City subdivision regulations in 2011.
- ✓ The City has implemented the sidewalk improvement plan and assisted property owners to improve sidewalks.
- ✓ Installation of wayfinding signs has been completed.
- ✓ The City has completed parks improvements.
- ✓ The City and devoted community members have implemented considerable actions from the

Downtown Plan's Goals and Action Plan, as further discussed in the Downtown sections.

While not all of the implementation measures in the 2010 Goals and Action Plan were completed, considering the planning horizon for the 2010 Growth Policy was 20 years or through the year 2030, overall implementation has been a success. This is especially true considering the many targeted actions completed over the past 12 years, and the City can further benefit from the lessons learned through Growth Policy implementation as this updated Growth Policy is completed and implemented. Future Goals and Actions have been updated, refined, and developed based on past success, a realistic vision, and current conditions.





LIBBY'S HISTORY

Set in the northwest corner of Montana, 35 miles east of Idaho and 70 miles south of Canada, is the City of Libby. The City lies in a picturesque valley carved by the Kootenai River and framed by the Cabinet Mountains to the south. Approximately 12,000 people live within a ten-mile radius of Libby, the seat of Lincoln County. Known as the "City of Eagles", the community's assets include clean water, beautiful scenery, and recreational opportunities such as fishing, hiking, hunting, boating and skiing. In fact, it is the only place in the Northern Rockies where one can travel less than 2 hours to 4 different ski areas with more than 2,000 feet of vertical descent!

Most of Libby's incorporated area is located south of the Kootenai River. U.S. Highway 2 bisects the community running east to west and MT Highway 37 crosses the Kootenai River, following it north to Eureka. The BNSF

has a rail line that follows the Kootenai River through Libby. The City of Libby is the largest urbanized area and most densely developed city in Lincoln County.

Like many western towns, Libby developed around the railroad after discovery of gold in the Cabinet Mountains. In August 1867, miners working Libby Creek discovered gold. The mining camp, located south of present-day Libby became known as Libbysville. In October 1889 a lode containing silver and lead was discovered. It was named Snowshoe and would be a major producing mine for the Libby area by the late 1890s.

On May 3, 1892 the first train on the Great Northern Railroad arrived in Libby. That year saw other firsts as well: the first school house, a small wooden building, in the same block as Hotel Libby and the first



An excerpt of *'Historic Libby 1894'*, a painting by Wilber Criderman, which is displayed at the Lincoln County Courthouse.



newspaper, the *Libby Miner*, was published. The first church was the old log Methodist Church built in 1897. The first homes were built in the early 1890s with dirt floors and dirt and grass roofs. Telephone service came to Libby around 1913.

The town grew quickly in the early 1900s and logging quickly became an important part of the community's culture, due to its setting. Libby Townsite Company brought in the first sawmill and cut timber to build Libby in its present location. In the spring 1906 construction began of the Dawson Lumber Company sawmill at the site of the former Stimson Sawmill (now known as the Kootenai Business Park) bringing workers and their families to the town in greater numbers. Unfortunately, that same year a

disastrous fire swept through downtown, destroying many of the original buildings. The Dawson mill was the first successful sawmill to operate in the Libby vicinity and several lumber companies owned the mill at Libby over the next 100 years. Railroad logging began in the area in 1907 with the construction of a logging railroad along Libby Creek. Julius (J.) Neils and Weyerhaeuser interests acquired timberlands in the area at about the same time.

For more than a century Libby has been tied to the timber industry and reminders of its importance are evident throughout the community – the local High School's mascot is the Libby Logger.



J. Neils #6 steam locomotive hauling logs to mill in the early 1900s in Libby; photo courtesy of Dean Kershner



The Libby Dam, approximately 17 miles north of town, was constructed from 1966 to 1972 employing 2,000 workers during peak construction periods. The 422-foot tall dam holds back 90 miles of water in Lake Koochanusa. Its generators can provide enough electricity for the daily needs of 500,000 average homes. In 1975, the Libby Dam was dedicated by President Gerald Ford after two decades of planning and construction.

In the early 1900s vermiculite deposits were first located by prospectors on Rainy Creek northeast of Libby. In 1919, E.N. Alley bought the Rainy Creek claims and started the Zonolite Company. The W. R. Grace Company bought the mine and operated it from 1963 until its closure in 1990. While in operation, the vermiculite mine in Libby may have produced 80% of the world's supply of vermiculite and was a significant employer of many Libby townspeople. Because the area vermiculite contains asbestos, and the mine's byproducts were used in local buildings and landscaping, the community suffered from an extremely high rate of asbestosis. In late 1999, the mine was blamed for asbestos-related deaths and illnesses among Libby residents and former employees due to exposure to asbestos-tainted vermiculite. It was found that nearly 10% of the population died from asbestos contamination. The federal government later charged W. R. Grace Company officials for complicity, but in 2009, the company was acquitted of charges that it knowingly



President Nixon at the Libby Dam construction site with Congressman Richard Shoup, Senator Mike Mansfield, and Stanley Stearns, the Libby Dam Project Manager. Photo courtesy of the Richard Nixon Library via Twitter.

harmed the people of Libby or subsequently participating in any cover-up.

In October 2002 Libby was added to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List for clean-up, triggering intensive research and on-site investigations. The EPA declared the first ever Public Health Emergency in June, 2009.ⁱ The site was divided into eight operable units. The units were based on the complexity of cleanup and extent of contamination. In 2016, the EPA issued a final decision giving our community a clean bill of health. As of September 2021, the EPA announced the deletion of the third operable unit in three years.ⁱⁱ Yet the stigmas tend to remain. The community has



faced these challenges head on, and is focused on Libby's future as a clean, safe place with endless opportunities in the City and out our back door.

Like many other western towns, Libby has experienced cycles of boom and bust. However, nestled in its beautiful and scenic mountainous setting, surrounded by vast public lands and recreation opportunities, Libby continues to be a desirable place to live, work, and retire. Libby has a number of assets that make it a livable community.

During the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the national economy stumbled, impacting the entire nation, including Libby. Those initial impacts on Libby were not as extreme as on other communities in large part due to the resiliency of businesses to not entirely shut down like in many other places. Visitors and tourists continued to come to Libby. Some discovered Libby and decided to make it home, like other western Montana communities. Then as the pandemic was controlled and the nation recovered, many people continued to move to Libby and invest in real estate. Much of this is thought to be spurred by the trend resulting from the pandemic, when many workers began working remotely, often from home. This resulted in flexibility in terms of where many

individuals can live and work. Why not Libby?

Libby's history and heritage, location along the Kootenai River, City parks and open space areas, cultural amenities such as a performing arts center, excellent schools, and wonderful recreational opportunities are all aspects that community members of all backgrounds extol.

Improving community safety, diversifying the economy, enhancing the image of Libby, protecting natural resources and maintaining attractive locations to live, work and recreate are all key to Libby's prosperity. The following sections discuss current Libby conditions, trends, and projections for population, economy, housing, land use, natural resources, public facilities, and local services.



Eagle monument and community driven landscaping at the intersection of US Highway 2 and Minnesota Avenue



POPULATION

Since the 1950s, Libby has experienced relatively substantial fluctuations in its population. The largest increase of 44% occurred between 1960 and 1970 with the construction of the Libby Dam, after which the population declined. Since 1990, the population slowly recovered from 2,532 people in 1990 to 2,887 people in 2000.

As of 2010 the population of Libby was estimated at 2,681, a 7.4% decrease from 2000. This decrease could be correlated to the EPA declaring, for the first time in the history of the agency, a public health emergency in Libby to provide federal health care assistance for victims of asbestos-related diseases. In 2020, the population increased again to 2,775. See Figure 1 for Libby’s population changes over the past 20 years, and projections through 2030.

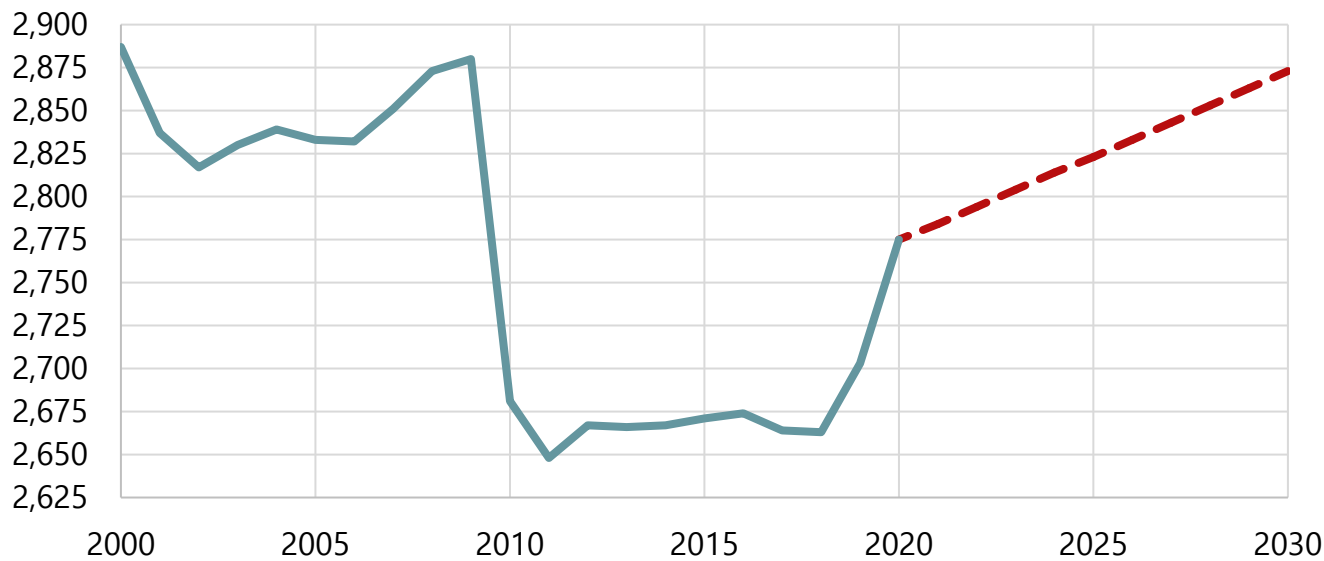
SNAPSHOT: POPULATION

The population of Libby is expected to rise at a moderate rate during the next 10 years, but as people from more populated areas move to small communities with recreational amenities and beauty like Libby, the City should plan for modest growth and take steps to accommodate a growing population.

Projections

Figure 1 shows population projections through 2030, assuming previous population change rates will be an indicator of future change, although the high growth rates over the past four years are likely to level off. Population annual growth rates were 0.35% from 2010 to 2020. Using that growth rate, Libby’s population is expected to continue to increase by approximately 100 people over the next 10 years. However, the City expects with added amenities, industries, and opportunities for economic

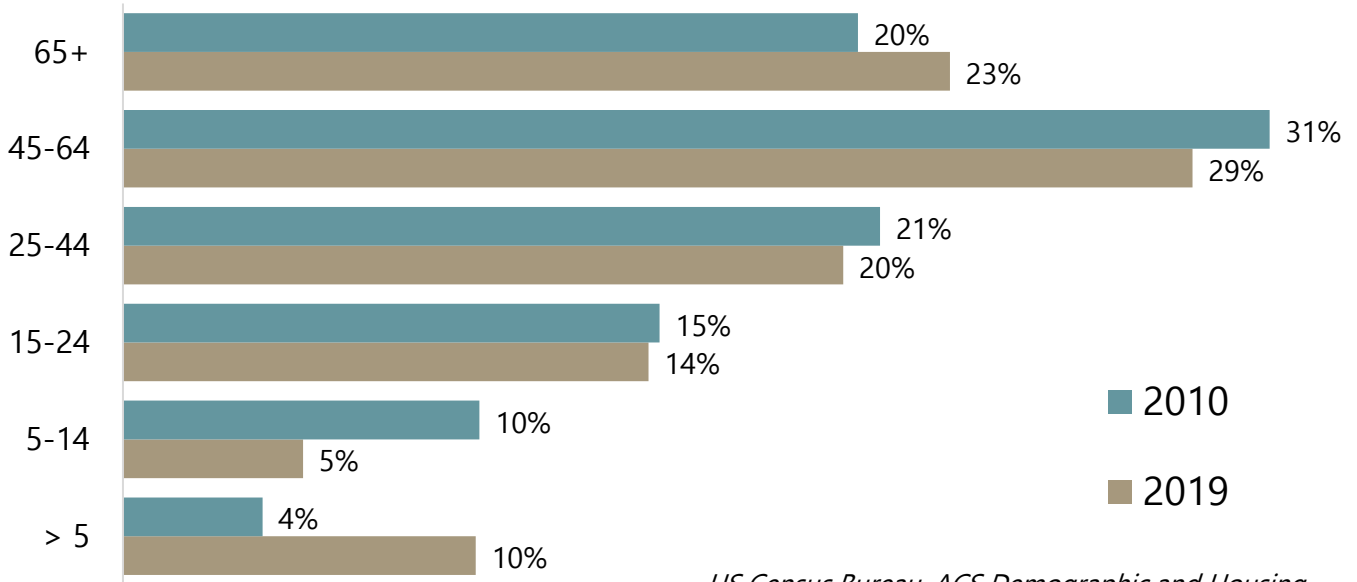
Figure 1 - Historic and Projected Population Changes



Source: US Census



Figure 2 - Age Distribution 2010 to 2019



US Census Bureau, ACS Demographic and Housing

growth and annexations, Libby could see a larger increase for the future population.. A higher 10 year projection of growth of 149 people ($\pm 0.52\%$) to a population of 2,954 people is supported by data for Libby’s average annual growth rate for the last four years (from 2018 through 2022) of 0.515%, when the population estimates increased from 2,763 to 2,805.ⁱⁱⁱ

Age Distribution

As of 2019, the 45-64 age group made up the largest share of Libby’s population at 29%, followed by 65+ (23%), 25-44 (20%), 15-24 (14%), under 5 (10%), and 5-14 (5%). As shown in Figure 2, there has been a 1% decrease in the percentage of those who were 15-44, and a significant drop in those age 5-14. There has been a 6% increase in the population of children under 5 years old. This is notable because the younger population may have an impact on the school enrollment, economic and housing demands. Also notable is the 3% increase in

ages 65+, because individuals in this group will likely have needs in terms of housing, mobility, and healthcare.

Race & Ethnicity

As of 2019, estimates show white as the most common race of Libby residents, which is also the case in Lincoln County and Montana. As Table 1 shows, Libby’s Hispanic and Black populations are larger than that of Lincoln County and Montana on a percentage basis.

Table 1 - Racial & Ethnic Composition, 2019

	Libby	Lincoln	MT
White	92.8%	92.6%	86.1%
Hispanic/Latino	7.2%	3.1%	3.8%
Black/African American	1.2%	0.2%	0.4%
American Indian	3.4%	1.2%	6.1%
Asian alone	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%
Hawaiian	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Other	0.5%	2.1%	2.8%

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce; Census Bureau



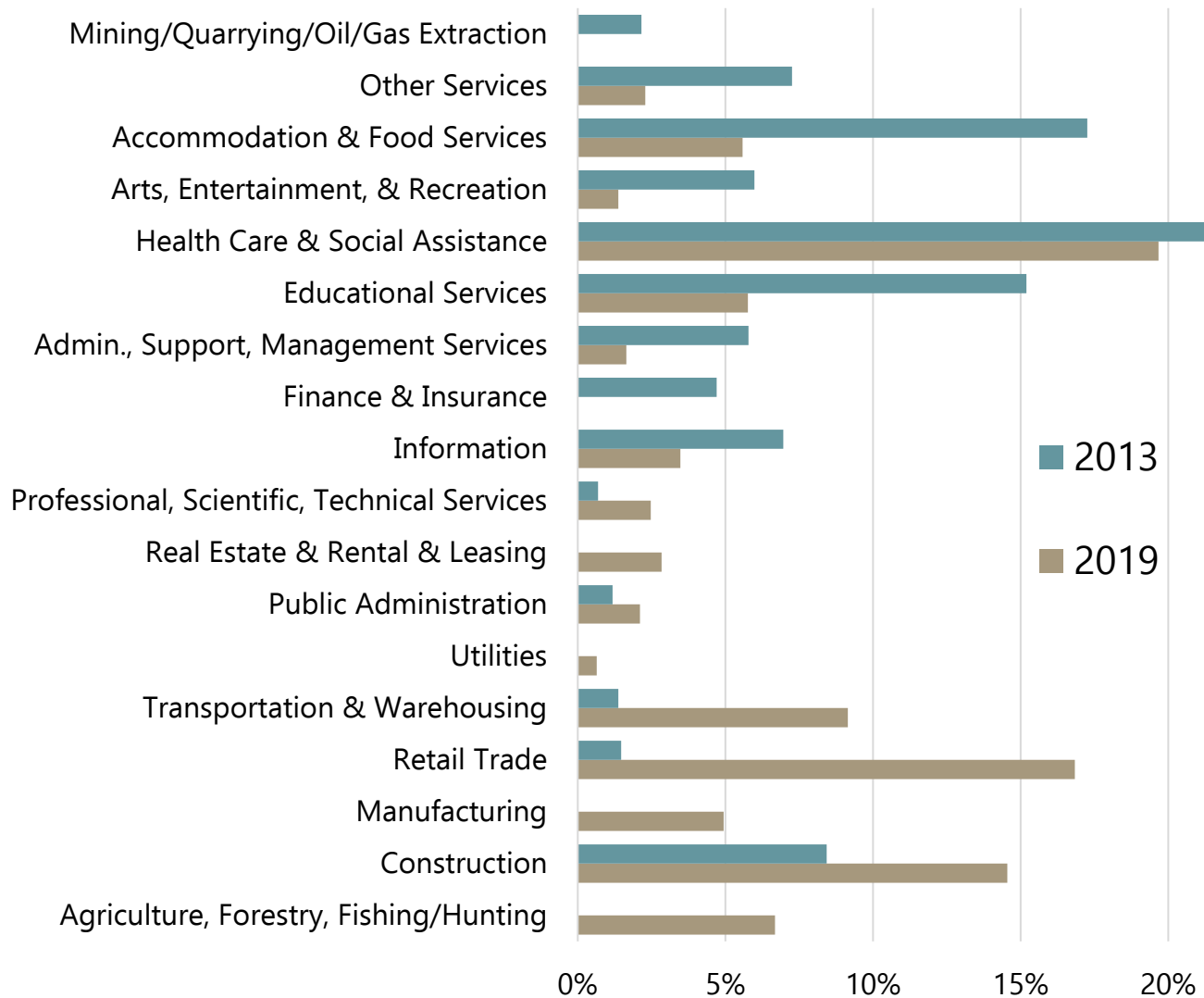
ECONOMY

Employment

Between 2013 and 2019 the total employment in Libby grew from 1,020 to 1,090. The industry sectors employing the most Libby residents as of 2019 were Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Construction, accounting for 20%, 17%, and 15% of all jobs, respectively (see Figure 3). During this time, out of the 18 sectors

SNAPSHOT: ECONOMY
The City of Libby’s economy is critical to address, with certain employment sectors in need of more workers. By taking actions to support job creation and economic and community development efforts, the local economy can continuously improve and the community can grow in line with its vision for success.

Figure 3 - Employment by Industry 2013-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau



analyzed, nine saw increases in employment.

The industries experiencing the highest nominal employment growth were Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Construction, and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting.

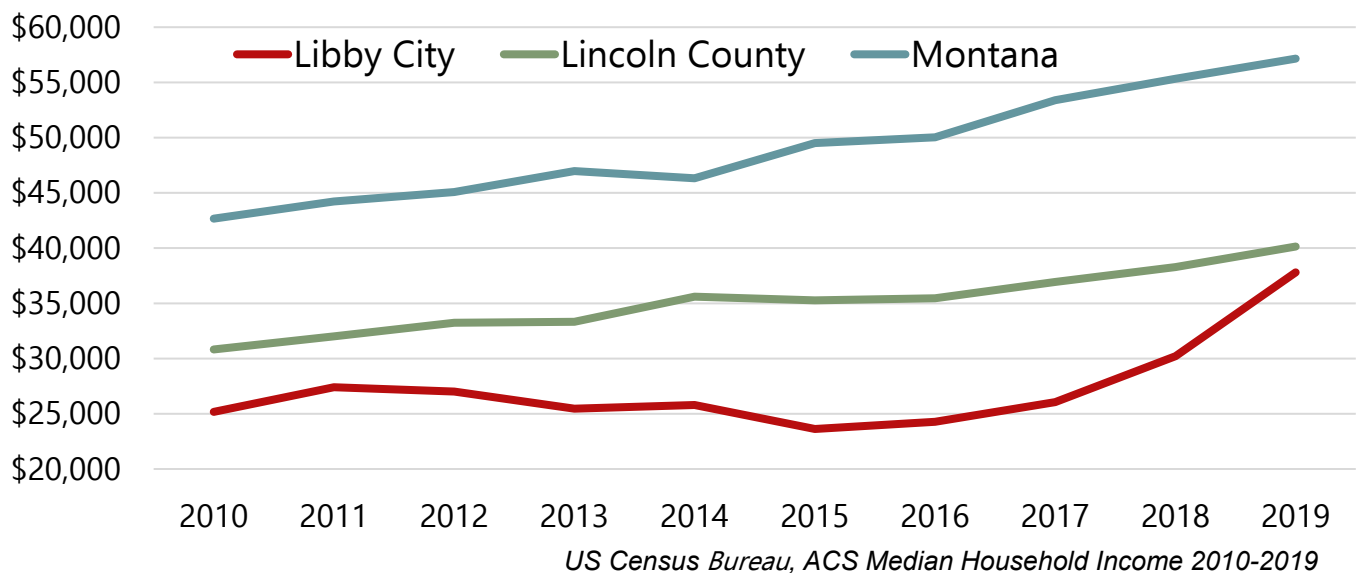
It should be noted that some industry sectors in Figure 3 have no data shown in either 2013 or 2019, but the figure is based upon available data. In addition, the City anticipates growth in the number of mining jobs as a result of anticipated mining in the area, as well as forestry and related jobs as a result of the USFS increasing staff.

When looking at employment trends in Libby it is helpful to look to the recent past and the impacts of the national recession. Libby’s economy has historically been supported by construction, logging, and mining. The Libby Dam construction project on the Kootenai River, just upstream of the

city, employed over 2,000 workers in the 1970s. The United States and Montana experienced a prolonged period of economic expansion during the 1990s which continued through the end of 2007 when the national economy took a sharp decline. Montana began feeling the brunt of “The Great Recession” late into 2010. Libby, like many smaller communities in western Montana, started feeling the contraction years earlier with the shuttering of mills and mines – the large employers in the area. In addition, as the EPA superfund cleanups have wrapped up, jobs and the amount of money injected into the local economy have also declined as a direct result.

As of 2019, the median household income for the Libby, MT census place was \$37,802^{iv}. The City of Libby experienced a median household income increase of 50.2% from 2010 to 2019, which is significantly higher than Lincoln County and Montana. County and state household

Figure 4 - Median Household Income





income increased at 30.2% and 33.9% respectively (see Figure 4). With this large increase, Libby’s median household income is now 6.2% below Lincoln County, compared to 2015 when Libby’s median household income was 49.3% below Lincoln County.

A large factor when considering the local economy and employment is the difficulty for businesses in service industries to find and keep employees. Likewise, there is a shortage of solid, well-paying jobs within the community that can keep up with housing costs.

Current unemployment figures for the City of Libby are unavailable because the U.S. Census Bureau did not release its standard 2020 American Community Survey 1-year estimates due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. 2018 unemployment estimates are found in Tables 2 and 3, which represent the latest data available.

While it is difficult to compare 2018 statistics

Table 2 – Estimated 2018 Libby and Lincoln County Unemployment Rates

	Libby	Lincoln County
Unemployment Rate	11.6%	10.4%
Male	9.7%	10.6%
Female	15.5%	9.4%
Persons with Disabilities	41.7%	17.6%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Table 3 – Estimated 2018 Libby and Lincoln County Unemployment Rates by Age

Age Group (years)	Libby	Lincoln County
16-19	0.0%	17.3%
20-24	6.7%	11.5%
25-29	14.1%	17.6%
30-34	8.2%	12.7%
35-44	5.1%	2.3%
45-54	24.4%	14.8%
55-59	0.0%	11.0%
60-64	0.0%	5.6%
65-74	0.0%	8.7%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

for local unemployment numbers to current state and national numbers as of 2022, it is important to note the June 2022 unemployment rate for the State of Montana was 2.6%, and the July 2022 unemployment rate in the United States was 3.5%^v. In short, past data consistently shows the local unemployment rate is considerably higher than state and national rates.

The top employers in the Libby area include the Kootenai National Forest, Libby Public School District, Cabinet Peaks Medical Center, and the Lincoln County Government.

Economic Development

Libby continues to seek to improve investment in the community. There are vacant buildings within the city limits and the adjacent Kootenai Business Park, which are excellent opportunities ready for



occupancy by numerous types of industries. As the Kootenai Business Park is developed, it is likely that needs for City services will prompt annexation of all or portions of the site which is likely to necessitate updates to the zoning code to create a City zoning district for the Kootenai Business Park that accommodates the Lincoln County Port Authority's visions and plans for the site, with consideration for the existing county zoning established for the TEDD and this Goals and Action Plan.

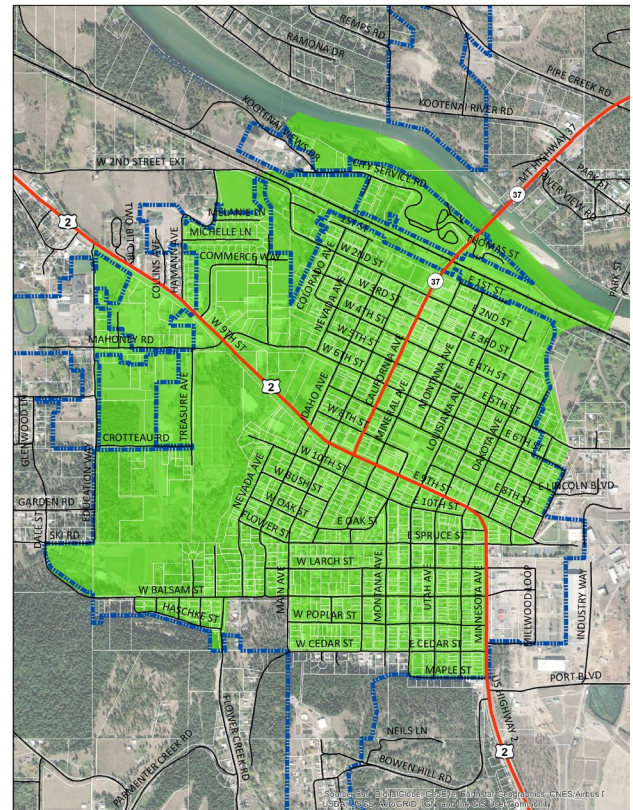
Libby contains an *Opportunity Zone* (see Map 3) as part of a federal program created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, allowing for investments in lower income areas to have tax advantages. The purpose of the program is to put capital to work in the local community that may otherwise be locked up because of the investor's unwillingness to trigger capital gains taxes.

Projections and Summary

The in-migration of retired persons to the area, combined with in-migration of persons whose employment allows them to live where they choose, are expected to be the most important factors underlying social and economic developments in Libby over the next 10 years. Economic growth in Libby is likely to come from the finance, education, government and service sectors of the economy.

Libby will need to find a sufficient supply of quality workers to meet future employment opportunities as they arise in all commercial and retail areas. The availability of

MAP 3: LIBBY'S OPPORTUNITY ZONE



broadband in the area offers an opportunity for local businesses to more effectively compete in the regional economy. Long-term employment opportunities offered through USFS increasing staff, potential increased manufacturing, and the expected increased mining in the Cabinet Mountains if the proposed Rock Creek and Montanore mines planned by the Hecla Mining Company proceed should attract many residents who are now under-employed, or former residents who left here to find work elsewhere that would like to return, as well as others wanting to live, work and recreate in this beautiful area. A purpose of this Growth Policy is to take a proactive role in



improving the workforce conditions.

The Downtown component of this Growth Policy plays a critical role in economic development. The Downtown Goals and Actions are intended to work in conjunction with those of Economy and Economic Development. While what the City can do to

directly influence the local economy is limited, achieving the City's goals for a successful downtown as envisioned in this Growth Policy is intended to boost economic development.



DOWNTOWN

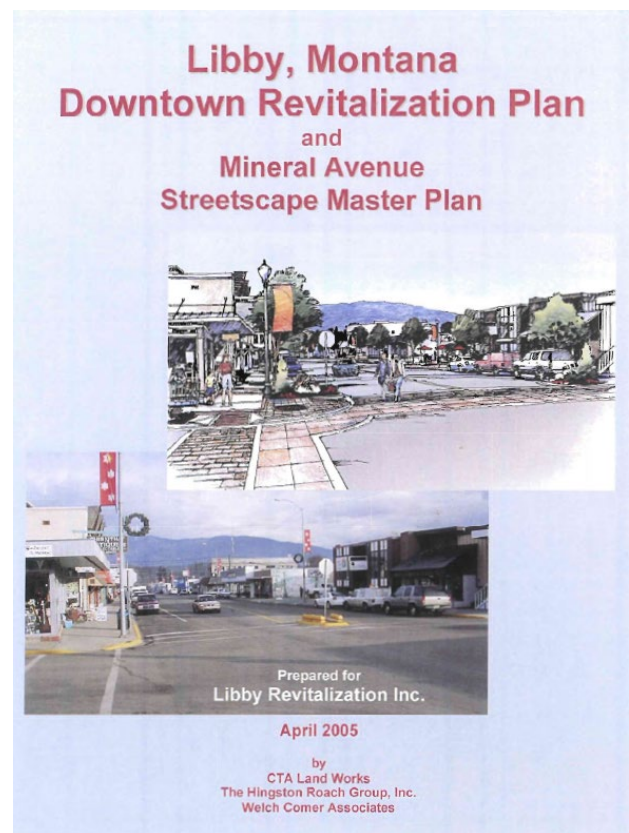
One of the City of Libby's greatest assets is our downtown. It provides an economic base and is the heart of the community. These factors and the many City goals and actions that pertain specifically to downtown have resulted in the need to include this section.

In 2005, the Libby, Montana Downtown Revitalization Plan and Mineral Avenue Streetscape Master Plan (aka Downtown Plan) was completed. The plan was prepared for Libby Revitalization Inc. (LRI), with the City of Libby being part of the Libby Downtown Revitalization and Streetscape Master Plan team. Although the City did not formally adopt the plan as an official City document, the efforts and results of the plan were significant, and still recognized by the City as invaluable. When the City planned for the Growth Policy Update and secured funding, a limited "update" to the Downtown Plan was included as an important component of the Growth Policy Update. With the City being one partner and team member with other stakeholders, the City's focus on the Downtown is on implementing some of the actions identified in the 2005 plan. Such actions include streetscape improvements, wayfinding signs, parking enhancements and code changes to activate the streetscape for a more vibrant and inviting corridor.

Since 2005, LRI has become inactive. To continue downtown revitalization efforts, it is imperative to reestablish a lead

SNAPSHOT: DOWNTOWN

Downtown is a unique community core that the City focuses on. A plan for Downtown is in place, that the City continues to implement as updated in this Growth Policy Update. Revitalization efforts are to continue, with a more vibrant downtown a key component of our community vision.



downtown organization, promotion, and management entity that is an active, sustainable organization made up of public, private and nonprofit partners working to improve Downtown Libby. In the last 8 years, the City has worked with the Kootenai River Development Council (KRDC) to secure and leverage funding for a variety of



projects that promote and enhance Downtown. It intends to continue to support those efforts, and work towards reestablishing a lead downtown management entity. One such possibility is a recently formed Downtown Business Association.

Downtown Libby Area

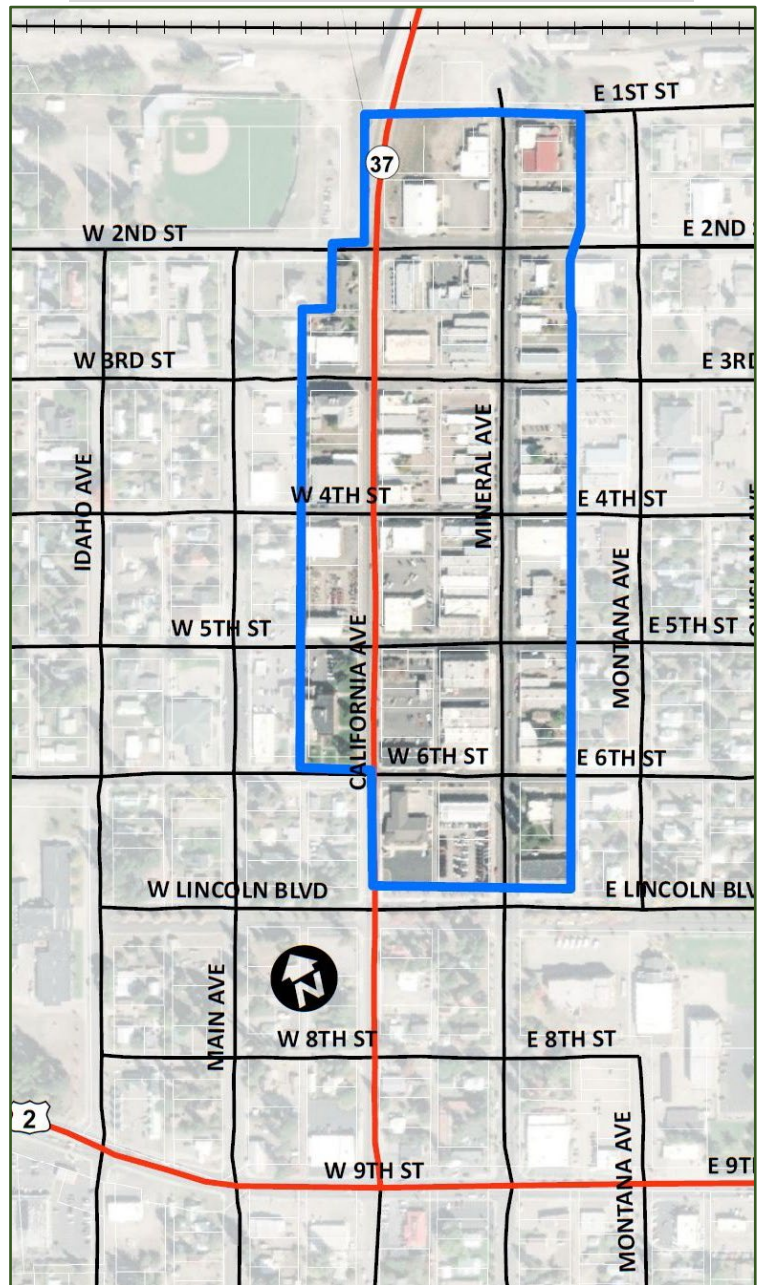
For purposes of this Growth Policy, "Downtown Libby" is defined as the Downtown Business District of the zoning code, which is shown on Map 4. Areas to the north and south of Downtown are considered important gateways and entrances to the Downtown and are therefore valuable components of the City that welcome Downtown visitors.

Downtown Zoning

Surrounding the west, east, and south sides of the core Downtown Business District is of Business Residential District. The area to the south of Downtown along the US Highway 2 is within the Business District. Zoning districts surrounding Downtown include the Medical District to the east, more Business Residential to the west and east, Residential A and B to the west, more Business District to the south, and additional Industrial to the north.

In 2020, the Downtown Business District was adopted to reflect the City actions in the Downtown Plan to better address residential uses, parking, and façade improvements. The City will continue to update the zoning

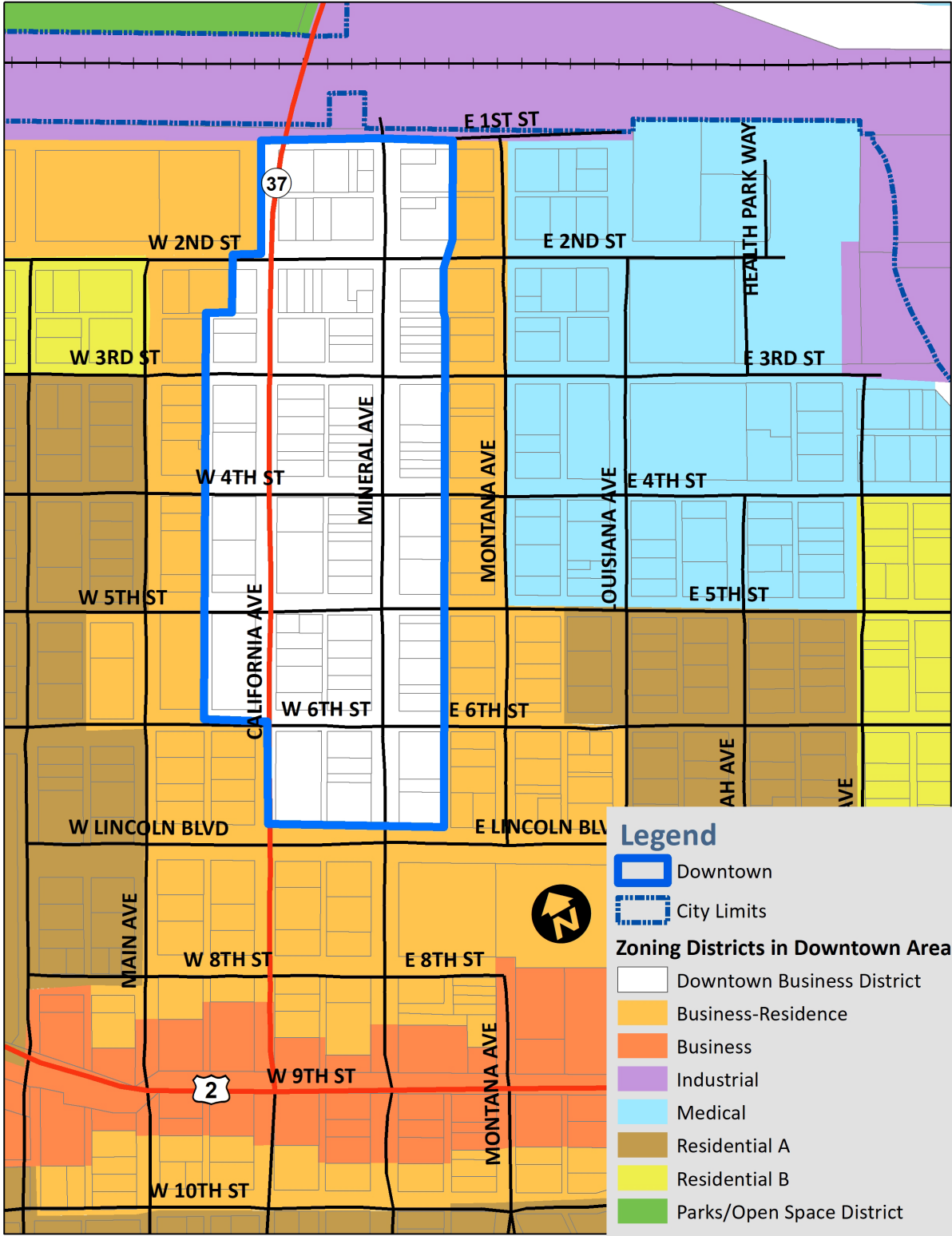
MAP 4: DOWNTOWN LIBBY



code when needed, and in doing so will address current, ongoing, and emerging Downtown issues such as signage, vandalism, code changes/ enforcement, parking issues, etc.



MAP 5: DOWNTOWN ZONING





Downtown Conditions

Downtown sidewalks are in fair condition, but improvements have been identified in the Downtown Plan to enhance the walkability, bicycle-friendliness, and overall attractive atmosphere, such as pedestrian bulb-outs at street corners, mid-block crossings, pedestrian-scale street lighting, benches, bicycle racks, street trees, and landscaping. The City also supports more building façade improvements and outdoor seating and gathering places.

Wayfinding and other directional signs have been installed to direct people downtown, but there is need for additional signage in key places, as well as City interest in creating a system of festive banners on Mineral Avenue to be used during events.

Public facilities are in place downtown, such as water, sewer, and stormwater drainage. High speed internet serves downtown, with options for Gigabit services from multiple



Hotel Libby, an underutilized, historic building

providers – a rare amenity for a small town in Montana.

During most times, there is sufficient public parking downtown; however, there is need for more parking downtown. During busy times, downtown employees of larger employers tend to park in prime parking spots, limiting available parking for visitors in key downtown locations. In addition, planned streetscape improvements



Looking north at Mineral Avenue; photo courtesy of Mark Andreasen



(pedestrian bulb-outs and mid-block crossings) are expected to displace approximately four to six spaces per block.

A City parking lot as identified by the Downtown Plan could provide 60 – 70 key parking spaces downtown. The City believes Lincoln County should be a partner with the City to implement a public parking lot.

Why Plan for Downtown?

Libby's Downtown is the civic, commercial, and social heart of the community. In order for Libby to sustain the long-term strength

of the community, it is crucial for the City to be proactive in improving the vitality of the downtown. There is a trend of people prioritizing quality of life factors when choosing where to live, socialize, and operate a business. For people choosing to live in small western communities, a vibrant and attractive downtown can be a deciding factor. Libby is in a choice location, with outdoor recreation opportunities in town and in every direction, and opportunities for jobs and entrepreneurship. While Downtown displays several characteristics of a healthy downtown – unique historic



Mineral Avenue in Downtown Libby



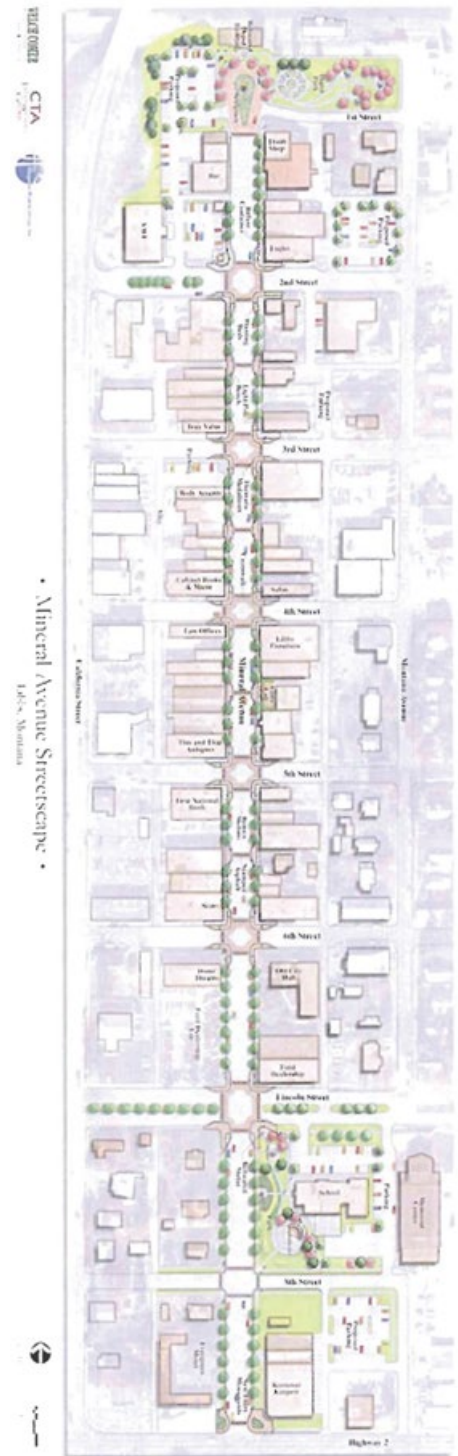
buildings, eating and drinking establishments, a theater, local shops, and segments of attractive streetscape – there are opportunities to improve the appearance and function of downtown and spark investment from existing and new residents. However, to realize these opportunities requires forethought and planning to ensure Libby’s downtown does not languish, but rather grows in a manner that is in line with the values of its community members. That is where the Downtown Goals and Actions come into play.

There is no one silver bullet for revitalizing a downtown; instead, the process is slow and ongoing, with each small step building upon one another. The idea behind Downtown planning is that over time, each and every action will help create an area people want to be. A vibrant downtown will project the image of a community that is committed to making the downtown an attractive place to visit, shop, and do business.

What has been done from the 2005 Downtown Plan?

As a result of collaborative community efforts, there are many implementation measures that have been accomplished since 2005.

The following is a list of actions from the 2005 Downtown Revitalization Plan and Mineral Avenue Streetscape Master Plan that the City was identified as lead entity; partially responsible for; or a partner of; and which have been completed or still have



Streetscape Concept Plan for Mineral Avenue from the 2005 Downtown Revitalization Plan and Mineral Avenue Streetscape Master Plan



relevance to pursue:

- ✓ **Action 1.14** identified the City as a partner to allow residential uses of downtown buildings, which was accomplished with updates to the City zoning code and adoption of the Downtown Business District in 2020.
- ✓ **Action 6.1** identified the City as a partner to create and implement a cohesive design concept for Downtown Libby, encourage business and property owners to incorporate the new design into their renovation and redevelopment projects, and provide incentives (such as the

matching grant program or onetime tax credit) to encourage property owners to upgrade Downtown buildings. The action was partially accomplished with updates to the City zoning code and Downtown Business District in 2020, and partial implementation of the streetscape



On the left is a portion of the streetscape renderings from the Mineral Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan Graphics, on the two blocks from Highway 2 to Lincoln Boulevard. On the right is 2014 imagery of the same area. These segments of Mineral Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard have been improved with a gateway, landscaping, and pedestrian lighting. Other improvements identified in the plan remain outstanding, and the City intends to continue to play a lead role in completing the improvements along with partners.



improvements as illustrated in the Mineral Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan Graphics. At this time, there remains interest in the City for creating/maintaining a fund via Main Street programming for building owners to access for façade and other improvements.

- ✓ **Action 6.3** included improving gateways and landscaping in Downtown to entice customers. The gateways have been installed, and much of the landscaping is complete, particularly along Mineral Avenue between the southern gateway near the highway and north to Lincoln Boulevard and along Lincoln Boulevard. The Downtown Business Association could take the lead on

working with the City to implement additional streetscape enhancements.

- ✓ **Action 6.4** was to install entry monuments at the intersection of Mineral Avenue and U.S. 2, which the City was one of the responsible parties to implement. The entry monuments and Action 6.4 are complete.
- ✓ **Action 6.7** identified the City as a partner to improve business and wayfinding signs in Downtown, using a consistent style or theme (such as wildlife and/ or natural materials), and to provide design suggestions/guidelines to business and property owners/ tenants, and offer incentives (such as the matching grant program



Mineral Avenue with street trees



or onetime property tax credit) to encourage businesses to upgrade signs. A wayfinding sign project was recently completed, and several business signs have been upgraded through the years, which the City encourages continue. In addition, the City intends to implement a system of banners on Mineral Avenue in a festive manner to be used during events. Action 6.7 is therefore being modified and incorporated into the City action updates.

- ✓ **Action 6.8** was a key action of the plan, with the City being a leader in the effort and responsible party: Implement Downtown streetscape improvements of pedestrian-scale lighting, new sidewalks, corner bulb-outs, mid-block crosswalks, curb cuts for ADA accessibility, benches, bicycle racks, and street trees. Seek to acquire funding for Phase 1 Mineral Avenue construction in 2007, as depicted on the Streetscape Master Plan. Seek funding for construction of Phases 2 and 3 in 2008-09. The installation of the streetscape improvements to the two blocks of Mineral Avenue between US Highway 2 and Lincoln Boulevard create a fantastic entry to downtown. Several businesses have adopted benches and the City purchased new, locally made garbage cans for downtown. In addition, the City has a sidewalk replacement program that

reimburses business owners \$15/square foot to re-build sidewalks. Additional streetscape improvements could be added with the participation of the Downtown business community. The action is therefore being updated to address current status of the remaining improvements. A new planning initiative that engages the downtown business community on conceptual design; engineering and implementation is identified as an action item.

- ✓ **Action 6.10** was to improve the Mineral Avenue cul-de-sac near Depot Park. This was completed in recent years. Note: The former "Depot Park" is now known as Mineral Park.
- ✓ **Action 6.11** suggested enhancing Depot Park with landscaping, pavilion and plaza for the Farmers Market. Installation of most of the landscaping, pavilion and plaza remain; however, the Farmer's Market is held at the Chamber of Commerce site and Fireman's Park, so the action is being updated accordingly.
- ✓ **Action 6.12** envisioned a renovated old High School Amphitheatre Park and create a "town green" for a public gathering place, entertainment and annual event venue and social center. The site has recently been used for summer activities, such as a weekly



vendor's market and limited other events, but the property is currently privately-owned. At this time, the City's and partners' abilities to install landscaping and pursue creation of a "town green" for public purposes are very limited. The action is therefore being updated for the City to encourage such uses and improvements. In addition, due to the historic character of the building and ideal central location of the of the site, the City seeks to partner with the private property owner to enhance the site and building and participate in potential improvements for public uses.

- ✓ **Action 6.13** was for the City to "enhance Lincoln Blvd. from Mineral Ave. to California with lighting; landscaped medians and street trees..." Lincoln Boulevard from Mineral Avenue to California Avenue has been improved with a landscaped median with boulevard trees, but lacks pedestrian lighting like on the south side of Lincoln in the two blocks between Mineral Avenue and Louisiana Avenue. Therefore the action is being updated to reflect landscape improvements taken to date.
- ✓ **Action 6.14** suggested construction of medians on Second Street from Mineral Avenue to California to minimize the visual impact of the

overly wide paved section and to encourage traffic from Highway 37 to turn to look to Mineral Avenue. However, due to an increase in activity downtown over the past 8 years, and therefore increased demand for parking, the City determined that diagonal parking was a needed in this location.

- ✓ **Action 7.1** was to install new directional signs on U.S. 2 for "City Center" (or "Historic Shopping District") east and west of Mineral Avenue. The recently installed wayfinding signs and other signs fulfilled Action 7.1.
- ✓ **Action 7.2** suggested installing new directional signs on California Avenue (Hwy. 37) north and south of Lincoln Blvd., and north and south of Second Street. Some recent signage addresses this action, but additional signs should be considered, and MDT and LRI are the responsible parties, so the action is being kept intact for purposes of this update, to be considered during the update process.
- ✓ **Action 7.3** envisioned the purchase or lease of lots for public and employee parking in Downtown, improved with paving, lighting, and low scale/low maintenance landscaping. The action has not been completed, and at this



time, the City would like to add Lincoln County as an implementation partner.

- ✓ **Action 7.7** was for the City to improve Lincoln Blvd. west of Mineral Avenue to Michigan Avenue for use as an alternative east-west corridor to U.S. 2, and orient stop signs to facilitate east-west traffic flow. The boulevard medians were recently constructed in the last two blocks of Lincoln Boulevard. However, it is not a stop-controlled corridor. The City may consider such changes in the future.
- ✓ **Action 8.4** was to review parking unit requirements for new development Downtown. Action 8.4 was completed by the City in 2020 when the zoning code was updated and parking requirements were reviewed and updated, particularly for the Downtown Business District.
- ✓ **Action 8.5** was to refine City codes to allow/encourage sidewalk dining, push-cart vendors and small sandwich board signs in the Downtown, and to allow outdoor dining with adult beverages if temporary fencing is used to delineate the dining area. The City modified its code to provide for such uses of Downtown sidewalks, so Action 8.5 is deemed complete.
- ✓ **Action 8.6** was to refine City codes to allow upper story and/or backstreet

residential uses of Downtown buildings, to encourage Downtown residential and mixed uses. The action was accomplished with updates to the City zoning code and Downtown Business District in 2020.

- ✓ **Action 8.7** was to refine City codes to require zero front setbacks on all new development on Mineral Avenue and California. The action was accomplished with updates to the City zoning code and Downtown Business District in 2020.
- ✓ **Action 9.1** was to clarify the role of Libby Revitalization Inc. as the lead Downtown management organization, using the National Main Street four-point approach to Downtown revitalization. At this time, Libby Revitalization Inc. (LRI) is limited in terms of its operations, and should not be considered the lead Downtown management organization. The City is updating this action to support creation of an active partner or civic organization to lead Downtown revitalization and economic development efforts, using the National Main Street four-point approach to Downtown revitalization. All City goals that make reference to LRI should also be updated accordingly.



✓ **Action 10.1** was to establish a sustainable funding stream for LRI and its programs. Consider as potential sources a Business Improvement District assessment, paid memberships, City financial support, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events/activities, grants, parking management, building redevelopment and leasing/sale, partnerships with other organizations, licensing/sales of Downtown Libby products, "Friends of Downtown" members, etc. Action 10.1 is being updated to include a new lead agency for Downtown revitalization efforts, and to expand on potential funding sources.

✓ **Action 10.4** was to work with City to address Downtown issues such as signage, vandalism, code changes/enforcement, parking issues, etc., with the LRI Board and City having the responsibility to complete. The City has updated the zoning code to address these issues, but additional changes to address them are likely to emerge during zoning code updates. Therefore, the action is being updated to state the City will update the zoning code to address Downtown issues such as signage, vandalism, etc.

✓ **Action 10.7** was to develop a funding strategy for Downtown capital improvements, based on phases outlined in Chapter 5 and to work with

the City, Montana Dept. of Commerce, Congressional delegation, property owners and other organizations to obtain funding for the improvements. Consider as potential sources a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), Treasure State Endowment Program (2006), MDT Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP), City Resort Tax, federal appropriations, etc. The action requires several updates to reflect the current status of desired Downtown improvements.

Actions 1.4, 7.4, and 7.8 are being removed from City-involved actions because they are not City priorities

Montana Main Street Program

The City of Libby has been an affiliate member of the Montana Main Street Program since 2010, which allows the City the opportunity to learn and develop the Main Street Four Point Approach™ while accessing the resources and services of the program network. This tier is designed for communities entering the program and in the early stages of organization and capacity building.

Goals of the Montana Main Street Program include the following^{vi}:

- Preserve and promote Montana historic and cultural resources



- Promote long-term planning for revitalization success
- Organize efforts and coordinate conversations between and within Montana communities
- Support economic, community, and tourism development to facilitate a comprehensive sense of place
- Enable small business owners to succeed by creating vibrant and healthy downtown districts

The City of Libby has the same goals, which the City intends to achieve through implementation of the goals and actions for Downtown Libby. The four points of the Main Street approach include (1) organization, (2) promotion, (3) design, and (4) economic vitality.

Main Street Road Map

The Montana Main Street Tier System allows member communities to engage in long-range planning and downtown revitalization at three distinct levels. Participant communities enter the program into a tier system as an affiliate member with the capability of gradually progressing to a Designated or Certified level.

Affiliate Community

According to the Montana Main Street Program, the Affiliate Community tier allows eligible communities the opportunity to learn and develop the Main Street Four Point Approach™ while accessing the resources and services of the program network. This tier is designed for communities entering the program and in the early stages of organization and capacity building. A community may remain at the Affiliate level indefinitely, but should be taking steps to advance upward in the tier system with the ultimate goal of achieving Certified Main Street Community status. Affiliate Communities do not require paid staff, but must have a volunteer base and widespread local support, including the city and Chamber of Commerce or a similar organization. Affiliates receive training and support from the Montana Main Street Program staff, are able to apply for annual grant funding with a local match of 1:5 (\$1 of local match for every \$5 committed by the state), and are invited to attend our regional workshops and conferences at a reduced cost (depending on program budget). Affiliate communities are required to submit quarterly reports to the Montana Main Street Coordinator.

MONTANA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

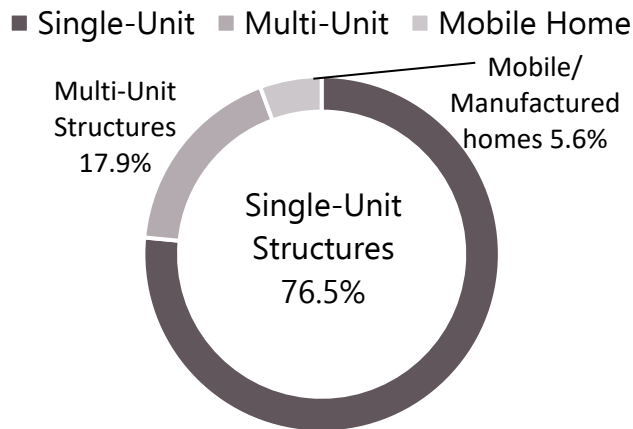




HOUSING

In 2020, there were an estimated 1,428 housing units within the City of Libby. The housing stock in Libby is dominated by single-units at 76.5%, followed by multi-units at 17.9% and mobile/manufactured homes (excludes RVs) at 5.6% (see Figure 5). The owner-occupied units in Libby were 63.3% of the housing units in 2019; compared to the previous year's rate of 50.9% (see Figure 6), a noteworthy one-year change, but it could be an anomaly in the data, or a trend.

Figure 5 - Types of Structures



U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates

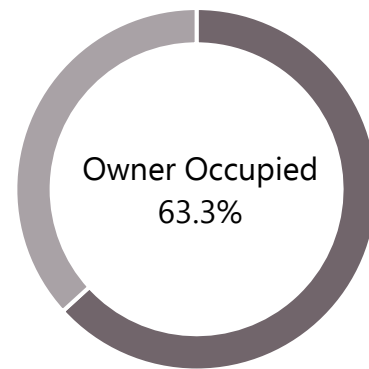
Affordable housing is generally defined as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities. Paying more than 30% of household income on housing is considered housing cost burden, so this threshold is a baseline to consider affordability. From 2015 to 2019, 52.1% of owner-occupied households in Libby spent over 30% of household income on a

SNAPSHOT: HOUSING

As housing costs increase in Libby, the need for more housing, especially affordable housing, also increases. While the City's ability to directly create housing is limited, there are actions the City can take to address housing needs and affordability and encourage responsible development while protecting existing neighborhoods.

Figure 6 - Ownership of Occupied Units

■ Owner Occupied ■ Renter Occupied

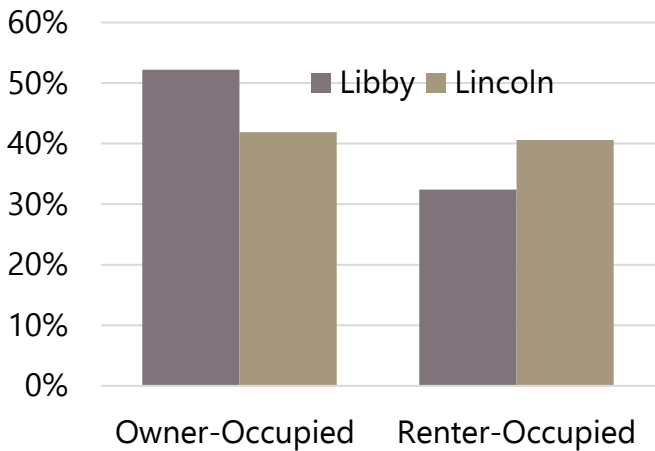


U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year estimates

mortgage and related costs (roughly \$1,058 per month median), and 32.4% of renter-occupied household income on gross rent (roughly \$631 per month median, including utilities and similar expenses). Similarly, 41.9% of owner-occupied households in Lincoln County spent over 30% of household income on mortgage and related costs (>\$1,195 per month), and 40.6% of renter households had a housing cost burden, paying >\$734 per month, >30% of income. See Figures 7 and 8.

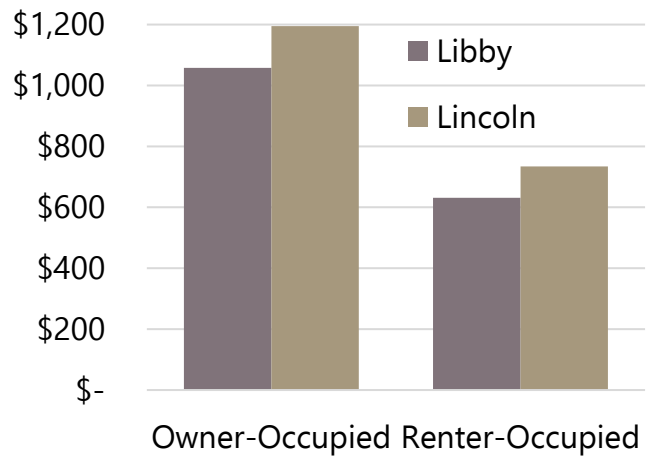


Figure 7 - Housing Costs Burden (% of households)



Source: Headwaters Economics

Figure 8 - Median Monthly Mortgage/Rent

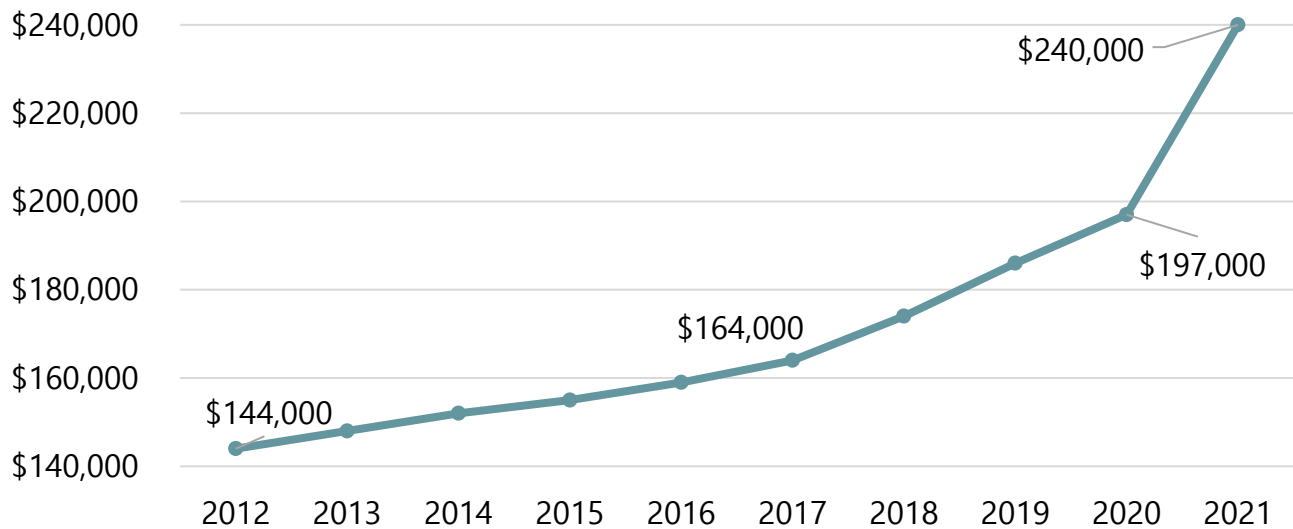


Source: Headwaters Economics

As shown below in Figure 9, the median housing value as of 2021 in Libby was \$240,000. This is a 66% increase since 2012 and a 279% increase since 2000. The median household income in 2012 was roughly 18.8% of the median home value. In 2015, there was a drop and the median household income was 15.2% of the median home

value, where it remained for a few years until 2018. Since then there has been a steady increase from 17.3% in 2018, and 20.3% in 2019. The data does not show a clear trend other than income and housing costs have both increased at similar rates during the past ±10 years.

Figure 9 - Median Home Value 2012-2021



Source: Zillow Libby, Montana Home Values



Homes on the edge of Downtown along Idaho Avenue

The recent marked increase in home values indicates overall demand is high. It is also a trend that increasingly results in homes becoming less affordable. The City therefore supports efforts to promote more housing of all types, with a focus on improving the availability of affordable housing. One challenge in improving housing availability is the shortage of workers in the local construction and building industry. This presents a 'catch 22' paradox, as unless current Libby residents enter the construction and building industry and remain in Libby to work, the community will need to rely upon out of area workers or have insufficient housing stock to support additional workers.

The City of Libby also values and considers the protection and enhancement of its existing residential neighborhoods a high priority. Some of the established housing stock has been poorly maintained over time and needs renovation and maintenance.



Apartment buildings along Commerce Way



Homes along the Cabinet View Golf Course; photo courtesy of Shawna Norry, Clearwater Properties



LAND USE

Libby is located near the center of Lincoln County in northwest Montana, 17 miles south of the Libby Dam. U.S. Highway 2 bisects the City running west to east, then south. The area surrounding the City of Libby consists of mountainous, forested land and valleys. The Kootenai River flows along the northern edge of the bulk of the City. Libby consists of relatively flat valley land surrounded by hills and steep slopes.

Within the City of Libby there is a highway commercial corridor along U.S. Highway 2. The central business district is bordered by Main Avenue on the west, Mineral Avenue on the East, Highway 2 on the south and the railroad tracks on the north. Residential areas are located off of the main streets and are generally characterized by small lot single family residential. The majority of homes (73%) were constructed prior to 1970. Table 4 outlines the land use statistics within the City of Libby.

Table 4 – Land Uses in Libby

Total Area (square miles)	1.9
Population Density/square mile	1,519
% of Residential	34.3%
% of Commercial	13.5%
% of Industrial	13.6%
% of Forest area	25.7%
% of Crop/Pasture/Range	6.2%
% Other (water, non-assessed, etc.)	±6.7%

Outside of the City Limits there are a number of suburban residential areas. These areas are characterized by larger lots and newer homes than the incorporated areas.

SNAPSHOT: LAND USE

The City of Libby's land use patterns are established. The City has zoning in place to influence future use and development, which should be kept up to date to encourage appropriate housing and economic development.

These residential pockets are west of town, where City services are utilized and is ripe for annexation, and north of town along the Kootenai River.

North of Libby on MT Highway 37 there is a mix of service-oriented uses, Forest Service property, and parkland along the highway. The developed area extends a few miles north and is generally low intensity.

There are highway commercial uses along U.S. Highway 2 west of town. This is comprised of auto oriented uses, mini-warehouses, retail, lodging, and institutional uses. The uses are generally setback from the highway and have limited landscaping.

In addition, the Kootenai Business Park, a



Kootenai Business Park; photo courtesy of Lincoln County Port Authority



400-acre industrial park owned by the Lincoln County Port Authority, is located on the southeast end of town. The Lincoln County Port Authority established the Kootenai Business Park as a Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD) and was zoned by Lincoln County for mixed use; industrial, commercial and recreational. With the possibility future tenants will desire city services to take advantage of economic development opportunities at the business park, the city should consider updating the city zoning code to create a zoning district in anticipation of future annexation of all or portions of the Kootenai Business Park that accommodates the Lincoln County Port Authority's visions and plans for the site, with consideration for the existing county zoning established for the TEDD and this Goals and Action Plan.

The auto-oriented uses on Highway 2 are an extension of the highway commercial in the city limits. There is some potential for in-fill development in this area. Development within the city limits of Libby is subject to city zoning regulations, discussed in detail later in this report.

Libby Groundwater Site

The Libby Ground Water Site resulted from the treatment of poles and timbers with wood preservatives during the late 40s, 50s and 60s by J. Neils Lumber Company and St. Regis Paper Company. The treating plant was shut down in 1969 and dismantled. The primary wood preservatives used at the site were creosote and pentachlorophenol with a mineral oil carrier. As a result of wood

treating chemicals being discovered in the groundwater, the Libby Ground Water Site was placed on EPA's "Superfund" list in 1983. International Paper Company is the current owner and responsible party for the site as a result of its purchase of Champion International in June of 2000. In 2009, International Paper conducted further research at Operable Unit number 2, the long-term remedial location, to reevaluate more effective technologies to clean up contamination in the upper aquifer. In 2018, a focused feasibility study was completed and compiled all the researched data and evaluated various technologies. The most effective and expedient remedy to continue cleanup was a more aggressive application of In-Situ Bioremediation. This plan was approved during a public meeting in 2019.^{vii}

Libby Asbestos Site

The Zonolite Division of the W.R. Grace Company operated a mine and mill nine miles northeast of Libby. It was once the largest vermiculite mining operation in the world and a major employer in the area.



Photo courtesy of The Mesothelioma Center



The product had been mined commercially at the Libby deposit since 1923. The Libby deposit contained an inadvertent byproduct, Libby amphibole asbestos, which caused health problems in the community and liability problems for the company. W.R. Grace closed the plant and began reclamation in 1991. In response to local concerns and news articles about asbestos contaminated vermiculite, the U.S. EPA sent an Emergency Response Team to Libby, Montana in late November 1999.

In October 2002 Libby was added to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List for clean-up, triggering intensive research and on-site investigations. The EPA declared the first ever Public Health Emergency in June 2009. The site was divided into eight operable units based on the complexity of cleanup and extent of contamination. EPA has deleted three Operable Units from EPA's National Priorities List based on a determination that no further remediation action is needed to protect human health and the environment.

Libby is now considered safe by the EPA, and resources are available in the community to address asbestos-related diseases caused by past exposures.

Zoning

The Libby zoning codes define and regulate land uses within the City of Libby. Map 6 shows the zoning districts within the City of Libby with general descriptions below.

Residence Districts

The City of Libby has three single family residential zoning districts – Residence A, B, and C Districts. Residence A and C districts require 6,000 square feet of lot area for each dwelling while Residence B district requires 5,000 square feet of lot area for a single-family dwelling, 6,000 square feet for two-family dwellings, 7,500 square feet for three-family dwellings, and 10,000 square feet for four-family dwellings.

Medical Community District & Business-Residence District

The intent of these districts is to restrict the area to medical service and businesses or residences, respectively, and still maintain a practical standard for residents. Any business may be placed in the Business-Residence district only by written approval of the application by the board of adjustment.

Agricultural-Suburban District

All uses permitted in Residence A and B Districts, or Medical Community District are permitted. Livestock is allowed within certain limits and must be kept for private uses.

Downtown Business District (DBD)

The purpose of the DBD is to maintain downtown Libby as a viable cultural, retail, governmental and financial center of the community. In addition, the DBD supports the expansion and continued investment in the historical business core of Libby and promotes an attractive, walkable, diverse area for shopping and entertainment.



Highway Commercial District

This district is marked by the edges of the city on Highway 2 which represent the gateway to the community and should present a welcoming entrance. The purpose and intent of this district is to accommodate business opportunities that tend to be more auto-oriented than the downtown core, with an emphasis on safety (both vehicular and pedestrian) and aesthetics.



BNSF Rail Station

Industrial District

The industrial district is created to provide a district for use for any manufacturing process, business, or treatment, and no such uses are excluded which do not create or tend to create a public nuisance or an undue hazard to life or property.

Parks and Open Space District

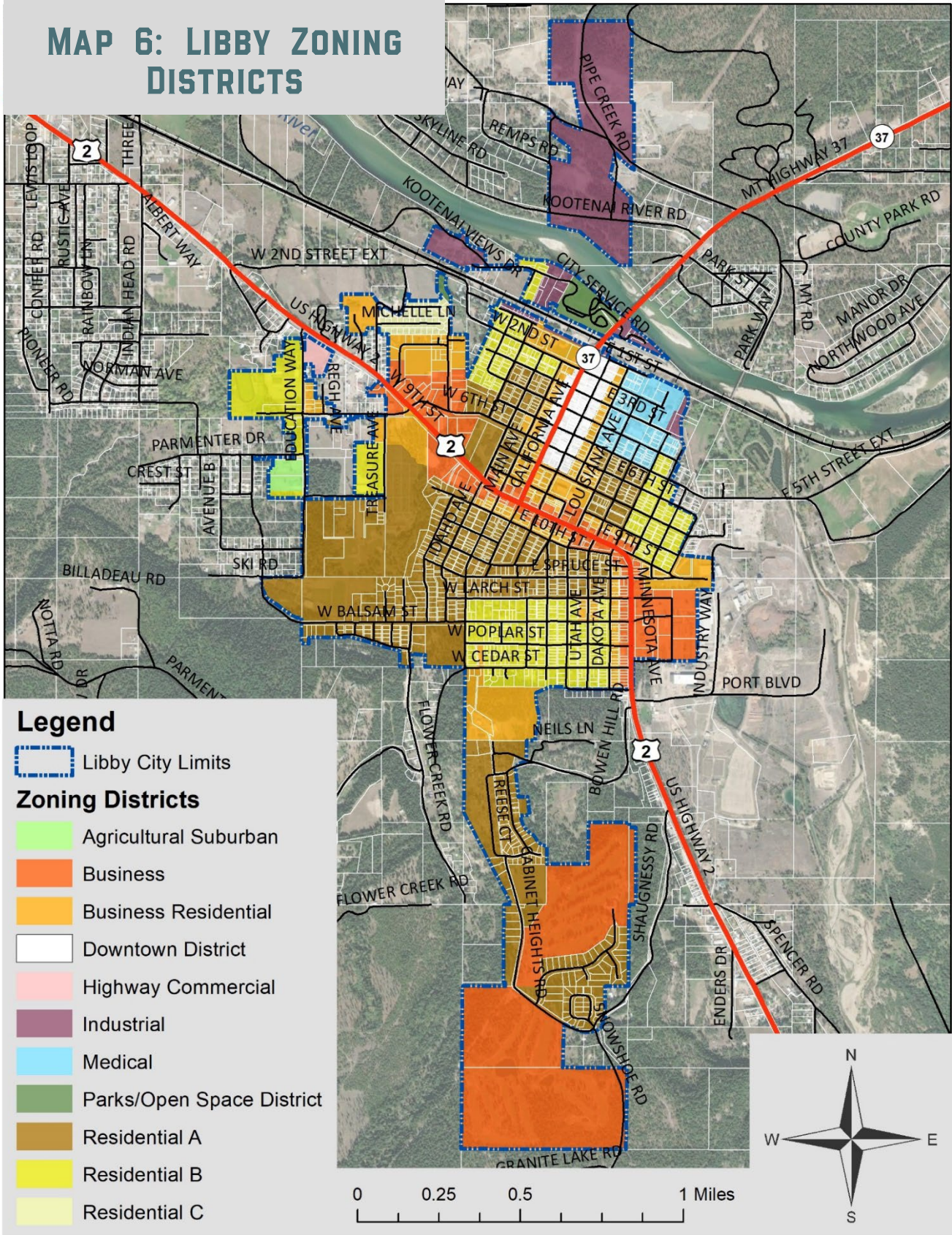
The intent of the parks and open space district is to provide a public park, a link in the trail system along the Kootenai River, parking and outdoor display.



Cabinet Mountain Brewing Co. in Downtown Libby



MAP 6: LIBBY ZONING DISTRICTS





NATURAL RESOURCES

The City of Libby is located at an elevation of approximately 2,000 feet above sea level and sits on primarily glacial lakebed sediments believed to have been deposited when continental glaciers blocked the Kootenai River. The sediments typically consist of silt and fine sand, but gravel inclusions likely were deposited by glacial meltwater streams.

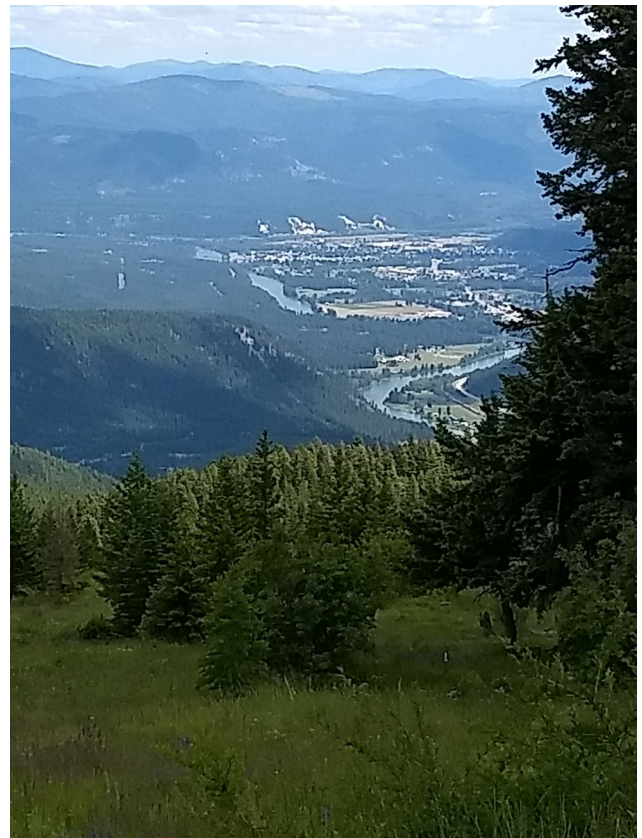
Libby is viewed by its residents as a City having a very high quality of life. Libby's built environment directly and indirectly affects its natural environment. Land use plans and major land use decisions need to be thoughtfully developed with the fullest possible understanding of the natural environment and potential impacts. While growth inevitably affects the natural environment, implementing policies that allow for planned development while minimizing the level of negative impacts will be pursued in future planning and decision-making.

Important natural resource and environmental factors in the Libby Planning Area include hydrology, floodplains, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat areas, air quality issues, steep slopes, soil limitations, wildfire hazard areas, geologically hazardous areas, agricultural lands and containment and improvement of past contamination sites.

Poor air quality has been an issue in the Libby area, and EPA has previously designated Libby a non-attainment area.

SNAPSHOT: NATURAL RESOURCES

The Libby area contains considerable natural resources, such as clean water, forests, fish, wildlife, and minerals. Sand and gravel operations are limited, and should be protected. The forests require proper management, and planning for wildfires is essential. The natural environment must be protected to preserve these resources.



Libby, viewed from Flagstaff Mountain; photo courtesy of Jennifer Nelson

Measures have been taken through a county air pollution control ordinance, which has resulted in air quality attaining EPA



standards through use of cleaner, efficient wood stoves.

Most of Libby's wetlands are located along the Kootenai River and Libby, Flower, Granite and Parmenter Creeks. Approximately 8% of the City is within the 100-year floodplain. Maintaining Libby's aquifer recharge areas is critical to present and future water supply needs. There is potential to develop and enhance wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat areas in the city and immediately adjacent to the City in the Kootenai Business Park.

In the fringes and the more rural portions of the Planning Area, there is habitat for hawks, ravens, grouse, turkeys, mule and white tailed deer, and an occasional moose or elk. A variety of bird life and small mammals have adapted to the more urbanized areas of the City. Several fish species found in the Kootenai River watershed are listed as threatened or endangered including the Bull

Trout and Kootenai White Sturgeon.

Measures taken by the City since 2010 to protect natural resources include adoption of City engineering specifications for stormwater management, working with the county to update the Lincoln County Floodplain Hazard Management Regulations, which apply within the city limits, improving the Flower Creek Dam, and completing a source water protection plan.

There are steps the City intends to take in the future as identified in the Goals and Action Plan to help preserve and promote the natural environment and natural resources. Many of the actions are regulatory in nature, but also include implementing sound policies and public education.

For example, the City of Libby has been a member of Tree City USA since 1993 and actively supports the planting and care of trees throughout the town.



Archway with eagle at Mineral Avenue and Highway 2 where trees enhance the streetscape; photo courtesy of Mark Andreasen



Benefits of urban trees include sequestering carbon and removal of air pollutants, reduced energy usage, filtering of storm water, and cooling of hot city streets and homes by providing shade and releasing water vapor.

Past work has been carried out by a volunteer Tree Board which wrote grants to supplement the funds given by the city towards the purchase of trees, pruning and fertilizing, removal when necessary, and public education projects such as spring pruning workshops.

Sand & Gravel Resources

Sand and gravel are key components of many infrastructure projects from the building and maintenance of roads to home construction. Distance from the source of sand and gravel extraction to its place of use contributes greatly to its cost of transportation.

Gravel resources are also important to adjacent landowners, often for reasons quite different from those of the public at large or gravel operators. Light, noise, dust, traffic, smell and the use of petrochemicals and other chemicals used in concrete and asphalt plants located at gravel pits can adversely impact residential and some commercial land uses.

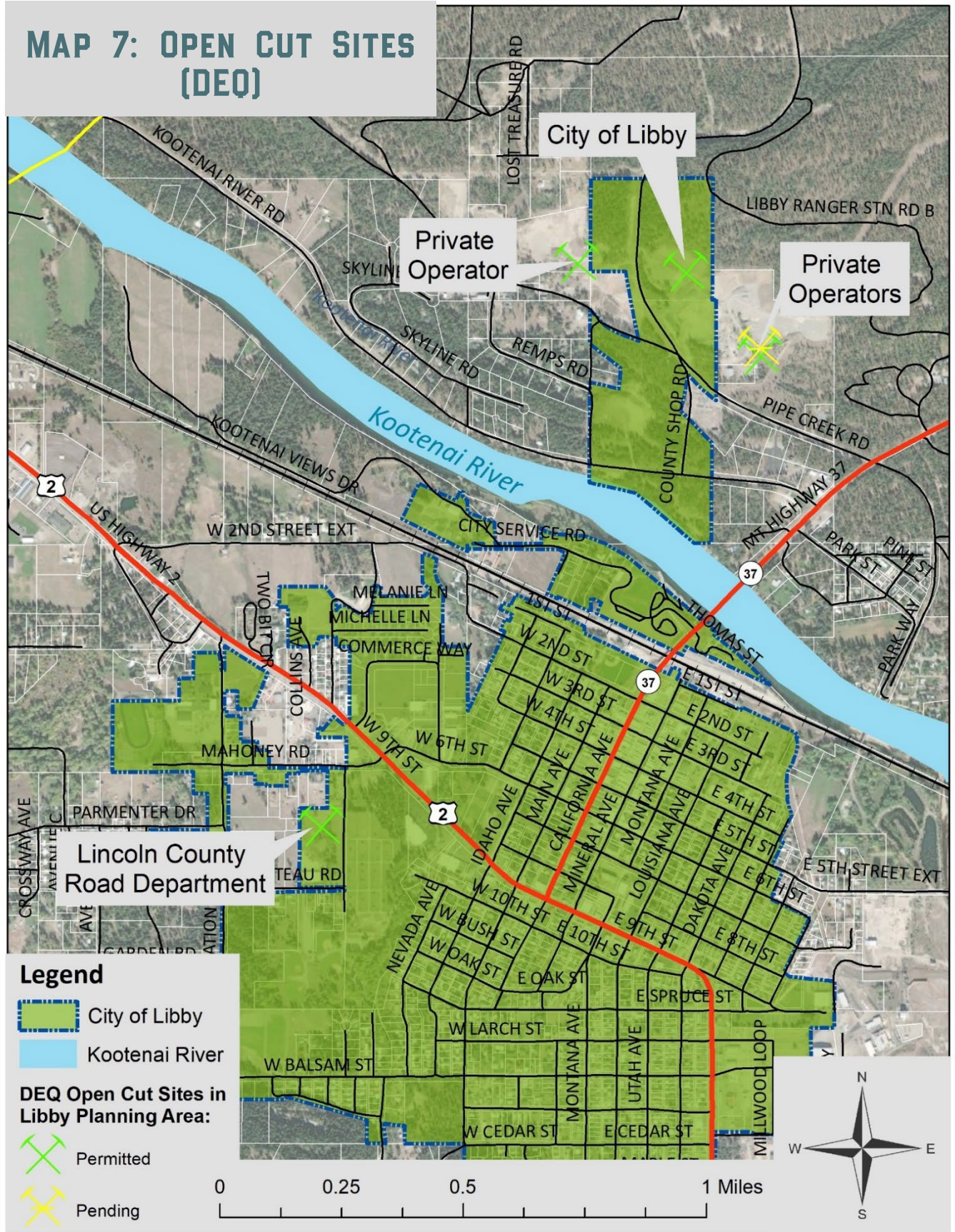
As depicted by Map 7, there are approximately four operating open cut mining sites (sand and gravel pits) in the Libby Planning Area, and one pending permitting by DEQ. One site is owned by the City of Libby, one is owned by Lincoln County and operated by the county Road Department, and two are privately owned and operated. Another private operation is located just over one mile west of the City, immediately outside the Planning Area.



Libby sand and gravel operations in north Libby, from Google Earth



MAP 7: OPEN CUT SITES (DEQ)





Wildland Fire

Libby is surrounded by forests, making the risks for a wildland fire very high. Libby is predominantly exposed to wildfire from indirect sources, such as embers or home-to-home ignition. Potentially vulnerable populations (i.e. populations who are more likely to be affected by wildfire because they lack access to resources, experience cultural and institutional barriers, have limited mobility, and/or compromised physical health) in Libby may experience difficulty preparing for and responding to wildfire; see Table 5 below.



The Weasel Fire far north of Libby, August 2022; photo courtesy of Kootenai National Forest via Facebook

Table 5 – Vulnerable Populations

Families in poverty	63	11.5%
People with disabilities	645	24%
People over 65 years	640	24%
Difficulty with English	15	0.6%
Households with no car	117	10.7%
Mobile homes	97	8.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

In 2017 the Kootenai National Forest experienced its largest wildfire on record roughly 50 miles away from the City of Libby. The following year, a wildfire blazed much closer to Libby along Highway 37. Wildfires are a major threat to Environmental Protection Agency’s Libby Superfund Site Operable Unit 3 as this includes the areas around the former mine and the surrounding forest. Studies have shown that asbestos is present in many Operable Unit 3 sources, including tree bark, ash resulting from wood burning, surface water, soil, duff and sediment.

The City, county, state and federal

governments have recognized the potential hazardous effects of a fire in Libby and the adjacent Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). In 2010, the City of Libby became a Firewise Community and works to reduce risks for everyone by getting the community involved in personal stewardship of fire prevention.



There have been significant fuel reduction projects on three City-owned wildland urban interface properties as well as on private, industrial forest, state, county and federal lands in the immediate vicinity of Libby. Treating fuel hazards in the immediate area around structures to reduce fire intensity can drastically improve the chances of their survival. These measures, however, do little to protect other values at risk, some of which may be equally or more important from a neighborhood or community standpoint.



Some immediate values at risk in the City of Libby could include:

- **Homes and Infrastructure** – The primary concern during a wildfire event is for the safety of the community’s residents. Other concerns include the threat to homes, structures, fences, power lines, communication sites or other infrastructure, such as major transportation routes. In the City of Libby the primary danger would be embers that might land on or adjacent to structures. Libby is fortunate in having an excellent fire department which under normal conditions could handle any fire within the City.

- **Public Health** – There is a great concern in Libby over the prolonged heavy smoke from a wildfire that would create a serious health problem for residents at risk for respiratory problems. In addition, an intense wildfire in the Flower Creek Municipal Watershed could possibly overwhelm the capacity of the City’s water system to handle additional sedimentation. Libby does not have a backup water supply and would be faced with a potential crisis to supply the basic human needs for potable water and sanitation.

- **Financial** – Major wildfires can have a tremendous financial impact in any community. Local businesses frequently suffer major losses, particularly when wildfires occur during



Lincoln County Firesafe Council, www.fireadaptedkootenai.org, provides resources to the community to reduce wildfire risks

the peak tourist season. Picturesque views of the forested landscapes are an important reason people live in and visit Libby. A wildfire will impact the aesthetics of the area which can further impact property values and economic activity.

With a continuing effort by all land management agencies, Lincoln County and the City of Libby, this community should be able to position itself to handle a large wildfire within the next few years. It is important to recognize that fuel treatments are only effective for 15-20 years because of regrowth of vegetation, so mitigating a wildfire hazard will be a continuing endeavor.

The wildland-urban interface has been delineated around Libby and across Lincoln County as part of the Lincoln County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The



Libby Subdivision Regulations include requirements for adequate ingress and egress to and from structures and developments to facilitate fire suppression

activities and other provisions to implement defensible space around structures and adequate water supplies for fire protection.



*Another photo of the Weasel Fire far north of Libby, August 2022;
photo courtesy of Kootenai National Forest via Facebook*



PUBLIC FACILITIES

The City of Libby owns and manages a number of public facilities, including local streets and sidewalks, parks, water and sewer systems, police and fire facilities, administrative buildings and maintenance facilities (see also Local Services). In addition to facilities owned and managed by Libby, there are many other publicly owned facilities managed by other government entities, which provide for some of Libby's public facility needs. These include but are not limited to schools, library, museums, and solid waste.

The provision of capital facilities contributes to the quality of life of Libby's residents. Parks, utilities, fire stations and other community and regional facilities are a physical reflection of the community's values. The implementation of a well thought-out plan for public facilities, utilities and services will help Libby realize its vision. Implementation of the City's land use and growth planning efforts is contingent on the development of needed infrastructure in a timely and orderly fashion. In order to accommodate future growth, regular assessment and maintenance of the City's capital facilities is required. Necessary improvements to those facilities to maintain the level of service when accommodating additional users is identified in the City's Capital Improvements Plan along with anticipated funding sources.

Current budget funds include the following:

- arterial street fund
- water fund (rate supported)
- sewer fund (rate supported)

SNAPSHOT: PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public facilities in Libby are what allow the community to provide services safely and responsibly to our citizens and visitors and provide for growth and opportunity. The City must continue to enhance public facilities in a cost-effective and efficient manner to achieve planned growth.

The following is a summary of existing facilities, utilities and services in the greater Libby area, some of which are directly owned and operated by the City.

Transportation

Transportation facilities are a major component of public facilities. Highways, streets, and pedestrian and bike routes connect the parts of the community – downtown, other commercial and service areas, neighborhoods, and other key places need an efficient network of connectivity.

Transportation network is essential to the current business base and future commercial



Walking bridge over the Kootenai River



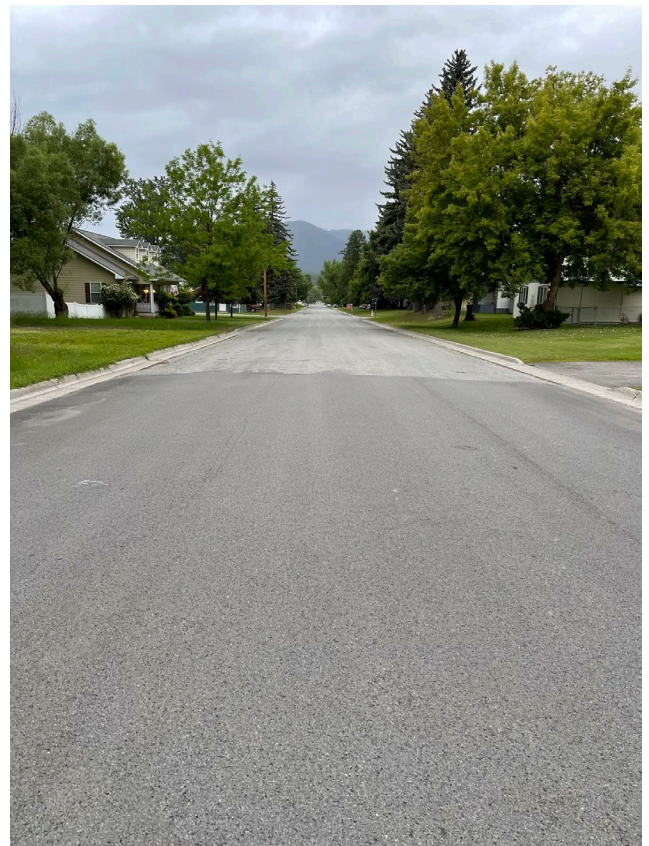
development to be able to provide affordable transportation costs and delivery options. This is applicable to both incoming raw materials and outgoing finished product. Oftentimes, local businesses are not able to be financially competitive due to the additional expense of freight, unless they significantly reduce profit margins. In addition, there is an increasing need for public transportation, especially among the underserved and special needs populations, but the rural nature of the region makes this extremely difficult.

To better understand public facilities in the community, it is important to know where many of the key places are located. Map 8 and its table on the following pages provide the locations of many of the key places to be aware of.

Streets/Roads

Within the City of Libby there are about 35 miles of streets, of which 99% are paved or covered with double coat chip-seal. About 80% of the City's 10 miles of alleys are gravel and 20% are paved or covered with chip coat. The City does the majority of the asphalt work with some assistance from Lincoln County.

From 2013 to 2018, the City worked with Kootenai Paving and largely with Lincoln County to pave 139 blocks and chip-seal 50 blocks of streets in the City. The majority of streets within Libby are set up in a grid pattern. Continuing an interconnected system of streets, as opposed to cul-de-sacs, will better serve the long-range transportation needs of the community.



Idaho Avenue in SW Libby, a typical City street

As of 2018 approximately 3,825 feet of sidewalk needed replacement, and an additional 5,500 feet was in poor condition. The City has a sidewalk ordinance that requires property owners adjacent to the sidewalk to be responsible for any repairs or replacement of sidewalks, including snow removal.⁸

Public Transportation

The only local public transportation service is an on-demand shuttle operated by Lincoln County Transit Services and there is an increasing need for public transportation, especially among the underserved and special needs populations. The rural nature of the region makes this difficult. See Figure 10 for means of transportation to work.



MAP 8: TABLE OF KEY PLACES

Id #	Place or Facility Name	Address
1	City Hall	952 E Spruce Street
2	City Water Treatment Plant	194 Ravenwood Lane
3	City Wastewater Treatment Plant	755 City Service Road
4	Libby Police Department	603 Mineral Avenue
5	Libby Fire Hall	119 E 6 th Street
6	Libby Ambulance Services	307 Montana Avenue
7	Cabinet Peaks Medical Center	209 Health Park Drive
8	Center for Asbestos Related Disease (CARD) Clinic	214 E 3 rd Street
9	Lincoln County Courthouse	512 California Avenue
10	Lincoln County Library	220 W E 6 th Street
11	Cabinet View Golf Club	458 Cabinet View Road
12	US Post Office	518 Main Avenue
13	Libby Area Chamber of Commerce	905 W 9 th Street
14	Libby High School	150 Education Way
15	Libby Elementary School	101 Ski Road
16	Lincoln County Port Authority	60 Port Boulevard
17	Libby Train Station (Amtrak)	100 Mineral Avenue
18	Kootenai Pets for Life (animal shelter)	125 County Shop Road
19	City Cemetery	Treasure Avenue
20	USFS Kootenai National Forest Offices	31374 US Highway 2
21	Memorial Events Center	111 E Lincoln Boulevard



MAP 8: KEY PLACES IN LIBBY

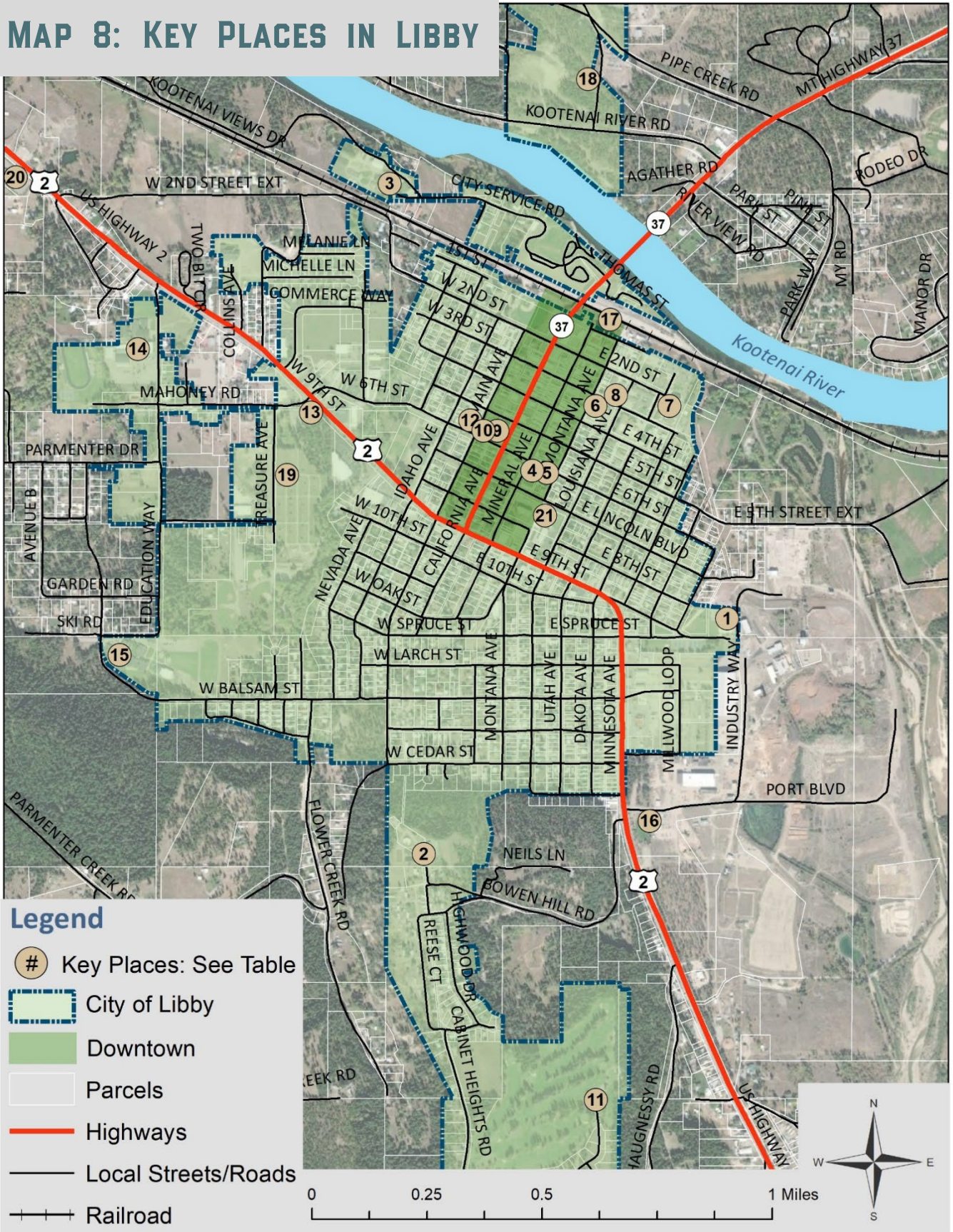
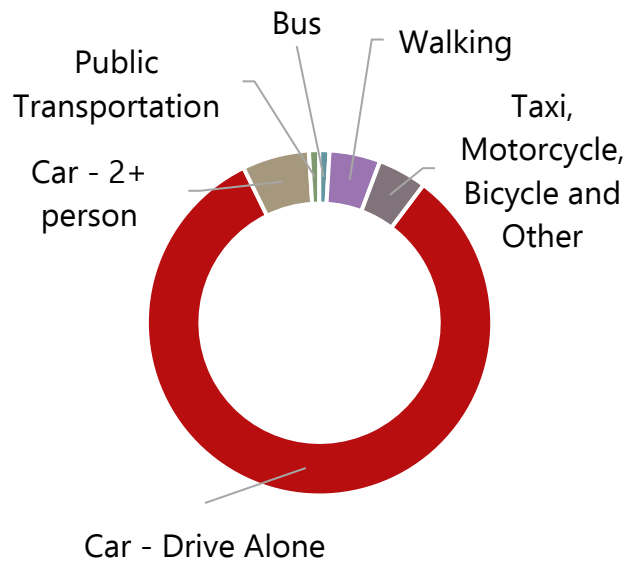




Figure 10 - Means of Transportation to Work



Source: County Office, Libby MT D.O.T.

Airport

The Libby general aviation airport is approximately eight miles south of Libby and is managed by an Airport Board. The airport elevation is 2,601 feet and is rated as B-II (large by State Aviation Standards). It has a 5,000-foot long, 75-foot wide asphalt runway with a connecting paved taxiway which is 200 feet x 35 feet. The paved apron is 10,000 square yards with hangars and 15 tie downs. Facilities at the airport include a lighted beacon, segmented circle and wind cone, medium intensity runway lights (MIRL), and precision approach path indicators (PAPI) on both ends. Services include jet fuel sales, major repairs, phone on field, charter flights, flight instruction and courtesy car.

Rail

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line provides commercial and industrial transportation. The Libby Train Depot is a

daily stop for Amtrak passenger rail service on the Empire Builder providing a scenic ride to Glacier National Park and points east and west.⁹



The Libby Airport; photo by Linda Caldwell, Kootenai Aviation. Photo taken April 2015 looking northwest. Via www.airnav.com



BNSF train waiting to depart the train depot



Parks

The basic building blocks of the parks and recreation program supported by the city/county Libby Park District Committee are the public parks. The City owns and maintains several municipal park areas, and Lincoln County owns and maintains numerous county parks in the Planning Area – see Map 9. Key City parks include Fireman Memorial Park and Riverfront Park. Other key components of recreation program include regional parks; special use facilities such as the Memorial Center, fitness complex, and senior citizen center; golf course; tennis courts; bikeway; and pedestrian paths throughout the community.

In addition to the in-town parks and recreational facilities, Libby residents also have the benefit from being in close proximity to parks within Lincoln County, specifically J. Neil’s Memorial County Park. This park includes four baseball fields, two soccer fields, lighted basketball courts, rodeo arena, covered band stand and dance area, new dog park, 18-hole Frisbee golf course, covered pavilions, picnic area, horseshoe pits, playground and 1.4 mile of paved walking path which is connected to a 3.6 mile paved walking bike path system. This is managed by a seasonal park attendant.

Fireman Memorial Park

Fireman Memorial Park was created in 1965 to memorialize all volunteers who provided fire protection to the Libby community. This park has two picnic pavilions, a playground which includes a splash pad, and camping

facilities for tents and RVs.¹⁰ The City, with the assistance from the local Rotary Club, installed a new concrete restroom in 2018. In the park there is a section of wooden playground equipment that needs to be replaced as it is beyond useful life and becoming a liability. The sprinkler system is also indicating the need for replacement along with the plumbing and picnic tables¹¹.



Fireman Tribute Monument at Fireman Memorial Park next to the Chamber of Commerce

Riverfront Park

Riverfront Park is located on adjacent to the south side of the Kootenai River. The Fred Brown log pavilion, built by the local Amish and other community members, is the park’s most notable feature. There is also a smaller pavilion that honors loved ones lost to



asbestos related diseases, and two boat ramps that provide river access for recreation and fishing.¹² The City intends to improve pedestrian access from Montana Highway 37 to the park and pavilion.

Swimming Pool

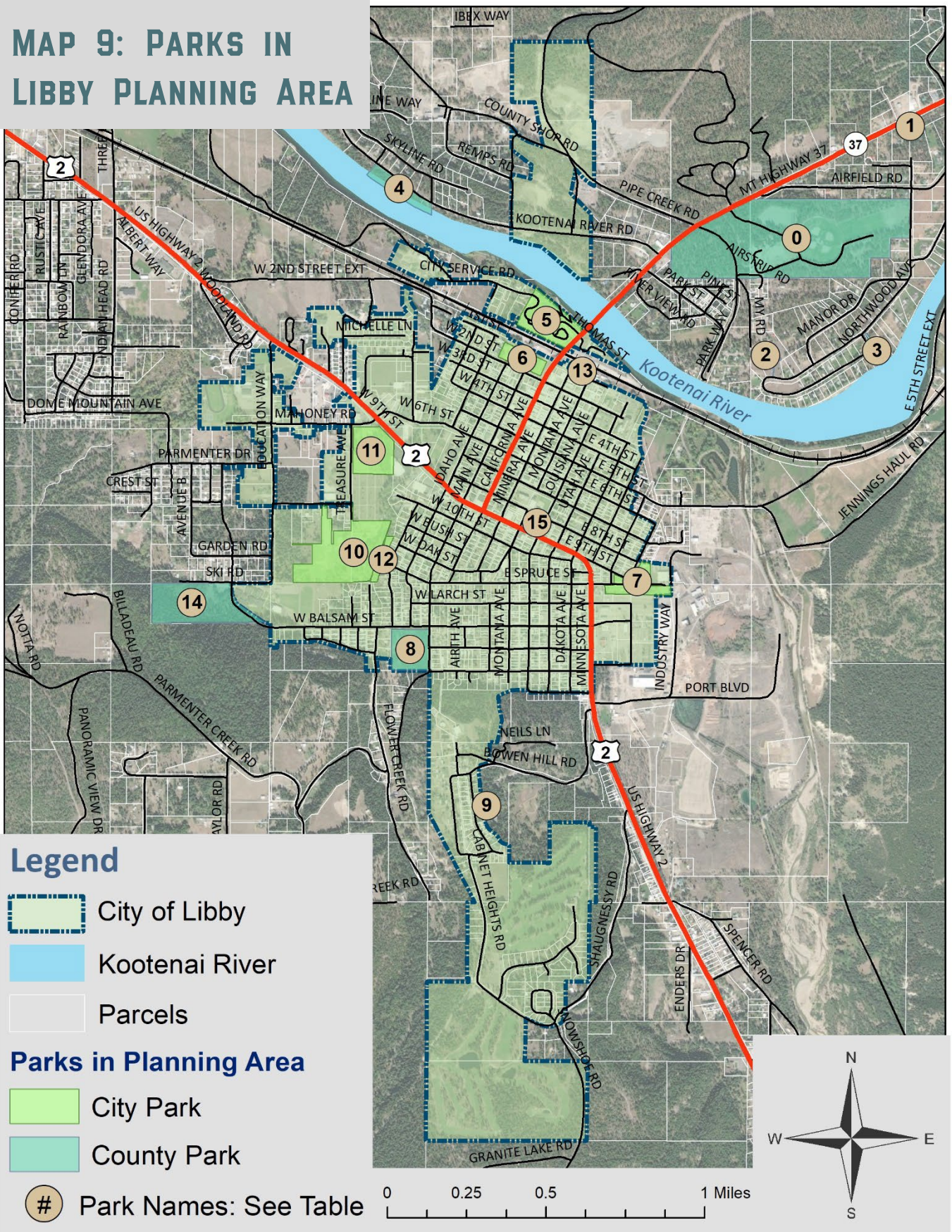
There have been efforts to plan for a future community pool or aquatics center, which the City supports. Such a facility is not anticipated to be City owned or operated, but would be an amenity that would provide a broad range of benefits for all ages.



Fred Brown Pavilion, Riverfront Park



MAP 9: PARKS IN LIBBY PLANNING AREA





MAP 9: TABLE OF PUBLIC PARKS

Id #	Park Name	Owner
0	J Neils Park	County
1	Edgewater Estates Park	County
2	Northwood Manor Park (west)	County
3	Northwood Manor Park (east)	County
4	Sunrise Terrace Park	County
5	Riverfront Park	City
6	Lee Gehring Field	City
7	City Tennis Courts	City
8	Pioneer Park	County
9	Cabinet View Highwood Park	County
10	Ball Field	City
11	Fireman Park	City
12	Frary Olson Park	City
13	Mineral Park	BNSF
14	Ski Dale Park	County
15	Central School	Libby High School Dist #4

Sewer System

The City of Libby owns and maintains approximately 67,000 lineal feet of gravity sewer and force mains and 3 lift stations, which convey wastewater to Libby’s wastewater treatment plant. The treatment uses a 6-stage aerobic process with a maximum capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day and daily average is 450,000 gallons.

In 2011, a new ultraviolet system was installed to disinfect the water discharged into the river and achieve the removal of solids, nutrients and E. coli without the use of chemicals.

Another upgrade in 2011 was the installation of a dewatering press, which is equipped to handle all the waste coming into the plant and future growth to the system. This dewatering press will allow the city to avoid the labor-intensive drying bed system for removing sludge from the treatment plant.¹³

Solid Waste Disposal

Lincoln County’s “Libby Landfill” is located approximately three miles from Libby. The Libby Landfill received 63,662 visits from private vehicles in 2020, which is an 11% increase in traffic from the previous year.¹⁴ Due to the influx of solid waste in recent years, the Lincoln County Landfill Expansion Project proposed to add 10.5 acres to the west side of the existing landfill.¹⁵ In 2021, Recycle Montana, Inc., a non-profit statewide organization, awarded their annual “Recycler of the Year Award” to Lincoln County Solid Waste Recycling.¹⁶





Water System

The City of Libby water supply originates from the Upper Flower Creek Dam located about 3 miles south of Libby on Flower Creek. The raw water is delivered to a water treatment facility, located near the golf course, and is treated through filtration, flocculation, and coagulation. This treatment plant is dated and will require significant maintenance and/or replacement of system components.

After treatment, the water is stored in either (1) a clear well under the water treatment facility, or (2) a 500,000 gallon ground-level, steel reservoir located northwest of the



Pressure testing at Flower Creek Dam, winter 2019



The new Flower Creek Dam near completion

treatment plant. This water storage capacity is 840,000 gallons deficient from what is needed in order to meet peak flows and maximum day demands during a fire event.

There are roughly 40 miles of water mains in the distribution that run throughout the city, as well as adjacent neighborhoods outside the City Limits.

In 2016, the 58-foot concrete Flower Creek Dam that was constructed in 1945 was



replaced. Raw water transmission mains were another area of concern that connect the lower reservoir at the diversion dam with water treatment plant. In 1980, 3,000 feet of the raw water transmission main was replaced and the remaining 2,500 feet was replaced in 2013. That same year, the City also installed 15 blocks of new water mains and 135 new meters and meter pits.

The City's 2020 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlined larger water and sewer department project goals. Several projects have been completed, and the CIP is in the process of being updated. New project goals have been identified to add to the goals in the CIP. See Table 6, below.¹⁷

Table 6 – City of Libby Water and Sewer Goals

Project	Cost
Lift Station at Montana & 1 st Street	\$325,000
Replace Bar Screen at Wastewater Treatment Plan	\$300,000
PLC Controllers	\$215,000
Additional 850,000 gallon water storage tank	\$1,200,000
Dredging, spillway repairs, and constructing a knee wall at the lower reservoir	\$1,000,000
Install multiple water mains in Vanderwood area	\$1,500,000
Contract comprehensive leak study on water mains including identifying lead lines	\$250,000
Increase size of water main servicing Cabinet View	\$1,100,000
Replace/Install various sewer mains	\$1,400,000



LOCAL SERVICES

Law Enforcement

The Libby Police Department was formed in 1996 and now consists of headquarters at 603 Mineral Avenue, which currently employs six officers to provide 24-hour coverage to the City of Libby.

In 2017, the City of Libby purchased four new Police vehicles with the help of a \$50,000 grant from USDA Rural Development.



Libby Police Station

Fire Protection

The Libby Volunteer Fire Department and the Lincoln County Rural Fire District #1 are dual fire departments that were formed in 1911. The City department operates with three Class A engines, three water tenders, one 4x4 wildland engine, utility van, hose/boom truck combination with 1500 GPM trash pump. This emergency service is provided with 30 volunteers.

The City of Libby Fire Department and Lincoln County Rural Fire District #1 provides fire protection, public education, fire

SNAPSHOT: LOCAL SERVICES

Services in Libby are provided by the City and other government agencies and private organizations. Local services are strong, but can be made stronger through targeted City actions and intergovernmental coordination.



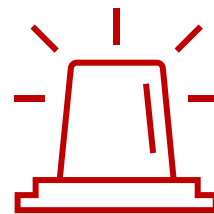
Libby Fire Hall

prevention and code management to the citizens of Libby and in the surrounding rural area.

Medical Services

Ambulance

The Libby Volunteer Ambulance (LVA) has provided ambulance service to the area since





1971. The organization has one full-time and one part-time employee. In recent years the organization has been stretched thin with about 16 active volunteers. The LVA has been hosting Emergency Medical Technician trainings in hopes of obtaining 10 more trained volunteers.



Libby Volunteer Ambulance

Their service area extends between 20 miles south of Libby to approximately 35 miles north to 10 miles west. The LVA is one of very few ambulance services in state that performs its own extrication – something

typically done by fire departments.¹⁸

Healthcare

In 2012, Saint John’s Lutheran Hospital broke ground on a new hospital building, which was renamed to Cabinet Peaks Medical Center (CPMC), after receiving over \$35 million in grant funding and donations.

In 2014, the CPMC building was completed and opened to the public. The facility is considered a Not-for-Profit, freestanding, Critical Access community medical center with state-of-the-art technology and 25 beds.¹⁹

CPMC employs 235 trained professionals and maintains a 24/7 Emergency Department staffed with physicians, imaging services, a 3-bed Intensive Critical care Unit, and a 24-hour full service laboratory; making it one of the largest employers in Lincoln County.²⁰



Cabinet Peaks Medical Center. Photo Courtesy: Heidi A. Long/Longviews Studios



Because of the unique needs of those exposed to asbestos, the Center for Asbestos Related Disease (CARD) provides special pulmonary evaluation and care. The CARD provides long-term clinical follow-up of patients with asbestos exposure and disease, special health guidance and evaluation, long-term psychosocial support, and a continual resource of education. The CARD actively works with multiple agencies and universities in pursuit of meaningful research.²¹

An important aspect of healthcare includes mental health care. After an abrupt closure of the Western Montana Mental Health Care Center's Libby facility at the end of 2017 due to state budget cuts²², leaving the community with diminished access to local mental health care, the facility reopened in 2020.

Veterinary (animal) care is another aspect of health care services that the Planning Board has identified as a community issue. The number of veterinary offices in the community is currently limited, and access to animal health care is diminishing, which the Planning Board intends to address with the growth policy update. A related concern is an abundance in urban wildlife within the City of Libby, which has the potential to increase the transmission of animal illnesses and further straining the already limited access to veterinary services.

Library

Lincoln County Public Libraries (LCPL) were originally founded as the Lincoln County Free Library in 1920 by the Board of County



Lincoln County Public Library

Commissioners. The Libby Library was dedicated in 1964 and is located adjacent to the Lincoln County Courthouse, one of three locations in the county. Funding for the libraries is provided primarily through county tax revenue.

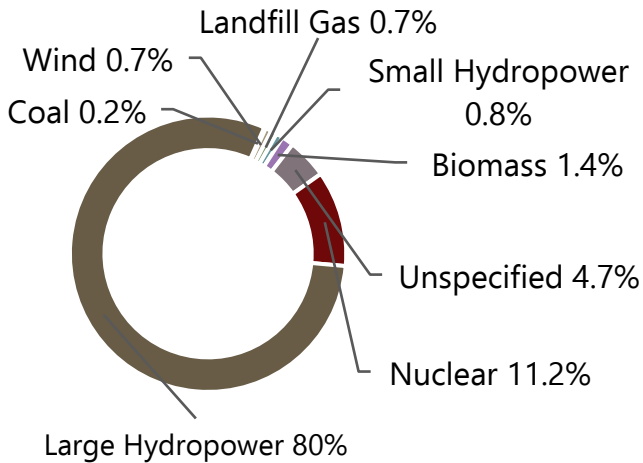
In addition to the Library, the Libby Heritage Museum provides a rich source of information in the interest of preserving the historical culture of the Lincoln County area. The museum is located on U.S. Highway 2 approximately one quarter mile southeast of the city limits.

Power

Libby is served by Flathead Electric Cooperative. In 2016, the City of Libby and Flathead Electric Cooperative signed a power purchase agreement for the purchase of electricity generated from the City's hydroelectric generator. As of 2020, around 80% of Flathead Electric Cooperative's electricity came from hydropower, as shown in Figure 11.²³



Figure 11 - Electricity Sources



Source: flatheadelectric.com

Internet

There are numerous internet service providers in the Libby area, both broadband and satellite services. Most areas in the Planning Area are well served by high speed broadband, with a small exception being Hogan Drive south of town where satellite internet services are available. Downtown has options for Gigabit services from multiple providers, which is currently a rare amenity for a small town in Montana.

Education

The Libby School District Number 4 serves most school age Libby residents. The Libby School District offers a pre-kindergarten school, an elementary school, and a middle school-high school joint consolidated school, along with administration, maintenance and operation facilities. All of these facilities are located within the Libby City Limits.



Montana Sky servicing overhead utilities; photo courtesy Amber Pacheco-Holm, Montana Sky

Figure 12 – Educational Attainment

88.9%

High school grad or higher

a little less than the rate in Lincoln County: 91.5%

a little less than the rate in Montana: 94%

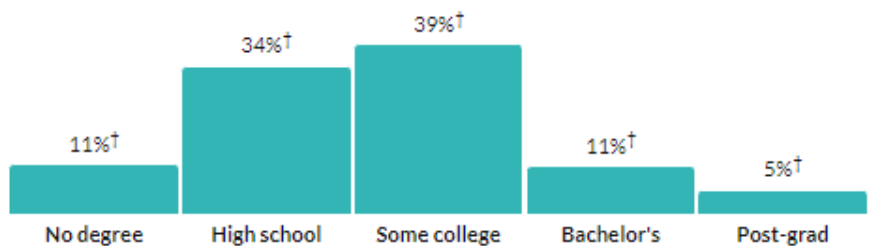
16.2%

Bachelor's degree or higher

about 80 percent of the rate in Lincoln County: 19.7% †

about half the rate in Montana: 33.1%

Population by highest level of education



Margin of error may exceed 10% of total value. Source: censusreporter.org – Libby profile



Libby High School

Compared to Lincoln County and Montana, the City of Libby has a slightly higher rate of the population with no high school diploma (see Figure 12).^{24]}

FVCC

The voters of Flathead County agreed to create a community college district in 1967 and the Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) was established. In 1983, the voters of Lincoln County agreed to create a community college extension center of FVCC to serve the residents of Lincoln County. The FVCC Lincoln County Campus gained official status in 1984 through a collaborative effort between Flathead Valley Community College and the Lincoln County Commissioners. The branch campus is located at 225 Commerce Way in Libby. The college offers associate degrees, certificate programs, continuing education and adult basic education (GED preparation).

The campus serves the community through continuing education and community

learning, occupational training, a high school equivalency program, transfer degrees for students who wish to continue their education at a university, and Running Start – a program which grants high school students the opportunity to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. Existing academic programs at the Lincoln County Campus are career focused, and centered around occupations and industries in high-demand within Lincoln County. These programs include nursing and health sciences, heavy equipment operation, welding and fabrication, forestry, and business. The college has a number of online courses.

A continuing partnership between the college and city and county officials invites the opportunity to expand program offerings to meet the needs of the community. Targeted academic programming can provide the foundation for a burgeoning tourism industry through hospitality and tourism studies and culinary arts, as well as training in untapped



industries with strong economic growth potential such as information technology and digital media. Community-based higher

education builds a strong local workforce for a stronger economy.



*The Lincoln County Campus of Flathead Valley Community College;
photo courtesy of FVCC via www.fvcc.edu/lcc*



GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

The City of Libby's Growth Policy is organized by key issues or areas of focus, and the Goals and Action Plan is structured to describe strategies for addressing those issues. In addition to the key issues are a host of other issues and items discussed in the growth policy that also need to be addressed. The Goals and Action Plan identifies policies, goals, and actions for the City of Libby to implement. The actions are intended to achieve the goals, thus promoting the policy statements. It is important to note that implementing some actions will be simple and straightforward, while others will be more complex, with implementation occurring over phases or through multiple actions to achieve the same goal. For each identified action the implementation tables include a priority ranking as well as organizations the City will seek to partner with to see implementation through to completion.

It is important to understand some actions accomplish multiple purposes and address goals found in other topics. For instance, the community of Libby is currently situated in a cycle of (1) needing more housing options, particularly affordable housing, but (2) the community struggles with a shortage of available workers necessary to build the housing. Many goals and actions that are found outside the categories of housing and economy can also promote the policies and goals for housing and economy directly or indirectly.

Implementing the Growth Policy

The Growth Policy is intended to be an actionable document that is implemented over time. To prevent the plan from collecting dust on a shelf, the City of Libby will need to take a strategic approach to using the Growth Policy as a tool to inform decisions related to budgets and workplans for individual departments. As such it is recommended that the City Council and Planning Board develop a Growth Policy workplan every two years.

Ideally, the work plan would identify a list of prioritized projects for each year, including projects to be completed within the year as well as projects that may take more time. In terms of budget, the work plan should identify stable funding sources as well as potential grants to apply for. The work plan should also identify roles and responsibilities for each department and partnering organization as well as a timetable for completion. The work plan is an important component to keeping on task towards implementation.

Explanation of Implementation Tables

The implementation tables organize the Growth Policy's goals and actions by topic in a manner intended to easily identify the priority of each action and which organization(s) will be involved carrying them out. The columns in the implementation table are listed and explained below:



Table Codes for Key Issues and Topics

Because some actions may achieve more than one category of goals and policies, the implementation table uses the following letters to identify which key issues and topics the goals and actions are intended to address:

- **E:** Economy/Economic Development
- **H:** Housing
- **D:** Downtown
- **T:** Transportation
- **C/R:** Cultural and Recreational Resources
- **L:** Land Use
- **N:** Natural Resources
- **P:** Public Facilities and Local Services

Level of Importance

The level of importance column is intended to be used as a tool for prioritizing the allocation of limited time and resources. Because resources are limited, implementation of each action will be incumbent upon availability of staff and funding. Priority rankings are organized as follows:

1. High Priority
2. Medium Priority

3. Low Priority

The level of importance rankings are intended to inform the Planning Board, City Council, staff, and partners regarding where to direct efforts. Recognizing that priorities may change over time, the City should use the priority ranking as a guide and adjust the implementation of actions as conditions and opportunities warrant.

Timeframe

The timeframe column is intended to recognize that while some actions are very important, they may take a while to accomplish while other, potentially lower priorities may be less urgent but more easily accomplished – the low hanging fruit. The timeframes provided are:

0. Ongoing
1. Short term – within 1 to 2 years
2. Mid-term – 3 to 5 years
3. Long term – 5 to 9 years

Recognizing that some actions may take several years to complete, they should be initiated within the given timeframes, but completion may take longer.

Partners

Recognizing that implementation will require working with other agencies and organizations, the partners column identifies the parties likely to play key roles in implementation of each action. Partnerships are not guaranteed, but are listed as potential partners for the City to attempt to collaborate with to complete



actions. It is also important to note that the general public is nearly always considered a partner in City activities, although not specifically listed as such. In addition, some actions will rely on public participation and not on partners, as indicated in the tables.

will note that under partners. Many actions will require contractors, which are not listed as partners because they will be acting in the capacity of working for the hiring entity, such as the City.

Where there are no specific partnerships expected, "n/a" may be used, or if only public participation is expected, the table

PARTNERS – KEY TO CODES

The following are the abbreviated codes for the potential implementation partners:

- Ch= Libby Area Chamber of Commerce
- Civ= civic groups/nonprofits
- DEQ= Montana Department of Environmental Quality
- DoC= Montana Department of Commerce
- DME= downtown management entity, to be organized/determined (and the entity's four Main Street committees)
- DNRC= Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- ED= Evergreen Disposal
- FVCC= Flathead Valley Community College
- FWP= Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
- JS= Libby Job Service
- KRDC= Kootenai River Development Council
- LB= local businesses
- LCo= Lincoln County
- LCPA= Lincoln County Port Authority
- LS= Libby Public School District
- MDT= Montana Department of Transportation
- Prop= property owners
- SHPO= State of Montana Historic Preservation Office
- Troy= City of Troy
- TBD= partners are yet to be determined



Implementation Tables 7 - 14

Table 7		Economy: Table of Goals and Actions				
Policy Statement	The City supports and participates in economic and community development efforts to build and maintain a strong, diverse economy through new and expanded business opportunities.					
Goals	E-1	Support the creation and filling of new higher wage jobs.				
	E-2	Strengthen relationship with downtown merchants and the Chamber of Commerce.				
	E-3	Support efforts to improve the conditions of the Kootenai Business Park to be "shovel ready" for new and expanding businesses and non-profits.				
	E-4	Improve the image of Libby as an appealing, healthy community.				
	E-5	Improve the business climate for downtown merchants throughout the year and especially during cultural events.				
	E-6	Promote redevelopment and use of vacant buildings and sites.				
	E-7	Increase the number of workers in sectors currently lacking in the community, such as those in the building industry, health care and animal care, childcare, and service industries.				
Actions	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	KRDC, LCPA, DME, JS, LCo, Ch, FVCC, LS, LB
E-a	Partner with FVCC and economic development agencies such as the Kootenai River Development Council and Lincoln County Port Authority to pursue economic development efforts that will result in more workers in sectors currently lacking in the community, such as those in the building industry, health care and animal care, childcare, and service industries. In doing so, also partner with FVCC and support, participate in, and/or host job fairs with attention to those sectors and recruitment of workers to live and/or work in Libby.					
E-b	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCPA
	Update the zoning code to create a zoning district in anticipation of future annexation of all or portions of the Kootenai Business Park that accommodates the Lincoln County Port Authority's visions and plans for the site, with consideration for the existing county zoning established for the Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD) and this Goals and Action Plan.					
E-c	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	Ch, LB, DME



	Promote Libby as an attractive, business-friendly atmosphere in printed material, on the City's website, and through other actions that generate economic development, business, and employment opportunities.					
E-d	Importance	3	Timeframe	1	Partners	n/a
	Keep the City's website up-to-date to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. An activity calendar; ii. A place for direct feedback; iii. City documents; iv. Positive images and information on key features of the community; and v. Promotional videos about the community and its attractions. 					
E-e	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	Ch, LB
	Establish a quarterly or semi-annual meeting between the City and business community.					
E-f	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	LB, DME, MDT, Prop, Civ
	Continue with streetscape improvements as identified in the Mineral Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan Graphics from the 2005 Downtown Revitalization Plan and Mineral Avenue Streetscape Master Plan in a manner that is supported by business owners, perhaps in a phased manner.					
E-g	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	LB, Prop, DME, Ch
	Promote local cultural events downtown by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inviting local businesses to stay open during events; ii. Ensure adequate sanitary facilities are distributed throughout the event; and iii. Asking event organizations to disperse their attractions throughout downtown. 					
E-h	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo
	Work cooperatively with Lincoln County to facilitate enforcement of its decay ordinance.					
E-i	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Adhere to the goals of the Capital Improvements Plan and keep it up to date so that City services are prepared for new economic development projects.					
E-j	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	Prop, LB
	Identify underutilized and vacant buildings and sites for possible development or redevelopment, and consider adding incentives in the zoning code and other programs to promote uses of such properties.					
E-k	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	Prop, LB, Civ, DME, DoC
	Investigate creation of new urban renewal areas to encourage redevelopment of key properties, and if found to be appropriate, implement the strategy.					
	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop



E-l	Enforce City's ordinances related to property maintenance (weeds, junk vehicles, etc.).					
E-m	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LB
	Invite developers, professionals in land use and development, builders, and the public to weigh in on updates to the zoning code and subdivision regulations, and give due consideration to their input on such issues as design standards and review procedures.					

Table 8 Housing: Table of Goals and Actions						
Policy Statement	The City supports development of a variety of housing opportunities to meet the different needs of the community through the efficient use of space, orderly growth consistent with high quality of life, fiscal responsibility, and consideration for the natural environment. Special attention must be made to provide for affordable housing and support efforts to expand the number of workers in the construction industry.					
Goals	H-1	Expand all housing opportunities and provide for efficient, mixed-use developments that offer work/live environments.				
	H-2	Increase the availability of affordable housing.				
	H-3	Maintain the aesthetic of the traditional neighborhoods of central Libby.				
	H-4	Encourage new housing by providing for expedited, flexible, and predictable reviews as allowed by state law.				
	H-5	Balance development with respect for natural features, the built environment and existing neighborhoods, which make housing projects more attractive and desirable, in turn improving the overall housing market.				
	H-6	In zoning code and other regulations updates, promote infill development and use of vacant and underutilized buildings and sites, particularly within walking distance of downtown, to provide for more efficient use of land.				
	H-7	Increase the number of workers in the building industry.				
Actions	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
H-a	Update the zoning code and subdivision regulations to improve the effectiveness at meeting the goals and housing needs of Libby; consider providing for more multi-family housing, mixed use developments, and moving provisions for Planned Unit Developments from the subdivision regulations to the zoning code.					
	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)



H-b	Update the City of Libby Subdivision Regulations to accord to changes in state law, including expedited review and phased development provisions, to include design standards that protect natural features, the built environment and existing neighborhoods, and to promote efficient use of available land.					
H-c	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Update the zoning code to provide for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in appropriate locations, subject to performance standards that protect existing neighborhoods.					
H-d	Importance	3	Timeframe	2	Partners	Prop
	Contact absentee landlords requesting their cooperation in improving Libby's image by maintaining their properties.					
H-e	Importance	2	Timeframe	3	Partners	DoC, TBD
	Develop a long-range plan for housing to meet projected needs.					
H-f	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LB, LS, FVCC
	Work with the building industry and local schools to encourage recruitment and training opportunities for workers in the building industry.					
H-g	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	JS
	Provide links to the local job service and other job opportunities on the City website.					
H-h	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	LB
	Encourage employers to provide employee housing within close proximity to the place of employment.					
H-i	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	When Capital Improvements Projects are evaluated, consider or give weight to infrastructure improvements that can incentivize the development of affordable and workforce housing.					
H-j	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	JS, LCo, Ch, FVCC, LS, LB
	Support, participate in, and/or host job fairs with attention to the building industry and recruiting workers to live and/or work in Libby.					
H-k	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	Prop, LB
	In new developments, subdivisions, and zoning code updates in certain districts, encourage compact neighborhoods, small lot sizes, and small floor plans, such as providing density bonuses for such developments within the zoning code, and consider allowing increased building heights, reduced parking requirements, and other provisions that promote for more efficient use of land.					



Table 9		Downtown: Table of Goals and Actions					
Policy Statement	The City seeks to take a leadership role in preserving and promoting historic and cultural resources of Downtown Libby, enabling small business owners to succeed by creating a vibrant and healthy downtown, promoting long-term planning for downtown revitalization success, and supporting economic, community, and tourism development to facilitate a comprehensive sense of place in Downtown Libby.						
Goals	D-1	Downtown Libby contains an appropriate mix of goods and services that appeal to existing and emerging customer target markets.					
	D-2	Downtown Libby is a pedestrian-oriented, architecturally unique district that attracts customers and encourages them to linger.					
	D-3	Downtown Libby provides a safe, well-maintained, and convenient environment for customers and workers.					
	D-4	Downtown policies, zoning and codes provide a business- and customer-friendly district, while protecting the character and design of Downtown.					
	D-5	Downtown Libby is effectively managed and promoted using the National Main Street model of downtown revitalization.					
	D-6	Preserve and promote historic and cultural resources of Downtown Libby.					
	D-7	Promote long-term planning for downtown revitalization success.					
	D-8	Learn from other Montana communities about downtown revitalization success stories, their lessons learned, and in general.					
	D-9	Support economic, community, and tourism development to facilitate a comprehensive sense of place in Downtown Libby.					
	D-10	Enable small business owners to succeed by creating a vibrant and healthy Downtown					
	D-11	The lead downtown management entity is an active, sustainable organization made up of public, private, and nonprofit partners working to improve Downtown Libby.					
Actions	Importance	1	Timeframe	1	Partners	DME, Civ, Ch, LB, Prop	
D-a	Support creation of an active partner or civic organization to lead Downtown revitalization and economic development efforts using the National Main Street four-point approach to Downtown revitalization. Note: Said partner or organization can assist other organizations, such as the Chamber, City, KRDC, etc. with projects in other areas of the community, but the lead entity's mission and role should focus on Downtown Libby.						
D-b	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	DoC, DME, LB, Ch, Prop	
	Formalize four Main Street committees under the lead Downtown management entity: Economic Restructuring, Design, Promotion (Merchants)						



	and Organization. Encourage the entity to develop and adopt Work Plans for each committee, with priorities, timelines, responsibilities, and budgets allocated by the funding agencies. Assist with recruitment of volunteers to serve on the committees, not limiting the recruits to downtown business and property owners.					
D-c	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Implement a cohesive design concept for Downtown Libby by taking City actions when possible to make improvements, and as detailed in the other actions below.					
D-d	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Encourage business and property owners to incorporate the streetscape designs into their renovation and redevelopment projects.					
D-e	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Create and manage an incentives program (such as the matching grant program or onetime tax credit) to encourage property owners to upgrade downtown buildings. Create and maintain a fund through the Main Street Program accessible to building owners to use for façade and other streetscape improvements.					
D-f	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, DoC, Civ, Ch
	Create and maintain a fund through the Main Street Program accessible to building owners and other interested groups to use for façade and other streetscape improvements.					
D-g	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Improve landscaping in downtown to entice customers.					
D-h	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Encourage property owners to redevelop buildings, and seek public/ private partnerships for acquisition and redevelopment of vacant buildings.					
D-i	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Make Downtown Libby "kid-friendly." Enhance amenities, products and activities for children in order to attract families (interactive sculpture, youth center, play spaces).					
D-j	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Improve business and directional signs in downtown, using a consistent style or theme (such as wildlife and/ or natural materials). Provide design suggestions/guidelines to business and property owners/tenants, and offer incentives (such as the matching grant program or onetime property tax credit) to encourage businesses to upgrade signs.					
D-k	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Implement a system of banners on Mineral Avenue in a festive manner to be used during events.					



D-l	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	<p>Continue to implement Downtown streetscape improvements of pedestrian-scale lighting, new sidewalks, corner bulb-outs, mid-block crosswalks, curb cuts for ADA accessibility, benches, bicycle racks, and street trees, as depicted on the Mineral Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan Graphics. In the short term, seek funding for construction of the following phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hardscaping and street work, such as street improvements, pedestrian lighting, intersection, crosswalk, curb cuts, and sidewalk improvements. 2. Street trees and landscaping. 3. Bicycle racks and benches. 					
D-m	Importance	2	Timeframe	3	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Enhance Depot Park with landscaping, pavilion and plaza.					
D-n	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch
	Support efforts to renovate the old High School Amphitheatre Park and create a "town green" for a public gathering place, entertainment and annual event venue and social center, and consider public/private partnerships to improve the historic building at the site that could add to uses that promote the Downtown and other goals and actions of the Growth Policy.					
D-o	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch, MDT
	Enhance Lincoln Boulevard from Mineral Avenue to California Avenue with pedestrian lighting matching the lighting on the south side of Lincoln Boulevard in the two blocks between Mineral Avenue and Louisiana Avenue.					
D-p	Importance	1	Timeframe	1	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch, MDT
	Install new directional signs on California Avenue (Hwy. 37) north and south of Lincoln Boulevard, and north and south of Second Street.					
D-q	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCo, DME, Prop, LB, Civ, Ch, MDT
	Purchase or lease lots for public and employee parking in downtown, as shown on the Mineral Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan Graphics. Improve the lots with paving, lighting, and low scale/low maintenance landscaping.					
D-r	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	n/a
	Perform a sewer infiltration/inflow evaluation using smoke testing of sanitary sewer facilities Downtown to locate extraneous sources of stormwater inflow. Redirect any extraneous sources of roof or surface drainage into the City's storm sewer system.					
D-s	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	DME, LB, Ch, Civ, DoC, Prop
	Support establishment of a sustainable funding stream for the lead Downtown management entity and its programs. Consider as potential sources a Business Improvement District assessment, paid memberships, City financial support, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events/activities, grants, parking management, building redevelopment and leasing/sale, partnerships					



	with other organizations, licensing/sales of Downtown Libby products, "Friends of Downtown" members, and others as identified in Action D-u below, which would likely work in conjunction with this action.					
D-t	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Update the zoning code to address current, ongoing, and emerging Downtown issues such as signage, vandalism, code changes/enforcement, parking issues, etc.					
D-u	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	DoC, CD, LB, DME, Prop, Ch, LCo
	Develop a funding strategy for Downtown capital improvements, based on the improvements specified in Downtown Plan and as the phasing is detailed in Action D-l. Work with the Montana Dept. of Commerce, Congressional delegation, property owners and other organizations to obtain funding for the improvements. Consider as potential sources a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), Treasure State Endowment Program (2006), MDT Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP), City Resort Tax, federal appropriations, etc.					
D-v	Importance	1	Timeframe	1	Partners	DME
	Update the Capital Improvements Plan to reflect the City's action plans for Downtown revitalization efforts.					
D-w	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	City official(s) will attend and participate in statewide downtown conferences and presentations on a yearly basis, and seek to have conversations with other Montana communities about downtown revitalization success stories, lessons learned, and in general.					



Table 10		Transportation: Table of Goals and Actions				
Policy Statement	The City supports a diverse transportation system that allows the safe and efficient movement of people as well as goods and services, and promotes the health and well-being of Libby's residents.					
Goals	T-1	Improve non-motorized transportation systems.				
	T-2	Improve availability of electric vehicles and associated charging stations.				
	T-3	Improve awareness of railroad access as an opportunity for both tourism and commerce.				
	T-4	Improve condition and safety of City streets.				
	T-5	Increase public transportation options.				
Actions	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCo, MDT, LS, Prop, Civ, Ch
T-a	Development of a bike path, trails, and sidewalk plan, which may address such items as striped bike lanes on certain streets, safe routes for school children and other bike path connection opportunities, a sidewalk improvement plan, and a schedule prioritizing sidewalk replacement and expanded facilities.					
T-b	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	Prop, Civ, Ch,
	Support additional electric vehicle charging stations.					
T-c	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	Ch, LB, Civ
	Explore the possibility of a program that provides City bicycles and/or e-bikes available to the public.					
T-d	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	LB, Prop
	Encourage more bicycle facilities, bicycle-oriented maps, and bike rentals.					
T-e	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	DME, Prop, LB, Civ
	Install more bike racks downtown and in other key locations, and encourage businesses to do so.					
T-f	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop, LB, MDT
	Require new development in the City to install adequate streets, sidewalks, streetside boulevard trees, trails, parking, storm water control and downward-directional street lighting where appropriate, at time of construction.					
T-g	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	LCo and Troy
	Research grant opportunities to, and partner with Lincoln County and/or the City of Troy to add a bus and/or other public transportation options.					



Table 11		Cultural and Recreational Resources: Table of Goals and Actions				
Policy Statement	The City supports the many cultural and recreation activities in Libby that serve to bring the community together, celebrate history, provide opportunities to recreate, increase physical activities and promote healthy lifestyles.					
Goals	C/R-1	Strengthen relationship and communication with groups engaged in parks and recreation.				
	C/R-2	Improve awareness of area opportunities and features.				
	C/R-3	Improve key parks and recreation facilities in the Libby Planning Area to be more attractive and safer for all users.				
	C/R-4	Preserve and encourage adaptive re-use of significant historical structures.				
Actions	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	LCo
C/R-a	Reestablish a strong and active community park board that maintains consistent communication with the City and County governing bodies.					
C/R-b	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo, Civ
	Invest in and improve City parks with new, safe facilities and amenities, after public input and scoping meetings to determine the most appropriate improvements and funding sources.					
C/R-c	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo
	When making decisions on parks improvements, consider the needs of senior citizens and seek to install appropriate amenities, such as benches along walking paths.					
C/R-d	Importance	1	Timeframe	1	Partners	MDT
	Plan for and work with the Montana Department of Transportation to develop a walking path along City Service Road from Highway 37 to provide safe pedestrian access the Fred Brown Pavilion at Riverside Park.					
C/R-e	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	Civ, Ch
	Support efforts for a community pool or aquatics center.					
C/R-f	Importance	3	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop
	When new subdivisions trigger parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland, and the residential uses will be well served by existing public parks, encourage or request the subdividers provide cash-in-lieu of parkland for improvements to the existing parks likely to serve the subdivision.					
	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCo



C/R-g	Locate all trails in the Libby Planning Area and create map(s) for public distribution; consider including the locations of key sidewalks, bike paths and lanes, and parks and other recreational facilities in the maps.					
C/R-h	Importance		Timeframe		Partners	Ch
	Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce to support their website as a portal for "All Things Libby", including focus on the cultural and recreational facilities and opportunities, and provide a link to their website on the City website.					
C/R-i	Importance	3	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop, Civ, LB, DoC, SHPO
	Pursue opportunities for historic preservation.					

Table 12		Land Use: Table of Goals and Actions				
Policy Statement	The City supports future development that reflects an efficient mix of land uses while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding natural and built environment. The City strives to be a compact, walkable community with unique character and a thriving Downtown serving as the community's center of business and civic life. Infill development within the City limits, and annexation of adjacent land where services are efficiently provided, are encouraged prior to expansion of the City into areas where services are not efficiently provided.					
Goals	L-1	Facilitate redevelopment and encourage development of blighted, vacant or underdeveloped land, including Superfund sites.				
	L-2	Encourage neighborhood planning efforts.				
	L-3	Improve the appearance of Libby's streetscape.				
	L-4	Modernize planning and zoning regulations.				
	L-5	Retain open space within the Libby Planning Area.				
	L-6	Preserve existing neighborhoods while encouraging infill and efficient land uses.				
	L-7	Encourage mixed-use development in the urban core.				
	L-8	Make the downtown more beautiful, dynamic, functional, and inviting.				
Actions	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
L-a	Review performance standards in existing zoning code to determine their efficacy at meeting the goals and needs of Libby.					
L-b	Importance	1	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Update the City of Libby Subdivision Regulations and zoning code to accord to state law, to best promote City goals and policies, and to promote efficient use of available land.					



L-c	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LB, Prop, Ch, DME
	Improve sign regulations to minimize impacts and clutter while providing for advertisement and free speech.					
L-d	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo
	Improve code enforcement through training, devoting resources, public education, clear regulations, and improved administrative forms.					
L-e	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Provide for flexible building heights to allow for higher density development if effects on public health and safety, viewshed, and the natural environment are addressed.					
L-f	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	Prop, LB
	Identify, plan, zone, and where necessary, partner with developers to extend adequate services to infill development sites.					
L-g	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop, LB
	Pursue annexation of contiguous land that receives City services or is ripe for infill and/or efficient development and provision of municipal services.					
L-h	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo, Prop, LB
	Provide for development in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) when dangers from wildfire are substantially mitigated.					
L-i	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	(public participation)
	Develop landscaping and tree planting requirements or guidelines for new development.					
L-j	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Explore the formation of one or more Urban Renewal District and Tax Increment Finance District to provide infrastructure and streetscape improvements in blighted areas.					



Table 13		Natural Resources: Table of Goals and Actions				
Policy Statement	The City seeks to have a healthy community with clean air, clean water, and sustainable use of its natural resources while respecting the constraints of such resources in the Libby Planning Area.					
Goals	N-1	Preserve and protect the City's water supply.				
	N-2	Maintain active involvement in the City-County Health Board.				
	N-3	Preserve the environmental functions of surface and ground water resources.				
	N-4	Manage storm water and require new developments to do the same.				
	N-5	Improve air quality.				
	N-6	Control dust and require new developments to do the same.				
	N-7	Reduce risks of catastrophic fires to the Libby Planning Area.				
	N-8	Reduce conflicts with wildlife.				
	N-9	Preserve existing gravel operations.				
	N-10	Preserve the night sky and minimize impacts of outdoor lighting in the Libby Planning Area.				
	N-11	Address climate change in the City's plans, regulations, and operations.				
Actions	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo, DNRC
N-a	Support active forest management in the Libby municipal watershed of Flower Creek.					
N-b	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop, FWP
	Require appropriate mitigation for land use activities that may adversely impact surface and groundwater, local fisheries, wildlife habitat, and air quality.					
N-c	Importance	3	Timeframe	1	Partners	LCo
	Review the floodplain ordinance and work with the Lincoln County Floodplain Administrator on desired changes.					
N-d	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Adopt regulations addressing development activities that may adversely impact slope stability or increase erosion potential.					
N-e	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Update the City of Libby Subdivision Regulations and zoning code to better address outdoor lighting, storm water management, and dust control in development projects.					
N-f	Importance	2	Timeframe	1	Partners	(public participation)
	Adopt City engineering specifications for stormwater management.					



N-g	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	Prop, LB
	Require paving for new developments when there are new or improved streets, parking lots of a certain size, and/or other similar facilities.					
N-h	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Limit development activities in sensitive areas, as defined by and required by City regulations and state and federal law.					
N-i	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Adopt a best management practices policy for addressing storm water runoff, to include bio-engineering options.					
N-j	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	n/a
	Enforce the well-drilling ordinance for the area affected by the Libby Groundwater Superfund site pursuant to the agreement with International Paper.					
N-k	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	(public participation)
	Ensure, through ordinance, prompt restoration of land after grading and vegetation removal. Such ordinance may include phased clearing and grading; replanting requirements; and other appropriate re-vegetation and engineering techniques.					
N-l	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	DEQ, LCo
	Continue to obtain technical information on air quality as a basis for an air quality improvement program.					
N-m	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	LCo
	Work cooperatively with Lincoln County to facilitate enforcement and public awareness of its Air Pollution Control District regulations.					
N-n	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	FWP
	Work with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks on promoting "Living With Wildlife" principles.					
N-o	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Support water conservation, use of native plants in landscaping, and development of water reuse systems and redundant municipal water sources.					
N-p	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Carefully consider development activity located next to gravel operations to limit potential conflicts.					



Table 14		Public Facilities and Local Services: Table of Goals and Actions				
Policy Statement	The City seeks to provide safe and efficient services and facilities for existing and future residents and supports local and regional cooperation of infrastructure enhancement efforts.					
Goals	P-1	Maintain and improve the City's infrastructure and facilities.				
	P-2	Minimize future maintenance costs.				
	P-3	Maintain a fully staffed police department in the existing downtown location.				
	P-4	Maintain and improve City parks.				
	P-5	Maintain mutual aid agreements for fire protection with other cities and counties in the region and respond accordingly to requests.				
	P-6	Improve recycling opportunities and awareness of them.				
	P-7	Improve availability of electric vehicles and associated charging stations.				
	P-8	Encourage energy efficient in the Libby community and Planning Area.				
	P-9	Encourage solar energized buildings in the Libby community and Planning Area to be tied to the power grid.				
	P-10	Improve opportunities for reduced energy consumption and explore or develop alternative energy sources, including biomass.				
	P-11	Encourage social services to locate near hubs of other local services.				
	P-12	Increase the number of workers in public and local services, such as health care and animal care, emergency medical services, and childcare, and social services.				
Actions	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
P-a	Adhere to the Capital Improvements Plan improvements schedules for City facilities.					
P-b	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Annually review and update the Capital Improvements Plan with identified funding mechanisms to ensure that facilities and services are available to meet future needs and this goals and action plan.					
P-c	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCo
	Work with Lincoln County and the Park District on developing funding mechanisms for park maintenance.					
	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	DNRC, DEQ, LCo



P-d	Develop a water use informational program promoting water conservation efforts.					
P-e	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Adhere to the Capital Improvement Plan's maintenance and improvement schedule for the municipal water system and other municipal facilities.					
P-f	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	SHPO, DoC
	Identify and apply for funding for historic preservation and upgrades to City Police building.					
P-g	Importance	1	Timeframe	1	Partners	ED, LCo
	Work with Evergreen Disposal and the Lincoln County Environmental Health Department on developing a recycling program for the City, to include a specific awareness and education program for City residents.					
P-h	Importance	1	Timeframe	0	Partners	(public participation)
	Ensure all new development can adequately be served by existing facilities or require proportionate upgrades.					
P-i	Importance	2	Timeframe	0	Partners	DME
	As streetlights need replacing, replace with downward directional lights.					
P-j	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCo, LS, MDT
	Develop a process to evaluate the impacts of development on existing parks, schools, transportation and other facilities.					
P-k	Importance	1	Timeframe	3	Partners	(public participation)
	Improve City hydropower capabilities.					
P-l	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	LCo, Prop, LB, TBD
	Find ways to work with social services providers and owners of vacant buildings near other community service providers to enhance opportunities for service providers to locate in central Libby (near the courthouse, downtown, and highways).					
P-m	Importance	2	Timeframe	2	Partners	JS, LCo, Ch, FVCC, LS, LB
	Support, participate in, and/or host job fairs with attention to employment in public and local services, such as health care and animal care, emergency medical services, and childcare, and social services.					



SUBDIVISION REVIEW

Subdivisions are strongly connected to the comprehensive planning process and may significantly advance or detract from the attainment of publicly identified goals. Because of this strong influence, all subdivisions (and subdivision regulations) must be reviewed for compliance with the Growth Policy.

Subdivisions must be reviewed in relation to their impacts on seven criteria established by state law (see Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA). State law also requires growth policies to include statements explaining how the local governing body will define the subdivision review criteria and evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria. This section provides the City of Libby's criteria definitions and how the City will evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria. Also required by state law, this section explains how public hearings regarding proposed subdivisions will be conducted. These strategies work in conjunction with the City of Libby Subdivision Regulations, last updated in 2011.

Criteria defined

These criteria are hereby defined and within the current City of Libby Subdivision Regulations as follows:

Agriculture

All aspects of farming or ranching including the cultivation or tilling of soil; dairying; the production, cultivation, growing, harvesting

of agricultural or horticultural commodities; raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals or poultry; and any practices including, forestry or lumbering operations, including preparation for market or delivery to storage, to market, or to carriers for transportation to market.

Agricultural Water User Facilities

Those facilities which provide water for irrigation or stock watering to agricultural lands for the production of agricultural products. These facilities include, but are not limited to, ditches, head gates, pipes, and other water conveying facilities.

Local Services

Any and all services that local governments, public or private utilities are authorized to provide for the benefit of their citizens.

Natural Environment

The natural environment is defined as the physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, sound, light and objects of historic and aesthetic significance.

Wildlife

Those animals that are not domesticated or tamed.

Wildlife Habitat

The place or area where wildlife naturally lives or travels through.

Public Health and Safety

The prevailing healthful, sanitary condition of well being for the community at large. Conditions that relate to public health and



safety include but are not limited to: disease control and prevention; emergency services; environmental health; flooding, fire or wildfire hazards, rock falls or landslides, unstable soils, steep slopes, and other natural hazards; high voltage lines or high pressure gas lines; and air or vehicular traffic safety hazards.

Evaluation/Impacts

Subdivisions will be evaluated for their specific, documentable, and clearly defined impact on these seven criteria. The evaluation of the impacts of the proposed subdivision on these seven criteria determines whether there are significant unmitigated adverse impacts. Unmitigated adverse impacts are potential grounds for denial of a proposed subdivision. Below are examples of items considered in evaluating the impact of a proposed subdivision on the seven criteria.

These examples do not reflect all potential items, but they do include a preponderance of the items under consideration. Depending on the proposed subdivision, some of these items included may not apply. In addition, some proposals may require evaluation of other topics not included in these examples to weigh the subdivision's effect on these criteria. It is the subdivider's responsibility to document proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts on these seven criteria. However, it is also possible for the local government to gather and review data for a larger area and therefore removes the need for a private party to do so.

Impact on agriculture

An impact on agriculture is an impact on an

existing, on-going agricultural operation onsite or on an adjacent or nearby property that may suffer some hindrance or other interference in the agricultural operation as a result of approval of a proposed subdivision. As required by state law, the impacts exclude any consideration of whether the proposed subdivision will result in a loss of agricultural soils.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable impact on agriculture if it does not include measures to control noxious weeds from proliferating to surrounding agricultural properties, does not fence livestock from entering subdivision lots, does not provide a sufficient buffer between residential developments and surrounding agricultural operations, does not take steps to prevent pets from harassing livestock, or does not notify future property owners of the right-to-farm by surrounding agricultural landowners. If a subdivision proposal in an agricultural area includes adequate measures to minimize the impacts on agricultural operations and resources, it is likely to be found to have little or no significant impact on agriculture.

Impact on agricultural water user facilities

This impact is defined as the interference of conveyance of irrigation water and/or of ground water supplies relied upon by an existing, on-going agricultural operation on adjacent or nearby property as a result of approval of a proposed subdivision.

A subdivision proposal may be found to have an unacceptable impact on agricultural water



user facilities if it does not comply with the irrigation provisions of the City of Libby Subdivision Regulations or fails to implement a reasonable mechanism for delivering irrigation water to lots that will be assessed for irrigation district operation and maintenance, does not include sufficient easements for ditch and system maintenance, or is likely to result in the disruption of service to other water users. If the proposal complies with the subdivision regulations, includes measures to limit the impacts to other users and meets the requirements of the applicable irrigation district, the proposal is likely to be viewed as having no significant impact on agricultural water user facilities.

Impact on local services

This is defined as an impact on the capacity and/or level of service of any local services such as utilities, streets, schools, parks, and bike and pedestrian facilities.

A subdivision proposal may be found to have an unacceptable impact on local services if it provides a substantial and unmitigated demand on local services, decreases the service provider's ability to provide timely services to the existing public, does not provide adequate facilities for service providers to serve the subdivision, provides barriers to service provisions, or is found to result in similar impacts without appropriate mitigation. If all reasonable service provider requirements and regulatory provisions are met, a proposal is likely to have minimal impacts on local services.

Impact on the natural environment

This shall be defined as impacts to air and water quality, including erosion, sedimentation, loss of native vegetation, and soil contamination.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment if it is found to have direct or indirect negative impacts on the physical conditions that comprise an area's natural environment or if the subdivision fails to comply with the applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to the natural environment. Any such negative impacts may require mitigation efforts by the subdivider. If a subdivision complies with all applicable regulations and mitigation measures are properly implemented, the proposal is likely to have no significant impact on the natural environment.

Impacts on wildlife

These impacts are defined as loss of wildlife or expected disruption of wildlife or their habitat.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable effect on wildlife if it directly displaces or removes wildlife from an area or it does not include measures to prevent conflict between wildlife and subdivision inhabitants, including pets. Any such negative impacts may require mitigation efforts by the subdivider. Examples of wildlife mitigation measures include preserving vegetative cover along riparian and migration corridors, requiring building setbacks from water bodies, reducing development density in areas of important



habitat, donating a monetary sum to an applicable wildlife or habitat preservation organization, and developing covenants that educate lot buyers and reduce the potential for human-wildlife conflict. If mitigation measures are properly implemented or a subdivision is not in a known wildlife area, the proposal is likely to have no significant impact on wildlife.

Impacts on wildlife habitat

These impacts are defined as loss of documented critical wildlife habitat.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable effect on wildlife habitat if it destroys or otherwise removes important or critical wildlife habitat or concentrates human-related activities near important or critical wildlife habitat in a manner that is likely to have a significant negative impact on the wildlife the habitat supports. Any such negative impacts may require mitigation efforts by the subdivider. Examples of wildlife habitat mitigation measures include preserving vegetative cover along riparian and migration corridors, requiring building setbacks from water bodies, reducing development density in areas of important habitat, donating a monetary sum to an applicable wildlife or habitat preservation organization to be used for mitigation, and developing covenants that inform lot buyers and reduce the potential for human-wildlife conflict. If mitigation measures are properly implemented or a subdivision is not in the vicinity of important or critical wildlife habitat, the proposal is likely to have no significant impact on wildlife habitat.

Impacts on public health and safety

This set of impacts can involve unsafe traffic generated by a proposed development, smoke, dust, noise, odors, and/or impacts on fire, emergency medical, and police protection.

A subdivision proposal may have an unacceptable effect on public health and safety if it is located in an area that cannot be effectively served by emergency responders or is located in an area that is prone to natural or man-made hazards. Examples are development on steep slopes or within high fire hazard areas or areas not served by a fire department. If steps are taken to ensure that the residents of a subdivision can be adequately served by emergency service providers, the dangers posed by natural or man-made hazards are adequately mitigated and maintained, and the proposal complies with state and local regulations, a subdivision proposal is likely to be viewed as having little impact on public health and safety.

Public Hearings on Subdivision Proposals

A fundamental component of the subdivision review process is the opportunity for members of the public and interested groups to offer comments on the proposal. This opportunity is formally provided by the public review process, including public hearings on major subdivisions and public meetings on minor subdivisions, where persons for, against, or merely seeking information about the proposal may speak to appointed or elected officials who must approve or deny the project. Public hearings



on major subdivision proposals in the City of Libby are conducted by both the City of Libby Planning Board and City Council.

This section describes how all public hearings will be conducted for the review of subdivision proposals when a public hearing is required. Minutes shall be taken at all public hearings and be made available to the public. Public hearings shall be conducted in the following order:

1. The presiding officer shall open the public hearing and introduce the subdivision proposal to be heard.
2. The body shall determine whether proper notice of the public hearing has been provided. If proper notice has not been provided, the public hearing shall be re-scheduled.
3. The presiding officer shall ask if any members wish to declare a conflict of interest in the matter to be heard, and excuse any member who declares such a conflict from participation in the hearing.
4. The presiding officer shall ask for the subdivision report to be presented by the subdivision administrator.
5. The subdivision administrator shall give an overview of the subdivision report and proposal, evaluating the proposal relative to state law, local regulations and the applicable review criteria, and

the recommendations of the subdivision administrator and/or Planning Board, as applicable.

6. Members may ask questions of the subdivision administrator.
7. The presiding officer shall ask the subdivider or his/her designated agent(s) to present the subdivision proposal, describe pertinent features of the proposal, and respond to the subdivision report and recommendations.
8. Members of the body may ask questions of the subdivider.
9. The presiding officer shall open the public hearing to public comment. The body may direct all public comment to be given in a manner and of a limited duration per person as determined by the presiding officer and members of the body.
10. All members of the public choosing to speak shall identify themselves prior to commenting and shall direct comments to the presiding officer and not audience members or the subdivider.
11. After public comment has been received, the presiding officer may then close the hearing to public comment.
12. The body shall deliberate and, if the Planning Board, make a



recommendation on the proposal to the City Council; if City Council, decide upon a decision on the subdivision proposal. During the deliberation, any member may ask further questions of the subdivision administrator, the subdivider, and the public.

13. Any member of the Planning Board may move to recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal. Any motion requires a second prior to the Board voting on the motion. All Board members may vote on the motion or abstain from voting.
14. Any member of the City Council may move to approve, conditionally approve, or deny a proposal.
15. If unanswered questions persist, the body may also ask the subdivider for an extension of the preliminary review period and if an extension is agreed upon, the public hearing may be continued to a date, time, and place announced during the hearing.
16. The City Council must make a final decision prior to the mandatory review deadline, unless an extension is agreed to according to state law.



REVISIONS AND UPDATES

As the Growth Policy is implemented and the City and Planning Board develops work plans every two-years, the City should keep track of actions accomplished and goals achieved, and take the opportunity to review the Goals and Action Plan to determine whether any urgent revisions to the Growth Policy are needed or if efforts should be refocused, which should trigger an update.

As demographic and economic trends are constantly changing, it is imperative to review the Growth Policy periodically. State law requires growth policies to include with the implementation strategy a timetable for reviewing the growth policy at least once every five years and revising the policy if necessary. Additionally, ideas that worked in the past may not work for Libby's present or future needs.

As part of the implementation strategy, the Growth Policy is to be reviewed at least once every five years, and should be revised if any of the following conditions are met:

1. Population growth exceeds a rate of 2.5% per year.
2. A development proposal has been proposed in the Libby Planning Area that revealed a need to update.
3. Sewer treatment capacity is exceeded by current flows or water service area is exceeded by new development proposals.

4. Any major impacts to the natural environment or City infrastructure occur.
5. The City experiences a major change in government form or service.
6. The City is petitioned to review the growth policy by no less than five percent of the then-current population.

Upon occurrence of one of the previously-listed events, the Planning Board will initiate the revision process utilizing staff, through Interlocal Agreement with Lincoln County for Planning Services, through a private consultant, through a task force or committee process, or any combination of these. The following can be used as a general guide for revising the Growth Policy, with an emphasis on public involvement and dissemination of the information:

1. Assess current information in the Growth Policy and update data as necessary and as available;
2. Solicit input from a broad group of stakeholders, including but not limited to:
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Service Clubs
 - Those in the construction, building, and development industry
 - Sportsman's or similar associations
 - Realtors
 - City of Libby



- Lincoln County
 - Libby Public Schools
 - Economic Development Organizations
 - Flathead Valley Community College
3. Conduct focus group or similar meetings to discuss the current statistics, demographic, and economic conditions and trends in Libby; and evaluate the progress and status of growth policy elements looking at such items as accomplishments to date, revision needs, and priority changes.
 4. The findings of the meetings and recommended updates can be presented to the Planning Board, and the Planning Board will direct what should be incorporated into the Growth Policy Update.
 5. Growth Policy updates will be incorporated into a document for review by the Planning Board.
 6. The Planning Board will conduct public hearings on draft amendments to the Growth Policy, amend the document as appropriate, and make recommendations to the City Council for consideration and action.
 7. The City Council may amend the Growth Policy or refer it back to the Planning Board.
 8. Adoption of the Growth Policy Updates will follow the requirements of state law.



COOPERATION STRATEGY – CITY OF LIBBY AND LINCOLN COUNTY

In the past, the City of Libby and Lincoln County have entered into an interlocal agreement for the provision of planning services in an effort to share resources for finding solutions to common and shared growth problems. Recently, the City has attempted to use a staff planner to administer the Growth Policy and planning regulations. At this time it is not known how planning services will be handled in the coming years. In any event, the City will typically have a professional planner, be it a staff employee, through interlocal agreement, or through other contract. The professional planner should work closely with the Lincoln County planning staff on planning matters and implementation of the Growth Policy.

Through cooperation, each government can advance the goals of the Growth Policy by addressing large-scale issues in a collaborative and effective manner.

In relation to the Growth Policy and any subsequent revisions and updates, the City of Libby¹ will cooperate and coordinate as follows:

- ✓ Both governments will invite the other to serve as a member of their task force or

¹ This strategy is also subject to Lincoln County's willingness and cooperation to implement, but these

working committee during the revision process.

- ✓ Each government will offer their respective governing board and staff the opportunity to review and comment on Growth Policy revisions.
- ✓ Opportunities for review and comment shall be of at least 30 days duration.
- ✓ Each government and staff will provide an opportunity to the other government and staff to review and comment on their respective implementation tools for their Growth Policy. Such tools shall include subdivision and zoning regulations and may include other tools identified as having a material effect on land uses.
- ✓ The City and County will maintain an open communication concerning growth policy issues of mutual interest.
- ✓ The City Planning Board and the County Planning Board will participate in a periodic joint planning meeting to review items of mutual interest a minimum of once per year or at the request of either government.
- ✓ The City will work with the County on identified items of common interest, including land use policies in the Planning Area, open space protection, water quality and supply, and other items. Joint funding will be pursued as allowed by state law.

are the steps the City of Libby proposes during review of this Growth Policy Update.



SOURCES

- ⁱ [Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- ⁱⁱ [Asbestos](#)
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/libby-mt-population>
- ^{iv} [Libby, MT | Data USA](#)
- ^v From [Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor via Data Commons](#)
- ^{vi} <https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Montana-Main-Street-Program/Purpose>
- ^{vii} [Libby Groundwater Contamination](#)
- ⁸ [Libby Capital Improvements Plan, 2020](#)
- ⁹ [The Great American Stations](#)
- ¹⁰ [City of Libby – Fireman’s Park](#)
- ¹¹ [Libby Capital Improvements Plan, 2020](#)
- ¹² [City of Libby – Riverfront Park](#)
- ¹³ [Libby Capital Improvements Plan, 2020](#)
- ¹⁴ [Lincoln County Health Department](#)
- ¹⁵ [Montana DEQ Environmental Assessment](#)
- ¹⁶ [Recycle Montana](#)
- ¹⁷ [Libby Capital Improvements Plan, 2020](#)
- ¹⁸ [The Montanian](#)
- ¹⁹ [Montana Right Now](#)
- ²⁰ [Cabinet Peaks Medical Center](#)
- ²¹ [Center for Asbestos Related Disease](#)
- ²² [The Western News](#)
- ²³ [Flathead Electric](#)
- ²⁴ [Libby School District](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
- [County Office, Libby MT D.O.T.](#)
- [Zillow - Libby, Montana Home Values](#)
- [Headwater’s Economics](#)
- [U.S. Department of Commerce](#)
- [Mesothelioma](#)



Photo courtesy of Mark Andreasen