

LINCOLN COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN



Lincoln, Montana

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*A community led effort
facilitated by:*



*Lincoln Valley
Chamber of Commerce*

Envision Lincoln



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INTRODUCTION

Lincoln Montana will always remain Lincoln Montana. Its residents are strong, and fiercely independent. They take great pride in their community and the surrounding area. They understand that what they have in Lincoln Valley is the last of its kind, and they understand the value that corresponds with that rare existence.

The world is knocking on their door however. Destinations like Lincoln Montana have become highly sought after in the modern world. Residency will turn over. Businesses will exchange hands. And growth will occur to the extent that the land allows. Unfortunately for Lincoln, and the rest of Montana that desires life to remain as it always has been, change is inevitable.

No one is at the whim of change. It is a force which may not be stopped, but it can be shaped, deterred, and coerced. A home along the banks of the Blackfoot may not be able to stop the river from slowly eroding its cutbank and taking the land right out from underneath it, but a person can deter that force and buy some time. Lincoln, through this master plan, and the actions they embark upon after its publishing, have the ability to shape the force of change in their community as they see fit.

No community member in this process wished poorly upon another resident. This is a community that cares deeply for its people, and responds to the call when someone reaches out for help. The master planning process has identified a number of areas where the community needs help. Safety for school children and residents, businesses with deferred maintenance, and residents without good employment are just a few areas that the community could address by utilizing the tools and pursuing the objectives within this master plan.

Focusing efforts on small achievable tasks will build community pride and provide momentum for greater objectives. Laying down the groundwork for larger projects like highway improvements needs to start as early as possible in order to properly navigate the regulatory measures of the State. Fostering community involvement is critical to the success of any project. Consensus is strong amongst residents in many categories to improve the status quo. Residents need to find individuals with similar desires and organize their efforts to shape the change within their community.

Without these efforts, Lincoln will change as new residents and businesses arrive. Without a strong understanding of the community's culture, and the mental and physical assets to reinforce that culture to the outside, Lincoln as it is today will fade into tomorrow.

This ain't Whitefish.

– Lincoln Resident

BACKGROUND

Lincoln Montana epitomizes the quintessential characteristics of western Montana. Born out of hard work, natural resource development, and a love of the landscape, the evolving history of this mountain community is shaped by those who have shown the tenacity and fortitude to make this their home.

A growing interest in rural communities from outside populations is putting pressure on Montana's cities and towns. In order to maintain community and culture, it is imperative that communities prepare for the inevitable growth. A thoughtful master plan will not only outline physical infrastructure, amenities, and attributes to be developed in coming years, but will help build community identity, and market the area appropriately to future employees and residents.

By undertaking this process, the residents of Lincoln and area stakeholders will cast a mold that will help to shape the community's future. Freestone Development and our partners will work to ensure a broad spectrum of the community is engaged throughout the process. Our goal is to enhance the attributes that set Lincoln apart from other Rocky Mountain communities, and to lay a new foundation for the community to build upon in coming years.

Project Understanding

Lincoln Montana's rich history can be felt by those who know a bit about the region. As I wind my way over Flesher or Stemple Pass and cross the CDT, I am attuned to the fact that I am entering a true mountain destination; when you get to Lincoln, you know that you have arrived somewhere distinct. The town, now comfortably settled in its second location, is the heart of this stretch of the Rocky Mountains. The people who call this landscape home are very much a reflection of the past and those who came before them.

As the world around us closes in, many Montanans feel as though their hand is forced. Some communities however, have foreseen the inevitable as an opportunity to shape their own destiny. Lincoln has wisely chosen this path, and has already taken strides to organize and implement community planning and investment by establishing Envision Lincoln. This organized effort shows that the community is well aware of the opportunities that the town, its businesses, and its residents can seize at this moment in time. It also demonstrates a positive regard for elevating the community through the implementation of a master plan.

The diverse make up of area residents and the values that define their quality of life are paramount in building a pathway toward the future look, feel, and prosperity of Lincoln, Montana. Public engagement of all segments of the population has been reiterated by community organizers and depicts a true concern for maintaining the community as it stands. Gathering data, information, and opinions of all segments will help to ensure that the growth plan laid out in the master plan will serve the greater good while staying true to the character of the community.

The master plan as presented by Freestone Development and its partners provides an inclusive look into the lifeblood that defines Lincoln Montana. It will guide intelligent investments to bolster the vitality of the community going forward, and present the area as a destination unique unto itself that will not be

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overlooked by travelers, prospective workforce, and residents. Implementation of the plan will foster community involvement, build upon the area's identity, and increase residents' adoration for the place that they call home.

Needs

Like many rural locations across Montana, Lincoln is facing challenges as they transition from a resource-based economy to that of a rural destination. Housing, employment, and childcare are issues that are plaguing communities large and small across the state. Freestone recently finalized an assessment of the Lewistown area that identified these subjects as impediments to prosperity, and provided a guide for the community to secure solutions that will work for their community. Greater understanding of the local economy will provide the consultant with the data necessary to tailor solutions specific to Lincoln area needs.

As an unincorporated community, Lincoln lacks many of the public resources available to other cities and towns. This community model has provided certain levels of freedom for residents and businesses, and the community has done well to organize and move projects forward with consensus. The master plan will address the community's need to create a unified and directed path to define its **IDENTITY**. This identity will be rooted in the area's rugged heritage and existing culture while providing a fresh, cohesive design will provide a visual representation the Lincoln lifestyle.

Investment into area **INFRASTRUCTURE** is a necessary component of the master plan. A land use, infrastructure, and building assessment will create a baseline of the community's physical assets. Investments will be prioritized to bolster the economic prosperity of the community. Short term goals will capitalize on low hanging economic opportunity and enhancing the visual form and function of the community. As an unincorporated community, it is vital to increase local prosperity and encourage private investment where possible. As early implementation efforts are realized and the local economy expanded, the community can begin to act on long term goals identified in the master plan.

Identifying various **RESOURCES** is an essential need for community organizations to succeed in executing the plan. Lincoln has done well in being the first unincorporated community recognized by the Montana Main Street Program. This organization has successfully leveraged government and non-profit funding to execute community projects. Expanding upon this success will be necessary to execute plan objectives. These resources will provide funding, planning, and consulting services to the community in order to achieve plan objectives.

The master plan development process will create a number of **ASSETS** that will be utilized by the community and organizations throughout the lifetime of the plan. These assets will provide a template for design and appearance of property, guide development outlined in the plan, and be utilized by businesses and organizations for greater economic benefit.

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<i>The Four Need Silos of the Lincoln Master Plan</i>			
Infrastructure	Identity	Assets	Resources
Land Use Assessment Infrastructure Assessment Buildings / Properties Assessment Parks, Trails, Recreation Public Spaces Walkability & Wayfinding Utilities Transportation Parking & Lighting	Heritage Maintain Community Character Transition to New Economy Tourism & Recreation Town Theme Target Market Demographics Uphold Quality of Life Special Events	Wayfinding Map & Sign Design Map of Community Assets Renderings Marketing Plan Graphic & Video Representations Trail Maps Community Connectivity Map	Business Opportunities Business Resource Center Funding Opportunities Consulting & Development Partners State & Federal Programs Non-Profit / Foundation Support NorthWestern Energy Programs

Methodology

The Montana Mainstreet Program outlines four points that should be recognized by a community when undertaking the development of a master plan. These four points provide guidance that will keep community leaders and volunteers focused on both short term and long-term objectives that have proven to revitalize Montana communities and reignited local pride. This proposal encompasses these four points and utilizes a methodology to support their implementation.

<i>The Four Points of Montana Mainstreet</i>			
Organization	Promotion	Design	Economic Vitality
Public Engagement Establishes Consensus and Cooperation Build Partnerships Est. Steering Committee Est. Standing Committee Delegate Workload & Responsibilities Community Visioning	Est. Identity Design / Branding Marketing Plan / Campaigns Advertising Special Events Highlight Unique Characteristics Amenities Business Establishments	Inviting Atmosphere Navigable Environment Heritage Architecture Form & Function Buildings / Storefronts / Signage Art / Street Furniture / Landscaping Maintenance Design Education	Strengthen Existing Economy Diversify Economic Base Enhance Competitiveness & Merchandising Attract New Business Convert Underutilized Spaces Build Sustainability Respond to Target Market Desires

Freestone Development will employ the following eight steps in the development and community led execution of the master plan. These steps will provide a general outline of the work plan and schedule as noted later in this RFP response.

<i>The Eight Steps to the Master Planning Process</i>	
1. Community Visioning	Engaging the public and developing vision statements, goals, and objectives
2. Data Collection	Preparing the community assessment and existing land use map
3. Data Analysis	Formulating future development scenarios based on vision statements, community assessment, and land use map
4. Evaluate Future Scenarios	Review and critique future development scenarios and how the plan can effect them
5. Preparing & Adopting the Plan	Selecting a preferred development and design
6. Implementing the Plan	Establish board or standing committee begins implementing priorities
7. Monitoring the Plan	Standing committee reviews ongoing developments and achievements
8. Amending & Updating the Plan	Standing committee engages with the public to revise, amend, and update the plan as needed.

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DISCOVERY PROCESS

Local leadership placed public engagement as their top priority in this planning process. The Lincoln area population is diverse, independent, and cares deeply about their community and its surroundings. It was paramount to this process to be as thorough as possible in notifying the public of the planning process, garnering public input, and reflecting all opinions in the final master plan.

The contractor worked with local leadership and the steering committee to engage the area residents and businesses through face-to-face meetings, online surveys, local newspaper articles, and video conferencing. The following public engagement strategies were employed in order to deliver community driven data into this master plan: Kickoff Town Hall Meeting, Small Group Discussion, Online Survey, Survey Results Town Hall Meeting, Focus Groups, and a City Tour hosted by local leadership with the Montana State University Community Design Center.



Nearly eighty community residents attended the master planning kickoff town hall meeting and participated in small group discussions.

The findings of the discovery process were essential to the development of master plan objectives and design elements. Findings from the master planning discovery process can be found on page 50 of this document.

DEFINING OBJECTIVES

Throughout the discovery period of the master planning process, common threads were found within the community. These common desires were reflected throughout community meetings, survey responses, and group discussions. Defining these objectives was conducted through careful consideration of identified outcomes, community sentiment, and common themes.

The following objectives have surfaced as the top needs of the community of Lincoln. Working to achieve these objectives will provide solutions for businesses, residents, and the local organizations. Elevating the community's standing through community organization and improvement to the Highway 200 corridor will foster local business prosperity, community safety, and unity amongst area residents. These objectives will provide a foundation for building upon the objectives of Economic Development and Greater Recreational Opportunities as identified by the community.

Objective 1. Community Organization

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT:

Development of an umbrella organization to serve residents, businesses, and local organizations to carry out the desires of the community.

Community organization and consensus building is perhaps the pinnacle of what impedes Lincoln's ability to realize needed improvements. Data collected throughout the master planning process suggests that consensus and common opinion does exist within the community. Data also depicts a fragmented society that is often going in multiple directions despite the fact that their underlying objectives align. This is a symptom of disorganization.

The community of Lincoln would greatly benefit from the development of an overarching organization that works to enable and align the multiple efforts of area residents, businesses, and local organizations.

Community Organization Objectives

1. Provide Community Administrative Support

Many of Lincoln's local organizations operations are hindered by the same factors. Fundraising, permitting events, community outreach, marketing, and attracting volunteers are often redundant across organizations. This has created unintended, negative impacts like volunteer burnout and donor fatigue. Facilitating and organizing these administrative tasks can improve operational efficiency and deliver a higher success rate to each organization's efforts.

2. Serve as the Community Communications Center

One of the central duties of the community organization would be communications. Lincoln currently lacks a reliable conduit for communication to all area residents. Development of a good communication system must be prolific and redundant in order to ensure visibility to all area residents. Some considerations to include would be: digital accessibility & ability, resident vacancies (snow birds, etc.), town hall meetings. The communications system should utilize

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information conduits to reach all audiences appropriately, and would benefit from removing any unnecessary communication platforms that may confuse the resident audience.

3. Market Lincoln

Capturing more economic activity can be facilitated through marketing. The community organization can serve as a central marketing agency for Lincoln. In this role the organization could market Lincoln as a destination, and/or, aid local organizations in marketing their events and activities. In either scenario, the community organization can develop cohesive marketing materials, identify proper advertising venues, help fund marketing efforts, and other marketing responsibilities.

4. Apply for, Collect, and Distribute Funds

As an unincorporated community, Lincoln would benefit from a centralized community financing body. The proper legal entity, like a community foundation, can provide the needed administrative body to collect, apply for, and distribute funding for community projects.

5. Coordinate Community Projects & Master Plan Implementation

This body will serve as the community project coordinator. In this role the organization will facilitate community discussions on which community projects to pursue, how to fund their development, and oversee project their development. These projects may be those specified within this master plan, or otherwise identified by the community.

Organizational Structure

Establishing the correct structure and legal standing of the community organization is very important to its initial success and longevity. The body must be able to legally carryout the various functions needed to facilitate the development and improvement of the community. Functions to consider when creating this body include but are not limited to:

- FUNDRAISING
- GRANT & LOAN APPLICATION
- INTERACTION WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
- PROPERTY OWNERSHIP
- EMPLOYMENT

The Lincoln Community Foundation

The most discussed community organization by town hall participants, focus groups, and steering committee members, was a community foundation. Lincoln already has an established community foundation in place. The foundation has a little over fifty thousand dollars in endowment which has generated a small amount of working interest. This is a positive start and further investigation into how this entity could serve the needs of the Lincoln community is needed.

The Lincoln Community Council

The Lincoln Community Council serves as the official body to interact with Lewis and Clark County. Lewis and Clark County is the communities first level of public office as it is unincorporated. It is the recommendation of this master plan to retain the Lincoln Community Council in this role. A community

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organization like the Lincoln Community Foundation should work closely with the Council as community projects and master plan elements are discussed and developed.

The Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce

The business community of Lincoln stated that there is a need to build better community amongst business owners in the area. The local chamber has waned in recent years; the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly hard on chamber membership, meeting participation, and maintaining a board. Chamber President Laurie Welty stated in focus groups, that businesses need to come together and think in terms of the abundance of resources, and opportunity they have in their community. Building business-to-business comradery is essential for everyone's success. Whether the chamber continues on with its charter, or another venue is created to build a stronger business community in Lincoln, a community organization should work to serve this critical component to life in Lincoln.

Visitor / Community Center

A central community building has been identified and discussed throughout the master planning process as a potential benefit to residents, businesses, and visitors of Lincoln. A community center can often embody community pride and spirit in a material setting, bringing the intangible into a physical presence. Survey results show an immense amount of community pride and distinct sense of community in Lincoln, and a community center could realize the bonds between individual residents and businesses.

Visitor / Community Center Services

Justifying the investment into the development of real property as substantial as a community center is important. Lincoln residents are penny wise and want to ensure that their hard-earned dollars are well utilized. Thus, the role and function of this piece of community infrastructure must serve community needs, bolster local economies, and stand on its own legs once operational. Possible roles and functions of a Visitor / Community Center could be:

- *TOURISM INFORMATION CENTER*
- *COMMUNITY MEETING PLACE*
- *LINCOLN HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXHIBIT*
- *IN-TOWN SCULPTURE IN THE WILD EXHIBIT*
- *COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING / TOWNCENTER TRAILHEAD HUB*
- *COMMERCIAL LEASE SPACE FOR COFFEE SHOP, BREWERY, ETC.*

Visitor / Community Center Real Property

A community center of this nature should exhibit community identity while serving the needs stated above. Information gathered during the master planning discovery processes suggest that the Matt King building could be well suited for this type of development. The Matt King building has been a focal point for historic preservation, community pride, and has experienced some success in raising funds and volunteer work. The Historical Society does own a lot in the town center which could serve as a location for a community center and private land use or purchase agreements must be negotiated should this be an avenue that is pursued.

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Development of real property of any kind for the purpose of a community center will require substantial funding. In order to raise funds, receive grants, and secure loan packages the community center will need to come to the table with a sustainable financial plan. Pairing private sector operations within the community center is one area identified by Lincoln residents as a solution. Multiple amenities were identified by survey respondents and focus group participants that could fit this model.

A visitor / community center represents a welcoming place to gather, and a place to exchange information about the surrounding area. These same characteristics can be found in public enterprises like coffee shops and breweries. Lincoln's lifestyle and economic emphasis on recreating in the area's public lands also lends itself to businesses that cater to this type of customer. A visitor and information center may also be well served by adjacent businesses like a fly shop, outfitter, or recreational equipment rentals.

RECOMMENDATION:

Establish the Lincoln Community Foundation as the Umbrella Organization for the Community
The Lincoln Community Foundation will serve the community as the primary source of information and home for community discourse. This body will work with all local groups and organizations to enhance their vitality and standing within the community as desired. The Foundation should develop an organizational chart that identifies local organizations, their affiliation and mission within the community, and their role and interactions with any governing bodies if applicable.

The Foundation shall work with the Montana Community Foundation to appoint an interim board to establish legal structure, financial accounts, administrative needs, develop a mission, and define objectives as stated above or otherwise identified.

Objective 2. Highway Corridor Improvements

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT:

Carry out improvements to the Montana Highway 200 Corridor throughout the Lincoln community in order to enhance safety, logistics, and appearance of the town center.

Highway 200 is the lifeblood of the Lincoln community and is the face of the Lincoln to visitors and residents alike. As the community's Main Street, the majority of businesses and local amenities are located along the highway corridor as well as the Lincoln school. Multiple user types utilize the corridor, often creating conflicts in traffic flow, parking, pedestrian safety, and other logistics. It is easy to see how this corridor can become a busy, congested, and hazardous thoroughfare during peak times.

Development of corridor improvements can improve safety and logistics, as well as the community's sense of place. Safety along the highway corridor is a major concern of area residents and was identified as a top priority in the master planning process. Survey respondents expressed a desire to enhance the appearance of the downtown area of Lincoln while maintaining the community's character. One focus group participant may have said it best when he stated, *"We don't have to change Lincoln, but we could clean it up a little."* Transportation infrastructure and main street design components can work in tandem in order to achieve both of these objectives.

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Safety & Logistics

Speed is a problem amongst all motorized user groups within the corridor. Semi-trucks, tourists, and off highway vehicles (OHV) have all been guilty of traveling at dangerous rates of speed through the downtown area. A number of tools have been identified in this process to slow the rate of speed, and calm traffic of all types within the town center. Some of the tools discussed and proposed in conceptual designs of the master plan include, but are not limited to:

- *POSITION SPEED SIGNS TO MORE VISIBLE LOCATIONS*
- *UTILIZE RADAR GUN – FLASHING SPEED LIMIT SIGNS*
- *CLEARLY DEFINE INTOWN SPEED LIMITS*
- *CREATE PEDSTRIAN CROSSINGS WITH BUTTON TRIGGERED FLASHING LIGHTS*
- *CONSTRUCT PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE ROADWAY LIKE BULB-OUTS / MEDIANS*
- *DEVELOP OHV USAGE, SPEED LIMIT, WAYFINDING, AND PARKING SIGNAGE*
- *ENHANCE WALKABILITY BY CREATING SAFE PATHWAYS AND HIGHWAY CROSSINGS*
- *IMPROVE PARKING BEHAVIORS BY PROVIDING OFF HIGHWAY PARKING AREAS & DEFINING PARKING FORM WITHIN THE CORRIDOR*

Enhanced Sense of Place

Lincoln residents have a strong sense community pride. Their love of the place that they call home is anchored in a respect of the nature world around them, the independent spirit of their community, and a high regard for their neighbor. Many residents would like to see the downtown corridor cleaned up, and have a better appearance in general. However, it was also clear that residents do not want to lose the character of Lincoln in that process. As one survey respondent stated, *“This ain’t Whitefish.”* This comment is very reflective of a community sentiment that residents do not want to become another replica of a mountain tourist destination but that any improvements should work to enhance Lincoln’s sense of place.

Careful design of community assets and infrastructure will help to ensure that Lincoln retains its character. Montana State University Community Design Center took careful note of this as they participated in the master planning discovery process and developed design concepts that could be employed by the community. Signage, bollards, fencing intrusions, artwork, and other infrastructure can all be developed in a manner that enhances the characteristics of the community. These physical assets will also serve as safety and logistics components.

Lincoln’s downtown businesses are a good reflection of the independent spirit of the community. Business storefronts vary in their design and provide an eclectic impression the community’s sense of place. Lincoln’s residents support a business owner’s right to choose how they develop and operate their business. However, many residents noted that many storefronts could be cleaned up, use a coat of paint, or fill in some of their potholes. This desire is reinforced by survey data which denotes a want to improve the community appearance.

Enhancing Lincoln’s sense of place will help the community protect and define its identity. Implementing small design criteria for community infrastructure installations will help to solidify the community’s character going forward, while still allowing business owners to choose how they develop their

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properties which play an important role in community identity themselves. Some of the community infrastructure that can help to shape the community's sense of place are but are not limited to:

- *SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING SIGNS*
- *PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS*
- *WALKABILITY & PATHWAY DESIGN*
- *BENCHES & SEATING*
- *LIGHTING*
- *PLANTER BOXES*
- *FENCING*
- *PARKLETS*
- *BOLLARDS*
- *BULB-OUTS*
- *MEDIANS*
- *TRAFFIC CALMING INSTALLATIONS*

RECOMMENDATION:

Implement Immediate Safety Measures

A number of options were identified to increase safety along the highway corridor that can be easily achieved and with little expense. These options included moving speed limit signs to more visible locations, using flashing radar gun speed limit signs, and making the downtown speed limit more recognizable. These traffic calming measures, and other low hanging fruit, can be addressed in the immediate future with proper approval from Lewis & Clark County and Montana Department of Transportation. The Lincoln Community Council should attend the county's monthly coordination meeting with MDT to address the possibility of implementing these safety measures.

Review Montana State University Designs and Identify Priority Projects

Montana State University Community Design Center provided three conceptual designs for Lincoln's downtown corridor. These designs work to enhance Lincoln's sense of place by showcasing design elements that reflect the area character, as well as increase public safety and logistic efficiencies in the corridor. The Community Foundation should work to identify priority projects through criteria such as:

- *COMMUNITY SUPPORT*
- *PROJECT COST*
- *PROJECT FEASIBILITY*
- *LAND OWNERSHIP*

Projects may be community led, or in some cases, local businesses or land owners may see a community or personal benefit to developing these projects independently. For example, it may be of benefit for a local business to create an alternate parking system to their current situation which would allow them

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to build a parklet in front of the business. This development can accomplish an enhancement in safety, business and community appearance, and increase the business's potential revenue.

Identify Potential Funding Sources

Various public and private funds are available for communities to enhance their downtown corridors. Historic preservation and main street programs are just a couple of examples of the resources that are available. Further resources can be found in the financial section of this master plan. The Community Foundation should work to identifying all possible funding programs that may apply to the various projects desired by the community.

Initiate Community Enhancement Projects

Improving Lincoln's downtown appearance was identified as a community desire. Much of this sentiment is aimed at the commercial properties along the main street corridor. Many of the storefronts and parking areas of local business are in need of a facelift. A simple coat of paint and weed mitigation may suffice in some cases, while other businesses may need more attention. Regardless of the type of improvement, the business community could be organized to collectively address the needs of the individual owner for the greater benefit of all businesses.

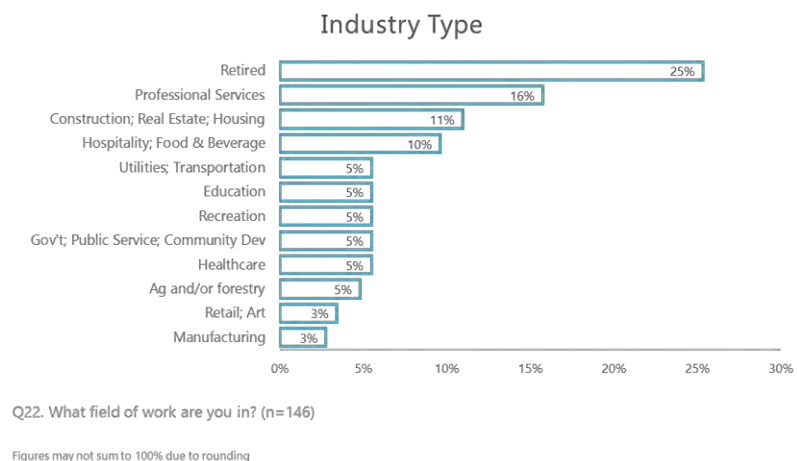
Hosting business socials was recommended in a master plan focus group, and an idea was presented by the consultant to hold a raffle for business improvement. Each month an attending business would be randomly chosen by raffle to receive the support of the community to accomplish an objective identified by the business owner. The owner would provide the necessary materials (paint, flower pots, gravel, etc.) and the business community would provide volunteer labor to help accomplish the task in short order. Projects should be small enough in scope to be accomplished over a weekend. These efforts will quickly provide a visible improvement to the downtown corridor.

Objective 3. Economic Development

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT:

Foster economic development by providing the community with the necessary resources to grow and sustain a vibrant economy suitable to Lincoln residents.

Historically, Lincoln's economy has been sustained by industrial natural resource development. Mining and logging provided the bulk of area employment for decades, with ranching providing for the livelihood of multiple residents. Today, the largest employer in the Lincoln Valley is High Country Snack Foods, a food processor known for its Made in Montana jerky and other products. While this employer is welcomed and appreciated by the community, its



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economic impact pales in comparison to the industries of past.

Economic development was ranked by survey respondents as the second highest outcome desired from the master planning process, behind a community led effort. The community expressed a need for sustainable employment with good wages, as well as development of new businesses and amenities. This data is an early indication of local demand for possible business start-ups and employers. This is one positive factor that investors and entrepreneurs could bring into their calculations of whether to invest in the local economy.

Approximately twenty-five percent of survey respondents claimed to be retired. This sizable portion of the area population is an important demographic for an economic development endeavor.

Figure 25. Graph depicting employment sectors claimed by survey respondents in Question 22.

Retired individuals typically carry disposable income and have what marketers are looking for, buying power. Tailoring entrepreneurial developments toward this demographic would help any business's longevity in the region.

From 2019 to 2020, employment in Lincoln, MT grew at a rate of 20.7%, from 401 employees to 484 employees. This increase reflects the post pandemic rebound experienced in many locations across the state and nation. The most common job groups, by number of people living in Lincoln, MT, are Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations (89 people), Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occupations (72 people), and Office & Administrative Support Occupations (62 people). This data and chart are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and illustrate the share breakdown of the primary jobs held by residents of Lincoln, MT.

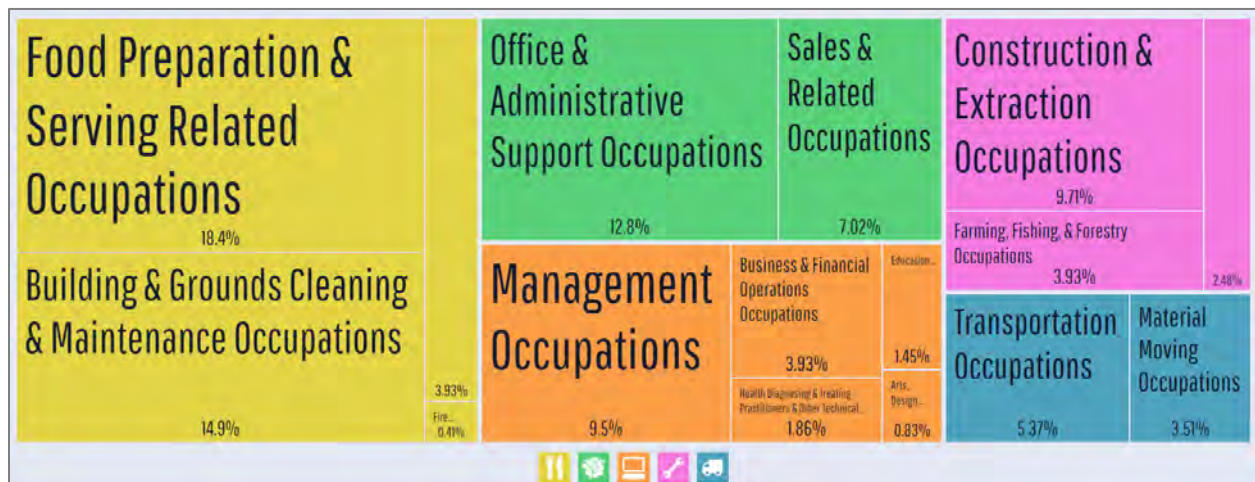


Figure 26. Chart provided by US Census Bureau depicting employment sectors in Lincoln Montana (2021).

Looking at employment by sector gives us a glimpse of the current economy. Service industries employ the largest portion of the 484 individuals captured by Census Bureau data. These establishments cater to the local retirement community, tourists, and area residents. Lincoln's employment demographics are typical of tourist and recreation destination economies that are heavily weighted in service industries.

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Lincoln's business community can benefit from further development of these sectors and increasing services to an already established market.

Business Expansion & Start-Ups

Area residents identified a number of business opportunities throughout the discovery process that could succeed and serve locals and visiting populations. These businesses amplified the service-based economy and catered to outdoor recreationalists, local families, and tourists. These opportunities could be pursued by existing businesses or by new business developments.

- *BREWERY*
- *LAUNDROMAT*
- *GROCERY STORE (A SECOND)*
- *COFFEE SHOP / BAKERY WITH MEETING ROOM*
- *RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT RENTALS*
- *FLY FISHING & TACKLE SHOP*
- *DIY CAR / TRUCK / OHV WASH*

Area Events

Lincoln is home to a number of events throughout the calendar year. In recreation and tourism-based economies, well attended community events can provide a reliable injection of income to sustain local business operations outside of peak season timeframes. Some of Lincoln's longest running and most notable events are the 4th of July Rodeo & Fireworks & the Race to the Sky dog sled race. Multiple local organizations also hold events throughout the year. These events deliver far less of an economic impact. Enhanced marketing and community coordination could help to increase attendance and structure events in a manner that delivered greater economic benefit to local businesses and the community.

Business Attraction

Business attraction was discussed very little outside of the discussion of what types of businesses would do well in Lincoln. However, business attraction is a key component of economic development and should be considered by all communities looking to bolster their economies. Some town hall attendees and focus group participants stated that they would like to see a return of the areas historic industries of mining and logging. Attracting companies of this caliber requires a very specific development criteria that hinges upon public regulatory approval.

Lincoln does contain a number of resources that are attractive to different business operations. A growing tech sector would be well served by the area's high-speed internet. As Victor Johnson, a Master Plan Steering Committee Member and retired software engineer, stated, Lincoln has some of the fastest internet speeds in the state. Tech companies are finding new homes across the interior west, and finding that remote workers or satellite offices can provide a quality of life that their employees appreciate.

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Lincoln is also home to a workforce skilled in the trades. Manufacturing companies have called this area home in the past and benefited from these human resources. Working with regional and state economic development agencies could help Lincoln to land another employer of this type.

RECOMMENDATION:

Foster New Business Development

Lincoln residents are aware of the economic development opportunities before them and local entrepreneurship should be pursued in the business sectors identified in the master planning process. Creating an entrepreneur group in the community can provide support, confidence, business model examples, and other necessary information in developing a business start-up. Local operating businesses can also provide their experiences operating in the Lincoln Valley and best business practices. This kind of collaboration will also foster a stronger business community and show how one businesses success can bolster another's.

Identify Resources to Develop or Enhance Businesses

Multiple resources are available to Montana businesses that can help with business operations and investments. The Montana Business Assistance Connection is the economic development organization for the Lincoln area and should serve as the first point of contact for these efforts. Multiple state and federal programs exist to help businesses secure financing, develop business plans, build product lines, and many other aspects of start-up activities and operations. Some of these resources can be found in the Resources section of this master plan.

Elevate & Strengthen Local Events

Lincoln is known as an enjoyable destination to many Montana residents. As Steering Committee Member Roger Dey stated, "*Lincoln is Montana's backyard.*" Given an excuse to visit the area, many folks within a day's drive will make to the trip to enjoy a day or two in the beautiful Lincoln Valley. The Fourth of July is easily the most successful and well attended event of the year. Businesses do their best to capture as much of the economic influx as possible, but planning for this level of patronage can be difficult. Understanding where demand was met, where local services fell short, and where oversupply or improper investments we made will help the business community capture more of the available revenue during these peak events.

Multiple other events occur throughout the calendar year and could be bolstered through organizational efforts. Developing a community calendar would help the community plan for events throughout the year and create an understanding of what types of infrastructure could serve the community during these events. Well organized events provide attendees with a seamless experience that makes it easy to enjoy the multiple amenities offered. Parking, traffic flow, family and children focused amenities, access to food and beverage, are all important components to creating a positive experience and memory that will bring the attendees back year after year.

Objective 4. Increased Recreational Opportunities

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT:

Increase access to recreational amenities by collaborating with area management officials, educating recreationalists, enhancing the recreation economy, and developing best use scenarios throughout the area's recreational footprint.

Outdoor recreation is at the heart of Lincoln. Area residents view this industry as a critical component to community culture as well as the most promising area of economic development. The community has experienced a contraction of outdoor recreational opportunities in recent decades. The US Forest Service and other public agencies have closed many area roads and trails to public use. This contraction has occurred in the midst of an expansion of the outdoor recreation market nationwide. This market expansion is placing more pressure on available resources which have been narrowed by government management.

Enhance Public Private Relationships

In order to provide a quality outdoor experience for residents and tourists alike, Lincoln must work to develop access and management plans with public and private land managers. The community has already taken good strides toward this objective through the work of the Lincoln Prosperity Proposal. The Lincoln Prosperity Proposal will expand Lincoln's recreation opportunities and boost local business while ensuring protection of clean water, habitat and wide-open spaces. The plan, offers management recommendations for 200,000-acres of national forest lands, consists of three primary parts: Conservation, Forest Restoration and Recreation.

Opening up access to a great network of trails and roads in the backcountry not only provides for greater recreational opportunities, but decreases degradation of the resource. Increased availability allows for system managers to close portions of the recreational area for a season or two. This allows for the area to recover from human impacts, trails to be repaired, and better use and management practices to be identified.

Expand the Recreation Economy

Developing the recreational economy serves the area's resources as well. Private enterprise has a stake in how the area's resources are used and preserved for future recreationalist. These private partners work to educate their patrons of best practices that will ensure future access from public and private land managers. As outfitter Kenny Low stated, *"it takes good public management teams and well operated outfitters to keep the area's resources in good standing."* Developing these economies goes beyond area businesses and licensed outfitters. Developing land use management strategies that can benefit the resource itself is a good way to increase sustainability.



Figure 27. Lincoln Prosperity Proposal. www.lincolnprosperity.com

Decrease Local Burden

Permitting is a good tool for local management to employ, especially as outside markets are increasing their use. Permits provide a reliable revenue stream and can provide necessary funds for plowing, road maintenance, event promotion, and other activities. These funds are currently sourced from local resources, mainly members of local organizations like the Snow Warriors. Permitting collects funds from local and outside users, increasing the overall pool from which to draw and decreasing the burden placed on local residents and resources.

A permitting system is in place in the Bighorn National Forest for snowmobiling. This system has allowed the area to develop necessary infrastructure to protect and maintain the integrity of the area. Lincoln could work with area land managers to put a similar system into place. Permits could be purchased at the aforementioned community center. This requirement would bring recreationalists into Lincoln's downtown area and will lead to an increase the local commerce.



Figure 28. Access to the Bighorn National Forest

Montana does have registration and trail permit requirements for snowmobiles and off highway vehicles. The funds are collected and distributed across the state and fees are kept to a minimum to not discourage access or burden resident recreationalists. By the time these funds are dispersed to local groups, the amount of funds necessary to perform proper operation and maintenance procedures is inadequate. Building a localized permitting system will better serve recreationalists, local organizations, and conservation of the resource.

RECOMMENDATION:

Enhance Public Private Partnerships

The Lincoln Prosperity Proposal has built a strong foundation for community leaders to build upon in regard to public and private relationships and partnerships. The US Forest Service Lincoln District recently hired a new supervisor which provides an opportunity to engage in a new discussion and relationship with the office. Public offices can provide good information on current uses, problem areas, current regulation, and potential opportunities to adjust management practices. These offices are also connected to other districts across the nation and can look at those jurisdictions who have experienced similar challenges and what policies they have put into place in order to address them.

Private operators and recreationalists should continue to organize under the Lincoln Prosperity Proposal in order to share their experiences and observations in the areas where they recreate. This user base populates and utilizes these resources more than any other, and their relationship with the land is can provide valuable information to public agencies. Private businesses, clubs, and organizations can have major influence on how these areas are utilized and preserved. They are a direct line to recreating individuals and can educate users on best practices.

Creating quarterly meetings with public land officials, user groups, and private land owners would foster an ongoing discussion on how to best manage resources and plan for an increase volume of recreationalists in the area.

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Recreation Business Development

Multiple business opportunities in the outdoor recreation industry exist in the Lincoln Valley. These businesses can serve as outfitters, or serve the needs of independent recreationalists. These private endeavors can also help public agencies with their management of the area by educating users on area closures, sensitive habitats, available resources, private land interaction, and other best practices. From a fly shop to a car wash to OHV rentals, there are multiple business opportunities that can successfully expand recreational activities and help to develop better management of the resource.

Develop Community Trail Network

The Lincoln Prosperity Proposal has identified a network of trails that would create a loop system of day rides for recreationalists. This system requires the development of spur trails from the town center and use of private lands. The system will deliver great benefit to area by connecting recreationalists to the local economy. It will also have a positive impact on area resources as it will enable users to access a greater trail network. This will decrease the impact on areas that experience high volumes due to the ease of access, resulting in less trail and trailhead degradation.

Pursue Ongoing Revenue Streams

Good management requires capital. Current systems are financially strained and rely too heavily on volunteer labor. This results in deferred maintenance and degradation of the resource. Private and public stakeholders should pursue options to create ongoing revenue streams that can support development of infrastructure and resources that encourage best use practices.

Objectives & Recommendations Conclusion

In order to execute recommendations and achieve objects, the Lincoln community needs a small group of organized leaders who will take swift and concise action. Many groups and organizations exist in the Lincoln area whose own objectives may overlap with those identified above. These groups may provide resources and experience that can assist in the community's new efforts.

A maximum of three individuals should be assigned to leadership roles in each objective. These individuals should be willing to make decisions on behalf of the community at large, be task driven, and action oriented. They will be responsible for leveraging the proper resources and utilizing community organizations in order to carry out their objective. They will assign deadlines and adhere to a schedule in order to maintain momentum and drive action from individuals who are assigned tasks.

Given the residents' emphasis on community, Objective 1 should be pursued first and in short order. Creating a community organization, like the Lincoln Community Foundation, will allow for continued public outreach and input, transparency in community developments, and provide a resource center for community public or private endeavors. Once established, the following objectives may move forward with confidence.

MONTANA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

The Montana Department of Commerce established the Montana Main Street Program (MMS) to aid communities in the revitalization of their downtown streetscapes, economies, and culture. This program provided funding for the Lincoln Community Master Plan and contains a number of financial and other resources to help the community assess and implement objectives identified within this plan, or otherwise identified within the community. The following information has been provided by the MMS, and is reflected upon in the Master Plan Application portions of this section.

Mission

The Montana Main Street (MMS) program is dedicated to bettering the economic, historic, and cultural vitality of Montana downtowns through community development, revitalization, and historic preservation. MMS will foster grassroots efforts through coordination and technical assistance, focused on a comprehensive approach to restoring healthy community districts, and preserving the historic structures that contribute to Montana's unique sense of place.

Adopting the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to revitalization developed by the National Trust for historic Preservation, Montana Main Street envisions a broader community and state effort dedicated to improving our downtown economies and historic districts. MMS aims to encourage and promote local efforts through a statewide network of educational outreach, coordination, and organization, to effectively lead Main Street communities throughout Montana toward fulfilling our mission as well as their own.

Goals

- *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*

Main Street Four Points

The Main Street Center Four Point Approach™ is a preservation-based economic development tool that provides a foundational method for local efforts to revitalize downtown historic and commercial

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districts. As an essential component of the method, Montana communities utilize their local assets — historic architecture, cultural and natural resources and heritage, local enterprise and community pride. The four points of the Main Street approach (described below) allow Montana communities to harness local ideas and goals in a unified and organized community revitalization effort.

1. Organization

Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the community. By getting everyone working toward the same goal, a Main Street program can provide effective, ongoing management and support for the downtown or neighborhood business district. Through volunteer recruitment and collaboration with partners representing a broad cross section of the community, a program can incorporate a wide range of perspectives into its efforts. A governing board of directors and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of volunteer-driven revitalization programs. Volunteers are often coordinated and supported by a paid program director; for Affiliate communities that may not have paid staff, coordination efforts may be led by a mayor or council member, planning director or a leader within the local Chamber or economic development organization. Active participation of, and coordination with local elected officials and municipal staff is a must. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various community members.

Master Plan Application

Objective 1 of this master plan addresses this point directly. Establishing a community organization, such as the Lincoln Community Foundation will help to solidify consensus amongst community members and provide an effective, locally controlled managing body to carry out community projects.

2. Promotion

Promotion takes many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in the commercial district and beyond. Advertising, retail promotions, special events, and marketing campaigns help sell the image and promise of Main Street to the community and surrounding region. Promotions communicate the unique characteristics, amenities, business establishments and activities your community has to shoppers, investors, potential business and property owners, and visitors.

Master Plan Application

Community pride is not in short supply in Lincoln. Data collected during the master plan discovery process shows that the community believes in itself today and its potential to seize opportunity in the future. Improving consumer and investor confidence in the community is address through the economic development, Highway 200 Corridor Improvement, community organization, and marketing objectives outlined in this master plan. As the community undergoes implementation of these aspects of the master plan, further marketing and promotional efforts with follow from community and private businesses alike.

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3. Design

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating an inviting environment for residents and visitors alike. It takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in a community by directing attention to all of its physical elements: architectural form and function of both public and private buildings, storefronts, signage, public spaces, parking, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising and promotional materials. An appealing atmosphere, created through attention to all of these visual elements, conveys a positive message about the community and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices, enhancing a community's physical appearance through the rehabilitation of historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, educating business and property owners about design quality, and long-term planning.

Master Plan Application

Proposals for main street designs in the community of Lincoln were provided by the Montana State University Community Design Center (MSU-CDC). Center Director Jordan Zignego oversaw the development of design concepts created by Senior and Master Degree students of the Montana State University School of Architecture. The MSU-CDC was able to provide three conceptual proposals to increase safety, logistics, and appearance / sense of place in Lincoln's main street corridor. Furthermore, the community was provided with multiple options for the community to consider when designing physical elements of downtown infrastructure. These can be found in the Montana Streetscape Improvement Plan attached to this master plan.

4. Economic Vitality

Economic restructuring strengthens a community's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district. The goal is to build a sustainable commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers.

Master Plan Application

The Lincoln Valley is sitting on an abundance of economic potential. The pandemic has stifled economic growth in recent years, however, an emergence of consumer spending, business start-ups, and economic development has moved across the state. Existing businesses and entrepreneurial endeavors can position themselves to capture this emergence by implementing the economic development factors recognized in this master plan.

Reflecting Upon Montana Main Street & the Lincoln Community Master Plan

The Montana Department of Commerce has aptly characterized the values and needs of Montana communities' downtown corridors. Lincoln is not alone in their current undertaking. Many Montana

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communities Main Streets are also Montana, and/or US highways. And many of these small communities are facing the same economic and cultural crossroads as is the community of Lincoln.

The Montana State University Community Design Center examined small communities who have faced similar situations to what Lincoln is currently experiencing when developing their proposals. Communities like Boulder, Ennis, and Anaconda have found innovative solutions and applications of infrastructure and design in order to achieve the same objectives identified in the Lincoln Community Master Plan.

The Montana Main Street Program (MMS) is well aligned with Lincoln's community sentiment. Master plan data shows that Lincoln desires to improve but not to change. This parallels the MMS dedication to bettering the economic, historic, and cultural vitality of Montana downtowns through community development, revitalization, and historic preservation. The community of Lincoln should build upon their relationship with MMS and utilize the multitude of the program resources available to them.

Montana Main Street Program Tool Kit

The MMS program has a number of resources available on their website that can help the community of Lincoln implement community projects. These resources can be utilized by contacting the MMS office, or reviewing the resources at the link provided below.

<https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Montana-Main-Street-Program/Main-Street-Planning-Toolkit>



MONTANA
MAIN STREET
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

For more information contact the Lincoln Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, Envision Lincoln, or Freestone Development at dustin@freestonedevelopment.com.

STREETSCAPE & COMMUNITY DESIGN

The Master Plan Steering Committee and the consultant engaged with Montana State University Community Design Center (MSU CDC) to develop a community design booklet that exhibits various options Lincoln may, or may not, utilize to advance community identity, safety, and economic vitality.



Community Identity

An important factor of community identity is continuity of design. An equally important factor, is being true to the culture and heritage of the community that has shaped it. Understanding and respecting Lincoln's current identity was paramount as MSU CDC crafted the design booklet. Working with community leaders, the design group provided an avenue in design that would provide both continuity, and embrace the individual and independent nature of the community and its residents.

First, the design group provided two color pallets that could be used in the creation of community assets. These color Pallets were derived from two well-known and prevalent community icons, the Blackfoot Pathways Sculpture in the Wild and the Chamber of Commerce. Each of these entities currently have a visual presence in the community and provide appropriate color pallets for artists and designers to reference in the creation of community elements.



Figure 29. Color pallet derived from community resources.

Second, the design team embraced the ideas brought forth by the steering committee, survey respondents, focus groups, and the consultant regarding community identity and design. Part of what

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makes Lincoln, Lincoln, is that it is fiercely independent, embraces the individuality of each community member, and can come together alongside their neighbor as strong as any community despite differences in opinion. This is exemplary, and is at the core of why Lincoln is so proud to be Lincoln.

So how do you package this community identity? How do you brand a community of fiercely independent residents? The answer is, you don't. Lincoln does not desire to be branded. If it had been branded twenty or thirty years ago, it would not be what it is today.

Understanding this, the consultant brought forward an idea during the Community Identity Focus Group, which included the MSU CDC design team. This idea is to allow artists and other individuals from the community, or approved by the community, to individually design community elements that will serve the implementation of the community master plan objectives. This directive will showcase the



diversity, independent nature, and varying perspectives from the community in the design of benches, sign posts, bollards, and other community elements.

The MSU design team then worked to bring forward examples of design elements from a wide spectrum of mountain communities, Montana small towns, and other locations. These examples can be seen in the team's booklet titled, Montana Streetscape Improvement Plan - Lincoln, MT. This booklet compliments the Lincoln Community Master Plan as an addendum, and provides a multitude of design options for the community to consider, adjust, revise, implement, or ignore in the execution of master plan objectives.

Community Safety

Community safety was identified as a top priority by the community. The MSU CDC design booklet identified a number of elements that can be utilized to increase safety along the HWY 200 corridor. Traffic calming, parking, pedestrian pathways, and lighting are some examples of the elements identified within the design booklet that the community may apply.

Traffic Calming

Speed reduction along Highway 200 is the primary safety concern of Lincoln residents. A number of strategies were identified through the master planning process in order to build a safer transportation corridor. Community design can play a major role in these efforts. As stated by Kevin Myrhe, of Century Companies, *"drivers slow down when the town begins to close in on them."* This speaks to the use of community design elements in order to build upon the perception that the driver should change their driving behavior from highway practices to in-town, pedestrian aware practices.

Elements that can contribute to this change of behavior are welcoming signs, art installations, crosswalks, flashing speed signs, changes in shoulder striping, parking designations, and others.

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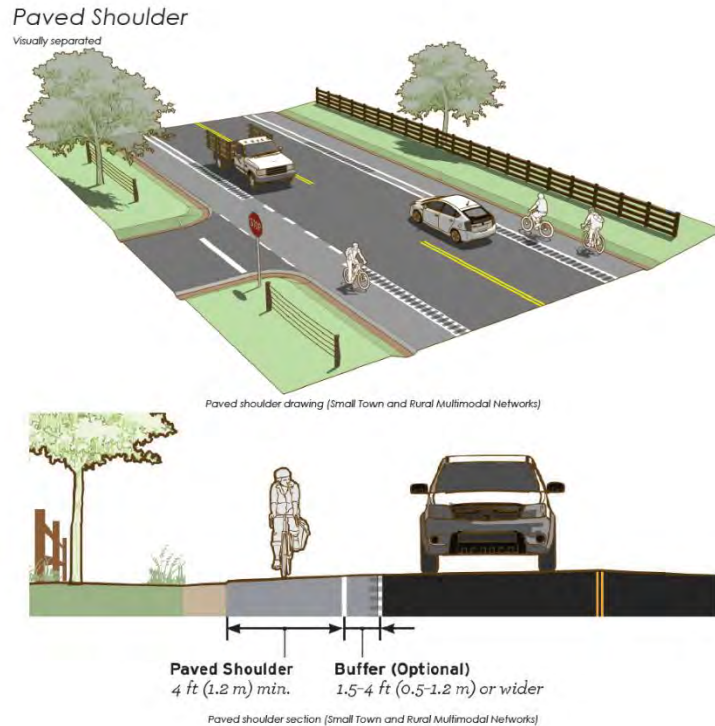


Figure 30. Standard paved shoulder design.

The image above was provided by MSU CDC to show how a paved shoulder and designated pedestrian usage areas can help to create good driver behavior and safe pedestrian use. Creation of a buffer between the vehicle and pedestrian usage areas is designated by a rumble strip and highway striping.

The Lincoln Community Master Plan Steering Committee reviewed the designs provided by MSU CDC and provided feedback as to how the consultant and the MSU design team could adjust the rendering above to suit the usage needs of the community.

The shoulder design below achieves a number of objectives identified by the community: 1) designated parking area on



Figure 31. Paved shoulder design created by the Master Plan Steering Committee and MSU CDC.

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the shoulder, 2) designated pedestrian area, 3) safety buffer between vehicle and pedestrian zones, 4) minimal / nonobtrusive design, 5) Full use of highway right of way.



Figure 32. Paved shoulder design created by the Master Plan Steering Committee and MSU CDC.

Parking

Many of Montana's small towns become destination locations for tourists and Montana residents at various times depending on the local draw. In these instances, parking can become a significant safety hazard. Improper parking practices can create blind spots for motorists, dangerous obstructions for bicyclists and pedestrians, and other negative impacts. Having a well-designed, designated, and clearly marked parking strategy not only decreases such negative impacts, but enhances the user experience and increases the patronage and local commerce. The shoulder design above provides a clear parking

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lane within the shoulder of the highway and a well-marked pedestrian lane outside of the rumble strip. This will encourage proper parking behavior by tourists, tractor trailers, and local motorists.

Working with local businesses outside of the highway right of way can provide further parking strategies and potential advantages to both the public and business owners. Regularly frequented community amenities like the grocery store or local restaurants will benefit from an enhanced parking strategy that facilitates both resident access and accommodates increased patronage during tourism seasons. Employing these types of strategies will lessen the frustrations of local residents when the town is experiencing increased visitation, and will allow local businesses to better capture the correlating increase in economic activity.

Walkability & Pedestrian Pathways

Walkability is a vital component to any community's town center. Development of a walkable downtown enhances safety, increases business patronage, and creates a visual community presence. Nearly half of Lincoln businesses that participated in the community survey listed walkability as an important component to their business's wellbeing. Likewise, walkability was also identified by all survey respondents as a top three safety concern in the community.

Executing this component within the Lincoln community should first focus on the Main Street / Highway 200 corridor and then expand outward. The highway corridor is the primary location of the community's economy and commercial patronage. It is also the focal point for the community's safety concerns. Development of community design elements that enhance the community's walkability will have a very positive impact on the community.

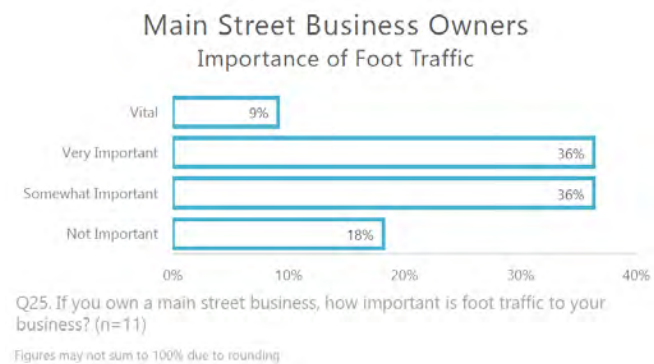


Figure 33. Graph depicting the importance of a walkable downtown to business owners.



Figure 34. Crosswalks, bulb outs, wayfinding, artistic installations, and should striping are depicted in the graphic above at Main Street's intersection with Stemple Pass Road and 6th Avenue.

Placing crosswalks at the community's busiest intersections will facilitate pedestrian use on both sides of the highway. Pairing this community element with the shoulder design described above will create an enhanced pedestrian corridor. Furthermore, these crosswalks will provide a visual impression to vehicle operators that they are within the downtown area of the community and they should change their driving practices accordingly.

Wayfinding is a tool implemented by communities to enhance the walkability and safe pedestrian behaviors. Wayfinding signage can be used to help create or enhance community identity while establishing preferred and safe pedestrian corridors. The wayfinding element seen in the rendering below employs a minimal pillar design with signage, and encourages pedestrians to utilize safe pedestrian crossings and corridors when navigating throughout Lincoln.

The wayfinding and safety infrastructure seen below was designed to accomplish a number of desires identified in the master planning process. Developing community elements in a nonobtrusive manner is important to Lincoln residents. While community improvements are desired, it is imperative that those improvements do not change or abandon the existing character and charm of the community. This



Figure 35. Crosswalks, bulb outs, wayfinding, artistic installations, and should striping are depicted in the graphic above at Main Street's intersection with Stemple Pass Road and 6th Avenue.

simplistic design blends into the existing surroundings of Lincoln's commercial district, allowing the community's character to stand on its own.

Functionality and practicality are also important when considering community elements. Snow removal is always a consideration when developing any physical infrastructure in Lincoln. The bollards shown in the rendering above (waste high posts at each end of the crosswalk) are removable. This design provides safety during peak pedestrian seasons in warmer months, and unobstructed snow removal during colder months. Design elements within the Highway 200 corridor must be approved by the Montana Department of Transportation.

Lighting

Lighting is an important part of developing community safety. However, in rural Montana, light can become more of a nuisance than a community benefit. More and more, communities are adopting lighting features that only provide the elements of safety, hospitality, and environment when necessary and in a manner that is appealing to local residents, both human and animal.

Lighting was seen as the third most important safety component desired by area residents. Local businesses listed lighting at fourth in their concerns regarding downtown revitalization. While lighting can provide an increased safety component to Lincoln's downtown, development of these features



Figure 36. Street light design provided by MSU CDC.

should consider community sentiment toward light pollution and overall benefit to businesses and the public at large.

The lighting feature shown here can provide a number of community benefits without becoming a hinderance to area residents. Bell shaped lighting fixtures ensure that light is cast down rather than outward and up, decreasing overall light pollution. Solar panels provide power to the light fixture and minimize the operational cost after initial investment. Motion sensors and timers can also be employed to decrease the presence of street lighting to hours only necessary. Lastly, design, frequency, and location will allow light fixtures to blend into their surroundings and not take away from the community's appeal, day or night.

Economic Vitality

Community identity is undoubtably tied to the community's economy. Businesses are established, grow, and remain in good standing in part because they understand the community's culture and the desires of local residents. Community improvements can greatly enhance economic vitality while conveying community identity and values. Events, public spaces, and downtown appearance build upon community pride and create a healthy environment for commerce.

Events

Lincoln knows full well the economic impact of a well-attended community event. The Fourth of July celebration in Lincoln is one of the best in the state, and the draw to the community provides the local economy with a healthy shot in the arm to get them through slower economic seasons. Public events like these are an opportunity for the community to promote their lifestyle, their culture, their businesses, and their unique identity.



Figure 37. Fourth of July Rodeo in Lincoln.

Public Spaces

A community isn't just a place; community is something that happens. Fostering healthy community growth comes from a shared connection. Connection to a town, a business, a landscape, an annual



Figure 38. Rustic and affordable public bench design.

event, or people. These connections are meant to be shared and public spaces create access to an opportunity to share with a neighbor or a visitor.

These public spaces can be large and successful, like Hooper Park. Or they can be small and simple, like a welcoming bench along a pedestrian pathway. They also present an opportunity to tell a story about the history of the community, inform the user of community amenities, or demonstrate community culture and artistic expression. These public spaces allow an individual to take in a moment within the community whether that be a ball game, or

an ice cream cone on a hot summer day. These moments of reflection create lasting memories and build community pride in residents, and memories in visitors that will bring them back to Lincoln to recreate that moment.

Downtown Appearance

Many master plan survey respondents noted that Lincoln's downtown corridor suffers from differed maintenance. Appearances may not be everything, but they do correlate directly with user experience. Enhancing downtown appearances can be a gratifying way to build community relationships, boost community pride, and create economic momentum. One of Lincoln's greatest strengths is their recognition of the individual. Independence is greatly valued and this is reflected from one property to another along the main street corridor. In order to be true to the community culture, it is important to enhance the individual ownership of each property.

Improving downtown appearances can begin with small achievable goals. Simple tasks like cleaning up garbage, helping a neighbor move a broken vehicle, planting and watering flower boxes, and other tasks can be accomplished through community organization. Larger tasks, like improving a business storefront or creating a public seating area, can be accomplished by leveraging the work of many hands. As tasks are completed, goals are met, and appearances improve community sentiment will improve as well, generating momentum and support for further improvements.

Community Design Conclusions

Streetscape and community design will evolve slowly under the current constraints of the community. Funding will largely govern the pace of these developments, but also, the community's appetite for change as expressed by the community in this master planning process. Community improvements should focus on design elements that improve upon existing assets, deliver practical solutions to objectives such as safety, parking, and walkability, and enhance the character of Lincoln.

FUNDING & RESOURCES

Funding is necessary in order to carry out the objectives identified above. The following resources may apply to one, or multiple objectives identified in this master plan. Many funding opportunities allow recipients to utilize the funds as matching dollars to other funding resources. As many governmental funding programs require a funding match (\$1 to \$1 or otherwise), leveraging one funding source to acquire another can be an attractive way for communities with limited resources raise considerable funds. This master planning process was funded in such a manner.

In the wake of the global pandemic, there are unprecedented levels of funding programs available. These funds have been disseminated to state and local governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations in order to reach communities and populations across the United States. The resources below are not a complete list and the community of Lincoln should work with government and nongovernment entities to source the funds and resources needed to support their community improvement endeavors.

State Funding

Montana Department of Commerce

Visit commerce.mt.gov for most up to date funding information

Community Development Block Grants

Planning Grants

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) planning grants are available to eligible counties, cities, and towns. Local governments may apply on behalf of special purpose districts (such as water or sewer districts), unincorporated areas, or on behalf of non-profit organizations (such as a human resource development council, an area agency on aging, a local domestic violence shelter, a boys and girls club, local food bank, hospital, nursing home, or a similar non-profit agency). Counties may also apply for planning grants on behalf of tribal utility authorities. Planning grants can be up to \$50,000 and required a 1:3 (25%) match.

CDBG planning grants may be used for the preparation of plans, studies, training or research in any of these areas:

- Growth Policies
- Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plans (CCIP)
- Subdivision Regulations
- Zoning Regulations
- Regional or Neighborhood Plans
- Downtown Revitalization or Master Plans
- Housing Plans
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Tax Increment Finance District (TIFD) and Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD)
- Historic and Architectural Preservation Studies

For more information contact the Lincoln Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, Envision Lincoln, or Freestone Development at dustin@freestonedevelopment.com.

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ADA Self-Assessment Plans
Brownfield Redevelopment Plans
Preliminary Architectural Reports (PAR)
Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER)
Site-Specific Development Plans
Business Plans

Housing Grants

Montana's CDBG Housing grants help local governments fund new construction or rehabilitation of single-family or multi-family housing projects that benefit low- to moderate-income (LMI) Montanans, i.e., households earning less than 80% of the area median income. CDBG offers two distinct types of housing grants, the CDBG Affordable Housing Development and Rehabilitation Grants and the Housing Stabilization Program.

CDBG Affordable Housing Development and Rehabilitation Grants

This grant is intended for construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing projects. Typically, these housing projects are multi-family rental or single-family development projects in which CDBG fills a funding gap and the maximum grant amount is \$750,000. Annual applications for the CDBG Housing grants are due at the same time as the Community and Public Facility grant applications.

CDBG Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) Grants

Successful applicants will qualify to access the CDBG HSP pool of funds for a period of five years. During that time, local governments are eligible to receive funds for construction or rehabilitation of owner-occupied or rental units that benefit low- to moderate-income households. There is no maximum grant amount and funds will be allocated based on the individual level of need and scope of project. As of 2023, Lewis and Clark County is not participating in the CDBG HSP program.

Economic Development Grants

Montana's CDBG Economic Development program is designed to stimulate economic development activity by assisting Montana's private sector to create or retain jobs for low- to moderate-income Montanans, specifically, this includes individuals earning less than 80% of the area median income.

The program can assist businesses by awarding grants to local governments and making fixed-rate financing available to those businesses at low interest rates. In addition, the program can offer payment deferrals, lower first-year payments, and interest-only payments. Montana Business Assistance Connections (MBAC) is the local Economic Development Organization administering CDBG ED grants through the County.

Tourism Grant Program

The Tourism Grant Program awards funds to projects that strengthen Montana's economy through the development and enhancement of the state's tourism and recreation industry. Funds are awarded annually to projects that develop and enhance tourism and recreation products that have the potential

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to increase non-resident visitation. More information available here:

<https://brand.mt.gov/Programs/Office-Of-Tourism/Tourism-Grant-Program>

Montana Main Street Planning, Project and Impact Grants

The Montana Main Street Program offers technical assistance and expertise to member communities and awards competitive grant funding to communities actively working on downtown revitalization, economic development, and historic preservation.

Applications for the Montana Main Street Annual Planning & Project Grant will be accepted for Montana Main Street member communities in the fall. Planning and Project Grants should focus on planning and projects directly related to downtown revitalization, economic development, and historic preservation.

Applications for the Montana Main Street Impact Grant will be accepted for Montana Main Street member communities in the fall. Impact Grants will support Montana Main Street Program member community efforts to implement high impact projects that activate spaces and execute concrete ideas for downtown revitalization. Impact grant funds can be used to activate public spaces, downtown retail spaces, and upstairs housing.

More information available here: <https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Montana-Main-Street-Program/>

Big Sky Trust Fund Grant Program

Planning Grants

The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program (BSTF) Planning funds are awarded to eligible applicants to assist with economic development planning efforts that promote long-term, stable economic growth in Montana. Typically, no more than \$27,000 per application is awarded.

Job Creation Grants

The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program (BSTF) Job Creation funds are awarded to local and tribal governments in the form of grants or loans to assist basic sector businesses in creating good paying jobs for Montana residents. Up to \$7,500 per net new job created is available.

Microbusiness Finance Program

The Microbusiness Finance Program (MBFP) administers funding for the Microbusiness Development Corporations (MBDCs) located across Montana. MBDCs work with Montana-based businesses with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees and gross annual revenues of less than \$1,000,000.

Certified MBDCs:

- Provide loans up to \$100,000 to qualified microbusinesses;
- Provide training and technical assistance to qualified microbusinesses; and
- Underwrite and service their microloan portfolios.

Primary Sector Workforce Training Grant Program

The Primary Sector Workforce Training Grant (WTG) encourages the creation of jobs in primary sector businesses. Primary sector businesses are generally defined as those having 50% or more of their sales outside Montana. This funding provides an essential job training incentive for new businesses to locate

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in Montana and provides existing primary sector businesses with essential support to train employees in new jobs that allow the businesses to expand in Montana without leaving the state. The maximum grant award is up to \$5,000 for each new full-time job and \$2,500 for each new part-time job.

Housing – HOME Program

Participating jurisdictions may use HOME funds for a variety of housing activities, according to local housing needs. Eligible uses of funds include tenant-based rental assistance; housing rehabilitation; assistance to homebuyers; and new construction of housing. HOME funding may also be used for site acquisition, site improvements, demolition, relocation, and other necessary and reasonable activities related to the development of non-luxury housing. Funds may not be used for public housing development, public housing operating costs, or for Section 8 tenant-based assistance, nor may they be used to provide non-federal matching contributions for other federal programs, for operating subsidies for rental housing, or for activities under the Low-Income Housing Preservation Act.

Montana Department of Transportation

Aviation

MDT's Aeronautics Division offers eligible communities and airports low interest loans and grants for various airport and aviation-related projects.

Emergency Medical Services

Competitive grants are available to emergency medical service providers for equipment, training, or to provide medical care to a patient.

Highway Traffic Safety

MDT's Highway Traffic Safety Section administers federal grant monies for safety programs aimed at reducing deaths, injuries, and property losses resulting from traffic crashes.

Research

MDT's Research Office issues contracts for various research projects. MDT focuses on applied research to answer questions and solve problems.

Transit

MDT administered both federal and state grant programs for qualified organizations providing transportation to the rural general public, including the elderly and disabled.

Transportation Alternatives

The Transportation Alternative (TA) replaces the funding from pre-MAP-21 programs including Transportation Enhancements, Recreational Trails, Safe Routes to School, and several other discretionary programs, wrapping them into a single funding source.

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Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks administers 11 grant programs. These grant programs help provide funding for recreational opportunities – both motorized and non-motorized, habitat improvement, trail development, conservation efforts, educational opportunities, and more.

Further information can be found here: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs>

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal grants program established by the Land & Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. LWCF encourages a full partnership between national, state and local governments in planning and funding outdoor recreation projects. The 2020-2024 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides guidance to direct Montana's state-side apportionment of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program.

Examples of eligible projects include: ball fields, public parks, outdoor swimming pools, playgrounds, picnic facilities, walking trails and more.

Further information can be found here: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/land-and-water-conservation-fund>

Federal Funding

The global pandemic of COVID 19 had negative impacts to local, state, national, and global economies. The United States government has rolled out a number of large spending bills to stimulate growth and heal severe lacerations to the nation's economy, supply chain, and people. These federal funds have and are being issues to state governments in various forms. A number of these funds may be applicable to the objectives of the community of Lincoln as identified in this master plan.

A number of these funding opportunities may have expired, criteria for allocation may have changed, or funds may have been rolled into new funding silos. The community should work with state and local government and non-profit organizations to gain insight into what programs will align with community objectives.

American Rescue Plan Act

Further information can be found at [ARPA.MT.GOV](https://arpa.mt.gov)

Broadband - Connect MT and Communications Advisory Commission

The 2021 Legislature passed and Governor Gianforte signed SB297 creating the ConnectMT Act. The Department of Commerce is responsible for establishing and administering the broadband infrastructure deployment program and is responsible for receiving and reviewing responsive proposals and awarding contracts. Before awarding any contracts, they must be reviewed by the Communications Advisory Commission created by HB632 to oversee Montana's American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

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Economic Transformation and Stabilization and Workforce Development Programs and Advisory Commission

The Montana 67th Legislature passed House Bill 632 which allows the use of \$150 million provided by the Department of Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act to be used for economic transformation, stabilization and workforce development. HB632 created a Commission to oversee programs that are developed, and proposals that are reviewed and recommended by the Department of Commerce.

The Commission held its first meeting on Tuesday May 4th. Commission members include Governor Gianforte's Budget Director Kurt Alme, Governor's Chief of Staff Chris Heggem, Labor Commissioner Laurie Esau, Senate President Mark Blasdel, Senator Ryan Osmundson, Senator Ryan Lynch, Speaker of the House Wylie Galt, Representative Llew Jones, and Representative Kim Abbott. Commission meeting information and future meeting dates will appear on this website. Commerce is tasked with staffing the Commission.

The Commission's first grant was of \$15 million to the Department of Labor & Industry, for the creation of a return-to-work bonus program that will help address a critical labor shortage stemming, in part, from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department is studying additional workforce development projects for the Commission's consideration.

Programs developed by the Department of Commerce and approved by the Commission may include grant and other programs for businesses, workforce development, and employee training. By law, the proposals recommended for funding by Commerce must be reviewed by the Commission, which will then recommend grants to the Governor.

Commerce, Labor & Industry and other agencies are in the process of developing recommended grant programs that will be submitted to the Commission for approval. Once programs are approved by the Commission, these agencies will provide more information on the grants available and process for applying and awarding the grants.

Farm and Ranch Value Added Developments

The Department of Agriculture proposes using \$50 million of the American Rescue Plan Act funds to launch a three-tiered grant program targeting expanded production and distribution of locally marketed Montana crops and livestock, added processing capacity to add value to and finish more raw goods in Montana, on-farm storage to help producers weather market volatility, and major supply chain infrastructure investments for Montana agricultural commodities.

Child Care Block Grants - \$112,500,000

For Child Care block grants provided for in section 2201 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Public Law 117, the department shall prioritize the use of funds to child care deserts for one-time equipment and necessary infrastructure, property improvements, worksite child care, licensing, and employee training and professional development.

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Child Care Expanded Block Grant Services

Funding is intended to expand block grant activities for child care in Montana to expand and support child care infrastructure throughout the state, including support for emergency and essential workers child care needs. Funding should support prioritizing child care deserts, equipment and infrastructure, property improvements, onsite child care, licensing, and employee training and professional development. The department is planning activities to gain public input including advisory council recommendations, surveys of providers and parents, town halls and discussions with stakeholder groups. The Child Care Expanded Block Grant services is compiling public input on the use of these child care funds intended to expand and support child care infrastructure throughout the states. Please provide input on the use of the funding. Child Care Expanded Block Grant Services Comment Form

Child Care Stabilization Grants

Funding is intended to stabilize the existing child care sector during and after the public health emergency. Funding can support the early childhood workforce and subgrants to providers for personnel, rent, utilities, maintenance, PPE, training, professional development related to health and safety practices, purchases or updates of equipment and supplies, goods and services necessary to maintain or resume services. Funding can also support mental health and health consultation and technical assistance. Child care providers who have been licensed, regulated, or registered under CCDF regulations as of 3/11/21, whether open or closed during the pandemic may be eligible for subgrants. This may include Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers as well.

Public Health Workforce - \$23,000,000

This funding is anticipated to be awarded via grant awards targeting general public health needs. Portions of each grant will allow funding to support workforce needs or public health agencies and relevant partners at the state and local level.

Funding would support wages and benefits, related to the recruiting, hiring, and training of individuals to serve as case investigators, contact tracers, social support specialists, community health workers, public health nurses, disease intervention specialists, epidemiologists, program managers, laboratory personnel, informaticians, communication and policy experts, and any other positions as may be required to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 in state. local and NGO settings.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law on November 15, 2021, reauthorizes federal surface transportation programs for the following next five years. This is a historic opportunity to for Montana and its communities to invest federal tax dollars to improve statewide and local infrastructure to the benefit of Montana's residents.

The federal allocations for Montana listed below are based on federal funding formulas and are subject to change, however, these funding estimates are near actual amounts. A number of these funding opportunities correlate with the community objectives outlined in this master plan and can aid Lincoln

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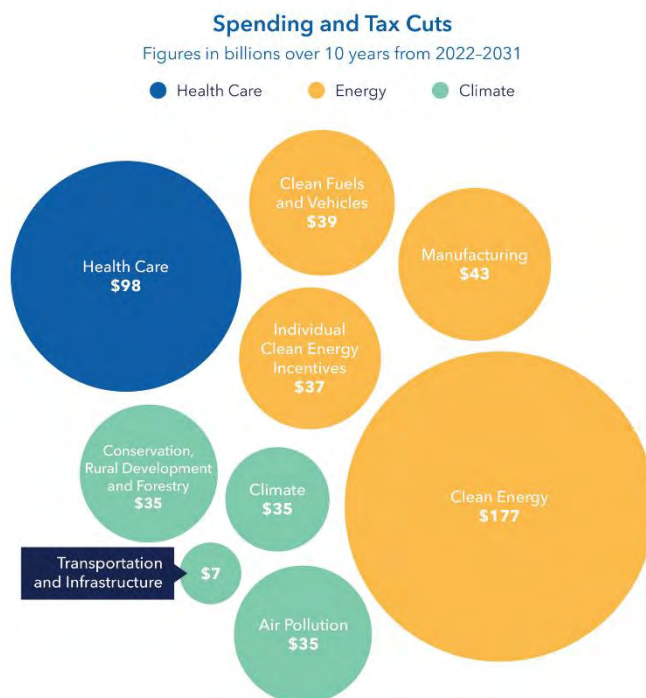
in the areas of highway corridor improvements, economic development, water and wastewater development, wildfire suppression, and more.

- \$2.8 billion for federal-aid highway apportioned programs and \$225 million for bridge replacement and repairs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act over five years
- \$157 million over five years under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to improve public transportation options across the state
- \$43 million over five years to support the expansion of an EV charging network in the state³. Montana will also have the opportunity to apply for the \$2.5 billion in grant funding dedicated to EV charging in the bill
- \$100 million to help provide broadband coverage across the state, including providing access to the at least 93,000 Montanans who currently lack it. And, under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 286,000 or 27% of people in Montana will be eligible for the Affordability Connectivity Benefit, which will help low-income families afford internet access
- \$23 million over five years to protect against wildfires and \$12 million to protect against cyberattacks. Montanans will also benefit from the bill's historic \$3.5 billion national investment in weatherization which will reduce energy costs for families
- \$355 million over five years to improve water infrastructure across the state and ensure that clean, safe drinking water is a right in all communities
- \$143 million for infrastructure development for airports over five years

Inflation Reduction Act

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) is a federal law which aims to curb inflation by reducing the deficit, lowering prescription drug prices, and investing into domestic energy production while promoting clean energy. It was introduced as an amendment to the Build Back Better Act. The act aims to catalyze investments in domestic manufacturing capacity, encourage procurement of critical supplies domestically or from free-trade partners, and jump-start R&D and commercialization of leading-edge technologies such as carbon capture and storage and clean hydrogen.

In regard to the community of Lincoln and this master plan, the IRA and its resulting programs can improve household income and viability, and largely represents opportunities within economic development. The bubble chart at right depicts the levels of funding in from the IRA into



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various economic sectors over the next ten years. A number of these funding silos will carry the ability to positively impact the Lincoln area resident or community.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, can provide funding for a variety of community projects, events, and economic development efforts. Montana is home to a number of NGOs that operate in this manner. The list below provides a number of resources for the community of Lincoln to engage as they work to develop objectives identified in this plan, or other community initiatives.

The Montana Community Foundation

Further information can be found at MTCF.ORG

The Lincoln Community Steering Committee has been in contact with the Montana Community Foundation throughout this master planning process. As the community is not and incorporated community and lacks a local tax revenue source, the community foundation can provide a number of different strategies to raise funds aimed at community improvements.

The Montana Community Foundation manages more than \$150 million in assets and administers more than 1,400 philanthropic funds and planned gifts. Their work with donors, charitable organizations, cities and towns plays a critical role in both philanthropic and community development. The Montana Community Foundation has reinvested more than \$90 million in Montana through scholarships, grants, and programs.

The Town Pump Charitable Foundation

The Town Pump Charitable Foundation provides funds to approved, non-profit charitable organizations (please submit proof of 501 (c) (3) status) and governmental organizations with a focus on meeting the basic needs and education of Montana citizens. Areas of giving include: Basic Needs, Education, Community Assistance, and Veteran's Needs.

Montana Main Street Program Resources

The links below are provided by the MMS program and are available on their website.

NATIONAL
[American Independent Business Alliance](#)
[Hart Family Fund for Small Towns](#)
[International Downtown Association](#)
[National Association of Realtors - Placemaking Micro-Grant](#)
[National Endowment for the Arts - Our Town Grant](#)

[National Main Street Center, Inc.](#)
[Project for Public Spaces](#)
[Smart Growth America](#)

REGIONAL
[Community Builders](#)
[NorthWestern Energy Community Works Fund](#)
[Rural Community Assistance Corporation](#)
[Sonoran Institute](#)

[Western Transportation Institute](#)

MONTANA
[Bike Walk Montana](#)
[Humanities Montana Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research](#)
[Montana State University Extension - Local Government Center](#)

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[Montana Building Active Communities Initiative](#)
[Montana Economic Developers Association](#)
[Preserve Montana](#)
[Montana State Historic Preservation Office](#)

[Montana Nonprofit Association](#)
[One Montana](#)

FOUNDATIONS
[Central Montana Foundation](#)
[Greater Montana Foundation](#)
[High Stakes Foundation](#)

[Jerry Metcalf Foundation](#)
[The LOR Foundation](#)
[Montana Community Foundation](#)
[Montana History Foundation](#)
[Northwest Area Foundation](#)
[The Steele Reese Foundation](#)

Other Resources Identified

AgWest Farm Credit- Rural Community Grants

This grant program aims to address challenges and provide opportunities to people who live in rural communities. This program provides grants to non-profit organizations for projects that improve rural communities within Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. This includes efforts such as building or improving facilities; purchasing necessary equipment to facilitate a local program; and funding capital improvements which enhance a community's infrastructure, viability and/or prosperity. Examples include: Fire engine for rural fire department, Multi-purpose community building, Improving community park facilities, Computers for a community center's educational classes". Maximum amount \$5,000:

<https://agwestfc.com/about/community-engagement/rural-community-grants>

Cross Charitable Foundation

(1) Assisting those organizations actively engaged in assisting the homeless and the oppressed; (2) Assisting those organizations actively engaged in promoting the conservation and preservation of our wildlife in our country and the world; (3) Assisting those organizations actively promoting conservation of the environment, with particular emphasis on conserving wildlife habitat and wildlife migratory routes; (4) Assisting those organizations promoting the health, care, and welfare of dogs, including the training of dogs to assist and benefit in improving the quality of life for humans and other animals.:

<https://crosscharitablefoundation.net/>

North40 stores in Montana

This funding opportunity is primarily focuses on events and may provide assistance for the community as a whole, community groups, or non-profits.

<https://north40.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>

T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program

This grant program focusses on revitalizing community spaces in towns with 50,000 people or less. For example, a community could implement tech upgrades to a library, refresh a local park, or break ground on a new place where neighbors can connect. Up to \$50,000.

<https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>

For more information contact the Lincoln Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, Envision Lincoln, or Freestone Development at dustin@freestonedevlopment.com.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS & CONSULTANT TEAM

Process

Freestone Development began facilitation of the master planning process in December of 2021. The Work Plan below was provided by Freestone Development as a guide to the master planning process.

Work Plan and Schedule

Task 1: Project Initiation / Community Visioning

- Establish a Steering Committee to discuss scope of work, identify stakeholders, community survey instruments, focus groups, discuss key roles & responsibilities, and develop communication preferences.
- Compile background reports and information from local, state, and other agencies.
- Compile a contact list including local leadership, state agencies, local service providers, and other community stakeholders.

Task 2: Assess Community Needs / Data Collection

- Conduct Steering Committee meetings to create a baseline of information on community needs in regard to the proposed master plan.
- Conduct online community and business surveys to assess needs and preferences.
- Conduct focus groups to create subsequent data on specific needs within the community and how to best address them through the master plan (e.g., infrastructure, downtown businesses, recreation, workforce, housing, childcare)

Task 3: Data Analysis / Evaluate Future Scenarios

- Review survey and other relevant data to identify common objectives across community sectors.
- Review findings with Steering Committee and define master plan objectives.

Task 4: Development of Master Plan

- Compile information gathered in Task 2 & 3 develop strategies to address priority needs.
- Meet with steering committee to present strategies and receive feedback on the identified strategies.
- Develop infrastructure and construction priorities with budgets and initial renderings.
- Identify funding and technical resources for implementation.
- Identify potential partnerships.

Task 5: Present & Adopt Final Plan

- Review, revise and finalize draft with steering committee.
- Review processes for implementation, monitoring, and amending the master plan.

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Lincoln Community Master Plan

Public Participation Strategies

A comprehensive master plan must find and engage the broad spectrum of stakeholders within and adjacent to the master plan footprint. The Community of Lincoln has made it clear that community involvement is of the utmost importance in the development of the master plan. Given the demographic of the Lincoln area residents, it was imperative that the consultant provide a variety of platforms for area residents and stakeholders to engage in the process if they so choose. Utilizing existing networks and communication platforms was key to achieving a good participation rate.

Steering Committee

A steering committee was convened to provide a reflection of the diverse make-up of the community. This committee was in regular contact with the consultant and provided a baseline of information from which to begin the process. The steering committee also provided contacts into various community groups and networks which can be leveraged to effectively communicate master plan processes and developments to the public.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jill Frisbee:	Pit Stop, Owner
Laurie Welty:	Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce, President
Roger Dey:	Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, Owner
Dani Cyr:	Lincoln Public School, Teacher
Karyn Good:	Upper Blackfoot Valley Community Council
Victor Johnson:	Lincoln Prosperity Proposal, Organizer
Forest Mercill:	Ponderosa Snow Warriors
Anne Pichette:	Montana Business Assistance Connection
Ann McCauley:	Lewis and Clark County, Grants Coordinator

Initial steering committee meetings helped to identify what the community and local business had experienced in recent years, as well as what the group hoped to accomplish through the master planning process.

Town Hall

A town hall event is a manner in which to create momentum for the master plan. This community event sparks discussion and provides an opportunity to share different ways for stakeholders to engage in the master planning process.

Public Survey

A public survey will be distributed both digitally and in hard copy to area businesses and residents. Respondents will be able to keep their information and opinions confidential.

Targeted Focus Groups

As development factors emerge from the process, conducting focus groups specific to various factors will provide greater insight into these issues. These focus groups could include: utilities, recreation, downtown, etc.

For more information contact the Lincoln Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, Envision Lincoln, or Freestone Development at dustin@freestonedevlopment.com.

Lincoln Community Master Plan

Consultant Team



Freestone Development, LLC
4795 Old Iron Drive
Helena, MT 59602
(406) 465-7016



Century Companies, Inc.
510 1st Ave. N.
Lewistown, MT 59457
(406) 535-1200



Dick Anderson Construction
4610 Tri-Hill Frontage Road
Great Falls, MT 59404
(406) 761-8707

Freestone Development, LLC

Principal(s):	Dustin de Yong, Owner
Company Description:	Freestone Development is a value-based commercial and industrial development firm.
Role in Master Plan development:	Primary administrator, facilitator, and development consultant

Century Companies, Inc.

Principal(s):	Jack Morgenstern, Chairman of the Board Tim Robertson, Chief Executive Officer and President and Secretary
Company Description:	Tom Evans, Vice President Tracy Golik, Treasurer and Director Century Companies, Inc. was founded in 1975 with a mission to deliver urban-quality infrastructure construction services to rural job sites and municipalities throughout the west.
Role in Master Plan development:	Civil construction consultant

Dick Anderson Construction, Inc.

Principal(s):	Dick Anderson – Chairman Marty Schuma – President Regan Meredith – Secretary/Treasurer Bob Heberly – Vice-President Allan Frankl – Vice-President Derek Didriksen – Vice-President Kevin Hintt – Vice-President Brian Bolton – Vice-President Josh deVos – Vice-President
Company Description:	Dick Anderson Construction provides full-service design-build services as well as construction management for civil, industrial, commercial construction projects, and luxury homes.
Role in Master Plan development:	Construction consultant

For more information contact the Lincoln Valley Chamber of Commerce, Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, Envision Lincoln, or Freestone Development at dustin@freestonedevelopment.com.

DISCOVERY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Kickoff Town Hall Meeting

Freestone Development and the steering committee held a Town Hall in Lincoln on March 2, 2022. Notification of the meeting was posted in the paper and online. The meeting was well attended with over 80 residents coming to the Community Hall to hear the presentation. Lead Consultant, Dustin de Yong, walked the audience through the master planning process, what the final document would entail, and how the public could participate in the process.

Area residents had an opportunity to ask questions, raise any concerns, and make general comments about the community and the planning process. Passionate testimony was given by a number of individuals which conveyed a strong commitment by the community. Following the question-and-answer portion of the meeting the audience was asked to break into small groups of 10-15 people for small group discussions.

Town Hall Small Group Discussions

Small groups of residents engaged in six different discussion topics and were asked to record their thoughts on paper. These questions were developed by the consultant and the steering committee prior to the town hall meeting in order spark public participation and community discussion regarding master planning and the future of the community.

Small Group Discussion Questions

Is this process a good thing for Lincoln? Why or why not?

All responses to this question were positive. The community member's responses showed a desire to inform and organize the community in order to help shape the future of the town. Residents have seen an increase in traffic, tourism, and outside influence; these are the forces of change that will shape Lincoln's future if local residents choose to stand idly by.

What is the biggest problem facing the community right now?

Respondents noted that the town needs things that are focused on improving living standards for families. These aspects include community safety, job opportunities for existing labor pool and for Lincoln's youth when they are of age, a community center or gym, and housing. There is also a need to address a local animosity toward any change of any kind. It was also noted that decisions that will affect the community as a whole should be driven by local residents, not out of town influences.

Lincoln Community Master Plan

If you could get one thing done for your community, what would it be?

Safety, opportunity, and community involvement we are reflected in the responses to this question. The speed of traffic along highway 200 is of major concern and community sentiment expressed various ways to increase safety including stop lights, street lighting, and crosswalks. Economic development and sustainability are of importance as well. Locals desire job creation and business development that is less seasonal and tourism based. Multiple groups agreed that a focus on community, family, and youth is needed, and honest efforts to build consensus would deliver great benefit to the community.

How would you describe Lincoln's identity today?

Responses to this question were diverse, however some themes emerged across groups. Themes spoke to aspects such as the surrounding wilderness, outdoor recreation, independence, and the party town atmosphere. Other responses spoke to the current status of the town, describing it as struggling economically and an old people town. One group stated that the town currently has a bit of an identity crisis. While these responses were varying in nature there was one clear outcome from this question. Lincoln loves its community. They love the town, the people, and the surrounding area.

How would you like Lincoln to look and feel ten years from now?

Consensus is to maintain the look and feel of Lincoln as much as possible while improving the level of upkeep, safety, and community. Maintaining Lincoln's rustic character and focus on the outdoors is important as well as embracing the full history of the region's mining, logging, and ranching heritage.

Consensus is to maintain the look and feel of Lincoln as much as possible while improving the level of upkeep, safety, and community.

What is Lincoln's biggest hurdle to overcome in executing a Community Master Plan?

Every group noted the people of the community coming together as the largest hurdle in executing a community master plan. A resistance to change is seen as the characteristic that has led to failure in addressing community problems. Local leadership and community participation are seen as necessary components to successfully addressing the needs of the community. Funding for projects and a fear of increased costs/taxation on residents was also stated as a hurdle to getting projects done.

Public Survey

A public survey was drafted by the consultant and reviewed and edited by the steering committee. This public survey allowed for an anonymous response from individuals throughout the community. The greatest efforts were made to ensure wide distribution of the survey in digital and print format. The survey questions covered varying topics in order to gather data relevant to drafting a master plan that would reflect community sentiment and desires for the community's future. These topics included community identity, area economy, local amenities, community events, safety, and community contribution. Understanding these topics will foster development of the Lincoln community as reflected by local opinion, and correspondingly, this master plan.

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Lincoln Community Master Plan

Survey Demographics

Public participation rate was very strong and the following demographics were reflected.

- 150 surveys were submitted (either online or hard copy)
- Most respondents were full time residents of the Lincoln area (72%)
- The majority of part-time or seasonal residents reside in Lincoln during the summer and fall months
- 54% of respondents have lived in the Lincoln area for 10+ years
- Nearly one third (31%) have been in the Lincoln community less than 5 years
- Retirees (39%), employed W2 workers (29%) and business owners (21%) made up the bulk of survey respondents
- 37 of the respondents are Lincoln area business owners
 - Of those, 11 own businesses on or near main street

Survey Results

Identity

The survey audience was asked to describe Lincoln through a series of questions. These questions aimed to provoke a local reflection of how the community sees itself, what is most important to community members, and what makes them most proud about their community. While a diversity of responses was provided, common themes and majorities were revealed.



Figure 1. Word cloud depicting the most popular responses to survey question 7. Words used more often by respondents appear larger in the cloud.

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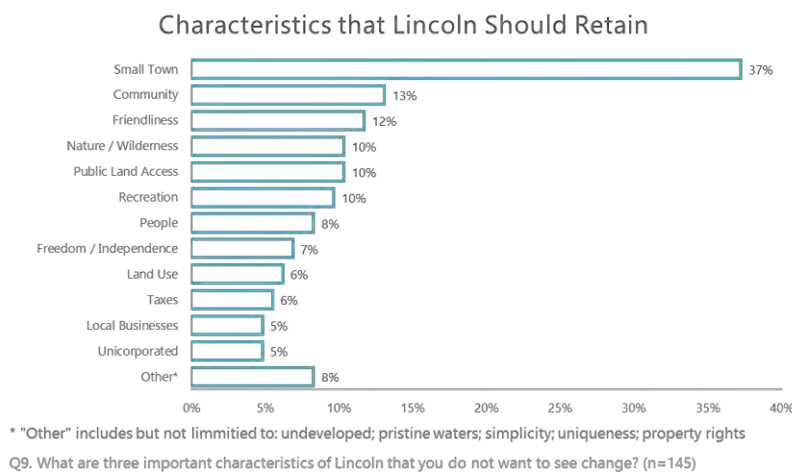
Lincoln Community Master Plan

When describing their community many residents reflected on the small town nestled in the mountain landscape of western Montana. This quiet setting and picturesque landscape are likely what brought and kept them here in the first place, and it holds significant importance to many of the residents. Other words that were used by multiple respondents to describe Lincoln were independent, bar focused, beautiful, rustic, quiet, peaceful, remote, conservative, depressed, and friendly, amongst others.

When asked what one thing makes residents feel proudest about living in Lincoln, the response was heavily weighted to people and community. This response shows a strong commitment to each other by individual residents, and a very high regard for their small-town community.



Figure 2. Word cloud depicting the popular responses to survey question 8. Words used more often by respondents appear larger in the cloud.



Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple words could be entered by survey respondent. It was a write-in question.

Figure 3. Bar graph depicting data from survey question #9.

What Lincoln desires to retain most is intangible in nature and can only be woven from the fibers of a tightly knit community.

tangible change could be brought to fruition. Topping the list were the Highway 200 Corridor / Main Street, local businesses & amenities, and cleanliness & appearances. These aspects were followed by other physical improvements like better trails and sidewalks in town.

Questions 9 and 10 inquired the survey audience about what aspects of Lincoln they would like to retain, and what characteristics of Lincoln that should change. The contrast drawn between the responses to these two questions can be seen in the types of answers provided. The top three answers to question 9, what should not change, were small town, community, and friendliness. This speaks to the characteristics of a place that cannot be designed by an architect, or built with brick and mortar.

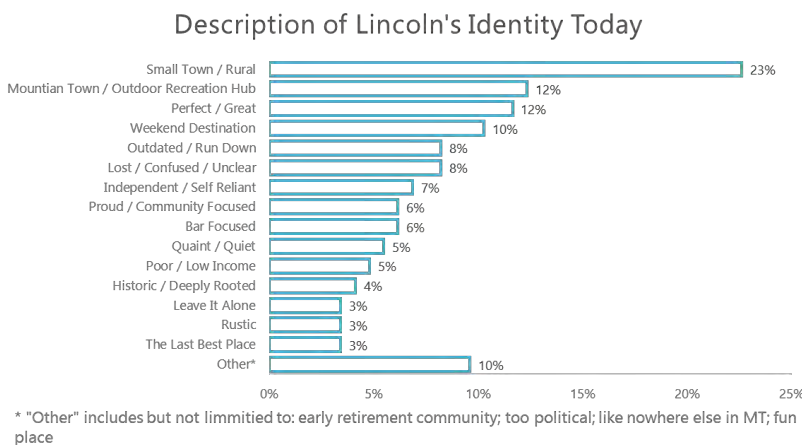
Looking in contrast to question 10, what should change in Lincoln, survey respondents focused on aspects of the community where

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It is important to note that the second largest response to this question was nothing. The wording of the question itself is important to understand the meaning of this response. As the survey the question reads, *What are three characteristics of Lincoln that you would like to see change?* Approximately fifteen percent of respondents stated they would not like to see any of the characteristics of Lincoln change.

The survey audience was then asked directly about how Lincoln identifies itself today. These survey responses reflected some of the sentiment collected in the Town Hall Small Group Discussions. While some common themes could be identified there was a very diverse response to this open-ended question. While some saw the small, mountain town as perfect, others portrayed the community as low income, outdated, and confused on how to identify itself.



Q11. How would you describe Lincoln's identity today? (n=146)
Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple concepts could be entered by survey respondent. It was a write-in question.

Figure 5. Bar graph depicting data from survey question #11.

The final question regarding community identity asked, *As the community develops, what aspects would you like to see incorporated into the community's appearance?* Overwhelmingly, respondents chose history/heritage and area recreation as the aspects that they would like to see reflected in future developments.

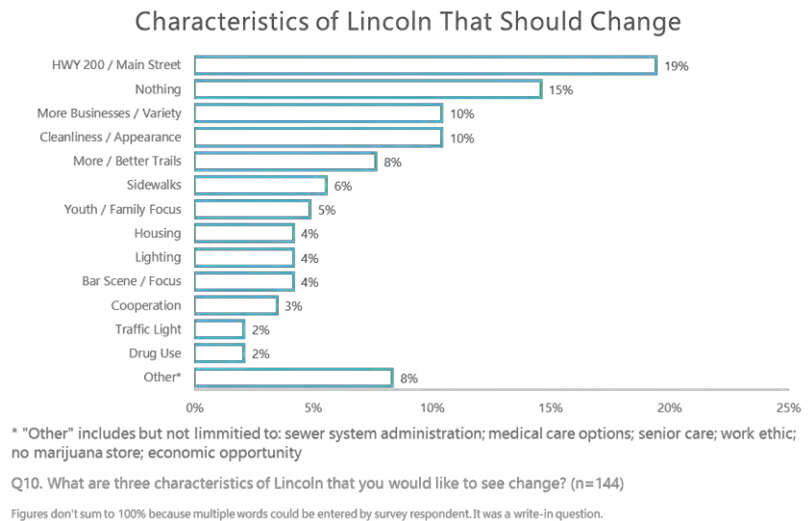


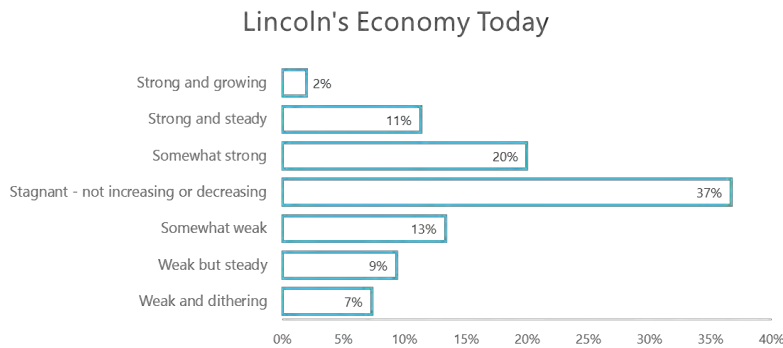
Figure 4. Bar graph depicting data from survey question #10.

Question 12 asked, *If you could shape Lincoln's identity five years from now, what would it be?* Responses to this question greatly reflected the responses to question 11; excluded from this future view were any negative aspects like lost or rundown. This shows that the community would like to retain its small, community centered, mountain town feel that it carries today into the future, while improving on the less desirable factors and realities that currently exist.

Lincoln Community Master Plan

Economy

A critical component of the Montana Main Street Program's four-pronged approach is development of the community economy. A strong, diverse economy is of great benefit for any community when working to develop community planning objectives. The Lincoln community was surveyed on various economic factors in order to obtain baseline information on the current status of the economy from a

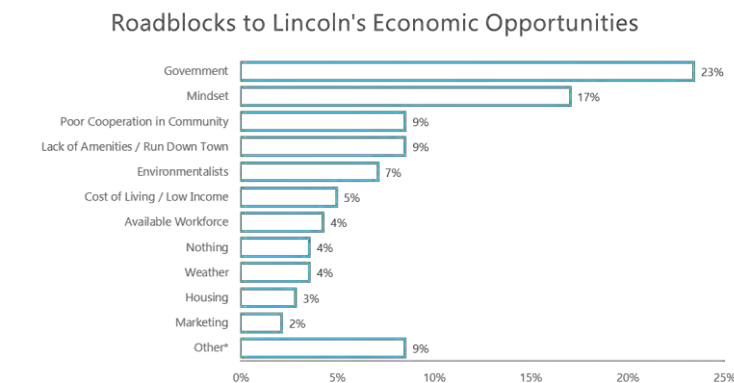


Q17. How would you describe Lincoln's economy? (n=150)

Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 6. Bar graph depicting data from survey question #17.

Lincoln area economy a majority of respondents, forty seven percent, stated that tourism and recreation had the greatest potential. Local business development and natural resources followed in second and third with nineteen and twelve percent respectively. Question 19 then asked, *What has hindered Lincoln's ability to capture that [economic] opportunity?*



* "Other" includes but not limited to: limited resources; unchecked growth; not supporting local businesses

Q19. What has hindered Lincoln's ability to capture that [economic] opportunity? (n=141)

Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple concepts could be entered by survey respondent. It was a write-in question.

Figure 7. Bar graph depicting data from survey question #19.

local perspective, what opportunities may exist for economic growth, and what improvements to the community would benefit local businesses.

Overall outlook of the local economy today was generally good. The majority of respondents stated that the economy was steady, and not increasing or decreasing.

When asked to consider what opportunities existed for the

The top three responses to this question show that there are two leading factors that impede development in the area according to local residents, government and the community itself.

Government action, or inaction, can have major impacts on rural economies that rely on public lands to generate private revenue. A lack of community organization and leadership can also hinder the local economy and small town's ability to capitalize on the opportunities that are present.

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Lincoln Community Master Plan

Local Amenities

In order to build a community master plan that suits the needs and desires of a community requires an understanding of what local amenities are favored most by its residents. Outdoor recreation is a pastime of all residents of Lincoln regardless of age. The surrounding area provides for recreationalist of all types, each of which have their own needs as far as infrastructure and amenities. Providing for these groups in master plan elements not only elevates the residents' ability to further enjoy the community, but provides safety and economic benefits as well.

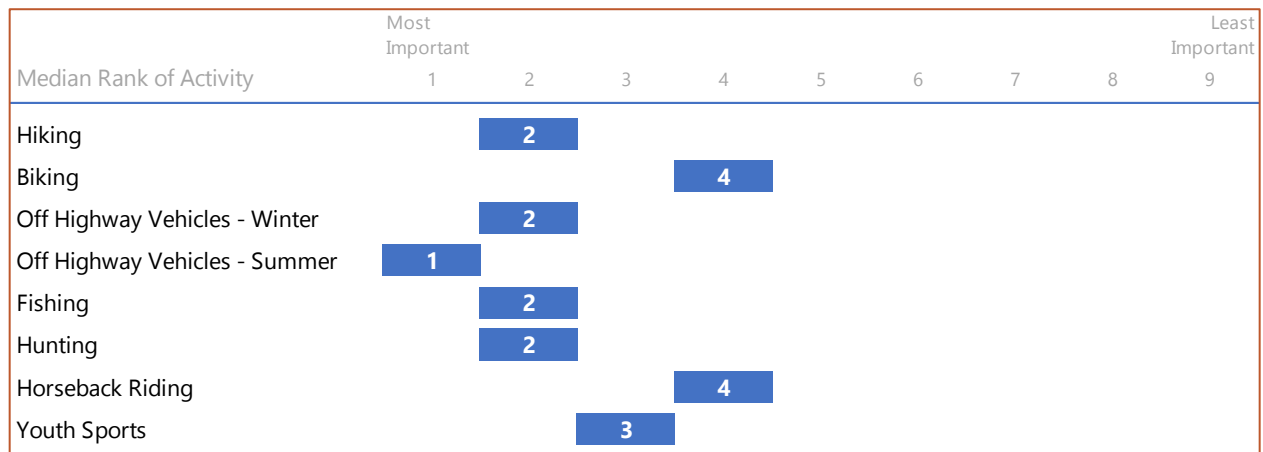


Figure 8. Chart depicting data from survey question #15.

Survey responses show that summer Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) was the most favored outdoor recreational activity. Residents also noted many other activities following closely behind with winter OHV activities, hiking, fishing, and hunting all coming in a close second.

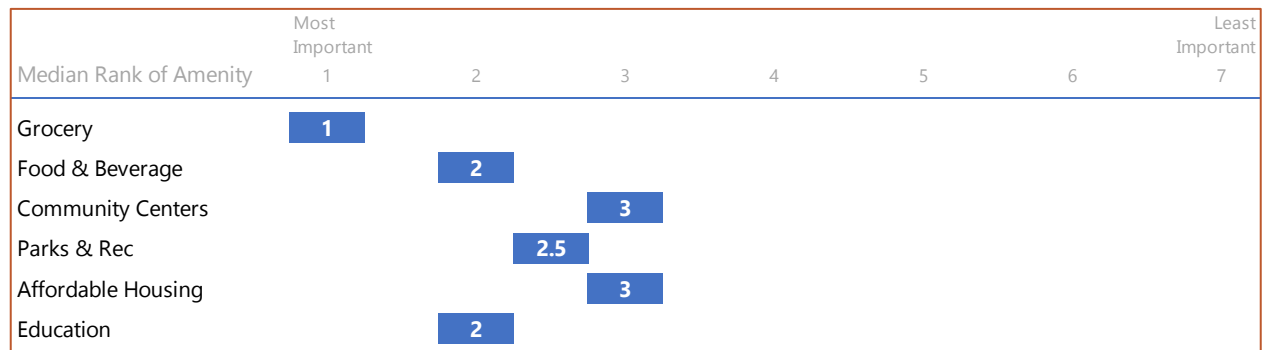


Figure 9. Chart depicting data from survey question #16.

When asked, *What community amenities are most important to you for the Lincoln area?*, respondents ranked groceries as their top choice, followed closely by education, and then food and beverage.

Lincoln Community Master Plan

Question 21 provided some insight in to what business amenities the community would like to see developed, as well as what additions might boost the local economy. Businesses geared toward outdoor recreation as well as a brewery came in as the top responses.

Safety

Lincoln Montana has a very direct safety challenge that has posed problems for many of the state’s rural communities. Its Main Street is a Montana highway. The bulk of storefronts and commercial operations exist along the highway corridor. Safety issues are abundant as a diverse mix of vehicles, pedestrians, residents, tourists, and even animals go about their business. The survey dove deep into issues of safety from multiple angels to understand where priorities lie and a cohesive but non-intrusive plan can bring better safety to the community.

When looking at some safety components recommended by the steering committee, respondents ranked the highway corridor as a top concern and road maintenance as second.

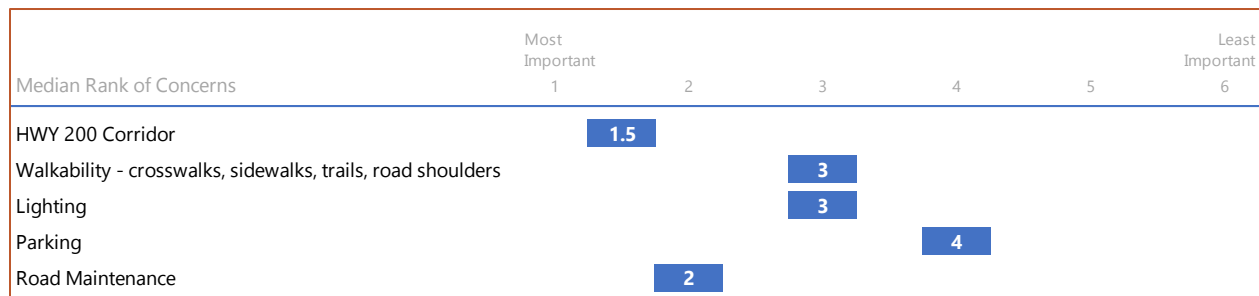
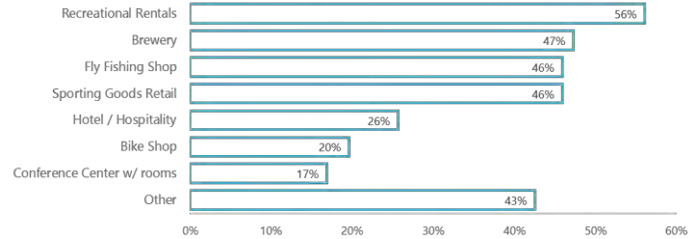


Figure 11. Chart depicting data from survey question #27.

Understanding pedestrian use and frequency is essential to developing safe and effective walkways around the downtown area, as well as to connect to area trail systems. The survey found that a number of residents frequently walk the downtown area. This data reveals that safe pedestrian pathways throughout the community would serve residents and be of community benefit.

Question 29 provided further insight into safely walking, cycling, or skating in the

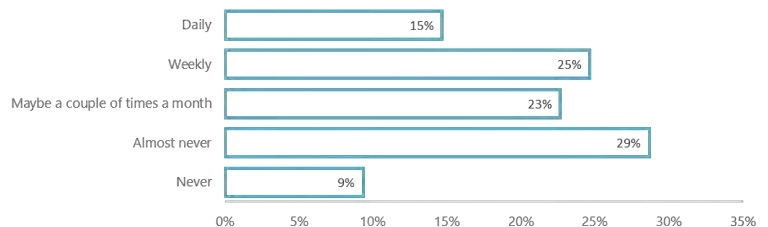
Potential Business Ideas for Downtown Lincoln



Q21. What business additions to Lincoln's downtown area might boost the local economy by drawing people to Lincoln and get them to stay longer? What amenities would you like to see on Lincoln's Main Street? (n=148)
Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple options (i.e. brewery, sporting goods retail, etc.) could be selected by survey respondent.

Figure 10. Chart depicting data from survey question #21.

How Often Do You Walk, Cycle or Skate Down Lincoln's Main Street?



Q28. How often do you or other members of your household walk, cycle, or skate down Lincoln's main street? (n=150)

Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Figure 12. Chart depicting data from survey question #28.

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community. Survey data showed that the speed of traffic as well as the sheer volume of traffic in recent years is the largest safety concern for pedestrians in Lincoln. This alludes to a need beyond the creation of pedestrian pathways, but for traffic control as well.

When looking at traffic control and safely driving in the community, respondents overwhelmingly consider the speed of traffic to be the greatest safety hazard. A number of safety factors shown in question 30 speak to a number of different concerns that should be considered when building a master plan. Speed of traffic however, was ranked highest amongst residents.

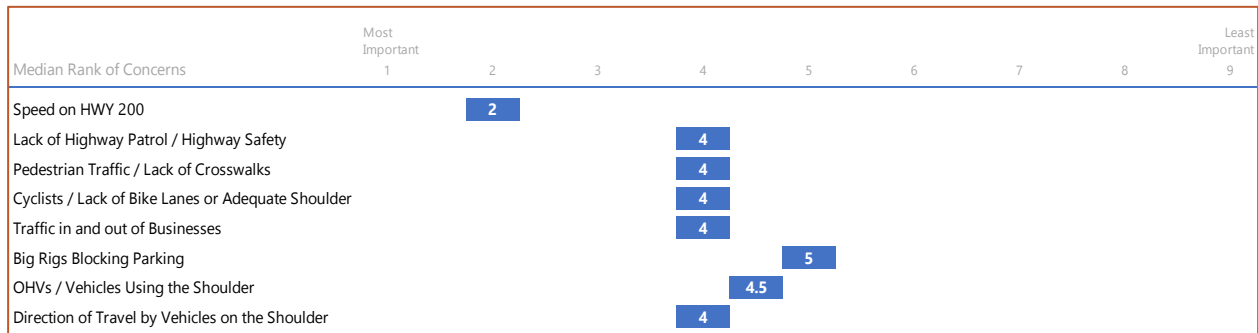


Figure 13. Chart depicting data from survey question #30.

Economic Development

One of the most important aspects of building a successful community master plan is the consideration of economic development. A strong local economy will help a community retain its sense of place as businesses invest revenue into their storefronts, provide sustainable employment, and contribute to community events and organizations. Increasing the vitality of the local economy is achieved by enhancing the existing economic asset's ability to perform, and developing new assets to capture available opportunity.

Existing Business

The survey provided a number of questions that were directed solely to Lincoln's business owners. Understanding how different aspects of the community effect their business operations and profitability is important to developing a master plan that benefits the local economy. Of the 150 survey responses gathered 37 of them were business owners, and 11 of those 37 business owners operate in or near the downtown area.

Business owners were asked what community improvements would deliver the greatest benefit to their business in question 24. The data shows that multi-use trails for area connectivity would be of the greatest benefit to local businesses and correlates with the data from question 25 which shows that foot traffic is of significant importance to the majority of

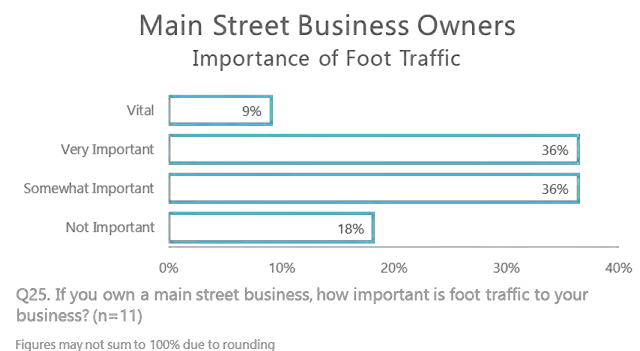


Figure 14. Chart depicting data from survey question #25.

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businesses. The flow of commerce would be much better served through the development of area connectivity and walkability.

Highway 200 safety, speed reduction, and appearance ranked second most import to business owners. Improvements to these aspects of the highway / main street corridor would help to capture a greater share of the daily traffic count and contribute to Lincoln’s sense of place. Businesses would also like to see Lincoln marketed more effectively. Marketing area events, businesses, and other amenities will help to bring patrons to the area and ultimately to local businesses. Local businesses also saw a substantial benefit in the development of a Community Center or gathering place.

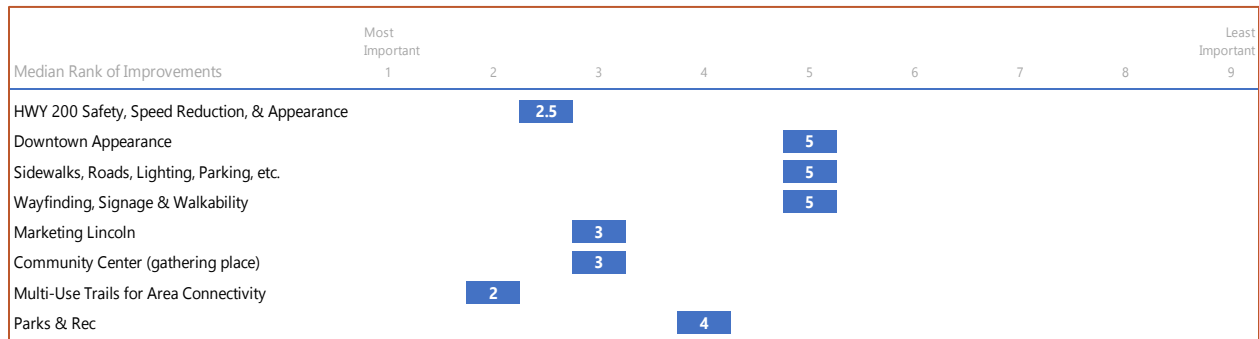


Figure 15. Chart depicting data from survey question #24.

Question 26 asked business owners what their concerns were regarding any downtown revitalizations. When focusing the question on concerns, business owners chose two aspects previously identified, highway 200 and walkability, but a new concern came to the surface and ranked second most important. That was downtown OHV/ATV safety. These vehicles can bring great patronage to local businesses; however, they can deter other customers if they are not operated and parked in a manner that is conducive to all patrons.

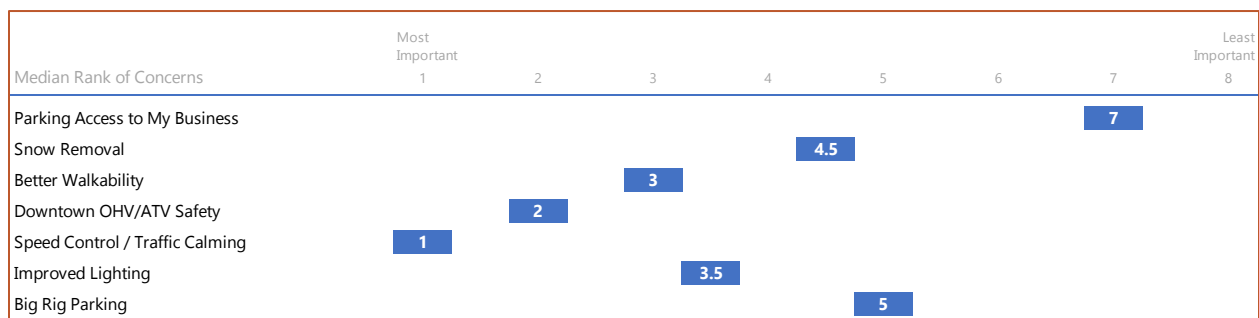


Figure 16. Chart depicting data from survey question #26.

Parking access to each individual business came in last, and tractor trailer parking and snow removal also were of little concern. This data shows that a central gathering place like a Community Center, or centrally located parking could be paired with trails and other walkways to provide better access and flow of commerce amongst Lincoln’s businesses.

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Lincoln Community Master Plan

Financing Mechanisms

Many master plan components require capital and labor in order to complete community development projects. The community of Lincoln has a history of pulling together resources in order to get projects done. As many of the residents stated throughout this process, when someone needs help in our community, we come together to do what needs to be done.

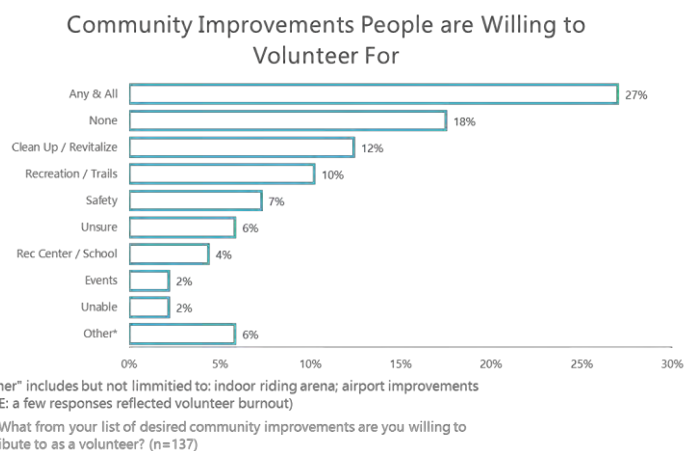
Lincoln has also found success in leveraging public and private grant funds in order to get community projects to the finish line. The skate park at Hooper Park and the Sculpture in the Wild exhibit are prime examples. Bringing these projects to fruition required community organization, individual leadership, land use agreements or purchase, funding, and volunteer work. This history shows, when the community is behind a project as a whole Lincoln has the wherewithal to accomplish their objectives.

Master plan developments will likely require some level of capital and labor resources depending on the scope of the project. As an unincorporated town, Lincoln lacks a local revenue collection system and tax base they could utilize to fund projects. The survey looked at various mechanisms that the community could use in order to fund and execute master plan developments, and what the community sentiment toward each looked like.

Volunteerism

Volunteering is often utilized within the community. Lincoln is home to a number of non-profit clubs and organizations. Many of these organizations are the catalyst to local project development, and the human, real, and capital resources that they deploy greatly facilitate development. The survey assessed the community's willingness to volunteer and what factors may influence that decision.

The results show a majority of area residents are willing to volunteer their time to contribute to community improvements. Eighteen percent of those surveyed stated that they would not be willing to contribute to any community projects through volunteering. This number likely reflects, to some degree, a consistent minority of respondents who do not support any change whatsoever in the community of Lincoln.



Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple concepts could be entered by survey respondent. It was a write-in question.

Figure 17. Graph depicting data from survey question #32.

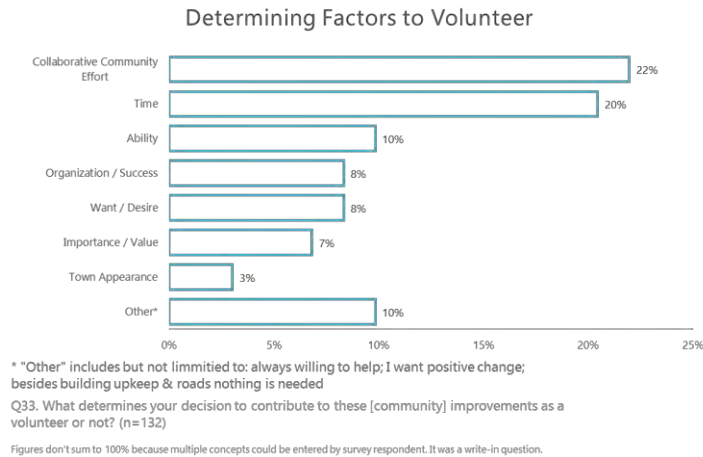


Figure 18. Graph depicting data from survey question #33.

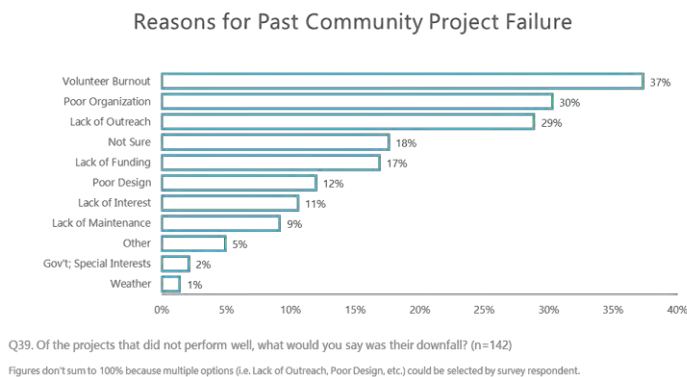


Figure 19. Graph depicting data from survey question #39.

When analyzing why residents are willing to volunteer or not, the most important factor to Lincoln residents is whether the project is a collaborative community effort. This reflects a high regard for community buy-in; something that is echoed through the survey. Time and ability are the next most relevant factors that determine whether and individual will volunteer or not.

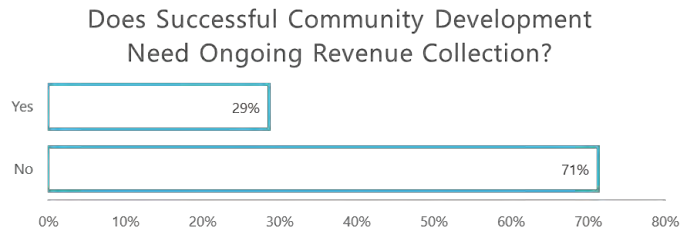
Question 38 asked how respondents would rate volunteer lead projects conducted in the community in the past. The majority of respondents found these efforts to be acceptable or above average with thirty-one and twenty-five percent of respondents respectively. This datapoint somewhat contradicts the information gathered in question 39, which asked, of the projects that did not perform well, what would you say was their downfall? The top response was volunteer burnout, with thirty-seven percent. Organization and outreach came in a close second and third with thirty and twenty nine percent respectively.

The data collected regarding volunteerism shows that the community has a strong willingness to volunteer their time, if there is community support for the project. The downfall of volunteer lead efforts is organization. Poor communication, organization, and outreach lead to volunteer burnout which has been the primary cause of project failure in the past.

Financial Contributions

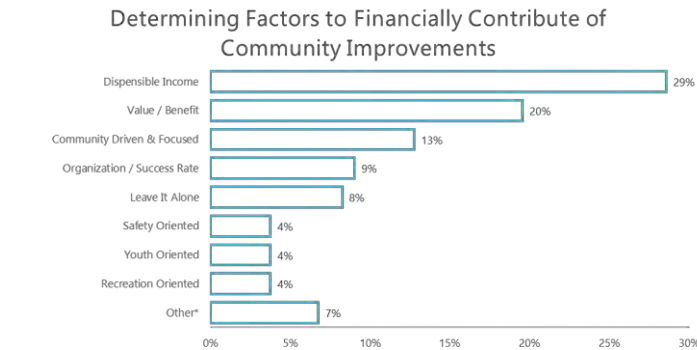
Most community projects are funded through a community assessment of one kind or another. Local taxes levied, bond measures passed by local residents, or special tax districts are typical mechanisms used to collect funds necessary to development. As an unincorporated town, Lincoln has found unconventional avenues to funding projects. Donations and local fundraising paired with grant funding have successfully resulted in the development of the Hooper Park skate park and the Blackfoot Pathways: Sculpture in the Wild.

Lincoln Community Master Plan



Q40. Do you believe ongoing revenue collection (tax levied or reoccurring contribution of another kind) is necessary to successful community development? (n=150)

Figure 20. Graph depicting data from survey question #40.



* "Other" includes but not limited to: aviation oriented; law enforcement; spend money at local businesses

Q35. What determines your decision to financially contribute to these [community] improvements or not? (n=133)

Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple concepts could be entered by survey respondent. It was a write-in question.

Figure 21. Graph depicting data from survey question #35.

What is important to note from this series of questions and the resulted data, is that the mechanism in which funds are solicited and collected is important to local residents. There is a strong resistance to city incorporation, tax districts, and alternative organizational structures with assessment capabilities. Volunteer labor, community fundraising, and grant monies are seen as the most favorable funding mechanisms. This reflects the community's independent nature and reverer for being able to choose when and how their resources are utilized for community improvements.

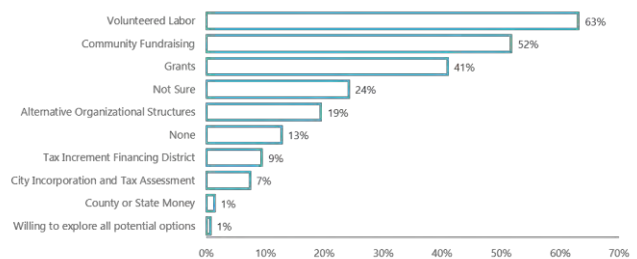
Summary Questions

Questions 41 and 42 brought the survey to a close with two simple questions. *Please describe the top three things that you **would most like to see** from the Community Master Planning Process & Please describe the top three things that you **would not like to see** from the Community Master Planning*

When polled about the use of more conventional financing mechanisms, the community sentiment was clear. Area residents to not believe that an ongoing revenue collection system is necessary in order to bring projects to fruition.

Over half of the community is willing to financially contribute to community projects, while forty-one percent stated they would not be willing to contribute financially. This data point from question 34 shows that there is a sizable population of residents for the community to target fundraising efforts. As noted previously, community buy-in and organization are key to successful fundraising, sourcing volunteers, and project completion. This is reflected in question 35 that examines the determining factors of one's willingness to contribute to local projects financially.

Supported Financing Mechanisms for Community Projects



Q36. What financing mechanisms are you willing to support in order to fund community projects and conduct necessary operations and maintenance? (n=149)

Figures don't sum to 100% because multiple options (i.e. Grants, Not Sure, etc.) could be selected by survey respondent.

Figure 22. Graph depicting data from survey question #36.

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Process. This open-ended question provided respondents the ability to reflect upon their previous responses and share their opinions as to what results they would like to see, and not see, from the master planning process.

A notable consensus exists in what the community does not want to see as a result of master planning. The top response by a considerable margin being an increase in taxes. City incorporation and a broken process not led by the community were second and third, respectively. This again emphasizes a strong regard for the community's independence and status quo of being able to choose where, when, and how their resources will be used for the greater good of the community.

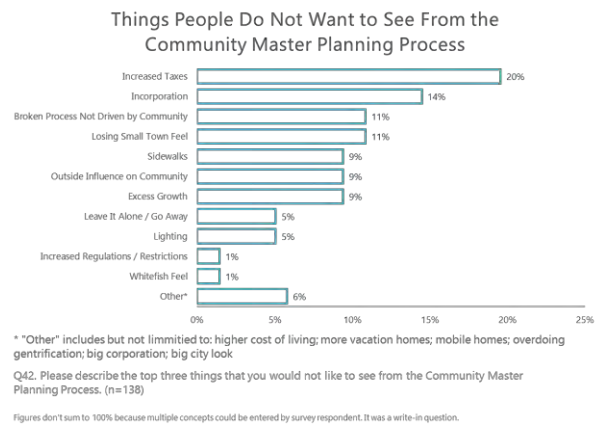


Figure 23. Graph depicting data from survey question #42.

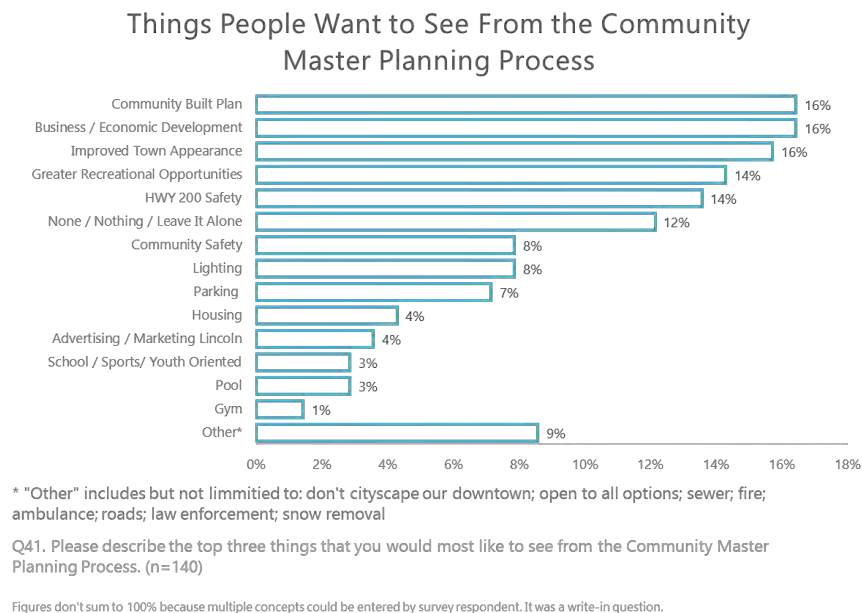


Figure 24. Graph depicting data from survey question #42.

Question 41 provides a good snapshot of what the community would like to see as a result of the master planning process. The top three results are in a virtual dead heat at sixteen percent. These top responses all speak to community health in the form of community collaboration, economy, and maintenance. The following three responses spoke to the value of area recreation, Highway 200 safety, and an admiration for Lincoln the way that it is today.

It is interesting to note that physical infrastructure while desired, did not score as highly as community health, opportunity, and safety aspects. Lighting, parking, housing, a community pool/gym, were all reflected as desires but not identified by a majority. This could speak to the community's emphasis on

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collaboration and consensus before moving forward with a specific project. Physical infrastructure is a necessary component to delivering some of the community objectives like Highway 200 safety and improved community appearance. The data shows that creating a master plan design that is non-intrusive and works to assimilate into the existing community character will be best received by area residents.

Major Takeaways from Public Survey Data

- *No new taxes, no incorporation, and/or other fixed revenue findings.*
- *People want Lincoln to remain a small town and to preserve its people and character.*
- *Community is highly valued.*
- *Community buy-in is important in all planning and development.*
- *Better safety and appearance along HWY 200 are desired.*
- *Foot traffic is important to downtown businesses.*
- *Trails and recreation opportunities are highly valued.*
- *Residents prioritize preserving history and heritage of Lincoln.*
- *5-10 respondents would state that they don't want to see Lincoln change but they would get behind some locally controlled projects.*

Focus Groups

The consultant and steering committee solicited the community for volunteer focus group participants to gather community opinion on topics of concern identified in the public survey. Focus group meetings provide an open forum for community members to hold peer to peer discussions. The meetings were facilitated by the consultant in order to touch on various discussion points within each focus group topic.

Six focus groups discussions were held over two days. The focus group topics were: Highway 200 Corridor, Existing Business, Recreational Opportunities, Community Identity, Community Organization, and Community Needs and Economic Development. Participants commented on many aspects related to the focus group topic before them, as well as discussing other concerns and opportunities in the community.

HWY 200 Corridor Focus Group

The Highway 200 Corridor is one of the top concerns of the Lincoln community. Safety concerns top the list while creating a downtown corridor that reflects local desires is essential. The majority of commercial activity occurs on the main street / highway corridor. Traffic calming, safety, downtown appearance, and walkability are just some of the measures that could improve the corridor for local and visitor use.

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The Highway 200 Corridor Focus Group was well attended. Local residents, civil engineers, county and state planners, steering committee members, and Montana Highway Patrol represented a good cross section of local knowledge and professional expertise.

Steering Committee member Karyn Good provided a background on the Envision Lincoln planning effort in 2017. That effort had good public engagement and showed that HWY 200 safety was the top concern of the community. Karyn noted that Lincoln is now part of the Montana Main Street Program which can provide resources for planning and project implementation. Kevin Myhre, with civil construction company Century Companies, noted that just because something is drawn on paper doesn't mean that construction will occur in that manner. This is important for the community to understand once the Master Plan is published; the master plan provides a conceptual guide and a snapshot of public opinion on the needs and desires of the community at that point in time. It often can take multiple years before projects are implemented and the needs of the community may have shifted and adjustments may be made at that time, but the plan serves as a baseline to draw from rather than starting from scratch.

Angie Hubbard, a Lewis and Clark County Planner, stated that the County can help Lincoln apply for grant money as projects are identified and pursued. The county works closely with Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) on projects with overlapping jurisdiction. Karyn stated that it is hard to get any matching funds put together in Lincoln which is often needed in order to obtain grants.

Katie Potts, an MDT Planner, stated that they are happy to be engaged in the process at this stage. Early and often communication with the department leads to the best outcomes. She noted that Lincoln has to rely on the MDT District (Great Falls) as the community is not incorporated. Lincoln will have to go through the district to apply for state and federal funds relating to the highway. Katie also described the Systems Impact process at MDT. If the community has a project that they would like to see within the corridor they will have to apply to Systems Impact through their district. This could be anything from a crosswalk, to moving a speed limit sign, to building a "Welcome to Lincoln" sign.

Geoff Streeter, an MDT Planner, mentioned that many of these things are discussed in their Monthly Coordination meetings with the county. Geoff extended an invite for a member or two from the steering committee to take part in those meetings. This would be an appropriate venue to discuss and begin implementation of desired changes. Many of the changes identified were relatively small in nature and could provide low cost, immediate solutions that would get Lincoln closer to its objective. Moving speed limit signs to more noticeable locations, adding flashing radar gun speed signs, and/or "Welcome to Lincoln" signs.

Jesse, Lincoln's resident HWY Patrolman, stated that there are always two troopers that cover from Clearwater to Cascade and Augusta to US 12 (Helena). In summer they might get an additional as needed. He noted that signage is an issue. The 30-mph limit by the school is for the full stretch of town but a lot of traffic interprets this as just a school zone speed limit, and will speed up after the school and through the rest of town. Other speed limit signs are poorly placed and can be missed by drivers. Dustin asked if Jesse could map the speed limit signs and note how different placement or use of flashing radar

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gun signs could improve driver behavior. The current locations of speed limit signs have been mapped by the MSU Community Design Center and is shown in the design section of this master plan.

"It is odd that Lincoln is not a safe place for our kids to walk to school, and it's only a town of 850 people."

- Karyn Good, Envision Lincoln

Jonathan Reis from the MDT Right of Way division noted that he would probably steer clear of any roundabout development or overhead entryway signs in the HWY corridor. He pulled up the HWY plans for the Lincoln stretch of Highway 200 which are dated back to the mid-1990s, but show right of way and state easements. Those were shared with the group in an email and are included in this master plan appendices. Bruce from MDT Right of Way stated that first you need to slow traffic down. Use flashing speed signs, crosswalks, etc. And second, allow a walking path to meander through town to work around encroachments and work with the right of way and private ownership.

Jesse, the resident patrolman, stated that the HWY shoulder is 10ft in Lincoln and that most highway shoulders are 4 ft. There could be room to do something there. He also stated that folks backing out from parking into the HWY itself is very dangerous, between 6th and Stemple Pass is the worst. Marshall Visgar, a local pastor, stated that simple painting and striping may encourage better parking and walkway safety. Signage would also help to encourage the right type of behavior. Kevin with Century Companies stated that you can create some "safety zones" where it is the most chaotic and dangerous by employing things like crosswalks and bulb outs.

Jonathan with MDT mentioned Boulder and Sheridan Montana as examples of small towns in the state who revamped their downtown area which is comprised of a main street that is a Montana highway. Boulder went with a center median and crosswalks which was strongly resisted by local residents and is now revered by the community. Sheridan did not put center medians in. Both communities pile their snow up in the middle and then remove/haul it away to a safe storage and melting zone. Sheridan did a lighting design which employs light bulbs and housing that shine a warm soft light down but not outward into the viewshed.

Kevin discussed how trail connectivity came to fruition in the Lewistown downtown development. They used an old rail bed. He stated that when town starts to close in on the HWY and the driver, that is when they drivers really start to slow down. The group noted some of the problems with trails coming in and around town, mostly regarding OHVs. They are crossing the road at any given place, traveling against traffic on the shoulders, there is no signage, OHVs often are traveling faster than the HWY traffic, and there is a lot of dust creating low visibility.

Forest stated that the OHV club had a mag chloride program in years past that fell apart but new leadership may help bring something like this back. Dustin mentioned maybe using asphalt millings would work as well. OHV wayfinding and speed limits in the borrow pit could also be something to discuss with MDT to increase safety.

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Jesse noted that with enough lead time he may be able to increase patrol in Lincoln for community events that draw more people or OHVs. He stated that there needs to be more education of the rules and regulations. A lot of people just don't know. Jesse issues a lot of warnings as he is trying to educate them, but if an outside trooper comes in, they are likely to issue tickets, not warnings. Education needs to occur sooner than later.

Outcomes from this focus group were very positive. The community of Lincoln made connections to state and county officials that can provide some relevant guidance on how to efficiently accomplish the towns objectives. Furthermore, the group was able to hone in on some strategies that might work to enhance the main street appeal of Lincoln and help to bring economic prosperity.

Existing Business Focus Group

The Lincoln economy has had its peaks and valleys over the years. The backbone of this economy has historically been resourced based industry. Ranching, logging, and mining provided the economic momentum to fuel and sustain growth. Those industries have waned in recent decades due to an increase in government regulation and market forces tightening margins on private operators. Main street businesses did well when industry was at its peak, and the community did well to stand by them as those industries eroded. In the last decade however, Lincoln has lost a number of businesses that were central to the community.

External forces have strained local business operations and few options are available for goods and services in the community. Local sentiment toward the town's businesses has turned sour on occasion, as residents feel that businesses are price-gouging a captive customer base. Businesses, on the other hand, are feeling the pressures of outside marketplaces like Helena and e-commerce, and simply cannot compete as a small, isolated economy. This focus group hoped to find some solutions to these current conditions as they discussed the various factors affecting their business.

Chamber President Laurie Welty provided a history of the Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce and perspective on the business climate. She stated that the Chamber has waxed and waned over the years. It has become too much of an event planning organization rather than focusing on the chamber charter. This resulted in volunteer burnout, and COVID then completely exhausted the volunteer base. Membership is down, volunteers are down, donations are down, and they have lost a number of board members recently.

Laurie would like the plan to generate community cooperation, volunteerism, individualism, and a rising tide that lifts all boats. She asked, how do we spark collaboration? There is a need for community organization so that businesses can know of, prepare for, advertise, and capitalize on events or other opportunities. Erin Dey, Owner of Rusty Relics & the Blackfoot Valley Dispatch who has lived in Lincoln most of her life, told the group that Lincoln's businesses used to help and rely on one another. It wasn't uncommon for one business to borrow an employee from another, or shut down early to help a business across the street get some needed work done. This business comradery is gone today. Erin stated, "Nowadays it's, that's my customer and no one else can have them."

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Laurie stated, *“It is time that we start thinking in terms of abundance, and not scarcity.”* Meaning, Lincoln has so much to offer and businesses should work together to help the business community as a whole capture more of the available market, rather than fight over existing customers.

“It is time that we start thinking in terms of abundance, and not scarcity.”

- Laurie Welty, Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce

Joe and Tammy Haas and their daughter Brit recently purchased Bushwackers restaurant in Lincoln and sat in on the focus group discussion. Brit mentioned that a business afterhours is a good way to get the business community together. One business hosts a social once a month to get folks together and talk. Dustin mentioned that maybe if Bushwackers hosted the first social it would be a good draw. Come and meet the new business owners. Then do a business challenge at the event where all attending businesses put their name in a hat, the one that is drawn is selected to receive a beautification weekend, or weekday, where other local businesses volunteer their time to help there neighboring business to put on a fresh coat of paint, fill potholes, or plant flower pots. The receiving business would pick the project and pay for the materials, and the labor is free. This can be done each month and would create comradery amongst the businesses and a visual improvement to downtown.

Tammy stated that some kind of a business organization that could bring businesses together and take some of the burden of off the Chamber may help. Erin stated that they have done business socials in the past and we need to do them again. But it will take a while to get buy-in and attendance. Laurie stated that the Chamber has to support Chamber Members first. Which can put them in a tough position when other businesses want to benefit from organized efforts. Finding a way to have an all-inclusive business organization would help.

Joe mentioned that workforce availability is a problem. It is in both short supply and there are a number of people nowadays that just don't want to work. Folks get more from government subsidies than the paycheck they could collect. Joe stated that we need to come together as a business community and realize this circumstance in order to find a way to move forward. Dustin stated that there may be a good opportunity to train Lincoln's youth to enter into the workforce. This is also a good way to help retain the young population in the Lincoln area.

Joe stated that businesses could bring a workforce into the area but that there is no housing for them. Karyn stated that High Country is putting in some workforce housing and that they may have received USDA or other public funding to help them do that project. Housing remains a community constraint in many ways and the current real estate boom has only exacerbated the problem.

Karyn stated that there are a lot of relatively new business owners in town right now, so this could be the perfect time to implement this kind of organization. All focus group participants emphasized that Lincoln needs to create a healthier business community.

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Kara Maplethorpe, a Heart of the Rockies Funding Coordinator, said that she can work with USDA to get funding for projects, grants, low interest loans, technical assistance, opportunity grants, energy, and housing are all areas where she can assist. Kara would like bring to bring some USDA staff to town in the fall and discuss what they can provide through USDA programs. Heart of the Rockies can help apply for and administer grants.

Recreational Opportunities Focus Group

Outdoor recreation is at the core of Lincoln's culture. No matter what your discipline, the Lincoln area provides the opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy some of the most incredible mountain terrain in the lower forty-eight. The community conveyed through their survey responses the immense value of this resource. It is often referenced in how the community identifies itself, and is seen by most as the top industry to provide for economic development in the area.

This focus group gathered a number of area residents with personal and professional ties to the area's outdoors. Montana Department of Transportation planners attended the focus group to provide insight into highway corridor use by various outdoor enthusiasts. Kara Maplethorpe of Heart of the Rockies also attended to provide her expertise in public programs that may be utilized in order to achieve objectives related to outdoor recreation.

Master Plan Steering Committee member and Snow Warriors Treasurer, Victor Johnson stated that Lincoln is great because you can take off in your OHV, or snowmobile, from your house and hit the trails. You can fill up in town, although there is no non-ethanol fuel in town, and recreate and patronize local businesses. He stated that there is only one snowmobile trail in town. User groups are constantly trying to open up trails from deadfall as forest management isn't what it used to be. They are also trying to open up trails that have been closed by the US Forest Service (USFS). Bears, lynx, and bull trout are the major species that end up restricting motorized use on USFS ground. Victor also stated that snowmobiles and OHVs are two very different classes as snowmobiles can get off trail once in the backcountry, where OHVs are limited to open trails and roads.

Kenny Low, Owner of K Lazy 3 Outfitters, stated that his business has switched from outfitting hunters to summer recreational activities. Hunting is getting tougher and tougher. Tourism is and will be the economic driver for Lincoln going forward. He said that we need to get the snowmobilers in town again. When he was young there were a lot more snowmobiles in town throughout the winter, and they spent a lot of money in town. Kenny stated that Lincoln needs a draw, a Tourism Center/Community Hub. Incorporating local history tours should be a part of this draw; dams, stage stops, mines, and other historic components can create a family experience and tourist attraction.

Area Chamber President, Laurie Welty recommended using the Matt King property and cabin as a tourism center/community hub/community foundation HQ. Everything comes back to COMMUNITY. Kenny stated, "There is room in this valley for all of us (businesses). We need to be helping each other." Businesses have to be nimble and diverse, and be able to change if they are going to succeed. Everything has moved to digital and it has to be accessible on a phone, not just a computer. Recreational opportunities can drive the local economy year-round. But there is no marketing coming out from the community. Lincoln needs a central origin of communication and marketing. Dustin stated there are

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public funds available to help the community market itself. Augusta is a good example of how to market a community similar to Lincoln. Tia Troy leads their effort.

Enjoying and capitalizing on recreational opportunities is not always any easy path. Permitting and building the economy around recreation can be tricky. There is a fine line between a club doing day trips on USFS and a commercial business that requires licenses, insurance, and is heavily regulated. This goes

“The bar just keeps getting higher and higher to operate a business.”

- Kenny Low, Owner, K Lazy 3 Outfitters

for all guided outdoor activities from hiking to fishing to OHV tours. The Flathead National Forest permits about everything you can do on USFS property and could serve as an example to follow. Kenny stated, *“The bar just keeps getting higher and higher to operate a business.”* Permitting, insurance, overhead, equipment, etc. are all putting the squeeze on small business. In the Bighorn Mountains there is a permitting system that pays for services for snowmobiling in the area. This permitting system could be a model for improving outdoor recreation infrastructure in and around Lincoln.

Victor stated that you need to have multiple trails developed in order to preserve the forest. Having multiple trail options allows you to close one trail so that the area can rest and recover for a season. Otherwise, overuse results in trail degradation and users will start to drive further off of designated routes, negatively impacting the ecosystem around the trails.

The Lincoln Prosperity Proposal would create a law that upholds trail system use. This legislative proposal is the area's best bet to a sustainable future of trail use and development. There are enough trails in the area to create one day loops; Mike Horse, Creeks 1,2,3, Lone Pine, Stone Wall. But we need spoke trails going out from town to connect to these loops, but that will need to cut through some private property. OHV trails are largely 60-inch two track and there are virtually no single-track trails for motorcycles and bicycles. Developing a mixed-use trail system will attract different markets and increase overall commerce to the area.

There is a new Forest Supervisor for the Lincoln District so that may help with discussions and proposals regarding trail use and expansion. Kenny stated that the Lincoln District wilderness is very clean (weed free, etc.) compared to Lolo and Sun River. It takes a good ranger staff, and good outfitters, to keep it that way.

Victor spoke to the lack of snow in recent years and how it constrains snowmobiling around town. And in the high country, the amount of deadfall constrains snowmobile recreation in the woods. The Snow Warriors Club did not plow the Copper Creek parking lot this previous year for two reasons. One, expense, and two, to drive folks into town. The club works to drive business into town and holds a DAV Run and Vintage Run every season.

The group wrapped up the discussion by talking about what opportunities exist around outdoor recreation. Kenny asked how do we focus on families? There is a very good market in catering to

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families, and asked if we bring back Snowbank Lake. The group said that there is a need for a dry goods store (Garlands back), a fulltime mechanic, a laundromat, do it yourself carwash, NAPA, OHV rental, bike rentals, & a fly shop. Given sufficient demand, these business start-ups could provide some economic momentum to the area.

A Red Bull style race event could be a good draw such as motocross, mountain biking, etc. It was stated that the Stimpson place is putting in a shooting range. Adventure biking is an up-and-coming market for the community and many cyclists are already keyed into the area due to the Continental Divide Trail. Dustin stated that he saw a pack of 10 cyclists going through Helena the other day. Cyclists have a very positive economic impact on the areas they recreate. They spend a considerable amount of time in one area and require the goods and services of communities along their routes in order to keep their load weight down.

Consensus in this focus group was that there is an abundance of opportunity around Lincoln's outdoor recreation. There are a number of obstacles to overcome in order to seize that opportunity. Improvement of the area's trail systems was a top concern. Developing trails through a well-founded organization like the Lincoln Prosperity Proposal is necessary. An organized effort like this is more likely to obtain funding, be granted access by public regulators, receive community buy in, and maintain the volunteer base needed to successfully develop the trail network.

Business start-ups would face a number of uncertainties as access to public property has been trending down in the area over the last few decades. The Lincoln area has done little to successfully market itself as a destination and has been losing businesses in the town center in the past few years. Implementing a well-organized campaign is necessary to instill confidence with possible entrepreneurs. Removing some of the burden on operators is one way to encourage entrepreneurship. Developing central organization and services is one way to foster a cluster of business start-ups in an area. A permitting system like the one employed in the Bighorn Mountains is an example of a way to utilize a central organization for the good of private industry.

The group concluded that everything comes back to community. Nothing gets done in Lincoln without the efforts of the community. Organization and consensus provide the direction that is often lacking in the thrust of community led efforts. A tourism center, or community hub could serve as the

"There is room in this valley for all of us (businesses). We need to be helping each other."

- Kenny Low, Owner, K Lazy 3 Outfitters

embodiment of Lincoln's collective ideal, as a reminder to residents of their proud heritage and their commitment to their neighbors, their schools, the local businesses, and the surrounding area, and as a signal to those who visit the area, to what Lincoln stands for, founded in a proud history, and purposefully looking toward the future.

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Community Identity Focus Group

Community identity is important to the planning process. Identity is rooted history and heritage, and carried by the individual & community culture of the present. Community pride is a result of the community embracing all of these characteristics. Lincoln is a place that does not fall short on any of these aspects of identity. It can possibly be best described as a well bonded community of fiercely independent individuals. The nature of the individual is you stay out of my business and I will stay out of yours; the nature of the community however, is that when a neighbor is in need, the entire community steps forward to help.

The community culture stems from the rugged history of generations doing what it takes to call this deep mountain country home. Some of the residents say that Lincoln is unsure of its identity today as many of the things that have defined the area have gone away. Natural resource industries served as the backbone of the economy for decades and have all but disappeared. Once an isolated mountain town, Lincoln is now feeling the world closing in on them as well. Tourism and population migration have brought attention and people to the valley. These outside forces of change leave longtime residents questioning how Lincoln will retain its character.

Roger Dey, Owner of the Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, spoke to the history of the region. He said it has its roots in mining, timber and ranching. There used to be a couple of mills in town but environmental regulations shut down the industry. Now Roger described Lincoln as *"The Last Best Place to Hide."* And that, *"Lincoln doesn't really have an identity because what defined it has evaporated."* He also stated that no one knows the history of this town.

"We need to marry our history with our future."

- Laurie Welty, President, Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce

Roger stated that tourism is also an historic industry. Lambkin marketed this area for recreation a long time ago. Snowmobiling has been in this area since the 1960s, and this has been a hunting destination for forever. He believes Lincoln Gulch was one of if not the first landmark designation to carry Lincoln's name after his assassination, April to August. He also stated that Lincoln Gulch gold mining is not recognized by the town at all, and that story needs to be better told. Dustin agreed that those stories resonate with both residents and visitors; Helena's Last Chance Gulch and the story of the Four Georgians is very woven into the city's identity and used to attract tourists. The group agreed that when considering Lincoln's identity, it is important to recognize the history of Lincoln.

Erin Dey, Owner of Rusty Relics and Administrator of the Upper Blackfoot Valley Historical Society, said that when she grew up in Lincoln, the businesses all worked together. It was about survival of the community not the individual. There were two grocery stores. Now everything revolves around the bars. Many of the people in town don't patronize local businesses; 80% of the town has never walked through her doors. Shopping out of town has had a big negative impact on the community, it has a snowball effect. The good news is that ten years ago there were 19 vacant businesses, and there are less now.

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She continued that in recent years older folks have passed on, and that the torch has not been passed to the next generation. This has resulted in the disjointed culture that exists in parts of the community.

Mary Henry, a semi-retired area resident stated, *“Lincoln is going to change, and that’s ok.”* Mary would like support a new business on her open lot in town, like a sporting goods store but she said, *“I don’t want a business, that come winter, goes tits up.”*

Karyn Good with Envision Lincoln, said that Envision Lincoln was originally called the Base Camp Group. It started because Lincoln was losing businesses, families, students, and traffic was only stopping in town to get fuel and keep going. How do we get families to come and stay, and get traffic to stop and spend money? She said that we need to connect Lincoln to the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) community. The

“How do we capitalize on what we have without ruining it?”

- Karyn Good, Envision Lincoln

CDT is very interested in building a stronger relationship with Lincoln as a destination for CDT through hikers and users. There may be CDT funds available and/or the ability to leverage CDT resources/network in marketing efforts. It was the Trust for Public Lands facilitated a public engagement process that led to the creation of Envision Lincoln, which may be an avenue for funding again.

Ellie Bernard, a student with the MSU School of Architecture and Community Design Center, said that they could work with the existing community logos as part of their design proposal. She also stated that in their research that *COMMUNITY* really stood out as an important characteristic of Lincoln. She also stated that the slogan *“Experience Our Montana”* really resonates. Roger stated that the Teepee Burner logo for the sculpture park could be a good, iconic symbol for the town, much like the Helena Fire Tower.

Ellie also said that Sculpture in the Wild (SITW) really stands out as a unique attribute to the community. Dustin state that he would like to see sculptures in the downtown area that connect SITW to town. Perhaps one big sculpture in town near a tourism center/community hub that would provide a photo op, as well as some smaller sculptures throughout the walkable areas. Ellie stated that MSU would work to build material pallets in their design to create a cohesive feel throughout the community.

Karyn stressed that we can’t forget about the sizable and very talented art community in Lincoln. Mary stated that this conversation is so wonderful and she likes what she is hearing. She said that the campground could be a place for signage or sculpture. Karyn noted that SITW is expanding into USFS land and will be adding another loop. That may create an opportunity to connect SITW to town with a trail as the park will be that much closer. Chamber President, Laurie Welty, said that trail connectivity is an objective of the community, but there are funding and right of way obstacles to overcome.

Roger noted that the community is concerned that nothing will come of this process and that we need to deliver some results early in order to remain in good favor and build momentum. Karyn said that wayfinding is a good low hanging fruit to get done.

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The group reviewed community events and generated a partial list of those that came to mind. It was clear that the community needs to organize a calendar and work with organizations and the business community to better capitalize on these events.

- *MEMORIAL DAY ATV RUN*
- *OPTIMIST SCAVENGER HUNT*
- *LINCOLN ARTS FESTIVAL*
- *CDT GATEWAY CELEBRATION*
- *RACE TO THE SKY*
- *FOURTH OF JULY*
- *LINCOLN RODEO*
- *SNOWMOBILER DAV RUN*
- *VINTAGE RUN*
- *SCULPTURE IN THE WILD EVENT*
- *AND MORE.*

Comments made regarding the identity of Lincoln included:

- *“We need to focus on what makes Lincoln, Lincoln. And that is never going to go away.”*
 - Karyn Good, Envision Lincoln
- *“Lincoln is Montana’s backyard.”*
 - Roger Dey, Blackfoot Valley Dispatch
- *“Experience Our Montana.”*
 - Ellie Bernard, MSU Student

It is clear from this focus group that no member of the community wants to lose the quintessential characteristics that make Lincoln what it is today. There is an understanding that Lincoln is changing. With that change comes opportunity. The community holds their future in their own hands, and the opportunity to shape that future is dwindling. This master planning process can serve as the catalyst to community organization, reinvigoration, pride, and identity. But these items are not created in the publishing of a single document, or five. They are built overtime by the hands of the community working side by side.

Community Organization Focus Group

Survey results showed a strong emphasis on community. It is highly valued by area residents and community support for projects is critical to attracting volunteers, garnering resources, and project completion. Lincoln is home to a number of volunteer organizations that center around area activities, service-based organizations, business, or segments of the population (youth, elderly, etc.). What is lacking is an umbrella organization that represents all segments of the community.

The group noted that many of the volunteer groups and organizations have the same shortcomings and face the same challenges. Volunteer burnout, fundraising, & board membership being a few. A

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community organization could provide support to these entities and streamline some processes like permitting events and community outreach. In order to better understand what type of community organization would best serve Lincoln, the group discussed what the organization might look like.

Characteristics

- Represents both residents and business
- Not dictatorial in nature
- Neutral Organization, has no agenda, just a facilitator for all.
- No assumptions about or from the groups make-up; creates a level playing field/safe place to have a substantive conversation.
- Would be a focal point/liaison for all community organizations
- Board development is very important to the entity's success. Needs to be community minded, not just business focused, or school focused, or arts focus, but all inclusive.
- Use the Master Plan findings to solidify local opinion and sentiment into the foundation mission statement, objectives, and bylaws. That way the community knows that they can trust in the intent and actions of the organization.

Roles

- To reduce the competition for resources amongst other organizations.
 - Avoid donation exhaustion by limiting the number of donation solicitations.
- Centralized community information distributor. The conduit for community notices.
- NOT AN EVENT COORDINATOR.
 - Leave that up to the individual organizations. The entity can help coordinate logistics that go along with any event, (Permits, public notices, funding, etc.) and build in administrative processes to increase efficiency.
- Feeds the Community Hub information or is the Community Hub.
- Helps all other organizations execute their objectives.
 - Make a list of community organizations and identify common challenges like fundraising, community outreach, volunteer signups, etc. and then figure out how the community organization can ease those pains.
- Figure out how this new entity could ease the burden of, take over, or consolidate responsibilities of other organizations like the Community Council, Chamber of Commerce and/or even trim down on the number of organizations to keep things streamlined and less confusing for the public.
- Fund raiser, program applicant, legal entity, grant writing entity
 - Lincoln needs a good grant writer. Dustin stated that they can use the county or Heart of the Rockies. Or the community organization could find a local resident, pay for that person to take grant writing courses, and contract with them as needed.
- Entity that can provide grants and matching funds.
- Coordination of Master Plan implementation, community lead prioritization of projects.

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Structure

- Needs to be the right legal structure so that it can apply for grants and programs, conduct fund raising and deploy the capital, etc.
- A Community Foundation was the most discussed.
 - Lincoln currently has a Community Foundation which is administered by the Helena Community Foundation and currently has about a \$50k endowment in the fund and a small amount of working interest.
 - Need to have some foundation startup money.
 - LOR Foundation previously funded the Matt King building work and the Envision Lincoln effort. This may be a good starting point for the foundation.
 - Anne Pichette with Montana Business Assistance Connection asked if Lincoln's community foundation has a Montana Community Foundation (MCF) account.
 - Roger stated that he believes that it does. Lincoln has had previous discussions with MCF and they suggested setting up an interim board to get things set up so they can apply for seed money, grants, and take donations.
 - Karyn Good with Envision Lincoln stated that Seely Lake Community Foundation is worth talking to, to find out how they became so successful. They started with only \$250.
 - Endowments to the community foundation need to be marketed. There is an elderly population in the area that would be likely to leave something to the foundation when they pass. The foundation needs to have a good way to honor donors and build upon their legacy within the community.
- Goal would be to have one or two FTE.
- Can be part of the physical community / tourism hub discussed in the previous focus groups.
 - E.g. Matt King Building
 - Matt King building is barely roughed in and needs funding to have more work done to it; currently no budget. Could possibly raise funds and use them as a match to grant funding like historic preservation, Main Street Montana Program, etc. The county can write the grant. The Historical Society owns the lot and the building.
 - This building may also be part of a for profit commercial space like a brewery or fly shop in order to help pay for expenses.

The community of Lincoln has a number of good resources at its fingertips. The retirement population is considerable, and provides a strong human resource with professional capability. This population segment also holds a certain level of dispensable income, and many have a desire to see positive change in Lincoln. Younger generations are family oriented and may not have the same level of flexibility in their household budgets but can provide a very capable labor force to aid in developing community projects. These resources are currently spread thin across a number of different interests.

A central community organization as described above by the focus group would help to build a greater degree of consensus amongst area residents by serving as a community hub, and central point and conduit of information. The organization can also serve as an administrative body that will alleviate some of the burden on existing nonprofit organizations through communications, fundraising,

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permitting, and attracting volunteers. The legal structure of the organization is very important as the body would likely want to be able to apply for various grants & loans, conduct fundraising, disperse capital, and own real and personal property.

Community Needs and Economic Development Focus Group

This focus group discussed what needs and opportunities lie before the community. Economic development in the Lincoln area has most been spurred on by private individuals taking on the entrepreneurial endeavor themselves. However, the community has signified that there are a number of amenities that they would support with local dollars if they were developed. As community improvements come into place, these opportunities may become more attractive to individual or community investment.

The Haas family represents one of the community's most recent entrepreneurial investments. Joe and Tammy Haas bought Bushwackers restaurant in Lincoln and began revamping the property and business model in 2022. Tammy stated that they don't want to do anything that already exists in the business community. They will be family focused and hope that they can provide a place for folks to gather and have good conversations.

They moved here from Ennis to be a part of a small town, as Ennis has lost that feel. They understand how important community is in a small town like Lincoln. They don't want to bring change here, but to become a part of what Lincoln is today. Members of the focus group voiced their support for the Haas family and their approach to bringing Bushwackers back to the community.

The group then discussed what economic development / business entities would be good for the area:

- *BREWERY*
 - A brewery that is family friendly and has a drink limit, activities for kids, and an outdoor area. Breweries can add to the town identity, marketing and branding.
- *LAUNDROMAT*
- *GROCERY STORE (A SECOND)*
- *COFFEE SHOP/BAKERY WITH MEETING ROOM*
- *RECREATIONAL RENTALS*

The conversation then shifted toward community needs. These needs can be less tangible than economic development, or business startups. This makes community needs harder to articulate; however, the group discussion did provide some insights. Karyn Good with Envision Lincoln talked about how Sculpture in the Wild has been a great success for the community, and has served the community by embracing a strong artist residency in the area. It had sceptics when it was proposed, but then the community came out in volume to support it. The project was successful in this regard as it was well organized, had a good visionary leading the charge, and it was communicated well to the area residents.

The group then discussed why some community led efforts have succeeded while others have failed. The group stated that the rumor mill is strong in Lincoln, and hinders community health and

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development. These opinions and assumptions are circulated throughout the community, whether they are founded in truth or not, and often led to a lack of support, involvement, and volunteerism from by community members. The group agreed that it takes a visionary with passion, drive, and a skillset to carry something through in Lincoln.

Events can be a strong catalyst to commerce and economic development. Lincoln hosts many events through the year. Some events have experienced greater attendance, success, and deliver greater economic impact than others. The success rate of these events can be tied to the community's willingness to come together and support it. Skijoring lived and died in short order in Lincoln due to volunteer burnout. The weight of organizing the event was put on the Chamber of Commerce, as many events default to, and resources and member support waned for this event.

Events can provide a strong economic boost if organized correctly and members of the community have voiced through the survey and these focus groups, an appetite to organize more community events. This opinion has gone as far to suggest building a community recreation center that could host basketball tournaments and other activities. These types of facilities can bring communities together in a manner that focuses on family and health. Developing these types of facilities is costly, and any developments of this nature need to be multipurposed and dual seasoned in order to justify the investment.

The group then shifted the conversation toward safety and spoke to the dangerous situations and possible solutions surrounding the highway corridor. They state that people drive down the shoulder like it is a two-lane road, that there is no visibility at Spring Creek Lane, and truck parking on the highway is a problem. Roger Dey, with Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, stated that it does not feel safe walking the shoulder. Especially when big rigs park there and you have to walk around them, you are practically in the HWY. It would be great if there was some kind of barrier to create protection. Even just a split rail fence.

Smaller vehicle parking along the highway corridor is a problem as well. The group agreed that the grocery store is the worst parking in town. There is a lot behind the store that could be made into a commercial parking lot. Parking at the Wheel Inn can create a hazardous situation; they have room behind their store as well. Creating designated parallel or angled parking solutions could provide some clarity and safety along the highway corridor.

The highway corridor in Lincoln is a multi-user zone. Pedestrians, cyclists, OHVs, snowmobiles, vehicles, and semitrucks all make use of the roadway and shoulder in various ways. Developing systems to guide users to designated pathways and spaces will help to ensure safety and efficient use of available property. It is good to remember that walkable spaces/corridors do not have to be on both sides of the street or straight. They can meander through town. Safe Routes to Schools is a program through the state Office of Public Instruction that can help fund things like crosswalks, bike paths, and walkways.