

Downtown Red Lodge

Assessment & Action Plan



April 2006

Prepared by
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Introduction

Background

During the summer of 2005, the Beartooth All-American Road from Red Lodge to Cooke City was closed due to landslides just prior to the start of the summer tourist season. Red Lodge attracts many visitors that travel the highway on their way to and from Yellowstone National Park. Due to the closure, there was a significant decrease in business sales in 2005. The City received a grant from the Economic Development Administration to off-set this impact by developing strategies to diversify the economy and increase business in the off-peak seasons. Diversifying the economy would provide a year-round economic base and higher paying jobs for Red Lodge residents.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this Red Lodge Downtown Assessment and Action Plan is to further efforts to revitalize and diversify the economy of Red Lodge, focusing particularly on the Downtown district as the community's commercial, social and civic center. The Action Plan is designed to build upon previous planning efforts, such as the 1986 Revitalization Master Plan and 2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This document focuses specifically on next steps for the commercial corridor along Broadway, Oakes/Hauser and Platt Avenues and their cross streets.

During the Assessment portion of the project, the consulting team investigated Downtown's strengths, challenges and opportunities, including its mix of businesses, land uses, and sales trends. Based on community priorities and input, the Action Plan identifies a vision for Downtown, goals, and opportunities for both short and long term action, including priorities, timeline, responsibility and potential resources for Downtown development. Finally, the Assessment process determined the suitability and readiness of Red Lodge for the Montana Main Street program.

Timeline and Methodology

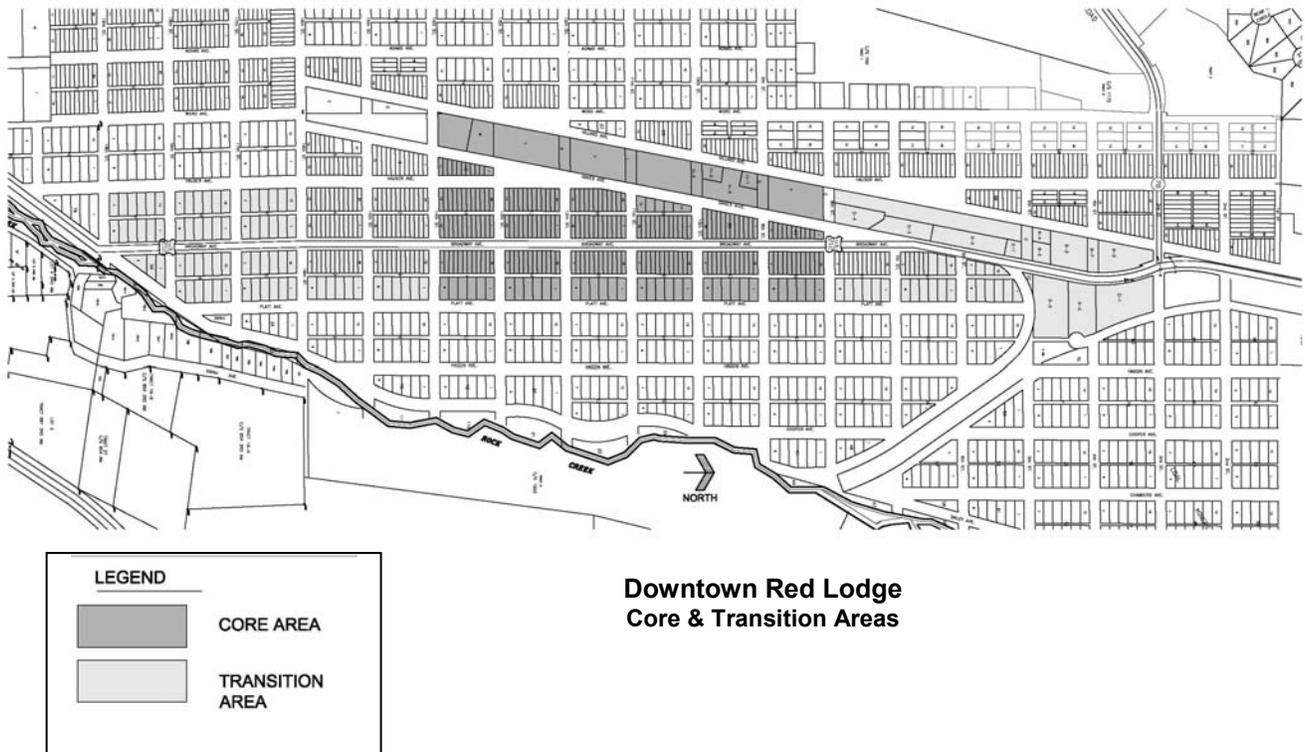
The Red Lodge Downtown Assessment and Action Plan project began with information-gathering and research in January 2006. Then an on-the-ground assessment and public workshop were conducted in early February 2006. The workshop included a presentation of consultant findings and observations, along with insights from workshop participants and a prioritization process in small group breakout sessions. As a result of the assessment and workshop, a draft Assessment and Action Plan document was developed in February-March 2006 for public review and comment. The final Assessment and Action Plan document was completed in April 2006, with implementation of the Action Plan beginning immediately.

Description of the Red Lodge Downtown District

The boundaries of "Downtown Red Lodge" are defined for the purposes of this Assessment and Action Plan document as a "Core" business area, which includes the designated Historic District, and a "Transition" area. The Transition area is slightly different in character than the Core area, but economically connected as part of the overall commercial district of Downtown Red Lodge. The boundaries and distinctive characteristics are the following (see map, next page):

Core Business Area: Broadway Avenue, Platt Avenue, and Oakes/Hauser Avenue from 8th Street to 14th Street, plus the cross streets from Platt to Oakes/Hauser. The Core area is characterized by historic buildings along Broadway and the cross streets, with zero lot lines, mid-block alleys and on-street parking. The Historic District is encompassed by the Core area, but leaves out one half block along Broadway from 13th to 14th, and includes only properties on the east side of Oakes/Hauser from 8th to 10th, and 12th halfway to 13th, and four lots on the west side of Platt north and south of 11th Street.

Transition Area: Broadway Avenue from 3rd Street (Chamber Visitor Center at the “Y” of Highways 212 and 78) to 8th Street, and from 14th Street to 19th Street. The Transition area is characterized by mixed uses, including light industrial, retail, residential, middle school, etc., and building set-backs with off-street parking.



Downtown Red Lodge Development-related Milestones

Since 1983, when the Core area of Downtown Red Lodge was designated as an Historic District, there have been several key milestones in its development, and some key milestones are yet to come:

- 1983: Historic District designated (boundaries amended 1984 and 1986)
- 1986: Revitalization Master Plan completed
- 1995: Growth Policy adopted (amended 2001)
- 1997: New Development Code (zoning ordinance) adopted
- 2004: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) adopted
- 2005: Zoning ordinance proposed that the Planning Board serve as the Design Review Board
- 2005: Beartooth Highway closed, creating significant negative impact on Red Lodge economy
- 2006: Downtown Assessment & Action Plan completed; Red Lodge selected for Montana Main Street
- 2010: Highway 78 project scheduled by Montana Dept. of Transportation (MDT)
- Beyond 2010: MDT reconstruction of Highway 212 planned

In early 2006, Red Lodge was selected to become a pilot community in the first year of Montana’s new Main Street program, which is an affiliate of the National Main Street Center. The program is designed to assist with the economic and historic revitalization of traditional downtown districts. The next section provides background about both the National and Montana Main Street programs.

Main Street Program and Four Point Approach

Downtown Red Lodge is the heart of community, with millions of dollars worth of infrastructure, and collectively, it is the largest contributor of business sales and jobs to the community. Red Lodge initiated a Main Street program to further its economic diversification and revitalization efforts. “The Main Street Program is a national movement led by the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center. The program includes nearly 2,000 community programs across the country which collectively have produced an investment in traditional commercial districts of more than \$10 billion, and spurred the rehabilitation of countless historic structures, while providing space for tens of thousands of new businesses and creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs for local citizens.”¹

Four Point Approach



The Main Street program uses an integrated, strategic Four Point Approach to Downtown revitalization: Organization, Design, Economic Restructuring and Promotion. It is an incremental, grass-roots driven effort based on local community priorities and investment. It is based on the principal that effective Downtown revitalization doesn’t “just happen” – it requires focused energy and strategic decisions based on sound market analysis and community values. Typical Main Street program activities are business retention, recruitment, promotion, safety, maintenance, and planning. The four components of the Main Street program are outlined below (information is from the Main Street Committee Members Handbook):

Organization means getting everyone working toward the same goal. The tough work of building consensus and cooperation among the groups that have an important stake in the district can be eased by using the common-sense formula of a volunteer-driven program and an organizational structure of board and committees.

Promotion means selling the image and promise of Main Street to all prospects. By marketing the district’s unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses and visitors, an effective promotion strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers.

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets – such as historic buildings and traditional downtown layout – is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere created through window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, street lights, public spaces, and landscaping conveys a visual message about what Main Street is and what it has to offer.

Economic Restructuring means enhancing the economic viability of Main Street’s enterprises by helping existing downtown businesses to expand and recruiting new ones to respond to today’s market. Main Street programs help convert unused or underutilized space into productive property and sharpen the competitiveness of business enterprises.

Montana Main Street Program

“In 2005, the 59th Montana Legislature approved legislation to establish the Montana Main Street Program. The purpose of the program is to assist Montana communities with revitalization of their

¹ The Main Street Board Member’s Handbook, National Trust, 2nd Edition
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historic downtown districts. Administered by the Montana Department of Commerce, the Montana Main Street program is modeled after the successful nationwide downtown revitalization program of the National Trust Main Street Center. The Main Street Four-Point Approach is a common sense, community driven approach, having a primary function of providing technical expertise that is necessary to establish and strengthen revitalization projects and address specific redevelopment issues.

In April 2006 six communities, including Red Lodge, were selected to participate in the Montana Main Street program. These communities benefit from specific expertise tailored to fit their community redevelopment needs. At the same time, general assistance is available to communities statewide that are undertaking revitalization efforts. The program provides hands-on assistance; and serves as a full-time advocate and development resource to communities. It promotes a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and rebuilding of historic commercial districts.”²

Year One Montana Main Street

In the first year of the Montana Main Street program, participating communities will receive the following services:

- ◆ Reconnaissance Visit – Guidance on structuring an effective downtown revitalization program, hiring local staff and publicizing the program; establishment of a short-term organization work plan.
- ◆ Main Street Basic Training – Intensive training for local staff and volunteers in the Four Points of Main Street participants learn roles and responsibilities and action steps and develop project ideas. (4 sessions – 1 for each committee)
- ◆ Local Staff Orientation – Training for local staff in Main Street program management.
- ◆ Vision Development – Facilitation of a community driven consensus vision of what the downtown should be physically, economically, and socially, for developing annual projects and activities.
- ◆ Work plan Development – Facilitation of an annual planning session to identify goals, objectives, and specific projects for each Main Street committee.
- ◆ Resource Team – a community-specific interdisciplinary consultant team that assesses downtown issues and opportunities, and develops short and long term recommendations for local program.
- ◆ Annual Program Evaluation – Review of local program accomplishments and recommendations to improve operations and projects.
- ◆ Main Street Quarterly Training

Year Two Montana Main Street

- ◆ In the second year of the program, communities will receive the following services:
- ◆ Work plan Development
- ◆ Main Street Quarterly Training
- ◆ Issue-Specific Technical Assistance – Specialized on-site consulting and strategy development for specific issues, such as streetscape, merchandising, upper floor development, etc.
- ◆ Annual Program Evaluation.

At the time of this writing, the new Montana Main Street program was funded for two years, with the expectation that the 2007 legislature will support the program for another Biennium.

Organization of This Assessment & Action Plan Document

This Red Lodge Downtown Assessment and Action Plan is organized according to Main Street Four Point Approach topics (Economic Restructuring, Design, Promotion and Organization), so that actions can be directly incorporated into Red Lodge Main Street program committees for implementation.

² Montana Main Street Program Application Guidelines
Downtown Red Lodge Assessment & Action Plan

Downtown Red Lodge Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

Downtown Red Lodge has tremendous assets and extraordinary historic character. The assessment of its strengths, challenges and opportunities focused on ways to improve the economic vitality of the district and to diversify the economy of Red Lodge. The results of the assessment are outlined below and on the following pages, according to the Main Street program categories: Economic Restructuring, Design, Promotion, and Organization. The sources of information are interviews with the Red Lodge City leaders and staff, Economic Development Council, Chamber, businesses, and citizens who participated in the public workshop, along with findings of the consulting team.

Economic Restructuring

“Economic Restructuring strengthens the commercial district’s existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding existing businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, by converting unused or underutilized space into productive property, and by sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of community business people.” (Montana Main Street)

STRENGTHS

The strengths of Downtown Red Lodge related to Economic Restructuring, as identified by Red Lodge citizens, business owners and members of the consulting team, are the following:

Business Density and Variety

Downtown Red Lodge has a compact business district with very few ground floor vacant storefronts. There are 103 businesses in the Core area, plus five civic facilities and four nonprofit facilities. In the Transition area, there are 35 businesses, four nonprofit facilities and three civic facilities (see Business Inventory, below and next page). There is a dynamic mix of businesses ranging from retail to professional and personal services, dining, civic uses, and even specialty manufacturing. This density and variety of businesses gives the downtown a vitality that is often lacking in small towns. The quantity of businesses in a small area makes the downtown pedestrian-friendly and easy to navigate. Red Lodge residents expressed a desire to maintain the district’s unique character and local ownership by avoiding development of chain restaurants and casinos in the downtown area.

2006 Red Lodge Business Inventory: CORE Downtown Area

Retail Goods (37)

- 6 Gift/Beauty/Novelty
- 6 Furniture/Furnishing/Décor
- 5 Art Galleries/Museums
- 3 Bakery/Candy
- 3 Antique/Used Merchandise
- 3 Florists
- 3 Apparel/Accessories
- 2 Book/Periodical/Music
- 2 Jewelry/Toy
- 1 Electronics
- 1 Mail Order/Catalogue
- 1 Pharmacy
- 1 Sporting Goods

Dining/Beverage (16)

- 11 Restaurants/Coffee Shops
- 5 Drinking Establishments

Lodging Accommodations (1)

- 1 Hotel

Professional/Business Services (27)

- 8 Real Estate
- 4 Attorneys/Law
- 3 Insurance/Title Insurance
- 3 Bank/Mortgage/Credit Union/Investment
- 2 Geographic consultant/Graphic design
- 2 Map drafting
- 2 Photocopy/Duplicating/Printing
- 1 Electric supplier
- 1 Media (newspaper/radio/cable TV)
- 1 Social Service

Auto Sales/Services/Supplies (5)

- 2 Automobile Dealers
- 2 Motorcycle Dealers
- 1 Gas Station

Medical / Health-Related Services (5)

- 2 Health Spa/Massage
- 2 Dentist/Optometrists
- 1 Medical Clinic

Personal Services (9)

- 5 Beauty/Barber
- 2 Photography/Dance Studio
- 1 Clay Center
- 1 Funeral Services

Government (5)

- 4 City/County Offices
- 1 Public Park

Non Profit (4)

- 1 Food Bank
- 1 Fraternal Organization
- 1 Rodeo Association
- 1 Church

Entertainment (2)

- 2 Movie Theater, Casino

Manufacturing (1)

- 1 Apparel

2006 Red Lodge Business Inventory: TRANSITION Downtown Area

Lodging Accommodations (9)

- 6 Hotel/Motel/Resort/Condo
- 3 Bed & Breakfast

Dining/Beverage (4)

- 3 Restaurants, Coffee Kiosk
- 1 Drinking Establishment

Professional/Business Services (7)

- 2 Bank/Mortgage/Credit Union
- 3 Real Estate/Land Investment
- 1 Insurance/Title Insurance
- 1 Commercial printer

Personal Services (3)

- 2 Beauty/Barber, Pet Groomer
- 1 Wedding Chapel

Retail Goods (4)

- 1 Farm/Ranch
- 1 Hardware
- 1 Grocery
- 1 Quilt/Fabric

Medical/Health-Related Services (2)

- 1 Chiropractor
- 1 Massage Therapist

Auto Sales/Services/Supplies (2)

- 1 Automobile Dealer
- 1 Automobile Repair

Construction (1)

- 1 Special Trade: Heating/Air

Entertainment (2)

- 1 Casino
- 1 Video Rental

Recreation (1)

- 1 Outfitter/guide

Government (3)

- 1 City Pool
- 1 City Library
- 1 School

Nonprofit (4)

- 1 Arts Guild
- 1 Church
- 1 Children's Center
- 1 Chamber/Visitor Center

Population Growth

The population of Red Lodge and surrounding Carbon County has been increasing steadily for the last 15 years. From 1990 to 2000, the growth rate in the county exceeded that of the city, but the trend reversed from 2000 to 2004 (see table below). A growing population provides a customer base to support local businesses. The demographic of the population that is moving to Red Lodge is generally attractive to retailers and includes a more mature, affluent, and educated market than the state average. Underdeveloped areas near downtown Red Lodge may provide opportunities for medium density residential development (affordable housing, townhouses, etc.), which would provide a larger customer base for downtown. However, with growth comes pressure for commercial sprawl. In order to stabilize and enhance downtown Red Lodge, infill development and redevelopment of the transition areas should be encouraged as a priority.

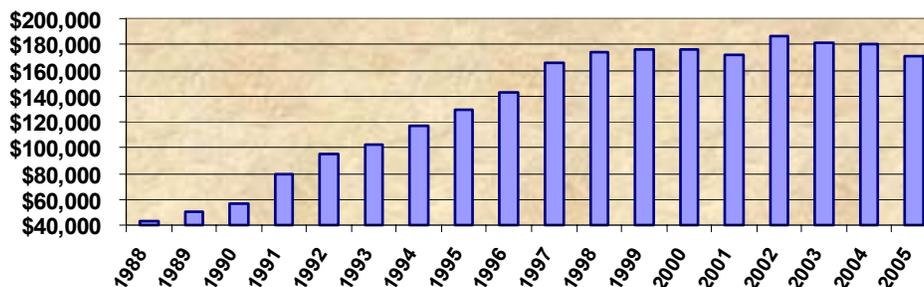
Population Growth (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)				
	1990-2000	2000-2004	2000 Pop'n	2004 Pop'n
Red Lodge	11%	7%	2,177	2,328
Carbon County	18%	2%	9,552	9,755
Montana	13%	3%	902,195	926,865

Tourism

Tourism, especially in the summer, has a major economic impact on Red Lodge and Carbon County, and is a strong draw for businesses to locate to Red Lodge. County lodging sales increased steadily from 1990 to 2000, then dropped in 2001 (after 9/11), rose again in 2002, then declined through 2005 (see chart below). Recent declines were partially due to poor snow conditions for skiing and the Beartooth Highway closure. Tourist dollars are needed to support the businesses in Red Lodge: when all 600+ local lodging units are booked (motels, B&Bs, vacation rentals, RV parks), Red Lodge has a population increase of 1,200 to 1,800 people, plus the guests at nine nearby campgrounds, and those staying with family and friends

Carbon County Lodging Tax Collections, 1988-2005

Source: Montana Dept. of Revenue



High Amenity Community

Red Lodge is a high amenity community that has the potential to attract “lone eagles” and other professional services. Quality of life factors such as access to outstanding recreational opportunities, small town appeal, and scenic vistas all contribute to the appeal of the community. Additionally, the proximity to Billings provides convenient access to air travel and business services, and increases opportunities for professionals to conduct business with national and international markets.

Previous Planning Efforts

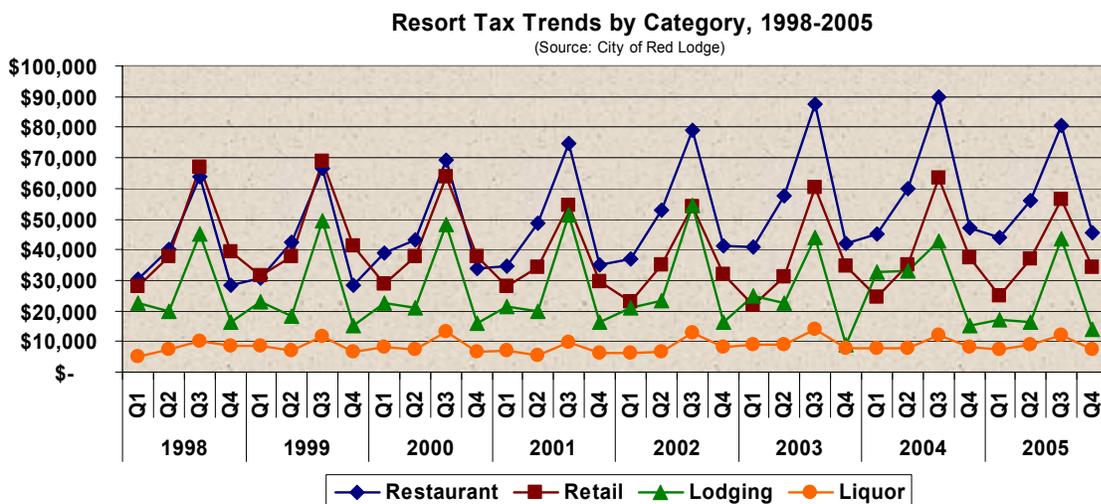
The City recently completed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that provides a framework for diversifying the economy. As a result of this planning process, the Economic Development Corporation has hired staff that can help implement the strategies. It will be important to coordinate the downtown planning effort with this overall economic development framework.

CHALLENGES

Challenges for Downtown Red Lodge related to Economic Restructuring, as identified by Red Lodge citizens, business owners and members of the consulting team, are the following:

Low Sales Volumes in Off-Peak Seasons

The economy of Red Lodge relies heavily on tourism. The summer months (especially 3rd quarter) are the peak season for retailers, lodging properties, and restaurants/bars. The chart below reflects annual trends and seasonality of business sales from 1998 to 2005 based on Red Lodge resort tax collections. Winter tourism is highly dependent on snowfall for skiing and represents a much smaller sales volume for local businesses. There is a dramatic reduction in business during the fall and spring off-peak seasons, meaning that tourism-dependent businesses have a short window of opportunity in summer to generate revenue that will sustain them through the entire year.



Peak Season Vulnerability

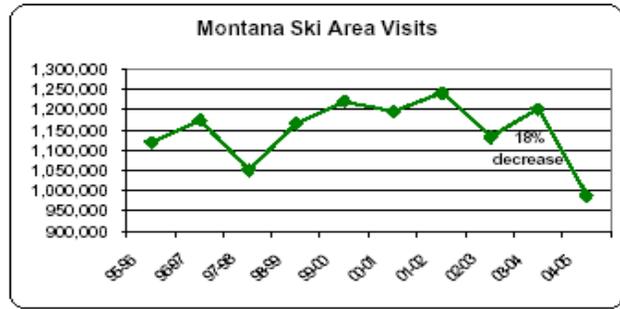
Even the stronger peak seasons are vulnerable to unpredictable events such as the Beartooth Highway closure, weather conditions, and rising fuel prices. The chart on the next page shows the the degree to which skier visits fluctuate based on snow conditions. Statewide, skier visits declined 18% in the 2004-05 season compared to the 2003-04 season, affecting business sales in many other sectors.

In 2005 when the Beartooth Highway was closed, retail sales in Red Lodge declined 5% from the previous year (-11% for the 3rd quarter, Jul-Sept). Dining sales declined only 6% and liquor sales were

stable, likely due in part to highway construction workers staying in Red Lodge. The Pollard Hotel, an historic hotel with dining in downtown Red Lodge, was closed from late February to late May 2005 due to a management change.

Lack of Meeting Facilities

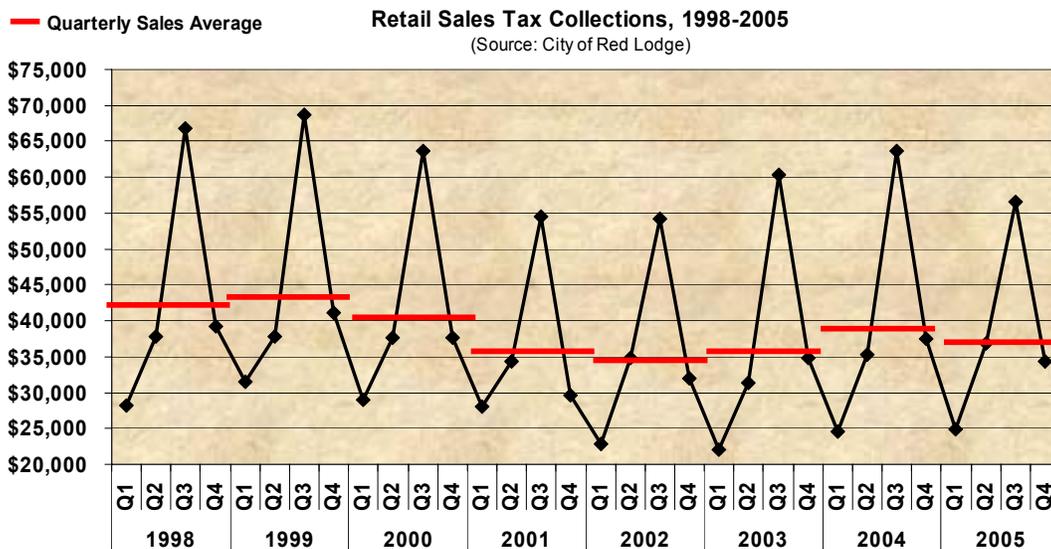
The lack of a large meeting space in downtown Red Lodge diminishes opportunities to bring some conferences, associations or other groups to Red Lodge year-round. However, the Pollard Hotel and Bridge Creek Restaurant have meeting space for groups of 50-75, along with the Pizza Company. The museum currently is planning a third-floor meeting space and ballroom which could accommodate 250+ people, and it is located close to several lodging properties. The Theatorium and Civic Center are other potential locations for meetings and events, but significant renovations would be required. Five miles south of Red Lodge, the Rock Creek Resort offers conference space for 300+. The resort has on-site dining, beverage, retail and recreation facilities, so guests often do not visit downtown Red Lodge, although the resort does have a significant economic benefit to Red Lodge because it purchases local goods and services, and its employees spend money in downtown Red Lodge.



Source: USDA Forest Service, Big Sky, Great Divide

Retail Leakage

The term “retail leakage” refers to dollars that could be spent in a community by residents or visitors, but are “leaked” out of town to other places. While the proximity to Billings may be an advantage in attracting visitors and businesses to Red Lodge, the large retail outlets in Billings provide competition to local businesses. In 2002, the estimated retail leakage from Carbon County was \$57.7 million (based on average potential sales per capita versus actual sales from state data). That figure was up from \$49.0 million in 1997. Retail businesses in Red Lodge would see increased profits if some of the \$50+ million in lost sales were recaptured. Retail sales also are extremely seasonal, reflecting the influence of tourist spending (see chart below). A Wal-Mart is scheduled to open in Laurel, approximately 50 miles north of Red Lodge. This will create added competition for resident dollars. It is difficult for small retail businesses to match the prices of big box stores due to economies of scale. However, relocation of the hospital and redevelopment of the north end transition zone, with better bike/pedestrian connections to downtown, could help improve the north entrance to Red Lodge and entice more shoppers downtown.



Inconsistent Customer Service

One way for Red Lodge businesses to compete with big box and chain stores is through outstanding customer service. This includes consistent and customer-friendly business hours (nationally, 50% of all retail sales are made after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends). Downtown Red Lodge businesses currently do not have consistent, coordinated business hours, and most businesses are closed during key shopping hours for residents and tourists (after work and on weekends). Most downtown Red Lodge businesses do not even display their business hours to alert potential customers when the store will be open. Another customer service tool, particularly for hotels and cafes, is free wireless Internet access. A few businesses in Red Lodge now offer free Internet “hot spots.”

Lack of Affordable Housing

Tourism jobs in Red Lodge typically pay low wages, so affordable housing is an issue in recruiting and retaining a work force. Exacerbating this condition is the fact that vacation rentals currently are allowed in all residential areas. These homes converted to overnight rentals can compete with lodging facilities, displace the year-round resident population, and create higher housing costs. The City is updating its development code, and considering adjustments that would restrict vacation rentals to designated areas, as Whitefish and other resort communities have done.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Downtown Red Lodge related to Economic Restructuring are as follows:

Specialty Business Niche

Red Lodge’s retail mix is unique and offers specialty products not typically found at big box retailers such as Wal-Mart. Recruitment of additional unique businesses that offer products desired by Red Lodge residents and targeted customer markets will help increase the downtown district’s draw as a destination. The historic character and compactness of downtown are attractive to these specialty businesses and their customers.

Underutilized Properties

There are a number of vacant lots, vacant buildings, and obsolete structures that are located in downtown Red Lodge, especially in the Transition areas immediately north and south of the downtown Core area. These underutilized properties in the transition area offer opportunities for redevelopment for affordable housing, professional services and specialty manufacturing (such as the brewery). Two of the most distinctive properties with redevelopment potential are the Theatorium and Cannery properties. Development of the Theatorium as a convention/meeting and performance facility could result in increased business sales in off-peak seasons. Medium density residential projects in the transition areas could create a resident base adjacent to downtown that would support businesses year round. Increased sales in off-peak seasons would result in higher resort tax collections and provide resources for other priority needs in the community.



Airport Business Park

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy recommended development of a Business Park near the airport as a top priority for job growth and diversification in Red Lodge. The addition of jobs at the business park would provide a stronger year-round resident base to support downtown. The types of businesses targeted for the business park would need different types of space than what is typically available downtown, and therefore would not compete with commercial/professional space downtown.

Housing Initiatives

The Economic Development Corporation recently has undertaken a housing survey to help identify strategies to address affordable housing. A number of agencies in Red Lodge are focused on addressing housing issues, and can be potential partners in implementing these strategies. Development of mixed-use, medium density housing in the Transition areas and along Platt Avenue would provide more opportunities for affordable housing, along with additional development of upper-story housing in downtown buildings.

Design and Infrastructure

“Design takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in a traditional commercial district by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, landscaping, merchandising, displays and promotional materials. Its aim is to stress the importance of design quality in all of these areas, to educate people about design quality, and to expedite commercial district improvements.” (Montana Main Street)

STRENGTHS

Downtown Red Lodge strengths related to Design including the following:

Sense of Place

One of the greatest strengths of Red Lodge is its sense of place. Downtown Red Lodge has a “curb appeal” that is not found in many communities, and makes it very attractive for residents and visitors alike. It also instills a sense of ownership and appreciation in residents who are more likely to take part in community events and volunteer efforts. Maintaining the sense of place is an incentive for residents to take part in enhancement projects that improve the quality of life and physical environment downtown. A sense of place can be created in many ways, including physical setting, cultural amenities or history, well planned downtown and neighborhoods, and a diverse array of activities for residents and visitors. The assessment revealed that a large number of citizens felt strongly that the physical setting, well planned downtown, and opportunities for community gathering at numerous downtown events were critical aspects of its sense of place.

Small Scale

The small scale of Red Lodge is an asset – it allows the resident or visitor to feel comfortable by providing an intimate experience during everyday activities and community events. A quaint mountain town has a great deal of appeal to relocating residents and visitors because it feels friendly and welcoming. Many Red Lodge residents like the absence of stoplights on Broadway Avenue – it reflects a sense of scale and intimacy about the town, representing a “simple” lifestyle and close community.

Culture and the Arts

Culture and the arts are alive in Red Lodge: many residents are currently involved in professional or hobby-style artistic pursuits. Downtown has an increasing number of galleries and stores which feature local and regional artists. In addition, there is a new art workshop, the Red Lodge Clay Center, which provides an interactive art opportunity in the downtown area.

Interactive Streetscape

Downtown Red Lodge is a great place to “be” – to linger and socialize. This makes it very appealing for a pedestrian because walking and biking around town is very easy. Accessing local and downtown amenities is convenient and enjoyable. Downtown is full of vitality during the day. Pedestrians enjoy

shopping, dining, chatting with friends, relaxing on benches provided in front of some businesses, and community events such as parades, farmer's markets, music festivals, and holiday celebrations.

Historic Preservation Successes

A great deal of effort has been made in Red Lodge to preserve and enhance the architectural integrity of the historic structures in the town – a tremendous accomplishment. Often, the process of designing, funding and completing a preservation project is a daunting task. The preservation effort to date has improved the downtown streetscape immeasurably, including façade treatments, architectural treatments that comply with historical preservation guidelines, and updating of building infrastructure such as plumbing and wiring.

CHALLENGES

Challenges for Downtown Red Lodge related to Design include the following:

Unclear Entryways

The town of Red Lodge has a strong sense of “downtown.” However, there is a lack of definition of the entrance into the town and in fact where downtown is in relation to other areas. This lack of “entryway” can cause visitors to miss the forks in the road to downtown, both at the intersection of Highways 212 and 78, and at Broadway and Oakes. With a lack of entryway into town there also is a missed opportunity to create a definitive and visual area for downtown signage.

Inconsistent Design Review

A lack of consistent and thorough design review of development projects has caused confusion with residents, developers and builders. Design review is critical to providing controls on land use patterns, building development standards, and adherence to preservation standards for historic buildings. The City is updating its development code and plans to enhance the design standards and review process.

Lack of Parking Management

Opinions differ among Red Lodge business owners and citizens regarding the parking situation in downtown and its affect on business viability. A quick parking count by the Assessment consulting team estimated that there are more than 700 parking spaces in the Core area (about 36% on-street and 64% off-street). These figures indicate that during most times of the year, parking is adequate for the local residents' use of downtown and adjacent businesses and services. However, during peak visitor seasons, there may be a need for more parking in the Core area of downtown. A complete parking analysis and parking management plan would provide a true picture of the situation and best solutions.

Maintenance for Pedestrian Comfort

Downtown Red Lodge is compact and walk-able, and the buildings and distances between the buildings are human scale. However, some of the sidewalks are in need of replacement, and traffic speeds on Broadway are often too fast, presenting safety problems for pedestrians. For pedestrians and bicyclists, downtown is not well-connected to other local attractions, parks, neighborhoods, and the airport/ fairgrounds complex; however, a trails system plan is in progress to address the connectivity issue.

Insufficient Enforcement

Enforcement of design regulations, sign code, zoning ordinances and other city regulations is lacking in some aspects for the City of Red Lodge. Lack of enforcement is one of the primary reasons for the failure of these documents to be implemented effectively.

Need for Infrastructure and Utility Upgrades

Several of the city wide utilities are either aging or inadequate, and may cause maintenance and/or health issues if not upgraded. Utility conditions also may delay or prevent new development due to capacity issues. A comprehensive infrastructure and utility inventory and improvement plan for future upgrades/expansions is needed to determine projected needs, costs, and funding sources. According to the City Public Works Director, the water main located under Broadway Avenue is undersized for future remodels and/or expansions of use. This main should be upgraded to allow for redevelopment in the downtown area. The sewer mains are believed to be in good condition and of adequate size for current and addition of intensified uses. However, the City's wastewater treatment plant receives a significant amount of infiltration from storm runoff, creating capacity issues, and work needs to be done to upgrade storm drains and separate them from the sewer system to eliminate infiltration. These infrastructure problems must be addressed before any significant amount of new development or redevelopment can take place downtown.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Downtown Red Lodge related to Design include the following:

In addition to maintaining "Strengths," it is important to recognize that there are ways to improve the existing situation by examining the opportunities that exist. Opportunities for Downtown Red Lodge were discussed during the assessment and public meeting sessions in early February 2006.

Architectural Façade Improvements

One of the greatest assets in Red Lodge is the earnest movement by the downtown business and property owners to revitalize building construction and facades through historic preservation programs and assistance. Further revitalization to downtown building facades would enhance the pedestrian experience as well as reface older buildings that have been modified from their original historic grandeur. Modifications of historic building facades detract from some buildings and overall downtown character in Red Lodge. Over the years, many property owners have removed historic elements and replaced them with inappropriate treatments. With the assistance of historic preservation experts, architects, and financial assistance, it is possible to restore these historic buildings. However, it is important to remember that Downtown's authenticity lies in its variety of styles and construction time periods. The goal of historic preservation is not to make every building look alike: a "Disney" version of a Downtown frozen in time is not historically authentic.

Streetscape Improvements

Downtown Red Lodge would benefit from market-driven streetscape enhancements – those designed to serve downtown's target customer markets. The downtown streetscape is a vital and important part of Red Lodge. Enhancing the design and function of the streetscape would make it an even more vital and active town center. Enhancements typically involve pedestrian walkways, pavement patterns to signify intersections or important streetscape features, street trees, benches and other seating, improved signage, lighting, and public plazas or gathering places. These all contribute to attracting pedestrians, as well as providing a relaxed and enjoyable experience downtown.

Public Gathering Space

Many residents who participated in the assessment public workshop were enthusiastic about the opportunity to create a public gathering space downtown, or directly adjacent to downtown. A public gathering space would allow people to relax during their lunch hour, attend farmer's markets, and plan community events with a central meeting location.

Design Review

Design review is one way to enforce zoning regulations, architectural standards and guidelines, and land use policies. A stronger design review process would ensure that future development adhered to these requirements. Design review should be implemented fairly and consistently for all projects that are deemed of a scale or intensity that would require additional inquiry or approvals prior to construction. However, guidelines should be reasonable: the goal is not to create a “Disney” version of Downtown, but to maintain quality and character while allowing for a variety of period adaptations.

Street Lighting

A street lighting program is currently being implemented for Broadway Avenue downtown. This street lighting program will reintroduce a historically appropriate light fixture to the streetscape. The “cobra head” highway-style light fixtures currently in use are out of scale for a historic downtown like Red Lodge and detract from the pedestrian experience.

Entryways

Broadway Avenue is U.S. Highway 212 and is heavily traveled by traffic en route from Billings, the Beartooth Pass, and Wyoming. However, Red Lodge does not have clear entries into the community, and into downtown. Visitors may be confused by the intersection of Highways 212 and 78, and by the fork in the road at Broadway and Oakes Avenues. It is difficult to tell whether Oakes Avenue or Broadway is the “Main Street,” especially at night. Other communities with similar entry issues have installed welcome signs, entry monuments, archways, roundabouts or other features as a way of signaling entry into the downtown and to slow fast moving traffic. MDT is considering a roundabout at the junction of 212 and 78, which provides an ideal opportunity for an entry feature to Red Lodge, such as a sign, sculpture, landscaping, or a combination of features. Entryways on Highway 78 and 308 also should be attractive and provide clear signage to direct visitors to the downtown district. Highways 212, 78 and 308 all are scheduled for reconstruction in the foreseeable future, so it is critical to coordinate the planning and construction with the needs of downtown Red Lodge.

Promotion

“Promotion takes many forms, but the aim is to create a positive image of the commercial district in order to rekindle community pride. Promotion seeks to improve retail sales events and festivals and to create a positive public image of the downtown in order to attract investors, developers and new businesses.” (Montana Main Street)

STRENGTHS

Strengths of Downtown Red Lodge related to Promotion include the following:

Number of Downtown Specialty Retailers and Professionals

Downtown Red Lodge has a strong critical mass of businesses, with a variety of specialty retailers, service businesses and professionals, to implement effective promotion and business recruitment efforts based on the Main Street model. Effective promotions require cooperation among business owners, well-defined target markets based on a thorough market analysis, strategic decisions regarding promotion strategies, and investment of volunteer efforts and money over time to convey a clear image and message about downtown to priority markets.

Established Events

Red Lodge has a number of strong events year-round that draw people to Downtown Red Lodge, such as the Home of Champions Parade and Rodeo, Festival of Nations, Beartooth Run, Red Lodge Music Festival, Iron Horse Rodeo, Art Event in the Rockies, St. Patrick's Day Celebration, Fun Run, Fat Tire Frenzy, Ski Joring, and others.

Existing Promotion Efforts and Web Site

The Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce and Merchants Committee actively promote the community and downtown district. Additionally, a local business hosts a highly effective commercial web site, www.redlodge.com, that promotes the community and local businesses and includes online retail sales.

Attractive Community and Surrounding Area

Red Lodge is an attractive community located in an extraordinary mountain setting, with abundant outdoor recreation attractions (skiing, golf, Beartooth Highway, hiking, biking, bird watching, flying, etc.). Its proximity to Billings and to Yellowstone National Park is an advantage for tourism and business development. It is a beautiful place, with a charming historic downtown district, but it also competes with numerous other quaint mountain resort towns throughout the Rocky Mountain west.

Funding and Partnerships for Red Lodge Promotion

Due to the Beartooth Highway closure in 2005, Red Lodge received some federal grant funds to use for advertising and promotion activities. These funds provide seed money to develop a clear, market-driven image and message for Red Lodge, and to build momentum as economic development efforts continue. Additionally, Red Lodge has established partnerships with tourism organizations such as the Yellowstone Country regional tourism association, Travel Montana, and the Friends of the Beartooth Highway. These relationships are important to enhancing Red Lodge promotion efforts through regional cooperation.

CHALLENGES

Challenges for Downtown Red Lodge related to Promotion include the following:

Inconsistent Marketing Messages

In past years, Red Lodge promotion efforts have sent unclear or inconsistent messages, and attempts to brand the community have been received coolly by residents and targeted customer markets.

Small Local Population

The resident customer base (local population) is insufficient to support all of the businesses in the Red Lodge retail district, even if most of the retail leakage were recaptured. Therefore, attracting more customers is essential, either through population growth, or increased year-round visitation, or both.

Seasonality of Tourism Product

In order to build more off-peak season business and attract outside dollars, Red Lodge's tourism "products" (events, packages, attractions) need to be enhanced or marketed during off-peak seasons. While outdoor recreationists are a seasonal target market, other types of tourist markets can be attracted in off-peak times (historic/cultural travelers, retreats, meetings, indoor events, romantic getaways, music/film events, specialty workshops, "voluntourists," etc.).

Business Turnover and Low Profitability

While downtown Red Lodge does not have many vacant storefronts, local leaders report considerable turnover of retail businesses, and a number of businesses report low profitability. Often this situation

results from incomplete market analysis (e.g., not understanding the local/regional customer base, or the implications of seasonal tourism in Red Lodge), inexperience (lack of knowledge about purchasing, inventory control, merchandising, cash flow management, work hours required to be successful in retail business, etc.), and/or poor customer service. A Main Street program can help provide market information to existing and potential business owners, to help them make strategic decisions about starting or growing a business. Promotion efforts are most effective when they are guided by good market research and a stable base of knowledgeable, profitable business owners.

‘Unfriendly’ Business Hours

It is difficult to promote a downtown district effectively if stores are not open when customers want to shop. Many downtown Red Lodge retail businesses close at 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. on weekdays, and at Noon on Saturdays. Some close for 1-2 weeks during off-peak seasons. Nationally, 50% of all retail sales are made after 5pm and on weekends. People who work in professional services cannot shop Monday through Friday from 8 to 5. Tourists who participate in outdoor recreation activities or conferences generally shop in early evening (or after dinner). Visitors for events or romantic getaways shop on Saturdays and Sundays. Business hours can be coordinated among businesses, and extended incrementally with enhanced tourism/economic development efforts, but consistency is paramount.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Downtown Red Lodge related to Promotion include the following:

Consistent, Market-Driven Marketing Messages

As Red Lodge initiates a new effort to promote itself year-round, it is critical that marketing images and messages be developed based on priority target markets (resident, business, and tourist), and that the messages are clear and consistent in selling the benefits of shopping, visiting, or locating a business in Red Lodge to those targets. In order to do this effectively, Red Lodge businesses first must reach consensus on the results of a good market analysis, and on the priority target markets.

Targeted Events

Regular evaluation of existing events is critical to determine their return on investment and potential for enhancements, particularly in off-peak seasons. There may be opportunities for additional events targeting specific local or visitor markets (or reasons to drop ineffective events).

Cooperative Efforts among Businesses

The Main Street program offers myriad ideas for cooperative promotions and cross-promotions, and for extending business hours strategically to control costs while increasing sales.

Business Recruitment and Group/Event Business

Promotion strategies can be used to help achieve business diversity and higher paying jobs, and to attract off-peak season group/event tourism business. However, focused and targeted direct sales efforts (phone calls, direct mailings, sales visits) are required to realize tangible results in business recruitment and group/event tourism business.

Marketing Partnerships

Cooperative marketing efforts between Red Lodge and neighboring communities/counties/attractions can be highly effective in achieving economic gains.

Historic Walking Tour & Guided Tours

Well-planned walking tours of historic districts, either guided or self-guided, are an attraction to many residents and visitors, and encourage people to “linger” in the downtown district.

Public Transit & Trail System

Public transit systems can be funded in part through annual federal grants. Transit helps promote downtown businesses by providing transportation to local residents and hotel guests to the downtown area. Transit also helps alleviate parking problems by shuttling employees to work, and allowing visitors to leave their vehicles in hotel or vacation home parking areas. Trail systems make connections between key nodes of activity around town, and promote walking and bicycling, which enhances quality of life and encourages people to “linger longer” in the downtown district.

Organization

“Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district. This will allow the Main Street revitalization program to provide effective, ongoing management and advocacy of the commercial district. Diverse groups from the public and private sectors must work together to create and maintain a successful program.” (Montana Main Street)

STRENGTHS

Strengths of Downtown Red Lodge related to Organization are as follows:

Volunteerism

There is a high level of volunteerism and community activism in Red Lodge to undertake planning projects. Because Red Lodge is a small town, people wear multiple hats, and communication can be easily facilitated among various groups.

Community-Based Strategic Plans

Red Lodge already has completed a number of community-based planning efforts that have received broad participation and endorsement from the community. Implementation efforts have begun, and results are being reported to community leaders and stakeholders.

Professional Staff

The City has hired a full-time planner that can be a resource for planning and implementation of projects, and the Economic Development Corporation has hired staff to oversee implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Main Street program. The Chamber of Commerce has a full-time Executive Director, who oversees tourism marketing, events, and visitor services for Red Lodge.

Main Street Program

Red Lodge already is working toward establishment and implementation of a Main Street program, based on the National Main Street Center model.

Funding Resources

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and U.S. Housing & Urban Development (HUD) recently provided grants to fund planning, implementation and marketing efforts in Red Lodge.

CHALLENGES

Challenges for Downtown Red Lodge related to Organization are as follows:

Lack of Coordination

Red Lodge has many needs, and a number of active groups working to address them. Communication is important to ensure that groups are working together and coordinating efforts where possible.

Duplication of Planning Efforts

Grant funds provide a resource to initiate planning on a number of community priorities. However, piecemeal efforts with multiple contractors may create conflicting recommendations and lack of consensus about priorities. Moreover, multiple planning efforts can result in duplication of efforts, volunteer burnout, and “meeting overload” for staff, and are less cost-effective than a unified effort.

Resources for Implementation

Although there are funds for planning efforts, there may be a lack of resources for implementation.

Leadership

During the Downtown Assessment public workshop, a number of participants expressed concerns about City leadership, including recent conflicts, inconsistent enforcement of City codes and policies, and past difficulties in dealing with growth and development issues.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Downtown Red Lodge related to Organization are as follows:

Main Street Organization

The Main Street program model provides a proven organizational structure based on volunteer committees and a board (or steering committee), which can be implemented as a stand-alone organization, or part of an existing organization such as an EDC, Chamber, or City.

Leadership Resources

Grant funds have allowed the Red Lodge Area Economic Development Corporation (RLAEDC) to hire staff, which should help expedite the implementation of the CEDS and Main Street program implementation. Additionally, MSU, the Montana League of Cities and Towns, Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA), and other organizations offer leadership training resources that can benefit local elected leaders and staff.

Development Tools

There are a number of development tools to assist with downtown revitalization efforts, including grants, Business Improvement District (BID), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Urban Renewal Districts, Historic District, Design Guidelines and Review Process, etc.

Potential Partners

There are numerous agencies and organizations that can bring resources to planning and implementation processes, including the City of Red Lodge, Carbon County, the Red Lodge Area Economic Development Corporation (RLAEDC), Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Merchants Association, Historical Society/Museum, Beartooth Front Forum, Arts Center, Montana State University–Billings (Red Lodge branch office), Beartooth RC&D, Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA), and others.

Key Issues to Address

During the Downtown Assessment public workshop, participants were asked to list the top 3-5 key issues related to downtown revitalization. In small groups, the participants shared their key issues, and then the groups prioritized the issues. Below are listed the top issues from each of the small groups at the workshop. The issues are organized according to the four Main Street categories.

Top Priority Issues for Downtown Red Lodge

Organization

- ◆ City leadership and involvement
- ◆ Enforcement of city codes and policies
- ◆ TIF District and/or BID to help pay for improvements/organization
- ◆ Address vandalism

Design

- ◆ Build on City streetscape: lighting, beautification
- ◆ Downtown maintenance and enforcement (clean / parking)
- ◆ No stoplights

Economic Restructuring

- ◆ Diversify/stabilize economic base: light manufacturing, living wages and benefits
- ◆ Convention and meeting facility: more than 250 people
- ◆ Promote unique/eclectic business mix
- ◆ Affordable housing

Promotion

- ◆ Expanded season (off-peak seasons)
- ◆ Extended retail hours
- ◆ Trails and transportation (trolley)

All Key Issues Combined

The following is a list of all issues discussed in the small groups, including those not listed as high priorities.

Organization

- ◆ Enforcement of city codes and policies; Enforcement; Lack of enforcement (dogs, parking, etc.)
- ◆ City leadership and involvement
- ◆ Common efforts/purpose: County, City, RLAEDC, Chamber, Merchants
- ◆ City vs. small business relationship: the city should try to build relationships with new and existing businesses. Currently there is no help with these issues: City business licenses, resort tax (what to tax or not), policing of resort tax payment, City fire inspections, signage limits and restrictions
- ◆ Vandalism
- ◆ MDT planning; Encourage working with MDT
- ◆ Lack of volunteerism
- ◆ TIF/BID

Design

- ◆ Quality of street aesthetics; Build on city street, historical lighting, beautification; Dirty downtown background and entrances (i.e. alleys have garbage & recycling)
- ◆ No stoplights
- ◆ Sidewalks; Clean streets and walkways; regular snow removal; Cleaner streets and sidewalks
- ◆ More handicap accessibility
- ◆ Public restrooms in convenient location
- ◆ Walking Mall of 3 main blocks (includes street entertainment, tree-lined) = street traffic flow to follow Platt, Hauser
- ◆ Design review process
- ◆ Underground wiring
- ◆ New audio system in streets
- ◆ Too much focus on non-problems, such as parking
- ◆ Definition of downtown: the re-construction of 212 should include a roundabout at the north end and better access at state highways at both ends of town
- ◆ When highway/streets are re-constructed that all aspects are dealt with
- ◆ North entrance; green buildings
- ◆ Main Street to Mountains Trail System

Economic Restructuring

- ◆ Apartments and business use of 2nd level; Downtown residential – second story apartments; Affordable housing (downtown)
- ◆ Stable economy and housing market; Encourage light manufacturing; Diversify economic base; light manufacturing
- ◆ Living wages and benefits for all employees
- ◆ Downtown as a lifestyle center
- ◆ Affordable sundries
- ◆ Cyber café (for adolescents & adults) with high speed internet
- ◆ Weak transitional zones; businesses in this zone don't have enough foot traffic; Redevelopment of North and South ends; Encourage redevelopment and find ways to discourage commercial strip development at the edges
- ◆ Develop 'off Broadway' areas of the core region, 1-2 blocks west
- ◆ Lack of convention facilities close to downtown (include kid friendly community type center with pool, etc.); Convention & meeting facilities for groups of 250+ people
- ◆ Incorporate 'EDC' concepts in the high school curriculum

Promotion

- ◆ Businesses promote our unique characteristics (MT Legends, Clay Café etc.)
- ◆ Better transportation (trolley system) around town and local destinations (i.e. Red Lodge Mountain/Rock Creek)
- ◆ No shops open after 9pm; only bars are open; Extended retail hours
- ◆ Expand Season
- ◆ Business owners who think the city, chamber, RLAEDC, etc. should be more responsible for their businesses than the owners themselves
- ◆ Development of a visitor oriented historical & architectural interpretive handbook/guide (find sponsors and/or cost support)
- ◆ Pay more attention to age & interest diversification (demographic analysis needed)

Vision: “Downtown Red Lodge in 2012”

The vision statement below is based on input from the public workshop participants about what they would like to see downtown Red Lodge *become*, and *not become*.

In 2012, Downtown Red Lodge is a diverse commercial, civic, social and residential center, with a strong base of profitable businesses and range of professional and service jobs. The downtown district is vibrant year-round, with events and activities for residents and visitors alike. The retail sector features locally-owned specialty shops, boutiques, and franchise anchor stores offering a variety of necessity goods and niche products to meet the needs of local and visiting customers. A renovated facility for meetings and performances attracts local and out-of-town groups for special events and meetings. Upper floors of historic buildings are filled with service businesses, loft apartments, and condominiums; underutilized properties in the transition area have been redeveloped.

Professional service and specialty manufacturing businesses offer family-wage jobs with benefits, and, along with downtown residents, provide a downtown customer base for retail shops and dining establishments. Downtown is a WiFi zone, offering free basic wireless Internet service to businesses and visitors. The commercial space vacancy and business turnover rates are low, and all vacant buildings have been redeveloped into usable space. Businesses have access to assistance programs. Downtown is the place where Red Lodge residents of all ages gather to enjoy their sense of community, their history, and their diversity.

Downtown Red Lodge property owners have restored their extraordinary historic buildings, which are complemented by attractive signs, historic light fixtures, an audio system, and decorative street furniture. Trees, shrubs and flowers provide color and shade, inviting customers to linger in downtown. Extended sidewalks at block corners provide traffic calming and accessibility for wheelchairs and strollers. Entrances to downtown are attractive, with highly visible signs directing visitors to the district. A town square provides a community gathering place for socializing, outdoor markets, and special events. Limited free parking is well marked and managed for both workers and customers. Downtown is clean and well maintained, with public restrooms for customer convenience. It is a walkable district, with good lighting at night and patrols for public safety.

Regular transit shuttle service and a trail system is provided from neighborhoods and lodging facilities to downtown, encouraging residents and visitors to walk or ride the shuttle. The trail system extends beyond downtown to connect along Highways 212 and 78, the fairgrounds, golf course, and hiking trails. Downtown water lines and storm drain systems have been upgraded, and alleyways have been improved to enhance delivery access, parking, maintenance, and waste removal. Design assistance is available to property owners, along with design guidelines and a design review process. City codes and policies related to downtown have been updated based on citizen and property owner input, and are enforced consistently and effectively.

Downtown Red Lodge is marketed effectively to priority customer and business markets. Its image is characterized as attractive, fun, eclectic, high quality, unique, celebrated, kid-friendly, and interesting, with a clear sense of its rich history. Downtown events provide entertaining activities for customers of all ages, from retail events to dining, music, meetings, family activities, and civic participation. The businesses are known for their personalized service, customer-friendly business hours, and creative merchandising and window displays. Regular customers travel from throughout south central Montana and northwestern Wyoming to shop and spend time in Red Lodge. Effective advertising and promotion programs reinforce downtown’s positive image, and draw customers for special events and promotions.

Downtown Red Lodge has a successful Main Street program, with active committees and sustainable programs. The Main Street program has strong partnerships with the City, RLAEDC, Chamber, County, Historical Society, Arts Guild, local civic clubs, Montana Department of Commerce, Friends of the Beartooth Highway, and other organizations. Funding for downtown projects and programming is provided by a business improvement district, a TIF district, the City, grants, parking revenues, events, and fee-based activities. The Main Street program has a Downtown Master Plan, and an Annual Work Plan for its board, staff, and each of its committees. Program policies and procedures are followed, and coordinated with City policies. A large and active group of volunteers ensures that youth, retirees and civic clubs are regularly involved Downtown projects, events and programs. Downtown truly is the center of community life.

Goals and Actions

The following goals and actions to help achieve the vision for Downtown Red Lodge are based on the key issues identified in the public workshop, and on the consulting team's investigation and assessment.

Organization

Goal 1: Implement a Red Lodge Main Street program.

Red Lodge is one of six communities in the 2006 Montana Main Street program, and as a result of the Beartooth Highway closure, has staff and grant funds to move forward with implementation of a Main Street program.

Action 1.1: Join the National Main Street Center and order materials: Board Member Handbooks, Committee Member Handbooks (Design, Promotion, Organization, Economic Restructuring), Parking Management Handbook, Fill-in-the-Blank Market Analysis, etc. Priority: High

Action 1.2: Form a Board and committees for Main Street, and work with the RLAEDC Project Manager and Montana Main Street Coordinator to begin implementation. Priority: High

Action 1.3: Conduct an orientation and recruitment session for downtown business and property owners and other interested stakeholders. Recruit members to participate in each of the four Main Street committees. Priority: High

Action 1.4: Formalize partnerships with other organizations, and engage them in development of the Main Street committees and work plans. Priority: High

Action 1.5: Work with each committee to develop an Annual Work Plan and budget. Identify priorities for implementation. Priority: High

Goal 2: Unify various Red Lodge planning efforts to ensure a common vision and cost efficiencies.

There have been a number of planning processes conducted in Red Lodge over the years. The Red Lodge Revitalization Plan was completed in 1986, and while many of the conclusions are still valid, the plan was limited in geographic scope to the core area and dealt primarily with the built environment. Current and scheduled planning processes relevant to downtown include an updated capital improvement plan, design review modifications, growth policy updates, streetscape design, and a marketing plan. A coordinated process is necessary to provide a common framework for completing these planning efforts so the projects work in concert with one another.

Action 2.1: Combine activities in the Economic Development Administration grant into one proposal and contract process. Priority: High

Action 2.2: Coordinate downtown planning with the growth policy update. Priority: High

Action 2.3: Coordinate downtown planning with implementation of the strategies in the 2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document. Priority: Medium

Goal 3: Build on other planning efforts and pool resources to complete planning projects.

No single agency can address all of the action items recommended in the various planning documents, and some issues require action from multiple agencies. Multiple agencies offer a variety of public services and are involved in a range of issues related to downtown. Organization and collaboration means getting everyone working toward a unified goal: providing a common vision. Coordinated responses promote efficient operations, avoid duplication and minimize the potential for conflicting priorities. For example, agencies may partner on capital construction projects, share staff, conduct joint planning processes, or enter intergovernmental agreements on a variety of issues.

Action 3.1: Coordinate with the Montana Department of Transportation planning efforts for improving Highway 212 and creating an entryway for downtown. Priority: Medium

Action 3.2: Coordinate with the Red Lodge trail planning process so that trails can become an amenity for the downtown area. Priority: Medium

Action 3.3: Coordinate with planned renovation of upper floors of the museum to attract events to downtown. Priority: Low

Goal 4: Foster and maintain a strong, healthy communication and organization framework within and between the City of Red Lodge, RLAEDC, Chamber of Commerce, and Carbon County.

At the downtown assessment public workshop, frequent references were made regarding the need for organization amongst the Red Lodge's municipal and non-profit entities related to downtown.

Action 4.1: Define all policies that are to be regulated in the core and transition areas of Downtown Red Lodge, such as street and alley cleanliness, garbage and recycling bin removal, street landscaping and beautification. Priority: High

Action 4.2: Implement a plan to enforce the defined policies. Priority: High

Action 4.3: Using motivation and rewards, turn apathy into action and involvement. Recognize individual and business involvement via 'thank you' announcements in local media and at public meetings, or certificates of participation, to motivate individuals to continue their participation, and spur others into action. Priority: Medium

Design and Infrastructure

Goal 5: Enhance and maintain the sense of place that defines Red Lodge, and capitalize on its character with exceptional, pedestrian-friendly design and streetscape improvement projects in the downtown and adjoining areas.

The vision statement for downtown Red Lodge was created during this assessment process. As the Main Street program is implemented, this vision statement should be reviewed and refined as necessary. The vision statement describes in detail the “sense of place” that reflects what downtown stands for and how its characteristics are reflected in the livable and physical environment.

- Action 5.1: Complete the installation of historically appropriate light fixtures downtown to replace the “cobra head” fixtures. Enhance the light fixtures to hold banners or hanging flower baskets, adding color and interest to the sidewalks and creating a “human scale” street environment. Priority: High
- Action 5.2: Conduct an inventory and analysis of downtown streetscape amenities, public spaces, landscaping, parking, pedestrian/bicycle facilities and their condition to determine gaps and needs for additional amenities. Priority: High
- Action 5.3: Create a Downtown Master Plan, based on the vision and community input, and results of the analysis in Action 5.2, to determine future development direction, improvements and amenities. For instance, if the vision stresses that the town is a walk-able, friendly environment for the visitor, then the Master Plan should include improvements to the pedestrian streetscape, more visitor amenities, or an atmosphere that reiterates the “vision.” Tools such as a design charette are effective and interactive processes to engage citizens and property owners in development of a Master Plan. Priority: Medium
- Action 5.4: As part of the Downtown Master Plan (Action 5.3), identify ways to create public spaces, such as a plaza or town square, and areas for sitting and relaxing in downtown Red Lodge. The one small pocket park, located on the north side of 12th Street between Broadway Avenue and the alley, is very small. This space does not lend itself well to a large gathering, public event or farmer’s market. Another location, with more area and accommodation for events, would benefit the town. Pedestrian spaces should contain essential elements for passive recreation and events such as seating, eating areas, refuse containers, water fountains, doggie pick up stations, landscaped beds or areas, sculpture, areas of both sun and shade, and access from the downtown streetscape (ADA access, stairs, ramps, signage, etc.). Priority: Medium
- Action 5.5: As part of the Downtown Master Plan (Action 5.3), conduct a comprehensive inventory of downtown parking, including public/private and on/off-street parking by block. Analyze the parking inventory with an inventory of building uses (retail, office, dining, residential, etc.) to determine parking needs based on number of units per thousand square feet of built space for different use types. Identify areas where additional parking is needed, and opportunities for parking development. Create a parking management plan for downtown, including parking policies for employees, business owners and customers, and designated areas for public, private and employee/resident parking. Priority: Medium

- Action 5.6: As part of the Master Plan (Action 5.3), address deficiencies in City utilities downtown (water lines, storm drain system, alleys, etc.). Also, work with the utility companies to evaluate placing Broadway Avenue overhead wires underground or in alleys. Develop a budget, phasing, timeline and funding strategy for infrastructure improvements. Priority: High
- Action 5.7: Seek funding to implement the Master Plan. Use phasing if appropriate to capitalize on potential partnerships with other agencies (such as MDT). Potential funding sources include block grants, a special improvement district (SID), TIF district, sales of personalized bricks, adopt-a-tree program, and other fundraising efforts. Plan the project so that all major construction is completed simultaneously (water line, sidewalks, etc.) to minimize negative impacts on businesses. Priority: Medium
- Action 5.8: Develop a plan and promotion strategy for mitigation of impacts on businesses from construction. Include provisions for access to water, EMS services, rear entrances of businesses, etc. Priority: Medium

Goal 6: Preserve and enhance the historical integrity and scale of downtown Red Lodge.

An inventory and analysis of historic buildings has been completed and much work has been initiated to preserve or enhance the construction, facades and general character of the buildings. This effort should continue and be bolstered by incentives developed by governing policies or programs, so that new development does not compromise the historic character or scale of the downtown district.

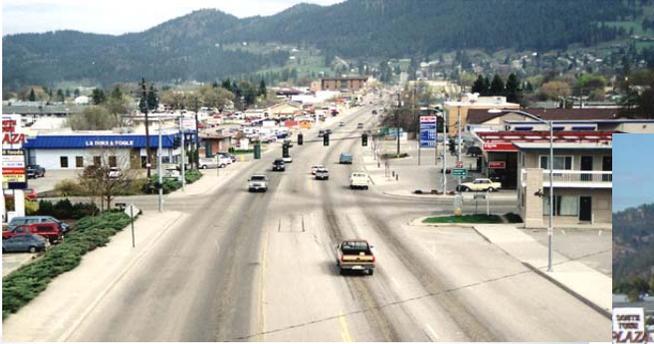
- Action 6.1: Provide design and planning assistance to property owners and developers regarding building construction, revitalization and development projects. Provide resources to owners of historic properties and to the design review committee. The State of Montana offers planning and research assistance in the revitalization of historical buildings through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Helena. The National Park Service, also publishes the “Standards for Rehabilitation,” which describes the appropriate standards for buildings designated as “registered” and non-registered. There are federal tax credits available for qualified and abiding property owners that adhere to these standards in addition to local regulations. These services should be promoted to property owners wishing to revitalize their buildings. Priority: High
- Action 6.2: Review and approve revitalization or development projects that take into consideration the existing quality of the downtown physical environment, historic design standards and guidelines. Priority: Medium
- Action 6.3: Create an annual awards program that publicly demonstrates appreciation for local renewal or revitalization projects that preserve or enhance integrity of buildings, especially in critical historical areas such as downtown, the “High Bug” district, or others. Priority: Medium
- Action 6.4: Work with owners of vacant historic properties, such as the Theatorium and Cannery, to evaluate options for redevelopment and explore potential private-public partnerships. Priority: Medium

Goal 7: Celebrate the culture and arts of Red Lodge through physical/visual representations and events.

- Action 7.1: Invite resident artists to do installations in public places or local galleries to display their talent and art work. “Artists in Residence” is an excellent method to attract artists to both participate in the artistic learning process as well as display work created. Create interactive art that is kid-friendly (made for touching, climbing, playing, etc.).
Priority: Medium
- Action 7.2: Include venues for artistic pursuits or showcase artists at downtown community events such as farmer’s markets, street fairs, parades, seasonal or holiday events, etc.
Priority: Medium
- Action 7.3: Initiate “Gallery Walks” at specified times of year to showcase local galleries and shops after normal business hours. Include music and food/beverages to attract residents and visitors to view art on display, meet the artists and socialize in the downtown environment. This type of event could be paired with special lodging and dining packages for regional and semi-local visitors, such as those from Wyoming or south central Montana. Priority: Medium

Goal 8: Develop attractive entryways that create a positive first impression of Red Lodge, and clearly welcome visitors and guide them into downtown.

- Action 8.1: Conduct an analysis of the most appropriate locations for entry features as part of the Downtown Master Plan. Entryways typically are identified as public spaces and often contain signage, some seating, landscaped areas, and other pedestrian amenities.
Priority: Medium
- Action 8.2: Develop appropriate signage at entryways to direct visitors to downtown, and to identify local points of interest, and direct residents and visitors to those sites.
Priority: High
- Action 8.3: Work with MDT to consider development of a roundabout at the junction of Highways 212 and 78, and design the roundabout as an entry feature (see proposed configuration, and examples of other roundabouts, next page). Priority: Medium
- Action 8.4: Work with MDT to develop a traffic study and strategy to link entryway development and outcomes of construction projects on highways 212, 78 and 308 in order to maximize the benefits of these projects for downtown Red Lodge. Include strategies for traffic calming through downtown, and incorporation of bike/pedestrian facilities.
Priority: High



**“Before” and “After”
U.S. 395 Roundabout, Colville, Washington**
(Courtesy Welch Comer Engineers)



**Proposed Roundabout
Twin Falls, Idaho**



Roundabout Concept for Junction of U.S. 212 & MT 78
(Courtesy MDT)

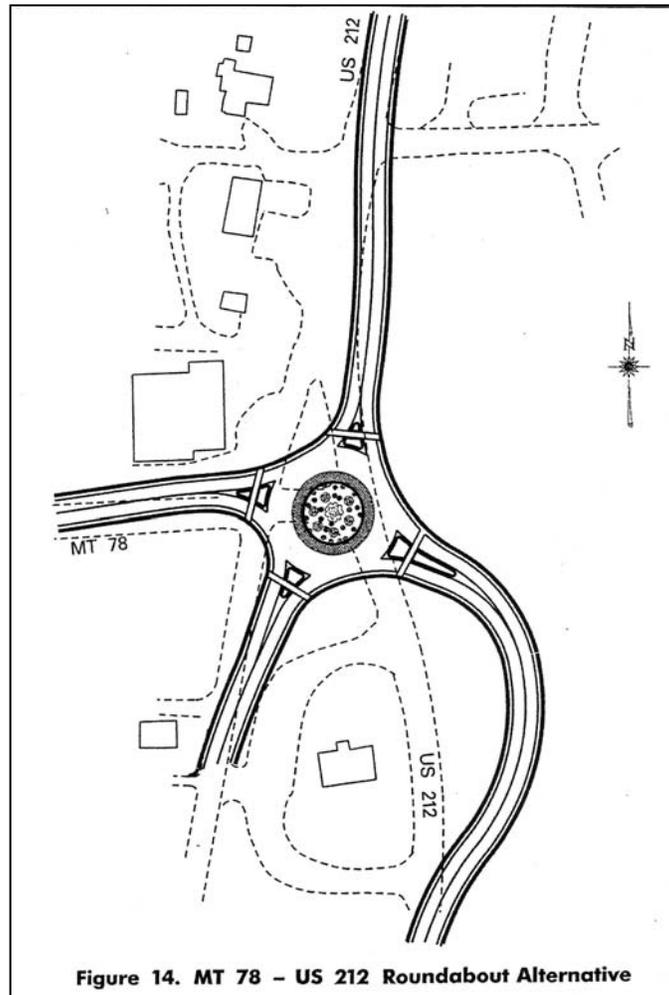


Figure 14. MT 78 – US 212 Roundabout Alternative

Promotion

Goal 9: Coordinate a strategic marketing program to increase downtown business sales.

The sudden closure of the Beartooth Highway in 2005 disrupted business development and reduced revenue for the downtown businesses. Therefore, Red Lodge must use its marketing resources strategically, targeting media and methods that will draw the type of customers most desired by Red Lodge area businesses and residents.

- Action 9.1: Develop a Strategic Marketing Plan for downtown Red Lodge based on a thorough market analysis of downtown's existing and potential customer markets, including local and regional resident segments as well as tourist market segments. Identify top priority segments, and develop strategies, images and messages to attract them to downtown. Address in the Marketing Plan strategies for publicity, promotion, public relations, direct sales, and advertising for peak and off-peak seasons. Include a marketing budget and implementation schedule for each market segment, and methods to track results of marketing efforts. Priority: High
- Action 9.2: Develop an effective image for downtown Red Lodge, its unique character and mix of businesses, with a position statement that speaks to key target markets with a message that answers the questions "what" and "why." Priority: High
- Action 9.3: Plan small downtown events targeted at specific customer segments (children and their parents, retirees, women, new residents, medical community, etc.). Design the events to focus on priority target customer segments and their interests. Use National Main Street materials to generate ideas and develop implementation strategies. Priority: High
- Action 9.4: Implement consistent business hours in downtown Red Lodge, with incremental extension of hours as business builds. Begin with weekend hours (e.g., all day Saturday). Coordinate extension of hours with aggressive media and publicity campaign, direct mailings and special events. Allow 6-18 months for customers to adapt to new hours and change shopping habits (i.e., buy in Red Lodge instead of Billings). Priority: High

Goal 10: Increase year-round tourism in Red Lodge.

The economy of Red Lodge relies heavily on tourism. The summer months are the peak season for retailers, lodging, and dining/beverage establishments. Winter tourism is highly dependent on snowfall for skiing and snowmobiling, and represents a much smaller sales volume for local businesses. There is a dramatic reduction in business during the fall and spring seasons that results in short window of opportunity for local businesses to generate revenue that will sustain them through the entire year.

- Action 10.1: Continue to coordinate tourism marketing efforts with Yellowstone Country, Billings CVB, Friends of the Beartooth All-American Road, Cooke City Chamber, Cody Chamber, Yellowstone National Park, and others. Use the 2006 celebration of the Beartooth Highway opening to draw national media attention and publicity from travel publications (print and online). Make Internet marketing the centerpiece of tourism marketing efforts, based on national research regarding consumer travel planning habits. Priority: High

- Action 10.2: Provide Red Lodge information, packages and coupons to Yellowstone park employees, to encourage them to become familiar with Red Lodge. Priority: Medium
- Action 10.3: Consider a cooperative promotion effort with the other two All-American Roads in the northern Rockies, to encourage eastern, southwestern, Canadian and international travelers to make the region a key destination. Scenic driving is a primary motivator for many tourists, so marketing the All-American Roads and adjacent attractions as the “Top 10 Destinations in the Northern Rockies” would generate wide publicity. Priority: Medium
- Action 10.4: Develop cultural and heritage tourism. Cultural and heritage tourists spend more money than the average visitor, and are more likely to support local businesses and attractions. These visitors are interested in attractions such as museums, historic walking tours, arts and craft events, etc. Priority: Medium
- Action 10.5: Create an enhanced Red Lodge Historic Walking Tour brochure and map. Coordinate the map/brochure with historic information signs on buildings. Work with volunteers to offer periodic guided tours for local residents, visiting groups, holiday weekends, etc. Priority: Medium
- Action 10.6: Conduct targeted mailings and e-mailings to alumni, previous visitors, sportsmen, spagoers, car clubs, etc. Ongoing mailings to previous visitors and inquirers will encourage repeat visitation and referrals to the area. Priority: Low
- Action 10.7: Focus marketing efforts to off-peak season groups, packages and events, particularly targeting affluent areas like Bozeman to promote weekend getaways. If a downtown-based conference or large meeting facility is developed, promote Red Lodge as a unique meeting destination. Target Montana and other Northwest business associations, organizations, small conferences and retreats (religious, government, etc.) with direct sales efforts to recruit events in Red Lodge. Priority: Medium
- Action 10.8: Market to other Montana residents, promoting the niche activities, services and products that typically match the profile of a state resident. Many Montanans want to avoid peak season crowds and the incentive of off-peak season deals will encourage them to explore and enjoy the uniqueness of the Red Lodge area. Priority: Medium

Economic Restructuring

Goal 11: Develop a business expansion and retention program to help local businesses succeed and reduce the turnover of businesses in the downtown commercial district.

- Action 11.1: Conduct a market analysis, including consumer and business surveys, to determine gaps in local goods and services offered, and potential areas for recapturing retail or business sales leakage. Share the results of the analysis with existing businesses, and encourage them to address the gaps and opportunities for expansion/diversification. Priority: High

- Action 11.2: Provide training programs and technical assistance for business owners to reduce the high turnover of downtown businesses. Examples of effective programs are the NxLevel Training (an entrepreneurship and business plan development program), Business Expansion & Retention (BEAR), retail sales and merchandising seminars by experts like Rick Segel (www.ricksegel.com), a library of materials from the National Main Street Center (*Specialty Shop Retailing, Competing with the Retail Giants*, etc.). Priority: High
- Action 11.3: Maintain regular contacts with local businesses to determine needs, create a business friendly atmosphere, and provide assistance when needed. Develop an informal business mentoring and networking group to provide support and technical assistance for small businesses, Lone Eagles and new entrepreneurs. Priority: High
- Action 11.4: Provide e-commerce and Internet marketing training to help businesses market their products and services year-round. Priority: Medium

Goal 12: Diversify the business mix in the downtown core and transition areas to provide higher paying jobs and to develop a year-round economy.

- Action 12.1: Provide incentives and favorable development regulations to encourage development of professional offices and business services in vacant second story space and on underutilized parcels in the transition areas. Priority: High
- Action 12.2: Based on the market analysis, identify unfulfilled market niches to meet resident and business needs, and recruit businesses to fill those niches. Examples of niches to consider include business services, health food, specialty clothing, hobby supplies (birding, scrap-booking), etc. Work with local businesses to develop lead lists and make direct sales calls on targeted business recruitment prospects. Priority: Medium
- Action 12.3: Create a Wi-Fi zone in downtown to encourage technology focused businesses and attract young professionals to the area. Priority: Low
- Action 12.4: Mentor young workers as future entrepreneurs. The community can grow its own businesses by mentoring its youth in effective business skills. Encourage local employers to partner with training institutions to provide on-the-job training in programs such as apprenticeships, internships, student work experience, etc. Implement entrepreneurial curriculum in the local high school to attract and direct Red Lodge youth toward the business sector and development of new youth-owned businesses in the downtown area. The youth version of the NxLevel® training, called “Get the Buzz on Biz”, is being used successfully in many high schools nationwide. Priority: Medium
- Action 12.5: Develop a business center with shared services and technical assistance to start-up professional service businesses in the downtown area. A technologically advanced business center could provide both goods and services, such as office spaces, shared conference room, office support services, a cyber café, etc. to businesses, residents, and tourists. Priority: Medium

- Action 12.6: Develop the Airport Business Park to complement and support downtown businesses. Investigate with the Montana Department of Commerce if/how a port authority might be used as an economic development tool in Red Lodge. Business parks are excellent locations for light industrial and small manufacturing businesses that are not appropriate in an historic downtown. Such development of the airport business park could provide growth in the number of living wage jobs with benefits in Red Lodge, resulting in greater year-round economic stability and stronger downtown business revenues. Priority: High
- Action 12.7: Coordinate business recruitment efforts for downtown to complement recruitment for the Airport Business Park. With a common goal to increase the business base for Red Lodge, City, RLAEDC and Chamber leaders can work together to attract new businesses appropriate for both venues. Priority: Medium
- Action 12.8: Conduct a feasibility study to determine options for redevelopment of the Theatorium for meetings and performance events. Include in the study scenarios for private, public and nonprofit ownership, funding for redevelopment, and a business plan for operating the facility. Priority: Low

Goal 13: Develop affordable housing for local workers.

The 2001 Red Lodge Growth Policy projected that an additional 690 housing units would be needed in the Red Lodge area by 2015 to meet population growth demands. Recent housing development has focused on higher-end homes and vacation properties. However, affordable housing is critical to business and community stability in Red Lodge, both to provide a year-round customer base for local businesses, and to provide local housing for the service industry workforce. Affordable housing is defined as housing for moderate income families (those earning 80% to 120% of median family income in the community).

- Action 13.1: Continue efforts of the RLAEDC and Housing Task Force to develop more affordable housing in Red Lodge. Use the results of the housing survey to determine current status of existing downtown housing and developable buildings in and around the downtown Red Lodge area, and to identify opportunities for redevelopment. Priority: High
- Action 13.2: Offer incentives and create favorable development regulations to create mixed-use, medium density housing projects in the downtown transition area to provide more options for Red Lodge residents in the housing market. Priority: High
- Action 13.3: Restrict short-term and vacation rentals in single-family residential areas. Priority: High
- Action 13.4: Work with housing agencies to develop programs that result in affordable housing for low to moderate income residents (such as setasides, etc.). Establish relationships with affordable housing organizations (Montana Housing Authority, Neighborhood Housing Inc., etc.) to finance and/or develop downtown affordable housing. The 2006 Montana Biennial Housing Conference, sponsored by the Montana Housing Partnership, is September 18-20 at the Kwa TaqNuk Resort in Polson. Priority: High

Implementation

Downtown development efforts require cooperation among public, private and nonprofit organizations in a community. No one entity can—or should—do it all. This Action Plan is designed to guide the actions and resource allocations of community and economic development organizations, local government, businesses and various partner organizations, based on the support of local citizens and businesses. The details contained in this implementation section are designed to:

- ◆ Focus on “first things first”: the actions are prioritized, and timelines are identified, so that all partners can maintain a strategic focus on top priorities
- ◆ Coordinate activities so that actions of organizations and agencies are inter-related
- ◆ Establish a realistic timetable for getting things done, and identify responsibilities to share the workload
- ◆ Help communicate what organizations and agencies are trying to achieve and why
- ◆ Identify expected outcomes and ways to measure success
- ◆ Manage (but not avoid) risk: achieving goals often requires stepping outside the box
- ◆ Maximize effectiveness: in a world of limited resources, community leaders and planning efforts can’t be all things to all people
- ◆ Provide benchmarks to measure results: the ability to see when activities are deviating from the Action Plan, and to evaluate whether goals are being achieved according to community values
- ◆ Maintain strategic integrity: the Action Plan provides details of priority actions in order to prevent “ad hoc” decisions that detract from the priorities or drain energy and resources away from the agreed-upon direction.

This Action Plan is designed to be a “Ready-Aim-Fire” approach to the downtown development process – to take incremental steps that build momentum and teamwork as the plan is implemented. All partners have critical roles in the success of the Plan.

The Action Table on the next three pages summarizes the goals and actions from the previous section, and also assigns a priority level and timeline to each action. The darker shading in timeline indicates a more intense level of activity in a given year. The key to the codes listed in the Partners column is at the bottom of each page. The organization listed first is the lead organization for each action, and additional organizations listed are those who will partner/assist with implementation.



“When the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside, the end is in sight!”

- Jack Welch, former CEO,
General Electric

Downtown Red Lodge Action Table

Goal								
Strategic Action			Timeline					Partners (See Key to Codes)
Detail	Priority		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
1. Implement a Red Lodge Main Street program.								
1.1	Join the National Main Street Center and order materials	H						EDC, MSB, City
1.2	Form a Main Street Board and committees to begin implementation	H						EDC, City, CC
1.3	Conduct orientation/recruitment session for downtown business & property owners	H						MSB, MMS, CC
1.4	Formalize partnerships with other organizations & engage them in the program	M						MSB, EDC
1.5	Develop an Annual Work Plan and budget; identify priorities for implementation	H						MSB, OC, DC, PC, ER
2. Unify various Red Lodge planning efforts to ensure a common vision and cost efficiencies.								
2.1	Combine activities in the EDA grant into one proposal and contract process	H						EDC, City
2.2	Coordinate downtown planning with the growth policy update	H						City
2.3	Coordinate downtown planning w/ implementation strategies in the 2004 CEDS	M						EDC, City, Co, CC
3. Build on other planning efforts and pool resources to complete planning projects.								
3.1	Coordinate w/ MDT planning for improving Hwy 212 & create downtown entryway	M						City, DC
3.2	Coordinate w/ Red Lodge trail planning so trails become downtown area amenity	M						DC, TTF
3.3	Coordinate w/ renovation of museum's upper floors to attract events to downtown	L						ER
4. Foster/maintain communication between City, RLAEDC, Chamber and County.								
4.1	Define all policies to be regulated in the core & transition areas of Downtown area	H						City, DC, ER
4.2	Implement a plan to enforce the defined policies	H						City, DC, ER
4.3	Use motivation & rewards to encourage downtown involvement	M						OC
5. Enhance & maintain the sense of place that defines Red Lodge.								
5.1	Complete installation of historic downtown light fixtures	H						CC, City
5.2	Conduct an inventory & analysis of downtown amenities & gaps	H						DC, CON
5.3	Create Downtown Master Plan based on vision, community input & Action 5.2	M						MSB, City, CON, DC, ER, PC
5.4	Identify ways to create public spaces and include in the Downtown Master Plan	M						CON, DC, City
5.5	Conduct a comprehensive downtown parking inventory & include in Master Plan	M						CON, DC, City
5.6	Address deficiencies in downtown infrastructure (water, storm drain), wires, alleys							City, DEQ, ER, MDOC, USDA
5.7	Seek funding to implement the Master Plan	M						OC, Dir, City, MSB, MDOC, BRCD
5.8	Mitigate construction impacts on downtown businesses via planning & promotions	M						ER, PC, CON, Biz
6. Preserve and enhance the historical integrity and scale of downtown Red Lodge.								
6.1	Provide design & planning assistance to property owners & developers	H						City, DC, HS, Prop, RE
6.2	Review & approve projects that enhance downtown historical integrity	H						City, DC
6.3	Create an annual awards program w/ public appreciation for preservation projects	M						DC, EDC, HS, Biz
6.4	Work with owners of vacant historic buildings to explore redevelopment options	M						DC, City, HS, Biz

KEY TO CODES: AG=Arts Guild; Biz=Business; BRCD=Beartooth RC&D; CC=Chamber of Commerce; City=City of Red Lodge; Co=County; CON=Contractor; DC=Design Committee; Dev=Developers; DEQ=Dept. of Environmental Quality; Dir=Main Street Program Director; EDA=U.S. Economic Dev't Admin.; EDC=Red Lodge Area Economic Dev't Corp.; ER=Economic Restructuring Committee; FB=Friends of the Beartooth Hwy; HS=Historical Society; HTF=Housing Task Force; HUD=Housing & Urban Dev't; MDOC=MT Dept. of Commerce; MDT=MT Dept. of Transportation; MMS=Montana Main Street; MSB=Main Street Board; MSU-B=MSU Billings.; NxL=NxLevel Training; NH=Neighborhood Housing, Inc.; OC=Organization Committee; PC=Promotion Committee; Prop=Property Owners; RE=Real Estate Firms; SBDC=Small Business Dev't Center; SD=School Dist.; TTF=Trails Task Force; USDA-RD=USDA-Rural Dev't; Vol=Volunteers; YC=Yellowstone Country

Goal								
Strategic Action				Timeline				Partners (See Key to Codes)
Detail		Priority	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
7. Celebrate the culture and arts of Red Lodge.								
7.1	Invite resident artists to do installations in public places to display their talents	M						AG, DC, Prop
7.2	Include venues for artistic pursuits or showcase artists at downtown cmty events	M						AG, PC, Biz
7.3	Initiate 'Gallery Walks' at specific times during year to showcase galleries & shops	M						AG, PC, Biz
8. Develop attractive entryways that create a positive first impression.								
8.1	Conduct an analysis of appropriate locations for entry features (Master Plan)	M						CON, DC, City, MDT
8.2	Develop appropriate signage at entryways to direct visitors to downtown	H						MDT, City, DC
8.3	Work w/ MDT re development of a roundabout at junction of Highways 212 & 78	M						City, MDT
8.4	Work w/ MDT to develop strategy to link entryways on Highways 212, 78, & 308	H						City, MDT
9. Coordinate a strategic marketing program to increase downtown business sales.								
9.1	Develop a Strategic Marketing Plan for downtown from thorough market analysis	H						PC, CC, CON
9.2	Develop an effective image for downtown Red Lodge w/ a position statement	H						PC, CC, CON
9.3	Plan small downtown events targeted at specific customer segments	H						PC, Vol, Civic, SD, AG, CC
9.4	Implement consistent business hours in downtown Red Lodge	H						PC, Biz
10. Increase year-round tourism in Red Lodge.								
10.1	Coordinate tourism marketing plans w/ Yellowstone, Billings, Cooke City etc.	H						PC, CC, YC, FB
10.2	Provide Red Lodge info, packages & coupons to Yellowstone Park employees	M						CC, Biz
10.3	Consider a cooperative promotion effort w/ the All-American Roads in N. Rockies	M						CC, FB
10.4	Develop cultural and heritage tourism	M						CC, PC, YC, AG, HS
10.5	Create an enhanced Red Lodge Historic Walking Tour brochure and map	M						HS, CC
10.6	Conduct targeted mailings and e-mailings to alumni, previous visitors etc.	L						CC, Biz
10.7	Focus marketing efforts to off-peak season groups, packages & events	M						CC, PC, Biz, YC
10.8	Market to other Montana residents, promoting niche activities, services & products	M						CC, PC, Biz, YC
11. Develop a business expansion and retention program.								
11.1	Conduct market analysis, consumer & business surveys, to identify product gaps	H						ER, CON, Biz
11.2	Provide training and technical assistance to business owners	H						ER, SBDC, NxL, EDC, CC, MSU-B
11.3	Maintain regular contacts w/ local businesses to provide assistance & support	H						EDC, ER, CC
11.4	Provide e-commerce & internet marketing training to business owners	M						EDC, CON, MSU-B
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Goal								
Strategic Action			Timeline					Partners (See Key to Codes)
Detail	Priority	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010		
12. Diversify the business mix in the downtown core and transition area.								
12.1	Provide incentives/favorable regs to encourage 2 nd story business occupancy	H					City, ER, RE, Prop	
12.2	Based on market analysis, identify unfulfilled market niches, recruit businesses	M					ER, EDC, CC	
12.3	Create a Wi-Fi zone in downtown	L					City, EDC, Biz	
12.4	Mentor young workers as future entrepreneurs	M					EDC, SD, Biz, NxL, SBDC, MSU-B, Vol	
12.5	Develop a business center w/ shared services for start-up downtown businesses	M					EDC, Prop, EDA	
12.6	Develop the airport business park to complement & support downtown businesses	H					EDC, City, Dev, RE	
12.7	Coordinate business recruitment for downtown and airport business park	M					EDC, ER, CC	
12.8	Conduct feasibility study to determine redevelopment options for Theatorium	L					EDC, CON	
13. Develop affordable housing for local workers.								
13.1	Continue to develop more affordable housing in downtown Red Lodge	H					EDC, HTF, NH, City, HUD	
13.2	Offer incentives & favorable regulations for mixed-use, medium density housing	H					City, HTF, Dev	
13.3	Restrict short-term and vacation rentals in single family residential areas	H					City	
13.4	Work w/ housing agencies to develop affordable housing set-asides	H					City, HTF, Dev	
<p>KEY TO CODES: AG=Arts Guild; Biz=Business; BRCD=Beartooth RC&D; CC=Chamber of Commerce; City=City of Red Lodge; Co=County; CON=Contractor; DC=Design Committee; Dev=Developers; DEQ=Dept. of Environmental Quality; Dir=Main Street Program Director; EDA=U.S. Economic Dev't Admin.; EDC=Red Lodge Area Economic Dev't Corp.; ER=Economic Restructuring Committee; FB=Friends of the Beartooth Hwy; HS=Historical Society; HTF=Housing Task Force; HUD=Housing & Urban Dev't; MDOC=MT Dept. of Commerce; MDT=MT Dept. of Transportation; MMS=Montana Main Street; MSB=Main Street Board; MSU-B=MSU Billings.; NxL=NxLevel Training; NH=Neighborhood Housing, Inc.; OC=Organization Committee; PC=Promotion Committee; Prop=Property Owners; RE=Real Estate Firms; SBDC=Small Business Dev't Center; SD=School District; TTF=Trails Task Force; USDA-RD=USDA-Rural Development; Vol=Volunteers; YC=Yellowstone Country</p>								

Next Steps

The suggested next steps in implementation of the Action Plan are as follows:

1. Approval and adoption of the final Assessment and Action Plan document by the Red Lodge Area Economic Development Corporation and the City Council.
2. Endorsement and/or adoption of the Assessment and Action Plan by the Chamber of Commerce, County Commission and other community groups.
3. Obtain commitments from partners to implement and report quarterly on progress.
4. Allocate/seek funding and staffing for implementation (grants, etc.).
5. Begin/continue implementation of the Assessment and Action Plan.
6. Monitor/oversee implementation of the Assessment and Action Plan, meet to discuss/report progress twice a year.



Potential Resources for Implementation

Federal

U.S. Economic Development Administration
USDA Rural Development
USDA Forest Service
Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byways
National Scenic Byways Resource Center

State

Montana Department of Commerce: Montana Main Street Program, Travel Montana, BEAR program
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
NxLevel Training Network®: a group of organizations engaged in entrepreneurial training, including Small Business Development Centers, Chambers of Commerce, business incubators, Councils and Associations of Government, Private Industry Councils, Planning Districts, Community Development Corporations, USDA agencies, Native American Groups, SBA funded training organizations, Community Development Financial Institutions, loan funds, and others. The purpose of the network is to develop the best training curriculums possible, and to share best practices among network partners, including effective operational, funding and management strategies. Montana maintains its own NxLevel® website, providing regional resources for business ventures. The youth version of the NxLevel® training, called “Get the Buzz on Biz”, is being used successfully in many high schools nationwide. www.nxlevel.org or www.nxlevelmontana.org.

Small Business Development Center: www.sbdc.mt.gov

MSU Billings
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana State Historical Society
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Regional/Local

City of Red Lodge
Carbon County
Business Improvement District (BID) or Special Improvement District (SID)
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District
Yellowstone Country
Beartooth RC&D

Private

Business Investment
Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce
Red Lodge Area Economic Development Corporation
Carbon County Historical Society
Arts Guild
Private and Community Foundations
Beartooth Front Forum
Sonoran Institute