

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A Reuse Planning Summary

Libby Asbestos Operable Unit 5 and Libby Groundwater Superfund Sites

Libby, Montana

OVERVIEW

With assistance from EPA Region 8 and the Superfund Redevelopment Initiative, the Lincoln County Port Authority hosted a redevelopment planning process to support revitalization of the Kootenai Business Park now that soil cleanup is complete. The redevelopment planning process provided an opportunity for the Port Authority to collaborate with representatives from Libby, the state and regional economic development experts to develop a strategy to boost economic development for the Kootenai Business Park. Stakeholders convened during two working sessions, in April and again in November 2017, to identify goals, challenges and an action plan of strategies, which are summarized in this report.

The redevelopment working sessions generated tremendous collaboration and optimism among regional stakeholders about the future possibilities for Libby and the Kootenai Business Park. The discussion outcomes include the vision, principles and site assets summarized below. Site opportunities by zone are described in detail on pages 2 and 3. A set of 10 strategies to promote revitalization for the Kootenai Business Park is outlined on page 4.

FUTURE USE VISION

Kootenai Business Park will once again be an economic driver for Libby and the broader region, attracting viable businesses to increase jobs and economic prosperity for the community.

PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS

Inspired by a panel of regional economic development experts, participants agreed the following principles are fundamental to regional economic prosperity.

- Collaborate on local planning for infrastructure, growth policy, economic development and recreation.
- Coordinate with other towns in the region and leverage state programs to promote an economic development strategy for northwestern Montana.
- Promote the region's desirable quality of life as a reason to invest in Libby.

SITE ASSETS

The Kootenai Business Park offers a number of site assets that would be attractive to business, including:

- Direct access to rail
- Abundant power supply
- Abundant water supply
- Friendly and vibrant small-town living
- Scenic landscape offering outdoor adventure and recreation



April 2017 site tour to discuss opportunities and constraints.



Rail to service businesses at the site.



November 2017 economic development panel shares success strategies with community stakeholders.

"There's a more positive outlook and increased optimism. We've had more businesses downtown than we had 6 or 7 years ago, so there's definitely momentum in the right direction for Libby"

- Local business owner

Reuse Suitability Zones

- Mixed Industrial/Commercial (Zone A)
- Potential Industrial (Zone B)
- Proposed Commercial Land Use (Zone C)
- Parks/Schools (Recreational) Land Use (Zone D)
- Proposed Recreational Land Use (Zone E)
- Non-Use Areas/Unlikely to be developed

Legend:

- OU 5 Boundary
- International Paper Co.
- Buildings
- Slabs/ Open Buildings
- Flood Zone
- Railway

Map Labels:

- River Country Wood Products
- Strom Electric (Masters Touch Electric)
- Thompson Contracting
- Timberline Auto
- A1 24-7
- F&H Mine
- Core of Engineers
- CDM Smith Federal ER/PRI
- Existing Business Park
- Potential Commercial
- Potential Industrial
- Existing / Potential Recreation
- Potential Recreation
- Libby Fishing Pond
- International Paper Co. (part of Libby Groundwater Superfund Site)
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Scale: 0 250 500 1,000 Feet

North Arrow: N

Skeo Solutions developed this map using base map information provided by CDM Smith. Shapefile source: HDR Engineering, Inc. - OU5 Remedial Investigation. Aerial: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community.

REUSE CONSIDERATIONS

The Kootenai Business Park offers a range of redevelopment options to support economic development and recreational amenities for the City of Libby and surrounding area. The reuse zones map on page 2 identifies areas of the business park that are most suitable for commercial, industrial and recreational use. These zones are based on stakeholder recommendations for future use and site information such as current use, cleanup standards, and existing site features. While the primary goal is to position the property as an economic driver for the region, the Port Authority would like to identify another entity to develop and manage recreational opportunities for areas where commercial/industrial development may not be feasible. Future use goals for each zone and redevelopment considerations are described in more detail below.

REUSE ZONES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	
Zone A: Existing Business Park	Promote and support industrial and manufacturing-related uses.
Zone B: Potential Industrial	Expand industrial development into this area. Consider supporting industrial uses or perhaps agricultural uses.
Zone C – Potential Commercial	Commercial development.
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES	
Zone D - Existing/Potential Recreation	Port Authority is interested in coordinating with local government to find an entity to develop and manage recreational assets.
Zone E – Potential Recreation	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Kootenai Business Park is well equipped with multi-modal access and infrastructure resources to support commercial, light industrial and manufacturing. Economic development experts agreed that the rail spur along with access to abundant water and power are significant assets that position the site well for a range of businesses. A summary of economic development assets includes:

- 200 acres of flat available land
- Electrical substation with 25 MW of power
- Permit to draw 11 million gallons of water per day
- Well-positioned for forest product entrepreneurship (niche forest product markets)
- Rail transportation connections, including rail load-out and new rail spur to the BNSF line with funding from a U.S. EDA grant
- Transportation infrastructure including switch engine locomotive, a rail reload facility and truck scales
- Highway access and visibility
- High speed fiber internet along Highway 2
- Existing businesses on site
- Local skilled labor force



Existing businesses on site.



Highway access and visibility.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The recreation zones on site have direct access from Highway 2 which serves to separate recreational users from industrial traffic. Current recreational uses on site include the Motocross Park and the Fishing Pond. A non-motorized trail runs next to Libby Creek enhancing access to recreational areas of the site. The Port Authority has a grant through Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to create a parking area on the property. Adding amenities such as parking, drinking water, lighting, improved trail surfaces, signage and a wayfinding system would enhance existing recreational features.



Existing Fishing Pond on site.



KOOTENAI BUSINESS PARK ACTION PLAN

The following action plan integrates the outcomes from the November 2017 working session into 10 action steps grouped into near term priorities, local leadership coordination and longer-term strategies. These actions items can be refined and updated over time as new opportunities and information become available.

Near-Term Port Priorities

(6 months)

1. Increase immediate cash flow by securing near-term tenant.
2. Document Kootenai Business Park inventory and assets.
3. Proactively market Kootenai Business Park through local and regional venues.
4. Streamline development requirements and Port Authority decision-making.

Tri-Leadership Coordination

(0-12 months)

5. Coordinate on local infrastructure planning, phasing and funding.
6. Identify entity to develop and manage recreational assets.
7. Coordinate locally to develop a community vision and update the Growth Policy.
8. Build local network of community development leadership working together to promote prosperity for Libby.

Longer-Term Strategies

(18-24 months)

9. Build financing team and strategy.
10. Create a phased development and infrastructure plan.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Local Government and Organizations

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City of Libby
Heritage Museum
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KLJ Engineers
Kootenai River Development Council
Lincoln County Board of Health
Lincoln County Port Authority
Noble Excavating
Venture Inn
WGM Group

Elected Officials

City of Libby Mayor Brent Teske
Libby City Council Representatives Peggy Williams, Kristin Smith and Gary Armstrong
Lincoln County Commissioners Jerry Bennett and Mark Peck
Office of U.S. Senator Steve Daines
Office of U.S. Senator Jon Tester

State and Federal Agencies

MT Dept. of Commerce
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
MT Economic Development Association
MT Finance Assistance Bureau
U.S. Economic Development Administration
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Forest Service

Regional Economic Development Experts

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