

CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS



Regular City Council Meeting
In the City Hall, 108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT
Monday, December 8, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

AGENDA

OPEN MEETING - Call to order

ROLL CALL OF THE COUNCIL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SET THE AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA – Claims, Minutes, Financial Reports, Court Report, & Water Shut-off List/Arrangements

COMMUNITY DECAY AND VIOLATIONS LIST REPORT - Attached

ENGINEER'S REPORT - Attached

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS - Attached

INFORMATION:

ACTION ITEMS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. Oath of Office – Gussie O'Connor
2. Water Leak Credit: 611 Grizzly Dr
3. Water Leak Credit: 202 Cedar
4. Reschedule Committee Meetings
5. Adoption of Comprehensive Plan
6. Setpoint Contract
7. Wastewater Project Phases 3 & 4 - Change Order #1
8. Wastewater Project Phases 3 & 4 Pay Application for Reimbursement
9. Water Project Phases 1 & 2 Pay Application for Reimbursement

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENT - The public may speak for up to 3 minutes about items not on the agenda.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Rusti Leivestad's updates.

ADJOURN

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89826529201?pwd=oGqe3qEKkFEYKY3BpABxbqAa2PkmPk.1>

Meeting ID: 898 2652 9201

Passcode: 876242

CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS

Committee as a whole COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Month: November, Day: 10th, 2025

Council Members Present:

Earlene Powell shawni Vaughn
Larry Lack
Hayley Allen-Blakney
Raoul Ribeiro

City Officials Present:

Mayor Rusti Leivestad

Meeting opened at 5:32 p.m.

Others Present:

see attached.

Action/Motion made:

Move to Committee of a whole For December
Speak w/ Chief and City Attorney to discuss
ordinance

(Hayley, Larry)

Meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Sign: Raoul Ribeiro

Print: Raoul Ribeiro, Committee as a whole Committee Chair

ATTEST:

Kelliann Barton
Kelliann Barton Clerk



City of Thompson Falls

Committee of the Whole Meeting

Monday, November 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall,
108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Agenda: Municipal Speeding Code

If you have any questions, please call

City Hall: 406-827-3557

CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS



Committee of the Whole

City Hall, 108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Monday, November 10, 2025, at 5:30 P.M.

Sign-in Sheet

[illegible]

CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS

Growth Policy COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Month: November, Day: 17th, 2025

Council Members Present:

Shawni Vaught
Earlene Powell

City Officials Present:

Mayor Rusti
Katherine

Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m.

Others Present:

Per attached

Action/Motion made:

Got a good round of feed-back from Open House. People need to understand a Growth Policy is a "wish list". Discussed putting "transparency" goal together. Need to get a social on-line presence to recruit volunteers for events. Eliminate any reference to including EMTs, etc. Add "entry level" housing. Change name to "Comprehensive Land Use Plan". Come up with where stop/yield signs (Streets & Alleys Committee) survey. Kevin will have final document by Friday.

(,)

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Sign: Earlene Powell

Print: Earlene Powell Committee Chair

ATTEST:

Kelliann Barton
Kelliann Barton, Clerk



City of Thompson Falls

Planning Committee

Monday, November 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall,
108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Agenda: Growth Policy

If you have any questions, please call

City Hall: 406-827-3557

November

City Hall, 108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT
Monday, November 17, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

[illegible]

**VIOLATION LIST FOR COUNCIL
12/5/2025**

Nov		2025				
Violations Reported:		6				
Number of Certified Letters Sent:		1				
Number of Citations Issued:		1				
Arrangements Made for Compliance:		1				
Number of Officer/Police Admin/ Office Contact:		8				
Verbal warning given:		1				
Type of Violation:	A:	B:	C: 2	D:	E:	
	F: 1	G:	H:	I:	Misc: 3	

Ledger of Ordinance in Violation/Complaints

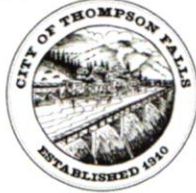
- A: Setback
- B: Parking or Encroachment on city street right of way
- C: Living in a Camper Trailer
- D: Placememt Permit
- E: Dog Tags
- F: Chicken, Ducks, Quail, Rabbits Roosters
- G: House Number
- H: Community Decay
- I: Open Burn with out permit
- Misc: Dog Complaint, Speed, Dust, Patrols, Foreign Plates , Water/Sewer

Completed By Lisa Gregory Police Admin Asst

Handwritten signature and date: 12/5/2025

CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 10, 2025



The City Council meeting was held at the City Hall
108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Council Members Present: Raoul Ribeiro, City Council President; Hayley Allen-Blakney, City Council Vice President; Earlene Powell, Shawni Vaught, and Larry Lack.

Not present: Katherine Maudrone

The City Council meeting was recorded via audio and is available for review on the city website.

City Officials Present:

Rusti Leivestad, Mayor
Kelliann Barton, Acting City Clerk/Treasurer
Tim Goen, City Attorney

Others signed in: The sign-in sheet is attached.

Rusti Leivestad opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.
Kelliann Barton noted who was present.

The Council passed a motion to amend agenda item #1 from adoption to proposal 5-0 to set the amended Agenda. (Powell, Vaught)

The Council passed a motion 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda. (Powell, Allen-Blakney)

Standing Committee Reports: Committee of the Whole meeting again on December 8th at 5:30 pm to discuss the municipal speeding code.

ACTION TAKEN

1. The Council motioned 5-0 to send to the Committee of the Whole. There was no public comment. (Ribeiro, Vaught)
2. The Council motioned 5-0 to approve the water leak credit for Cheryl Blakney. There was no public comment. (Vaught, Lack)
3. The Council motioned 5-0 to send to committee, Streets and Alleys. There was public comment. (Powell, Ribeiro)
4. The Council motioned 5-0 to send to committee, Streets and Alleys. There was public comment. (Ribeiro, Powell)

5. The Council motioned 5-0 to send to committee, Zoning and Board of Adjustment. There was no public comment. (Allen-Blakney, Vaught)
6. The Council motioned 5-0 to send to committee, Water and Sewer. There was no public comment. (Ribeiro, Vaught)
7. The Council motioned 4-1 to approve the Montana League of Cities and Towns Contract Amendment. There was no public comment. (Ribeiro, Allen-Blakney)
8. The Council motioned 5-0 to approve the Water Project Amended BAN Resolution. There was public comment. (Ribeiro, Powell)
9. The Council motioned 5-0 to approve the Water Project Contract Award. There was no public comment. (Powell, Ribeiro)
10. The Council motioned 5-0 to approve the Term Extension for ARPA Grant AMC-23-0068. There was no public comment. (Ribeiro, Allen-Blakney)
11. The Council motioned 5-0 to approve the Wastewater Project Phases 3 & 4 Pay Application for reimbursement. There was no public comment. (Ribeiro, Powell)
12. The Council motioned 5-0 to approve the Water Project Pay Application for reimbursement. There was no public comment. (Allen-Blakney, Vaught)

Unscheduled Public Comment: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT –

- Various comments from residents about Wastewater project – Compliments about crews and progress so far, a couple of complaints about dust. The weekly updates from contractor about where they plan to be working are being posted on City website, Facebook and City Hall door and seem to be reaching our residents and helping to keep them informed.
- Weekly Construction meetings with GWE, City (staff and Public Works), funding agencies and contractor.
- Dept of Commerce here to review compliance checklist for CDBG and MCEP for the Wastewater Phase 3&4
- Special Council meetings for Claims and Hearing/Budget Amendment
- Growth Policy Open House
- Team meeting with GWE and funding agencies. Some aspects of funding are being impacted with Government shutdown.
- Site visit and release form for remedial work.
- Attended Main Street meeting
- Attended Chamber of Commerce meeting
- Swore in reserve officer
- Submitted a budget modification to DNRC for Phase 3 W/W project to transfer \$150,000 from Engineering to RPR Services and \$529,711 from Assessment Bond Funding to Construction. This was to expedite the use of ARPA funding to avoid asking for an extension of the ARPA contract term. Given the progress that S&L has been making, it looks as though we are able to avoid asking for an extension on that project.
- Met with funding agencies to determine since the government shutdown is still unresolved - best approach to be able to award contract for Water Project.

- We received notice that Department of Commerce has approved our request to modify CDBG grant to allow an expansion of benefits to residents in Phases 1 and 2. There will be meetings soon to determine the exact process this would take and to establish the proper way to pay those assessment balances as these SIDs have been on the Tax Rolls for a few years.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Rusti Leivestad, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelliann Barton, Acting City Clerk/Treasurer

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CONSENT AGENDA – Claims, Minutes, Financial Reports, Court Report, & Water Shut-off List/Arrangements

COMMUNITY DECAY AND VIOLATIONS LIST REPORT - Attached

ENGINEER'S REPORT - Attached

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS - Attached

INFORMATION:

Growth Policy Open House

ACTION ITEMS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposal of Municipal Speed Limit Code
2. Water Leak Credit: Blakney \$90.00
3. Yield Sign
4. Parking Ordinance
5. Conditional Use Permit
6. Update Water Regulation Policy
7. Montana League of Cities and Towns Contract Amendment
8. Water Project Amended Bond Anticipatory Note Resolution
9. Water Project Contract Award
10. Term Extension for ARPA Grant AMC-23-0068
11. Wastewater Project Phases 3 & 4 Pay Application
12. Water Project Pay Application for Reimbursement

UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENT - The public may speak for up to 3 minutes about items not on the agenda.

MAYOR'S REPORT - Mayor Rusti Leivestad's updates.

ADJOURN

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83029485475?pwd=SLGYrjlhgihrq78IzY3BPkcMrW8Kov.1>

Meeting ID: 830 2948 5475

Passcode: 779424

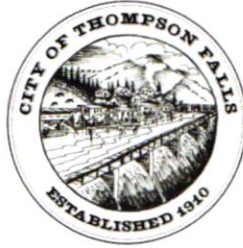
November

Sign-in Sheet

[illegible]

**CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

Monday, December 1, 2025



The City Council Public Hearing was held at the City Hall,
108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls, MT

Council Members Present:

Raoul Ribeiro, City Council President

Katherine Maudrone

Earlene Powell

Shawni Vaught

Larry Lack

Not present: Hayley Allen-Blakney, City Council Vice President

City Officials Present:

Rusti Leivestad, Mayor

Kelliann Barton, Acting City Clerk/Treasurer

Others signed in: Sign-in sheet is attached.

Rusti Leivestad opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Kelliann Barton noted who was present.

ACTION:

Five people were in favor of the proposed amendments to the Growth Policy and motioned to recommend adoption to the Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Rusti Leivestad, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelliann Barton, Acting City Clerk/Treasurer

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
GROWTH POLICY**

City Hall, 108 Fulton Street, Thompson Falls
Monday, December 1, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda: GROWTH POLICY

Public Hearing Notice published in the Sanders County Ledger on November 20, 2025, and
November 27, 2025.

Public Hearing

6:00 p.m. Agenda: Growth Policy

December 1, 2025

Sign-in Sheet

[illegible]

RESOLUTION NO. 861

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE THOMPSON FALLS GROWTH POLICY 2025

WHEREAS, under 76-1-605(2)(a), MCA, a growth policy is not a regulatory document and does not confer any authority to regulate that is not otherwise specifically authorized by law or regulations adopted pursuant to the law; and

WHEREAS, 76-1-604(3)(a), MCA, authorizes the Thompson Falls City Council to revise an adopted growth policy following the procedures of Chapter 1, Title 76, Part 6, MCA, for the adoption of a proposed growth policy; and

WHEREAS, the Thompson Falls City Council recently prepared an updated revision to the Thompson Falls Growth Policy following the procedures outlined in Chapter 1, Title 76, Part 6, MCA; and

WHEREAS, the proposed revision meets the standards of a Growth Policy, as outlined in 76-1- 601, MCA, and is hereby referred to as the Thompson Falls Growth Policy 2025; and

WHEREAS, after due consideration, including holding a public hearing on December 1, 2025, the Thompson Falls Planning Board recommended adoption of the Thompson Falls Growth Policy 2025; and

WHEREAS, 76-1-604, MCA, allows the Thompson Falls City Council to adopt, adopt with revisions, or reject a proposed growth policy after first adopting a resolution of intention to adopt, adopt with revisions, or reject the proposed growth policy or any of its parts; and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2025, the Thompson Falls City Council adopted Resolution No. 861, a resolution of intention to adopt the Thompson Falls Growth Policy 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Thompson Falls City Council solicited public comment on the Thompson Falls Growth Policy 2025; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 2025, the Thompson Falls City Council held a public hearing on the Thompson Falls Growth Policy 2025; and

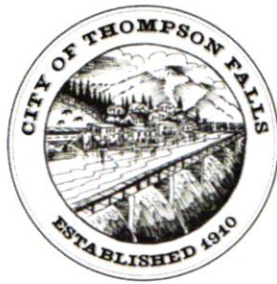
WHEREAS, the Thompson Falls City Council has duly considered all public comments and made clarifying revisions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Thompson Falls City Council hereby adopts the Thompson Falls Growth Policy 2025.

**PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND SIGNED BY THE
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS THIS 8TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2025.**

By: _____
Rusti Leivestad, Mayor

Attest: _____
Kelliann Barton, Acting City Clerk / Treasurer



**REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA
THOMPSON FALLS CITY COUNCIL**

I, Rusti Phone # _____

request the following item be placed on the agenda for
the December 8 2025, City Council Meeting:

Please give a brief description of the item to be discussed,
approximate time you need and the results you would like to see.

Information: _____

Time: 6:00pm

Action: Oath of Office - Gussie O'Connor

**All agenda requests must be submitted by Noon on
Wednesday before the Council Meeting.**



Certificate of Election

TO BE ISSUED TO SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE BY ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR AFTER OFFICIAL CANVASS OF VOTES

COUNTY OF SANDERS

STATE OF MONTANA

GREETINGS:

I, Alisa Garcia, Election Administrator of Sanders County, do hereby certify that at a Municipal General Election held in said county, on the 4th day of November, 2025,

GUSSIE O'CONNOR

was duly elected to the office of City of Thompson Falls Mayor in and for said County, having received the highest number of votes for said office as appears from the official canvass of the returns of said County and having complied with state campaign and practice laws pursuant to 13-37-127, Montana Code Annotated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand and official seal this 18th day
of November, 2025.

[SEAL]


Election Administrator

**REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA
THOMPSON FALLS CITY COUNCIL**

I, Rusti Phone # _____

request the following item be placed on the agenda for
the December 8 2025, City Council Meeting:

Please give a brief description of the item to be discussed,
approximate time you need and the results you would like to see.

Information: _____

Time: 6:00pm

Action: Water leak Credit
Glenn Wilson 111 Grizzly Dr
\$15.00

**All agenda requests must be submitted by Noon on
Wednesday before the Council Meeting.**

Customer Name: WILSON, GLENN
Account: 313110-00
Route - Meter: 08-13110 **From 6-2025 to 12-2025**
Service Address: 611 GRIZZLY DRIVE
Mtr Id - Type - Size: 12201462 B **0.750"**

Meter Serial #:**(Readings in Actual Units)**

AP-Year	Reading	Reading Date	Monthly Usage	YTD Usage	Reading Type
12-2025	510800	12/01/2025	1800	83500	HANDHELD
11-2025	509000	11/03/2025	12000	81700	HANDHELD
10-2025	497000	10/01/2025	11600	69700	HANDHELD
09-2025	485400	09/02/2025	18900	58100	HANDHELD
08-2025	466500	08/01/2025	14900	39200	HANDHELD
07-2025	451600	07/01/2025	10700	24300	HANDHELD
06-2025	440900	06/02/2025	4100	13600	HANDHELD

$12,000 = \$15.00$
 - 2,000 base
 $1.50 \times 10,000 =$
 credit

**REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA
THOMPSON FALLS CITY COUNCIL**

I, Rusti Phone # _____

request the following item be placed on the agenda for
the December 8 2025, City Council Meeting:

Please give a brief description of the item to be discussed,
approximate time you need and the results you would like to see.

Information: _____

Time: 6:00 pm

Action: Water leak Credit
Matthew Boniecki 202 Cedar St.
\$314.50

**All agenda requests must be submitted by Noon on
Wednesday before the Council Meeting.**

Customer Name: BONIECKI, MATTHEW S.
Account: 202030-00
Route - Meter: 08-02030
Service Address: 202 CEDAR STREET
Mtr Id - Type - Size: 12216037 B

From 6-2025 to 12-2025

0.750"

Meter Serial #:

(Readings in Actual Units)

AP-Year	Reading	Reading Date	Monthly Usage	YTD Usage	Reading Type
12-2025	668700	12/01/2025	400	195200	HANDHELD
11-2025	668300	11/03/2025	91500	194800	HANDHELD
10-2025	576800	10/01/2025	95900	103300	HANDHELD
09-2025	480900	09/02/2025	6500	7400	HANDHELD
08-2025	474400	08/01/2025	500	900	HANDHELD
07-2025	473900	07/01/2025	100	400	HANDHELD
06-2025	473800	06/02/2025	300	300	HANDHELD

6,500 : \$7.50
 91,500 : \$138.00
 95,900 : \$144.00
 Penalty fees: \$25.00
 Total: \$314.50

**REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA
THOMPSON FALLS CITY COUNCIL**

I, Rusti Phone # _____

request the following item be placed on the agenda for
the December 8 2025, City Council Meeting:

Please give a brief description of the item to be discussed,
approximate time you need and the results you would like to see.

Information: _____

Time: 6:00 pm

Action: Reschedule Committee

Meetings

**All agenda requests must be submitted by Noon on
Wednesday before the Council Meeting.**

**REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA
THOMPSON FALLS CITY COUNCIL**

I, Rusti Phone # _____

request the following item be placed on the agenda for
the December 8 2025, City Council Meeting:

Please give a brief description of the item to be discussed,
approximate time you need and the results you would like to see.

Information: _____

Time: 6:00 pm

Action: Adopt Comprehensive Plan
also known as Growth Policy

**All agenda requests must be submitted by Noon on
Wednesday before the Council Meeting.**

City of
Thompson
Falls
Montana



Comprehensive Plan 2025

Formatted: Font: 45 pt

Adopted:
XX, XX, XXXX

CITY OF THOMPSON FALLS

Montana

December 2025

Prepared for:
City Planning Board

Acknowledgments

The completion of the Thompson Falls ~~Growth Policy~~Comprehensive Plan would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts and valuable input of many individuals and groups. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the following:

Thank you to the Thompson Falls Planning Board members for their thoughtful guidance, commitment, and expertise throughout the development of this policy. Your time and effort in reviewing, discussing, and refining the key elements of the ~~Growth Policy~~Comprehensive Plan have been indispensable.

- Earlene Powell
- Raoul Ribeiro
- Shawni Vaught

We also wish to express our appreciation to the Thompson Falls City Council for their continued support and leadership. Your collaboration and encouragement have been crucial in ensuring the success of this project. We are grateful for your dedication to making Thompson Falls a better place for all residents.

- Rusti Leivestad, Mayor
- Raoul Ribeiro, Ward 1
- Larry Lack, Ward 1
- Katherine Maudrone, Ward 2
- Earlene Powell, Ward 2
- Shawni Vaught, Ward 3
- Hayley Allen-Blakney, Ward 3

Lastly, we extend our sincere thanks to the public for their active participation and feedback during the policy development process. Your engagement, suggestions, and willingness to share your thoughts have enriched this document and helped shape the future of Thompson Falls.

We are grateful for your involvement and for helping ensure that this ~~Growth Policy~~Comprehensive Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of our community.

Together, through the contributions of the Planning Board, City Council, City Staff, and the public, this ~~Growth Policy~~Comprehensive Plan represents a collective effort to guide the future of Thompson Falls in a thoughtful and sustainable manner.

Thank you all for your contributions to this important work.

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Map 1 – Location Map of Thompson Falls, Montana State Library

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Thompson Falls' community tag line is 'Genuine in Nature' because of its two greatest assets, people and open spaces. An example is the fact that in 2012, the City was chosen by Outdoor Life magazine as number 16 of the 35 best hunting and fishing towns in the United States.

Thompson Falls is in the warmest area of the state, thus allowing residents and visitors to enjoy outdoor activities year-round. The City is surrounded by the Lolo National Forest and very close to the Kootenai National Forest to the west. In addition, the community is set between the Cabinet Mountain Range and the Coeur d'Alene Mountain Range. The surrounding public lands and thousand miles of trails and logging roads offer many opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

Thompson Falls is the County seat for Sanders County and offers a variety of services for residents and visitors. The City is located adjacent to the reservoir created by the Thompson Falls Dam which provides access to swimming, fishing and boating. Residents and visitors can also walk from downtown across the Gallatin Bridge to Island Park and view the dams and the historic High Bridge over the Clark Fork River.

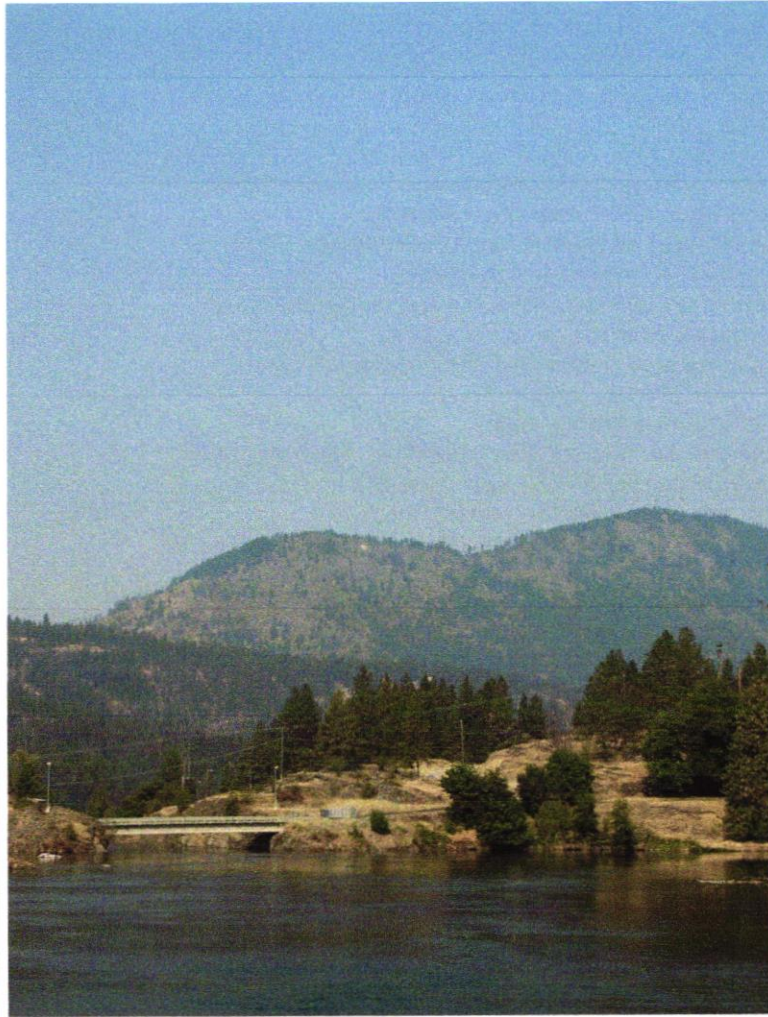
While the City has amazing natural assets, residents know there are other opportunities and challenges that need to be addressed. These include working to strengthening the economy, upgrading City infrastructure, retaining and attracting young people and families and harnessing the knowledge and resources of new City and County residents.

It is important to note that Thompson Falls and Sanders County have been actively working to improve the economy and quality of life of residents through thoughtful planning. These efforts include:

- 2013 Sanders County Technology Initiative Feasibility Study (Sanders County Community Development Corporation (SCCDC)/Big Sky Trust Fund)
- 2014 Thompson Falls Community Trails Plan (Thompson Falls Community Trails-TFCT)
- 2015 County-wide Resource Assessment (SCCDC and MEDA, sponsored by the County Commissioners)
- 2015 Downtown Master Plan (Thompson Falls Main Street-TFMS, Montana Main Street Grant Program)
- 2016 Thompson Falls Community Branding Project (TFMS, Montana Main Street Grant Program)
- 2017 Financial Measures Feasibility Study (SCCDC and City of Thompson Falls/LOR Foundation)
- 2017 Thompson Falls City Inventory and Assessment of Public Parks (SCCDC and City/LOR Foundation)
- 2017 Feasibility Study of Eastward Extension Trail (SCCDC and TFCT/LOR Foundation)
- 2018 Thompson Falls Visitor Survey (SCCDC/Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research)
- 2018 PAR for Black Bear (SCCDC/Montana Main Street Program)
- 2019 Recreation Economy Technical Assistance Grant (TFMS and SCCDC/EPA)
- 2020 City Growth Policy
- 2023 Capital Improvements Plan
- 2023 Community Assessment
- 2024 Wayfinding Plan

This updated [Growth Policy Comprehensive Plan](#) is the City's comprehensive effort to tie these many different planning projects into one document and to look 5 to 8 years into the future. The document contains nine sections, all of which provide the basis for achieving the goals developed by the City Planning Board. These sections include:

- Goals and Objectives: To take advantage of the opportunities and issues the City faces, residents must be willing to establish practical and achievable goals.
- Introduction: A description of the City, its location, features and history.
- Population: A description of the City's population characteristics.
- Economy: A description of the City's current economic situation through the lens of both City and County level data and other sources.
- Community Services: A description of the services and infrastructure provided to residents.
- Housing: The status of the City's current housing stock.
- Land Use: A discussion about how the City might grow in the future. This section also includes a discussion about annexation, subdivision regulations, the wildland urban interface, sand and gravel resources and floodplains that affect the City.
- Resident Engagement: A description of the steps used to obtain the advice and guidance of residents for this planning process.
- Action Plan: The actual steps the City may take to achieve the goals identified in the document.



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The City Planning Board reviewed the goals and objectives in the 2020 Growth Policy and identified those that had been achieved or were in the process of being completed. Those goals and objectives included:

- Assist with the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan.
- Help implement the City Marketing Strategy.
- Assist with implementing the priorities identified in the Thompson Falls Community Trails Plan
- Encourage satellite technology and a location for continuing/technology/distance training and education in the City.
- Continue to upgrade and maintain City services i.e. water, sewer and streets.
- Develop year-round indoor recreation facilities.
- Prioritize and incrementally complete street improvements.

The Planning Board updated the goals and objectives in the [Growth Policy Comprehensive Plan](#) to address the opportunities and needs identified through the entire process. The specific projects and policies to be used achieve these goals are found in the Action Plan on page 61.

Economy

Thompson Falls must create a foundation to help residents prosper. Therefore, the City will work to strengthen and diversify its economy.

Goals	Objectives
Increase the number of (non-gender-specific) living wage jobs in Thompson Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the creation and expansion of businesses that offer year-round employment opportunities to residents <u>the establishment of a customer service call center to employ up to 30 full-time employees.</u>
Promote a business incubation strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the provision of low-cost space for new business startups to begin the process of developing and establishing their business

Improve and enhance the impact of the recreation economy upon City residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan. • Help implement the City Marketing Strategy. • Assist with implementing the priorities identified in the Thompson Falls Community Trails Plan.
Help foster the continued development of a technology and communications industry in the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in implementing the Sanders County Technology Initiative by supporting private businesses and engaging the school district.
Improve technology and educational opportunities for residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage satellite technology and a location for continuing/technology/distance training and education in the City such as the Lifeline Trade School and a Montana University system satellite campus
Create events focused on the identity, cultural quality and social fabric of Thompson Falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create events focused on the identity, cultural quality and social fabric of Thompson Falls. • Create a rich cultural component to Thompson Falls identity.
Encourage business development through the provision of safe, economical and reliable City services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to upgrade and maintain City services i.e. water, sewer and streets.

Community Services

Quality of life for City residents is determined by many things. Some of the most important are services, including healthcare, education, emergency services and recreation. The City will help to provide and/or encourage adequate community services including safe and economical infrastructure and facilities that range from drinking water and wastewater treatment to streets and parks.

Goals	Objectives
Provide safe and economical drinking water and wastewater collection and treatment services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete upgrades to the City's drinking water system. • Complete the installation of the new sewer collection system and treatment system upgrades. • Prioritize revenue expenditures on the most critical City facilities. • Utilize state and federal funding sources to help maintain and upgrade City water and sewer infrastructure.
Reduce stormwater drainage issues in the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on stormwater issues in the residential areas north of the railroad tracks.
Upgrade the surface condition of City streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize and incrementally complete street improvements.
Promote quality year-round, indoor recreation/fitness opportunities for all City residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop year-round indoor recreation facilities.
Ensure emergency medical and fire protection services for City residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide residents with efficient, effective and economical fire protection and emergency medical services.
Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the City and along Main Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a good working relationship with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). • Construct pedestrian facilities across Main Street/Highway 200 and bicycle/pedestrian routes parallel to but not located on Main Street.

Housing

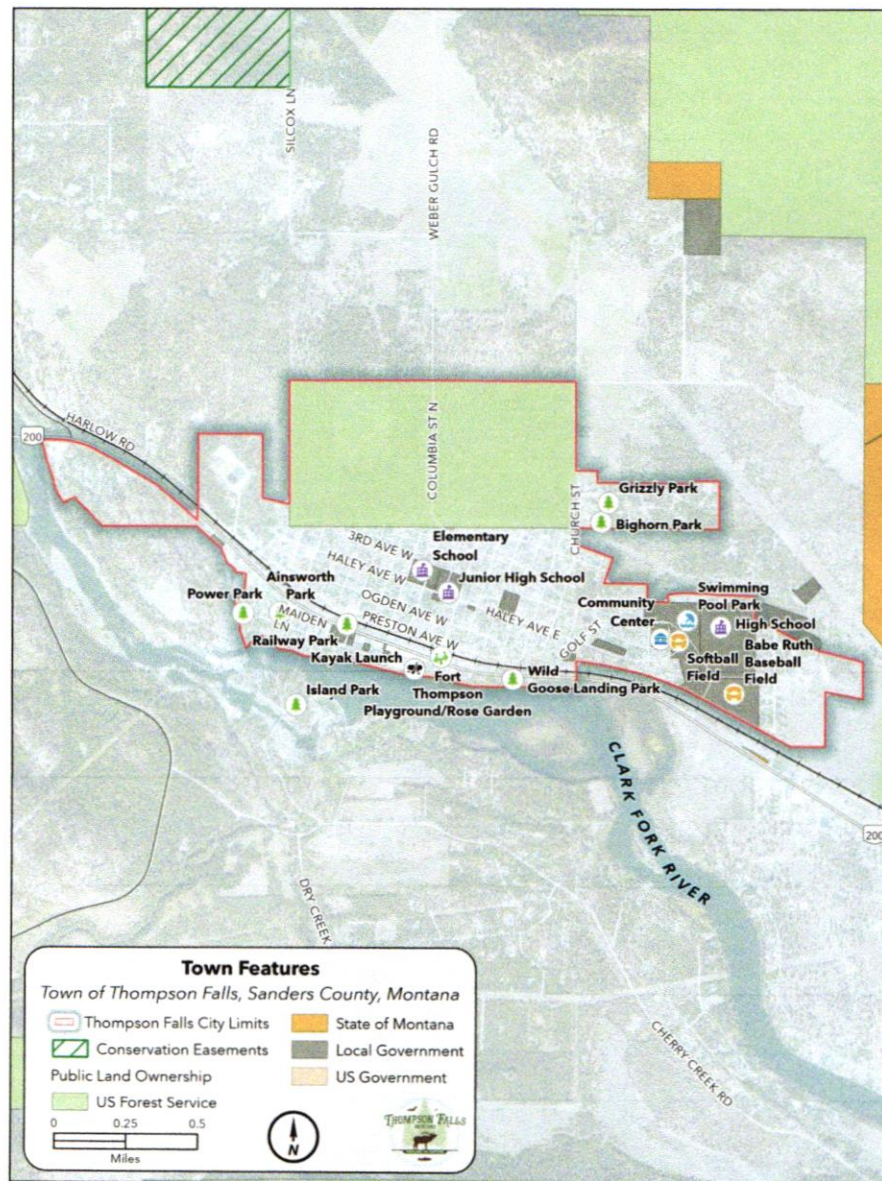
Adequate and affordable housing is essential to ensure the success of City residents. The City, along with other partners, will work to meet community housing needs.

Goals	Objectives
Facilitate safe and affordable housing for all City residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the housing and real estate market of the City and the County.• Encourage the use of vacant City lands for housing. Encourage the development of diverse housing types such as entry-level and senior housing.

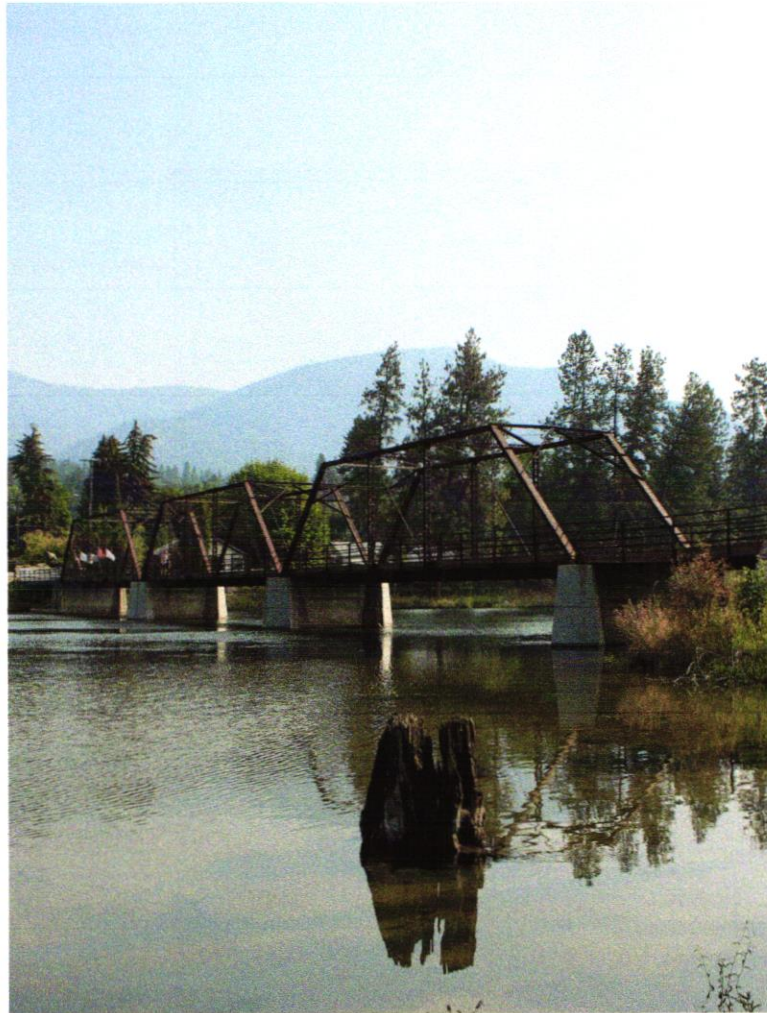
Land Use

New growth will be essential for the long-term success of the City, but growth should occur in a logical and cost-effective manner. New development should take place in areas easy to provide services to and have a limited potential for natural hazards such as floodplain or wildfire.

Goals	Objectives
Annexation of new land into the City will only occur if it will be an asset to the City and can be economically and safely provided with services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and adopt a formal policy and process for annexation.• Use existing City engineering reports to help identify areas appropriate for annexation
Efficiently and effectively update subdivision regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update after legislative sessions for new regulations.• Ensure City staff and the Planning Board understand and can administrate the review of subdivisions.
Encourage the redevelopment of the Riley Creek Mill Site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess the property for any potential cleanup and development options.



Map 2 – City Features of Thompson Falls, Montana State Library



INTRODUCTION

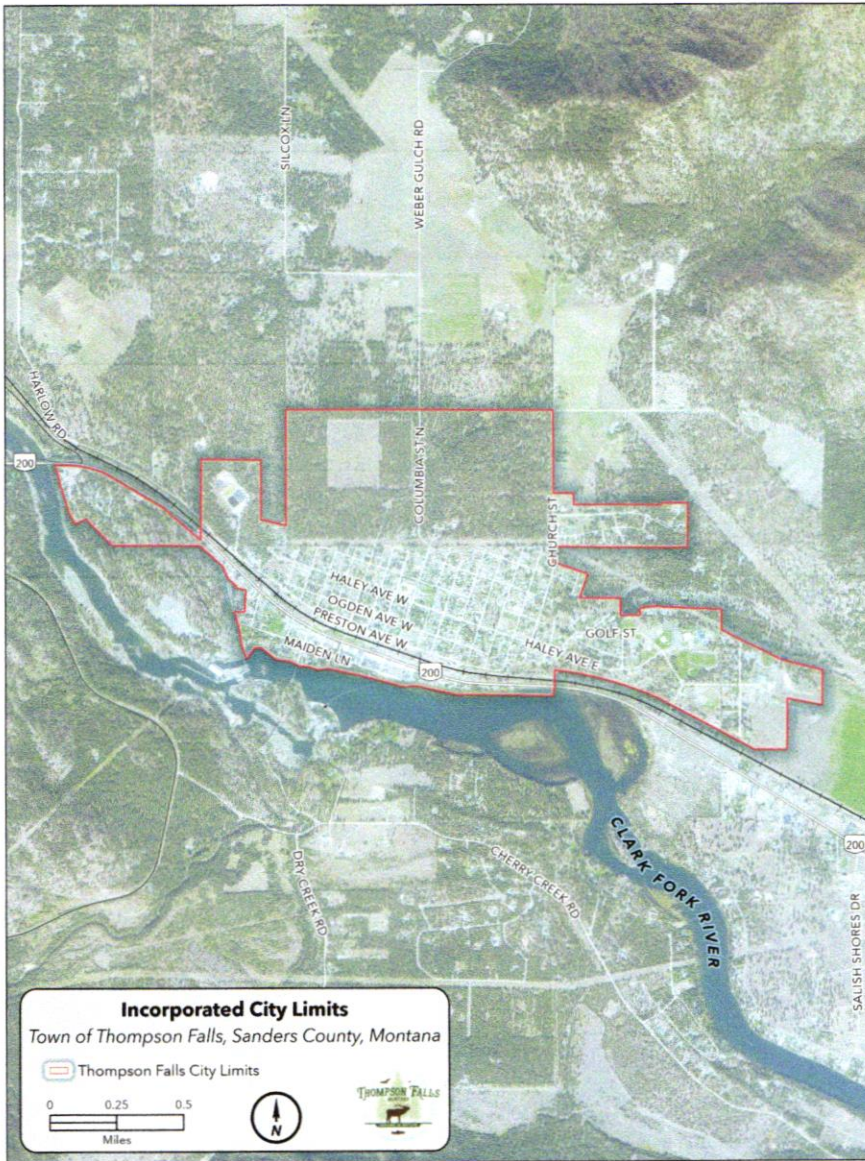
INTRODUCTION

The City of Thompson Falls determined that the term, Growth Policy had confused the public during the initial planning process and instead, the Town has elected to use the term, Comprehensive Plan. Statutorily, these monikers mean the same. A Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document, primarily driven by state statute (MCA 76-1-601), and is adopted by a city, town or county and outlines the community's vision for its future. A Comprehensive Plan is used by local governments to guide decision-making about the community's land use and development. A Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document and does not require regulations to be adopted and utilized. But regulations such as zoning and subdivision must be consistent with and supported by the Comprehensive Plan, for the purposes of consistency and clarity.

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Location

The City of Thompson Falls is in Sanders County, Montana, approximately 101 highway miles northwest of the City of Missoula and 107 highway miles southwest of Kalispell. According to the United States Census Bureau, the estimated population of the City in 2023 was 1,568 people. The City also serves as the County seat for Sanders County.



Map 3 – Incorporated City Limits, Montana State Library

Geography

Thompson Falls is nestled in the Clark Fork River Valley between the Cabinet and Coeur d'Alene Mountains along the Clark Fork River. Main Street is part of Montana Secondary Highway 200, and the north side of the highway is bordered by the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad, which is leased by Montana Rail Link. Thompson Falls is surrounded by large amounts of public land, particularly the Lolo and Kootenai National Forests, which comprise well over 900,000 acres of land in Sanders County.

Land Ownership in Sanders County (Acres)		
Private Ownership	339,971	19.2%
Federal Lands	922,305	52.2%
Tribal Lands	439,412	24.9%
State of Montana	64,792	3.7%

Table 1 – U.S. Geological Survey, Gap Analysis Program, 2024, Protected Areas Database of the United States (PADUS version 4.0)

Climate

The climate of Thompson Falls is characterized by generally mild summers and cold winters. The City's warmest month of the year is July, with an average maximum temperature of 88.7 degrees Fahrenheit, while the coldest month is January, with an average minimum temperature of 36.9 degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual precipitation in the City is 20.32 inches, with precipitation evenly distributed throughout the year. Generally, the month with the highest precipitation is November, with an average snowfall of 2.82 inches.

It is important to note that Thompson Falls and the western end of Sanders County are the most temperate areas in Montana and thus have the longest growing season in the State. This highlights how mild the climate can be in Thompson Falls compared to the rest of the State of Montana.

History

It is generally assumed that the City of Thompson Falls is named after the British explorer and fur trader David Thompson. Thompson established a North West Company fur trading post in 1809 near the present-day City. Historical evidence shows the City was more likely named after James Thompson, a trapper, hunter, and prospector who lived in the area from the mid-1860s until 1888, when he was murdered at the Horse Plains (near the present-day Town of Plains).

Development of the City began in earnest upon the arrival of the railroad in 1881. Growth increased two years later, when a gold rush hit the region surrounding Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Thompson Falls served as a supply and transportation center to accommodate the men going to

the new mines. The first platted lots were established in 1885, and the City was incorporated in 1910.

The Thompson Falls Dam was completed in 1915, with the foundation of the dam constructed on a set of natural falls at the time. The dam was a major supplier of electricity to the electrified portion of the Milwaukee Railroad in Montana and mining operations in Idaho. The dam system is owned by Northwestern Energy. Currently, the dam complex creates an upstream reservoir with a water storage capacity of 8300 acre-feet and has a seven-unit hydroelectric generation capacity of 94 megawatts. The island in the middle of the dam complex contains a public park with hiking trails, picnic tables, and scenic overlooks.

Construction of a fish ladder at the Thompson Falls dam was completed in 2010, and it started operations in 2011. The fish ladder operates annually between March and October and provides passage for bull trout, as well as several other salmonid and non-salmonid species.

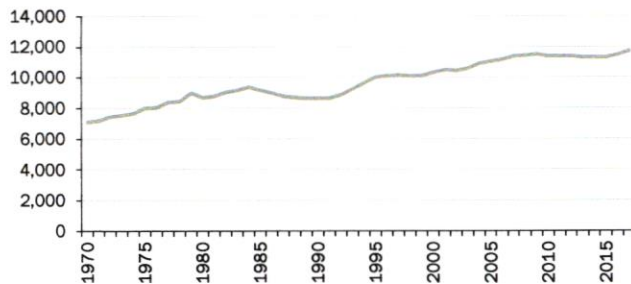
Thompson Falls Dam is one of a series of three (3) dams that are found on the lower Clark Fork River. The other two are Noxon Rapids Dam and Cabinet Gorge Dam, and are located downstream of Thompson Falls. Noxon Rapids Dam creates Noxon Reservoir, a 7,700-acre body of water that is a major recreation attraction for the area.



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In 2023, the City of Thompson Falls was estimated by the Census Bureau to have a population of 1,568 people, while Sanders County had an estimated population of 12,936, which includes Thompson Falls.



*Figure 1 - Population Trends, Sanders County 1970-2023
(Census Bureau, 2014 Washington, D.C.).*

Demographically, Sanders County finds itself in a situation familiar to many other communities in Montana: the median age of County residents has increased. American Community Survey (ACS) data from the Census Bureau showed that in 2010, the median age for County residents was estimated at 48.8 years of age, and by 2023, it had increased to 54.6. For the City of Thompson Falls, ACS data indicates the median age of residents has decreased from 44.5 to 47.2 from 2010 to 2023.

It is important to note that the City provides services to far more than just the people within the City limits. This is particularly true from a parks and recreation standpoint. For example, there are approximately 1,568 people in the City, and there are a total of 5,000 people living in the Library District, which also encompasses the City. The District helps fund the operation of the Library. While an actual number is unknown, many of the people living outside the City limits are likely to use City parks and recreation facilities at some point during the year; however, they do not pay to fund their operation and maintenance.

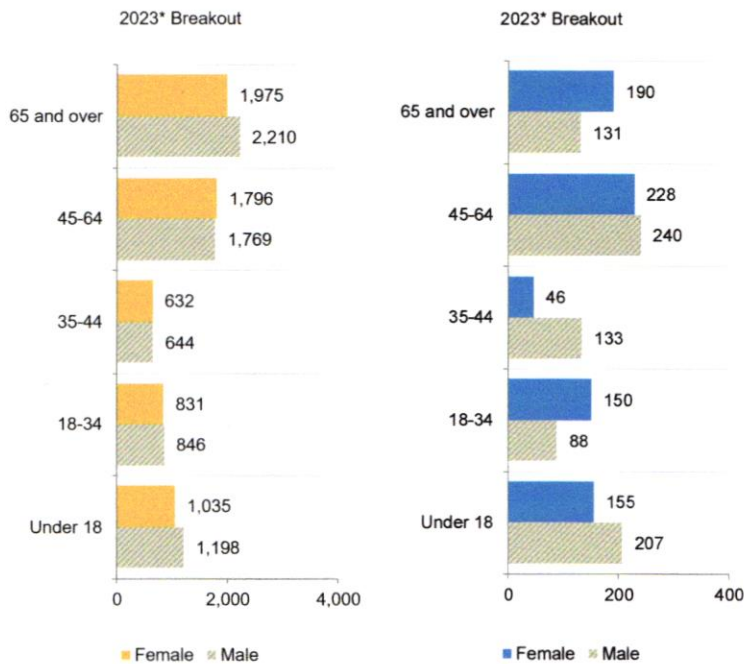


Figure 2 - Population Age Breakout for Sanders County (Left) and Population Age Breakout for Thompson Falls (Right), 2023 Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

Another trend that should be watched closely in both the City and the County is the increase in the number of people age 65 and over. In 2010, the Census estimated this number at 2,335 persons in the County; by 2023 it was estimated to be 4,185 persons, or approximately 32 percent of the total County population.

There are several factors that are leading to an aging population. These include:

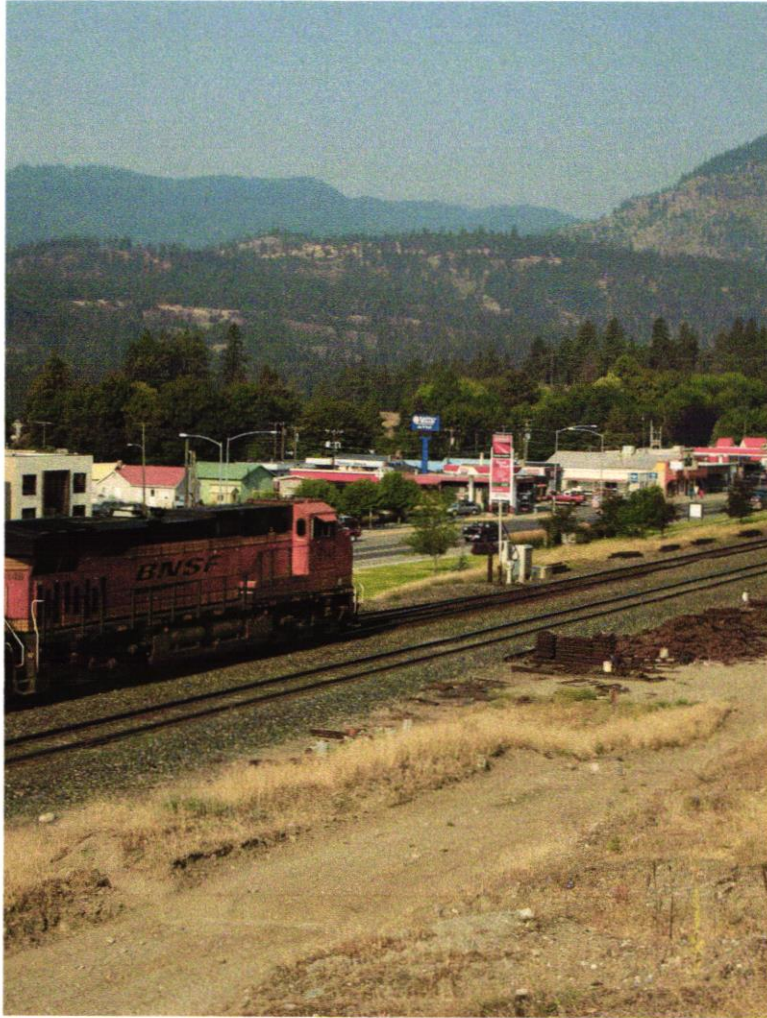
- People of retirement age are finding Thompson Falls and the County an attractive place to retire due to a lower cost of living and the wide variety of amenities; and
- Young people graduating from high school in the County find it economically difficult to stay.

To slow or reverse this trend, it will be important to make the City and the County an attractive

choice for young people and families to choose for a home. To do so, it will require four key ingredients:

- Living wage employment;
- Housing affordability;
- Cultural and entertainment opportunities; and
- Continuing education opportunities.

Like many other Montana counties and communities, an aging population and a continued decrease in the number of younger people is something the City and Sanders County need to continue to watch closely. The trend could affect the ability of each jurisdiction to provide or facilitate services such as senior services, healthcare, housing and a stable workforce.



ECONOMY

ECONOMY

Based on the limited economic data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, Thompson Falls has six broad occupations that employ most of the residents. These include education, healthcare, retail trade, finance/real estate, manufacturing, and forestry/agriculture. Unfortunately, much of the detailed economic data available for Montana is compiled only at the State or County level. Hence, to understand the economic situation in Thompson Falls, it is essential to also look at data for Sanders County.

County Employers

In 2022, the top six employment sectors in Sanders County were healthcare (540), accommodation/food service (448), retail (428), educational services (332), manufacturing (266), and public administration (214). Other important employers in the County include construction and other services, excluding public administration.

From 2002 to 2022, the top three industry sectors that added jobs were health care and social assistance (373 new jobs), accommodation and food services (227 new jobs), and retail trade (210 new jobs).

From 2002 to 2022, jobs in non-service related industries (farm/ag/mining) grew from 1,626 to 1,749, an 8 percent increase. During that same time, jobs in service-related industries (retail/healthcare, etc.) grew from 2,559 to 3,641, a 42 percent increase. Over that same time, the number of government jobs shrank from 750 to 704, a 6 percent decrease. The significant increase in service sector jobs is likely related to the growth in the recreation economy of the County.

Compared to the County, the top 6 employment sectors in Thompson Falls in 2022 were public administration (153), retail trade (99), educational service (94), accommodation and food services (82), health care and social assistance (43), and real estate and rental leasing (40).

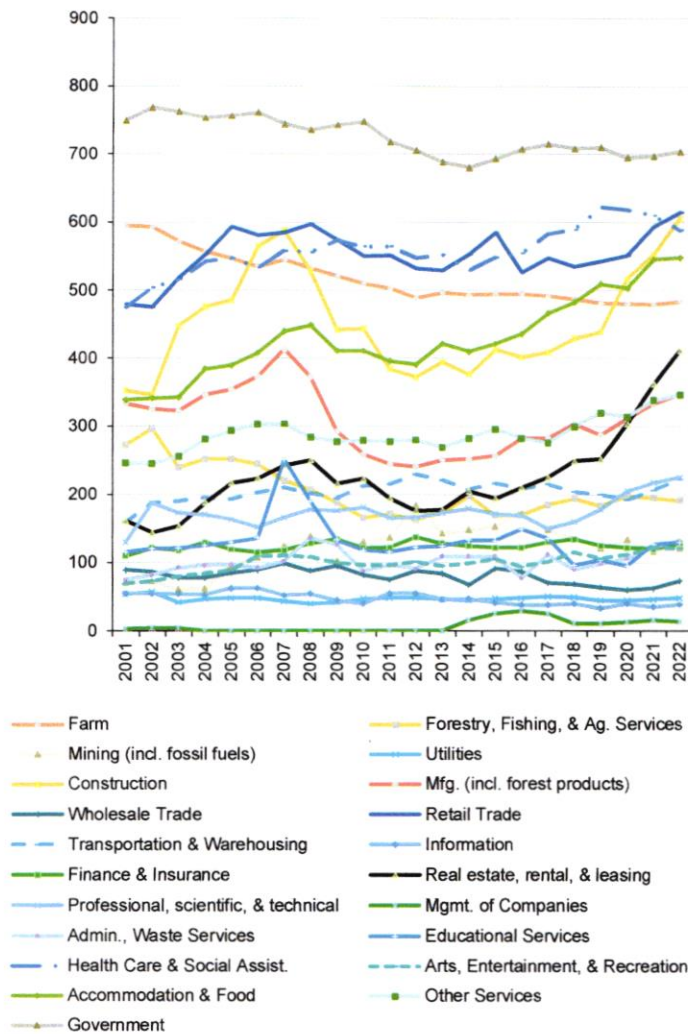


Figure 3 - Top Employment Sectors in Sanders County 2001-2022
 U.S. Department of Labor. 2023. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

According to data from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, the following are the

firms or organizations in Sanders County that employed the most people in 2024:

• Bonnie Plants LLC	• 20-49 employees
• Clark Fork Valley Hospital	• 100-249 employees
• Clearview Academy	• 50-99 employees
• Little Bitterroot Special Services	• 50-99 employees
• Montana Moore Holdings LLC	• 20-49 employees
• Moodys Market Inc	• 20-49 employees
• Quinns Hot Springs Resort Inc	• 100-249 employees
• RTI Fabrication	• 20-49 employees
• Thompson River Lumber Company of MT	• 50-99 employees
• Town Pump Inc	• 20-49 employees

*Figure 4 - Top Employers in Sanders County 2024
Montana Department of Labor and Industry 2024.*

Labor and Non-Labor Income

In 2022, income from labor sources for County residents was \$226.2 million, or 35.3 percent of all income. This was a significant increase from the estimated figure of \$159.1 million in 2000. This increase may be attributable to an increasing “remote” workforce working from home or pending retirees bringing their labor income with them.

Non-labor income for County residents in 2022 was \$413.9 million and represented 64.7 percent of income. This was a 14.1 percent increase from the estimated figure in 2000. Non-labor sources of income include dividends, interest, rent, and transfer payments such as Social Security and Medicare.

Per Capita Income

From 2000 to 2022, per capita income in the County increased from \$31,304 to \$47,623, a 52.1 percent increase over that time. Per capita income is a measure of income per person. It is the total personal income (from labor and non-labor sources) divided by the total population. Per capita income is considered one of the more important measures of economic well-being for communities.

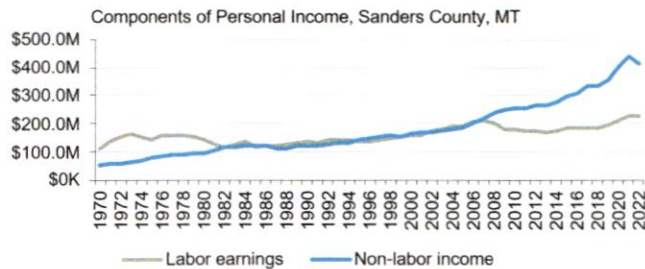


Figure 5 - Components of Total Personal Income, Sanders County 1970-2023
 U.S. Department of Labor. 2024. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

Total personal income is a measure of the total annual gross earnings of an individual from all income sources, such as salaries and wages, investment interest and dividends, employer contributions to pension plans, and rental properties.

According to Census data, the median household income in the County in 2022 was \$54,035, and the percentage of low to moderate-income families was approximately twenty-two (22) percent of the County's population in 2022. The Census defines median income as dividing the income distribution of a community, in this case the County, into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. For households and families, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families, including those with no income.

Timber Industry

Natural resource industries had traditionally dominated the economy of Sanders County and communities such as Thompson Falls. The County used to be one of the top timber-producing counties in the State, with timber harvests taking place on national forest lands, corporate timber lands, state and tribal land, and other private holdings. The timber industry in the County was at its height of production in the late 1980s, but with increased Federal regulations, environmental litigation, and the national recession of 2008, timber harvests saw a significant decline, which negatively impacted the economy of the County.

At the height of timber production, there were four large mills and several smaller sawmills in operation in the County. Today, only one mill remains in operation. Thompson River Lumber, which is the second largest employer in the County.

In 1998, the timber industry represented almost 16 percent of total employment in the County.

By 2016, that percentage had declined by over half to just over a 7 percent total employment. From 1970 to 2023, the average earnings for such jobs shrank from \$35,172 to \$31,676 (in real terms), a 10 percent decrease. In addition, according to the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research, in 2005, Sanders County reported 74,082 thousand board feet (MBF) of timber harvested. By 2016, volumes declined to 39,732 thousand board feet (MBF).

The potential exists to use the County's timber resources to diversify the County's economy. The area has significant timber biomass resources that could be used to create value-added products such as wood pellets for heating. Timber biomass is any timber-derived product capable of being converted to energy. Biomass mills that are manufacturing heating pellets are currently operating in nearby Superior and Columbia Falls, Montana.

Rock Creek Mine

The Rock Creek Mine is a silver and copper hard rock mine proposed by the Hecla Mining Corporation. The project has received Phase 1 approval by the United States Forest Service, and Hecla is proposing to invest \$3.2 billion (over 35 years) in the project. The proposed mine is located approximately 36 miles northwest of Thompson Falls. During Phase II of the project, when the mine is fully developed, it could create approximately 300 high-paying jobs. These jobs will be distributed between Bonner County in Idaho, Lincoln and Sanders Counties in Montana, and other areas of the country. The jobs at the mine could generate nearly \$700 million in salaries and \$400 million in goods and services purchased during the estimated life of the mine, which is approximately 35 years.

When the mine begins operation, it will have a significant impact on the economy of northwestern Montana, including Sanders County and Thompson Falls. The City and the County need to think about how to ensure that adequate housing is available for the new workers and how additional services such as law enforcement, emergency services, and education can be provided. The most important question for Thompson Falls is how to position itself to attract some of the new residents who are a part of the mine workforce. One this the City can do is to ensure it has enough water and sewer capacity and land for the development of new residential housing.

Antimony Mine

Antimony is a rare earth metal that is used in a wide variety of products, but the most common uses for the mineral is in flame retardants, lead batteries, and ammunition. Currently, China is the largest producer of antimony in the world, mining 80% of the world's supply.

In an effort for the United States to produce more rare earth metals domestically, the Federal government has been paving the way for easier expansion and permitting of mines. The United

States Antimony Corporation is the sole processor of Antimony in the United States. This company was recently awarded a \$245 million contract with the Department of Defense to produce more antimony.

The United States Antimony Corporation currently operates an antimony mine in Sanders County. With this new contract from the Department of Defense, they will be expanding the current footprint of the mine to produce more antimony and increase our Nation's defense. Thompson Falls should anticipate at least some influx of new residents and or more activity in the area as additional jobs are added at the mine.

Broadband Communications

Thompson Falls has very good Broadband internet service. Service is provided to City residents by two private entities: Access Montana and Blackfoot Telephone.

In the spring of 2019, Blackfoot Telephone began a multi-year project to upgrade its Broadband network in the Thompson Falls area. This includes the installation of new fiber optic cables in the area in 2019. This work could help encourage businesses that are reliant on fast internet speeds and facilitate any potential distance learning/continuing education programs.

Main Street Businesses

The Thompson Falls, Main Street Inc. was formed by concerned business owners and City residents who wanted to improve the appearance and economic vitality of the downtown area. As part of that process, the City became an affiliate member of the Montana Main Street Program, which is managed by the Montana Department of Commerce. The City's Main Street program essentially serves as a funding mechanism for downtown projects, and the Sanders County Community Development Corporation assists with implementing program projects.

In 2015, Main Street Inc. developed a Downtown Master Plan to serve as a guide for improving the economic condition and appearance of the downtown area. The Plan focused on the traditional downtown along Main Street/MT Highway 200 and extended along MT Highway 200 from Wild Goose Landing on the east side of the City to just beyond Pond Street on the west end of the City.

The plan addresses marketing, the design and improvement of buildings, and identifying how to connect the downtown to nearby amenities. It also focused on achieving measurable results. The plan contains short, medium, and long-term actions to improve downtown and addresses four main issues:

- Access and Mobility: Pedestrian and non-motorized connections between the core area and neighborhoods, important sites, and recreational amenities should be made and improved upon.
- Awareness: Thompson Falls should do more to brand and promote itself within its primary trade area and within the region. Signage is needed to direct visitors to amenities.
- Amenities: Thompson Falls has a wealth of quality-of-life amenities, especially outdoor recreational opportunities. These amenities can be used as assets to attract residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Appearance: The appearance of the community can help capture business and create a uniqueness to the community that people identify with. Opportunities to improve facades and the streetscape can create a sense of place where people will want to be.

An example of a project undertaken to implement the plan is the development of a preliminary architectural report (PAR) for the historic Black Bear Inn in 2019. The PAR will set the stage for the rehabilitation of the building and promote economic development by conducting a feasibility study for the use of the second floor of the building for office space etc. Another project identified in the Plan that was completed in 2016 was a Marketing Strategy. The strategy created a “brand” for the City and helped with the installation of wayfinding signage.

Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan continues to gain traction. This was highlighted by the recent award of an EPA Recreation Economy Technical Assistance Grant to help Main Street Inc. and the City work to implement the other goals identified in the Plan.

Ultimately, it is important that the Downtown Master Plan be coordinated closely with goals and actions identified in this [Growth Policy Comprehensive Plan](#).

Recreation

Recreation is an important component of the economy for Thompson Falls and Sanders County. Data from the University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) shows that average annual expenditures by non-residents in Sanders County in 2023 were \$39,002,000. The highest expenditure categories were outfitting, restaurants/bars, fuel, lodging, and retail.

In 2018, Thompson Falls was one of five communities chosen by ITRR to participate in a tourism survey. The survey conducted by community volunteers and students from the University of Montana examined the impact of tourism on the City. The study used a visitor survey to collect data. The survey found that visitors spent an average of 5.66 nights on one form of lodging or another while traveling, and of that time, 2.01 of those nights were spent in Thompson Falls. In addition, expenditures by visitors on lodging in Thompson Falls totaled \$7,062. Respondents also reported spending a total of \$26,321 while in the Thompson Falls area. Of the 122 people

surveyed, most indicated that they stayed in Thompson Falls because it was their destination of choice.

Implementing the Downtown Master Plan, the Marketing Strategy, and the Community Trails Plan are all steps that the City can take to enhance the recreation economy in and around the City.

Technology-Communication

Technology and Communication infrastructure enable access to jobs in the business sectors not dependent on regional natural resources (lumber, mining, etc.). Work that can be done via computer and telephone can exist anywhere in the world. What is required is physical space to accommodate the workers, technology, and communication infrastructure, and a willing workforce.

One business sector that has surfaced as a solid source of jobs in areas with a lower cost of living is customer contact (call centers/customer service, and support). This industry has exploded into trillions of dollars annually. The single largest provider of these services is Tata (based in India) with \$1.46 trillion annual revenue. While companies are attracted to the lower cost of offshore services, they are also deeply concerned about the negative impact of non-English-speaking support personnel who struggle to create satisfying customer experiences.

The idea of putting people to work in call centers across the US, where other industry opportunities are not prevalent, is not new. Significant call center operations have been opened in the last year in Billings and Butte, and each employs hundreds of workers. This is significant because it clearly signals the willingness of US corporations with a national presence to award contracts where they feel their needs can be met.

Thompson Falls has a willing workforce with the desire and ability to work living wage jobs. A Customer Service Call Center is being developed in the City by a local business owner, who is also working with Blackfoot to ensure fiber optic infrastructure is available for the new call center.

OTHER TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES

The City's excellent telecommunications system can be used to attract people who want to telecommute. This means working in a non-traditional capacity, outside of a traditional office or workplace, and using technology to complete one's work. There are many types of telecommuting jobs; here are just a few:

- Remote: Remote jobs might involve working from home, from a coworking space, or on the road. This can be a combination of home-based and office-based work.
- Virtual: Working in a virtual job usually involves working 100% of the time from a home-based office.
- Mobile: Describes a job that you can take with you, even if you start out in one geographic location and end up moving to another.
- Work-from-Home: These positions generally have established home offices and set hours.

Big Sky Rail Authority

The Big Sky Rail Authority was accepted into the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor ID (CID) Program in 2023. This CID was established to assist in kick-starting the North Coast Hiawatha route, revitalization of the passenger rail line between Chicago and Seattle. This proposed route would travel through Montana on a southern route along Interstate 90, before veering to the north, where it would ultimately travel through Thompson Falls and Sanders County.

As the Big Sky Rail Authority enters phase 2 of its development, they are determining candidates that could provide rail stops along this route. As the project moves forward, Thompson Falls needs to identify a variety of items:

- The location of a proposed rail station
- Funding for additional security measures to protect Thompson Falls residents and rail passengers
- Noise mitigation measures

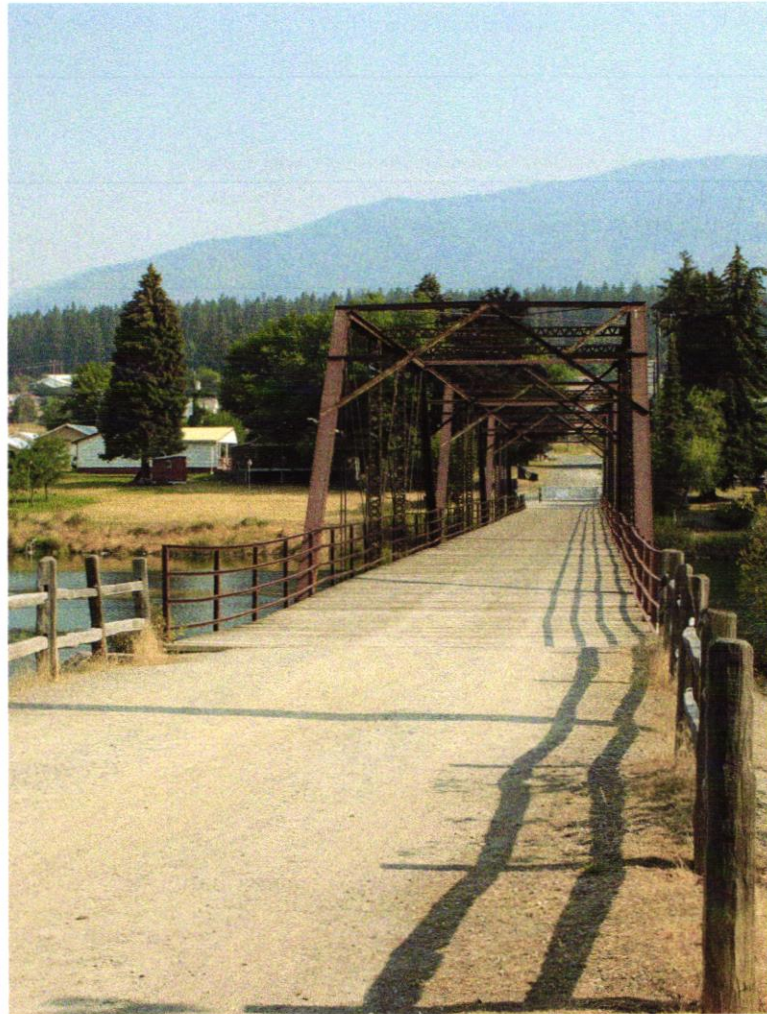
The City may need to consider a feasibility study for the location of the proposed rail station.

Community Events

Organizing and holding community events is another way to boost the City's economy and bring City residents together to socialize and celebrate the community.

David Thompson Days was an annual event that used to be held in the City. It was a historical celebration of the life and times of the explorer, David Thompson. Attendance never met expectations, and eventually, the event was cancelled for some time, but it was resurrected in 2025, by Main Street and supportive individuals, car show, a restaurant/bar had sidewalk food, a farmers market collaborative effort that had a lot of public participation, and will try again next year.

City residents have shown that there is a desire for successful community events, which was evident by the 2025 David Thompson Days event. Future events could also include concerts, parades, and festivals. The success of any event will depend on finding the right mix of volunteers, sponsors, and venues.



COMMUNITY SERVICES
