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KICKSTART KEMMERER

a comprehensive plan for the future



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Introduction & Executive Summary

“Kickstart Kemmerer” is a high-level planning document used to direct the City towards realizing its vision for the future. It is the result of approximately two years of research and analysis. The intent of the document is not to predict the future or force any particular policy; rather, it is the culmination and categorization of thoughts, ideas, and insights that residents on the advisory committee, members of the zoning board, and citizen-servants on the City Council have noted as the most important elements necessary for the continued prosperity of Kemmerer. Most simply, it is a roadmap between 2018 and 2038 based on relevant data, sound policy formulation, and historical “gut checks” based on the background of residents who have lived here for decades. No outside consultants were employed to assist with the creation of this plan, nor was any money received from outside sources to draft it. It is, first and foremost, a Kemmerer-centric document.

Not everything in this plan will be implemented. Over time, as staff, residents, elected officials, and priorities change, the plan will need to be reevaluated, updated, and revised. It is intended to serve as a flexible roadmap. The route taken may vary from the one established in this plan. However, it is critical for the plan to exist and serious efforts taken to see it through. As the old aphorism states: “He who fails to plan, plans to fail.”

The major elements of this plan review the following areas:

- Community Appearance
- Land Use and Housing
- Economic Development
- Recreation & Open Spaces
- Public Infrastructure

Some of the more important outcomes the plan identifies include:

- the prioritization of infill development to avoid overextending municipal services to new areas
- the need to redevelop older residential sections of town into larger lots and new housing
- the lack of ready-to-build land for new residential development
- the realization that even under ideal economic conditions, population growth will likely be low
- the importance of retaining a rural, small town feel
- the value of preserving Kemmerer’s cultural heritage by investing in the Triangle
- the danger of a decrease in revenue as Kemmerer’s share of sales tax shrinks due to rapid population growth in Star Valley

Kemmerer is blessed with a strong economic base and a wide variety of municipal amenities, including numerous parks, a golf course, an outdoor pool, the only recreation center in the County, an events center, and multiple walking trails. Because the plan identifies low population growth as a goal and the reality that within the State of Wyoming, municipalities receive more funding based on the total number of residents, the plan prioritizes the maintenance of existing amenities over the addition of new municipal services. The construction of parks, trails, roads, and expansion of other facilities without the requisite funding to maintain them is a long term threat to the viability of the City as a municipal corporation.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The comprehensive plan is to be used as a guide for the decision-making process and should remain flexible enough to allow decisions to be made that are in the best interest of the community. The plan, if followed, will encourage economic growth without adversely impacting the overall character of the community. As a guide, it is important that the recommendations contained in this document are followed by the policy and decision-making organizations. Although this information must be considered general, it represents an important perspective that will help direct future planning decisions.

A 2010 study from the Knight Foundation and Gallup determined that the five most important factors for making a quality community include “social offerings, openness, aesthetics, education, and basic services.”¹The Comprehensive Plan helps address each one of these categories. Land use decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis. These decisions must carefully consider how each use relates to the community’s goals, objectives, and policies, as well as the Future Land Use Map and its overall impact on adjoining properties. Long-range stability will require a continuous effort by the city, property owners, and residents to maintain and improve all elements of the city. The city must assume responsibility for maintaining the public infrastructure, such as streets. Property owners and residents must assume responsibility for maintaining private property. Zoning regulations, infrastructure improvements, etc. are only supportive to private property owners’ maintenance responsibilities.

Legislative Authority: the development of a comprehensive plan is permitted through Wyoming Statute (W.S.) 15-1-601. This “Master Plan” (see W.S. 15-1-503) shall show:

1. Recommendations for the development and general location, character, and extent of streets, bridges, viaducts, parks, waterways and waterfront developments, playgrounds, airports, and other public ways, ground, places, and spaces;
2. General location of public buildings and other public property;
3. General location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, light, power, heat, sanitation, transportation, communication and other purposes;
4. Acceptance, widening, removal, extension, relocation, narrowing, vacation, abandonment, or change of use of any public ways grounds, places, spaces, buildings, properties, utilities, or terminals;
5. Zoning plan for the regulation of the height, area, bulk, location, and use of private and public structures and premises, and of population density;
6. General location, character, layout, and extent of community centers and neighborhood units; and,
7. General character, extent and layout of the re-planning of blighted districts and slum areas.

¹ *Soul of the Community Project*, Knight Foundation and Gallup, 2010. As reported by the Pennsylvania State University by Walt Whitmer. <https://extension.psu.edu/what-makes-the-good-community>, accessed 4 September 2018.

Vision Statement

Kemmerer will be an attractive community with a diversified economic base where people take pride in their homes, businesses, and environment.

Guiding Principles

- Attractive Community:** Kemmerer will invite new visitors, residents of all ages, and businesses to promote a high quality of life through a distinctive combination of small town living with modern amenities.
- Diversified Economic Base:** Kemmerer will retain its global presence through energy production and expand its economic base through maximizing a regional workforce, leveraging its natural resources, and preserving its historic heritage.
- Community Pride:** Kemmerer’s people, housing, events, and businesses will reflect the highest standards of living in the region.



Section 1 – The Story

Kemmerer has over a 100-year history that is steeped in rich stories and journeys including coal mining, railroads, bootlegging and historic migrations like the Mormon and Oregon Trails. The City of Kemmerer was organized in 1897 and incorporated in 1899 by Patrick Quealy. Quealy and his partner and investor, Mahlon Kemmerer, began their partnership in the development of coal mines in Frontier, a company town, and in Kemmerer, an independent town, both co-located in Uinta County, one of the five original counties in Wyoming. These two towns had a multitude of underground coal mines. From the late 1890s until the 1960s, there were active mines throughout the region.

Mines in this area stretched from Cumberland near the Carter Cutoff (Hwy 412) south of town and north to Sublet and west to Cokeville. This coal mining boom produced coal towns such as Cumberland South, Cumberland No. 1, Cumberland No. 2, Blazon, Glencoe, Hams Fork, Sublet, Gomer, Suzie, Frontier, Diamondville, Elkol, and, of course, Kemmerer. Most of these towns no longer exist. However, a number of cemeteries still remain. The entire South Lincoln County area was active in coal mining due to the construction of the Oregon Short Line Railroad that still runs from the Union Pacific mainline along I-80 to the Oregon shores. If the railroad did not exist or was not built, the coal could not have been moved efficiently throughout the west and limited its worth.

In 1911, Kemmerer and Frontier were incorporated into Lincoln County. The Kemmerer and Quealy partnership brought to this region the Kemmerer Coal Company (the mine properties are still in operation today by Westmoreland Kemmerer) as well as the towns of Frontier and Kemmerer. Mr. Quealy, who lived in the area full-time, owned Frontier Supply Company and Uinta Improvement Company, became president of the First National Bank of Kemmerer, the Quealy Sheep and Live Stock Company, and the Wyoming Timber Company along with various other enterprises in the area. Prior to Mr. Quealy's work in Kemmerer Coal Company, he was employed by the Union Pacific Coal Company and worked to find, mine and ship coal for the Union Pacific Railroad.

In 1902, a young entrepreneur named James Cash Penney arrived in Kemmerer to open a store then known as the "Golden Rule." The store was originally located behind Kemmerer's unique Triangle Park. Penney and his family lived in Kemmerer for several years before relocating to Salt Lake City, Utah and renaming the store the J.C. Penney Company. The original J.C. Penney store, known as the "mother store", is located on Triangle Park and is open for business. It holds several original artifacts of Penney's time in Kemmerer. The J.C. Penney home is located one block east and is available for tours during the summer months.

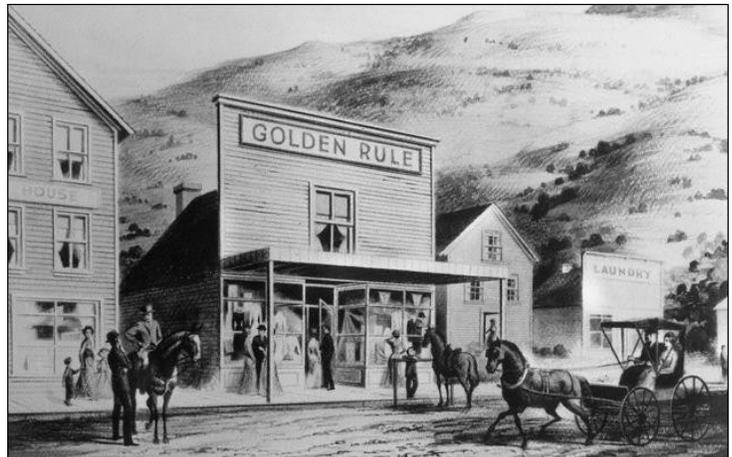


Figure 1. Drawing of the original Golden Rule store.

Coal mining has continued to be a staple of the Kemmerer economy since that time. Approximately five miles southwest of Kemmerer, a large 13,400 acre surface coal mine employs around 300 people in the region. All of the underground mines in the region have been closed, and reclamation continues for ground subsidence throughout the area.

In 1963, the Utah Light & Power Company, now owned by Rocky Mountain Power, commissioned the first of three coal-fired power units at the Naughton Plant located four miles southwest of Kemmerer. The other two units followed within another eight years. The power plant burns more than 2.8 million tons of sub-bituminous coal each year which is fed directly to the plant from a conveyor belt from the nearby Westmoreland-Kemmerer coal mine. Between all three operational units, the plant produces 700 megawatts of power.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Kemmerer became known as “Little Chicago” due to its prominence as a major source of bootlegged alcohol during Prohibition. One variety of swill, known as “Kemmerer Moon,” was reportedly a favorite in speakeasies around the country. This led to growth of organized crime and spurned other vice industries such as prostitution. The last legal brothel was closed in Kemmerer in the mid-1960s.

Other energy industries have found a home in Kemmerer. During the 1980s, Exxon (now Exxon-Mobil) began construction of the Shute Creek gas plant approximately 35 miles east of Kemmerer. The plant was designed for natural gas, but is also the source of 25% of the world’s helium. This operation employs another 180 workers directly for Exxon-Mobil as well as several dozen contractors. Southeast of Kemmerer, the Opal Hub is a major connection for the transmission of natural gas. The Kern River pipeline transports the gas from the Green River Basin to locations in the northwest and southwest United States. Finally, Kemmerer is centrally located between several large oil fields and often supports the oil industry as a base for oil-related companies. For example, ConocoPhillips recently began oil exploration twenty miles northeast of Kemmerer.

Because the major employment base of the area is firmly grounded with energy extraction, Kemmerer is inextricably linked to booms and busts of the energy industry. Additionally, environmental regulations, national policy and political changes, and international affairs all play a significant role in the development of the local economy.

Kemmerer is the home to Wyoming’s only three-term governor, Ed Herschler. Herschler was the City Attorney prior to taking elected office in 1974. The city’s distinctive town Triangle (rather than a more typical town square) was renamed after Governor Herschler.

The city’s history plays a critical role in determining its future: the energy sector provides high wages, atypical amenities for a community the size of Kemmerer, and high levels of public service. The town simply would not exist in its current form without the jobs created by energy companies. Without an influx of new primary jobs, the community is generally appropriately sized for its needs. Therefore, this plan focuses more on the redevelopment of existing properties and amenities to ensure a small-town feel.



Figure 2. Recently refinished sign at Triangle Park honoring 3-term Governor Ed Herschler of Kemmerer (2017).

Section 2 – The Lifestyle

During its 100+ year history, Kemmerer has undergone significant population changes subject to the swings in the local economy, but has consistently maintained a small town feel. The relatively high wages of residents help the community maintain an equally high standard of living, evidenced by numerous community amenities such as a golf course, recreation center, indoor pool, outdoor pool, walking trails, events center, modern school facilities, and numerous parks.

Demographics

The historical population of Kemmerer has shown small growth over the last four decades, despite a significant increase in housing stock in the community. This is largely due to a stable number of energy-related jobs in the area that consistently attract families to settle and stay in the area. Population also largely trends with the total economic health of the State of Wyoming. The population grew heavily during the energy boom of the 1960s, 1970s and then lost population during the bust of the mid-1980s. Since the year 2000, the population has remained largely static. U.S. Census Bureau estimates only a small percentage increase in total population since 2010. This is also true for Kemmerer’s closest neighbor, Diamondville.

Year	Population
1910	843
1920	1,517
1930	1,884
1940	2,026
1950	1,667
1960	2,028
1970	2,292
1980	3,273
1990	3,020
2000	2,651
2010	2,656

Table 1. Kemmerer
Population, 1910-2010

While the Census Bureau estimates that Kemmerer has added population in roughly the same percentage increase as other communities in North Lincoln County (4%), a greater total population is moving to the north. Afton is predicted to have added 84 new residents, Alpine 37, and Star Valley Ranch 67 (a total of 188 to Kemmerer’s 115). This does not include population increases outside of municipal limits in such places as Smoot, Bedford, Etna, or Grover.

The population share throughout the county is an extremely important factor for long-range planning. Population is the primary driver for the distribution of sales tax throughout the state. The larger the population, the greater percentage of sales tax is remitted to the community. While Kemmerer is still the largest municipality in the county (14.6%), as other communities continue to grow, Kemmerer’s capacity to fund regular maintenance of its many assets will decrease and funding to undertake new projects will be severely constrained.

Housing Market

The booms and busts of the Wyoming economy can be seen through the construction of housing in the Kemmerer area. Generally speaking, “lower Kemmerer” is the area below 3rd West Avenue. The homes in this area date between 80-120 years old. The Lincoln Heights subdivisions, located on a hill overlooking Downtown, were generally built in the 1970s or 1980s. Homes in the Dell Rio neighborhood are generally about 30 years old and were built just prior to the last major bust in Wyoming in the 1980s. As the local economy generally surged from 2005-2015, new housing can be found along Canyon Road and in the Antelope Ridge subdivision.

As of 2015, there are 1,055 occupied housing units in Kemmerer. Renters occupy 26% of the available housing stock, and comments from the public frequently reference the poor quality of rental housing and its impact on public perception in Kemmerer. While 79% of these units are single family detached buildings, the next largest single structure type in Kemmerer are mobile homes, which account for nearly 8% of the

total housing stock. Many of these mobile homes are in grandfathered zones and are mixed in with more traditional detached homes.

As of July 2018, the average time on market for a home in Kemmerer is 95 days. The time period is significantly shorter for newer housing stock, while older homes can stay on for considerably longer periods of time.

Perhaps the most telling statistic regarding housing in Kemmerer is the vacancy rate. The 2015 American Community Survey estimates that 22.4% of all housing units in Kemmerer are vacant, with a 4.9% margin of error. This equates to approximately 305 homes. Many, if not most, of these homes are located in the “lower” part of town and are over 80 years old. They are on small lots with small homes that do not appeal to a modern clientele in terms of size, finishes, parking, storage, or style.

A good comparison would be the communities of Lyman and Mountain View, located 40 miles southeast of Kemmerer. Lyman (population 2,100) and Mountain View (population 1,300) are in the Bridger Valley and share a common population approximately the same size as Kemmerer/Diamondville. However, these towns have vacancy rates less than half that of Kemmerer. Additionally, their housing stock is much newer. This investment comes despite the fact that the Bridger Valley does not offer the industrial employment base that can be found in the Kemmerer area.

While it appears that most people in each town have moved to the community since 2000, there is a significantly higher level of investment in new housing stock in the Bridger Valley. New homes, defined as those constructed after 1990, constructed in the Bridger Valley outnumber new homes in Kemmerer over 2:1.

	Kemmerer	Lyman	Mountain View
Total Housing Units	1,360	847	515
Housing Vacancy	305 (22%)	106 (13%)	47 (9%)
Units Built 1990-present	145 (16%)	186 (22%)	131 (25%)
Units Built 1960-1989	664 (49%)	582 (69%)	303 (59%)
Units Built before 1960	483 (35%)	79 (9%)	81 (16%)
New Move-Ins since 2000	634 (60%)	456 (62%)	295 (63%)
New Move-Ins before 2000	421 (40%)	285 (38%)	173 (37%)

Table 2. Housing Comparison, Kemmerer to the Bridger Valley.

From an income standpoint, 22% of homes earn less than \$35,000 per year. This is contrasted with the higher income homes, of which 31.4% of all households earn more than \$100,000 per year. The median household income in Kemmerer is \$64,234. The income difference between owner-occupied households and renter-occupied households is over \$38,000; renters typically make far less than their counterparts. The median rental price in Kemmerer is \$860 per month.

There are also anecdotal reports that the South Lincoln Nursing Center is constantly at capacity (24 beds) and we lose population for seniors as well as support staff because many leave town to go to other cities with greater senior living capacity. Nearly 17% of Kemmerer’s population is over 60 years old; only 5% of the total population is over age 75. This suggests that as residents age, they tend to leave Kemmerer. The Kemmerer Senior Center and the SLNC are the only two facilities in the community that specifically cater to individuals generally aged over 60, and Kemmerer does not provide year round facilities or amenities geared towards retirement-age individuals.

What We Do

In addition to city-owned facilities, such as the Recreation Center, Kemmererites are typically outdoorsmen. The Hams Fork River runs through town and is well-known for trout fishing. Hunting is a popular recreational activity, as is camping, shooting, snowmobiling, and boating. Many residents use outdoor trails for exercise. During the summer months, Kemmerer attracts tourists to its many fossil fish quarries as well as to outdoor events such as the Oyster Ridge Music Festival. Oyster Ridge is the largest free music festival in the state; perhaps the largest free fireworks show in Wyoming can be found in Kemmerer on the Fourth of July.

While the primary job base in the area is energy-based, there is also a thriving tourism market. Fossil Fish quarries and rock shops consist of approximately 25 full-time employees. There are also natural tourism attractions, such as Fossil Butte National Monument (ranked #5 best attraction in Wyoming in 2017 by USA Today) and the original J.C. Penney store and homestead. Because of its proximity to outdoor recreation, Kemmerer also sees many tourists going to hunt, fish, camp, or use ATVs. As the Salt Lake City metropolitan area continues to expand, markets such as Kemmerer offer quick getaways with plenty of wide open space.

The Kemmerer community has large, stable energy employers in Westmoreland-Kemmerer Coal (300 employees), Pacificorp Viva Naughton Power Plant (150 employees), ExxonMobil Shute Creek Gas Plant (180 employees), Williams Gas Plant (35 employees), and Enterprise Gas Plant (approximately 30 employees). These five companies provide nearly 70% of the total jobs in the Kemmerer area. Additional support businesses and contractors supplement the work force. Despite the proximity of Kemmerer to these industries, many employees choose to live in other communities for a variety of reasons. For example, only half of Westmoreland employees live in Kemmerer, with the rest spread throughout Utah, Green River/Rock Springs, Evanston, and even into Idaho.



Figure 3. The sun sets on the Naughton Power Plant outside of Kemmerer.

City Core Values

The City's core values are service, innovation, and flexibility. These core values are correlated and largely distilled in the motto: "Make it Matter, Make it Better, and Make it Happen."

Make it Matter

Everything the City undertakes should serve the public, whether it be through public safety and the police department, infrastructure improvements in our streets or parks, providing recreational opportunities, or even

paying a garbage bill. The City does not exist to serve itself. Therefore, city employees must make sure, above all, that it *matters*.

Make it Better

Just getting the job done isn't sufficient...how we do the job is frequently just as important. Local governments in Wyoming have little to no power to generate their own revenue. Like most cities, we attempt to do more with less. In order to provide the services our constituents desire, the City must frequently adapt and change. This is best accomplished through requests from residents, observations from line employees, and long term planning (such as the Comprehensive Plan). The City constantly seeks for ways to accomplish our goals quickly, professionally, and conservatively.

Make it Happen

Sometimes, the best we can do is all we can do because inaction is simply unacceptable. Circumstances frequently arise that force the City to stretch its limits with finances, employees, equipment, and other resources. However, we are still responsible to make sure that the job gets done. Employees need to be flexible with the public and with management; management needs to support the employees and help them stretch where necessary; Council needs to recognize limitations on all staff but also set firm goals and policies for the future. In the end, the City must make do with the resources it has despite external constraints and communicate its efforts to the public.

Section 3 – The Vision

The Vision Statement was developed cooperatively with members of the advisory committee. In discussing Kemmerer’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the committee frequently cited the close-knit community feel, high wages, tourism prospects, and outdoor recreation as highly valued aspects of “Kemmerer life.” Contrasted with these strengths are fear for the shuttering of our major employers due to regulation, keeping up on regular maintenance of existing City infrastructure, negative “curb appeal” of the City due to poorly maintained property (both public and private), and keeping up with ever-expanding needs for improving quality of life to attract and retain residents.



Figure 4. Fossil Butte National Monument, located 11 miles west of Kemmerer, welcomed over 20,000 unique visitors in 2016. It was also ranked the #5 Best Tourist Attraction in Wyoming by USA Today in 2017.

The Vision Statement was finally approved to read:

“By 2038, Kemmerer will be an attractive community with a diversified economic base where people take pride in their homes, businesses, and environment.”

It is important to note that the twenty year horizon of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to take the committee beyond the short term issues facing the City; rather, the City is envisioned as close to ideal as possible given constraints, technological advances, and demographic changes to be incurred over the timeline of the plan. These constraints are then overcome through strategic, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely implementation of projects to achieve the ideal.



Figure 5. The Hams Fork Recreation Area is a wide open space for all-season outdoor fun.

Embedded within the Vision Statement are three critical paths to success: first, the community must become more attractive; second, Kemmerer must diversify their economic base; and third, people will take pride in the community. These goals will be evaluated through five different categories, including:

- Land Use/Housing
- Recreation and Open Spaces
- Economic Development
- Community Appearance
- Public Infrastructure

This plan will be the compilation of community-initiated ideas combined with staff recommendations to help make the strategic decisions necessary for the future.

Attractive Community

“Kemmerer will invite new visitors, residents of all ages, and businesses to promote a high quality of life through a distinctive combination of small town living with modern amenities.”

Being an attractive community has several meanings. The community must create a field from which it can distinguish itself from competition. Then, like a magnet, it attracts residents and businesses who are seeking to meet their needs based on characteristics found in the community. Thus, there are both internal and external methods for “attracting” community development. The first, and perhaps most obvious, is the physical attractiveness of the City. Does it have well-maintained streets, yards, and manicured parks? Are the storefronts charming and inviting? Is the housing stock appealing to all ages and stages of life? Are there obvious or iconic natural resources to showcase?

The second meaning behind an attractive community includes factors that more frequently affect quality of life. These are the qualities that make an individual move to the area. This could include high-performing schools, recreational facilities, technology, various dining options, shopping/retail spaces, transportation options, and of course job opportunities.

Year	Population Estimate
2010	2,656
2020	2,696
2025	2,764
2030	2,833
2035	2,904
2038	2,935

Table 3. Estimated population growth in Kemmerer from 2018-2038 at an annual increase of 0.5%.

A goal to make Kemmerer more attractive “through a distinctive combination of small town living with modern amenities” includes the implicit requirement to keep population growth to a minimum. However, this could also be interpreted to mean that any growth that does occur should be scaled to ensure the perception of small town living. For example, while nearly a quarter of all homes in Kemmerer are vacant, redeveloping those residences and adding an additional 600 individuals would be noticeable, but would not change the underlying capacity of the city to deliver services. On the contrary, it would fill existing residential, educational, and commercial gaps, increase the local tax base, and provide the ability to address deferred maintenance issues on both an individual and community scale. It is therefore understood that this plan does not anticipate an explosion of population growth outside of city limits and envisions a future population that can sustainably support approximately 3,000 residents, or an increase of 0.5% per year over 2010 levels. This is an additional 279 people over twenty years.

Diversified Economic Base

“Kemmerer will retain its global presence through energy production and expand its economic base through maximizing a regional workforce, leveraging its natural resources, and preserving its historic heritage.”

The first step of building a diversified economic base is retaining the one you already have. Maintaining a global presence through energy production must remain one of the top economic goals for the City of Kemmerer. Partnering with local industry, including Westmoreland, Pacificorp, ExxonMobil, Williams, Enterprise, and other extractive partners to ensure their long-term success is the single most important economic activities the City can undertake. Beyond existing businesses, the City should look towards attracting support services to locate to the area. Natural resources not only include the



Figure 6. Surface mining at the Westmoreland Kemmerer Mine, June 2017.

extractive industry, but also include alternative energy, outdoor recreation, the fossil fish industry, and the agricultural sector. Investments in wind energy have already been made near Kemmerer, and solar energy is also a viable option with 214 sunny days per year.



Figure 7. *Heliobatis radians*, an extinct stingray.

Outdoor recreation, particularly to Bridger-Teton National Forest, Green River basin, and Hams Fork Recreation Area, is readily available. Kemmerer is centrally located to all of these areas, and as the Salt Lake City metropolitan area continues to expand, many outdoor enthusiasts are more and more willing to make the relatively short drive to leave behind the masses. Fantastic snowmobiling, riding ATVs, camping, hunting, fishing, and hiking are all within minutes of Kemmerer.

Kemmerer finds itself in a situation where industry and history converge. The ancient Fossil Lake in the Green River Formation contains one of the largest deposits of fossil fish in the world and is located just outside of Kemmerer. This formation has specimens dating over 50 million years old and can be found in such prestigious locations as the Chicago Field Museum and the Smithsonian Institute. The fossils are also found in the homes of private collectors all over the world. Fossil Butte National Monument is located 11 miles from Kemmerer and regularly hosts visiting scientists, fossil enthusiasts, and 20,736 unique visitors in 2016. A 2017 report from the National Park Service estimates over \$1 million to the local economy. When combining private quarries in the area and FBNM, the fossil industry employs nearly 25 full-time people in the Kemmerer area.

Adding to natural history, Kemmerer also has a colorful modern history. Waves of emigrants passed nearby on the Oregon and Mormon trails. Authentic trail with wagon ruts can still be found in the area. Kemmerer's unique Downtown Triangle is one of the few such features in the United States. Within the Triangle, visitors find the Original J.C. Penney Store and Homestead. Many of the buildings on the Triangle are historic and can benefit both commercial and tourism ventures. Finally, Kemmerer was once known as "Little Chicago" as it produced large quantities of contraband moonshine for the Intermountain West during Prohibition.

Census data confirms the leakage of individuals out of Kemmerer. Based on 2013 figures, the most recent for which information is available in Wyoming, between 17-55% of employees working in the Kemmerer area live outside of the Kemmerer-Diamondville general area.²

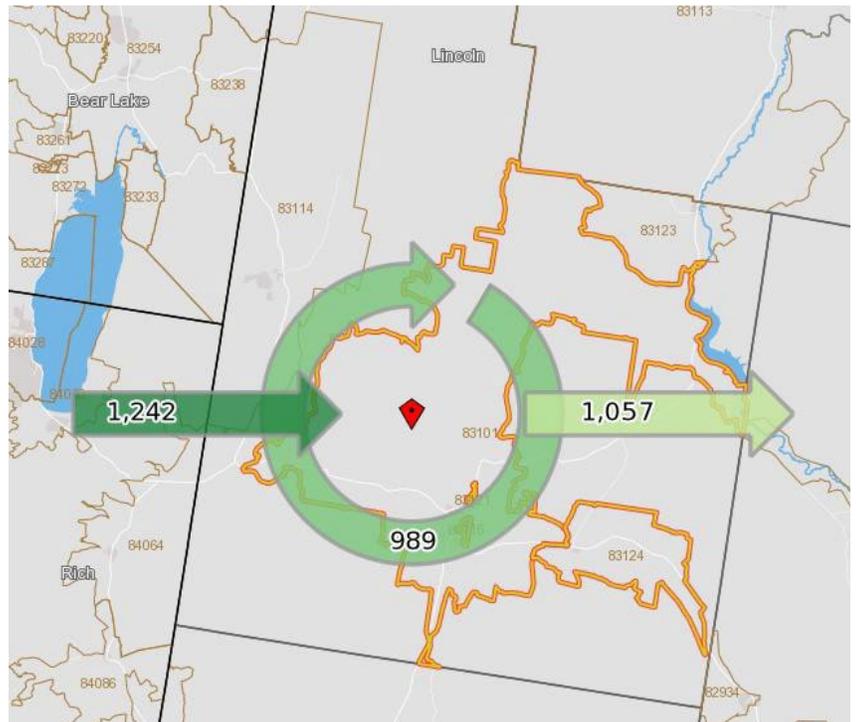


Figure 8. Inflow/Outflow analysis of the local job market. 1,242 individuals travel to the selected area to work; 989 live and work within the area; and 1,057 leave the area for work.

² Home Destination Analysis and Inflow/Outflow Analysis, <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov>, performed 11 July 2018 for zip code 83101; 83124; 83116; 83121.

Part of encouraging a diversified economic base includes improving retail options for residents. In 2017, approximately 50% of the 300 employees working at the Westmoreland Kemmerer Mine lived in other communities. The disparity is even greater for the ExxonMobil Schute Creek Gas Plant. Larger cities located on I-80 with more retail shopping options encourage employees to commute rather than live closer to their work site in Kemmerer. Towns like Rock Springs (population 23,000), Green River (population 12,500), and Evanston (population 12,300) offer a greater variety of grocery stores, retail stores, and national brand restaurants. Each is located approximately one hour from Kemmerer. As stated by one member of the Kickstart Kemmerer steering committee, “I can’t even buy a pair of shoes in Kemmerer!”

Community Pride

“Kemmerer’s people, housing, events, and businesses will reflect the highest standards of living in the region.”

The vision of this plan defines community pride to include both physical and quality of life factors, retaining high-paying jobs, expanding the industrial base, and maximizing our historical and natural resources. What we consider to be basic code violations today (tall grass, weeds, abandoned vehicles) will basically be nonissues by 2038 because the character of the city’s neighborhoods instills an inherent obligation for private property maintenance. Historic buildings will have new life, and Downtown will have consistent historical themes, architecture, and color palettes. Most major roads will have been repaired. Many dilapidated homes will have been rehabilitated or removed. Significant strides will have been taken to remediate shabby housing, and Pine Avenue will be an attractive thoroughfare that encourages passers-by to stop and explore Kemmerer. City parks and recreational facilities are modest but well-maintained with modernized equipment.

Section 4 – The Framework

Land Use Analysis

Kemmerer’s current city limits include roughly 7.94 square miles and include land use zones ranging from heavy industrial uses (such as property near the Naughton Power Plant) to higher density residential and mobile home parks. Of that area, roughly 12% or 1 square mile, are currently developed. Kemmerer currently maintains a population density of about 334 people per square mile, or 429 people per square mile of developable land. Kemmerer’s residential density equals 1,369 people per square mile.

Another 22%, or 1.74 square miles are undevelopable rights-of-way, tax exempt land (such as parks and open space), and public land (such as the South Lincoln Cemetery). Of the remaining land that is within Kemmerer’s city limits, 66% remains vacant or undeveloped. Land uses are separated by the following percentages:

Agriculture	1.00 square mile	12.5%
High-Density Residential	0.09 square miles	1.1%
Low-Density Residential	1.85 square miles	23.1%
Public	0.61 square miles	7.6%
Commercial	0.65 square miles	8.1%
Industrial	3.80 square miles	47.6%

These calculations assume vacant land as properties where no improvements have been made, or where the only improvement is a surface parking lot. Parks and open space are included in the Public use designation.

Future Land Use & Transportation Map

The Future Land Use & Transportation Map proposes the future distribution and location of housing, business, industry, civic uses, and parks. Each category of land use was carefully identified and depicted with the goals of enhancing Kemmerer's identity, providing reasonable opportunities for growth and economic development, and enabling the City to provide necessary public services in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The Future Land Use Map should be viewed as what the community will grow to become, as it will be the guide for future zoning and development within the City. For areas outside current town limits, the map designations do not become effective until annexation, at which time zoning should be applied in a manner that implements the City's land use designations.

Development approvals, capital improvement programs, and implementation ordinances should all be consistent with the land use designations indicated on the official Future Land Use Map.

The land use designation for a property is to be the primary consideration in determining whether the proposed zoning of that property complies with the Plan. However, in interpreting the Future Land Use Map, one should realize that it is not a zoning map, in that the boundaries between land use designations are not rigid and can accommodate reasonable rezoning requests that cross boundaries depicted on the map. Rezoning requests that represent extensive changes to an area should not be approved without first considering the Future Land Use Map, and ensuring the change is consistent with the community's vision, goals, and desired future character. The land use designations of the Future Land Use Map are described below. These categories should be considered as guidelines, with flexibility provided in the specific zoning district regulations, such that an appropriate mixing of uses and densities may occur to provide variety, opportunities for transitional densities, efficient land use patterns, and other desirable situations that will result in an attractive, efficient, and well-organized community.

Land Use Designations

HDR = High Density Residential. This could include current zones Rc, M1, M2, and M3.

LDR = Low Density Residential. This could include current zones R, Ra, and Rb.

C = Commercial. This could include current zones C, CB, CN, and CH

A = Agricultural. This could include current zones A and A1.

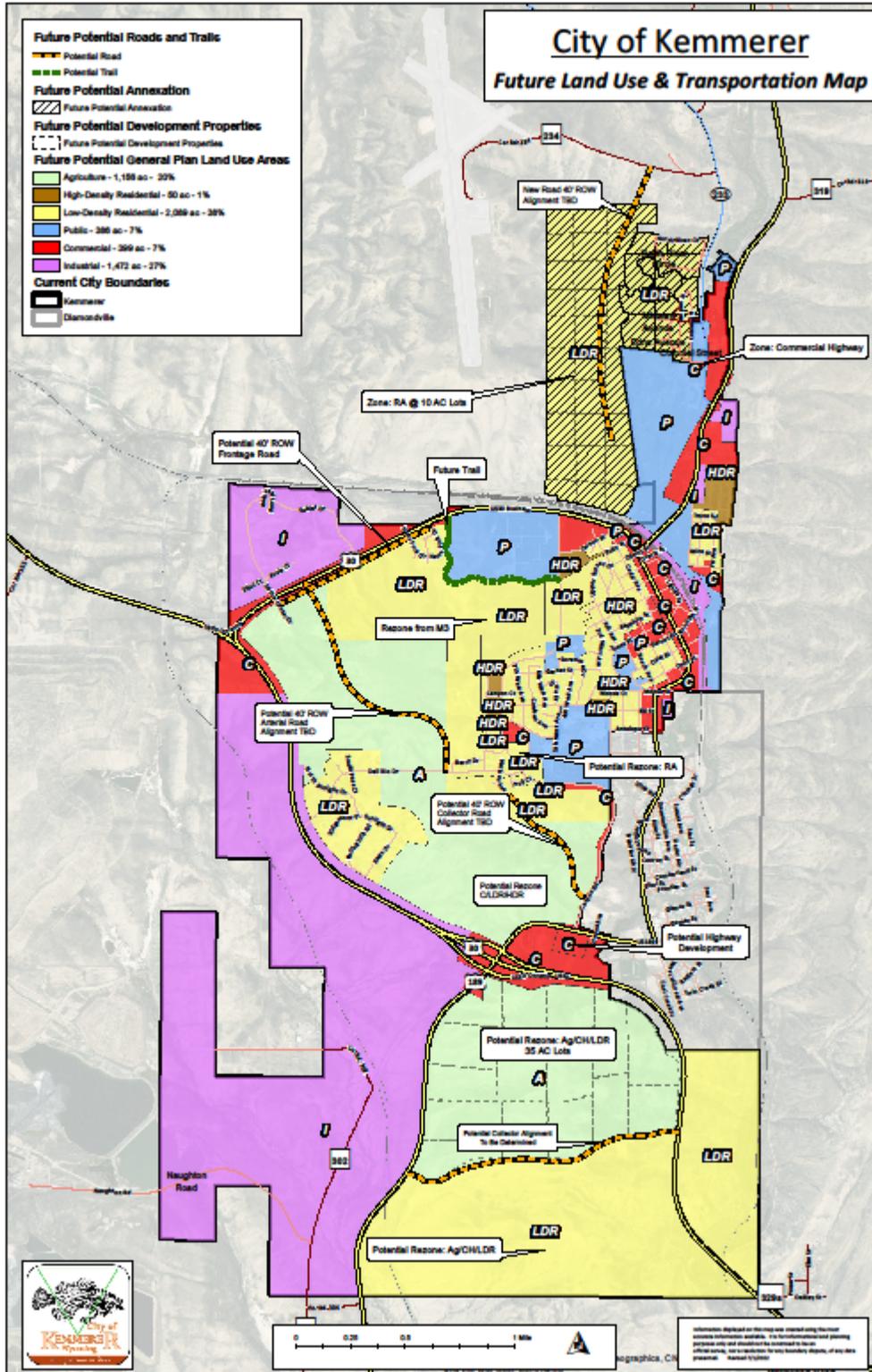
I = Industrial. This could include current zones I-1 & I-2.

P = Public

The City was analyzed by the Vision Statement in order to produce the Future Land Use and Transportation Map. The major considerations are listed below:

1. Annexation of Frontier, including the adjacent hillside. Future residential development, particularly higher-end homes with larger lots (10 acres) which include views of the Golf Course. The hillside was recently auctioned by Westmoreland-Kemmerer. A new road is indicated that connects with County Road 234.
2. Future trail from the current Antelope Ridge subdivision, extending along the southern edge of the South Lincoln Cemetery, and connecting with the trail system at Canyon Road. A potential collector road parallel to this location would help divert traffic off of the highway and open up additional parcels for development.

3. Rezoning property (locally known as Goullich Ranch, but owned by Star One LLC) from M3 to Ra or other similar, compatible use to attract infill development.
4. Possible future frontage road between the Lincoln County Justice Center and the Antelope Ridge subdivision. This applies sound access management principles to the highway and opens up development parallel to, but not on, the highway.
5. Possible future arterial road extending from the area around the Justice Center up to the bluff overlooking Kemmerer, and connecting with Dell Rio Drive.
6. Rezoning of property directly west of the Recreation Center from Commercial to Residential to promote more infill development.
7. Possible future collector road extension of Nations Drive that crosses the 290 LLC property and connects with Canyon Road to encourage more residential development.
8. Potential highway development east of the Best Western hotel. Ideas include a truck stop, restaurants, retail options, and similar uses.
9. Rezoning of all land south of Highway 30 from Industrial to Agricultural, Commercial Highway, or low density residential. The intent is to provide large parcels (approximately 30-35 acres) to allow for residential or agricultural uses.
10. Potential collector road connecting Highway 189 and Highway 30 across the currently undeveloped portion of land mentioned above.



Section 5 - Implementation Strategies

This section will expand the guiding principles of the vision statement to create a list of strategic goals, objectives, and measures to help fulfill the vision.

Community Appearance (CA)

CA-1. Welcoming Gateways. Improve the visual image of the community and the City’s initial “curb appeal” by investing resources at major entrances to Kemmerer. This could include:

- (1) Updating perimeter signage noting the J.C. Penney mother store
- (2) Landscaping at the Rotary billboard at 233/189
- (3) Monument and landscaping at Canyon Road/U.S. 30
- (4) Iconic landscaping at the highway interchange of U.S. 189 & U.S. 30
- (5) Modern wayfinding signage



Figure 9. Welcome signage for Kemmerer highlighting the first J.C. Penney store.



CA-2. Code Enforcement – Legal Framework. Undertake a complete review and overhaul of Sections 14 and 16 of the municipal code to ensure that the legal framework for undertaking code enforcement activities contains modern and relevant language as well as realistic enforcement mechanisms.

CA-3. Code Enforcement – Implementation. Develop a comprehensive program for code enforcement with annual goals, targeted priorities and a timeline for implementation. Over time, the highest priority items will be largely addressed and the focus can shift to the next important classification.

CA-4. Code Enforcement – Analysis. Measure and evaluate progress to achieving goals based on outcomes, not outputs.

CA-5. Placemaking. Develop a Placemaking strategy for Downtown Kemmerer. This plan should evaluate 10 regional destinations, 10 local attractions, and 10 activities to do at each attraction.

CA-6. Enhance Streetscape Requirements. Evaluate streetscape policies and regulations for commercial and residential landscaping, lighting, and amenities such as trails. Require new development, especially commercial and multifamily zones, to install and maintain sustainable landscaping. Adjust existing requirements to allow more flexibility but to also provide more direction.

CA-7. Improve Visual Appeal. Use landscaping buffers or screens to accentuate gateways and thoroughfares to improve the “curb appeal” of Kemmerer.



Figure 10. Conceptual drawing of a residential area with basic enhanced streetscape requirements.

Economic Development (ED)

ED-1. Support Existing Industry. Work with current industrial employers to sustain and expand existing workforce and expansion by lending legislative support and investing in quality of life measures that attract employees to live in Kemmerer.

ED-2. Tourism Master Plan. Use the Fossil Basin Promotion Board to fund a tourism master plan for the community.

ED-3. Tourism Promotion. Realign the purpose of the Fossil Basin Promotion Board from acting as a community grant agency to implementing long term strategic tourism marketing objectives and initiatives.

ED-4. Outdoor Recreation Tourism. As recommended by a tourism master plan, develop standards and criteria for the use of lodging tax dollars to attract outdoor enthusiasts to Kemmerer. This could include hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling, and historic preservation along the Mormon and Oregon Trails.



Figure 11. Control Room at Naughton Power Plant.



Figure 12. Fossil Fish on display at Fossil Butte National Monument.

ED-5. Fossil Industry Tourism. As recommended by a tourism master plan, leverage Kemmerer's fossil-related assets to expand tourism dollars in the community.

ED-6. Transportation Infrastructure. Market the availability of multimodal transportation (highway, rail, and air) to attract a truck stop or distribution centers for regional commerce.

ED-7. Alternative Energy. Supplement the existing energy industry by attracting the manufacture and installation of alternative energy sources, including wind, solar, and clean carbon technologies.

ED-8. Invest in Technology Infrastructure. Embrace technology as a public investment to ensure the highest quality internet connections in the region.

ED-9. Economic Development Incentives. Develop a municipal incentive package for new businesses that generate new primary jobs in City limits, including reduced fees for plan review, building inspection, zoning applications, sanitation, sidewalk improvement, and other municipal services.

ED-10. Economic Partnerships. Use regional economic development agencies, such as the South Lincoln Economic Development Corporation and the Lincoln-Uinta Revolving Loan Fund, to provide additional incentives to grow or attract businesses.

ED-11. Encourage Retail Development. Recruit retail businesses that persuade people to choose Kemmerer as a place to live. This should include a mix of retail, food, and lodging establishments, especially for those with regional or national brands.

ED-12. Encourage Use of Reclaimed Mine Lands. The large open pits left by coal mining operations, combined with the proximity of truck and rail transportation, could make the Kemmerer area attractive as a regional solid waste repository.

Public Infrastructure (PI)

PI-1. Street Maintenance Program. Develop a rolling pavement preservation program to include the targeted repair, maintenance, and reconstruction of City roads with an emphasis on major thoroughfares.

PI-2. Development Standards. Ensure infrastructure is built to City standards. Where standards do not exist, adopt policies to enforce them. Require new developments to construct certain services, such as streets and water utilities, open space/parks, walking trails, and land for future City use. If a developer does not construct these types of facilities, assess a proportionate impact fee to offset the future cost to the City.

PI-2. Development Standards. Consider lowering development standards required for new subdivisions in order to stimulate new residential growth while simultaneously including the creation of local assessment districts therein to ensure public improvements are eventually funded.



Figure 13. New housing construction that required the installation of a separate multiuse pathway throughout the neighborhood. This particular path opened onto the backyards of homes into a natural ravine, giving residents quick and safe access to the trail. See PI-2.

PI-3. Capital Improvement Projects. Strategically align capital improvement projects with future and underutilized land uses.

PI-4. Underground utilities. Work with granting agencies to obtain funding to relocate overhead utilities underground, especially in Downtown.

PI-5. Special Purpose Sales Tax. Develop a potential list of projects and an educational program for the public that could be used for a 6th Penny election to help finance infrastructure improvements, particularly for roads.

PI-6. Technology. Engage in concurrent planning processes with area agencies and private sector partners to make Kemmerer 100% connected to high speed fiber internet.

PI-7. Street and parking design principles. New streets should be interconnected in clear, direct and understandable patterns. New streets should connect to existing streets whenever possible. Dead end streets and curved streets are appropriate only in response to topography.

All streets should be built in accordance with the Kemmerer City Engineering Standards and Construction Specifications.

Recreation & Open Spaces (REC)

REC-1. Recreation Maintenance Program. Extend the life of large capital recreation assets by investing dollars into rehabilitation and preservation before building new facilities.

REC-2. Connected Trail System. Work with the Town of Diamondville and Westmoreland to obtain easements on the east side of the Hams Fork River to connect the Golf Course trail with a river walk to Diamondville.

REC-3. Complete a Recreation Master Plan. Examine opportunities for additional recreation amenities (such as a splash pad, ice rink, pickleball courts, etc.)

REC-4. Inclusive Recreation Strategy. Provide recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Invest in recreation amenities that support and retain young families. Develop non-athletic programs for youth, adults, and seniors.

REC-5. Outdoor Recreation. Work with partner agencies to promote outdoor recreation in the Hams Fork Recreation Area.

Land Use & Housing (LUH)

LUH-1. Develop an ordinance and implementation program to create a review process for Downtown Kemmerer grounded in historic preservation principles using recommendations from the “Downtown Kemmerer Area Design Guidelines” as a baseline. See Figures 13-15 for a Wyoming example of a form-based code in downtown redevelopment.

LUH-2. Promote the redevelopment of underutilized commercial space to accommodate new uses. Vacant and underused buildings from Taco Time to Ridley’s offer opportunity for rehabilitated commercial uses in a historic zone.

LUH-3. Promote land use patterns that provide housing of all types, supported by parks and services.

LUH-4. Undertake a complete overhaul of the land use chapter & zoning of the Municipal Code to reflect the vision of this plan and update to newer standards.

LUH-5. Develop a local process to identify and remove blighted buildings in Kemmerer, including financing mechanisms to fund abatement projects. See LUH-2.

LUH-6. Using the Comprehensive Plan “Future Land Use Map” as a guide, redevelop lower Kemmerer by systematically identifying locations with narrow lots that can be combined with adjacent properties. This

strategy would be used create lots of sufficient size to attract new residential development in older parts of town.

LUH-7. Identify on the Future Land Use Map and add language to code that encourages the development or expansion of independent and assisted living centers in Kemmerer.

LUH-8. Decrease the total number of zones allowed in city limits to better align the intent of the plan (local redevelopment) rather than expansion.

LUH-9. Decrease the cost of building permits, plan checks, and other permitting procedures in blighted areas for individuals who renovate or redevelopment existing properties.

LUH-10. Transitions between different land uses and intensities should be made gradually with compatible uses, particularly where natural or manmade buffers are not available.



Figure 14. Yellowstone Garage as an Edsel dealership in the 1950s.



Figure 14. Yellowstone Garage as an abandoned machine shop in the early 2000s.



Figure 16. Yellowstone Garage, revitalized as an events venue and restaurant, using a consistent color palette, design standards, and architectural features as the historic Edsel dealership (early 2010s).

Section 6 – The Path Forward

Planning Administration & Roles

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is the responsibility of the entire City of Kemmerer including planning staff, elected officials, and community organizations. The entire community will be called upon to implement “Kickstart Kemmerer”.

Planning staff and the Zoning Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing development proposals against the Plan’s vision and goals
- Providing decision-makers with information regarding compliance with the Plan
- Bringing forth projects from the implementation actions to be considered in the Capital Improvement Plan and yearly budgets
- Producing and presenting annual reports
- Updating land development regulations and zoning maps for consistency with this Plan.

Elected officials are responsible for:

- Making decisions consistent with this Plan
- Allocating the necessary funding for implementation actions
- Collaborating with other jurisdictions on implementation for a consistent vision.

The greater community is responsible for:

- Being involved in the monitoring of decision-makers as they implement the Plan
- Following the Plan’s goals through the development and construction of residential, commercial and industrial uses within the City of Kemmerer.
- Encouraging policies that promote development consistent with this Plan, especially those that collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions to increase economies of scale.

Ideally, this Plan should be updated after five years but no later than 10 years after adoption.

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