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# UTILITY SYSTEMS

## 6

### CHAPTER

Land development places added demands on the City to provide residents with services of facilities, including utilities (water, wastewater, and drainage), police and fire protection, emergency medical services, parks and recreation facilities, among others to meet increased demand in service. Satisfying these demands costs money, and requires a significant amount of government resources. When the City reacts to development proposals, it is placed in a position of responding to sporadic and unplanned development. Serving scattered development is much more costly than proactively planning for responsible, compact growth. Utility systems provide the groundwork for almost all development and growth, thus it is important for the City of Laramie to address these issues.

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#### THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

A significant growth management challenge is confronting the City of Laramie, because there are large vacant land areas surrounding the City that are considered attractive to development. Nearly all of these undeveloped areas, however, currently lack streets, utilities, water and sewer thus straining existing services by any new development. Additionally, the City is facing investment decisions involving maintenance or replacement of existing, aging infrastructure. Current fiscal resources are being burdened to meet all needs for utility extension, upgrading, maintenance, and operation.

Any further discussion of Urban Growth must be preceded by more detailed enumerations of the current status of utility systems.

#### UTILITY SYSTEM FACILITIES, SERVICE AREAS AND CONDITIONS

##### Water Supply, Treatment, Distribution and Storage

The City obtains water from two sources: the Laramie River and the Casper Aquifer. These sources include the Soldier Springs Well, Pope Well Field, Turner Well Field, and Spur Well Field. On an annual basis, water production from the well fields is slightly more

that half of the total system production. The conjunctive use of these sources has allowed the City great flexibility in meeting its municipal water demands.

In addition to the quality water resources already in use, the City has access to undeveloped water resources with excellent water right standing. The City owns the Monolith Ranch and the associated agricultural water rights, both surface and groundwater. These supplies will be converted to municipal use as the City demand increases. The strategic management of these important rights was recently studied<sup>1</sup>, and recommendations for water rights management are currently being implemented.

Laramie is very fortunate to have current and future water supplies, of quantity and quality suitable for municipal growth well beyond the planning horizon of this comprehensive plan. The supplies should accommodate a municipal demand beyond twice the present day demand. At the same time, though, it is important for the community to be cognizant of its water usage as the immediate area and the state continue to confront drought conditions. Therefore, proactive water conservation measures are warranted and advocated by this plan. These measures may include such programs or improvements as service metering, conservation rate structures, water accounting (large volume user audits) and loss control, landscape efficiency, water use restrictions, rebates and incentives, reuse and recycling, and public education. In addition, a drought management strategy for the Monolith Ranch, furthers the water conservation efforts for the city.

**A water pressure zone** is a geographically defined area within which the water pressure is designed so as not to exceed acceptable limits or fail to meet minimum standards. The maximum standard per the Uniform Plumbing Code is 80 pounds per square inch (PSI) while the minimum standard is 35 PSI per the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ).

## Water Treatment

Surface water treatment is performed at a conventional treatment plant about 20 miles southwest of the City. The process includes alum addition (coagulant) followed by clarification, up-flow filtration, and disinfection using chlorine. The plant has undergone many modifications since its original construction in 1964. The present operation is regionally noted for a high quality product, a testimony to the operator skill. With increasingly stringent water treatment requirements, the plant may some day require complete reconstruction. That possibility is currently being evaluated in a State-funded study of the entire water system.

Ground water treatment is performed at three locations, at the Wye (Soldier and Pope Wells), City Springs (Turner No.1 and No. 2 wells), and the Spur Wellfield (Spur No.1 and No.2 Wells). Because of excellent source water quality, treatment at these locations is limited to chlorination and fluoridation. The continued use of this high quality and low cost supply is dependent on the successful management and protection of the Casper Aquifer (refer to *Chapter 3, Community Character* for more information about aquifer protection).

## Water Distribution and Storage

Laramie's water distribution includes seven pressure zones and five storage tanks, as indicated in *Map 6.1, Water Distribution Deficiencies*. The map also indicates areas that are

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<sup>1</sup> City of Laramie Management Plan for Water Rights on Monolith Ranch, Volume I and II, May 2004

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## CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC UTILITIES

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currently experiencing low water flows while meeting the peak water demands of the system. The map also shows areas generally not able to serve a legislated fire flow. These fire flow deficient areas are those that cannot meet the flow requirement but do have the minimum pressure requirement satisfied - 35 pounds per square inch (PSI).

The condition and capability of the transmission, storage, and distribution system was last comprehensively characterized in the 1995 Master Plan<sup>2</sup> and, subsequently, in a Level II study in 1996<sup>3</sup>. At this time, there were many noted deficiencies, such as limited water supply, water storage and volume deficiencies, and corrosion of main transmission pipelines. Since the mid 1990s, there have been significant upgrades and modifications to the water supply and distribution system, including:

- Corrosion control programs implemented on the transmission pipelines between Sodergreen Reservoir (located 19 miles west along S.R. 230), the water treatment plant (WTP), and the City.
- Replacement of the 24-inch transmission line through the City.
- Installation of the Spur Well Field water supply and transmission system.
- Installation of the West Laramie Transmission Line to the Airport, including a 1.0 million gallon water tank.
- The East Side Tank project and its associated transmission lines are nearing completion. This project will bring 1.0 million gallons (MG) of storage into Zone 4. Zone 3 may receive an additional 1.4 MG of storage in the future (refer to *Map 6.1, Water Distribution Deficiencies*, for the zone locations).
- The 8.0 MG tank was rehabilitated; the Zone 2 tanks painted and modifications made to the water treatment plant clear well.

Even with the notable improvements over the last decade, there remain several challenges to maintaining and improving the functionality and reliability of the transmission, distribution, and storage system. Some of these challenges include:

- A water main replacement strategy to upgrade failing mains;
- Fire flow capacity improvements within several areas of the oldest pressure zones (1 and 2); and
- Extension of adequate service and maintenance to new developments within and at the fringes of the current distribution system, including areas within the City limits and those designated by this plan for future growth.

At the present time, the City is participating in a State-funded water management plan that is evaluating the following:

- Hydraulic adequacy of the existing water transmission, distribution, and storage;
- Modifications to the existing system to improve hydraulic performance;
- Conceivable future modifications to the system to accommodate planned changes in land use, population growth, and the incorporation of new water sources;
- The construction of an untreated, non-potable water system for serving green space, such as parks and the golf course; and
- Improvements to existing well systems.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Laramie Water Supply Master Plan, Level 1, November 1994

<sup>3</sup> City of Laramie Water Supply Master Plan, Level II, June 21, 1996

The **East Side Tank project** is a new water storage tank located north of Grand Avenue on the east edge of town (north of the Imperial Heights subdivision).

## SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

### Sewage Collection

**Wastewater collector lines** are those that collect wastewater from individual properties – residences and businesses – where it gravity flows or is pumped to **major interceptor lines**, which conveys the wastewater to the treatment plant.

Laramie’s sanitary sewer collection system was originally installed in the early 1900s and consisted mainly of 6-inch diameter pipe. In 1973, collector lines were extended to serve the West Laramie area and the major interceptor lines were expanded. Additional improvements to interceptor lines were completed in 1982. Other improvements included the addition of a 15-inch collector line flowing south along 21<sup>st</sup> Street.

The sanitary sewer system consists of approximately 82 miles of pipeline ranging in diameter from 6 inches to 27 inches. The lines were originally constructed of clay, while some concrete lines were installed after 1960, and poly vinyl Chloride (PVC) was generally used after 1970. Clay lines were constructed using caulked bell and spigot joints that are susceptible to leakage due to pipe movement and tree roots. Lines constructed out of concrete are susceptible to corrosion attack caused by a chemical reaction to wastewater gases, such as hydrogen sulfide generation.

The most recent comprehensive study of the sanitary sewer system was performed in 1986<sup>4</sup>. The study focused on 11 separate major wastewater lines serving various parts of the City. Peak flows were projected at the end of a 25-year planning horizon for a population of 35,000 persons to identify potential problem areas and the upgrades needed to alleviate any future problems. Problem areas reported from the study include a number of capacity deficiencies of several interceptor lines. These deficiencies constrain the amount of current and any additional wastewater flows. Thus, there are capacity improvement needs for each of these lines in order to sustain current flows and accommodate additional flows of new development. Upgrades of some of these lines are currently underway (*Map 6.2, Wastewater Improvements*).

Since the 1986 study, additional local studies have been performed for the sewage collection system. Upgrades to the collection and outfall lines are currently underway. Current improvements to the system and future issues related to sewer collection include:

- ♦ Wastewater service to the Laramie Regional Airport;
- ♦ South of Laramie Water and Sewer District;
- ♦ Interceptor improvements in the alley immediately west of Cedar Street to provide additional capacity;
- ♦ Interceptor improvements from Canby north to the main lift station and Spring Creek from 11<sup>th</sup> Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street, which is currently under design.
- ♦ The need for immediate upgrades to the main sewer lift station; and
- ♦ Future improvements to the West Laramie lift station (at the plant) and the Adams lift station.
- ♦ Future development of a South of Laramie Sewer Study.
- ♦ All related Goals and Action Statements listed in this plan.

<sup>4</sup> Sanitary Sewer Master Plan, HDR Infrastructure, 1986

### Wastewater Treatment

Prior to the late 1990s, Laramie's wastewater treatment facility was operating inefficiently and in need of improvement. The present treatment facility, completed in 1999, consistently meets Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements. The plant currently treats about 4.5 million gallons per day (MGD), and is designed to treat up to 6.0 MGD. The plant appears well-equipped and staffed to meet treatment needs for the present time. Based upon continued community growth, the wastewater treatment plant is in need of another digester and may require capacity improvements during the horizon of this plan.

### **STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM**

The City lacks a comprehensive stormwater management plan for the entire City Limits. In this absence, the City has been operating under several independent and loosely connected drainage planning documents for individual drainage basins. These documents were prepared at different times to support specific development projects or limited areas. These documents include:

- ♦ The East Campus Drainage Plan
- ♦ The North Laramie Drainage Plan
- ♦ West Laramie Drainage Plan
- ♦ Turner Tract Drainage Study

Displayed in *Map 6.3 Drainage Study Areas*, are the portions of the City that are covered by the above drainage studies and plans. This figure also shows that there are many areas of the City that do not have a management plan, including the majority of Downtown. Each property that is developed in these areas must provide its own storm water detention rather than utilizing regional detention facilities. Regional detention facilities can be located on properties of less development potential and provide for more efficient land use. Often, regional detention facilities can be incorporated into public parks or green spaces providing a benefit to the community rather than a development limitation on each individual property, the latter of which is the current situation.

In the areas throughout the City that do have storm water management plans the documents have made many recommendations for capital improvements to construct regional detention facilities and install properly sized storm sewers. However, very few of these recommended capital improvements have been constructed. This has resulted in land development, which should have the benefit of regional detention, either having to provide individual on-site detention or having no detention at all. There are large areas of Downtown that have no storm water detention other than what is provided in the curb and gutters and storm sewer.

A lack of detention and improper planning for future development has led to many areas which have undersized storm sewer. These undersized pipes quickly become overloaded in heavy rain events. When the storm sewers become overloaded the runoff begins to pool in parking lots and roadways creating a hazard and possibly leading to property damage. The City, and many residents, have learned where many of these problem areas exist

**National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** is part of the Clean Water Act requiring municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities to obtain permits which specify the types and amounts of pollutants that may be discharged into water bodies. Phase II regulations address stormwater discharges from small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and construction sites that disturb 1 to 5 acres. Construction activities that disturb one acre or more are regulated under the NPDES stormwater program.

DEQ contributes to Wyoming's quality of life through a combination of monitoring, permitting, inspection, enforcement and restoration/remediation activities which protect, conserve, and enhance the environment while supporting responsible stewardship of our state's resources.

through repeated experiences. A comprehensive storm water management plan for the entire City would not only formally identify the problem areas but could design the proper replacement size and be used to prioritize funding as it becomes available.

The Spring Creek channel is an important drainage way, collecting storm water runoff from the southern and eastern portions of the City and carrying it to the Laramie River. The hydraulic capacity of this channel is limited, however, at several points by bridge structures crossing it. Furthermore, properties along many of the reaches of the channel have been developed right up to the channel edge. Therefore, not only are these properties susceptible to flooding, but they also prevent widening of the channel. In short, the hydraulic capacity of the Spring Creek channel cannot be expanded without major bridge modifications and right-of-way acquisition. The channel's capacity is further restricted by the buildup of sediment from upstream. The City periodically removes this sediment in order to prevent backup and flooding. Without hydraulic capacity improvements, acquisition of additional right-of-way, and periodic clearing of sediment, this channel may overflow its banks causing localized flooding, possible property damage, and hence, risk the public health and safety.

In the future the City may be required to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Stormwater Quality Regulations. These regulations mandate that storm water quality meet minimum requirements. A few of the larger communities in Wyoming are beginning to address these Phase II requirements and are finding the cost of compliance to be significant. The City of Laramie is currently exempt from these requirements and, therefore, has no stormwater treatment facilities in use or in the design phase. A comprehensive storm water management plan for the entire City should include an examination of water quality issues in addition to the classic view of limiting quantity only.

## SOLID WASTE

Currently, solid waste is collected curbside and disposed in a permitted Type I (based on 20 tons per day of total household refuse) sanitary landfill just north of the City on 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The landfill is composed of unlined disposal trenches. The landfill property has been designed to accommodate many more trenches thereby allowing its capacity to last near the planning horizon for this Comprehensive Plan.

Late in 2005, a preliminary groundwater contamination notice was issued by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The notice indicated that there is a likelihood of ground water contamination, based upon the results of a modeling study by the DEQ. In order for the City to expand the facility it will be required to line the disposal trenches to avoid further contamination. Therefore, despite the adequate space, permit renewal will likely require that future landfill cells be designed for engineered containment, meaning encapsulation of wastes to eliminate liquids from contaminating the ground water.

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Collection is performed twice weekly by City crews and private trash services. The City has attempted to institute an automated trash collection system, but has met public resistance despite what appears to be a strong economic argument in favor of automation. The source of the resistance is due to possible added costs, changes in the size of new containers, and a possible reduction in the number of weekly pick-ups.

The City recycling program, performed at the landfill, is limited to the salvage of some steel, appliances, tires, wood, batteries, and waste oil. Steel and appliances are sold to area recyclers and removed from the landfill once a year, tires are shipped to Utah by a local hauler, and the wood products including Christmas trees are chipped and made available as mulch to the general public. Waste oils and rechargeable or lead acid batteries are accepted at the Street Department Shop or the landfill. The landfill permit does not allow the City to dispose these items. Electronic waste disposal is also an issues that is being addressed by the City. Currently drop-off locations are being considered for the landfill as well as off site locations. In addition drop-off programs are planed to be instituted on a bi-annual or quarterly basis.

There is no public curbside recycling program. There is at least one local private enterprise that performs this function. The concept of curbside recycling was studied several years ago, but not considered in detail since ARK Industries began operation. ARK Industries performs recycling of paper, metals, plastics, and glass using five drop-off centers and their sorting area on South 3rd Street. The recycled materials are sold on the open market.

### UTILITY SYSTEMS GOALS AND ACTION STATEMENTS

In this section the goals and action statements for each element of the plan are set forth. The goals and action statements are to be used as a starting point to achieve the overall vision of this plan.

#### Water Supply, Treatment, Distribution and Storage Goals and Action Statements

1. Implement the recommendations provided by the 2006 Water Management Plan, Level II Study, including:
  - a. Construction of the Laramie River Water Intake Pipeline to the Water Treatment Plant.
  - b. Modifications at the Turner Wellfield.
  - c. Additional study of irrigation and conservation measures.
  - d. Accelerate the high priority water mains replacement program.
  - e. Upgrade the distribution system to provide required peak hour service pressures and fire suppression capabilities in Zones 1 and 2.
2. Maintain water rights to provide for future expansion by adhering to the 2004 Monolith Ranch Water Rights Management Plan. The Monolith Ranch Water and Agricultural Plan should continue to be followed.

- a. Develop the Monolith Ranch Recreation Plan. This plan could be done in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
3. Strictly enforce and implement the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan and begin working on the updates to the Plan. Issues such as conservation, water quality, monitoring, availability, demand and threats along with issues mentioned in this plan should be incorporated into the new plan (*Chapter 3, Community Character*).
4. Replace existing canal use with a pipeline from the Laramie River to the Water Treatment Plant to ensure river supply availability during drought conditions. Sources of funding may include the Wyoming Water Development Commission.
5. Water and sewer facility standards should be replaced with the standards that give them the longest life and quality available at this time. This should help reduce the backlog of maintenance.
6. Adopt a dead-end water main restriction policy to preserve adequate flows, increase circulation, and prevent staling water.
7. Prioritize annual water main replacements in the City budget.
8. Follow through with the initiated cooperative efforts between the City, County, and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) to agree on the aquifer protection area.
9. Develop a contingency plan for an emergency event in which the aquifer becomes contaminated.
10. Develop standards for when developments outside of the city limits must hook up to city services. This may include distances, number of units, etc.
11. Research and consider using raw, untreated water or grey water systems for irrigation of landscaping. Other methods of water conservation should be considered.

#### Sanitary Sewer System Goals and Action Statements

1. Continue to implement the recommendations of the 1986 Master Plan by HDR Infrastructure, including the expansion or extension of several sewer reaches; among them Cedar Street in West Laramie, and the Spring Creek interceptor.
2. Monitoring and periodic sanitary sewer planning updates.
3. Implement the recommendations of the 2004 Turner Tract Sanitary Sewer Study, including:
  - a. Upgrades to several sewer reaches that are surcharged under present conditions or would become surcharged under build-out conditions and do not meet current WYDEQ requirements.
  - b. Improvements to the A-line near Reynolds Street reiterates the need for sewer upgrades at an estimated cost for the upgrades at 5.4 Million (2004) dollars.
4. Implement the recommendations of the 2005 Reynolds Street Sanitary Sewer Study, which identified the same section of the A-line given as one of the deficient target reaches found in the 2004 Turner Tract study and the 1986 Master Plan.

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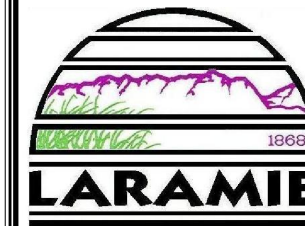
5. Complete a community-wide wastewater master plan, which may be funded by SLIB grants or Community Ready funds.
6. Develop standards for when developments outside of the city limits must hook up to city services. This may include distances, number of units, etc.

### Solid Waste Goals and Action Statements

1. Evaluate alternatives to land filling trash, including possible shipping to other municipalities, recycling, and composting.
2. Educate the public regarding automated collection. Subsequently, evaluate the feasibility of automated collection and obtain funding.
3. Begin dialog with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) regarding landfill contamination issues.
4. Perform an analysis of the costs and benefits associated with a comprehensive recycling program as well as possible sources of funds for managing such program. Cooperation with ARK should be considered as a viable option. Public education on the benefits of recycling should be pursued.
5. Establish drop-off locations for electronic waste at the landfill and at off site locations. Electronic waste drop-off should be done on a bi-annual or quarterly basis.
6. Perform an analysis of technologies and programs such as biomass energy production, methane gas production or composting programs that could generate revenue for solid waste while conserving and reducing biomass in the landfill itself.
7. Implement and develop procedures to reduce waste in an effort to save landfill space. Examples include composting for yard waste, e-waste pick-up and recycling.

### Stormwater Goals and Action Statements

1. Complete a community-wide stormwater management plan, including updates to the existing drainage plans. This plan should address water quality issues as well as funding mechanisms.
2. West Laramie will need to provide paved streets with a drainage system. This must be done to provide proper drainage and save the excessive maintenance costs for this area.
3. Adopt the drainage policy and management plan into the City codes.
4. Adopt uniform drainage design policies, practices, and standards.
5. Adopt a Spring Creek channel maintenance plan. Subsequently, educate the public on the benefits of the plan.
6. Implement best management practices for prevention of stormwater contamination.
7. Educate the public on the importance of avoiding stormwater contamination by way of discarding paints, used oil, gasoline, and vegetation brush, among other items.

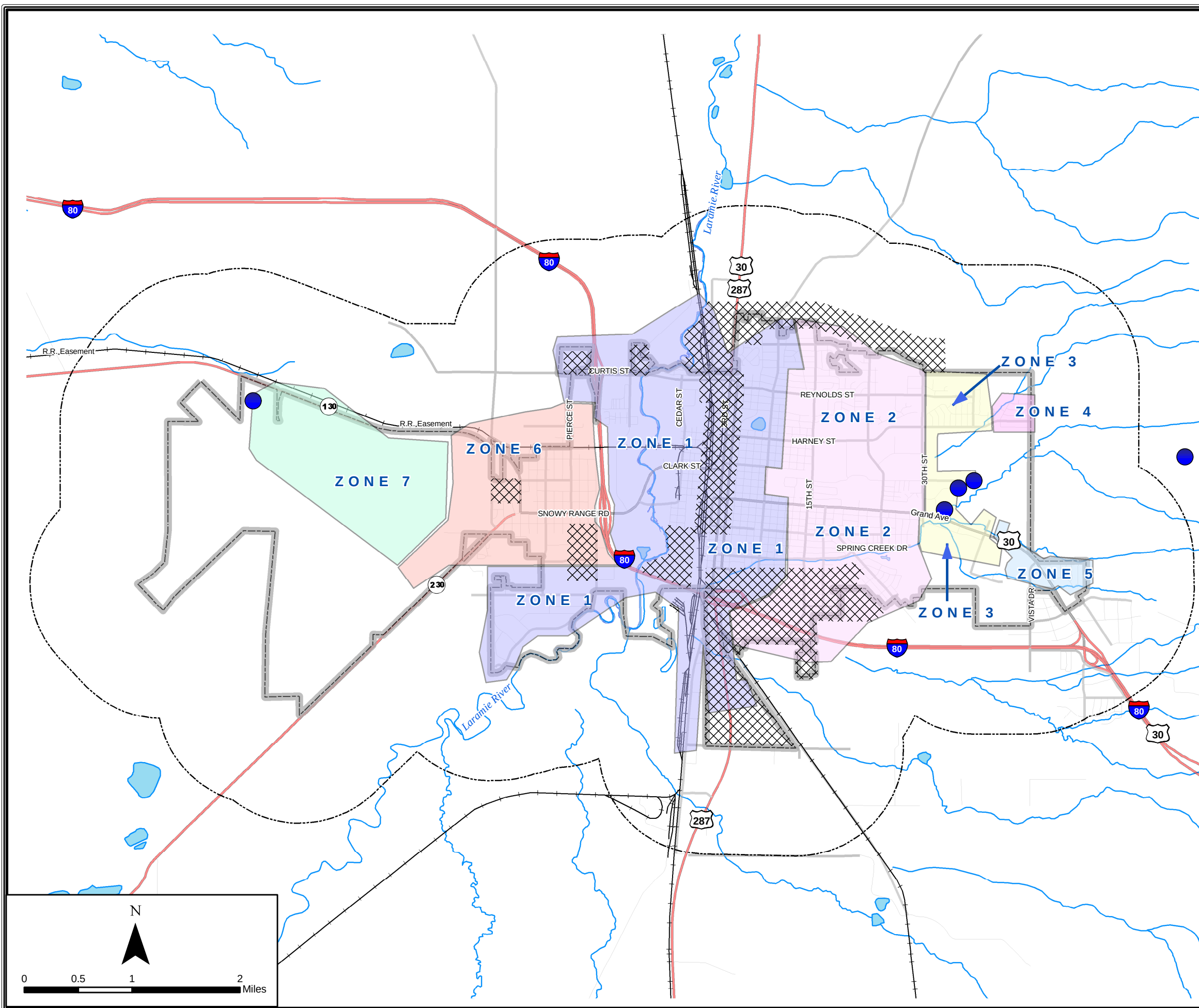


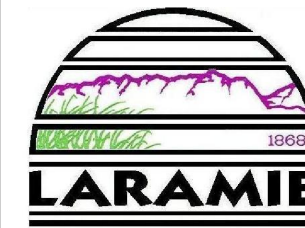
THE  
LARAMIE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

## Map 6.1 Water Distribution Deficiencies

### Legend

- Local Roads
- Collectors / Arterial Roads
- Interstates / Highways
- City Limits
- Streams
- Railroad
- 1-Mile Planning Area
- Distribution Deficient Areas
- Water Tank



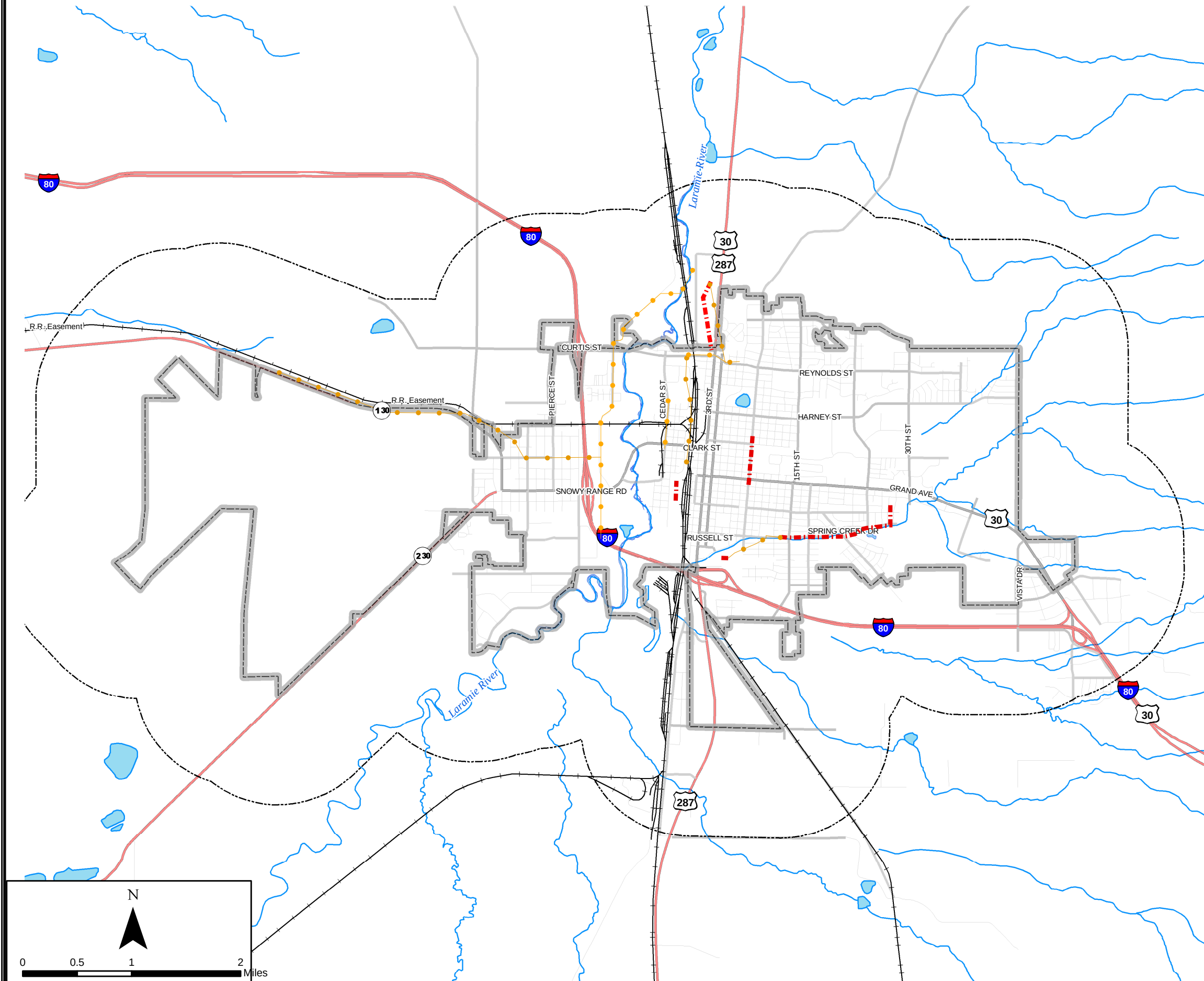


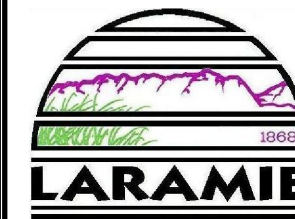
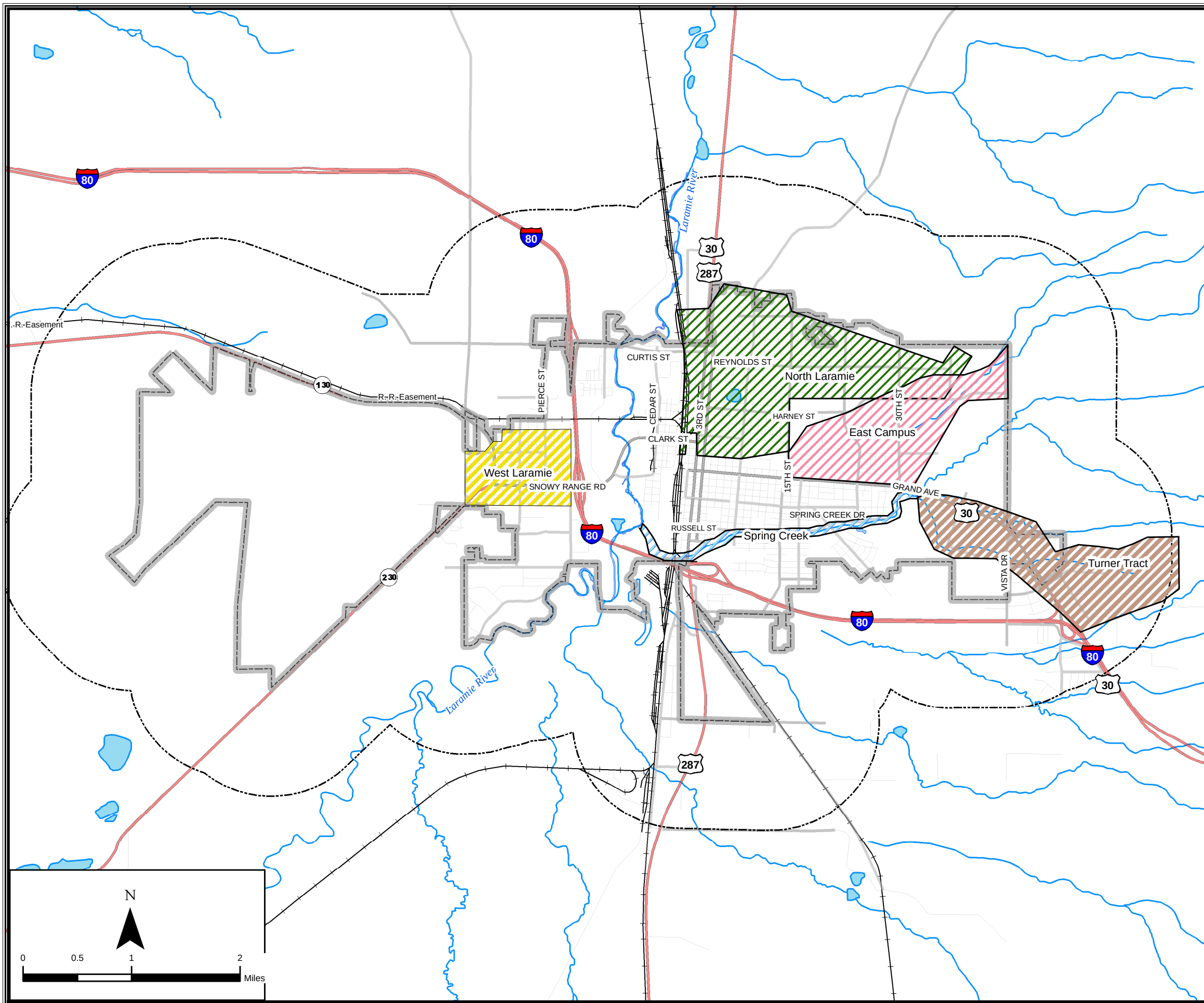
THE  
LARAMIE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

## Map 6.2 Wastewater Improvements

### Legend

- Local Roads
- Collectors / Arterial Roads
- Interstates / Highways
- City Limits
- Streams
- Railroad
- 1-Mile Planning Area
- Proposed / Under Procurement
- Under Design or Construction





THE  
LARAMIE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

## Map 6.3 Drainage Study Areas

### Legend

- Local Roads
- Collectors / Arterial Roads
- Interstates / Highways
- City Limits
- Streams
- Railroad
- 1-Mile Planning Area

### Drainage Study Areas

- East Campus
- North Laramie
- Spring Creek
- Turner Tract
- West Laramie



# URBAN GROWTH



## CHAPTER

Planned growth is essential for a community if it wants to be successful at managing new development, population and the economy among many other issues. The City of Laramie has multiple factors that make managing growth in and around the City challenging. Thus, it makes sense for Laramie to adopt a plan that manages its growth thereby better managing fiscal resources while meeting residents' needs. The policies of this plan that address the community's future growth are called growth management policies.

### EXPANSION VERSUS INFILL DEVELOPMENT

#### Laramie

The City is seeking to accommodate continued population growth in a variety of housing types as well as adding employment and increasing the tax base. Significant new development has continued at the north edge of the City, the recently approved Grand View Heights Subdivision in the Turner Tract, and Fall Creek in the south. Additionally, there have been many other subdivisions and multi-family development projects in other parts of Laramie. Finally, numerous redevelopment opportunities are situated throughout the developed portions of the City, and there will be more in the future.

A major issue confronting Laramie has been the constraints provided by aging water distribution and sanitary sewage collection facilities. The City faces the challenge of upgrading existing infrastructure that has exceeded its useful life. As water and sewer lines age replacement will be required in the coming years. Topography and distance constraints add to the challenge of providing utility services beyond the northern ridgeline or in non-contiguous areas.

On the other hand, infill development is highly desirable because it requires a minimal extension of service. It also affords the advantage of being able to use maintenance and replacement funds to upgrade some parts of the system to provide for future growth. This reduces the competition for limited resources by getting double benefit from the expenditures.

**Statistics on the Sprawling of America**  
Over a 20-year period, the 100 largest urbanized areas sprawled out over an additional 14,545 square miles. That was more than nine million acres of natural habitats, farmland, and other rural space that were covered over by the asphalt, buildings, and subdivisions of suburbia.

**Smart Growth Goals:**

- ♦ **Neighborhood Livability** - A central goal of smart growth is the quality of neighborhoods. They should be safe, convenient, attractive, and affordable. Sprawl development too often forces trade-offs between these goals. Some neighborhoods are safe, but not convenient. Others are convenient, but not affordable.
- ♦ **Better Access, Less Traffic** - One of the major downfalls of sprawl is traffic. By putting jobs, homes, and other destinations far apart and requiring a car for every trip, sprawl makes everyday tasks a chore. Smart growth's emphasis on mixing land uses, clustering development, and providing multiple transportation choices helps us manage congestion, pollute less, and save energy. Those who want to drive can, but people who would rather not drive have choices.

The City has several in-town neighborhoods that have maintained their vitality over the years but are confronting issues related to structural obsolescence and competition with newly developing outlying areas. It is far better to encourage renewal of these areas than to let them deteriorate. Therefore, it is advisable for the community to begin identifying specific areas of older, established neighborhoods that are at risk for continued decline and disinvestment. Some of these areas include those immediately abutting the west side of the railroad tracks, adjacent to the north and south of Downtown, and portions of the tree area. Once the boundaries of these areas are defined, it must become a priority to upgrade the existing infrastructure. Thus, while growth may assume a very different form within the City then what we see today, management of growth will better serve the needs of citizens - present and future.

**Albany County**

Nearly all of Albany County, excluding Laramie and other towns, is either natural, vacant, or in rural agricultural uses. Areas within a 0-5 miles of the city limits are mostly developed with 1-5 acre residential lots. Many of these developments are located south of Laramie and are served by the South of Laramie Water and Sewer District (SLWSD). Albany County, except for areas south of Laramie in the SLWSD and at 9-Mile Water District, is not equipped to provide an urban or suburban level of infrastructure or public services to residents. Generally, if development were to leap into the rural areas of the County, any sewer and water lines extended to these areas would serve far fewer people per mile, and the costs of maintenance would increase. Along with water and sewer costs, school bus trips, police and fire emergency services, mail delivery, and many other governmental costs would also increase. Residents who are considering purchase of a home in a County subdivision need to be informed that the County is not prepared or financially capable of making investments for significant road improvements and other infrastructure components necessary to prematurely support increased density. Further major new and permanent commitments would need to be made on operations, maintenance, and personnel. Clearly, this would constrain County finances.

**MOVING TOWARD A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The basics of a growth management strategy, currently called “smart growth” or “sustainable development,” have been known for forty or more years. The logical planning solution, first developed in the late 1960s and still valid today, is to identify an urban growth area. The planning framework involves four areas; the developed area, urban growth areas, development limitation areas, and agricultural areas.

**Developed Area**

The developed area has existing infrastructure. Planning issues are primarily infill and redevelopment. Illustrated in *Map 7.1, Developed Areas*, is Laramie’s developed area.

### Urban Growth Areas

Land on the fringe of the developed area, or at infill locations, should be identified as the urban growth area<sup>1</sup> where new development in urban patterns is to be encouraged for immediate or near-term development. The urban growth area boundary limits zoning and infrastructure expansion. The size of the urban growth area should be on the order of 15 to 20 years of development potential. Ideally, the number of years should be determined in conjunction with a capital investment program for expanding infrastructure and municipal facilities.

Shown by *Map 7.2, Urban Growth Area*, is the suggested area for which future development should be focused. These areas shown, should be the areas where the City is planning expansions of roads, water, sewer, and the extension of public services. All improvements associated with development should be completed to full city standards and should be annexed at the time of development. The figure also provides for additional development of the airport area, where expansion of airport-related and industrial uses have been proposed.

The urban growth area can be modified as conditions change during the life of the plan. In the future, areas designated as rural growth areas may be changed to urban growth areas if it is determined that infrastructure improvements should be expanded to this area.

The Monolith Ranch is another area that is directly linked to growth and a major asset for Laramie. Purchased by the City for its water rights, this area has other benefits it can offer. This area should be looked at as an area for trails expansion, open space, and possibly development, as a revenue source and as exchange land among many other benefits. Urban growth area boundaries should be evaluated and adjusted accordingly with each annual progress report.

### Development Limitation Areas

In and around Laramie, there are several areas that are within the 100-year floodplain, the Casper Aquifer protection area, along the highly-valued ridgelines, adjacent to the Laramie River and its tributaries (Spring Creek, Pioneer Canal, and Soldier Creek), steep slopes in locations through the community, and other natural habitat and heavily vegetated areas that are important to the community for protection. The floodplains and other flood prone areas, in particular, are hazardous due to the potential for the loss of life and the loss or damage of property. Government's responsibility for the public health and safety indicate that they should be protected. There are Federal standards that protect wetlands. Other resources, such as wellhead and aquifer recharge areas, are also deemed worthy of protection. These are areas where regulations should limit, and in some cases prohibit, development through applicable zoning restrictions, adoption of environmental performance standards, or even outright purchase. Shown in *Map 7.3, Development Limitation Areas*, are the primary areas for which protection is valued and warranted, for all identified areas. Areas identified on this map may warrant special conditions before or if this land is to be developed.

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<sup>1</sup> The growth area has also been known as a development district, urban growth area, urbanizing area, and other terms over the years.

### **Smart Growth Goals Cont:**

♦ **Thriving Cities, Suburbs and Towns** - Smart growth puts the needs of existing communities first. By guiding development to already built-up areas, money for investments in transportation, schools, libraries, and other public services can go to the communities where people live today. This is especially important for neighborhoods that have inadequate public services and low levels of private investment. It is also critical for preserving what makes so many places special— attractive buildings, historic districts, and cultural landmarks.



Clustered conservation subdivisions are a type of land development that groups or clusters lots to allow conservation of resources and natural open space.

**Smart Growth Goals:**♦ **Shared Benefits -**

Divisions by income and race have allowed some areas to prosper, while others languish. As basic needs, such as jobs, education, and health care become less plentiful in some communities, residents have diminishing opportunities to participate in their regional economy. Smart growth enables all residents to be beneficiaries of prosperity.

**Rural Growth Areas**

This area has been identified as not appropriate for future urban growth. Illustrated in *Map 7.2, Growth Areas*, is the Rural Growth Area for Laramie and Albany County. Development in these areas now as urban growth areas, or within the next 20 years, would be considered premature and sprawl inducing. Plans for growth in these areas need to be reviewed jointly with the guidelines of the Albany County comprehensive plan, this plan and any subsequent development standards jointly adopted by the city and Albany County. Such development would require inefficient utility and street extensions and would needlessly stretch the geographical requirements of other public facilities and services. Limiting the density and character of development in these areas will contribute to conserving view sheds into and out of the City; it will help to preserve the dramatic views of the mountains and reinforce the sense of Laramie as a freestanding community.

The rural growth area should develop with a low density (1 home < 2.5 acres), a figure that discourages all but the rural estate and agricultural uses. Such development and uses are typically not served by urban utilities, so normal urban and suburban development is not feasible and less likely to occur. It would be more appropriate to consider these areas for:

- ♦ Continued agricultural or open space;
- ♦ Low density, countryside, residential development;

Subdivisions within the 1-mile planning area shall comply with development standards that have been jointly adopted by the city and Albany County. The development standards will be developed in concert with the Albany County comprehensive plan and may include improvements above those of present county standards such as paved streets, water and sewer distribution systems (private or public) dedication of easements, parks, trails, among many others. These standards must be in place to promote orderly and planned growth while assessing future impacts these developments will have in these areas.

**Periodic Expansion**

The urban growth area has a potential life of 20 years. The community needs to regularly revisit this area and add additional land. Expansion should take place well before the current growth area is 50 percent developed. The need should be assessed every five years and ideally, the growth area will be expanded to maintain a 20 year growth potential.

The major issue becomes how the City and County implement the growth management strategy presented above. There will be major components. The first is a common designation of the developed areas and development of growth area. The second is the identification of the development limitation areas. These are accomplished on a map that serves as a guide to decision making on development for both the private sector and the various governmental bodies. There will be additional policies that are attached to each of these basic mapping elements that provide controls or incentives for the implementation of the plan.

### Effect on Development Pattern

A growth management approach such as that outlined above is not designed or intended to restrict or limit community growth. In fact, to the contrary, its purpose is simply to direct development to areas that are most suitable and feasible given the existing pattern of use and ready availability of adequate infrastructure. The defined growth areas will accommodate a population of approximately 38,000 persons, which exceeds the target population of 33,830 so as to allow market flexibility. In addition, there are a variety of character types planned throughout the growth area that are designed to accommodate different neighborhood environments and a variety of housing types and price ranges. This program may be further refined and enhanced to include transfer of development rights or density, which would allow land owners in the peripheral areas to sell their rights and allowable density to developers within the growth area.

While the most effective means for implementing growth management involves Albany County and is highly advocated by this plan, it may be accomplished by the City through other means. If the County is involved, it may be accomplished through an amendment of its zoning regulations, which would be based on an adopted land use plan and development policies. In lieu of the County's participation, the transitional areas could be annexed into the City thereby allowing the City to enact its zoning authority. Alternatively, performance standards could be incorporated into the City's subdivision regulations, in effect, conditioning approval and the receipt of urban infrastructure on the ability to meet certain standards. (e.g. infrastructure capacities). Lastly, the use of incentives such as density bonuses may be an effective means for compliance.

### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

The mapping of Laramie into the four basic growth management areas is a critical step. The following are recommendations of how these areas should be applied to Laramie and its one-mile planning jurisdiction.

#### Developed Areas

The primary objective in the developed areas is to promote infill and redevelopment. Infill development is new construction of open pockets of land surrounded by existing development, and individual lots or vacant properties. In some cases the vacant land may have had a prior use.

In Laramie, redevelopment should take place in well established neighborhoods where there is an emerging pattern of decline and disinvestment. These areas are not exceedingly apparent as they are essentially on a lot-by-lot basis. Collectively over time there will be target areas that are ripe for reinvestment and redevelopment, either by the public or private sectors or both. In all these neighborhoods, water and sewer lines should have priority for upgrades to replace substandard facilities and coordinate with growth needs. Parks should be established and improved, and in areas where park deficiencies exist, additional parkland should be secured and improved early in the redevelopment period. Park areas may be one or two assembled lots or possibly larger tracts that are identified concurrent with the redevelopment process.

#### **Smart Growth Goals:**

- ♦ **Lower Costs, Lower Taxes** - Opening up green space to new development means that the cost of new schools, roads, sewer lines, and water supplies will be borne by residents. Sprawl also means families have to own more cars and drive them further. This has made transportation the second highest category of household spending, just behind shelter. Taking advantage of existing infrastructure keeps taxes down. And where convenient transportation choices enable families to rely less on driving, there's more money left over for other things, like buying a home or saving for college.
- ♦ **Keeping "Open Space" Open** - By focusing development in already built-up areas, smart growth preserves rapidly vanishing natural treasures. From forests and farms to wetlands and wildlife, smart growth lets us pass on to our children the landscapes we love. Communities are demanding more parks that are conveniently located and bring recreation within reach of more people. Also, protecting natural resources will provide healthier air and cleaner drinking water.

- Source: Smart Growth America

Neighborhood revitalization requires, at a minimum, an intensive five-year effort to initialize, program, and sustain. If this is done, only ongoing management and administration efforts should be needed by the City after five years. A redevelopment priority assessment should be completed to encourage neighborhoods to begin action ahead of designation to reinvest on their own. Such designation may be encouraged through a neighborhood-based planning initiative, seed money for an improvement project, or declaration of an improvement district.

As recommended in *Chapter 3, Community Character*, the downtown area is in need of reinvestment. The area, while still economically strong as a retail and entertainment area, is in need of internal design improvements, conservation policies for existing buildings, and areas designated for infill and possible minor expansion.

### Urban Growth Areas

The development growth area has been defined to provide for all of the City's anticipated growth for the next 20 years. The development capacity of this area for the Year 2025 is a population of approximately 38,000 people (38,704 according to the land use model), or 17,337 dwelling units. This exceeds the target population of 33,830 persons (refer to *Chapter 2, Conditions and Outlook*) to allow sufficient market flexibility. The urban growth area contains land for both residential and non-residential development. The residential need is based on the land use modeling of the alternative future scenarios described in *Chapter 3, Community Character*. These alternatives were generated by a series of small groups through future planning workshops in February 2006.

Some of the urban growth area for Laramie falls outside of the city limits. It is essential that this area develop with predetermined standards that match or closely compare to existing city standards. Improvements standards for sewer, water, roads, lot size, parks, schools, utilities among many other items must be considered as these areas develop. Annexation of these areas is also likely at the time of development. Growth should proceed but only under the recommendations found in this plan. It will be essential to incorporate the finding found in other chapters of this plan as well as maps in determining where and how urban growth should occur. Properties located in the Urban Growth Areas still must conform to other restrictions or conditions that may be found in other chapters such as the Parks and Recreation Chapter and on maps such as *Map 7.3, Development Limitation Areas*.

### Development Limitation Areas

Development Limitation Areas can be found on *Map 7.3, Development Limitation Areas*. Areas identified as development limitation areas may warrant special conditions before or if this land is to be developed.

One type of development limitation area consists of floodplains along the Laramie River and Spring Creek, wetlands and natural habitats, ridgelines to the north and east, and the aquifer protection area. These are areas that should remain largely undeveloped with the exception of some limited recreational uses, greenways and limited development. In

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## CHAPTER 7: URBAN GROWTH

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addition, soil studies and mitigation measures should be taken to ensure that the lands in this area are able to support proposed uses.

While there are Federal regulations that apply to the floodplain, it is important to regulate and control floodplains locally. Flooding takes a toll on property and sometimes on life. The primary goal is to ensure that flood damage and loss of property is absolutely minimized. Some low-impact recreational uses in areas that are not damaged by occasional flooding are also permitted, provided the flooding or water tables are such that the facilities are normally usable even in wet conditions.

Filling of floodplains should be prohibited, except for road crossings of a river or stream where the road is needed to provide a network of major roads or to provide access to otherwise isolated properties that do not have access to other roads except by the crossing. The floodplain should not be used as routing for roads to avoid the higher condemnation costs on dry land. Residential uses should not be located and should be discouraged in the floodplain nor should on-site sewer systems be located there. The filling of house pads to elevate the homes above the floodplain simply place homes in a dangerous condition. With roads underwater, people are isolated and cut off from emergency services in the event of fire or health crisis. Further, the 100-year flood is simply a frequency of flooding measure, and greater floods occur. Similarly, although not officially mapped through a letter of map amendment or revision of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps, there is evidence that the 100-year floodplain is increasing as areas are developed and paved forcing more water into the streams.

There is one other resource that is subject to flooding, which is known as drainage way soils. These are soils that form along streams and are listed as having seasonal water tables where the water is at or above the land surface. This is an area that should be used for stormwater management. Water naturally flows here, and development on these properties should be designed to use these areas to control the flow of stormwater off site. The subdivision regulations should be amended to maintain the pre-development storage capacity in addition to detaining/retaining the excess water created by development as currently required.

The second type of Development Limitation Areas consists of lands that comprise the ridge (parallel to Reynolds) at the northern edge of Laramie's current City Limits (often mentioned by residents as a priority) as well as several other ridgelines that traverse the edge of the Jacoby Golf Course and extend in a southerly direction across State Highway 30. Lands occupying the ridge slopes are difficult and extremely costly to provide street, utility, and other public services. Areas at the top of the ridges are considered sensitive because any development that occurs there will loom over the remainder of the City and harm the highly valued views of these ridgelines. Any development at the top of the ridgelines, if it must occur, should be set back or heavily camouflaged by vegetation such as trees and bushes and further though proper color selection so as to mitigate to the maximum practicable extent any negative impacts on the community and its residents.

The third development limitation area type consists of the western flank of the Laramie Range, abutting the far eastern edge of the study area, which is comprised primarily of

exposed Casper formation. The protection area of the Casper Aquifer is highly sensitive and warrants a high level of protection. While some of this area is federally owned, there are significant areas closer to town that appear to be available for development. As with ridge top development, provisions should be made for either acquisition, extremely low density development, clustering in appropriate and less sensitive areas, or camouflage mitigation provisions. Planning provisions and recommendations as to the protection of this area are outlined in *Chapter 3, Community Character*.

### Rural Growth Areas

These land areas are excluded from urban development for the immediate future. Reviews should be conducted to determine whether additions to the urban growth areas need to be made, thereby reducing the amount of land in the rural growth areas. The reason for not allowing urban development is to avoid premature development of land that results in higher costs to government for service and infrastructure and can lead to difficulties in providing services to these areas at a later time.

The rural growth area should develop with a low density, a figure that discourages all but the rural estate and agricultural uses. Such development and uses are typically not served by urban utilities, so normal urban and suburban development is not feasible and less likely to occur. It would be more appropriate to consider these areas for:

- ♦ Continued agricultural or open space;
- ♦ Low density, countryside, residential development;

### **LEVELS OF SERVICE**

Local governmental service should be quantified as meeting an expressed level of service. This is a familiar concept on roads where the level of service (LOS) relates to the degree of congestion. The same concept can hold true for other service types. With sewer this is basically a two-level condition: public and on-site sewers. Water service is based on normal water supply pressure and whether there is sufficient hydrant pressure and capacity for firefighting. As mentioned in *Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation*; standards for parks are based on acres per thousand people, for different types of parks. Fire and emergency services have response time criteria, which for fire is also combined with water service conditions.

With a two-stage level of service approach in mind, developed areas and urban growth areas should be given uniform levels of service with one possible exception: In the Downtown, University, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Grand Avenue commercial corridor areas, a higher tolerance (lower service level) for congestion on roads can be permitted. If these areas meet their appropriate economic roles, more congestion is understandable. Goals of increasing the vitality of these areas, particularly the Downtown, will by necessity result in congestion, which is not a sign of decreased living standards, but of a healthy high-density commercial and residential area.

The rural growth areas are not intended for urban development during the next 20 years and a good portion of them are unlikely to be developed even further into the future.

#### **Smart Growth Goals:**

- ♦ **Shared Benefits -**  
Divisions by income and race have allowed some areas to prosper, while others languish. As basic needs, such as jobs, education, and health care become less plentiful in some communities, residents have diminishing opportunities to participate in their regional economy. Smart growth enables all residents to be beneficiaries of prosperity.

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## CHAPTER 7: URBAN GROWTH

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Because of this, the level of urban services should be held to the lowest possible level. The level of service may include modified standards since city standards would not be warranted based on the density or intensity of uses.

### URBAN GROWTH GOALS AND ACTION STATEMENTS

In this section the goals and action statements for each element of the plan are set forth. The goals and action statements are to be used as a starting point to achieve the overall vision of this plan.

Displayed in *Map 7.2, Growth Areas*, are each of the above described areas. This illustration is consistent with *Map 3.2, Future Land Use*, both of which, together, will guide decisions relating to the pattern, type, and character of future development of the Laramie one-mile planning area. The following are policies to assist in the decision-making process.

#### Redevelopment Goals and Action Statements

1. Neighborhoods at the periphery of the Downtown and University should continue neighborhood enhancement efforts. These enhancements could include redevelopment of these areas.
2. Areas designated for redevelopment should be studied to determine maintenance and replacement needs including upgrades for water and sewer services that will serve the expected future growth.
3. Improve parks standards level of service where current levels are inadequate.
4. Maintain and improve sidewalks in the initial redevelopment effort through the use of the shared sidewalk replacement program, facilitated by the engineering department.
5. Increase residential population in the Downtown through changes to the current zoning regulations to encourage mixed use buildings and upper floor rental or condominium units.
6. Maintain and improve infrastructure within the developed area so as to enhance the sustainability and integrity of older neighborhoods and business areas.
7. Roads and other infrastructure should be maintained, replaced and required in accordance with a capital improvements program to maintain such facilities in a safe, sound, and efficient condition.

#### Urban Growth Areas Goals and Action Statements

1. Extend water and sewer for all growth areas in a sequential manner concurrent with development. The timing of infrastructure improvements is reliant upon the rate of new development.
2. Provide plans for parks and recreation areas as well as police, fire and emergency management services and solid waste collection concurrent with new development.
3. Establish a capital improvements program or other means of providing needed infrastructure or services. This includes other capital facilities including police, fire/rescue services, library, schools, and parks.

4. Provide for review of the Laramie Comprehensive Plan and updating every five years to ensure the development capacity is adequate.
5. Coordinate with Albany County to encourage preparation and implementation of a plan and standards that manage development within the one-mile planning jurisdiction, consistent with the growth guidelines of this plan. Standards may include infrastructure such as streets, water and sewer along with services such as schools, police, fire, parks and trails. Standards in this area should be at a level of improvement high enough for eventual annexation.
6. Provide adequate land for 20 years of development, based upon a target population of 33,830 persons. This should include sites for all types of development, open space, recreation and public buildings among other land uses.
7. Contain higher intensity estate, suburban, and urban development within the defined urban growth area of the plan.
8. Determine which areas can be served by sewer in the distant future and which will be served by septic systems. The actual timing of service extension will depend upon the rate of new development and the build out of the defined growth areas. Defined areas will help determine the mean by which sewer will be treated.
9. Develop area plans similar to the Turner Tract Area Plan which outline best uses for an area, as well as helping develop integrated, mixed use, live-work developments.
10. For areas outside the city limits but inside the 1 mile boundary higher development standards such as paved roads, water, sewer, dry lines, parks, trails or other improvements may be required.
11. Upon adoption of the Albany County comprehensive plan, the city shall consider amending the urban and rural growth areas to coincide with the Albany County comprehensive plan. Any future amendments to the urban and rural growth areas shall be coordinated and agreed to by both the county and the city.

#### Development Limitation Areas Goals and Action Statements

1. Prohibit residential parcels less than 35 acres for development in the 100-year floodplain except for water dependent uses and essential road crossings.
2. Regulate development within the aquifer protection zone so as to closely manage this water resource. Development should follow the Aquifer Protection Plan (APP) or any subsequent updates. All provisions of the APP should be followed.
3. Prohibit development in wetlands. If development is to occur where wetland are located mitigation measure should be taken to preserve wetlands on the property. Wetlands should be set aside as open space if development occurs.
4. Use existing drainage ways for storm water management such as retention, detention and conveyance. Such use of existing drainage ways shall not result in contamination of ground water or result in other significant environmental impacts.
5. Make clustering with minimum density and maximum open space a permitted use in all protection areas that are currently zoned residential.

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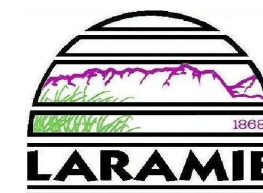
## CHAPTER 7: URBAN GROWTH

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6. Provide educational information on the benefits of protecting the wide range of natural resources available to our community. Information on habitat, water, aquifer protection, night skies, air quality, open space among others should be developed.
7. Explore transfer of development rights for areas determined to be “sensitive.” This option can provide alternatives to development in specific areas while compensating for the loss in development.
8. Provide density bonuses for developers protecting and maintaining open space or sensitive habitat.

### Rural Growth Areas Goals and Action Statements

1. These areas should be restricted to agricultural or low density residential purposes only. Any development that occurs should maintain the primarily agricultural nature of the area.
2. Non-agricultural related residential development should be in the form of subdivisions with extremely low densities and on-site and water supply and waste treatment facilities. Emphasis should be placed on cluster development and preservation of open space.
3. Sewer and water services should not typically be extended into the rural growth areas unless the plan is amended by the City to re-designate the land into the urban growth area. Minor improvements to any existing development should be limited to upgrade the benefit of the current users.
4. Agricultural Areas should be used to preserve the agricultural heritage of the community.
5. The Laramie Comprehensive Plan should be as consistent as possible with the County Comprehensive Plan in relation to rural growth.
6. Upon adoption of the Albany County comprehensive plan, the city shall consider amending the urban and rural growth areas to coincide with the Albany County comprehensive plan. Any future amendments to the urban and rural growth areas shall be coordinated and agreed to by both the county and the city.

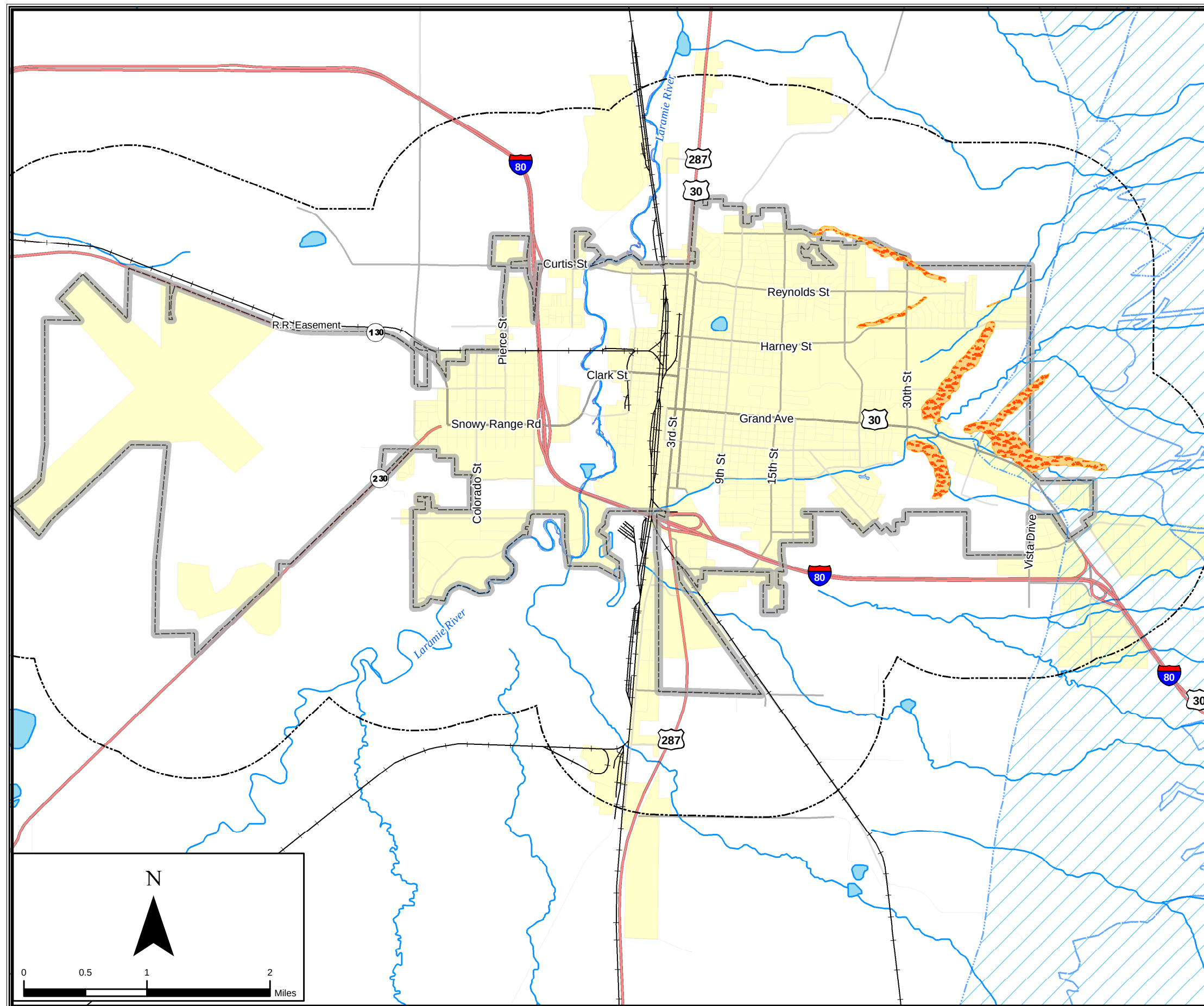


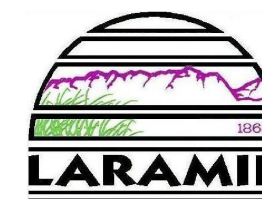
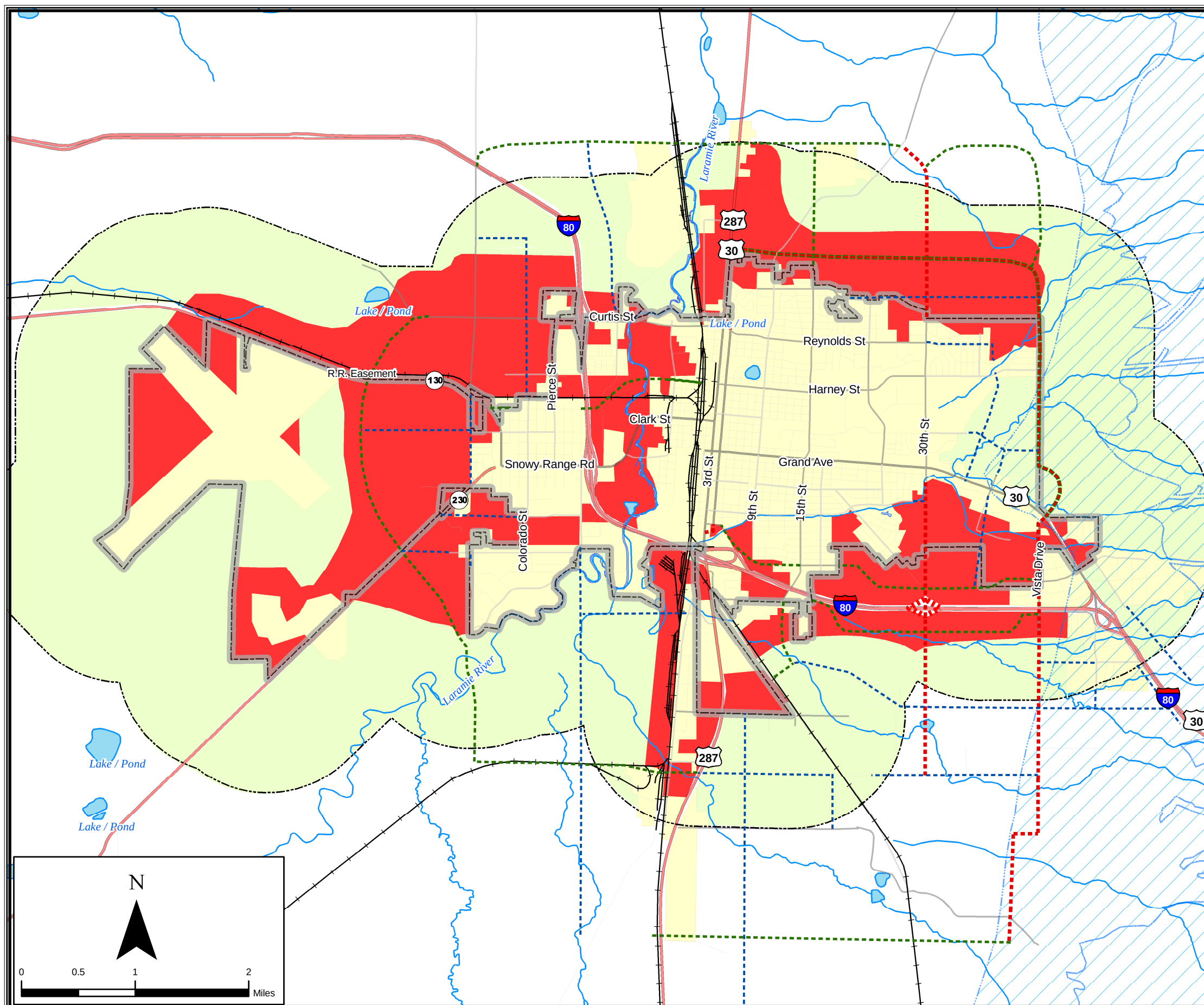
THE  
LARAMIE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

## Map 7.1 Developed Areas

### Legend

- Local Roads
- Collectors / Arterial Roads
- Interstates / Highways
- 1-Mile Planning Area
- City Limits
- Streams
- Railroad
- Ridgelines
- Developed Areas
- Casper Aquifer Protection Area





# THE LARAMIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

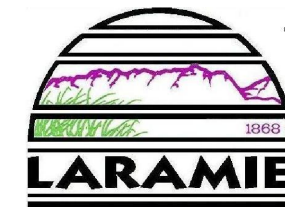
## Map 7.2 Urban Growth Area

### Legend

- Local Roads
- Collector / Arterial Roads
- Interstates / Highways
- Proposed Parkway\*
- Proposed Principal Arterial\*
- Proposed Minor Arterial\*
- Proposed Collector\*
- 1-Mile Planning Area
- City Limits
- Streams
- Railroad
- Developed Areas
- Urban Growth Areas
- Rural Growth Areas
- Casper Aquifer Protection Area

\*See Map 8.1 for additional details.



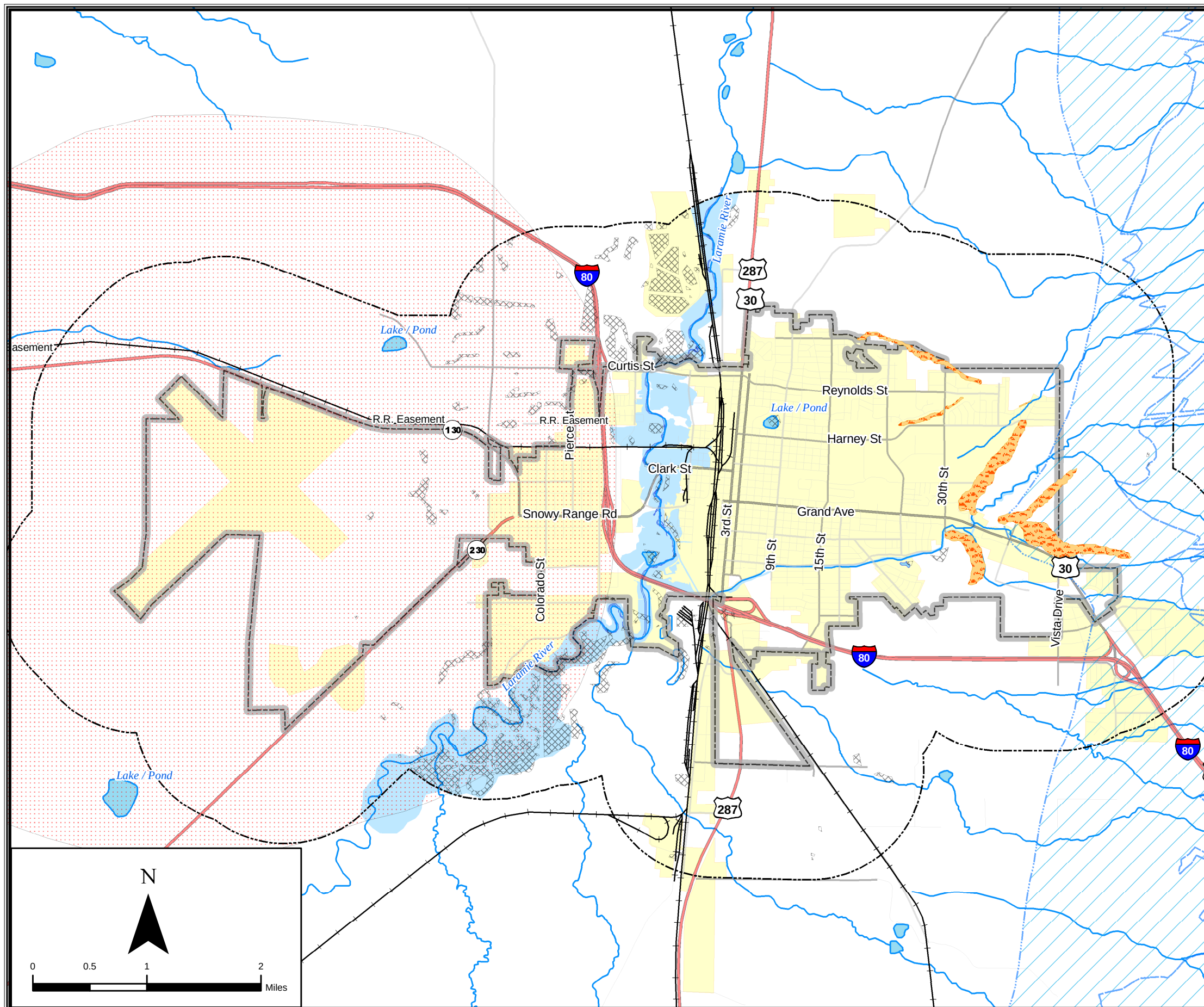
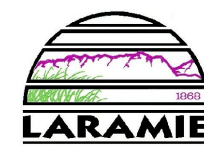


THE  
LARAMIE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

## Map 7.3 Development Limitation Areas

### Legend

- Local Roads
- Collector / Arterial Roads
- Interstates / Highways
- 1-Mile Planning Area
- City Limits
- Streams
- Railroad
- Ridgelines / Slopes
- Floodways, Flood Plains, and Riparian Areas
- Potential Wetlands
- Airport Influence Area
- Casper Aquifer Protection Area



# TRANSPORTATION



## CHAPTER

Transportation planning is an essential function for the community. It helps the City adequately prepare for its future travel demands and ensure safe movement of people and efficient transport of goods throughout the community and beyond. Access to, through, and within the community, whether by air, bus, automobile, bicycle, or foot, is vital for the physical, economic, and social well-being of Laramie. A well-planned and highly coordinated transportation system will contribute to the character of the community and its pattern of future growth.

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### INTRODUCTION

Transportation is of significant value and importance to Laramie. A transportation system offers the ability to depart from an origin and arrive at a destination in an efficient, timely, and safe manner. It allows the movement of goods, materials, and people in a manner that permits the local economy to function successfully. The transportation system includes, as its primary mode, a network of highways, primary and secondary arterial roads, and collector and local streets, which must function seamlessly with varying other modes of transport such as air transportation, public transit, bicycling, and walking. Communities that are successful in their mobility programs have a true “system” of transportation, meaning that there is a balance among modes.

The primary transportation system in Laramie is the street system, which consists of a series of rights-of-way that connect the community’s neighborhoods and destinations such as employment centers, educational institutions, public buildings and spaces with the larger region, state, and nation. These linear alignments largely define the shape and form of the urbanized areas, which translates into the pattern of development. Since each of these corridors carry both residents and non-residents, they also convey to the public a sense of community by way of the appearance of the corridor environs themselves and the adjacent development and vacant lands.

A **Major Street Plan** is an official plan for the development of the major street system for an area, which is adopted by the local government.

While a focus of this chapter is on the surface transportation system, i.e. street network, each of the other modes is addressed, as well, particularly in light of the demand for other modes resulting from the student population and the propensity for walking and bicycling. The surface transportation system unveils itself in the form of a Major Street Plan, which establishes the general alignments and functional classifications of roadways throughout the community and its one-mile planning area. The essence of this plan is the preservation of rights-of-way to secure the needed land for roadway extensions, widening, and new alignments. The other modes addressed in this chapter are the airport, the public transportation system, bicyling, and pedestrian mobility.

There is an essential relationship between this chapter and other elements of the plan. For instance, the future land use and overall development patterns outlined in *Chapter 3, Community Character*, and *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*, help determine the transportation infrastructure necessary to meet future mobility needs. The transportation system also relates, albeit indirectly in some cases, with each of the other elements, such as *Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation*; *Chapter 5, Housing and Neighborhoods*; *Chapter 9, Economic Development*; and *Chapter 10, Public Safety*. For instance, the transportation system is vital to the movement of goods and people, thereby having direct influence on the community's economic development. Businesses seeking to locate or expand in the community are interested in their access to and within the community and, in the case of a major industry, the proximity to the interstate and its external markets. Transportation arteries provide opportunities for linear connections via sidewalks and/or bicycle trails, which complement the parks and recreation system. The location, design, and capacity of roadways may also determine the type and character of development. In essence, the transportation system is a common thread that ties each element of this plan together.

The purpose of this chapter is to plan well in advance of ensuing development so as to preserve necessary rights-of-way and effectively coordinate the long-term investments of modal infrastructure. An effective plan will guide decisions regarding the pattern of future thoroughfare development and the corresponding infrastructure needed to meet the mobility needs of the community. It includes the extension and improvement of streets.

## MOBILITY ISSUES

In conjunction with the Citizens' Project Advisory Team (CPAT), as well as input received from citizens who participated in stakeholder interviews, community forums, small group workshops, and community group presentations, there were a number of key transportation issues identified, including those described below.

### Available City-wide Public Transportation Services

Public transportation is often a perplexing proposition for communities the size of Laramie. While it is inarguably a needed segment of the overall transportation system, particularly for those who are transit dependent, such as the elderly and disabled or those without reliable transportation, it is difficult to fund due to its significant required capital investment and limited State and Federal funding assistance. Those communities who are successful in meeting the needs of their citizens are those who commit local funds, identify a dedicated funding source, and/or partner with local business and industry to contribute

As defined in the Federal Transit Act, **Public Transportation** involves transport by bus, rail, or other conveyance, either publicly or privately owned, providing to the public general or special service (but not including school buses, charter, or sightseeing service) on a regular and continuing basis. Public transportation is also synonymous with the terms mass transportation and transit.

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## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

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the necessary funding. The current Public Assisted Transportation System (PATs) is funded by the City of Laramie and, in part, by the County through the provision of fuel at no cost, which indicates their pledge and commitment to public transit services. According to community residents, though, there are needed improvements and service expansions to better serve the community.

Among the various issues regarding transportation, the most often cited concern was the need to address public transportation in the community. The vast majority of trips that occur are by single occupant vehicles due to the distant proximity of neighborhoods to employment areas and commercial centers, as well as the community's remote location from larger market areas. While public transit will not replace the automobile as the standard and preferred means of travel, the availability of public transportation can play a significant role in achieving efficiency in the transportation system.

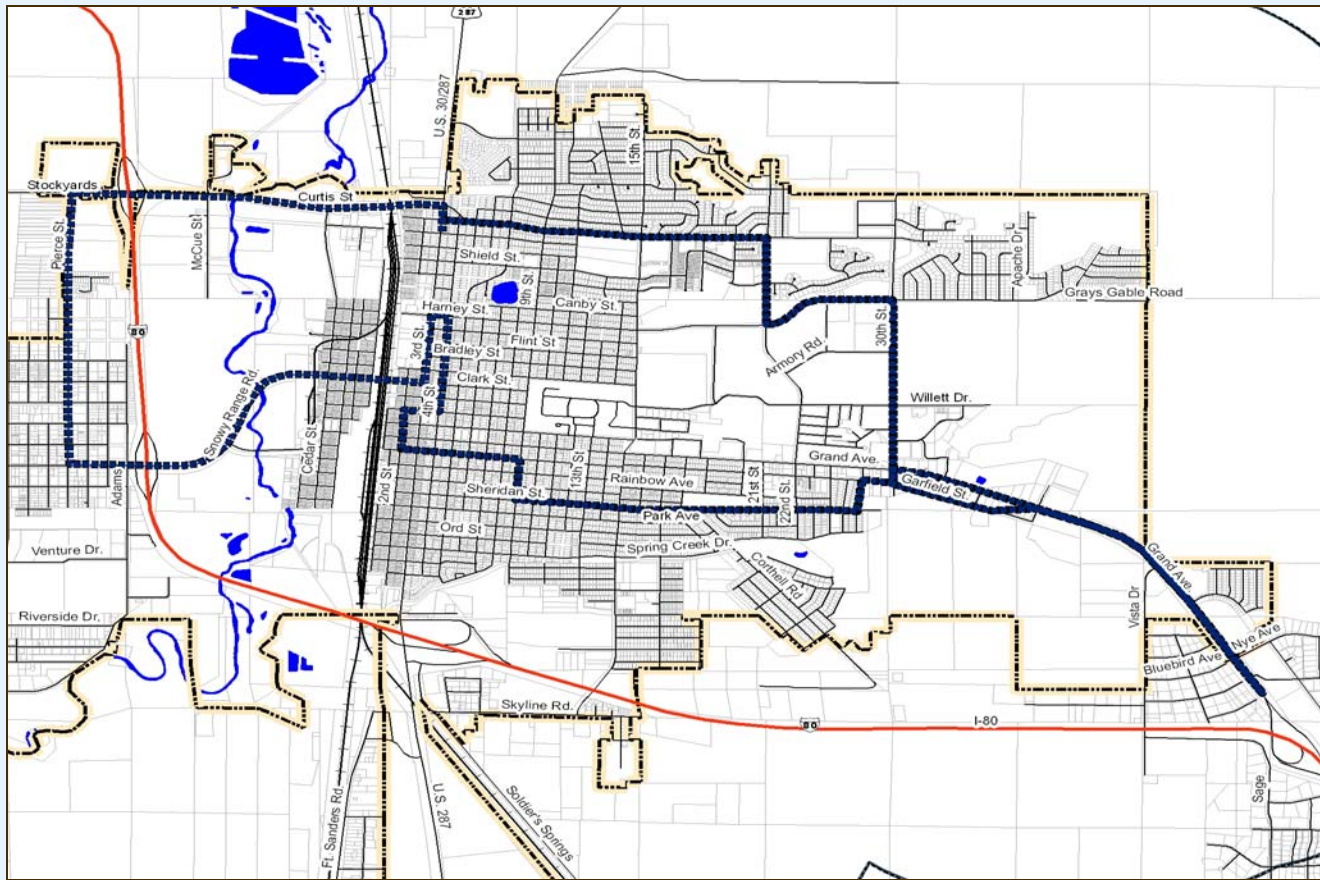
During the public involvement process, there were several comments received about the adequacy of the current public transit services. Residents cited both stable and increasing transit needs warranting continuing evaluation and the feasibility of expanding the current transit services. Particularly, there was concern voiced about its timely availability and the route of the current fixed route service. There were requests by residents for added service, particularly connecting Downtown with the University and the Civic Center (possibly including an expanded University shuttle service), shorter headways (less wait time between buses), more connections and increased trips to West Laramie, increased days and hours of service, better availability of route maps and information about the services offered, and enhancement of transit stops and improved rider amenities. There were also suggestions for a circulator route using a rubber-tired trolley as an attraction for visitors and tourists. The challenge confronting the City though, is the feasibility of offering such expanded public transit services. The current system is funded by the City and County as well as other public and private businesses and organizations. With State and Federal funding support shrinking, it is increasingly difficult to provide these services.

Currently, the Eppson Center for Seniors provides door-to-door service for persons of need, as well as a Public Assisted Transportation System (PATs) fixed-route circulator that operates daily with service on the hour between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (last bus departs at 4:00 p.m.). For both the door-to-door and fixed route services, the ridership in 2003-04 was approximately 1,717 per month, which increased to 1,821 in 2004-05<sup>1</sup>. The ridership has declined since September 2005 since the Center no longer provides service for the Head Start program. For the first seven months of FY 2005-06, the average monthly ridership is approximately 1,533 persons.

As shown above in *Figure 8.1, Public Assisted Transportation System Fixed Route*, the fixed route service generally operates from the Eppson Center north on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to Curtis Street, west to Pierce Street, south to Snowy Range Road, east into the Downtown area (north on 3<sup>rd</sup> and back south on 4<sup>th</sup> Street), to Garfield and then farther south to Sheridan Street, east to 26<sup>th</sup> Street, north to Garfield Street, along S.H. 30 to I-80 and back to 30<sup>th</sup> Street north to

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<sup>1</sup> The monthly ridership numbers are for both the door-to-door and fixed route services together, which were provided by the Eppson Center for Seniors, as reported to the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT)

**Figure 8.1** Public Assisted Transportation System Fixed Route

Source: The Eppson Center for Seniors

Grays Gable, west to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, north to Reynolds Street, and back west to create a complete loop. There are 22 stops along the route including:

- |                                                                |                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The Eppson Center for Seniors                               | 13. Wal-Mart                                                         |
| 2. KOA Kampground                                              | 14. Gem City Bone and Joint Clinic                                   |
| 3. PETRO                                                       | 15. Tumbleweed Express (interface with Greyhound bus lines)          |
| 4. Pierce Street @ Snowy Range Road                            | 16. Iverson Memorial Hospital                                        |
| 5. Gateway Plaza (@ Safeway & K-Mart)                          | 17. 30 <sup>th</sup> Street and Harney Street                        |
| 6. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street and Grand Avenue                     | 18. 22 <sup>nd</sup> Street and Binford Street (hospice)             |
| 7. Civic Center                                                | 19. 21 <sup>st</sup> Street and Reynolds Street                      |
| 8. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street and Sheridan Street                  | 20. 15 <sup>th</sup> Street and Reynolds Street                      |
| 9. 15 <sup>th</sup> Street and Sheridan Street                 | 21. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street and Reynolds Street                       |
| 10. 26 <sup>th</sup> Street and Sheridan Street                | 22. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street and Reynolds Street (Family Dollar Store) |
| 11. Albertson's Grocery Store                                  |                                                                      |
| 12. Laramie Recreation Center (+LCCC Campus across the street) |                                                                      |

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## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

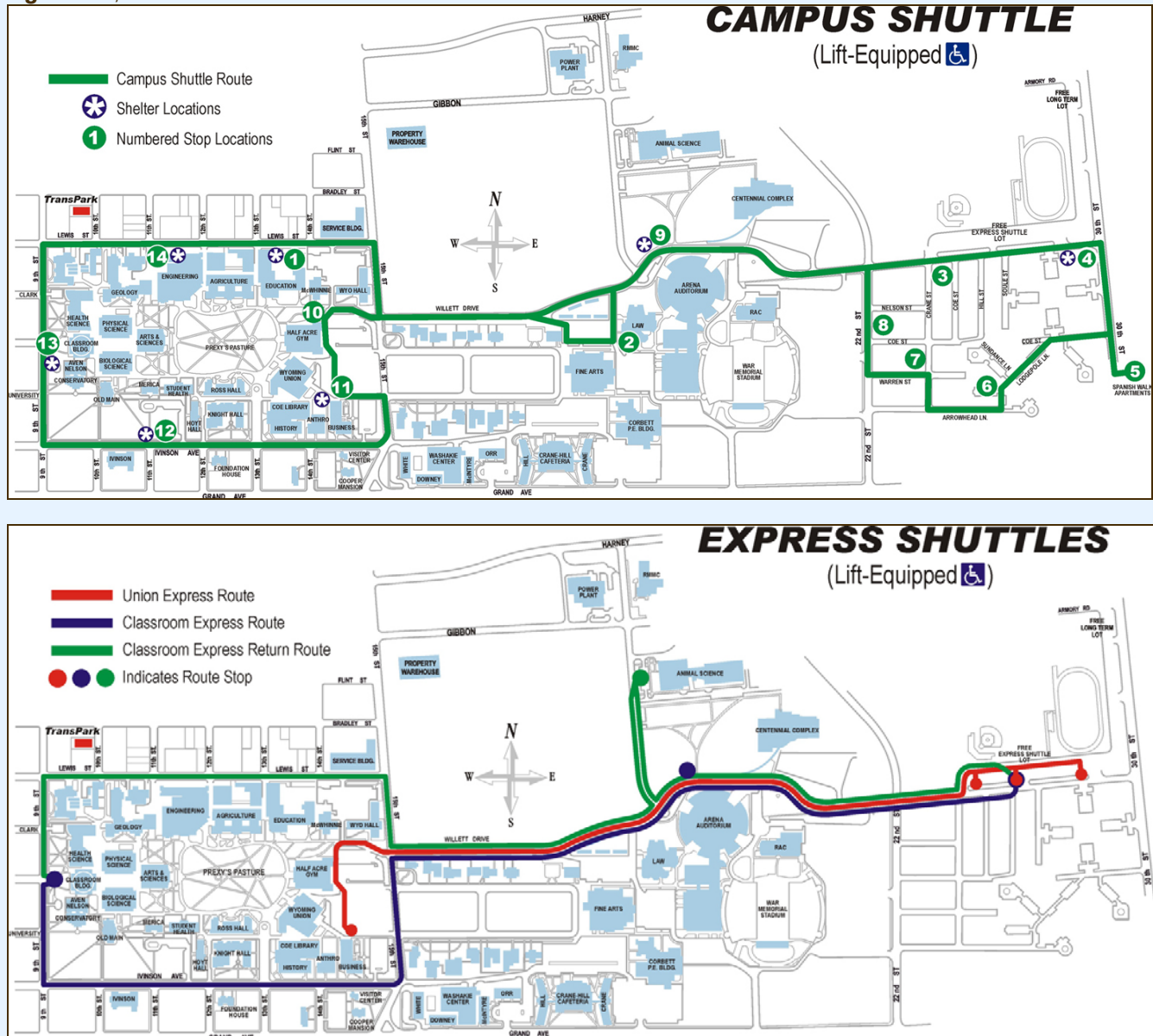
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In addition to the fixed route service operated by the Eppson Center for Seniors, the University also provides a campus shuttle service (TransPark) around the perimeter of campus between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on University business days (*Figure 8.2, UW Shuttle Routes*). Two buses serve this route every 15 minutes until roughly 6:00 p.m. when the schedule becomes a 30-minute route. The Campus Shuttle reverts to a 30-minute schedule for the summer session and scheduled breaks. The University also operates Union Express and Classroom Express services every five and 15 minutes, respectively, delivering students from the express lot at Willett Drive and Crane Street to the Union and Classroom Building. A paratransit service is also operated by the University for transportation to/from work, school, and medical/dental appointments; to meet nutritional, social, and recreational needs; and other personal travel within the City limits and a two-mile area. The service is open to the public for persons who are disabled or are faculty, staff, or students enrolled at the University.

Perhaps another long-term approach for meeting the public transportation needs is through minimization of the necessity for public transit. In other words, responsible development patterns require less vehicular travel and provide viable mode options, e.g. sidewalks, trails and bikeways, other than the single occupant vehicle. Examining the development ordinances and making amendments that lead to these types of development patterns and outcomes is highly advocated by the plan, although they will not be fully realized for an extended period of time.

Other issues should also be examined when it comes to the public transportation system. Cooperation between all the different groups around Laramie such as the Local School Districts, Head Start, UW, LCCC, WYDOT, Eppson Center, City of Laramie and WyoTech could help maximize the public transportation service without a lot of extra funding, buses and drivers needed. Cooperation between these groups can provide a wide variety of options for these programs. Programs to service other areas of town like the Downtown could also provide additional ridership that in turn could provide revenue. With the potential for changes, physical improvements such as bus routes, turning lanes and turnouts may be needed to help improve the effectiveness of the public transportation system.

In addition to improved physical planning and subdivision design, the City's current and ongoing economic development initiatives will also positively impact those persons who are unemployed or underemployed and thus, dependent on transit by offering better paying jobs. However, there will remain a certain portion of the population who are dependent on public transit for reasons of age and/or disability.

**Figure 8.2, UW Shuttle Routes**

Source: University of Wyoming (<http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/tap/TransServices.htm#Express%20Shuttle>)

### Pedestrian Mobility Improvements

Among the various issues regarding transportation, the second most cited concern was the need to address pedestrian infrastructure in Laramie. In this case, pedestrian refers to walking and jogging. Bicycle lanes and bikeways are discussed in *Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation*, with proposed trail extensions and bicycle lanes exhibits in *Map 4.4 Bicycle and Trails Master Plan*. With the emphasis commonly placed on the street system, such as the impending viaduct replacement/construction, infrastructure for pedestrians has been a secondary priority. Although this may be the case, increased emphasis needs to be placed on pedestrian mobility.

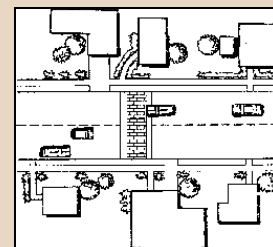
## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

A transportation system offers a variety of modes, including both motorized and non-motorized transportation options. Especially in a community with a high student population, the importance of walking and bicycling is heightened. There were comments received through the public input sessions regarding the need for better sidewalks around and adjacent to the University and all around the city, as well as crosswalks and traffic calming improvements to improve pedestrian safety. At the same time, pedestrian improvements such as pedestrian-actuated traffic signals, crosswalk signage, pavement markings, a speed table, curb cuts, boulevards, reduced speeds, handicap ramps, and median breaks are an essential part of the infrastructure necessary to support and encourage pedestrian activity.

In many of Laramie's neighborhoods, the sidewalk is placed immediately at the back of the street curb, which provides a walking surface, but is less desirable than one that is placed a safe distance from the street. As displayed in *Figure 8.3, Sidewalk Placement*, the lower photograph of an arterial street depicts a condition that is preferable aesthetically due to the green parkway. Even though the upper photograph shows a local residential street, it is perceived to be safer for the sidewalk to be removed a distance away from the travel lane. To accommodate the preferred scenario, the subdivision regulations must be structured properly to allow sufficient right-of-way (*Figure 8.4, Alternative Cross-Sections*). The zoning ordinance must also allow a sufficient lot size and front yard setback to

provide separation from the front façade. For higher density housing types the front setback may be reduced to limit the distance from the sidewalk to the front façade.

With the exception of West Laramie, most of the neighborhoods and commercial areas have sidewalks; however, they lack continuity and connection within and between neighborhoods and other districts. In addition, there are significant barriers to their use, including wide, highly traveled street sections with worn pavement markings and no pedestrian refuge (center median, i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> & Grand Ave.), a lack of signal warning lights at high pedestrian crossing locations, lack of American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements (particularly in the older areas where the



A speed table is a long raised speed hump with a flat section in the middle and ramps on the ends; sometimes constructed with brick or other textured materials on the flat section.

Source: Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE); <http://www.ite.org/traffic/table.htm>

**Figure 8.3, Sidewalk Placement**



sidewalks were installed before the Federal law), cracked and uneven surfaces, as well as poor surface conditions during the winter months. Other more prominent physical barriers include the railroad, Interstate 80, Laramie River and Spring Creek. These barriers contribute to the lack of use, which must become a priority if the community is to change the current choice of transportation mode. Pedestrian mobility should be considered in design of subdivisions, street and other improvements due to the fact that this was identified as a high priority throughout the community.

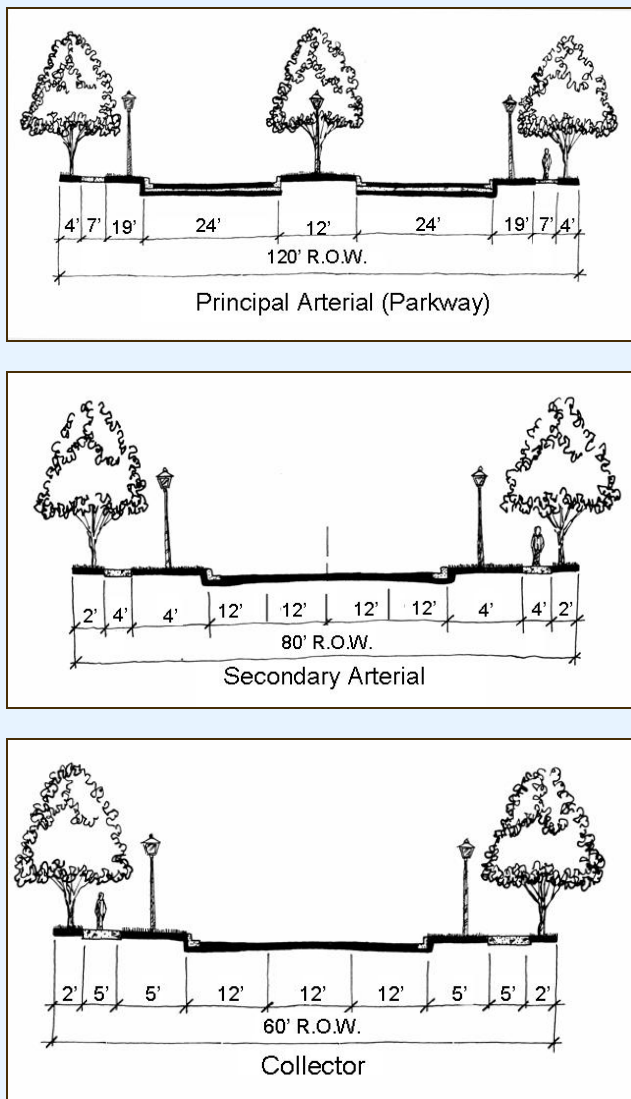
### Efficient Surface Transportation Mobility

A surface transportation system is formed by a network of highways and streets, each with different designations as to their function within the overall system and their designed traffic carrying capacity. Each street segment contributes to the interconnectivity of the network. Without a continuous system, there are unnecessary interruptions, thereby altering natural traffic movement patterns onto street segments that are not designed to

carry the associated traffic volume and, thus, become overly congested. Therefore, for a network to operate efficiently, it is essential for there to be a complete network of roadways designed in a hierarchy from highways, to arterial and collector streets, to the local street network. Each link is intended to function according to its design capacity, in effect, distributing traffic from the lowest design classification, local streets, to the highest functional classification, highway or expressway. Connectivity is a key to providing an efficient, safe, and convenient roadway network for vehicular traffic.

The grid street pattern in the original, well-established areas of the community displays a sound network of continuous roadways. This street pattern maximizes continuity and the efficiency of the overall street network. However, the newer development areas, such as Alta Vista and Indian Hills, have departed from the one block grid with diagonal and discontinuous streets and very long block lengths. The result is desirable from the perspective of reduced traffic volume but disrupts the continuity of the system. This is best reflected by the termination of Reynolds Street at Arapahoe Street. Reynolds Street is a long, continuous principal arterial roadway that extends from west to east across the community until it abruptly ends within the Alta Vista subdivision. While there is no solution to this situation at present, future subdivision approvals elsewhere in the community must ensure roadway continuity by requiring dedication of the necessary right-of-way through the development. In this instance, this

**Figure 8.4.** Alternative Cross-Sections



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## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

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terminated arterial street affects the larger street network by requiring unnecessary rerouting onto other roadways.

An optimum street network has a principal or secondary arterial roadway each mile, which forms a neighborhood superblock. Within the superblock, collector roadways should be spaced at one-half mile intervals in each direction, north-south and east-west. The local streets within each quadrant of the superblock may allow curvilinear streets, which distribute traffic to the one-half mile collector streets and onward to the arterial street network. Such network manages traffic at the neighborhood level without compromising the continuity of the street network. This also allows for connections between neighborhoods.

The development of the street network may be attributable to the occurrence of small development phases. While this will continue to occur as a result of the local housing market, it must occur in a planned sequence to ensure adequate roadway continuity and integration with the existing street network. Sidewalk and trail development, as well as public access easements must also occur at the same time as road development during the subdivision process, including the 1 mile boundary developments, to ensure accessibility, convenience, efficiency, and safety. Recommended street cross-sections and pavement widths must be strictly adhered to in all new developments. In certain instances where there are unavoidable constraints for complying with the City's standards that are peculiar to the location and not brought about by the subdivider by cause of the subdivision layout or design, the City may allow an exception as long as it is the minimum variation needed to otherwise abide by the City's standards. Regulations should also require marginal access roads and/or cross access easements along all commercial frontage abutting arterial and collector roads to minimize the number of driveways. The number of residential streets with access to arterial streets should be restricted by requiring marginal access streets or collector roadways. Design standards could be incorporated that allow new design concepts such as rear loading garages. Taking these measures improves street network connectivity and traffic flow.

Many times impact studies are necessary in specific situation to assess the impacts on the surrounding street system and neighborhoods and evaluate viable and warranted alternatives. The use of the land use designations contained in this plan allows quantification of the transportation impacts, including population and dwelling unit counts, trip generation, and other model inputs. In this way, there is a high level of coordination between the adopted land use and growth plan and the resulting thoroughfare network, thereby greatly improving the accuracy of the trip generation and the corresponding assignment and distribution of trips.

The design and arrangement of the local street system is confronted with several barriers, including the ridgeline near Indian Paintbrush School (the preservation of which is of great value to the community), Casper Aquifer, multiple creeks, Irrigation canals, Laramie River, Interstate 80, railroad tracks, and existing and proposed development, among others. As a result, there are only limited options for creating a complete arterial and collector street grid. The major street plan depicted later in this chapter identifies the proposed extensions

of existing thoroughfares and new alignments of arterial and collector streets to form a complete street network.

One of the significant barriers is the railroad rights-of-way adjacent to Downtown. There have been multiple alignment options evaluated in the Major Street and Highway System Report 2004, including, among the alternatives, reconstruction of the current Clark Street Bridge or construction of a new bridge aligned with Harney Street. A traffic study being conducted concurrently with this plan will evaluate the options and feasibility for a reconstructed and/or new bridge. The Wyoming Department of Transportation has indicated that it will provide funding assistance for one, but not both bridges, meaning that the City would be required to fund a second bridge should the local decision be made to maintain two bridges. From a financial standpoint this is likely not feasible and possibly not warranted from a traffic capacity perspective. In fact, according to the 2004 report, there would be 2,400 vehicles per day (vpd) fewer on the Harney crossing versus the Clark Street bridge, with the remainder diverting to I-80 and Reynolds Street. The idea of preserving the existing Clark Street bridge structure and using it for pedestrian access has merit. This connection would tie the community together with West Laramie and provide direct access to Downtown and the University. This option requires a funding commitment that is a local decision and one which is advocated by this plan.

From a thoroughfare planning perspective and on the basis of continuity, Harney Street is an advisable location for a new bridge since it would allow connection to State Highway 130/Snowy Range Road (whether the final alignment bends south before the Laramie River or crosses the river, through West Laramie, and tying into State Highway 130/Snowy Range Road near Welsh Lane). This would allow a continuous cross-town arterial street connecting from State Highway 130/Snowy Range Road to the eastern City limits and the proposed northern extension of Vista Drive/45<sup>th</sup> Street. Other than U.S. 30/Grand Avenue and I-80, this would be the only thoroughfare providing cross-town access. Its spacing relevant to the other two east-west roadways is also appropriate, per the criteria of *Table 8.1, Functional Classifications*. An important consideration of such street classification though, is the low density residential nature of Harney Street to the east of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. While this road is generally functioning as an arterial road today, there would be essential design considerations to improve traffic and pedestrian safety and mitigate the environmental impacts associated with higher traffic volumes. Final decision of the alignment will be based on the 2007 engineering report done by HDR, a consulting firm hired to evaluate the different proposed routes.

An essential element of thoroughfare efficiency is preservation of its traffic carrying capacity. Even though roadways are designed to carry a certain volume of traffic, similar to that expressed in *Table 8.1, Functional Classification*, there are situations that affect its efficiency including the number of access points, lane width, synchronization of signals, number of intersections, impedance of traffic flow by vehicles entering and exiting properties, allowance for deceleration/acceleration at each ingress/egress point, and the presence or nonexistence of a center turn lane or median, among other factors. In addition new street widths should be considered to provide alternative rights-of-way and pavement widths for certain conditions. The following are possible street configuration and widths and are displayed in *Figure 8.4, Alternative Cross-Sections*:

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- a. **Parkway** - 120 feet of right-of-way, four, 12-foot travel lanes with 48 feet of pavement, and a 12-foot median. On-street parking should be prohibited. This section is particularly appropriate for the 30<sup>th</sup> Street extension so as to provide additional green space and room for streetscape enhancements, as well as the proposed northern loop on top of the ridge. The median may also be depressed and used to channel and filter stormwater runoff.
- b. **Secondary arterial** - undivided street section within 80 feet of right-of-way with a 48-foot pavement section. On-street parking should be prohibited.
- c. **Alternative Collector** - 60 feet of right-of-way with a pavement width of 36 feet, which is sufficient to achieve its traffic-carrying capacity of 15,000 vehicles per day (VPD). On-street parking may be permitted on one side, which may alternate daily.

**Table 8.1** Functional Classification

| Criterion                                | Highway                                                                     | Principal Arterial                                                                              | Minor Arterial                                                                                  | Collector                                                                                                  | Local Street                                                   |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Functional Role                          | Entirely through traffic movement with no direct access to property.        | Mobility is primary, access is secondary. Connects Freeways and other Arterials.                | Connects Freeways, Principal Arterials, and lower classification roadways. Access is secondary. | Collects traffic destined for the Arterial network. Connects Arterials to Local Streets. Also land access. | Access is primary. Little through movement.                    |
| Roadway Continuity                       | Inter-city, regional, and interstate                                        | Connects Freeways to lower classification roadways. Connects major activity centers.            | Connects Freeways and Principal Arterials to lower classification roadways.                     | Continuous between Arterials. May extend across Arterials.                                                 | Discontinuous. Connects to Collectors.                         |
| Roadway Length                           | Usually more than 5 miles                                                   | Usually more than 5 miles                                                                       | Usually more than 3 miles                                                                       | Varies from roughly one-half mile to 2 miles                                                               | Generally less than 1 mile                                     |
| Traffic Volumes (VPD = vehicles per day) | 40,000+ VPD                                                                 | 20,000 to 60,000 VPD                                                                            | 5,000 to 30,000 VPD                                                                             | 1,000 to 15,000 VPD                                                                                        | 100 to 5,000 VPD                                               |
| Desirable Spacing                        | 5 miles or more                                                             | 2 miles or more                                                                                 | Generally one-half to 2 miles                                                                   | Generally one-quarter to one-half mile                                                                     | Varies with block length (at least 125 feet between)           |
| Posted Speed                             | 55 to 75 mph                                                                | 40 to 55 mph                                                                                    | 30 to 45 mph                                                                                    | 30 to 35 mph                                                                                               | 20 to 30 mph                                                   |
| Access                                   | Controlled access. Grade separated interchanges and frontage/service roads. | Intersects with Freeways, Arterials, Collectors, and Local Streets. Restricted driveway access. | Intersects with Freeways, Arterials, Collectors, and Local Streets. Restricted driveway access. | Intersects with Arterials and Local Streets. Driveways limited.                                            | Intersects with Collectors and Arterials. Driveways permitted. |
| On-Street Parking                        | Prohibited                                                                  | Restricted                                                                                      | Restricted                                                                                      | Normally permitted                                                                                         | Permitted                                                      |
| Community Relationship                   | Defines neighborhood boundaries                                             | Defines neighborhood boundaries                                                                 | Defines and traverses neighborhood boundaries                                                   | Internal and traverses neighborhood boundaries                                                             | Internal                                                       |
| Through Truck Routes                     | Yes                                                                         | Yes                                                                                             | Permitted                                                                                       | No                                                                                                         | No                                                             |
| Bikeways                                 | No                                                                          | Limited                                                                                         | Permitted                                                                                       | Yes                                                                                                        | Yes                                                            |
| Sidewalks                                | No                                                                          | Yes                                                                                             | Yes                                                                                             | Yes                                                                                                        | Yes                                                            |

Based on the above alternative street sections, amendments to the subdivision regulations to include performance standards for residential streets, whereby the type of access, number of dwelling units served, and the units' average frontages determine the street right-of-way, pavement width, and other design requirements such as parking lanes, curb

**Laramie Regional Airport (LRA)** was built in 1934 and was originally named Brees Field, after General Herbert Jay Brees of the US Army. The original hangar still stands today. In 1944, the runways were paved to allow hundreds of B-24 bombers to land at Laramie and bring crews for rest and recuperation to the UW recreation camp in the Snowy Range. In 1945, Summit Airways began to provide passenger service. The Brees Field Airport Board was formed in 1965 to oversee airport operations. In 1992, the airport's board changed the airport's name to Laramie Regional Airport. The terminal originally built in 1959 was remodeled in 1994. A fourth community heated hangar was completed at the end of 1997. Also completed was a runway extension to accommodate larger aircraft and a City of Laramie airport water project. Future plans include bringing businesses out to the airport industrial sites and increasing charters out of Laramie Regional Airport.

width, parkways, and sidewalks would be recommended. The standards would be based on the requisite roadway design capacities and the volume of traffic generated by abutting and cumulative developments. This approach is only for local streets and is not applicable for collector or arterial streets. The standards must be tailored based upon the allowable densities of each zoning district and other dimensional criteria such as county developments located within the one mile boundary.

Of relevance to this plan is the management of property access along each of the community's major arteries. While the one block grid maximizes access and continuity, it allows an increased disruption of traffic flow with vehicles entering and exiting the thoroughfare from local streets. In addition are the numbers of driveways, particularly along the older sections of Grand Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, for instance. The numbers of potential conflict points all affect the operating efficiency of the street system. A solution to this problem is through shared driveways (or shared access), which effectively reduce the number of breaks in traffic since motorists have reduced turn opportunities on and off of major roads and into/out of abutting properties. Similarly, cross access can also be effective in minimizing traffic problems. Cross access is accomplished by a platted and/or recorded easement giving access between two nonresidential properties thereby eliminating the need for motorists to use major roads to move between abutting and nearby properties.

### Multi-Modal Systems

An effective transportation system is truly multi-modal, meaning that it offers all available modes necessary to transport people and goods in the most effective and cost efficient manner. For travel outside of the nearby region and state, the airport offers a viable option providing daily air service to the Denver International Airport and Worland Municipal Airport. Sustaining the commercial air service relies on enplanements, meaning that every passenger trip counts toward preserving or possibly expanding the service. Therefore, it is essential for the community to promote usage of the airport and market its advantages aggressively to ensure long-term protection of this valuable community asset. The "Fly Wyo" state advertising campaign will greatly aid in this effort.

The railroad is looked upon by many as an obstacle or barrier between Laramie and West Laramie. While this presents a challenge, the railroad is yet another viable option for the transport of large and heavy quantities of materials that are more costly via other modes. The decision regarding the location of the proposed new viaduct will help remedy the accessibility, particularly if the decision is made to preserve the Clark Street Bridge structure for use as a pedestrian and bicycle way. Nonetheless, the railroad helped to give existence to the community and has long been a part of its physical framework.

### Air Travel

Beyond the local and regional transportation system, the airport provides opportunity for longer distance travel. This, too, is a key component of the community's economic sustainability. Air transportation provides yet another viable opportunity for transporting materials and supplies, as well as visitors and clientele, to and from local businesses. It also provides access to residents, to conduct business and socialize.

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The Laramie Regional Airport (LRA) offers commercial air service to/from the Denver International Airport through Great Lakes Airlines. There are three flights daily providing access via Denver throughout the U.S. and world, which carry an average of approximately 10,000 passengers annually. A co-share program that allows Great Lakes Airlines two carriers increases the connecting flights one can have in Denver. In addition to these positive aspects the time savings for those flying directly out of Laramie is immensurable. However, due to the amount of airfare for the flight from Laramie to Denver and the availability of E-470, many residents choose to drive to Denver, which makes it increasingly difficult for LRA to serve the community.

In addition to the commercial air service operated out of LRA, there is an average of 40 based aircraft, including private and corporate planes. Cowboy Aviation is operated by LRA to provide Fixed Base Operator (FBO) service to private, corporate, and commercial aircraft. LRA also houses the University of Wyoming's Department of Atmospheric Science aircraft, used to conduct state of the art research. There are three community hangars available for rent, the newest of which is heated. LRA is also home to Eagle One private hangars and the University of Wyoming hangar.

Laramie Regional Airport is funded by the City and County. It is Part 139 Air Carrier Certified with trained Aviation and Rescue Fire Fighting personnel and non-precision instrument approaches. LRA also provides airport weather conditions. The airport has two runways, one (runway 03/21) of which was recently extended by 800 feet to accommodate larger aircraft thereby allowing better access to charters and commuter airlines. In addition, Albany County recently approved a one percent capital facilities tax, which included \$1.2 million for the airport to improve its water system. The airport has been working with the City in planning a water system that will store 1 million gallons of water and provide 4,000 gallons a minute to the airport for fire suppression.

Continued development and expansion of the airport is essential for sustaining and growing the community economic development program, and seizing opportunities to both attract and retain businesses. In addition to the other modes of transportation, commercial air service, the new airport business park, as well as general aviation service, is an important part of the overall local and regional transportation system, offering convenient and accessible access throughout the nation. LRA is a asset that many other communities this size can not offer, thus making Laramie unique and ready for any opportunity.

Protection of the airport and its airspace is essential for its continued use and operation. As stated in *Laramie Municipal Code 17.37, Aviation Influence Area*, the purpose of establishing an influence area is to “minimize exposure of residential and other land uses to aircraft noise, to minimize the risks to public safety, to minimize hazards to aviation users and those employed or residing in proximity to public aviation facilities and to promote sound land use planning and zoning practices on lands influenced by aviation operations.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore, one of the stated purposes of this plan must be the management of future land use within and adjacent to the airport’s area of influence.

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 17.37 Aviation Influence Area, 17.37.010 Purpose

14 CFR Part 139 requires the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to issue airport operating certificates to airports that---

- ♦ Serve scheduled and unscheduled air carrier aircraft with more than 30 seats;
- ♦ Serve scheduled air carrier operations in aircraft with more than 9 seats, but less than 31 seats; and
- ♦ The FAA Administrator requires to have a certificate.

Airport Operating Certificates serve to ensure safety in air transportation. To obtain a certificate, an airport must agree to certain operational and safety standards and provide for such things as firefighting and rescue equipment. These requirements vary depending on the size of the airport and the type of flights available. The regulation, however, does allow the FAA to issue certain exemptions to airports that serve few passengers yearly and for which some requirements might create a financial hardship.

Source: Federal Aviation Administration ([http://www.faa.gov/airports\\_airtraffic/airports/airport\\_safety/part139\\_cert/?p1=what](http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/airport_safety/part139_cert/?p1=what))

**Multi-modal** refers to the availability of multiple transportation options, especially within a system or corridor. A concept embraced in the Intermodal Transportation Surface Efficiency Act (ISTEA), a multi-modal approach to transportation planning focuses on the most efficient way of getting people or goods from place to place, be it by truck, train, bicycle, automobile, airplane, bus, boat, foot or even computer modem.

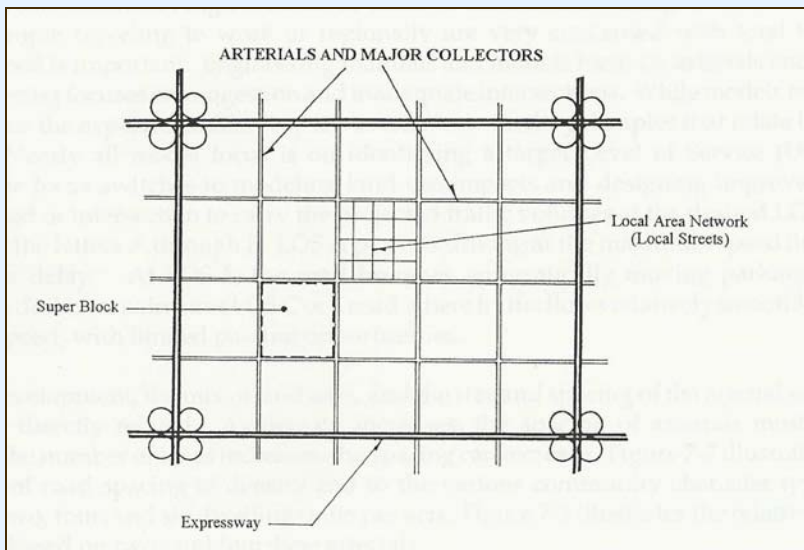
### Rail Travel

The railroad is a substantial physical feature in the community, located parallel to U.S. 287 and immediately adjacent to the railroad. Similar to each of the other modes, the railroad is equally important to the community, particularly due to its rail service to local business and industry. Along with its benefits, though, come its constraints, the most significant of which is access across the rail rights-of-way. At present, there are approximately 58 trains daily operating through town at speeds up to 55 m.p.h. Therefore, the railroad has, to this point, acted as a de facto barrier between the majority of the community to the east, including Downtown, the University and LCCC, and a majority of the retail, entertainment, and service areas from West Laramie. The railroad has been problematic in that it is costly to cross, which is an issue regarding the Clark Street crossing and each of its alternatives. It is also a barrier, albeit to a lesser extent, for trail and pedestrian access since at-grade crossings are highly discouraged or, in many cases, disallowed.

### Major Street Planning

The City's Major Street Plan is designed to provide for the future travel needs of the community by ensuring orderly development of the street system, including the extension and improvement of existing streets, as well as planned future roadways. The Major Street Plan is designed to ensure that adequate rights-of-way are preserved with a general alignment and sufficient width to allow for efficient expansion and improvement of the street transportation system. In addition, it is designed to provide opportunities for other

transportation modes so as not to place a fiscal burden on the community to fund extensive road improvements, which, in turn, require long-term maintenance. This latter objective is essential given the level of current infrastructure investment and reinvestment needs in Laramie.



A typical thoroughfare network forms a grid defined by arterial and collector roadways, within which are superblocks and the local street network.

Displayed in *Map 8.1, Major Street Plan*, are the proposed general alignments for the extensions of existing collector and arterial roadways and planned new roadways. It is important to note that the actual alignments of these roadways will likely vary from this plan and will be determined through the subdivision development process and the preliminary engineering phase of construction.

Refinement of the Major Street Plan on this basis is both warranted and accepted. Modifications that alter the intentions of the plan to create a complete and continuous network, though, should not be permissible without the necessary study and proposals to achieve the objectives, policies, and purposes of the plan.

Perhaps more than any other component of this plan, the thoroughfare system will affect and directly influence the pattern of future community growth and development. For this reason, it is particularly essential for the community to be cognizant and remain diligent and steadfast in adhering to this plan so as not to act in a short-sighted manner. Rather, decisions about thoroughfare improvements must be made in coordination with the future land use plan and the policies of *Chapter 3, Community Character*, and the policies and guidance principles of *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*.

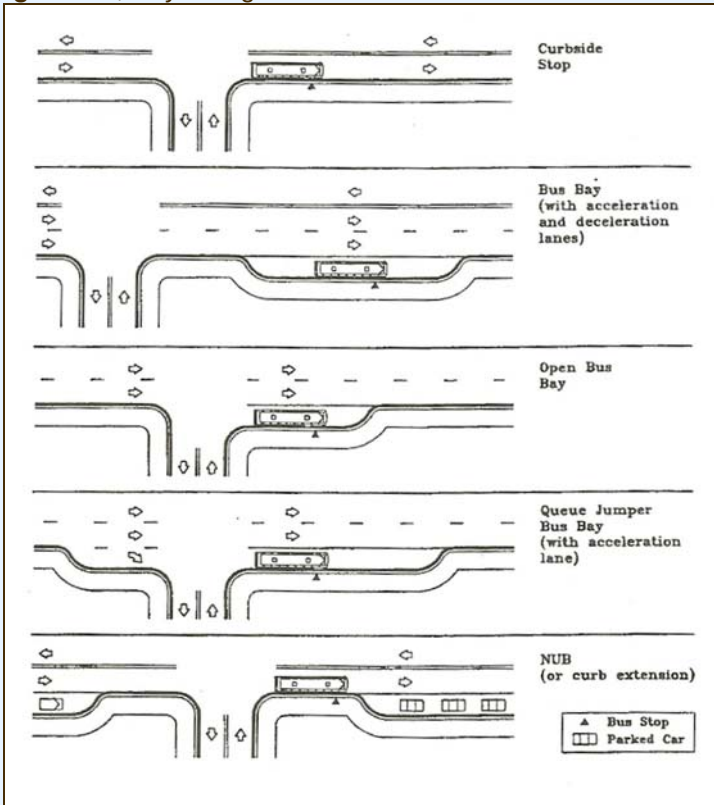
### TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND ACTION STATEMENTS

In this section the goals and action statements for each element of the plan are set forth. The goals and action statements are to be used as a starting point to achieve the overall vision of this plan.

#### Public Transportation Goals and Action Statements

1. Follow goals and action statements found in *Chapter 3, Community Character and Chapter 7, Urban Growth*, regarding restructuring the planned unit development standards to provide incentives for neighborhoods that integrate appropriately designed and scaled mixed uses.
2. Prepare a transit study to evaluate the current performance of the fixed route and establish service performance standards. Potential new routes, coordination opportunities, feasibility of commuter routes, fuel alternatives, vehicle types and specifications, infrastructure improvements, future funding, revenue options, and funding strategies should also be examined.
3. Continue to support the PATS fixed route service currently operated by the Eppson Center for Seniors.
4. Develop and execute an advertising, marketing and education campaign to inform the public as to the public transportation services and schedules available in Laramie.
5. Facilitate meetings and cooperation between the City, the Eppson Center, the University (relating to TransPark), LCCC, the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), and other area transportation providers to identify opportunities for coordination of service as well as other issues such as longer times, more routes, fees, joint maintenance and driver training.
6. Coordinate with the University and the Eppson Center shuttle and transit service providers to identify locations for construction of street and curb side improvements. Explore low-cost transit-oriented street improvements such as:
  - a. Special left turn-lane signal phases at select intersections;
  - b. Preferential signal timing to aid bus travel time;
  - c. Initiation of parking regulations to clear the curb lane for bus operations, particularly at high volume transit stop locations and during peak travel periods;
  - d. Improved identification of bus stop locations and installation of no parking signs; and;

**Figure 8.5, Bay Design Alternatives**



Source: Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 19, Federal Transit Administration

e. Pavement markings in support of signing at transit stops.

7. Prepare guidelines for pedestrian access to transit stop locations.
8. Within future street improvement projects along bus routes, incorporate design provisions relating to sidewalks, curb cuts, handicap accessibility, non-slip surfaces, marked, signed and/or signaled pedestrian crossings and installation of pedestrian actuated traffic signals.
9. Evaluate potential locations for the installation of bus pull-out bays, which are specially constructed areas separate from the street travel lanes providing for passenger boarding and alighting (*Figure 8.5, Bay Design Alternatives*).

#### Non-Motorized Transportation System Goals and Action Statements

1. Update the current trail plan to include the recommended new and extended trails identified in *Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation*. A comprehensive review and update of this parks plan is necessary to conform with the new Comprehensive Plan.
2. Stripe, re-stripe, sign and maintain streets designated as bike lanes. Bike lane locations should follow the bike and trail plan layout. Maintenance issues such as snow removal and regular street sweeping should be considered. These maintenance issues should also be applicable to sidewalks and trails.
3. Establish requirements within the subdivision regulations pertaining to the location of sidewalks and boulevards within the right-of-way. Pedestrian safety should be considered pertaining to all requirements. Traffic calming measures such as signs, traffic singles and crosswalks should all be considered.
4. Amend the subdivision regulations to include a requirement for sidewalks to be installed on both sides of all arterial, collector, and local streets.
5. Perform a condition inventory of sidewalks/bike lanes/trails to assess condition and maintenance requirements, especially in areas with high pedestrian traffic. Programs and Capital Improvement Programs should be used to repair areas in disrepair based on city standards.
6. Amend the subdivision regulations to require public access easements every 800 feet, or portion thereof and at the end of cul-de-sacs where there are continuous rows of homes abutting trails or collector and arterial roads.

## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

7. Make use of the current access easements located along Spring Creek Drive to improve access to the proposed trail along the creek.
8. Implement pedestrian safety improvements within neighborhoods through updates in code. Areas to include are schools, parks and churches with improvements like signage and raised crosswalks.
9. Perform a barrier analysis to identify significant barriers for safe and convenient use of the pedestrian infrastructure system.
10. Displayed in *Figure 8.6, Viaduct Walkway*, is the pedestrian area crossing the existing Clark Street Bridge, which is in deteriorating condition, and unprotected and too narrow. Consideration must be given to a wide, protected pedestrian way on a new viaduct bridge no matter the location.
11. Include requirements within the subdivision regulations as to the installation of bicycle racks at all commercial developments over 5,000 square feet of gross floor area and for businesses employing more than 10 persons.
12. Continue maintenance and use of the Garfield Street Footbridge as a bike and pedestrian bridge which connects the west side of Laramie to the east side of Laramie. In addition this bridge serves as a focal point for the downtown.
13. Consider maintenance and necessary reconstruction of the Clark Street Bridge for ongoing use as a pedestrian and bicycle cross-over of the railroad between Laramie and West Laramie. While this would require a substantial investment, at the same time, it would foster improved accessibility and convenience.
14. Research the available sources of funds relating to railroad crossing safety as well as pedestrian, bicycle, and other transportation improvements, including following:
  - a. National Highway System funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System, including Interstate 80.
  - b. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) added "the modification of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act" as an activity that is specifically eligible for the use of these funds.
    - i. High Priority Projects and Designated Transportation Enhancement Activities identified by Section 1602 of SAFETEA-LU include numerous bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and traffic calming projects in communities throughout the country.
    - ii. Title 49 U.S.C. (as amended by SAFETEA-LU) allows the Urbanized

**Figure 8.6, Viaduct Walkway**



- Area Formula Grants, Capital Investment Grants and Loans, and Formula Program for Other than Urbanized Area transit funds to be used for improving bicycle and pedestrian access to transit facilities and vehicles. Eligible activities include investments in "pedestrian and bicycle access to a mass transportation facility" that establishes or enhances coordination between mass transportation and other transportation.
- iii. SAFETEA-LU also created a Transit Enhancement Activity program with a one percent set-aside of Urbanized Area Formula Grant funds designated for, among other things, pedestrian access and walkways, and "bicycle access, including bicycle storage facilities and installing equipment for transporting bicycles on mass transportation vehicles."
  - c. Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use and walking.
    - i. Ten percent of Wyoming's annual STP funds are set-aside for Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs). The law provides a specific list of activities that are eligible and this includes "provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists," and the "preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian and bicycle trails)."
    - ii. Another ten percent of Wyoming's STP funds are set aside for the Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing programs, which address bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. The State is required to implement a Hazard Elimination Program to identify and correct locations which may constitute a danger to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Funds may be used for activities including a survey of hazardous locations and for projects on any publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail or any safety-related traffic calming measure. Improvements to railway-highway crossings "shall take into account bicycle safety."
  - d. Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for trail projects. Of the funds apportioned to the State, 30 percent must be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses (any combination).
  - e. Provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists are eligible under the various categories of the Federal Lands Highway Program in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways.
  - f. National Scenic Byways Program funds may be used for "construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists."
  - g. Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants are available to support projects, including bicycle-related services, designed to transport welfare recipients and

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## CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

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eligible low-income individuals to and from employment.

- h. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety remain priority areas for State and Community Highway Safety Grants funded by the Section 402 formula grant program. Wyoming is eligible for these grants by submitting a Performance plan (establishing goals and performance measures for improving highway safety) and a Highway Safety Plan (describing activities to achieve those goals).
- i. Research, development, demonstrations and training to improve highway safety (including bicycle and pedestrian safety) is carried out under the Highway Safety Research and Development (Section 403) program.
- j. Federal/State Matching Requirements. In general, the Federal share of the costs of transportation projects is 80 percent with a 20 percent State or local match. However, there are a number of exceptions to this rule, including: Federal Lands Highway projects and Section 402 Highway Safety funds are 100 percent Federally funded; Bicycle-related Transit Enhancement Activities are 95 percent Federally funded; Hazard elimination projects are 90 percent Federally funded; Bicycle-related transit projects (other than Transit Enhancement Activities) may be up to 90 percent Federally funded; Individual Transportation Enhancement Activity projects under the STP can have a match higher or lower than 80 percent; and states with higher percentages of Federal Lands have higher Federal shares calculated in proportion to their percentage of Federal lands.

### Thoroughfare Improvement and Effective Capacity Management Goals and Action Statements

- 1. Adopt a hierarchical thoroughfare network to be shown on the Major Street Plan, along with the corresponding policies and regulatory amendments as stated in this plan.
- 2. Utilize the future land use plan for incorporation into the urban area transportation model to define the functional classification of streets and the necessary roadway capacities.
- 3. West Laramie must be brought up to City of Laramie paving standards. Paving should be required at the time of any property improvements such as building, subdivision and remodeling. This issue is closely related to drainage issues that occur in this area.
- 4. Acquire rights-of-way in adherence with the City's land use and growth policies (refer to *Chapter 3, Community Character*, and *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*) to ensure that a sufficient amount of land is dedicated to meet transportation needs for roadways, sidewalks, and trails, while also meeting community design and appearance objectives.
- 5. Update the Major Street and Highway Plan based on suggestions found within the plan. Changes are needed to lessen the rigid, non-planned location of many of the roads found in the Major Street and Highway Plan.
- 6. Coordinate with WYDOT, Albany County and private property owners in conducting a traffic engineering and design study along collectors, arterials and other major roads

to identify necessary and feasible improvements such as acceleration/deceleration lanes, turn lanes at major intersections, ROW property acquisition and the effective use of medians.

7. Adopt new minimum street widths and performance standards as alternatives to those in the subdivision regulations to provide alternative rights-of-way and pavement widths for certain conditions (*Figure 8.7, Alternative Cross-Sections*).
8. Streets facility standards should be replaced with the standards that give them the longest life and quality available at this time. This should help reduce the backlog of maintenance.
9. It is an essential prerequisite to adopt the land use policies and growth management guidelines in *Chapter 3, Community Character*, and *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*, prior to improvement of the roadways reflected on the Major Street Plan. Of particular relevance is the following:
  - a. The proposed alignment of Harney Street, assuming this is the selected viaduct alternative.
  - b. The proposed northern loop, which is an extension of 45<sup>th</sup> Street south tying into Vista Drive. The extension should be continued to the north and west tying into U.S. 287 by means of Beaufort. The road must be designed in the context of its environment, being highly sensitive to the Casper Aquifer.
  - c. The proposed extension of 30<sup>th</sup> Street south to I-80 and continuing further south to the extended Skyline Road.
  - d. The proposed extension of Skyline Road to the east running generally parallel to I-80.
  - e. The proposed extension of McCue Street north of Curtis Street and continuing northward and westward and traveling back to an east-west extension of Welsh Lane, as reflected on the Major Street Plan.
  - f. Collector roadways are required to be located no less than every one-half mile and shall continuously connect to other collector and/or arterial roadways. In no case shall a collector roadway be terminated within a neighborhood.
10. Amend the subdivision regulations to incorporate traffic calming requirements, which would be applicable where there are continuous and relatively straight streets (for a distance of 500 feet or more) carrying higher volumes of traffic in excess of 100 vehicles per hour during peak hours, when actual speeds exceed the posted limit on a regular basis, and/or when the street is in close proximity to a school, park, or other location frequented by children.
11. Periodically conduct travel speed studies to determine appropriate speed restrictions in neighborhood pedestrian areas.
12. Street pavement markings and signage for all school safety zones should be improved and regularly maintained.
13. Adopt access management regulations to restrict the number, location, and spacing of driveways, street intersections, medians and median openings, marginal access roads,

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and turn lanes at major intersections.

14. Identify levels of service for major intersections and streets. These levels of services are needed to evaluate the effect of development on existing neighborhood and already constructed roadways.
15. Complete a comprehensive transportation study relating all modes of transportation; public, private, non-motorized, motorized, air, interstate and rail. The study should focus prioritization of improvements, standards, recommendations in addition to any accomplishing goals listed in this chapter.

### Multi-Modal Systems Goals and Action Statements

1. Support the continued development and expansion of the airport through provision of improved infrastructure (water and sewer) capacity, thereby allowing development of the business park.
2. The Laramie Regional Airport board should prepare and development a Master Plan. Information such as an inventory study, usage statistics, future land use plan, surveys and business/marketing plan among others items should be considered.
3. Consider amendment of the Aviation Influence Area<sup>3</sup> to include the more common approach, transition, horizontal, and conical surfaces, which better define the limits and requirements of the Federal Aviation Regulations. These regulations should include general environmental standards relating to noise, vibration, emissions, hazardous materials, dust and debris to include references to the latest standards and requirements. Definition of such surfaces would require an update to the airport master plan.
4. The City may consider the use of amortization of any existing nonconforming uses within the aviation influence area, which would establish the period within which the use or structure must be removed. This may be necessary so as not to limit or harm the viable operations of the airport.

### Major Street Planning Goals and Action Statements

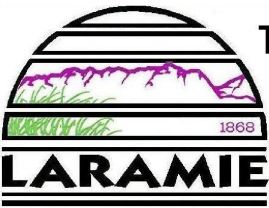
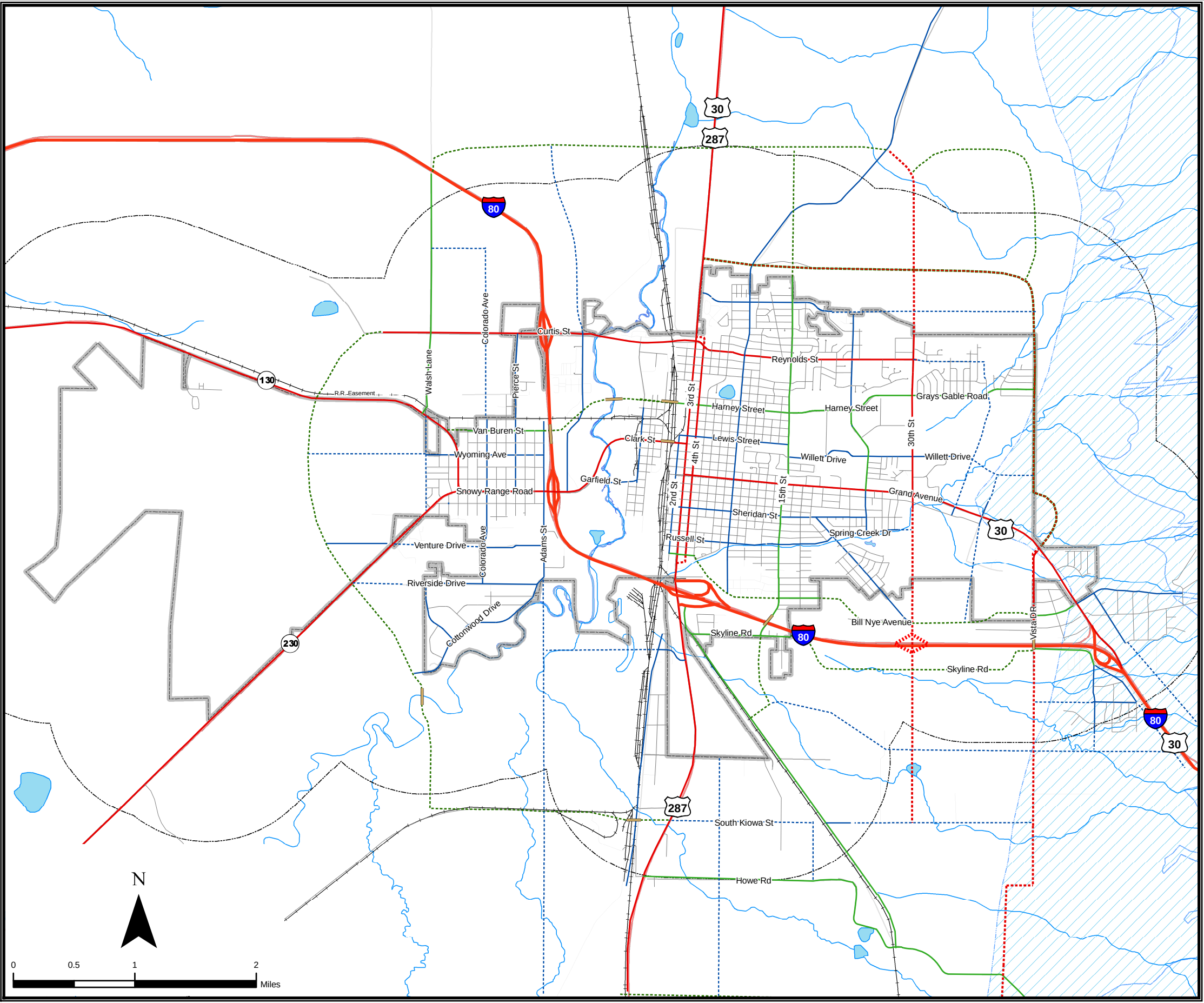
1. Continue review of all preliminary and final plats and their compliance with the Major Street Plan to ensure consistency and availability of sufficient rights-of-way for the general roadway alignments shown on the plan.
2. The general location and alignment of thoroughfares must be in conformance with the Major Street Plan. Although alignments are approximate, any major change in thoroughfare alignment that is inconsistent with the plan should require the approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission through a public hearing process (*Map 8.1, Major Street Plan*).
3. Necessary, total, rights-of-way must be dedicated at the time of final platting. Properties proposed for subdivision that include or are adjacent to an existing thoroughfare with insufficient right-of-way should be required to dedicate land to compensate for any deficiency.

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter 17.37 Aviation Influence Area

Cities often use **amortization** to eliminate nonconforming uses or structures, which may apply to building, signs, towers, or any other type of regulated use of structure. The use of amortization is considered fair and reasonable because it allows depreciation of an asset over an established number of years so as not to unduly restrict or deny reasonable use and value of the building.

4. Existing streets adjacent to land proposed for subdivision should be continued so as to meet the continuity objectives of the Major Street Plan. The arrangement of streets in a new subdivision must make provision for continuation of the principal existing streets in the adjacent areas.
5. Land owners and developers are 100 percent responsible for constructing sections of collector roadways and also responsible for participating in the construction of arterial roadways adjacent to their property pursuant to the City's improvement policies and funding participation program, as applicable.
6. To maximize mobility, collector streets must traverse adjacent neighborhoods to provide access and circulation not only within, but also between, neighborhoods. Collectors should generally connect arterial streets, rather than allowing development to have a street system with no points of ingress and egress other than the major entrance.
7. Community entryway/corridor/major street improvements should occur with development. At the time of development, opportunities exist for the city to contribute additional funding for landscaping and other improvements that will help aid in the look to these major streets.
8. Streets identified as collectors on the plan may not ever be widened due to physical constraints and right-of-way limitations. Instead, the designation signifies its traffic-handling role in the overall street system and the importance of maintaining it in good condition.
9. Collectors must be situated to connect arterial streets with other collectors and local streets. Their continuity in the roadway system is essential to its function of distributing traffic within the hierarchical system.
10. Individual improvements may be constructed by a variety of implementing agencies, including the City, County, Wyoming Department of Transportation, private developers, and intra-governmental agencies.
11. The future alignments of local streets are dependent upon individual land development plans and, thus, are not set forth by the Major Street Plan.
12. City should revise engineering design standards to incorporate the *Alternative Cross Sections* in *Figure 8.4* which address issues such as asphalt widths, sidewalks, parkways, raised medians and decorative improvements.
13. Identify and develop when traffic studies should be required prior to subdivision approval.



THE  
LARAMIE  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

# Map 8.1 Major Street Plan

## Legend

| Proposed Roads                 | Existing Roads     |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Interstate                     | Local              |
| Parkway                        | Interstate         |
| Principal Arterial             | Parkway            |
| Minor Arterial                 | Principal Arterial |
| Collector                      | Minor Arterial     |
| Bridge/Overpass/Underpass      | Collector          |
| Rivers, Streams                |                    |
| 1-Mile Planning Area           |                    |
| Railroads                      |                    |
| City Limits                    |                    |
| Casper Aquifer Protection Area |                    |

This thoroughfare plan does not constitute a commitment for infrastructure construction. All plans are contingent upon funding and engineering review.



KENDIG KEAST  
COLLABORATIVE



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## 9

### CHAPTER

Laramie is situated in an attractive setting, boasts small-town values and a special quality of life, and offers great economic development potential. The approach taken to seize its potential and to enhance its attractiveness as a place to live and work will greatly influence its ability to achieve its vision. This economic development element of the plan is written to capitalize on the community's assets and both strengthen and stabilize its tax base. To do so, it must add value to its existing businesses, attract new businesses and industries that complement its assets and workforce, foster an entrepreneurial spirit, and take steps to enhance its living environment.

#### Introduction

Over the course of the last three decades Laramie has had stable population growth, amounting to approximately 0.5 percent annually. The local economy has grown at a steady, albeit modest rate as well, as reflected by several economic indicators<sup>1</sup> for the City and County. While this reflects positively on the local economic environment and the community's success in its development efforts, there must be continued diligence to both sustain and grow the economy to meet the needs of its residents and businesses.

The purpose of the economic development chapter is to provide the City with a framework for economic growth. Laramie's location along the Interstate 80 corridor and the presence of the university, and technical and community colleges among other strengths, offer significant opportunities. The strategies in this plan will help define Laramie in the minds of businesses and residents throughout the area. Sound economic development policies will enhance the community's ability to capture job growth and business expansion, while maintaining its capacity to provide public services for current and future residents.

The essence of this plan element and the reason for its existence is to provide the necessary policy direction for the community to act in its best long-term interests by making strategic



Laramie is engaging in this economic development planning process as a means to increase its population and employment, strengthen its tax base, and create improved opportunities for its residents and businesses.

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<sup>1</sup> Economic Indicators for the Laramie Area, 1990-2003 Annual Trends

decisions as to how it strengthens and grows its economy. The future land use plan, thoroughfare plan, and urban growth policies, together with this economic development plan, establishes the vision of the community, as expressed by its citizens, and the recommended actions for achieving the intended outcomes. Use of these plans is, therefore, essential in the community's ultimate success.

A common understanding of economic development helps clarify intent and purpose. With this in mind, we encourage a definition that acknowledges the importance of collaboration and partnership. Economic development is the use of public resources to stimulate private investment. In other words, effective policy for Laramie should be judged by how well public resources can create a response from private investors. This response can certainly be measured in jobs, but also in capital investment (land and buildings), technology, and spin-off (cluster) benefits.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS OF THE COMMUNITY

An economic development Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis (SWOT) was conducted for Laramie, which was based on a review of economic and demographic characteristics, discussions with area residents and representatives of local organizations, input of the CPAT and LEDC, and the consultant's experience working with communities across the country. Displayed in *Table 9.1, Laramie SWOT* are the primary findings of this analysis.

Laramie is positioned well in relation to many other small communities in that its indicators are all on an upward swing and, thus, generally favorable. For instance, sales and use tax receipts have gained each year since 1990, generally doubling between 1990 and 2003.<sup>2</sup> The total number of employed persons increased in the City and County, while the unemployment rate remained steady at just under two percent.<sup>3</sup> The number of employers<sup>4</sup> and proprietors<sup>5</sup> increased, and per capital personal income also increased over the same time period.

As displayed in *Table 9.1, Laramie SWOT*, the community has many assets and offers advantages, each of which is and must remain central to its competitiveness as a place for conducting business. Among the primary advantages are the University of Wyoming and its business incubator, WyoTech, and Laramie County Community College (LCCC), which contribute to the availability of an educated workforce and offer training and higher education for employees, as well as their spouses and children. The K-12 education program, including the Lab School and Snowy Range Academy, is also noted for its quality, which is an attraction to the community. The stable population growth and ongoing development activity is also a strength as it shows confidence and bolsters the area economy. This growth has resulted in the development of new retail businesses and expansion of the hospital, both of which encourages local spending and result in increased

### Expectations for Quality of Life

In a highly competitive environment, businesses are seeking communities that offer an enhanced quality of life, including:

- ♦ Well paid jobs with benefits offered to employees
- ♦ Educational opportunities for all, including lifelong learning
- ♦ Medical facilities
- ♦ Quality and affordable housing
- ♦ Low pollution / environmental damage
- ♦ Public amenities, including public school systems
- ♦ Low crime
- ♦ Recreation, entertainment, shopping, and intellectual stimuli
- ♦ Low cost of living / low taxation and
- ♦ Aesthetic built and natural environments.

<sup>2</sup> Wyoming Department of Revenue and Taxation

<sup>3</sup> Wyoming Department of Employment

<sup>4</sup> Wyoming Department of Employment

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Commerce Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Table 9.1, Laramie SWOT**

| Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Opportunities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Population/Workforce</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stable population growth</li> <li>- Educated population</li> <li>- UW, WyoTech, and LCCC</li> </ul> <b>Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retail growth</li> <li>- Engineering/technology companies</li> <li>- UW Business Incubator</li> <li>- Downtown businesses/restaurants</li> </ul> <b>Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Airport</li> <li>- Interstate 80</li> <li>- Rail</li> <li>- Available/quality water supply</li> <li>- Good Aquifer protection</li> </ul> <b>Livability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UW education, events, and activities</li> <li>- Accessibility to public lands</li> <li>- Ridge and rangeland views</li> <li>- Tree area</li> <li>- Quality of healthcare</li> <li>- Quality of K-12 education</li> <li>- Small-town values</li> </ul> | <b>Downtown</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion and revitalization</li> <li>- Mixed use, including residential living</li> <li>- University leveraging</li> </ul> <b>Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partners in Progress Initiative</li> <li>- Airport related businesses</li> <li>- Healthcare/medical expansion</li> <li>- Educational Opportunities (Hathaway Scholarship)</li> <li>- Tourism</li> </ul> <b>New Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New conference center</li> <li>- Turner Tract/Grandview Heights</li> <li>- Reynolds Crossing</li> <li>- Coughlin Pole Mountain</li> <li>- South Gait property</li> </ul> <b>Redevelopment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North of Downtown</li> <li>- "Tired" neighborhoods</li> </ul> <b>Livability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trail expansion</li> <li>- Recreation Center</li> <li>- Resource and view/ridge protection</li> </ul> |
| Weaknesses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Threats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affordability</li> <li>- Availability</li> <li>- Rental vs. owner occupancy</li> </ul> <b>Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water transmission and distribution</li> <li>- Aging conditions of wastewater mains</li> <li>- Storm drainage</li> </ul> <b>Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low wage levels</li> <li>- Lack of employee benefits</li> <li>- Tax exempt properties</li> <li>- Timeliness of development review/approval</li> <li>- Shortage of trade labor</li> </ul> <b>Appearance and Image</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of identity and gateways</li> <li>- Corridor aesthetics</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Housing/Neighborhoods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrity of well established neighborhoods</li> <li>- Declining housing conditions</li> </ul> <b>Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- West Laramie's Standards</li> <li>- Aquifer vulnerability</li> <li>- Requisite funding for reconstruction</li> </ul> <b>Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued rising energy prices</li> <li>- Recruitment/Retention of physicians</li> <li>- Lack of quality office space</li> <li>- Workforce shortage</li> </ul> <b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of air service</li> <li>- Increased congestion</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

### Trends in Business Attraction

- ♦ Site selection is the process by which businesses seeking to invest a large amount of resources seek out a new location for their facilities.
- ♦ Financial incentives almost always influence the site selection process for medium- and large-sized businesses.
- ♦ Communities are trying to focus their recruitment dollars using cluster analysis to target their marketing and recruitment efforts towards specific kinds of businesses.
- ♦ Workforce development incentives have become an important business attraction tool.
- ♦ Quality of life attracts businesses and workers because a business wants most of its workers to move with it.
- ♦ Successful campaigns involve prominent politicians and business figures, as well as economic development practitioners.
- ♦ Well benefited jobs.

tax revenues. Additionally, Laramie benefits from its location along I-80, the presence of the airport, Turner Tract Area, UW Business Incubator, the amount of land that is serviceable by utilities, and a high quality water supply. Its livability is commonly cited as the reason they have chosen to live and work in the community. In addition to the strengths, there are also several opportunities, including economic expansion of Downtown through location of an anchor or a major investment, or reinvestment decision, arising from the opportunity created by the final outcome of siting the railroad overpass. The presence of UW provides the community with a unique economic development opportunity to position itself for research activities and associated funding, which has the potential of reaping long-term economic benefits for the entire community. This is particularly important because University research is now recognized as a key driver for local economic development due to the potential commercialization of research, spin-off start-ups, and associated wealth creation throughout the community. The developing Turner Tract, potential for development of an airport business park, UW Wyoming Technology Business Center (a business incubator) and the continuing development of Reynolds Crossing and the Laramie River Business Park provide opportunities for business location within attractive settings. The positive planning steps Laramie has taken in developing its river trail and its potential for City-wide expansion, as well as the measures taken to protect the aquifer are also opportunities for enhancing and sustaining community livability.

Like any community, though, there are also weaknesses or obstacles to overcome. As addressed in *Chapter 5, Housing and Neighborhoods*, the median house value has outpaced the increase in median income, meaning that affordability is becoming an increasing concern. There is also aging infrastructure (outlined in *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*) that requires reinvestment and a significant annual commitment of capital funds. A low median household income relative to other communities in the State and a high rate of impoverishment as discussed in *Chapter 2, Conditions and Outlook*, also present challenges. Lastly, there are opportunities to build upon the attractive features of the community to further enhance its visual image and physical identity, making it more appealing to those considering a move or major investment in Laramie. Although UW provides many positives to Laramie's economy, its tax exempt land creates obstacles, such as loss of revenue and expanded infrastructure that must be maintained. Recognizing the City's financial impacts, in 2006 and 2007, UW worked with the City of Laramie to obtain financial support from the State Legislature. Through a complex formula, the State recognized that some communities, including Laramie, cannot generate revenues at the same level as other communities with similar characteristics. As a result, the City of Laramie was appropriated additional funds from the State to off-set the financial impacts.

Threats are also present, meaning those known or unknown occurrences that may negatively impact or influence the economic growth of the community. While many are external to the community, such as the national economy, interest rates, rising energy prices, increasing healthcare costs, etc., many are subject to the community's control through advanced planning and pro-activeness. For instance, the condition of housing will emerge as an increasing issue in the future, as structures and neighborhood infrastructure age. Issues such as these are within the realm of decision-making process of the community that can positively affect change. Successful protection and conservation of the aquifer is also within the parameters of management of the City and County through

effective and responsible land development practices. These and other circumstances must be continually monitored and addressed to guard against their potential impacts.

Small communities across the nation are confronted with circumstances similar to those in Laramie as they seek to address the stability and strengthening of their tax base. The difference between communities who are able to sustain themselves and those who will face decline lies in their ability to adapt to a rapidly changing national and international economy. Each community has its own uniqueness and set of attributes that offer competitive advantages over other communities and regions. The key to success, then, is uncovering and strongly promoting these attributes and capitalizing on them in a way that benefits the local economy and, at the same time, adds to community character. To strengthen and secure the City's competitiveness, the City must regularly evaluate itself by assessing a range of business factors against previous years, as well as other peer cities. Such an approach will shed light on those for which the City offers an advantage, but, more importantly, those that add costs or may present concerns to businesses considering a local investment decision. A willingness to alter the course, adapt new ideas and strategies, and commit to invest the necessary resources is a prerequisite for success.

This chapter expands upon the community's opportunities to retain and support existing businesses, attract and grow desirable new businesses, and adequately train and educate youth and the community workforce - all while sustaining, protecting, and enhancing the characteristics valued most by those who live in Laramie. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to the community as to how it can be proactive in its economic development and achieve its vision without compromising character or quality of life.

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

#### Easing the Site and Community Selection Process

There are widely varying criteria that are used by businesses to select a site, which are unique to different businesses and between businesses depending on their needs. Some require location near an interstate highway or a major metropolitan area, while others rely on the existence of other industries or the expertise of a local technical college or university. The criteria differ, yet they all generally relate to the expectations that one location will offer an advantage over another relating to business factors, such as development and operational costs, business efficiency, and community acceptance.

Costs include initial start-up costs, as well as the operating costs over the life of the business. Start-up costs include all those things that contribute to the up-front costs of doing business, such as the price of land, length of development reviews/approvals and permitting, amount of time to have a building open for business, local construction costs, and the investment in employee hiring and training. In addition there may be regulatory provisions that have the unintended effect of increasing land and development costs, such as overly restrictive building footprint requirements without due consideration of floor area ratio provisions or other measures that more effectively manage building bulk and scale. These direct and indirect costs can vary greatly between communities. The longer

term operating costs that are of the most importance are those associated with carrying on the business operations, such as wage rates, state and local taxes, impact fees or assessments, and the costs related to complying with local and other regulations.

The efficiency of operations relates to the amount of time it takes to bring the facility to full operating capacity. As other costs have risen, time has become one of the more important factors in the site selection process. Therefore, delay caused by lengthy development approvals and permitting has a fiscal consequence on companies in terms of lost sales, loss of an otherwise competitive edge for reason of timing, and loan interest.

Each step in the process, from zoning and site plan approval to building design, permitting, and inspections, affects the way a project can affect the community. More and more communities are beginning to streamline their development approval process to combat the timing problems of businesses and, particularly, to gain a competitive edge over those who have a delayed and more difficult development process. In other words, they are structuring their ordinances to encourage compliant applications by expediting the review and approval process for those that meet the objectives and standards of the ordinance. These changes many times come in the form of a Unified Development Code (UDC). Generally, a UDC merges all development functions thereby simplifying the procedures and use of the code. It also helps to avoid duplicative and conflicting provisions within the code that are confusing and often cause delays. Among other benefits, a UDC allows simplification and streamlining of the development review and approval processes by coordinating the review and permitting functions. Streamlining may be accomplished by consolidating districts and establishing strict performance standards, which both improve development outcomes and limit the number of zoning amendments and, thus, application submittals, review time, and public hearings. Portions of the existing ordinance requiring substantial review and negotiated approvals, such as conditional uses<sup>6</sup> and planned unit developments,<sup>7</sup> may be permitted as of right, subject to applicable conditions and standards.

These and many other ordinance modifications greatly aid economic development by expediting approval of compliant applications and shortening development time. The experience has been that even though the standards are increased, businesses are willing to comply in exchange for increased certainty in the zoning process and reduced time for receiving approvals and permits. In the end, there is a gain and benefit to the community and its businesses. Recently, the City has focused attention on the development process to find ways to improve its efficiency. It is also approaching the process of updating and amending its zoning ordinance to begin implementing this plan. Therefore, proactive steps are being taken although they will take time to integrate and implement.

It is now commonplace for prospective businesses to request meetings with local employers to gain insight as to the business climate in the community and their relationship with the City, utility providers, and other regulatory agencies. From a business perspective, they are interested in knowing the impact of the City practices on

Telecommunications is fundamental to service industries, as well as to rural economic diversification strategies. Telecommunications can provide communities with an opportunity to compete in the fast-growing service sector. It represents a tool with which rural businesses and citizens can directly participate in national and global economies. As an electronic highway, telecommunications allows urban-based industries and customers to access rural products, services, and markets more easily. Without a modern telecommunications infrastructure, however, rural communities may be left behind and denied the economic and quality-of-life opportunities new technologies have created.

Source: The Role of Telecommunications in Rural Economic Development, AeRie Applied Rural Telecommunications, Colorado Rural Telecommunications Project (CRTP).

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<sup>6</sup> Chapter 17.09, Conditional Uses, City of Laramie Municipal Code

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 17.38, Planned Unit Developments, City of Laramie Municipal Code

their operating costs. Instances where tax increases are often without proportionate services or where there are burdensome regulations are telling of the local business environment. Therefore, prospective businesses are interested in the history of the community regarding the addition of operational costs to the business community. They also consider the extent to which the cost of basic services gets shifted from the residential community to the business community.

This highlights the role of the economic development corporation in a cooperative effort with the City and a full-time professional who can facilitate this process, acting in the interest of both the prospect and the community. Organization of local business owners and groups, into a representative group, can promote and “sell” the City to potential new business, based on good sound information collected from all the parties involved. Other programs, such as an active business retention program also demonstrates the community’s interest and ongoing support of its employers. The acceptance of the community and its excitement for the company is also a factor in the site and community selection process. Companies make location decisions based upon the communities that want them and work to solve any barriers to making the location decision.

### Infrastructure Condition and Capacity

Laramie, like many smaller communities, is increasingly challenged by limited fiscal resources. While it benefits from its location along I-80, the presence of UW, WyoTech, and LCCC, and its picturesque setting nestled adjacent to the Laramie Mountains, the local economy is sustaining itself and growing modestly, but not at the preferred level of healthiness. Laramie recognizes the importance of their infrastructure to the success of their economic development program. It is, therefore, essential for the community to make efficient use of its infrastructure, which is affected by its pattern of growth and coordination of infrastructure. It is, thus recommended that the City remains mindful of its fiscal responsibility for managing growth, particularly as it relates to the provision of adequate facilities and services.

Laramie has and continues to invest millions of dollars in their public infrastructure in recognition of the improvement to the local business climate. While it annually replaces water distribution lines the revenue flow does not cover the costs, leaving a funding deficit. Therefore, line replacement is occurring although at a slower than preferred pace. There are also revenue shortages to cover the costs for sewer line expansion and maintenance. Maintenance of the storm sewer system is also not meeting the preferred schedule, which may compromise drainage capacity and result in increased costs over the long term. Funding is also needed for street repair and reconstruction. Consequently, the aging and deteriorating condition of the infrastructure system may limit the City’s access to economic opportunities without proactive measures and near-term action.

Capital programs that are planned to construct new streets, provide sufficient water capacity, treat wastewater, and expand telecommunication services all contribute benefits for business creation and retention. Upgrading public facilities and municipal infrastructure also have the added benefit of improving the character and image of the immediate area and community as a whole. Therefore, investments made in public

### **Trends in Workforce Development**

- ♦ Developing advanced skills training meets needs for skilled workers in regions with high-tech industries.
- ♦ Public initiatives try to help small businesses gain access to previously unaffordable training.
- ♦ Business partnerships pool and leverage a range of financial, physical, human, and intellectual resources and provide a collective voice for workforce development funding.
- ♦ Businesses' employee retention efforts focus on accommodating differing needs and lifestyles of workers.
- ♦ Cities are establishing programs to retain local university graduates who possess needed skills for high-tech firms or to attract graduates to move back home.
- ♦ Integrating the curricula of community colleges

improvement projects, while not seemingly of direct impact to the infrastructure system, have an indirect influence on the character and assertiveness of the community. Capital improvements are not the only option municipalities have. Many different and creative strategies should be used to maximize the benefit of any funding received for these improvements. Consideration of tax increment financing (TIF), to fund infrastructure improvements for new nonresidential developments, pay-as-you-go or perhaps use of sales tax as possible means of funding should all be evaluated. Such actions and projects serve to benefit economic development through their contributions to the community and its observed or perceived livability.

Businesses are now operating in highly competitive markets, thereby demanding the need for faster, more reliable, and cheaper means of communication. Now more than ever, companies are reliant upon technology for their everyday operations and communications with suppliers, distributors, associated companies, and clients. For this reason, it is essential to the efficient operations of local businesses and the competitiveness of the community to offer advanced telecommunications infrastructure. Doing so requires telecommunications companies to have the ability to handle the growth in demand, especially as the Internet becomes an ever important tool in the world of business. Companies of varying levels of technology are all seeking reliable communication service. To aid in the provision of this highly valuable service, Laramie must be creative in their financing of technology infrastructure.

The difficulty in the investment of infrastructure in the local economic development program is that its direct benefits are difficult to measure. Without question, though, infrastructure creates jobs and stimulates new business development. However, its impact may not be recognized or attributed to such investment for several years. Moreover, infrastructure installation may have negative impacts on the community initially, such as the inconveniences of construction, before any benefits are realized.

#### Training and Workforce Development

Companies that are looking to locate in an area are interested in the labor force that is available for them to employ. Depending on the nature of the business, whether it is salary or non-salaried workers, they evaluate such measures as the percent of unemployment, the ratio of those employed who are available to be in the workforce, the educational attainment of persons, and the existence of training facilities and educational institutions in the area. Generally, they are interested in the skill sets of individuals that may give one community a competitive advantage over another. From this perspective, Laramie is very well positioned relevant to other communities of similar size or even larger.

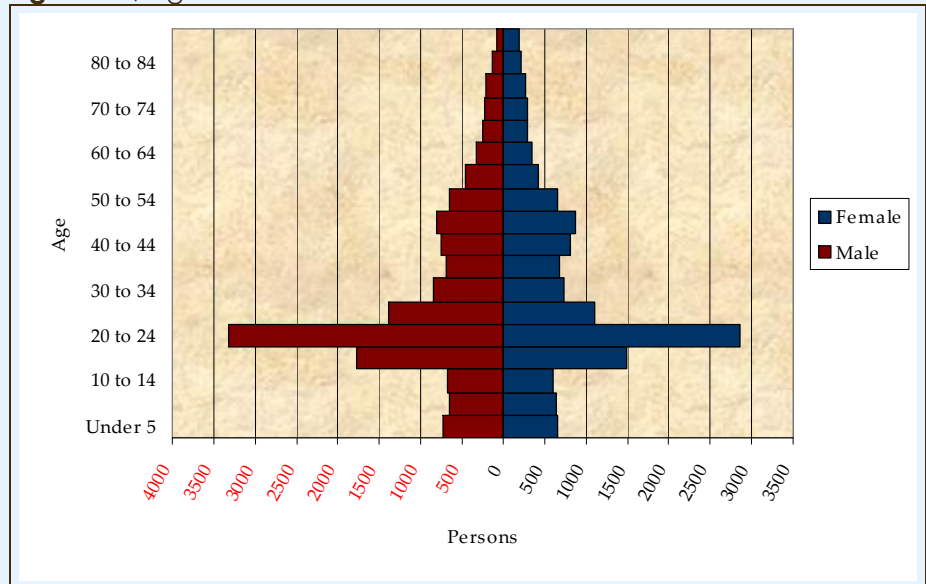
The presence of UW, WyoTech, and LCCC places the community in a very competitive position. The importance of the local school system cannot be understated. For the City's workforce program to be highly competitive and successful, employers want assurance of their access to trainable workers. At the same time, company executives and rank-and-file workers alike, place emphasis on their own access to training and higher education, as well as the quality of education for their children. Both home buyers and the development community recognize their investments are affected by the quality of schools and the availability of higher learning. As a result, it is imperative that Laramie remains supportive

of the local school district, University, WyoTech, and LCCC and establishes excellence in education and workforce training as long-term goals. Communicating the community's economic development goals with the education and training institutions will enable business to be responsive to the changing needs of the existing and targeted businesses and future employers in the community. In other words, the coordination of institutional programs with the target industries can provide a key competitive advantage for the community.

In addition to educated workers from the schools, the unemployment rate has been held at or below two percent each of the last 10 years, meaning that over 98 percent of the labor force in the community is employed.<sup>8</sup> Also, Laramie has higher rates at most educational attainment thresholds in comparison to several other communities in the State. Therefore, there is a larger pool of trained and talented persons available to the workforce. Albeit much of the workforce is only available as part-time employees and their employment is relatively short term while they are attending school, there remains an opportunity to capitalize on this human resource.

It is incumbent upon the leadership of Laramie who is actively promoting its economic development to become highly familiar with the programs that are offered through each of the institutions ranging from basic skills such as literacy, to technical training like carpentry or electronics, and to higher education degree programs. This is highly valuable information that is of great interest and may enhance the competitiveness of the community for attracting prospective businesses. These learning and education facilities are attractive to businesses since they offer specialized training opportunities to their employees, but also because they offer higher learning institutions for the spouses and children of their employees. Opportunities for higher education contribute to area quality of life. Additionally, if the types of local businesses are well matched with the education and skills of graduating students there is an increased opportunity for their retention in the community. Laramie is fortunate to have a major university, technical

**Figure 9.1, Age Breakdown**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Sex by Age, STF 1

<sup>8</sup> Labor Force Averages for Wyoming, Albany County, and Laramie, 1995-2003, Economic Indicators for the Laramie Area, 1990-2003 Annual Trends.

training school, and community college, which offer higher learning opportunities for community residents and training for local employers.

The Laramie Employment Resources Center is also a benefit for providing employment assistance to residents and assisting employers in their staffing needs. These facilities greatly improve the competitiveness for attracting technology-based businesses. As shown by *Figure 9.1, Age Breakdown*, an issue for the future of the community is the retention of its youth. Currently, there is an influx of college-age students attending each of the three institutions, some of which are local students who grew up in Laramie and attended UW, WyoTech, or LCCC. However, there is a significant decline in the age cohorts beyond graduation age, meaning that many graduates leave Laramie following graduation to seek higher paying jobs, more employment opportunities, and more cultural amenities within a larger metropolitan area. Creating strategies and opportunities for these students to remain in Laramie to attend higher schooling and stay upon graduation is essential to sustaining the economy.

### Image and Community Character

With improved technology and advanced means of communication, companies now place an even higher priority on quality of life in choosing their business setting. Therefore, while the availability of sites and buildings, adequate infrastructure, skilled labor force, and incentives remain vitally important to the location and investment decision, factors such as housing availability and affordability, quality of schools, proximity to higher learning institutions, recreational opportunities, access to medical services, and community appeal have become increasingly important. As Laramie continues to grow, there must be plans, policies, and ordinances in place to effectively manage its appropriate placement and quality.

The appearance of Laramie is formed by many factors. First and foremost is the quality of its natural areas and views, which are highly regarded by both residents and visitors. Also important, though, is the design of public spaces, government buildings and grounds, and infrastructure, while also having a proactive stance to ensure the land use standards deliver quality development outcomes. Without focusing attention on the quality and sustainability of physical development, character is left to chance, leaving little opportunity for the community to control the destiny of its appearance.

The emerging pattern of development is along the frontage of each major corridor, as has and is presently occurring along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Grand Avenue, and increasingly along other arterial streets. This pattern of strip development lends itself to the concerns expressed by residents, including a proliferation of signage; multiple driveways; limited green space and landscaping along the streetscape; buildings situated to the back of sites with a view from the street across large expanses of concrete and parked vehicles; wide street sections needed to accommodate higher traffic volumes, multiple turning movements and vehicular acceleration and deceleration; and, generally, an unappealing corridor environment. Instead, the public would like to see shopping districts with enhanced standards that achieve a development character that reflects positively on the community and its identity. New development standards that address these amenities issues must be

available to developers.

The character and appearance of Laramie are of top priority according to a broad cross-section of the community that participated in the public comment process. Residents recognize the importance of quality of life in the success of their economic development and, therefore, both desire and expect quality new development and redevelopment. There is a strong desire to protect and preserve areas of distinction, such as Downtown, the tree area, the ridge north of Indian Paintbrush Elementary School, aquifer protection area and along the Laramie River. In addition, residents voiced their desire to improve the entrances to the community with distinctive gateways, enhance the roadway environs with streetscape improvements, increase the amount of green space adjacent to the rights-of-way and throughout the community, add more landscaping and screening of parking and storage areas, control the size and location of signage, incorporate more public displays of art and community history, better manage the appearance of structures and vacant properties, and diligently enforce the City's codes.

Community design and appearance are essential components to providing a positive visual perception of Laramie, making it more attractive to prospective residents and endearing it to current ones. In other words, community design should no longer be considered only as amenities. Instead, it should be considered a critical factor in selling the community to skilled and talented workers that will make local employers more competitive. Unfortunately, community design and aesthetic features are often the first to be compromised during periods of constrained budgets. Budgets must be in place to enforce and review projects where design guidelines must be followed. Also, community and design features should not be compromised due to opposition, based on cost factors. They must, nonetheless, be maintained if the City is to cast a positive first impression on visitors and potential residents and investors.

### Achieving Quality, Affordable Housing

Without a sufficient supply of housing, including within different neighborhood environments, varying styles and sizes, and at variable price ranges, the ultimate success of the community's economic development program may falter for reason of an inadequate or poor supply of housing choices. When business owners are looking to relocate or establish a new branch, there are multiple variables that factor into the decision, one of which is the availability, adequacy, affordability, and quality of housing. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to Laramie and its economic development program to devote resources toward implementation of this plan, as well as the Housing Study and Action Plan.

Available and affordable housing are also key factors in the attractiveness of a community as well as the quality of life of existing residents. The presence of an adequate, available housing stock is imperative to meet the needs of low-, moderate-, middle-, and upper-income households. Market conditions will determine the quantity and price of new residential units, as well as resale and rental housing. It is sometimes necessary for public agencies and nonprofit organizations, though, to take steps to encourage housing



Housing – urban and rural, large and small, attached and detached – is important as to acceptable price and preferences of consumers.

construction or rehabilitation or to assist lower-income buyers or tenants to find adequate, affordable shelter in the community.

As outlined in detail in *Chapter 5, Housing and Neighborhoods*, as well as within the Laramie Housing Study and Action Plan, there are existing and increasingly emerging concerns with respect to the condition and affordability of housing, particularly for the very low- and low-income population. In addition, the availability of housing is also an issue as the vacancy rates have declined steadily since 2001, from 6.25 percent to 2.84 percent in 2005.<sup>9</sup> A vacancy rate of five percent is considered the minimum desired

rate to ensure an adequate supply of housing at various price points to satisfy demands and allow sufficient mobility within the market. Since the vacancy rate is well below the five percent threshold, there is a shortage of available housing, particularly from an economic development perspective.

Beyond livability and economic development concerns, local government also has an interest in the sustainability of new residential construction and the condition of the existing housing stock since market and assessed values directly impact the tax base and resulting revenue potential. Areas that are in need of revitalization and redevelopment, such as those to the north and south of Downtown and within West Laramie, should be the target of public and private funding and assistance efforts to preserve the integrity of these existing neighborhoods and prevent future decay and deterioration.

There continues to be construction of new homes in the community, amounting to 538 residential building permits since 2000. However, much of this is due to the increased demand caused by fewer persons per household, a smaller population living in University dorms, and a larger percentage of non-family households. Therefore, the homes that are being built are largely accommodating the current population and, thus, meeting only a small portion of the total demand. At the same time, newly constructed homes are not affordable for the average citizen.

For the community's economic development objectives to be met there are a wide range of variables to be considered and adequately addressed. For instance, while the Partners in

**Partners in Progress**, a public-private economic development partnership for Laramie, Albany County, and the surrounding areas has forged a five-year strategic plan focusing on job creation through industry analysis, marketing, and an entrepreneurial environment, plus community enhancement, with plans for community development, beautification, and communication and reporting.

<sup>9</sup> Wyoming Community Development Authority

Progress initiative has shown strong results since its inception in 2005, if the housing situation is not remedied, it has the potential to retard business growth for a lack of housing for new employees and residents. Therefore, housing is of utmost importance in the overall economic development program, similar to the timely and adequate provision of infrastructure, incentives, and quality of life.

### ECONOMIC GOALS AND ACTION STATEMENTS

In this section the goals and action statements for each element of the plan are set forth. The goals and action statements are to be used as a starting point to achieve the overall vision of this plan.

#### Economic Competitiveness Goals and Action Statements

1. Assemble and consolidate all development-related codes into a unified development Code (UDC). A UDC is a code that consolidates all development related ordinances, i.e. zoning, subdivision regulations, landscaping, sign controls, etc. into a single bound document.
2. Conduct a comprehensive management and organizational study, customer service training, process and systems analysis, work flow analysis, and management training for the City's development review function. The study's is to comprehensively review and critique each individual function, as well as the system as a whole, identify needed policy changes, procedural modifications, organizational adjustments, and technical revisions in an effort to maximize efficiency.
3. Consider establishment of a one-stop-shop development review, processing, permitting, and inspections center, whereby all functions associated with development are highly coordinated and handled by a single project development coordinator from the initial inquiry through to final inspection and issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
4. Develop a marketing plan, survey and information database for the City. A plan such as this would be used to help promote development and aid potential business in there decision to locate here and would include:
  - a. Full and regularly updated base line data on the City, such as business costs, land costs, building values, construction costs, transportation costs, labor rates, taxes, permit and fees, development times,
  - b. Identify criteria and issues that business use when making a decision to locate in a community (alternative site evaluation).
  - c. Regional market reports with minimum market criteria, e.g. market area population, income, and educational limits, as well as anecdotal support to identify key intangible considerations, for potential business comparing our city to others in the region.
  - d. Prioritize improvement project or other capital investments identified that will aid in promoting the City.

The Primary Target Industries report of Albany and Carbon Counties (Zone 9), dated April 2005, was the product of a contract between the Wadley-Donovan Group and the Wyoming Business Council. The Primary Target Industry selection was based on the findings of the Locational Assessment Reports, which examined such topics as labor, real estate, infrastructure, training, and quality of life issues. The primary targets include:

- ♦ Sensor-Based Companies
- ♦ Educational Software and Archival Services
- ♦ Back Office Accounting and/or Payroll Operations

Source: Primary Target Industries: Wyoming Zone 9 – Albany and Carbon (eastern) Counties, Wyoming Business Council, April 2005

5. Promote and support the efforts of property owners and the City of Laramie, who own property within the Turner Tract area due to the residual economic activity this area will generate.
6. Organize a group of local business owners to act as a coordinating committee with officials of the City, Laramie Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), and Chamber of Commerce.
7. Promote and support the efforts of the University of Wyoming and their plans with the business incubator. The business incubator can serve as primer for good economic development for the City of Laramie once these “incubated” business look for permanent facilities.
8. Work to attract an anchor to Downtown and seize the opportunities for redevelopment in the northern and southern fringe area.
9. Promote and support business and new development with strong environmental ethics to re-locate or develop in Laramie.
10. Target tourism in the strategy for expanding the local economy. Tourism should be used to not only promote the community but to help promote economic development.

#### Infrastructure Management and Readiness Goals and Action Statements

1. Utilize the policies and recommendations of *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*, to refine the limits of future urban development.
2. Seek ways to narrow the funding gap for infrastructure improvements, through different funding sources identified potentially by a municipal financing specialist.
3. Identify specific deficiencies in certain locations through small area utility service studies that would improve capacity and make land available for development. Work closely with the Laramie Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) to prioritize the areas and the timing and staging of improvements, where the highest possible cost benefit will be realized.
4. Adopt criteria and a policy for financially constrained maintenance whereby cost efficiency is maximized for the minimal maintenance required to sustain the useful life of the infrastructure systems. A structural integrity process may be used to guide maintenance resources into financially viable repair and replacement strategies.
5. Amend *Laramie Municipal Code 17.80, Wireless Telecommunication Towers*, to allow expedited approval subject to increased performance standards relating to allowable heights in specified locations, appearance and buffering of equipment buildings and cabinets, and electrical and mechanical equipment, landscaping, fencing materials, signage, illumination, noise of equipment, and the location and appearance of accessory support facilities.
6. Consider the use of incentives for developments to encourage new technology like wireless or fiber optic communication networks, including density bonuses, property tax abatements, grants, low interest loans, preferential fee structuring, rebate or payback programs, cost sharing for on-site or off-site improvements, priority status for development review, and flexible facility standards.

The Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP) is a competitive grant program to help public broadcasting, state and local governments, Indian Tribes, and nonprofit organizations construct facilities to bring educational and cultural programs to the American Public using broadcasting and non-broadcasting telecommunications technologies.

7. Seek out Federal funds, such as grants through the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program (PTFP), that are designed to assist with public and nonprofit communication technology services or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.
8. Promote interconnection and common carrier collaboration among technology service providers and the City. Joint ventures should also be encouraged to maximize the value of communications technology information to resident and business consumers. The City should also support coordination of a shared common grid of communications technology systems for education, health care, public agencies, social services, justice, and economic development.

### Training and Workforce Development Goals and Action Statements

1. Fully embrace and support the enrollment growth of UW, WyoTech, and LCCC through the Statewide, legislative level, and at the local level. The City and educational establishments should work together to secure legislative assistance when possible, all avenues should be explored that promote the University and the City in a cooperative manner.
2. Create a career education program through the school districts and other educational institutions where information about local career opportunities, speakers from local business and industry, career matching, and curriculum planning will occur.
3. Establish a career apprenticeship program whereby students can train on the job for a local career, while receiving work credit at school. A partners-in-education program may also be considered to facilitate tutoring of students by community leaders, members of the business community, and retirees.
4. Seek to leverage the graduate and research programs and faculty of the University to expand upon current, and identify additional opportunities for long-term economic diversity and vitality.
5. Coordinate with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) to administer local education and training programs, such as basic education, apprenticeship utilization, career aptitude and exploration, employment, and training for self-sufficiency.
6. Continue cooperation efforts with existing or new businesses to access Department of Workforce Services Business Training Grants, New Hire Economic Development Grants, Wyoming Business Council, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Job Training Grants and the Business Ready Communities Grant & Loan Program.<sup>10</sup> Also, assist in providing access to the Wyoming Business Council's workforce training programs, including Quick Start and Development Dimensions International (DDI).<sup>11</sup>
7. Periodically conduct a comprehensive survey among local employers and the target industries to identify their labor needs and minimum skill requirements. Utilize the findings of the survey to coordinate with the local educational and training institutions

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) is focused on delivering comprehensive and effective services that build a workforce to meet the changing demands of Wyoming's diverse businesses, citizens, and economy. The Agency's mission is "linking human and economic development for Wyoming's future." DWS is comprised of four divisions, including the Business Training & Outreach (BTO) Division, Employment Services (ES) Division, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division, and the Office of the Director.

Source:  
<http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/>

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<sup>10</sup> Wyoming Business Council, <http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/community/workforce.aspx>.

<sup>11</sup> Wyoming Business Council, <http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/business/workforce.aspx>.



The roadway environs are within the purview of the public sector as to their design, appearance, and maintenance.

to refine existing or craft new programs directed at addressing the identified skill needs.

8. Continue to offer scholarships funded by the Laramie business community, in addition to the Hathaway Scholarship Program, to reward outstanding and deserving students with college financial assistance.
9. Establish a forgivable loan program for students meeting specified criteria who remain in Laramie and agree to work in the community in their respective field for a certain period of time after graduation.

10. Develop a “Return Home to Laramie” promotion for the children of parents who reside in the community. Such program may highlight local employers and career opportunities, competitive wage rates, cost of living index, and other factors that may lead to a decision to return to Laramie.

11. Continue the Leadership Laramie program to identify, train, and motivate prospective and current community leaders, with the intent to promote local economic development objectives.

### Image and Community Character Goals and Actions Statements



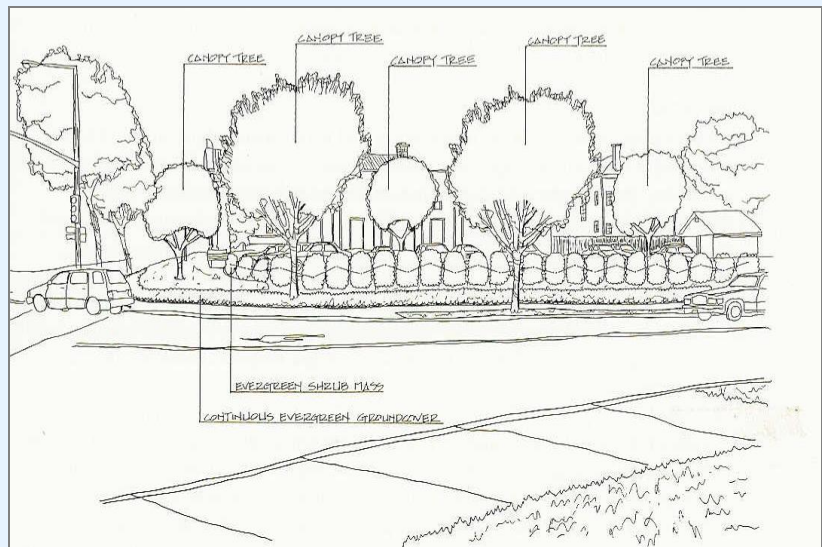
The unique lighting standard used in Downtown could be extended elsewhere in the community, with variations as to the height and necessary light output. This helps to form an identity and a unifying theme throughout the community.

1. Coordinate with WYDOT to prepare special area corridor revitalization studies and plans for U.S. 287/3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Highway 130 & 230 and U.S. 30/Grand Avenue. The studies should include and consider:
  - a) Redevelopment and enhancement projects at the entrances to the community, including public infrastructure improvements and strict enforcement of code violations. The areas should be prioritized according to traffic counts at each location.
  - b) Inventory and assessment of existing conditions, including land use and zoning, building footprints, numbers and locations of driveways and parking lots, numbers and locations of signs, trees and vegetation, power poles and overhead lines, street cross-sections and rights-of-way, sidewalks and pedestrian improvements, pervious and impervious surfaces, and general visual

characteristics.

- c) Inclusion of a raised medians, which breaks up the wide expanse of pavement by creating space for grass, groundcover, shrubbery, trees, xeriscape and other amenities.

- d) Street trees within the median and the outer streetscape buffer areas abutting the roadway, allowing a canopy to be formed over the roadway (similar to the Tree Area), which significantly alters the driver's perspective of the roadway environs. This area creates separation between the public and private realms and provides space for more "green" adjacent to the roadway.



Sufficiently screened parking areas form an edge between the public and private realms and create an attractive streetscape environment.

- e) Limit the number, width, and location of new driveways, consolidating existing driveways, and defining the edges with curb cuts and patterned crossings helps to create a more appealing pedestrian environment.
- f) The use of neighborhood standards, such as decorative street lamps, help form a unique community identity.
- g) Require underground utilities similar to requirements now. Also examine methods of relocating already existing above ground utilities underground or out of sight.
- h) Traffic control devices and signage also contribute to the appearance of the road environs. The condition of road sign poles and faces, as well as their placement and proximity to other public and private signs, has a significant visual impact. Consolidating signs onto single poles where applicable or relocating signs are options for enhancing the appearance of corridors.
- i) Timelines and cost figures for the implementation of the goals and action statements.

2. Prepare an urban design plan that identifies the design characteristics of individual areas, such as the Downtown, Turner Tract, Tree Area, etc., with defined limits of individual framework areas. Framework areas should identify the improvements and enhancements that will exploit and perpetuate its unique features to form a special sense of place. Standards may also be established within developing areas, as well as future development areas, such as along the extended 30<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.
3. See recommendations found in *Chapter 3, Community Character*.

4. Update subdivision code to incorporate and address issues of newly designed buildings and sites such as building design, floor area ratio, building materials, footprint, elevation, architecture and placement. Landscaping (xeriscape), parking, lighting, streetscape design, impervious material and signage should also be addressed by the update.
5. Improve outdoor lighting standards as not to contribute to the nighttime appearance of development. Without regulations to ensure an appropriate light intensity, light pollution will diminish the quality viewing of the nighttime sky, light spillover will impact adjacent properties, and light glare may create harmful conditions along the adjacent street.
6. Organize a public education campaign regarding property maintenance and environmental codes and establish an annual amnesty program for code violators. Volunteer to assist property owners in identifying violations and conforming solutions.
7. Amend the design standards of the rights-of-way for arterial and collector roadways to acquire sufficient additional lands to include increased green space and buffer zones from adjacent land uses. Refer to *Chapter 8, Transportation*, for more information.
8. Adopt tree protection and preservation standards, including the establishment of tree protection zones during construction, and standards relating to grade changes, dumping, and unauthorized pruning.

#### Quality, Affordable Housing Goals and Action Statements

1. Establish and maintain relationships with area builders and financial institutions to determine interest in assisting in development of affordable housing through programs that allow builders to share responsibility for creation of affordable housing and financial institutions to establish a revolving loan fund for pre-construction loans to area builders in development of affordable housing.
2. Consider development of a HOME Investment Partnership Consortium with areas surrounding Laramie, including Albany County.
3. Review the possibility of application for a Homeownership Zone from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to reclaim vacant and blighted properties, increase homeownership, and promote economic revitalization.
4. Seek funding sources for housing from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that serve specific households that historically require affordable housing, such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.
5. Coordinate with local financial institutions to establish a down payment and closing cost assistance program for those households in need.
6. Utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to leverage other funds and to implement projects and programs, such as infrastructure repair, park development, or removal of unsafe structures, aiming to improve neighborhood conditions in areas of low- to moderate-income and in efforts to eliminate “slum and blight.”

7. Revise local health and building codes, as needed, to streamline the process to address unsafe or dilapidated structures and other potential health and safety risks, such as weeds, tires, and heavy trash.



# Thrive Laramie: A Community and Economic Development Action Strategy for the Next 10 Years

## Executive Summary

January, 2020







Photos Courtesy of The City of Laramie

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# Thrive Laramie

In 2020, Laramie, Wyoming, is at an inflection point. Bolstered by success in the arts, history and culture, diversity, recreation, and tech, Laramie has lived up to its moniker as the Gem City of the Plains. Its charm and ruggedness attracts people from all over who enjoy outdoor pursuits such as fishing, hiking, mountain biking, and snowmobiling, in the vast natural reserves that surround the town, from Vedauwoo and Happy Jack, to the Snowy Range and Medicine Bow National Forest. The University of Wyoming (UW) is a huge community asset, preparing students from around the country and state to become the next generation of leaders. A remarkable education system from the Albany County School District (ACSD) to the Albany County Campus of the Laramie County Community College (LCCC) means Albany County, Wyoming residents are some of the most well-educated and skilled talent one might find anywhere in the country.

Still, Laramie can do more to prevent losing young people to other cities and towns that are able to offer better economic opportunities. Albany County residents earn the lowest median wages of all surrounding counties, especially among people aged 25-44. Compounded by high housing costs, people at the beginning of their careers are leaving the Gem City to make a living elsewhere.

At the same time, Laramie is in a unique position to attract and grow the types of companies that are powering our future while paying good wages to skilled employees. Local ventures have demonstrated that successful growth in Laramie is possible: Trihydro is an environmental engineering leader that has grown from its founding in Laramie in 1984 to twenty offices nationwide; UL, a global safety science company, acquired a local firm (IDES) and has been growing its presence in Laramie since

2012; Plenty, formerly Bright Agrotech, grew its operations from a garage to the University of Wyoming incubator system, and now has its R&D arm in Laramie and its marketing and operations in Silicon Valley; Coffey Engineering and Surveying is a family-owned, multi-generational firm specializing in land and building development and energy transmission and delivery. Becoming a leader in industries like boutique and machine manufacturing, telecommunications, data hosting and processing, and financial activities, as well as in the professional, scientific, and technical fields which include architectural, engineering, and design services, computer systems design, management and technical consulting, and scientific research and development is well within Laramie's reach given its experience, resources, and professional capacity in these areas.

In addition, there is a growing interest in entrepreneurship in Laramie, sparked by cutting edge research and development in areas like drones and supercomputing coming out of the university; courses and degree programs in innovative fields like brew science and "food-preneurship" at the community college; and a robust support system for startups and small businesses like that which is offered through the university-affiliated Business Resource Network. This interest should be nurtured and strengthened, as entrepreneurship is a crucial ingredient in economic development. Entrepreneurs who are carving their own path, taking risks and creating livelihoods for themselves and others, truly embody Cowboy Ethics and Code of the West.

None of these efforts are possible, though, without a strong business-ready infrastructure, the most fundamental of which is access to comprehensive high-speed broadband. Albany County is rural and at some times isolated, which is a draw but also a barrier for founders, freelancers, and remote workers, who depend on reliable and robust internet connectivity.

A second foundational barrier to business readiness is housing that is of high quality and quantity – a requirement of all people that is in short supply in Laramie. With home prices that look more like booming Fort Collins, Colorado, than like nearby Cheyenne or Casper in Wyoming, Laramie is facing a true housing shortage for middle-income working people. A number of factors contribute to this, including a short construction season, a lack of developers, builders, and skilled contractors, and transient college students putting pressure on the available stock. The strategies for overcoming these challenges that are outlined in this plan will be critical to support Laramie's growth. Increasing the availability of workforce housing will give employers confidence that they can invest in Laramie and support their employees.

Finally, the City of Laramie must seek stronger relationships with the University of Wyoming and other educational and training institutions that will prepare the region's workforce for the next wave of economic opportunity. Laramie should be recognized as a hub for educational and intellectual capital by employers and visitors alike. Beyond this, Laramie must realize its potential as a university town – enhancing Laramie as a campus community, where “town” and “gown” work together to integrate their physical presence as well as social activities to raise the quality of life and sense of place for residents, students, workers, and visitors.

As Laramie seeks to welcome new people and industry to enact its vision and goals, it should capitalize on and widely broadcast its strengths through coordinated marketing by key stakeholders: a highly educated workforce; quality educational institutions training workers in growing target industries; a destination for recreation, culture, arts, and tourism amenities; and a small but growing entrepreneurship scene. Laramie should also continue to nurture its strong commitment to diversity and inclusion – as the first city in Wyoming to pass an LGBT non-discrimination ordinance in 2015, and home of the first woman in the United States to cast a legal general election vote in 1870, courage and inclusion are baked into its history.

Because of all of this, Laramie is poised to be an engine of growth for the state, but first it must overcome its barrier of high housing costs; reduce its dependency on the currently dominant handful of non-traded and low-paying industries, diversifying its economy to increase wages; better connect its town and gown to enhance the experience of residents and visitors; better advertise Laramie's world-class amenities to draw new people in; and continue to invest in startups and small business support to grow the next generation of employers.

The recommendations in this plan were designed to do just that – to enact a future vision of Laramie as a welcoming cultural capital, education hub, and center for economic opportunity for all current and future residents. Stakeholders in Laramie are charged with working together to realize this vision, to allow Laramie to Thrive in the next 10 years and beyond.

# Catalysts for Growth



Throughout conversations associated with the 10-year community and economic development strategy planning effort, three general recommendations emerged that cross topic areas. These three areas will catalyze a thriving and prosperous community.

## Strategy 1. Population Growth to 50,000 to Support Economic Opportunity and Enhance Quality of Life

Laramie and Albany County's population growth over the past 50 years can be characterized as slow but steady; it has allowed for a continued expansion of the amenities and labor force needed to thrive. Throughout Laramie's history, the only spikes in population have resulted from the University of Wyoming's expansions. Today, one in three jobs are in the education sector, which demonstrates the benefits of the University as an employer but also the risk of having so many residents dependent on one sector. In communities throughout the country, there is a trend of population growth driving job growth. As more people identify a place they want to live, they either find or create their employment opportunity. With the explosive growth of the Fort Collins region, it can be expected that Laramie will begin to see spillover growth.



The Laramie community, if it can grow to a population of 50,000, would realize new opportunities and enhance the overall quality of life for its residents. Current population modeling shows a natural growth projection of 4,000 residents – to 42,000 people in 2030. This plan would seek to realize an additional 8,000 residents above what current population models indicate during that time period. While this would demonstrate a significant increase in the annual growth rate, it is certainly possible based on what is seen in other growing communities. Laramie can proactively manage its growth in order to minimize any potential negative impacts.

## Recommendation

**Ensure that this economic development strategy and other plans, including the comprehensive plan, identify what is needed to effectively host an additional 12,000 residents by 2030.**

## Strategy 2. Consistent and Cohesive Laramie Messaging



Laramie residents know and treasure how special their community is, but that sentiment is not shared among people outside of the community who simply aren't aware of Laramie's many amazing attributes. One of the most important keys to attracting visitors and future residents is messaging around what makes the community so beloved by its residents. There are many (and often varied) ways of discussing the awesomeness of Laramie. Communication

efforts have not been coordinated in the past, which has limited the effectiveness of the message and investments, as well as the positive impacts that could be realized from tourists, visitors, and existing residents. Consistent messaging would allow Laramie's organizations to build a suite of complementary statements about the best attributes of various components of the community.

### Recommendation

**Bring together stakeholders to develop a cohesive set of messages that can be adopted across platforms, as well as a common evaluation framework for those efforts, and then work collaboratively to implement targeted marketing campaigns.**

## Strategy 3. Revenue Enhancements to Support Plan Implementation



Existing reliance on sales tax due to the absence of property and income taxes limits the ability for Laramie, Albany County, and partners to invest in the initiatives, programs, and services required for growth. Laramie needs to identify near-term resources to support the investment needs identified in this plan.

In the long term, the community should develop an approach to reduce dependence on state funding and create mechanisms to increase reliability/predictability and mitigate the boom-bust cycles experienced due to the state's tax structure. The Laramie community will support state revenue enhancement legislation, and will identify coordinated co-investment opportunities in mutually beneficial projects with strategic partners. In addition, the city needs to increase the frequency with which it pursues grant funding to support the recommendations that follow.

### Recommendation

**New revenues must be identified to reduce dependence on state funding, allow the community to thrive, and support investments in the initiatives, programs, and services required for growth.**

# Strategies and Recommendations

The following make up the recommendations for the Thrive Laramie Community Economic Development Strategic Action Plan.

## Industry Diversification and Increasing Wages



Median wages across all age groups in Albany County are lower than in neighboring communities and the country as a whole, contributing to the perception of limited opportunity in the region for job seekers. In recent years, Laramie has been able to attract and grow companies such as HiViz, UL, and MillaporeSigma. Still, the Laramie community struggles with talent retention, due in part to the lack of competitive wages and industry mix. Laramie has an opportunity to make an impact through purposeful, targeted growth and diversification.

### Strategy 1. Increase Regional Collaboration for Business Retention, Attraction, and Recruitment Efforts



To encourage the introduction and growth of new businesses and industry sectors that pay competitive wages, work should be done to address regulatory and other barriers that may exist, such as restrictive code related to building aesthetics and a lack of infrastructure to support new build and business expansion.

#### Opportunity

Target industries that bring high-paying, skilled, primary labor market jobs for attraction and retention to diversify the region’s industry mix, drive economic growth, and increase wages.

#### Recommendation

**Work collaboratively to enhance the “business brand” of Laramie and the region.**

##### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                     | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Develop strategy for target industries                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Host local business roundtables to address business friendliness |    |    |    |    |    |
| Develop and launch a marketing strategy for the region           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Build a talent-engagement portal                                 |    |    |    |    |    |
| Develop physical space in identified development areas           |    |    |    |    |    |

# Strategy 2. Support Increased Revenue and Wages for Existing Businesses



## Opportunity

Bring partners together to collaborate on solutions to reduce the cost of employment, increase revenues, and allow for employment and wage growth.

## Recommendation

Create the Revenue Catalyst - a resource initiative for employers to reduce costs and increase revenues.

### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                          | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Build an educational and peer-networking platform to encourage cultural change within existing businesses                             |    |    |    |    |    |
| Enhance employer toolkits as a central place for businesses to find resources                                                         |    |    |    |    |    |
| Work with the industry consortium (strategy 4) to connect employers with student talent and develop multi-business talent recruitment |    |    |    |    |    |
| Work with employers to reduce individual costs                                                                                        |    |    |    |    |    |

# Town-Gown and Industry-Workforce Alignment



The presence of the University of Wyoming (“gown”), a land-grant university and a leading institution of learning, is a significant asset for the City of Laramie (“town”) as it considers growth over the next decade. The resources that the University provides, like workforce training, business incubation, shuttle services, and arts, sports and other cultural events, can help the city achieve its goals related to the workforce, cultural tourism, economic development, and overall quality of life.

## Strategy 3. Enhance Laramie as a “Campus Community”



To improve the impressions of first time visitors and enhance the quality of life for residents, there is a need to focus on city beautification and continuity between campus and the rest of the city. This includes gateway improvements, enhancing bike and pedestrian safety, and the development of more public art, green infrastructure, parks, and indoor community spaces for programs and events.

### Opportunity

Strengthen Laramie as a campus community by collaboratively and cooperatively improving the physical connectivity of “town” to “gown” community assets (gateways, corridors, dorms, transportation) as well as the social integration of the campus population and community through sports, the arts, and co-sponsored or co-organized programs, projects, and services. This may take the form of a committee structure as a mechanism for effective partnerships and a way to build trusted relationships.

### Recommendation

**Establish and strengthen effective mechanisms for coordinated Town-Gown co-investment that has buy-in from decision makers.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                             | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Determine 3-5 key issues/action items to pursue                                          |    |    |    |    |    |
| Highlight package of mutually beneficial amenities                                       |    |    |    |    |    |
| Quantify contributions toward achieving shared goals                                     |    |    |    |    |    |
| Publicize Town-Gown work and collect public perception through regular sentiment surveys |    |    |    |    |    |

## Strategy 4. Strengthen Connections Between Educational/Training Providers and State and Regional Employers



Improved industry-workforce alignment is needed to keep workers in the region, by ensuring they can pursue family-sustaining job opportunities and that they have the skills needed to fulfill employer requirements. The region is positioned to drive economic transformation in the state due to the innovative initiatives, research, and development happening at the postsecondary level. Educational institutions must work collaboratively and cooperatively to ensure that the next generation gains the skills needed to take advantage of these opportunities.

### Opportunity

Strengthen collaborations between training providers, educational institutions – including high school, technical training, community college, and university – and private employers to enhance workforce and industry alignment and support talent retention.

### Recommendation

**Create an industry consortium for talent enhancement and promote Laramie as a destination for education and intellectual capital.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                   | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Convene business and industry leaders and education and training institutions                  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create curricula, apprenticeship, and internship programs in high-demand, high-growth sectors  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Establish an employer relations team to coordinate among educational and training institutions |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create incentives to reduce the costs of taking on interns, apprentices                        |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create a policy advocacy platform for workforce development programs, initiatives, and funding |    |    |    |    |    |

# Tech, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship



While attracting new business and industry from outside of the region is an exciting prospect that would certainly create new economic opportunity, fostering home-grown business development by encouraging technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship has added benefits, and has the potential to make even more scalable impacts.

## Strategy 5. Develop and Expand Tools and Programs for Laramie's Entrepreneurs, Startups, and Small Businesses



Though there are a number of resources and programs to support local innovators and help launch new ventures, more can be done to provide entrepreneurs across all sectors, including small business owners, with access to the tools they need to thrive.

### Opportunity

There are numerous high-quality programs that serve entrepreneurs in the community – however, they are decentralized and not all are accessible through a single information source. Entrepreneurs that seek out these resources will find them – but it would help if they were packaged in a way that gives the user a clear understanding of what exists, how they relate, and how effective they are. This improvement will also help stakeholders better understand how they can work collaboratively to deliver non-duplicative services, fill gaps that are missing, and scale existing (or develop new) programs and tools to ensure that all innovators, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and startups have what they need to thrive.

## Recommendation

**Develop an Entrepreneurial Partnership that coordinates and helps promote the primary organizations that are serving entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses.**

### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Identify an entity to serve as a neutral organizer. Submit all services and resources that serve entrepreneurs to the organizer                              |    |    |    |    |    |
| Convene to map resources, identify redundancies, define roles, and create tools to better market resources                                                   |    |    |    |    |    |
| Pilot new/unique sources of assistance to entrepreneurs (1-2 each year)                                                                                      |    |    |    |    |    |
| Explore developing a business census or registration system to create an accurate business listing and more effectively deliver resources to local companies |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify additional funding sources to support entrepreneurs                                                                                                 |    |    |    |    |    |

## Strategy 6. Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture



The absence of a strong and thriving entrepreneurial culture limits the number of business births that a region experiences. A strong entrepreneurial culture that encourages peer learning, celebrates small wins, and minimizes the stigma of failing can help potential entrepreneurs unlearn aversions to risk, failure, and sharing with others.

### Opportunity

Create and/or enhance a culture of entrepreneurship in Laramie to encourage greater rates of new business startups and also support current entrepreneurs and small businesses so that they can thrive. Entrepreneurship, innovation, and startups are important ingredients for economic growth. Despite the rugged individual cowboy culture that exists in Wyoming, the region is relatively risk averse when it comes to starting new businesses. In order to inspire more entrepreneurship, it is important to encourage risk and failure by increasing exposure to entrepreneurship at all levels: both in incorporating more entrepreneurial, technology, and innovation opportunities inside of “traditional” K-12 and higher education, as well as encouraging and supporting those who have already started on the entrepreneurial path with needed tools and services.

### Recommendation

**Create a strategic marketing and recruiting plan that highlights Laramie’s existing entrepreneurial culture by celebrating successes and acknowledges the growth opportunities borne from failure; supports new and existing entrepreneurs through targeted education; and encourages seasoned entrepreneurs to relocate to the region.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                    | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Convene entrepreneurial leaders to document their experiences. Build a narrative of the positive aspects of entrepreneurship                                                    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Replicate, scale, or promote entrepreneurial events to create more connections between new and seasoned entrepreneurs                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify strengths of other entrepreneurial communities. Create a shared definition of targeted growth goals in terms of types of firms, numbers of technologies licensed, etc. |    |    |    |    |    |
| Highlight the region’s entrepreneurial amenities to target populations                                                                                                          |    |    |    |    |    |
| Expand tools, resources, and support for freelancing and entrepreneurship to reduce the risk                                                                                    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Incorporate entrepreneurial training into primary, secondary, and post-secondary education                                                                                      |    |    |    |    |    |

# Art, Recreation, Culture, and Tourism



Art, recreational, and cultural tourism are significant engines of economic growth and prosperity for cities and regions across the country – creating jobs, increasing business revenue, and strengthening and supporting inclusive communities. Laramie, in particular, is quite dependent on tourism due in part to the state’s structural reliance on sales and lodging taxes. As Laramie works to diversify its economy, tourism provides an immediate growth opportunity that can generate additional revenues coming into the city via visitor spending on things like retail, dining, entertainment, and recreation.

## Strategy 7. Maximize Tourist Attraction and Expenditure Capture



Laramie is historic, vibrant, active, and lively, which is a draw for visitors and a perk for residents. However, efforts to draw people in and market Laramie’s assets, while successful, have historically been disjointed, and as a result visitors are not necessarily aware of or experiencing the full range of attractions that are available to them. Cross-promotion of Laramie’s assets, coordination of admission/use fee structures, and enhancing each visitors’ overall experience can help increase tourism expenditures and sales tax revenues.

### Opportunity

Enable the capture of additional arts-oriented, cultural (including sports and history), and recreation-related tourism expenditures, and, where possible, fees, to generate additional tax revenue and further develop the tourism-related ecosystem. It is important that the region maximizes the amount of tourist dollars it is able to capture by improving programming, communication, and marketing, and making sure tourists, whether in Laramie for sporting events, outdoor pursuits, arts and culture, or historic tourism, are connected to multiple assets in Laramie beyond the “main attraction” or their original reason to visit.

### Recommendation

**Build the tourism economy around existing ecosystem assets. Connect, communicate, and leverage efforts across entities.**

## At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Develop a series of information pathways with cohesive messaging for various amenities                                                        |    |    |    |    |    |
| Evaluate current marketing techniques and scale these into an integrated tourism marketing campaign                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Co-sponsor and organize more events and programs to bring people in                                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Develop a process to measure quality of experience, via visitor surveys or a rating system                                                    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Improve the on-the-ground experience across the city and county. Enhance entry points into the community, creating attractive entry corridors |    |    |    |    |    |
| Support and advocate for additional education and training in key areas that support these industries                                         |    |    |    |    |    |

# Strategy 8. Promote Laramie as the Culture Capital of Wyoming



Albany County is home to a number of arts and culture businesses and organizations, and recent initiatives like the Laramie Mural Project have contributed to Laramie’s quality of life and resulted in public art pieces from dozens of artists. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the area’s music, art, and street festivals, and local arts and culture activity generates \$103 million in revenue annually. The arts are in a position to put an amplified focus on diversity, to reflect the fabric that makes up the community and ensure Laramie is even more welcoming and inclusive.

## Opportunity

Develop a funding strategy that can be used to cover the administrative aspects of arts and culture organizations in order to support more diverse, inclusive arts and culture in Laramie, making the area even more inclusive and welcoming to recruit more people to live, work, and visit.

## Recommendation

**Develop a mini-grant fund for equitable and inclusive arts and culture initiatives that is earmarked for project administration and management.**

### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                  | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Draw lessons learned from successful programs locally and elsewhere                                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify available funding sources – both existing and future fund options – and create a budget for funding the program                      |    |    |    |    |    |
| Establish a Board of Advisors that is accountable to and recruited from the community, to detail the program's purpose, objectives, and goals |    |    |    |    |    |
| Seek input from the community and launch initial application and grant cycle                                                                  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Establish professional development and mentorship opportunities for smaller, disadvantaged, and underrepresented organizations                |    |    |    |    |    |
| Work to support local artist advancement and visibility. Explore bringing in major collectors and national and international artists          |    |    |    |    |    |

## Strategy 9. Sustainably Grow the Opportunity for and Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation and Related Tourism



Marketing and promoting Laramie's natural surroundings and world-class outdoor recreation amenities to locals and visitors more widely can bring enormous economic benefits to the community. Doing it in a sustainable way can ensure those benefits are maximized without putting unnecessary or harmful strain on Laramie's infrastructure.

### Opportunity

Maximize the usage and economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry in Laramie. More can be done to capitalize on the opportunity that outdoor recreation presents, from encouraging more outdoor events and programs, to marketing and amplifying existing recreational attractions, to supporting outdoor recreation entrepreneurship ventures (bike rental/repair shops, tour guides, etc.). These should all be marketed to bring more people to the area to live, work, visit, and play, but without exploiting them or putting unnecessary pressure on Laramie's infrastructure. Manageable, sustainable growth should be the goal.

### Recommendation

**Create an Outdoor Recreation Coalition that works to increase coordination and leverage resources to boost the use and economic impact of outdoor recreational assets.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                       | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Recruit organizations to join the coalition, form a board, and appoint an entity to spearhead it                                                                                   |    |    |    |    |    |
| Conduct a SWOT analysis or a resource inventory of all available outdoor recreation amenities                                                                                      |    |    |    |    |    |
| Amplify messaging to attract additional visitors, residents, and businesses to the region that value outdoor recreation                                                            |    |    |    |    |    |
| Support the prioritization and implementation of projects identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Improve street, park, and community infrastructure in key corridors. |    |    |    |    |    |
| Develop a Trail Etiquette program to help sustainably manage growth by guiding behavior on regional trails to ensure net economic benefit                                          |    |    |    |    |    |

# Infrastructure



Infrastructure can either support or limit economic competitiveness depending on how much focus and planning is performed to map future opportunities and risks. A proactive approach to utility infrastructure improvements requires asset management, ongoing maintenance, and proper planning to understand what impacts are limiting potential or that may cause degradation in the future. Proactive infrastructure investment demonstrates a focus on economic competitiveness and overall quality of place.

## Strategy 10. Increase Broadband-Related Infrastructure Investments



### Opportunity

Make Laramie the state leader in connectivity, prioritizing investment in proactive broadband infrastructure upgrades to help attract and retain people and businesses to the region.

### Recommendation

**Form the Greater Laramie Region Broadband Coalition: A public-private partnership.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                      | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Convene partners to form the Greater Laramie Region Broadband Coalition                                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create a broadband master plan to set goals, evaluate the current system, and map desired infrastructure that accounts for future economic growth |    |    |    |    |    |
| Creatively finance the system, and explore establishing a Broadband Utility                                                                       |    |    |    |    |    |
| Build a user base through market building and education                                                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Build capacity to support current end users and plan for expanded use with projected economic growth                                              |    |    |    |    |    |

## Strategy 11. Prioritize Municipal Infrastructure Improvements to Increase Economic Competitiveness



Today much of Laramie’s infrastructure, from roads to sewer to gas lines, is aging or at capacity, which limits growth and the development of new housing and businesses. As private developers look to develop commercial and residential properties at the edges of the city and beyond, extending the required infrastructure is a huge barrier.

### Opportunity

Identify areas for investment in proactive and managed municipal infrastructure upgrades to help attract and retain people and businesses to the region.

### Recommendation

**Plan for proactive road, stormwater, sanitary sewer, and water utility expansion and improvement in targeted growth areas.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                        | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Review current infrastructure capital plans as well as progress updates to identify potential priorities and partnerships. Define growth areas as well as geographic limits to growth               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Prioritize infrastructure expansion and improvement projects in targeted infrastructure improvement areas                                                                                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Establish joint planning to coordinate timelines and maximize investment efficiencies                                                                                                               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify funding sources for road and stormwater improvements, and in the case of new housing, commercial, or industrial development, determine which entities bear what portion of the cost burden |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create a City-County-State Asset Management Inventory system                                                                                                                                        |    |    |    |    |    |
| Educate the public about ongoing and upcoming infrastructure improvement initiatives                                                                                                                |    |    |    |    |    |

## Strategy 12. Prioritize Infrastructure Planning for Energy Resilience and Carbon Reduction



Competition from natural gas and renewables is lowering the country’s demand for Wyoming coal, which has made it less profitable to mine and threatens the state’s reliance on coal-related tax revenue. As Wyoming and the region look at next-generation sources of energy, Laramie can position itself at the forefront of initiatives like microgrids, solar, and wind farms, taking advantage of available land and resources at the University of Wyoming, community and technical colleges, the city and county, and at private enterprises.

### Opportunity

Increase energy resiliency and reliability by making needed infrastructure improvements, lessening dependence on one type of energy, and proactively preparing for and attracting the future of jobs and industry

### Recommendation

**Improve energy infrastructure and diversify energy portfolio to increase economic competitiveness and develop Laramie as a leader in this area.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                      | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Complete the energy audit at the city level. Support city-wide enterprise resource planning to improve efficiencies and lay the groundwork for enhanced grid and smart technology |    |    |    |    |    |
| Form a Joint Task Force among leaders to communicate and share resources, and determine future of energy                                                                          |    |    |    |    |    |
| Explore opportunities for renewable power distribution to the city and county through Rocky Mountain Power’s wind turbines                                                        |    |    |    |    |    |
| Work with the University of Wyoming on wind and solar energy research and collaborate on sustainability goals                                                                     |    |    |    |    |    |
| Attract green technology companies and those interested in integrating renewables into their energy mix. Market energy diversity to recruit residents and businesses              |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify pilot renewable energy projects                                                                                                                                          |    |    |    |    |    |
| Explore becoming carbon neutral, as well as legislation to encourage renewable energy and increase net metering                                                                   |    |    |    |    |    |

# Housing



The current lack of affordable, quality housing in Laramie has negative economic impacts on the community. The 2015 Housing Study conducted for the City of Laramie noted, “Future population and household growth in Laramie will be driven by new and expanded housing and economic development and public service activities. The most critical housing issues in the City include promoting the development of housing for the local workforce, college students and young professionals, affordable to all salary income levels.”

## Strategy 13. Work to Expand the Quality and Quantity of Housing Options Available



### Opportunity

Increase the volume of construction, as well as enhance the existing quality and diversity of housing stock in strategic locations to contribute to a more livable Laramie.

### Recommendations

To alleviate the negative consequences of the existing housing environment in Laramie the following objectives can be pursued:

- 1. Enhance the role that the city is playing with respect to code development and enforcement and the planning and policy environment related to housing development/redevelopment.**

#### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                        | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Implement recommendations from the code audit. Empower city staff to have latitude in working with developers, and to learn from peer cities                                                        |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify a city/county liaison for developers and property owners. Engage an outside code review officer to assist in mediating inconsistencies                                                     |    |    |    |    |    |
| Launch a “Did You Know” campaign that covers existing regulations to increase understanding, and promotes defined housing demands and opportunities to inspire developers to build more in the city |    |    |    |    |    |
| Advocate for code to enable “missing middle” housing typologies including ADUs to support increased density                                                                                         |    |    |    |    |    |

## 2. Increase the financing options available through public-private partnering opportunities.

### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                                            | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Work with the Cheyenne Housing Authority to evaluate their capacity to expand beyond low income housing and identify opportunities for mixed-use development and expansion of workforce housing options |    |    |    |    |    |
| Seek to partner with financial institutions to capitalize new/ expanding developers                                                                                                                     |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create deed-restricted housing that allows for the preservation of affordability through the use of initial subsidies or other development/ redevelopment cost reductions                               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Develop housing rehabilitation funding programs that can support residents aging in place and making needed home improvements and new market entrants who want to enhance housing quality               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Work with the Wyoming Community Development Authority to offer additional first time homebuyer access as new properties are built in Laramie                                                            |    |    |    |    |    |

## 3. Increase the pipeline of developers and laborers interested in working in Laramie.

### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                                                    | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Recruit developers in partnership with other regional partners                                                                                                                  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Create a building supply warehouse to buy bulk materials for local developers or form a collective purchasing group to reduce the cost of materials                             |    |    |    |    |    |
| Work with educational institutions to increase training – both skills and entrepreneurial – to increase the number of available developers, contracting companies, and laborers |    |    |    |    |    |

#### 4. Identify opportunities for infill development in strategic locations to prove the market.

##### At A Glance

| Action Items                                                                                                                                         | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Identify resources and partners to overcome the risks around land acquisition, funding, permitting and variances, or technical skills                |    |    |    |    |    |
| Identify infill opportunities to increase housing diversity within the core area of the city                                                         |    |    |    |    |    |
| Explore tax incentives, fee waivers, and easing the permitting and approval process to encourage housing by lowering barriers of entry               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Secure land through conventional purchasing, land trusts, trades, or development authorities to incentivize housing growth                           |    |    |    |    |    |
| Invest in infrastructure: improved streets, bike facilities, sidewalks and landscaping                                                               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Explore the development of a Rental Registry and Inspection Program to reduce blighted properties. Develop/expand existing renter-education programs |    |    |    |    |    |
| Consider growth opportunities in north and west Laramie and what type of development should occur to attract investment                              |    |    |    |    |    |

# Implementing the Plan

To ensure the success of the Thrive Laramie 10-Year Community Economic Development Strategic Action Plan, an Implementation Committee will be formed from existing Steering Committee members who will initiate a “recommit” process, affirming their interest in continuing to engage. Implementation Committee members will provide guidance, direction, and accountability as they serve as lead advocates, doers, and fundraisers for the plan.

The Implementation Committee will be supported by a number of working groups and action committees associated with each of the plan’s focus area. Convening partners have been identified to lead each working group. They are charged with recruiting working group participants, inviting community organizations with a stake in a given strategy area to be a part of its implementation.







**Community Economic Development  
Strategic Action Plan - Executive Summary  
January 2020**

