

The North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan



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WYOMING

The North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	6
2. Introduction	10
3. Guiding Principles	16
4. Methodology	28
5. Project Content	32
a. Visioning Sessions	34
b. Alternatives Development	42
c. Alternatives Analysis	48
d. Preferred Alternative	56
e. Implementation	64
6. Conclusion	74

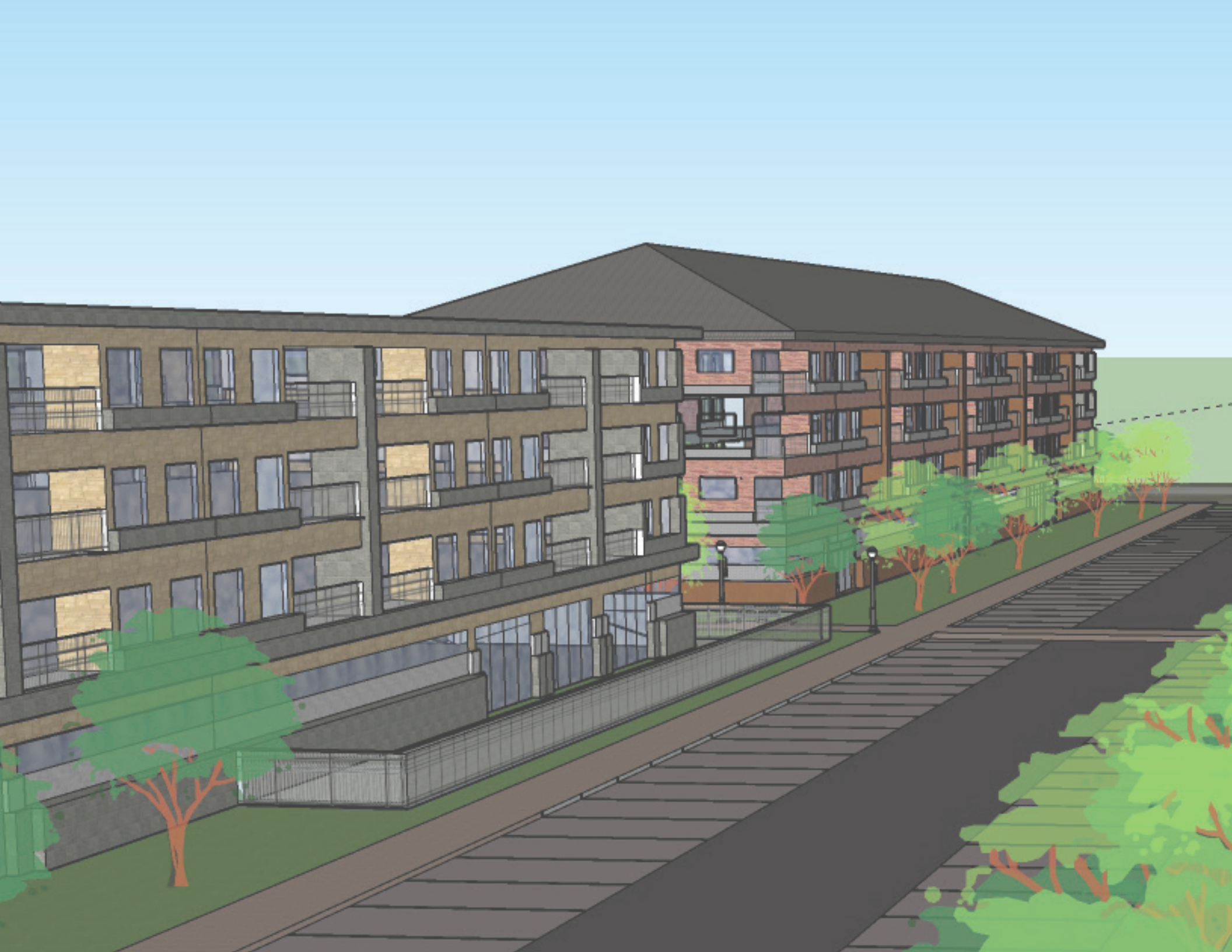


Table of Figures

Figure 1	9	Figure 16	45
Figure 2	11	Figure 17	45
Figure 3	13	Figure 18	46
Figure 4	14	Figure 19	46
Figure 5	29	Figure 20	49
Figure 6	35	Figure 21	50
Figure 7	36	Figure 22	51
Figure 8	37	Figure 23	52
Figure 9	38	Figure 24	53
Figure 10	39	Figure 25	54
Figure 11	40	Figure 26	55
Figure 12	41	Figure 27	58
Figure 13	43	Figure 28	58
Figure 14	44	Figure 29	69
Figure 15	44	Figure 30	69

1. Executive Summary

- » Place Uses within the area you want to develop or multiple uses together.
- » For each use you must have parking.
- » Items such as trails, art locations, etc. are shown on the map.
- » Area to the side of the map is for notes.
- » Think creativity & have fun

Executive Summary

Mark Christensen and Maxwell Gesten
Master of Urban and Regional Planning
Capstone: Spring 2019

The City of Laramie's Planning Division has begun exploring the possibilities of redeveloping a city-owned site adjacent to Labonte Park. The seven parcel "Study Area" spans 3.61 acres and currently accommodates the City's Public Works and Parks and Recreation facilities, as well as the animal shelter. The site has been identified as a prime area for redevelopment due to its close proximity to Downtown Laramie, the University of Wyoming, and 3rd Street, a major commercial and transportation corridor within the city.

The City seeks to create a redevelopment vision that addresses retail tax leakage, creates opportunities for affordable housing, and interacts well with the surrounding area. The Planning Department's goal for this vision is to conceptualize a new and vibrant multi-modal urban district within the city that is inclusive and can accommodate a wide range of users. With these objectives in mind, the purpose of this capstone project is to synthesize case studies, market data, applicable academic journals, and engagement exercises to create a redevelopment plan that reflects the City's vision for the area.

The Capstone Team, comprised of Mark Christensen and Max Gesten, worked both collaboratively and independently to create a redevelopment vision for the Study Area. The Team's work began by conducting background research of the site. A study conducted by Retail Coach, a consultant hired by the city, revealed that the Study Area has significant opportunities

for an array of commercial uses such as general merchandise stores, food service and drinking establishments; health and personal care stores; and hobby stores. Additionally, the Laramie Housing and Action Plan 2030 overviews the existing housing stock in Laramie and identifies housing types and price points needed in the community. The Housing and Action Plan also focuses on the need for affordable housing for the elderly and young professionals alike.

In addition to the background research, the Capstone Team researched ways to interact with the community. After extensive research, the Capstone Team created an engagement exercise influenced by a City of Centennial City Council work session. The exercise involved creating a scaled map of the Study Area and providing participants scaled cutouts with potential uses and their corresponding parking requirements to place on the maps. A presentation providing a summary of the background research was presented to the participants in order for the groups to keep city plans in mind prior to the exercise. This exercise was important because it allowed participants to be creative with their vision for the Study Area, but it also forced them to be rational because of the size limitations of the site and the requirement to address parking. The exercise also allowed the groups to consider building footprint, design, use, and streetscape design. These scaled models were used to facilitate meetings with Planning Commission, City Council, City Staff, and Planning Staff and

the process resulted in a total of seven alternatives that were created by these groups.

The results of the seven alternatives not only produced an array of conceptual ideas for the Study Area, but they also provided ample data that could be arranged and sorted to give a more in depth analysis of the community's vision. Each alternative contained an assortment of information relating to each groups preferred land use, density, setbacks, and design that were each recorded, categorized and eventually ranked against Laramie's Comprehensive Plan, Unified Development Code, Housing Action Plan 2030, and the Retail Coach Study. After reviewing the dataset, it became clear that the seven alternatives could then be boiled down to three preferred alternatives. Although many of the groups acknowledged the importance of incorporating multi-family housing and mixed-use opportunities within the Study Area, the density, land uses, and designs that were chosen by the groups varied and fell largely into three distinct designs; a low-density option, a medium-density option, and a high-density option.

After creating the site maps of the three preferred alternatives, the Capstone team presented these materials and their relation to the Comprehensive Plan, Unified Development Code, and Housing Action Plan to City Council, Planning Commission, and Planning Staff to determine which preferred alternative should ultimately be chosen. Based on the input received from City leadership and general direction from Planning Staff following the meetings, it became clear that a hybrid between the medium and high intensity options was the alternative that garnered the most interest. Comments from members of City Leadership and Planning Staff revealed that they were drawn

to a mixed-use community that consisted of ample housing units, streetscape improvements, and more open space opportunities.

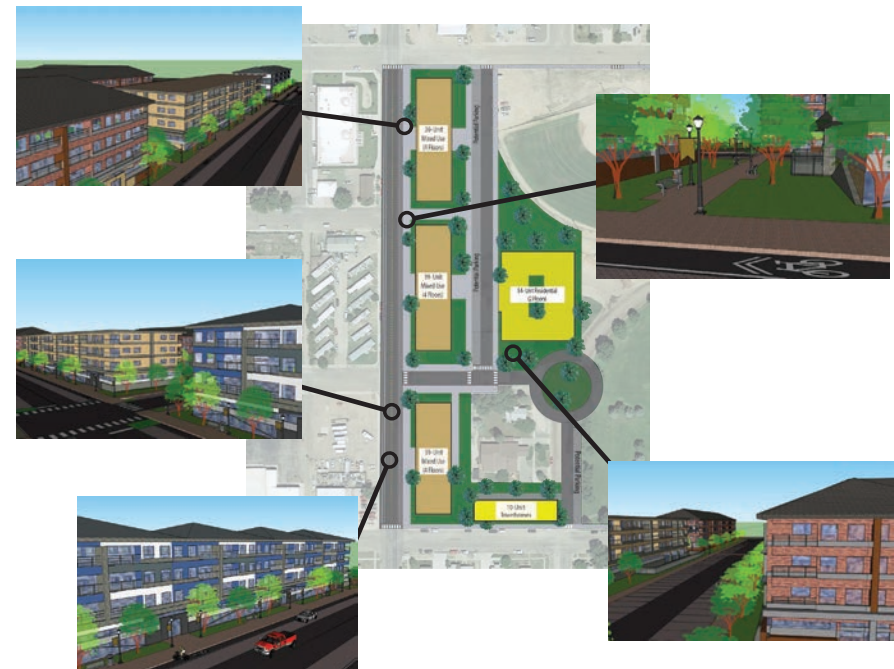
Although the Capstone Team developed a conceptual layout and designed models of the preferred alternative, the unit counts and square footages of the mixed-use and residential buildings in the report are left intentionally vague and are up for interpretation. Rather than stating that the preferred alternative would have exactly 188 units, as the models depict, the idea is to provide a range of units that the preferred alternative could accommodate to give the City more liberty in determining what kinds of buildings or units they would like to develop within the Study Area. Additionally, the Capstone Team identified that the preferred alternative provides a good framework that represents community interests, goals, and objects. However, keeping the models vague will ultimately allow the City to hire a consultant to further investigate the feasibility of the North 4th Street vision. With that being said, the Capstone Team recommends that the City strive towards the conceptual layout, streetscapes, and buildings provided in this preferred alternative.

The final step in our methodology was to create an implementation plan for the North 4th Redevelopment Plan. The implementation section is a significant component of the North 4th Street Redevelopment Project because it gives the client a framework for executing the preferred alternative. This section of the Vision Plan is based on three overarching themes, which includes partnerships, policy changes, and infrastructure improvements. Policies include recommending changes to the Unified Development Code, Comprehensive

Plan, or other general City of Laramie directives. Partnerships include cooperating with various parties in order to properly and responsibly implement the final recommendation. Lastly, infrastructure improvements include enhancing streetscapes, upgrading utilities, and incorporating landscaping, which are all necessary to carry the plan out.

In conclusion, The North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan has the potential to have a significant impact in the City of Laramie. The background research informed the exercise and the visioning sessions staff painted a clear picture of what the City would like to see in the Study Area. The uses employed by the different groups show a desire for fresh and vibrant mixed-use community that is all inclusive and addresses housing concerns within the City. The Capstone Team believes the preferred alternative not only addresses the vision shared by community leadership, but also accomplishes several initiatives set out in adopted planning documents by the City of Laramie and substantiating the goals of the Housing Study 2030 and the Comprehensive Plan. Through our planning process we have noted the redevelopment has the opportunity to provide an array of housing options, address retail tax leakage, and enhance streetscapes and landscaping within the Study Area. The redevelopment plan intends to create an exciting urban district with nearby park amenities, and incite development within a key gateway to the City of Laramie.

Figure 1: Summary Graphic



2. Introduction

Problem Statement

Background | Context

Objectives

Remainder of Report

Work Product

Problem Statement

The City of Laramie is seeking to redevelop approximately 3.61 acres of City-owned property (the “Study Area”) directly adjacent to Labonte Park between Canby Street to the south and Shield Street to the north. The redevelopment of the property stems from the relocation of Public Works facilities and possibly Parks and Recreation facilities to a recently acquired property north of Laramie. The City seeks to create a redevelopment vision for the Study Area that addresses retail tax leakage, creates options for affordable housing, takes advantage of the close proximity to 3rd Street and the Harney Street viaduct, and interacts well with Labonte Park and the surrounding neighborhood, which will ultimately create a new exciting, walkable urban district for the City of Laramie.

Background | Context

The Study Area is approximately 3.6 acres and is divided into seven parcels that are owned and operated by the City of Laramie. This tract is located along 4th Street and lies within the North-Central part of the City, about two-thirds of a mile away from Downtown Laramie. A map of the Study Area can be seen across the page in [Figure 2](#). It is adjacent to LaBonte Park, which offers a variety of amenities including soccer and softball fields, shared use path, a skate park, basketball courts, and community gardens. The Study Area currently contains Laramie’s Solid Waste Division, Fleet Maintenance, Animal Shelter, Street Division, Youth Crisis Center, and Parks and Recreation Shop space. The streetscape is equipped with bike lanes and offers ample space for on-street parking. Surrounding land uses include a mixture of single and multi-family housing, commercial and retail. The Study Area is also



Figure 2: Study Area

located a block away from 3rd Street, which hosts a great deal of the City's commercial and retail space and is a major arterial within the City. The study area is currently zoned B2, shown on the following page in [Figure 3](#), and its future land use designation is Public Institutional, shown on page 13 in [Figure 4](#).

Objectives

The North 4th Redevelopment Vision capstone maintains several objectives. These objectives include both procedural capstone objectives and overall project objectives. The procedural objectives include ensuring the project's success while the overall project objectives relate to the goals of the City of Laramie. The procedural capstone objectives include:

- Narrowing down the vision, which included completing exercises with municipal department heads and staff, City Council, and Planning Commission to three alternatives for the future development of the north 4th Street parcels.
- Determining the feasibility of the three visioning session alternatives of the north 4th Street parcels to current zoning regulations, comprehensive plan goals and policies, objectives of the 2030 Housing Action Plan and available real estate and market absorption information.
- Gaining consensus on the preferred alternative from City Council and Planning Commission based on the three alternatives and how well they relate to city planning objectives.
- Building models and mapping documents to visualize the preferred alternative and its effects on future land use on adjacent properties.
- Developing implementation strategies to achieve the preferred alternative.

These procedural objectives culminate in the project achieving the City of Laramie Planning Department's overall objectives for the project to:

- Create an economically viable redevelopment vision for the north 4th Street Study Area.
- Generate tax revenue that addresses leakage issues to neighboring communities.
- Ensure development within the Study Area is compatible with Labonte Park.
- Address affordable and workforce housing in a cohesive effort
- Create a new, walkable, social urban district that acts as an entrance to the City and the University of Wyoming

View of the Utility Building Looking North



Remainder of Report

In order to properly complete our capstone objectives, we conducted background research to aid our understanding of the project and to identify guidelines for how we are going to accomplish the goals of the project. We drew our research from a variety of sources, including:

- Academic journals relating to urban land reform and redevelopment strategies,
- Relevant City plans that address the goals and opportunities of the Study Area and;
- Case studies of projects that are similar to this project.

The background research is organized into three guiding principles, which include:

- Design for Human Scale
- Business Friendly Development
- Providing Housing for All

After analyzing the background research, we will summarize our methodology for the North 4th Street Vision Plan. This will be followed by a robust discussion of the exercises conducted with Planning Commission, City Council, and the City Staff to obtain a better understanding of the type of development the community envisions for the Study Area. We will then explain how we synthesized the options presented by the groups through the alternatives analysis outlined in the Methodology section and coordinated a plan that best adhered to the land-use and development goals of the community. The process entailed creating various maps, diagrams, and models that outline the preferred redevelopment

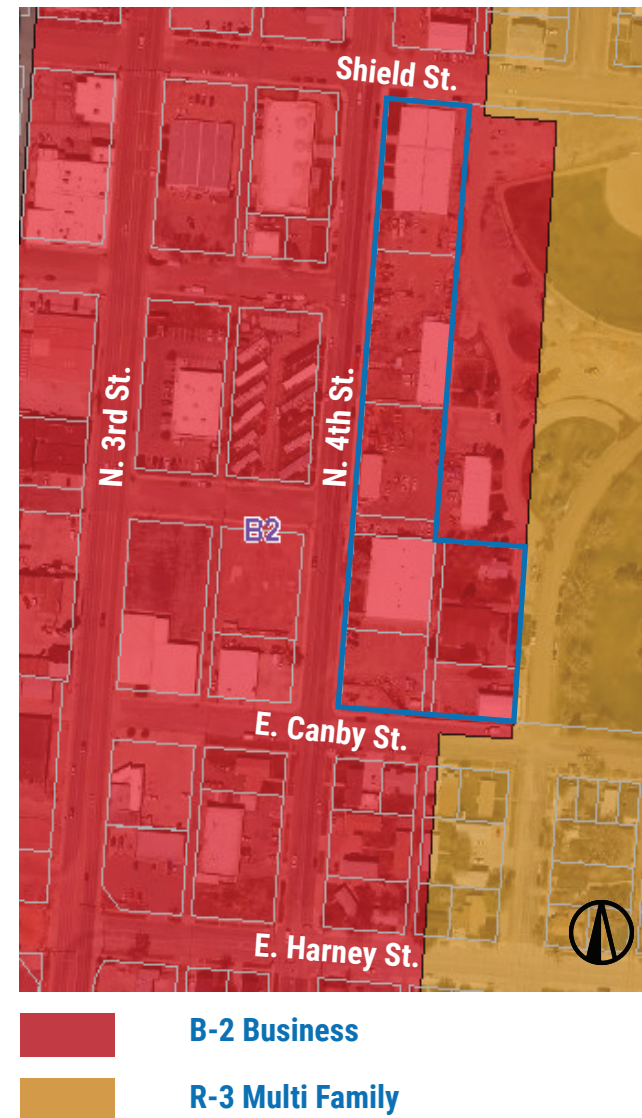


Figure 3: Study Area Zoning

objectives in order to provide visuals to further understand the direction of the redevelopment plan. Finally, we address implementation through recommending policy changes and identifying investors and partnerships to make the proposed redevelopment viable and attainable.

Work Product

This Capstone was completed to fulfill the requirements of the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at the University of Colorado Denver by Mark Christensen and Maxwell Gesten. The client for the project was the City of Laramie Planning Department. The Introduction, Background Research, and Methodology was a joint effort between both students. The Project Content section was again a joint effort between students, however the different sections provided each student the opportunity to create a component that was substantially their own work. The Visioning Session section was a joint effort between both students. The Alternatives Development and Preferred Alternative Section were completed by Maxwell Gesten, while the Alternatives Analysis and Implementation Section were completed by Mark Christensen. Both students worked on the Conclusion as a joint effort.

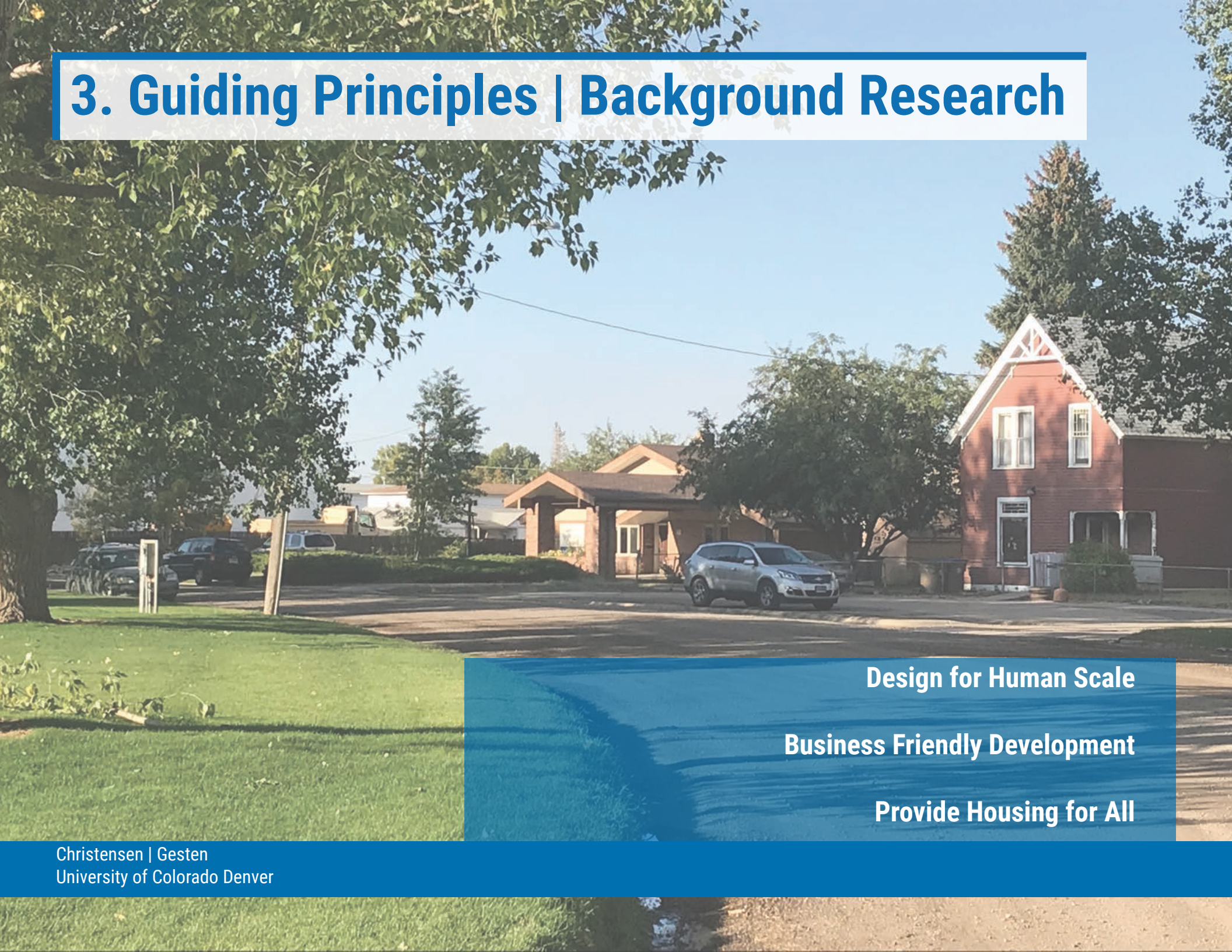


Figure 4: Study Area Future Land Use Design

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3. Guiding Principles | Background Research



Design for Human Scale

Business Friendly Development

Provide Housing for All



Background Research

The robust number of sources related to the North 4th Street Redevelopment Vision provide great direction in crafting our recommendations to the City of Laramie. To organize these guiding principles and steer our discussions with City staff, Planning Commission, and City Council, we have developed the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan guiding principles. These guiding principles include design for human scale, business friendly development, and providing housing for all. All three guiding principles are goals of Planning staff and are clearly evident throughout the background research.

Design for Human Scale



The ultimate success of the North 4th Redevelopment Plan will depend on the relation of its buildings, streetscapes, and amenities to a human scale. Facades that peak pedestrian interest, frontages that are inviting and unique, and public spaces that are activating will culminate in an exciting space that people of all ages will enjoy spending time in. The Gillette Avenue Urban Design Plan and WYDOT 3rd Street Action Plan yield interesting components which we have used to form the basis for our design recommendations.

Gillette Avenue Urban Design Plan (2013)

Gillette, Wyoming is a city of just over 30,000 people located in the northeast portion of the state. The people of Gillette have dubbed the city the “Energy Capital of the Nation” due to its vast quantities of coal, oil, and methane gas. The expansion of this industry has caused Gillette to grow very quickly, as its population grew over 48% from the 2000 census when the population of the city was just only 19,700 people. This rapid expansion and influx in the population have resulted in an opportunity for the city to rehabilitate underutilized streets and thoroughfares in order to enhance the quality of life of the people who live there. One of these such plans is the Gillette Avenue Urban Design Plan, which aims to “create a street and district that pulses with life and creates memories.”



GILLETTE AVENUE URBAN DESIGN PLAN

GILLETTE, WYOMING
MARCH 2013

We decided to study the Gillette Avenue Urban Design Plan because of how similar Gillette and Laramie are to each other in character. Not only do the two cities have around the same size population, but they also have relatively young populations compared to the average age in Wyoming. The average age of the state’s population is over 37, while the average age of Laramie’s population is 26, and the average age of Gillette’s population is under 31. The size and type of

population that lives in these two cities greatly influence local planning efforts in providing infrastructure and spaces that reflect the communities wants and needs. Both cities have expressed their desire to create active and lively spaces that will be economically important as the cities continue to grow in the future. The cities also want to convert underutilized areas into meaningful spaces in order to spur activity and increase the quality of life. Both communities have clearly expressed a desire to focus more on design principles and to create enticing places for pedestrians.

There are many key takeaways from the Gillette Avenue Urban Design Plan that will be considered when we are developing the North 4th Street Redevelopment Vision for Laramie.

- **First**, the Gillette Plan expresses a desire to activate the public realm because it supports new businesses and encourages public and private investment. This is important because, in order to attract quality development in the area, the city must first enhance the streetscape to exhibit to developers that the city is investing in the area and encouraging pedestrian activity.
- **Next**, the Gillette Plan encourages the implementation of design standards for existing and future development to adhere to in order to maintain consistency with the character and scale of the street. Design guidelines are also necessary to maintain architectural styles that help progress the city, but also maintain its authenticity in relation to existing development.
- **Finally**, the Gillette Plan expresses a desire to enhance a pedestrian bridge north of downtown to increase its functionality and better link the downtown core to surrounding areas.

Coincidentally, Laramie recently opened a new viaduct that lies

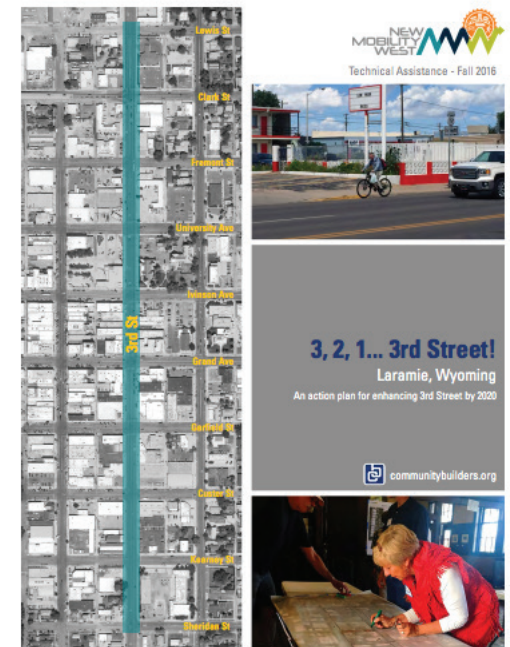
adjacent to the project area and is also intended to enhance connectivity between different parts of the city. It will be useful to utilize Gillette's recommendations so that the project area can serve as an important link between the viaduct and the downtown area.

Laramie's 3rd Street Action Plan was initiated in response to

WYDOT 3rd Street Action Plan

the Wyoming Department of Transportation improvements that were to be made to 3rd Street, a major arterial in the City. Local partners felt it was their duty to reach out to the community to "discuss, plan for, and implement improvements along the corridor." The goal of the improvements to 3rd Street was intended to create a safe and beautiful streetscape that is accommodating

for pedestrians and nearby businesses. The focus on accommodating pedestrians clearly emphasizes human scale development. The Plan is a culmination of goals and ideas from the local community that is focused on enhancing Downtown Laramie in the best way possible. The enhancements that are included within the Plan focus on a variety of issues that would strengthen the area's built environment, while also considering its rich history and design



characteristics. The Plan will focus on aesthetic improvements including facade improvement, public art installations, and creating more green space, while also considering business growth and retention, parking management and increasing way finding. These enhancements were generated from the goals of the community, which include increasing bike and pedestrian activity and safety along the corridor, adding more green space and public art, expanding new and existing businesses, slowing traffic speeds and decreasing automobile accidents, and increasing sales tax revenues.

Although the Plan focuses on 3rd Street, which is a block away from the Study Area and does not directly impact 4th Street, we have identified that the growth and development of this corridor will surely have an effect on nearby streetscapes and land uses. The Department of Transportation improvements on 3rd Street are slated to begin in 2022 and it is important that our redevelopment plan considers these improvements within our own designs because the two streets will surely interact. The Plan also provides us with an initial framework to help guide the initiatives we look to adopt for the Study Area. It consists of valuable community input that may not have been expressed in the Planning Commission and City Council meetings that we conducted, and it gives the public a voice pertaining to how they would like to see their streetscapes develop in the future.

Business Friendly Development



Business friendly development refers to the plan's commitment to creating predictability in the development of North 4th Street, ensuring local businesses can thrive through the use of various incentives, and creating spaces for the modern retail

market. Creating predictability in the development of North 4th Street is two-fold. It refers to creating a predictable plan for the City of Laramie to anticipate what forms, uses, and buildings will make up the North 4th Street parcels while also ensuring the community has a predictable and navigable entitlement process. Additionally, we would like North 4th to be a hub for local businesses and ensure that these business will serve the needs of the residents in the vicinity. Lastly, we would like to ensure the forms and tenants of the building are suitable to thrive in the current and future retail market. Seizing City Assets: Ten Steps to Urban Land Reform, Urban Vacant Land Redevelopment: Challenges and Progress, the Casper Old Yellowstone District case study, Making Zone Districts More Effective, the Turner Tract Plan, Laramie Comprehensive Plan, and the Unified Development Code all reinforce the need for business-friendly development for North 4th Street.

Seizing City Assets: Ten Steps to Urban Land Reform (Academic Journal) and Urban Vacant Land Redevelopment: Challenges and Progress (Academic Journal)

Over the last decade, there has been a vast improvement regarding the condition of cities across the country as they have become far more attractive places to live in. The conversation about cities today is focused more on new markets, community capitalism, and the creation of healthy neighborhoods. This greatly contrasts from previous discussions regarding cities, which were much bleaker and related more to their problems and failures (Brophy and Vey, 2002). For the first time in a while, vacant, abandoned, and underutilized properties have become more of an asset and less of a liability to newly thriving municipalities. However,

this does not mean that vacant, abandoned, and underutilized parcels do not pose challenges to local governments. Unless local real estate markets are robust, it's often difficult for property to be redeveloped in cities due to an array of factors. A few of these factors include the parcel being improperly zoned, land that is owned by numerous parties, or simply a general lack of planning and coordination between government departments and developers (Brophy and Vey, 2002). All of these factors discourage private development and it is up to the local government to respond to these issues in order to make redevelopment feasible and encourage revitalization in urban areas.

Addressing and understanding why an area consists of vacant and under-performing urban parcels of land is important to understanding the area's revitalization barriers (Brophy and Vey, 2002). There is a strong link between why land is vacant, and what prevents it from being redeveloped (Goldstein, Jensen, Reiskin, 2001). There are numerous factors that often correlate with the vacancy or abandonment of a property, and it is often tied to financing, government regulations, or physical barriers. Identifying the source of these issues can often lead to solutions due to the amount of existing government and non-government groups whose best interests lie in redeveloping underutilized properties. Many cities have identified that under-performing parcels have become a big issue, and they are aggressively trying to find ways to solve it (Goldstein, Jensen, Reiskin, 2001).

Redeveloping under-performing parcels of land does not fit within a one size fits all model. There are numerous steps that city governments and landowners must take in order to make redevelopment projects feasible. Working with local governments to identify already implemented planning

initiatives helps the developer realize the assets and goals of the immediate area and expedite the review process (Goldstein, Jensen, Reiskin, 2001; Brophy and Vey, 2002). Meeting with neighborhood organizations to understand mutual goals and gain valuable market information is another important key to molding a successful redevelopment project. Researching finance mechanisms that are pertinent to the

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- Goldstein, Jensen, Reiskin (2001)

hand, developers must understand the planning initiatives that exist in areas they are looking to redevelop to conform with the local community's goals. Developing partnerships to solve financial, governmental, and physical barriers is the key to creating spaces that benefit all parties and to transform a concept into a reality. This illustrates fostering predictability within the development community. Once city officials and developers are on the same page, have a wide array of tools to use, and share a cohesive vision, it is possible for under-utilized

project such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), tax incentive programs, and bonds help offset redevelopment costs, which are often much higher than suburban greenfield projects. Being conscious of natural and historic landmarks, while also being sensitive to gentrification and relocation is another factor that must be considered because redevelopment projects should enhance the area's they are located in. It's important that city leaders work with neighborhoods, developers, and stakeholders to redevelop responsibly and create mechanisms that do not drive out the current population. This includes creating affordable housing, tax deferment programs, and generating fewer costs on the surrounding community for redevelopment projects (Brophy and Vey, 2002).

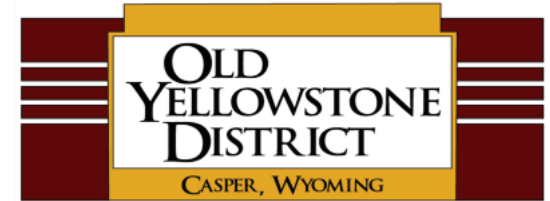
In conclusion, there are many steps that must be taken to redevelop an under-performing parcel. Steps must be taken to identify why the parcel is under-performing and work with an array of groups to create a project that benefits both the developer and the surrounding community. It is important that city officials work together with developers on these projects. Municipalities need to understand that redevelopment projects enhance blighted areas, but they are not necessarily feasible without some sort of government intervention. On the other

The redevelopment plan calls for a walkable, mixed-use district with an urban feel. The plan targets local restaurants and local artists to create a new, identifiable area within the City.
- Old Yellowstone District
Casper, Wyoming

properties to become redeveloped efficiently and predictably. Casper, Wyoming is the second largest city in the State of

Old Yellowstone District Casper, Wyoming

Wyoming at 59,171 residents (American Community Survey, 2017). In 2007 the City of Casper adopted a redevelopment plan for the Old Yellowstone District, a historic retail area adjacent to downtown that had fallen into disrepair (Casper Urban Renewal Authority, 2010). The district is approximately 130 acres with development expected to take place in three different phases (City of Casper, 2007). The redevelopment plan calls for a walkable, mixed-use district with an urban feel. The plan targets local restaurants and local artists to create a new, identifiable area within the City. The redevelopment plan is nearing the end of phase 1 and has already brought several new businesses and improvements to the area (Conner, 2017).



Although the redevelopment of the old Yellowstone District in Casper is significantly larger than the North 4th Street parcels, the Planning effort for the Old Yellowstone District offers several lessons that we can apply to the redevelopment plan. The most impactful piece of information contained in this case study is the extensive list of funding resources available to make the redevelopment feasible. The marketing document for the Old Yellowstone district lists several partnerships and funding mechanisms being used to make the project feasible, including New Market Tax Credits, the Economic Development Assistance Program, and Wyoming Business Council Program

Partnerships (Casper Urban Renewal Authority, 2010). These partnerships, all available nationally or within the State of Wyoming, can help us identify financing options for implementing the North 4th Street Vision implementation steps at the end of our study. Using resources such as these fosters relationships between the development community and the municipality and makes redevelopment projects much more feasible. Secondly, the plan resulted in the creation of a form-based zoning district. Development in the Old Yellowstone District is regulated via a form-based code with building types, street standards, and design standards mandated by a regulating plan, creating more pedestrian scaled development (Casper Urban Renewal Authority, 2010).

The redevelopment of the North 4th parcels may lend itself to the creation of a form-based code or overlay zone that may be applied in other areas of Laramie if found to be successful. Often times, form-based codes result in by-right development leading to fewer projects going to city council and, therefore, creating a more predictable development process. Lastly is the simple concept of rooftops before retail (Casper Urban Renewal Authority, 2010). This phrase pertains to the need to develop residential units before retail is developed. This ensures there is a suitable population to support retail uses. In recommending phasing of our plan, we will consider whether there is adequate residential density to support retail uses. In addition to these three components, we can refer to the maps created in the document, the visual representations of the redevelopment, and other components to create an attractive and easy to understand redevelopment plan. Although much larger, we can condense many lessons from the Old Yellowstone District to make them applicable to the North 4th Redevelopment Plan.

Making Zoning Districts More Effective

“Making Zoning Districts More Effective,” by Wolfgang G. Roeseler and Bruce W. McClendon from the Journal of the American Planning Association argues for tying local zoning ordinances more closely to comprehensive planning efforts and other community planning endeavors. The article is highly relevant to the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan as our discussions with City of Laramie staff have indicated that zoning regulations may need updating depending on what recommendations we may make. The article states that in order to make planning efforts more influential in the public realm, the zoning ordinance must use land use plans as the basis for the regulations (Roeseler, McClendon, 2007). In order to do this, Roeseler and McClendon argue for zoning districts to closely emulate future land use designation in planning documents, so they can be understood. For example, they recommend naming zoning districts Neighborhood Business rather than B1, B2, or B3. This designation is followed by a description and general location type to users of the code to understand what uses are permitted and where they generally take place. (Roeseler, McClendon, 2007). Additionally, the authors recommend updating zoning ordinances to reduce the number of districts, modernize the list of permitted uses, and to use simple indicative terms (Roeseler, McClendon, 2007).

In order to make planning efforts more influential in the public realm, the zoning ordinance must use land use plans as the basis for the regulations.

- Roeseler, McClendon (2007)

“Making Zoning Districts More Effective,” will be highly influential for the final stages of the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan. As mentioned before, City staff suggested that the planning around Study Area will likely result in a need for rezoning the area. Preliminarily, we felt this may constitute creating a new zoning district. However, the article advocates for condensing zoning districts to make them applicable to more locations. After looking at this, it may be necessary to recommend amending the Downtown Commercial zone to allow it to be used in other locations. The Downtown Commercial zone is not necessarily limited to use downtown, rather it allows for urban scale development and could be mapped in various locations. Our planning effort could influence the new standards of an urban zoning district that may be applied to other places in the City of Laramie, much like the article by Roeseler and McClendon suggests. Additionally, tying zoning districts to planning efforts allows the development community to understand the community vision and propose projects more in line with planning efforts.

Turner Tract Plan (2013)

The Turner Tract Plan, adopted by Laramie City Council in 2013, lays a framework for the future development of a large piece of vacant property located on the east side of Laramie. The 2013 plan served as an update to the original 2001 Turner Tract Plan. The Turner Tract planning area was approximately 442 acres and was made up of largely



vacant property owned by various stakeholders. The City of Laramie notable owned approximately 274 acres of the Turner Tract prior to the planning effort. As part of the implementation of the 2001 Turner Tract Plan, the City of Laramie sold 54 acres of property to the Albany County School district for the construction of a new high school and elementary school. As part of this transaction, the City of Laramie paid for infrastructure improvements to make the development of the schools more feasible. The Turner Tract Plan foresaw the development of the area as a largely mixed-use area that would be a focal point of development for the City over the next several years. The mix of uses was to create a live-work environment developed at a human scale that would maintain civic anchors that connected with the rest of the community. The options presented in the plan overview several different land use layouts that depend on varying scales of mixed-use development, meaning mixed-use with commercial dependence, mixed-use with office dependence, and mixed-use with residential dependence. The plan ultimately concludes with the residential option being the preferred alternative and several policies for development within the Turner Tract to realize this vision.

Although the Turner Tract does not encompass the North 4th Street parcels, it provides a framework for which to develop our plan. Planning staff for the City of Laramie recommended looking at the Turner Tract Plan to illustrate the type of document they would like to see our group create. The plan shows how different alternatives do not necessarily constitute different site layouts, rather, how a different mix of uses can create alternatives in developing an alternatives analysis. Furthermore, the plan embodies the mixed-use nature we are trying to achieve on the North 4th Street properties. Lastly, it

is important to note that the City owned a significant amount of property in the Turner Tract. We can look into how the City transferred ownership to achieve desired results, which we will do for the North 4th Street project. We will refer to the Turner Tract Plan as we create alternatives for the redevelopment project and the layout of the final document. Creating options for mixing of uses will allow the development community to deliver what they foresee the market demanding.

Laramie Comprehensive Plan (2003)

The Laramie Comprehensive Plan is the blueprint for growth within the City and its one-mile planning area. The document acts as Laramie's framework for growth and development for the foreseeable future. The plan that was adopted by the City Council in May 2003 and amended in 2015 in order to adapt to changes within the community. It embodies the community's goals for how it will continue to develop in order to accommodate further expansion while continuing to retain the City's unique charm and character.

The Study Area is zoned for Business (B2) and is located off of 4th Street, which is considered to be a minor arterial within the City. The Study Area's primary land uses are designated for public institutions, although its zoning allows for neighborhood business and general commercial opportunities. According to the Comprehensive Plan, a land use change from public institution to urban commercial would be highly recommended. There are currently multiple economic development goals that are stated in the Plan that could be applied to this property, which includes improving the image of the community. Although the land uses within the Study Area primarily consist of municipal entities such as Laramie's Solid Waste Division

**The area between 1st Street to 4th Street
"could offer a large-scale, mixed residential/
non-residential use redevelopment project,
particularly if the Clark Street overpass were
to be relocated to Harney Street."
-Laramie Comprehensive Plan 3-28**

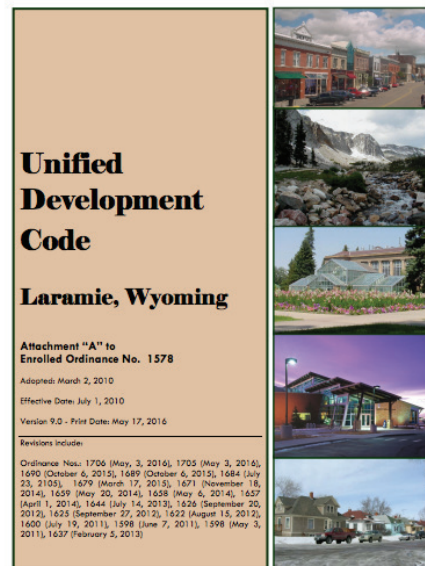
and Street Division, its close proximity to major arterials, parks, neighborhoods and the downtown area makes it an attractive opportunity to redevelop its largely underutilized land uses.

The Comprehensive Plan outlines that the goals for 4th Street include embracing more of an urban character with various mixed-use opportunities. Adding infill development in the Study Area would be in line with Laramie's goal to concentrate future growth within underutilized parcels of the City. The Plan also states that the area between 1st Street to 4th Street, "could offer a large-scale, mixed residential/non-residential use redevelopment project, particularly if the Clark Street overpass were to be relocated to Harney Street." In July 2018, the Harney Street Viaduct opened, replacing the Clark Street overpass and creating more development opportunities in the Study Area due to increased traffic frequency. The Study Area's proximity to the Viaduct and its location one block over from 3rd Street, a major arterial within the City, makes the Study Area prime for future growth and development. It gives Laramie an opportunity to fulfill its goals stated within the Comprehensive Plan to concentrate future, mixed-use development in highly frequented areas within the urban core of the City.

The Comprehensive Plan lends itself to human scale design, business friendly development, and housing for all. Although it provides goals and strategies that relate to all three of our guiding principles, we felt it accomplishes several economic development goals of the Comprehensive Plan and which led it being more related the principle of business friendly development.

Unified Development Code

The Unified Development Code serves as the City of Laramie's zoning regulations, subdivision standards, and development code. Because the document is so expansive and pertains to several different areas of the development process this section will overview current zoning regulations as they pertain to the North 4th Street properties. The current zoning for the North 4th Parcels is B2, which serves as the general business district for the City of Laramie. In general, this district accommodates retail and office uses that serve the surrounding neighborhood and community. The B2 district permits a variety of uses and may be suitable for some desired forms of development that may occur on the North 4th Street parcels, yet notably only allows residential uses through a conditional use process. Furthermore, the district does not permit townhouse dwelling units, which were expressed by city staff as a desired housing type for the area. The conditional



use process will create an administrative burden to developers hoping to develop in the North 4th Street area.

In addition to use standards, other notable sections of the Unified Development Code that are applicable to the North 4th Street Redevelopment project include dimensional standards, design standards, and parking regulations. Both the B2 and DC zoning districts have shallow setbacks promoting walkability. The B2 district permits greater heights in general than the DC district as DC district heights are based on existing heights of surrounding buildings. The design standards yield the possibility for the district to create its own design standards to produce a unique, identifiable, urban district. Lastly, the creation of the district may enable the use of shared parking found in Chapter 15.14.

Providing Housing for All



Housing options and opportunities are a focal point of the redevelopment of North 4th Street. The guiding principle of providing housing options for all not only stems from the Housing Study and Action Plan 2030, but also from a staff desire to provide more housing options in Laramie for residents of all income levels. The Housing Study and Action Plan 2030 are the primary sources of information for this guiding principle and are discussed in more depth below. Housing Study and Action Plan 2030 (2015) (City Plan) The Laramie Housing Study and Action Plan 2030 overviews the existing housing stock in Laramie, identifies housing types and price points needed in the community, and provides several action steps to ensure the community is meeting its housing demand. The plan was drafted by Hanna: Keelan Associates of Lincoln Nebraska with the help of city staff and

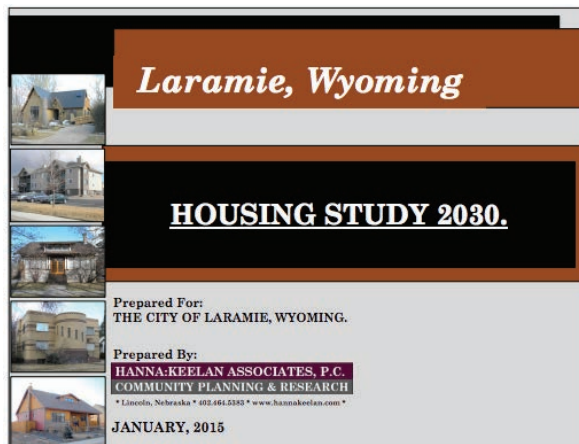
a housing advisory committee. The plan, which was adopted in January of 2015, is largely based on 2014 census data and includes projections and citizen surveys with several different focus groups. The study provides housing demand estimates for the next 15-year time period, which is projected to be 4,106 units, with 1,762 owner-occupied units and 2,344 rental units. The projected population at this time is expected to be 37,923. Housing types needed within the housing demand study include senior and elderly housing and workforce housing, specifically calling out the need for two-bedroom units between the \$625 and \$850 price range. In addition to this, the

need for single room occupancy and multi-family development is discussed as a need for students and young professionals. The greatest housing need is for those making 81%+ area median income

(AMI), though there is still a substantial housing demand for those making below 80% AMI. Potential barriers to affordable housing development cited include high costs of vacant lots and Unified Development Code requirements.

The Housing Study and Action Plan 2030 is pertinent to our capstone project as many Council members, Commission members, and City staff discussed the need for affordable housing within the community. The housing study provides an

in-depth analysis of what kinds of units are needed, the price points at which they are needed, and the potential barriers to the development of affordable housing. In developing our recommended site layout, unit type, and implementation steps, it will be important to refer back to the Housing Study and Action Plan 2030 to ensure housing needs, both affordable and market rate, are addressed within our redevelopment plan.



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4. Methodology



Visioning Sessions

Alternatives Development

Alternatives Analysis

Preferred Alternative

Gathering Consensus

Implementation

Visioning Sessions

The first step in our methodology was completed prior to the start of the semester to ensure we would be able to address all tasks requested by the City of Laramie Planning Department. In November and early January, we volunteered our time to facilitate visioning sessions with the City of Laramie staff, City Council, and Planning Commission. The process involved creating an extensive list of potential uses and forms in which these uses may be built, scaling the forms and uses to a localized map of the area, and calculating the necessary parking for each use. An example of the scaled uses can be seen across the page in [Figure 5](#). The colors denote the use category of each piece while the number of parking spaces is noted below the use. We used these scale models to facilitate meetings with Planning Commission, City Council, and City Staff. With the direction of Planning Staff, we assigned three members to a board and allowed them to place the scaled uses on the map of the North 4th Street properties to build their desired district. The process resulted in seven alternatives created by the groups, which we will use to create three preferred alternatives in the following steps. The City Staff visioning session was held November 9, 2018, the City Council visioning session was held November 27, 2018, and the Planning Commission visioning session was held January 14, 2019.

Alternatives Development

The second step in our methodology was narrowing the vision session into three preferred alternatives. This step involved taking the seven vision session maps and coding them in order to produce the preferred alternatives. Synthesizing

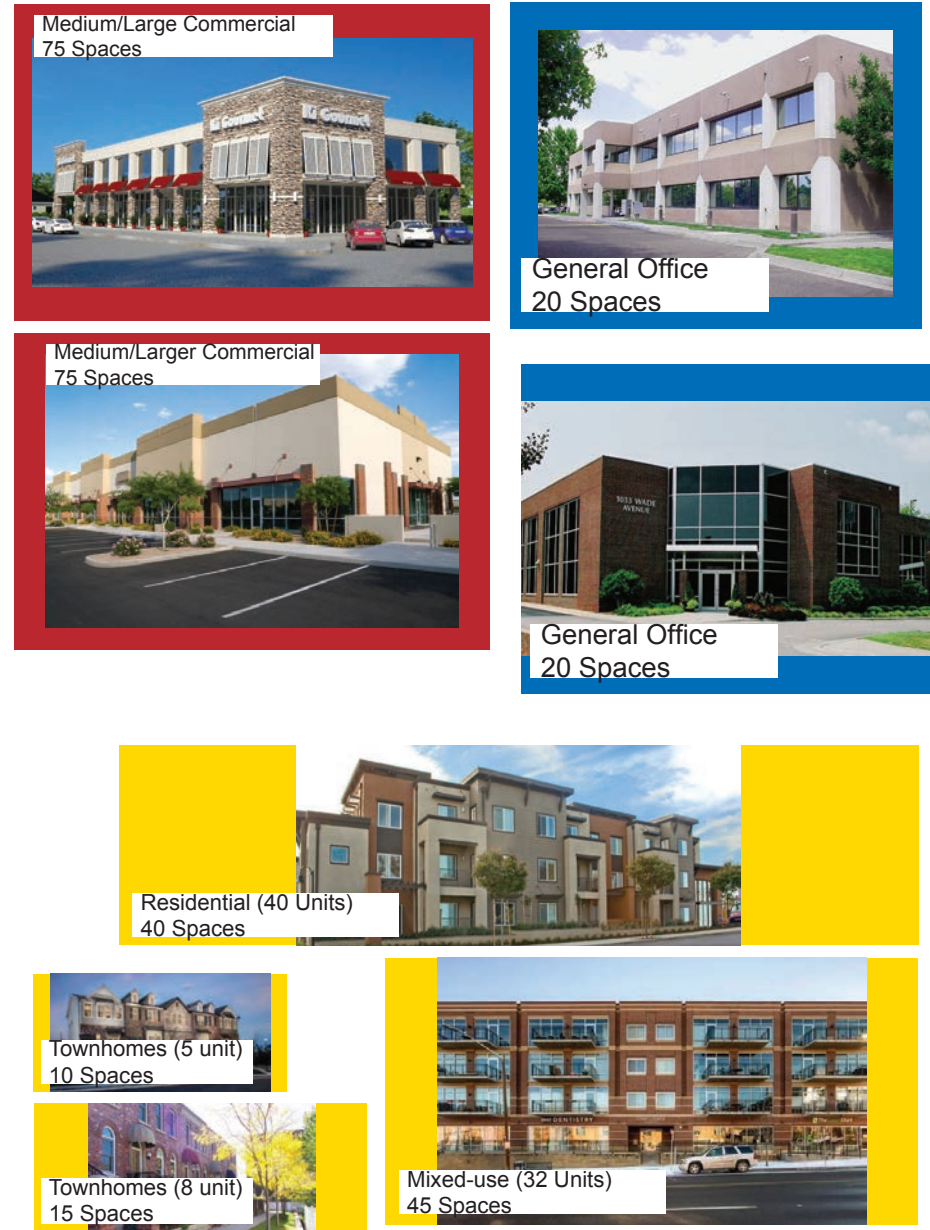


Figure 5: Example of pieces used in the Visioning Sessions

the visioning sessions required coding both buildings and land uses. After coding the maps, we placed the parcels in an excel spreadsheet to determine the highest use count for each parcel, which became the preferred alternative for use. In coding the buildings, we assessed the general layout and building heights presented by each visioning group. We then put all the results into an excel spreadsheet to determine the most commonly used building type for each parcel. The building types that were chosen were similar across the seven visioning groups. Because this was the case, we focused on different intensities to determine how different unit counts, square footage, and buildings would constitute different alternatives. We then used the results to create alternative scenario maps on Adobe Illustrator, which provide an integral component in determining the compatibility stage of our methodology.

Alternatives Analysis

After narrowing down the three preferred alternatives, we analyzed and compared the recommendations with the Comprehensive Plan, the Housing Action Plan, the Unified Development Code, real estate information, and the Retail Coach Study to determine how well each alternative related to planning objectives in the City of Laramie. First, we analyzed the market study that the consulting firm, Retail Coach, conducted for the City. Retail Coach is a company that identifies new retail opportunities based on an intensive market analysis for an area and then recruits those retailers to the community. Comparing our work with Retail Coach's study helped us understand how the company's recommendations aligned with the visioning sessions and if they reflect what the community would like to see develop within the Study Area. In

addition to this, we reached out to local real estate brokers to retain a better understanding of market statistics surrounding the Study Area. This included gathering data regarding the area's year-to-year absorption rates, vacancy rates, and cap rates, and gathering sale and rent cost information.

In addition to comparing the three alternatives to available market information, we compared the alternatives to current land use and zoning regulations. Land use and zoning layers were acquired from City of Laramie Planning Staff to determine the existing conditions of the surrounding parcels. The alternatives received a score based on how well they interacted with the current zoning regulations. We also scored the three alternatives based on how well they accomplished goals of the Housing Action Plan 2030 and Comprehensive Plan. The alternatives were scored on their relation to the Comprehensive Plan by the number of goals and policies they helped substantiate and to the Housing Action Plan based on the gross number of units they provided.

Gathering Consensus

After developing and utilizing the alternatives development and analysis outlined above, the Study Team met with Planning Commission and City Council to receive final input and critiques relating to the preferred alternative. We presented the three alternatives and their relation to City planning goals to both City Council and Planning Commission to determine which should be the preferred alternative. After our presentation, we asked the following questions:

- Which of the three options provides the most exciting opportunity for Laramie? Why?

- Which of the three options is the most compatible with the area? Why?
- Which of the options is the least compatible with the area? Why?
- Are there any other considerations for the area you would like us to look in to? Please explain.

The feedback provided by Planning Commission and City Council allowed us to enter our final stages of building a final model of the preferred alternative and an implementation plan. Although the final presentations to City Council and Planning Commission aided our development of the preferred alternative, we also used input from staff and the alternatives analysis to inform our final recommendation.

Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative was formed through our final discussions with City Council and Planning Commission and the alternatives analysis of each different density option. We took the input from City leadership, related this with general direction from Planning staff at the beginning of the semester, and assessed each alternative through the matrix developed for the alternatives analysis. With these considerations, we created a final site plan on Adobe Illustrator which informed the development of our 3D rendering of the preferred alternative. Through the rendering process we considered the materials used in visioning process and our guiding principles of human scale development and providing housing for all. In addition to building types and overall site layout, we considered streetscape improvements and public art to make the district a truly identifiable area within the City.

Implementation

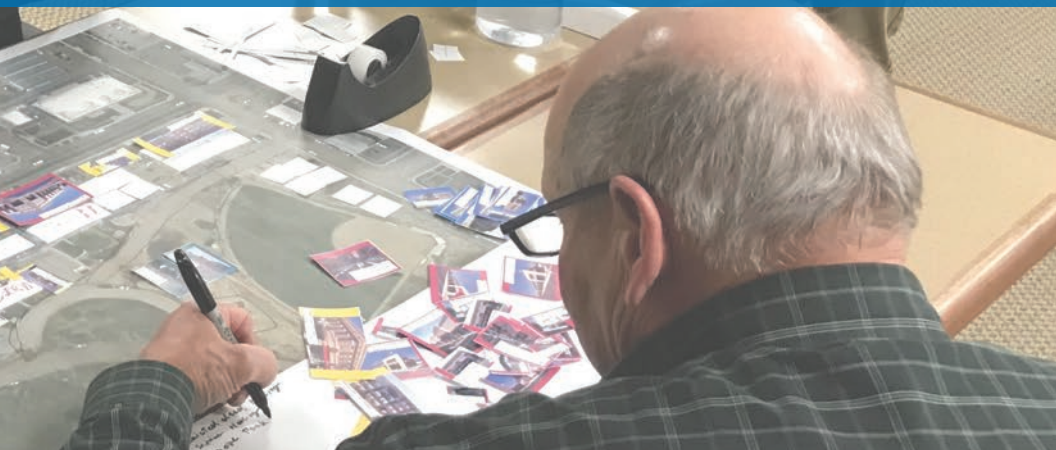
The final step in our methodology was to create an implementation plan for the North 4th Redevelopment Plan. The implementation plan includes recommendations for policy changes, investments, and partnerships to ensure the plan is carried out. Each implementation step acknowledges which guiding principle the implementation step helps achieve. The implementation plan takes the form of a matrix and overviews each implementation action based on the department responsible, the cost, the time frame, and the ease. Policies include recommending changes to the Unified Development Code, Comprehensive Plan, or other general City of Laramie directives. Partnerships include those that will need to be made in order to properly and responsibly implement the final recommendation. Lastly, the implementation matrix focuses on infrastructure improvements necessary to carry the plan out. These include streetscape improvements, park renovations, and other activities that will make the project more feasible. The implementation plan also considers future studies we recommend undertaking for feasibility purposes.

The implementation plan includes a short synopsis of how the redevelopment may affect future land use in the surrounding area. This features a GIS analysis of the total value of the parcel divided by the land value of the parcel. Properties that have a higher ratio of total value to land value are deemed to be higher performing while those that are lower are seen as prime for development. This short discussion will include recommendations for future land use in the area.

5. Project Content



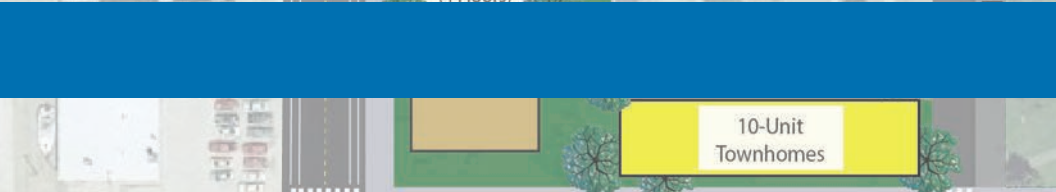
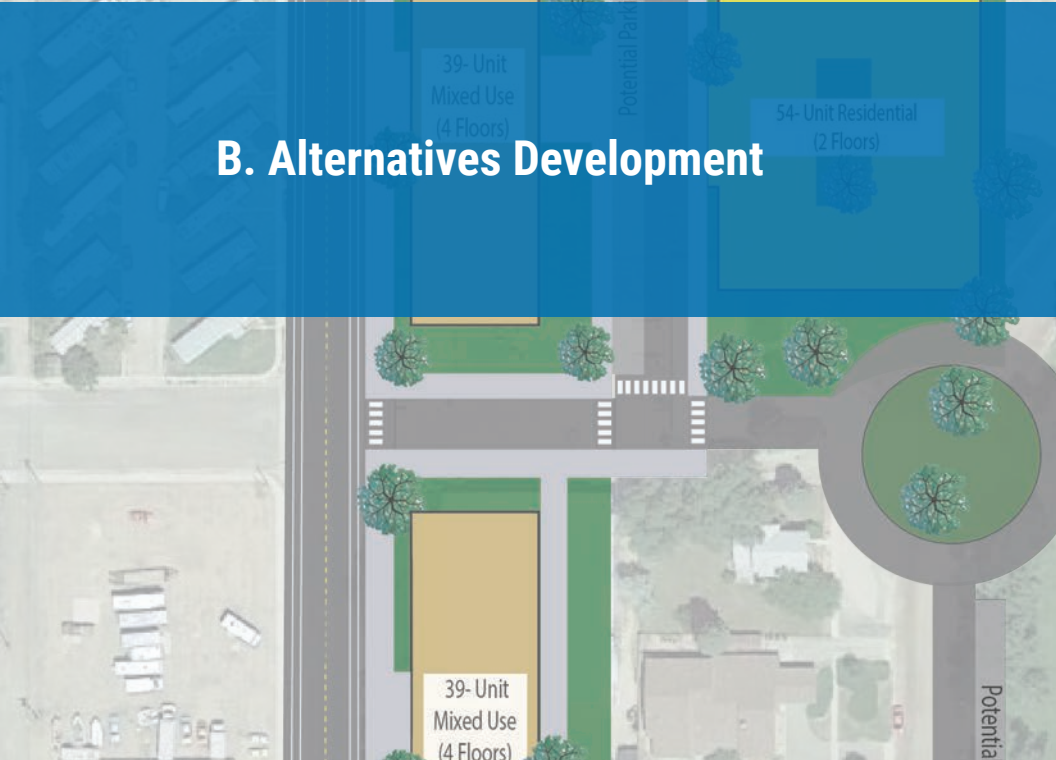
A. Visioning Sessions



Christensen | Gesten
University of Colorado Denver



B. Alternatives Development



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C. Alternatives Analysis

D. Preferred Alternative

E. Implementation

A. Visioning Sessions



Visioning Sessions

The Visioning Sessions were a critical component of the project as the recommendations provided below were drawn from the work that we did with City Council, Planning Commission, and City Staff. The Visioning Sessions allowed us to work with different entities within the City of Laramie in order to understand what the current role of the Study Area is and the potential that it has moving forward. At these sessions, community leadership was able to share what they imagined the Study Area evolving into and try to figure out how it could influence the surrounding area in the future.



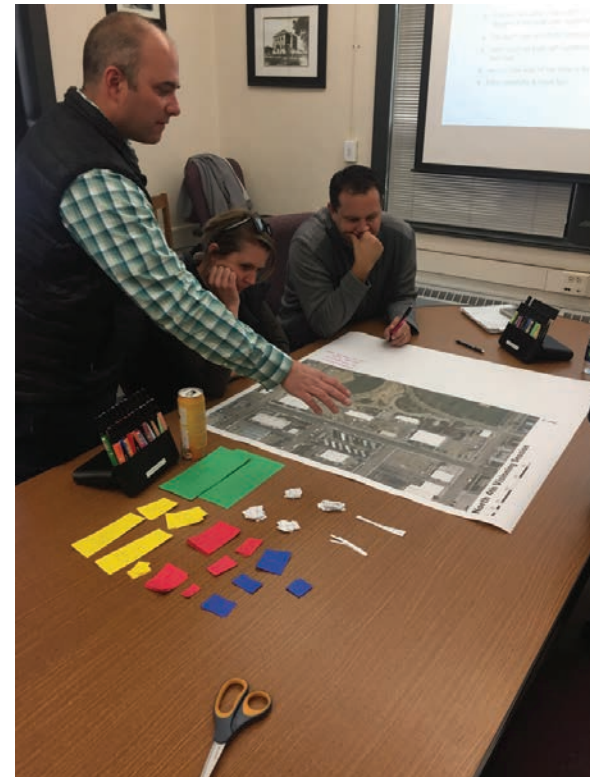
*Figure 6:
Visioning Session
Feezer, Reese, and Brown*



*Figure 7:
Visioning Session
Teini and Cox*



To reiterate the methodology section, the visioning process involved creating an extensive list of potential uses and forms in which these uses may be built, scaling the forms and uses to a localized map of the area, and calculating the necessary parking for each use. We used these scaled models to facilitate meetings with Planning Commission, City Council, and City Staff. With the direction of Planning Staff, three members were assigned to a board to place scaled models of potential buildings in the study area. The exercise that we generated was largely influenced by a visioning session held at the City of Centennial for their Centennial Center Park Master Plan. However, we wanted to cater this exercise to the City



of Laramie to better reflect the city's historic development practices and built form.

In order to determine a redevelopment plan for the City to adopt, we first had to learn what uses were desired by different facets of the community. To do this, we held many discussions with numerous parties, including the Planning staff, a city-hired retail consultant, and other City staff generate proposed uses that could be feasibly developed within the Study Area. We also learned through various conversations with our client what uses have been suggested in the past by the local community to offer more diversity that could be incorporated within the



*Figure 8:
Visioning Session
Weaver, Shuster, and Gabriel*



*Figure 9:
Visioning Session
McKinney, Paulekas, and Shumway*



visioning exercise. We then created a map of the study area so that the different groups could place the use pieces where they saw fit. The groups were given a lot of flexibility designing the maps and were able to place uses anywhere on the Study Area, even in places that are currently occupied by buildings or park amenities. They were also allowed to add streetscapes that do not currently exist, draw in street improvements and amenities, and provide feedback for any uses that we may have missed. Throughout this visioning exercise, we did not just want to only focus on building uses that could be developed in the



A group of people are gathered around a large conference table in a meeting room. A man in a dark suit and light blue shirt is seated on the left, leaning forward and pointing at a large map or plan spread out on the table. He has a beard and is looking intently at the map. To his right, a woman with blonde hair tied back is also looking at the map. Further right, an older man with glasses and a dark jacket is pointing at a specific area on the map. The map itself appears to be a site plan or a map of a development, with various colored areas and lines. On the table, there is a microphone on a stand, a can of soda, a smartphone, and some papers. The room has large windows with vertical blinds in the background.

[illegible]

*Figure 11:
Visioning Session
Stoner, Harrington, and Hanson*



The visioning sessions overwhelmingly depicted the vision for the Study Area to become a new mixed-use district within the City of Laramie. Participants had the ability to choose stand-alone commercial, residential, or office uses, however nearly all groups used buildings with residential uses over retail and office space. Additionally all groups had the opportunity to extend the park to North 4th Street and none utilized this option. The Remaining figures in this section ([Figure 6](#) through [Figure 12](#)) show the different visioning session maps from each group and the members who completed it.



Figure 12:
Visioning Session
Homer, Polk, and McGrath



B. Alternatives Development



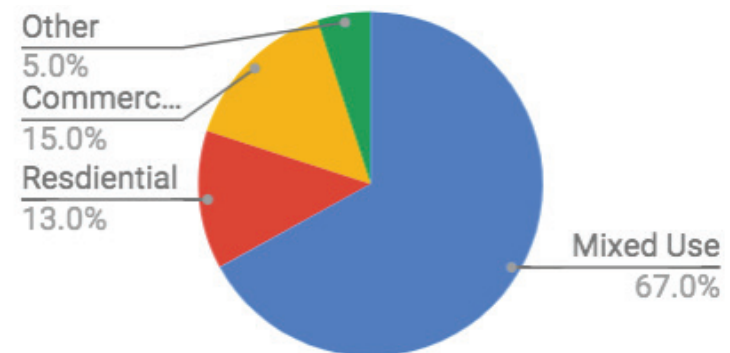
Alternatives Analysis

After the groups completed the seven maps, we considered different ways that the maps could best organize and read the data that was provided by our various groups. We acknowledged that each map was unique in their own way, but there were many components of the visioning maps that overlapped and were similar. After careful consideration, we determined the best way to move forward was to synthesize the data from the seven maps and narrow them down into three alternatives that could be presented to our client, Planning Staff, Planning Commission, and City Council in public meetings. This method was devised to allow for the presentation of three distinct concepts that were generated from the maps so that the groups could carefully analyze their preferred alternative and not have to consider the nuances of the seven original alternatives. The final presentation of the three alternatives allowed us to distill the three options into a preferred alternative that we would further pursue within the Implementation Plan.

It was decided that the best way to synthesize the data and narrow down the seven map alternatives generated by the groups into the three alternatives was to create a matrix where we could input and analyze the data that was stored within the group's maps. Because each use that was placed on the maps was scaled to size and consisted of varying densities and designs, there was sufficient data to record that would help guide the team in generating the three options. The analysis started by going through each of the seven maps created by the groups and noting the specific uses that each group used in the exercise. This included the total square footage of all uses, the square footage used per use, and the

preferred design and density of each use. We also analyzed the general area where groups decided to place each use on their maps in order to see if there were any patterns or general consensus on where certain uses should be placed. In addition to considering uses and building form, each streetscape and landscape amenity that was either drawn on each map or described in their notes was also noted in the matrix.

Figure 13: Examples of Alternatives Development Planning Staff



Many of these drawn pictures and comments were related to enhancing streetscapes to generate a better pedestrian environment, altering existing park space to better complement the proposed development, and strengthening connections and movement throughout the Study Area.

Once all of the data was input into the excel sheet, we then considered different ways that information could be interpreted in order to organize and group maps together that exhibited similar components and traits. After analyzing a few potential scenarios, it was determined believed that the best way to generate the alternatives was to narrow down the maps based on the varying density of uses and total square footage that was clearly evident on each map. While compiling the data, we noticed that there were three maps that had a smaller footprint/density and they all consisted of uses that made up less than 190,000 square feet. There were another three maps that were very close in square footage/density and ranged between 230,000-248,000 square feet. Lastly, there was one map that was sizably larger and had a higher density than the

Figure 15: Low Density Alternative



Figure 14: Density Alternatives

Density	Housing Units	Total Commercial or Office (Sq. Ft)	Parking
Low	74	48,800	180
Medium	141	72,000	225
High	241	59,200	310

other maps and totaled over 420,000 square feet. Additionally, we noticed that uses were placed in the same general layout within these density sub-groups. Because of the similarities between the maps that we placed in the three groups, the group of maps less than 190,000 square feet would be the low-density alternative (Figure 15), the maps within between 230,000-248,000 square foot range would be the medium-density alternative (Figure 17), and the map that was greater than 420,000 square feet would be the high-density alternative (Figure 18). The table on the previous page (Figure 12) shows the number of housing units, commercial and office space, and number of parking spaces each alternative would require. After creating the alternatives based on density and general

Figure 17: Medium Density Alternative



Figure 16: Examples of Alternatives Development City Council

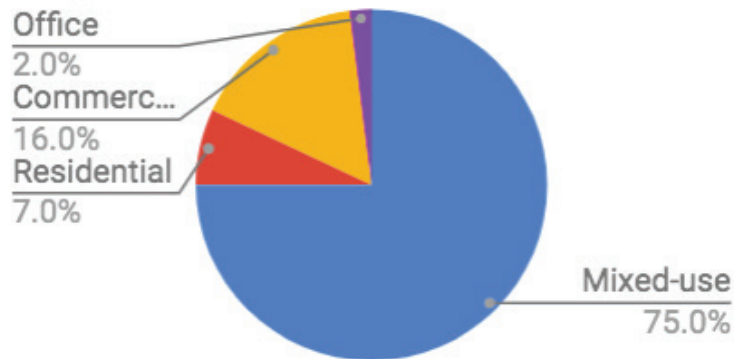
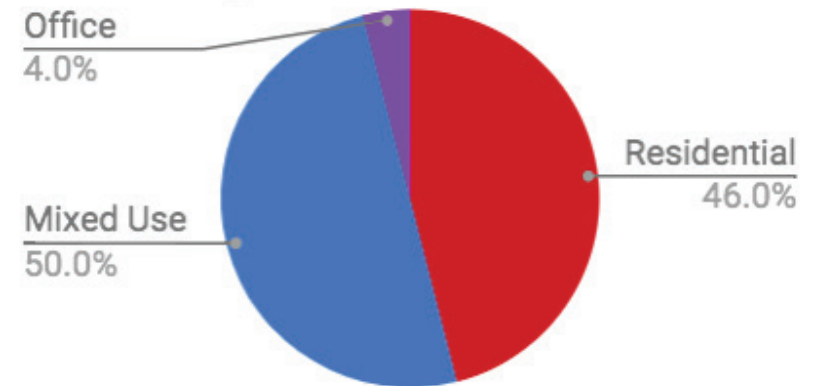


Figure 18: High Density Alternative



location of uses, we then were charged with designing conceptual site plans (again, shown in [Figures 15, 17 and 18](#)). The site plans were created in order to illustrate the different development densities to our client, Planning Staff, Planning Commission, and City Council. The site maps were critical in allowing each group the opportunity to analyze the three different options and provide us with any comments and ask questions that they had. All of this feedback was considered in the developing the preferred alternative we recommend the City of Laramie move forward with.

Figure 19: Examples of Alternatives Development Planning Commission



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C. Alternatives Analysis

Laramie, Wyoming



HOUSING STUDY 20

Alternatives Analysis

The three alternatives illustrate the array of possibilities in the study area. They show the housing could range from 74 to 241 units and that anywhere from 48,800 to 72,000 square feet of potential retail and office space could be accommodated. However, the development of the alternatives is only part of the picture. In order to better weigh the alternatives, we analyzed how well each different density compares with the current zoning regulations, comprehensive plan goals and strategies, housing plan objectives, the recently completed Retail Coach study, and local real estate conditions. Each alternative was given a score on how well it conformed to or related to the given documents. These scores are based on a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 meaning low conformance and 3 being high conformance. It is important to note that the scores for the Unified Development Code and Comprehensive Plan permitted the options to have the same score. For instance, the medium-density option and the low-density option each received a score of 3 for the Unified Development Code as they have the same uses and we did not weigh parking as heavily in our analysis. However, in regard to the Housing Study and Retail Coach study, each option was ranked with how many units or square footage of retail space was provided. The table below shows the breakdown of the alternatives analysis matrix and the subsequent score each alternative received out of 12 possible points.

The medium-density option received the highest score in the alternatives analysis at 14 points, followed by the high-density option at 13 points and the low-density option at 8 points shown in [Figure 20](#). This analysis was presented to the City Council and Planning Commission as an easily understandable way identify how well each option conformed to adopted policies. The breakdown of each scoring is detailed at large in the following paragraphs. Although the alternatives analysis provides a means for a quick reference to adopted plans and policies, it is important to note it was not the only factor in determining the preferred alternative. Rather, we intended the matrix to show that all three options would substantially advance plans and policies in the City of Laramie. Additionally, we believe all three options provide the opportunity to significantly further the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan guiding principles. Furthermore, it is important to note these relate to how well these options relate to current adopted plans and regulations. Many items that are considered in the analysis, such as permitted uses, could be amended to allow for the different alternatives to further conform to planning policies and regulations in the City of Laramie. These potential changes will be discussed at large in the implementation section of the plan. The following sections detail how each document was analyzed in the alternatives analysis matrix.

Figure 20: Alternative Analysis

Density	Zoning	Comprehensive Plan	Housing Plan	Retail Coach	Real Estate Market	Total
Low	3	2	1	1	2	8
Medium	3	3	2	3	3	14
High	2	3	3	2	3	13

Unified Development Code

The first component analyzed in the alternatives analysis was the Unified Development Code, which has the City of Laramie zoning regulations nested within it. The zoning regulations contain three items considered in the scoring of the three alternatives: the development standards for the district, the permitted uses of the district, and the parking requirements for each alternative. The area is currently zoned B2, which is the general business district.

The Unified Development Code considers several different development standards for each district. These standards include parking (which will be discussed in the following paragraphs), landscaping, height, setbacks, and other public improvements. This analysis only considered the height and setback standards as we are focusing more on the form, intensity, and placements of the building in this step of the analysis. [Figure 21](#), illustrates the height and setback standards for the B2 District. All three alternatives conform to these development standards. The B2 District allows for shallow setbacks and a maximum height of 65 feet, which

ensure all buildings would be permitted as proposed. The tallest building in each alternative is four floors, which would generally have a height between 40 and 45 feet. All alternatives conform to these standards, so they did not factor into the zoning score.

The second consideration in zoning is in regard to use. For this, we generated 13 potential uses for the study area that may occur in any of the three alternatives. We then considered whether the use was permitted by-right, was subject to a conditional use procedure, or was not permitted in the B2 District. If a use was subject to a conditional use procedure or was not a permitted use, it would result in a lower score for the alternative in which it was present. [Figure 22](#) shows the 13 uses and their status in the B2 District. Of the 13 uses only multi-family dwelling and live/work dwellings are subject to conditional use procedures and the only non-permitted use are townhomes. Townhomes and live/work units could be present in all three alternatives so it did not result in lower scores. However, stand-alone multi-family was only present in the high-density option which results in a lower score for this alternative. The analysis of potential uses had the greatest impact on the scoring of the alternatives for the zoning component of the analysis.

Figure 21: Zone District Analysis

Zone District	Height	Front Setback	Side Setback	Rear Setback
B2	65	0	0	3
DC	See Note*	0	0	3

*No primary or accessory structure shall be taller than (a) the tallest building on the block face where the proposed building is located, or (b) 12 feet taller than the tallest building on the block across the street from the front façade of the proposed structure, whichever is less

Figure 22: Land Use Analysis

P: Permitted Use C: Conditional Use NP: Use not Permitted

Use	Low	Medium	High
Dwelling, Multi-family	C	C	C
Dwelling, Town Home	NP	NP	NP
Dwelling, Live/work	C	C	C
Dwelling, Commercial	P	P	P
Personal Service	P	P	P
Coffee Shop	P	P	P
Restaurants	P	P	P
Bars or Taverns	P	P	P
General Merchandise	P	P	P
Professional Office Complex	P	P	P
Administrative and Professional Office	P	P	P
Art Gallery	P	P	P
Art Studio	P	P	P

the Comprehensive Plan, the future land use designation did not affect their score.

After a review of the Comprehensive Plan, we determined the different alternatives should be weighed against the goals of Chapter 5- Housing and Neighborhoods, Chapter 7- Urban Development, and Chapter 9- Economic Development. We felt the scope of the North 4th Redevelopment Plan substantially related to these three chapters and therefore felt the goals and strategies of these chapters would be the most important to achieve. After review, it was found that all three alternatives essentially accomplished the same goals and strategies. We believe this is in regard

to all three maintaining a similar character with different scales of development. Comprehensive Plan goals are generally vague, so it is not unexpected that three alternatives of the same character would accomplish the same goals. However, each alternative accomplishes the goals to a different degree. For instance, the high-density vision accomplishes affordable housing goals to a greater extent by providing more units while the medium-density option accomplishes the economic development goals to a greater extent by providing more spaces for business. For this, the high-density vision and the medium-intensity vision received scores of 3 while the low-density option received a score of 2. All three options accomplished a significant number of goals in the

Comprehensive Plan

The analysis of the comprehensive plan related to two primary components; the number of goals and strategies each intensity option accomplished and whether or not the option was in accordance with the future land use plan. All three options are not in conformance with the future land use map as it designates this area for institutional use. The institutional use is essentially allocates the land for community purposes. Planning staff acknowledged that this designation did not anticipate the relocation of the public works facilities north of the City. A change in future land use designation will be addressed in the implementation section of the plan. As all three options were determined to not be in conformance with

The area between 1st Street to 4th Street “could offer a large-scale, mixed residential/non-residential use redevelopment project, particularly if the Clark Street overpass were to be relocated to Harney Street.”

-Laramie Comprehensive Plan 3-28

Comprehensive Plan, but the medium and high-density options further goals of economic development and housing more so than the low-density alternative.

The discussion of the Comprehensive Plan would be incomplete without an acknowledgment to foresight evident within the plan. The Comprehensive Plan states, “This area could offer a large-scale, mixed residential/non-residential use redevelopment project, particularly if the Clark Street overpass were to be relocated to Harney Street” (Comprehensive Plan, 3-28) This foresight gives credence to all three alternatives for the study area and illustrates each option can be reinforced through the Comprehensive Plan through implementation.

Housing Action Plan

The Housing Study 2030 adopted by City Council in 2015 illustrates the housing demand in the City of Laramie. The three alternatives developed were compared to the overall housing demand for the City of Laramie for 2030 based on the total demand in the market, which is 4,106 units, 1,762 of which are owner occupied and 2,344 of which are renter occupied.

Each option is weighed based upon the gross number of units provided in the alternative, therefore the high-intensity option received a score of 3, the medium-intensity option scored 2, and the low-intensity option scored 1. [Figure 23](#) depicts the make-up of each density in relation to total demand. The high intensity option provides 241 units at 44.6 dwelling units per acre, which accounts for 6% of the total housing need for the City of Laramie by 2030. It is important to note the dwelling units per acre of the high intensity option considers a larger acreage than the other option as this option involves removing the current sport field and replacing it with multi-family units. The medium intensity option provides 141 units at 39.1 dwelling units per acre accounting for 3% of the total housing

Figure 23: Demand by Density

Density	Units	% of 2030 Demand
Low	74	2%
Medium	141	3%
High	241	6%

demand by 2030 while the low-intensity option provides 74 units at 20.5 dwelling units per acre accounting for 2% of the housing need by 2030.

Though each option is evaluated based on the total number of units provided over the next 15 years as the key metric, it is important to note there are several other variables that come into play in regard to housing. First, it is important to compare the progress in housing units provided since the housing study was completed to determine whether the City of Laramie is on

track to meet housing demand, Since the study was completed in 2015 the City of Laramie has constructed 324 number of homes, 225 of which are single-family homes and 99 of which are multi-family units. This trend illustrates the City is not on track to meet the total housing demand by 2030. Furthermore, it shows the City is not developing an adequate number of multi-family units. This is an important consideration to make in regard to each alternative evaluated. In this regard, the City of Laramie should weigh the number of units the high-density option provides more heavily as it provides more multi-family units and overall units to meet 2030 housing demand.

Second, it is important to consider how each option can help meet other housing objectives, namely providing affordable units, units for the elderly, units for young professionals, and renter occupied versus owner occupied housing. The housing demand for 2030 for different income levels is shown in [Figure 24](#) below. Again, the high-intensity option provides the opportunity to yield a greater overall unit count and can therefore achieve more housing objectives and should be weighted higher. The make-up of the units provided will be discussed at large in the implementation section as it will detail the unit composition of the preferred alternative.

Each option presented provides a significant proportion of the housing demand for the next 15 years. The high-density alternative, with 241 units, provides the highest percentage of units to achieve the housing demand and was therefore

ranked highest in the alternatives analysis. With more units, this alternative is also more flexible to achieve more specific housing needs and will also advance housing development to be on track with housing units developed year to year.

Retail Coach Study

The Retail Coach Study is yet another important factor in overweighing the three alternatives for the study area. This study was completed for the City of Laramie late last year to discover economic areas and sectors in which the City was losing retail tax revenue to other communities, notably to Cheyenne and communities of the Front Range in Colorado.

There are several key sectors that can potentially use the space provided in each alternative. [Figure 25](#) on the following page shows the general category of retail areas of leakage can be found in and the subsequent amount of potential retail sales in that category.

As one can see the Study Area has high potential sales in motor vehicle and parts sales; furniture and home furnishing stores; electronics and appliance stores; gasoline stations; general merchandise stores; food and beverage stores; building materials and garden equipment and supplies dealers; health and personal care stores; clothing and clothing accessories stores; sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores; miscellaneous store retailers; non-store retailers; and food

Figure 24: Demand by AMI

Tenure	0-30%	31-60%	61-80%	81%+
Owner-Occupied	52	88	220	514
Renter-Occupied	145	360	522	492
Total	197	448	742	1006

Figure 25: Retail Coach Potential Retail Sales

Retail Sector	Potential Retail Sales
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	\$91,926,519
Gasoline Stations	\$78,835,539
General Merchandise Stores	\$53,962,787
Food and Beverage Stores	\$50,663,648
Food Service and Drinking Places	\$42,537,828
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	\$39,832,134
Health and Personal Care Stores	\$30,394,227
Non-Store Retailers	\$20,598,655
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	\$9,301,600
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$7,447,711
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	\$7,123,495
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	\$5,550,577
Electronics and Appliance Stores	\$3,209,577

accommodate these uses.

The alternatives were scored on the Retail Coach study based purely on the gross square footage each provided. The medium-density alternative scored 3 with a total of 72,000 square feet of retail and office space, the high-density alternative scored 2 with a total of 59,200 square feet of retail and office space, and the low-density alternative scored 1 with 48,800 square feet of retail and office space. The alternatives were scored on gross square footage as we felt each alternative had the ability to accommodate a variety of different retail uses cited in the Retail Coach Study.

services and drinking places. The Retail Coach categories of leakage are broken down further in Appendix B with specific amounts for each sector. Some uses require further defining, such as non-store retailers. These are retailers that are located in a municipality but do most of their sales online. In the Study Area this could look like a shoe store that does most of its sales online yet maintains a shop front where it carries out limited transactions. In viewing these different areas of leakage, we felt it was important to remove uses that were not necessarily cohesive with the City's vision for the area. Gasoline stations and motor vehicle and parts sales are uses that do not utilize small formats or typically occupy ground floor spaces of mixed-use environments, therefore we did not score the alternatives negatively if they could not

Real Estate and Market Conditions

The real estate and market conditions analysis were the result of discussion with Walt Hammontree and his staff at Hammontree Real Estate in the City of Laramie. Hammontree Real Estate was referred to us by City of Laramie staff as they have exceptional knowledge of the residential and commercial real estate market in the City of Laramie. We asked Walt and his staff the following questions:

- How many new residential units come into the market each year? What percentage of these are multifamily? What is the market for single-family attached townhomes like in Laramie?

- How much vacant office space is there in Laramie? What is the typical square footage of office space the Laramie market absorbs each year?
- How much vacant commercial retail space is there in Laramie? What is the total square footage of commercial retail space the Laramie market absorbs each year?
- What type of retail uses are expanding the most in Laramie?
- What age groups, income levels, or housing types are most needed in the Laramie market?

Scott Crist, an Associate Broker at Hammontree Real Estate, was our primary point of contact for the information. The following paragraph summarizes our correspondence with Mr. Crist. In regard to the number of residential units that come into the Laramie market, he provided data from the Albany County Assessor detailing new builds from the last three years, detailed in [Figure 26](#). The data closely mirrors that we received from the City and again illustrates that the City is not on pace to meet the demand detailed in the Housing Study. He then went on to tell us that between 15,000 and 20,000 square feet of office space goes unrented every year, illustrating that office space may not be the best use for the Study Area. With this in mind, it will also be important for the City to evaluate the current condition of office space within the municipality. Though a significant amount of office space goes unrented every year, it may be because current office space is not in the condition, format, or location of current market needs. In addition to this, his answers in regard to retail space shows the alternatives can provide needed retail opportunities. He stated that the Laramie market absorbs approximately 10,000-20,000 square feet of retail space each year. All alternatives could provide a notable proportion of retail space each year as the Study Area builds out through different phases. One option he noted for potential retail space is that of men's clothing stores

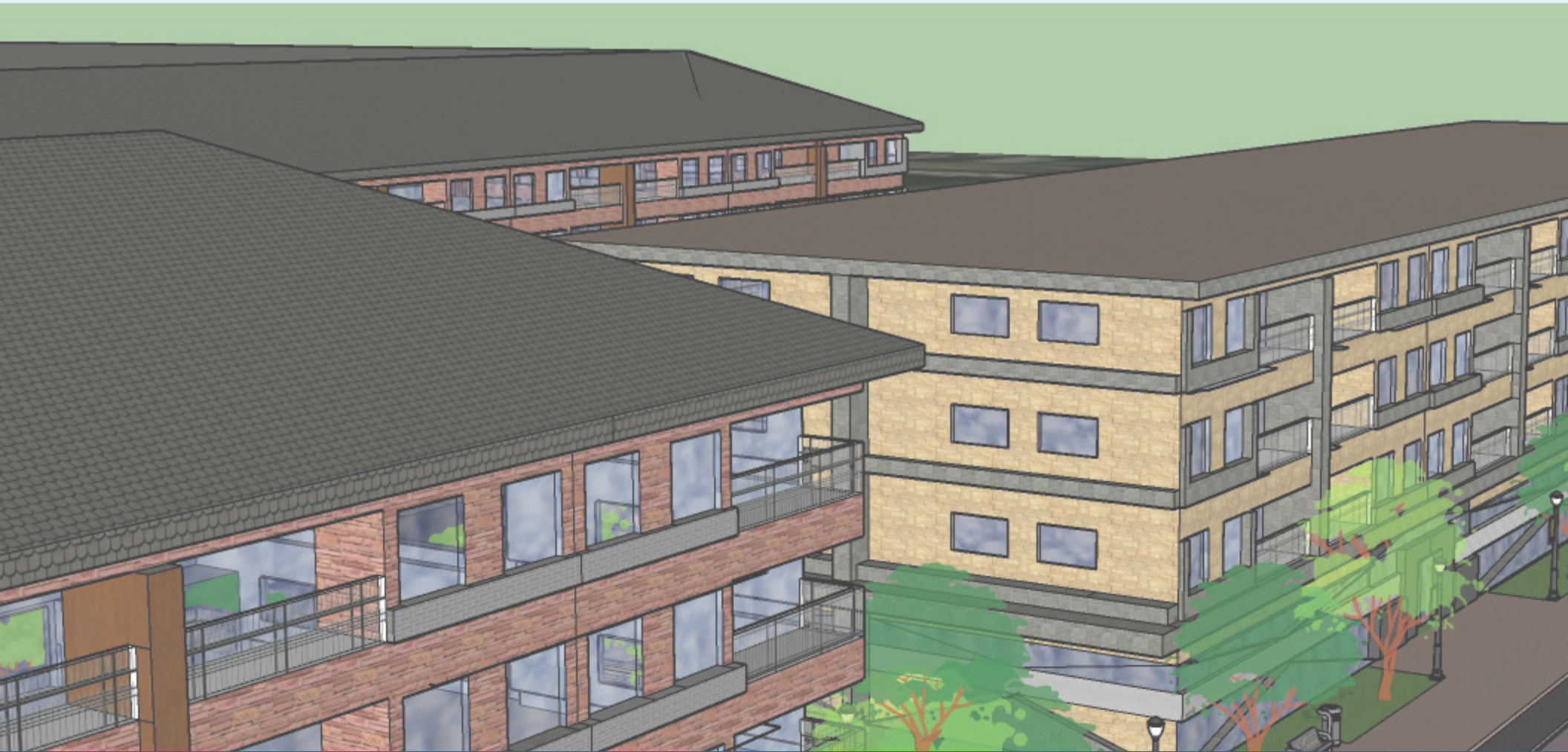
as the City is currently lacking these kinds of stores. Lastly, he noted that housing for young professionals and affordable housing around the \$200,000 to \$225,000 entry range are much needed in the community.

The information provided by Mr. Crist was scored similarly to the Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Development Code. The high-density alternative and medium-density alternative each scored 3 while the low-density alternative scored 2. The high-density option scored 3 as it provided more housing units to account for the demand stated in the Housing Study while the medium-density option scored 3 as it provided enough retail space to account for significant proportion of the market absorption rate of 10,000- 20,000 square feet. The options received the same score as they provide different needs of the real estate market. The low-density option received a score of 2 as it does fill needs within the market, yet not as well as the other two options.

Figure 26: Real Estate Housing Data

Housing Type	Units
Single Family	223
Multi Family	88
Total	311

D. Preferred Alternative



Christensen | Gesten
University of Colorado Denver

Preferred Alternative Feedback

After developing and analyzing the three different options, we returned to the City of Laramie to receive one final round of feedback. After reviewing the alternatives, Planning Staff agreed that the three alternatives were accurate representations of the Visioning Sessions and that they were ready to be presented to Planning Commission and City Council.

Before meeting with Planning Commission and City Council, we developed a method for maximizing feedback from these groups before moving forward with the preferred alternative. We determined that with 7-9 members making up each Planning Commission and City Council several individuals may not be able to voice their final opinions on a preferred alternative. Because of this, we used comment cards, which allowed each member of the Planning Commission and City Council to fill out and provide feedback regarding which concept they preferred the most. Again, the comments on the comment cards included the following questions:

- Which of the three options provides the most exciting opportunity for Laramie? Why?
- Which of the three options is the most compatible with the area? Why?
- Which of the options is the least compatible with the area? Why?
- Are there any other considerations for the area you would like us to look in to? Please explain.

The first meeting that we presented our three alternatives was during a Planning Commission session. After presenting our materials, we received a variety of comments and mixed feedback regarding the types of businesses that would move into the space, how the concepts overcome parking challenges, and how the development could be feasible given the existing buildings there and lack of city money to develop the project. Due to the verbal feedback that we received, we felt that the Planning Commission would prefer the low-density option. However, the majority of the members of Planning Commission preferred the medium- to high-density concepts presented. Many of the comment cards reflected the general sentiment that Laramie needs to increase density, provide more affordable housing, and create more jobs in this section of the city.

After we attended the Planning Commission meeting, we made some revisions to the presentation to cater it to City Council. We also wanted to include the feedback that Planning Commission included within their session and the comment cards for the Council to consider and mull over when they reviewed the three concepts. After presenting our materials to Council, we received some similar feedback regarding parking concerns and the feasibility of the project. The comment cards again yielded the result of a desire for affordable housing, pedestrian oriented design, and new retail uses. However, the general consensus from City Council was more toward the medium-density of development.

Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative is a mixture between the medium-density and high-density alternatives. [Figure 27](#) shows the number of units and square footage of retail for the preferred alternative. Although we have a conceptual layout and have built models of what the preferred alternative could ultimately look like in Sketch-up, we kept the unit count and square footage of retail more open than in the other alternatives. Rather than stating this option would have 188 units, as the model and Illustrator Map depict, we provide a range of units the preferred alternative could accommodate. We chose this method to give the City more liberty in determining what kinds of buildings or units they would like to see in the area. Additionally, we felt this approach would allow the City to hire a consultant to further investigate the feasibility of the North 4th Street vision. With that being said, we recommend the City strive towards the conceptual layout, streetscapes, and buildings provided in this preferred alternative. The following sections detail our specific recommendations for the unit types, retail and office types, and streetscape enhancements to be made in the North 4th Redevelopment.

Figure 28: Preferred Alternative Site Map



Figure 27: Preferred Alternative Characteristics

Intensity	Housing Units	Total Commercial or Office (Sq. Ft)
Medium to High	150-200	50,000-60,000

Unit Types

Determining the unit types in the North 4th Redevelopment Vision Plan was calibrated through the types of buildings used in the visioning sessions, the variety of unit demand expressed in the Housing Action Plan 2030, and the relation of the units to other planning documents and market information.

The building types used in the visioning session included those with transparency for ground floor retail, several high-quality materials, and different urban design principles. The

buildings have a high proportion of glass on the ground floors and also utilize high-quality stone, masonry, and brick for the other components. The building depicted with blue and white finishes does not necessarily depict high-quality materials, however it maintains high-quality design through extensive vertical and horizontal articulation. We recommend the City create design and materials guidelines for this district as it will be a new clearly identifiable area with the City of Laramie. The crux of these design guidelines will be discussed further

in the implementation section of the plan. Furthermore, the design of the buildings uses a double loaded hallway model for the building type. The buildings are approximately 66 feet wide, allowing for 30-foot-deep apartments on each side of a 6-foot hallway. This layout allows the buildings to have storefronts deep enough to support several retail uses while also allowing space for a west and east facing apartments. With this model, residents will have views of the Snowy Range to the west or the Laramie Range and Labonte Park to the east. The design and layout of the buildings is important in creating an exciting and livable place for the North 4th Street Visioning Plan, therefore we recommend using transparency, high-quality materials, and sound urban design principles for the Study Area.





In addition to using high-quality materials and design, we envision the preferred alternative to have a variety of unit types to accommodate different users. The number of units depicted in our Sketch-up model for the preferred alternative is 188. The unit count is based on a variety of apartment sizes the Study Area could accommodate. Specifically, the buildings in the model depict a 50% mixture of 600 square foot 1-bedroom apartments and a 50% mixture of 1,200 square foot 3-bedroom apartments. Again, we feel the mixture of unit sizes should ultimately lay in the hands of the City and

the development community. We feel the Study Area can provide a multitude of housing options with 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom apartments. In addition to various unit sizes, we also believe the area should provide housing at multiple price points. The Housing Study 2030 denotes a demand 1,027 affordable housing units in the range of 0-80 % AMI for 2030 (Housing Study 2030, 2015). Additionally, the Study states that a significant proportion of mobile homes in Laramie are in fair to poor condition (Housing Study 2030, 2015). Noting the mobile home park adjacent to the study area along with the need of affordable housing in general, we feel the Study Area should accommodate affordable housing on site. For the purposes of this plan, we do not have a target number of affordable units for the

site as this number should be calibrated based on economic data. Rather, we feel the City can mandate affordable housing on site through the use of incentives. The City could reduce impact fees or reduce the sale price of the property in general to developers who pledge to maintain affordable units. Again, this will be described further in the implementation component of the plan. In general, the units in the Study Area should come in a variety of different sizes at several different price points.

Retail and Office Users

In addition to a variety of different unit types, we believe the Study Area will provide several different retail and office opportunities. The Retail Coach Study illustrates that the area has significant opportunities for general merchandise stores; non-store retailers, food service and drinking places; health and personal care stores; building material and garden material and supply equipment; and hobby stores, discussed at large in the alternatives analysis portion of the plan. In addition to retail spaces, we believe the area could serve small office uses through co-working spaces and professional services offices. Coupling this with the visioning session buildings and influx of residential truly paints a picture of what kind of retail and office uses can flourish in the area. We recommend the retail component of the Study Area to focus on attracting food and beverage services, hobby stores, small building materials stores, and furniture shops. Many of the retail opportunities in the Retail Coach Study focus on a large format or depend on automobile uses. These retail opportunities are not in line with the City's vision for the Study Area and do not address Laramie's growing need for housing options. Additionally, they do not necessarily account

for an increase in residents in the area. For this, we believe the study area can focus on smaller scale retail uses that can be located on the ground floor of mixed-use buildings. Small furniture stores, hardware stores, personal services such as beauty salons, pharmacies coupled with convenience stores, or music stores all come in formats that are complementary to the character of the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan and are cited in the Retail Coach study as uses that could recover retail tax leakage. In addition to these uses, we recommend

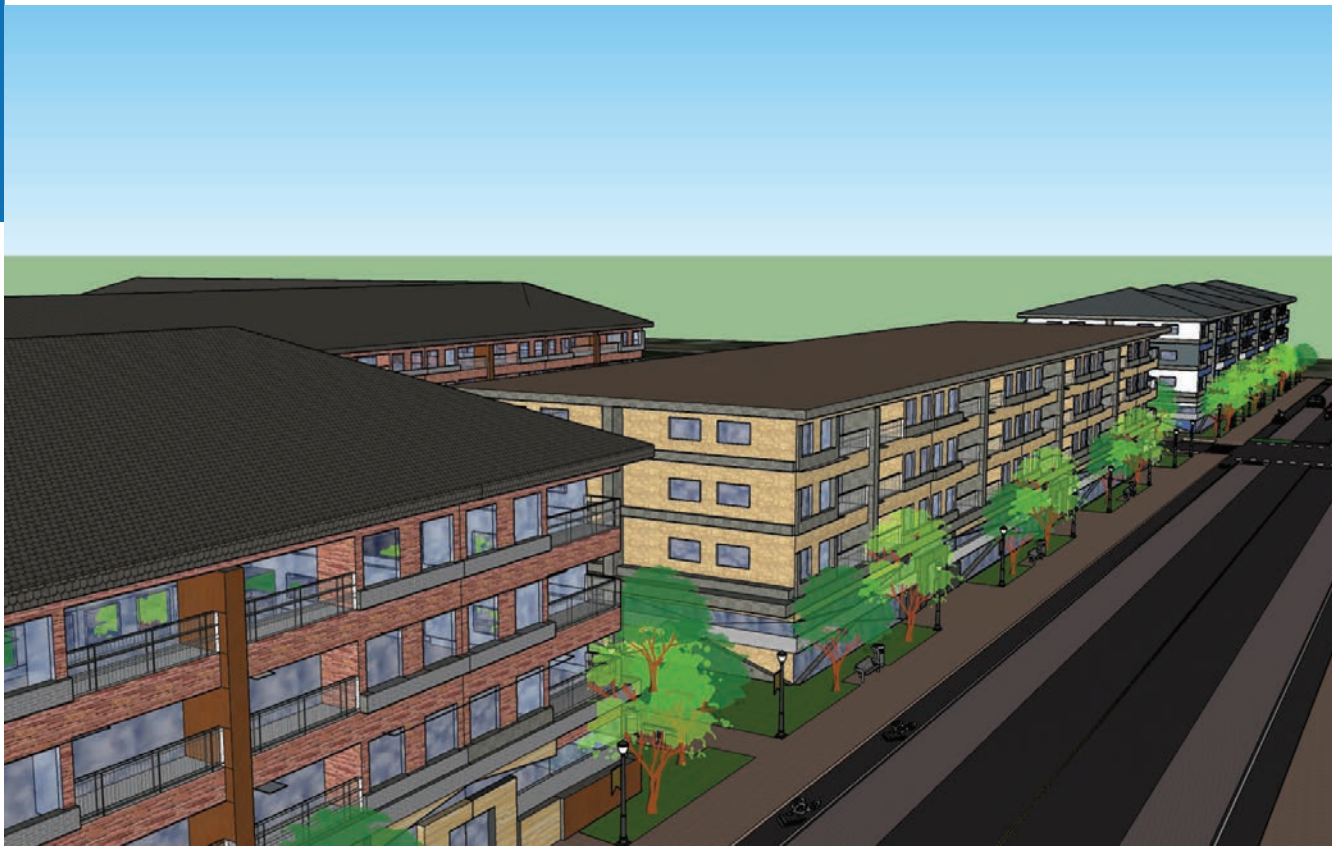


the corners of North 4th Street and East Canby Street and North 4th Street and Shield Street should anchor the North 4th Street Redevelopment with restaurants. The Retail Coach Study states the area has the opportunity to have up to \$42.5 million in retail sales from restaurants and we believe these anchors could attract significant patrons. The restaurants have the opportunity to serve as after park events with summer softball and baseball leagues. We also believe locating co-working spaces on the ground floor of mixed-use buildings could serve to retain graduating college students in Laramie. Office spaces are not necessarily a need in Laramie based on our discussions with Real Estate professionals, however we believe small

format co-working spaces could incite an exciting atmosphere that is currently not available in the City of Laramie. Providing space for entrepreneurs and small firms could attract talent to the City and reduce brain drain in Wyoming. Mixing these small office uses with small retail formats will create the active atmosphere and identifiable district on North 4th Street the City envisions.

Although we see several opportunities for specific retail and office users for the area, we recommend not tenant finishing spaces until leases are in place. Our professional advisor, Carrie Makarewicz, Ph.D., suggested the spaces be built to

accommodate a variety of different users to ensure they do not lock in a retail user that may not lease up space the area. This strategy will also ensure that the spaces will not be susceptible to deterioration if retail trends change in the future. The open nature of the spaces will account for retail turnover and create a diversity of uses. With that being said, we recommend all space be built with high transparency, the opportunity for outdoor spaces, and high-quality materials.



Streetscape Enhancements and Public Art

Lastly, we recommend the North 4th Street Redevelopment project account for a pedestrian friendly environment. In addition to active uses and inviting building frontages, we recommend the area account for human-scale design. Several members of Planning Commission and City Council stated they were less concerned with the unit count and uses in the Study Area and more concerned with the area being designed for pedestrians. To account for this, we recommend 10-foot sidewalk widths, ample street seating, enhanced landscaping standards, and exciting art opportunities.

Additionally, we feel the area should have strong connections to Downtown Laramie. For this we recommend enhanced bike lanes that connect North 4th Street to Downtown and murals that invoke the Downtown feeling. The Laramie Mural project by the Laramie Mainstreet have fostered a strong Downtown identity and we feel using murals in the study Area could enhance the area's connection to Downtown. Lastly, we recommend reducing required off-street parking by including on-street parking in parking ratios. This will limit the amount of parking in the study area and encourage patrons to bike or



walk to the Study Area and de-incentivize large parking lots, thus creating a more pedestrian friendly environment. We envision the North 4th Street Redevelopment to invoke an urban feel with strong connection to Downtown, and to do so we recommend putting pedestrians first.

E. Implementation



Implementation

The implementation of the preferred alternative is a significant component of the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan. This component of the plan is based on three overarching themes, which include Partnerships, Policy Changes, and Infrastructure Improvements. Each overarching theme has several associated implementation steps. The implementation steps have icons associated with them that denote the time necessary to complete the step, the cost associated with the step, and which of the guiding principles the step aligns with. The number of clock and dollar icons denotes the relative difficulty of the project while the guiding principle icons state which guiding principle each step relates.



Time

Cost

Guiding Principle

Partnerships

1. Hire a land use economics consulting firm to determine the feasibility of the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan. Although we have determined the vision’s compatibility with the Retail Coach Study, the Housing Study 2030, and market conditions as described by local real estate experts, a true feasibility study should be undertaken by a professional land use economics firm. The results of this study should yield the true number of units this area can support, the different retail sectors that should be targeted, and the calibrated percentage of units that should be allocated for affordable housing. The firm should consider the price points the City can sell the land to profitable and maintain the vision the community desires.
2. Work with the Laramie organizations to develop a branding identity for the Study Area. Although this area is not necessarily part of the Downtown Laramie, we recommend working with the organization to brand this new development and ensure the opportunities at North 4th Street do not detract from Downtown Laramie.





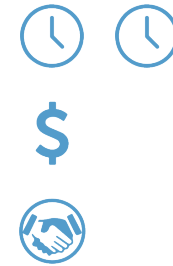
3. Partner with the University of Wyoming to share the vision of North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan with the student body and to find potential future tenants for office space. Put together informational boards and take surveys to gain student feedback on the project. Use these surveys to enhance the preferred alternative to account for student preferences. Additionally, partner with the business school to gauge interest in entrepreneurial interests to form ideas for office space in the Study Area. One of the primary objectives for the project is to retain graduates, therefore we feel it is essential to gain their input on the plan.

4. Engage the J. Darryl and Terry I. Cooper Center for Creative Arts or similar organizations to establish a public art plan for the Study Area. The Center provides a place for handicapped individuals to express themselves through creative arts. Partnering with this institution will allow the North 4th Street parcels to connect with surrounding users and create public art that is unique to the Study Area.

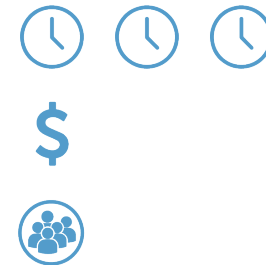
5. Develop an RFP or RFQ to post for the future development of the site. This RFP or RFQ should incorporate a request for firms that have developed mixed-use districts with affordable housing components. One of the key pieces of this partnership will be determining the price point at which the City is willing to sell the land for. We recommend considering selling the parcels below market value or even potentially gifting the land to a developer to ensure the development of Study Area is in line with the community's vision. The reduced price of the land will reduce the land costs for the developer's pro forma and will reduce the overall risk of the project, giving the City more authority over how the redevelopment turns out. In the long run, this will accomplish affordable housing objectives and increase tax revenue as the project will be built to the overall vision.



6. Collaborate with the Laramie Chamber Business Alliance to determine what gaps in businesses exist within the community. The Laramie Chamber Business Alliance works with the Wyoming Business Technology Center, University of Wyoming, and the Wyoming Small Business Development Center to “foster business creation and growth.” Once potential new businesses are identified, establish a business attraction methodology to ensure the ground floor spaces are filled with active uses the community needs.

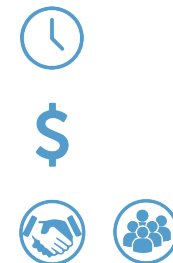


7. Explore Housing and Urban Development and affordable housing mechanisms to ensure affordable units can be accommodated on site. The Housing Study 2030 recommends using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants, and HOME funds administered by the Wyoming Community Redevelopment Authority to promote affordable housing options. Additionally, the study notes Tax Increment Financing, available through the creation of an Urban Renewal Authority, as a way to provide funding for new housing projects. The Laramie Housing Partnership noted in the Housing Study 2030 should be created. The City should revisit these mechanisms and strategies to apply to the Study Area.

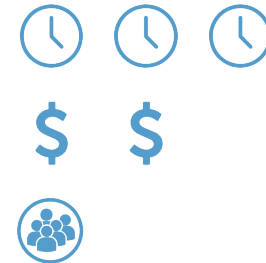


Policies

1. Change the Future Land Use designation and update the B2 zone district to accommodate the vision for the Study Area. The Future Land Use designation should be changed to Auto-Urban Commercial while the B2 zone district should be amended to allow multi-family as a permitted use. Alternatively, the zoning can be changed to add the Residential Overlay for Business, or ROB, designation to accommodate stand-alone multi-family development in the Study Area. Consider changing the zoning code to make all projects in the North 4th Street Redevelopment administrative approvals to expedite the development process and ensure predictability for developers.



2. Establish an affordable housing ordinance not only for the Study Area, but the City of Laramie as a whole. Partnership implementation Step 1 suggests the City partner with a land use economics firm to calibrate an effective percentage of units to be allocated for different levels of affordability for the Study Area. We recommend expanding this study to the community as a whole so that every project within the City contributes to expanding affordable housing options in the City of Laramie. Again, we stress the importance of the land use economics firm and data in determining what percentage of affordable units should be mandated or what contributions to an affordable housing fund should be. This varies from community to community based on the approximate market value of units and the approximate value of the income restricted unit, which in turn provides metrics on how many market rate units offset the cost of one affordable unit (Density Bonuses: Let's Get the Bonus!, American Planning Association National Conference).



3. Draft design standards for the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan. These design standards should address the quality of materials used for the district, horizontal and vertical articulation, 4-sided design, and ground floor transparency requirements. An example of required materials can be seen in [Figure 29](#), the City of Centennial's materials standards for the Central Arapahoe Road Corridor Study. These standards set out that façades must use 50% of Class 1 materials, no more than 50% Class 2 materials, and no more than 10% of Class 3 materials on all new development in the corridor. Reducing the sale price or gifting the parcels will offset the costs of higher quality materials, which is an approach we believe the City should utilize.

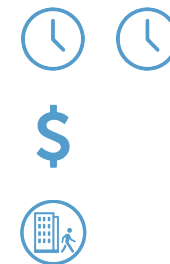


Figure 29: Central Arapahoe Road Corridor Materials

- i. Class I. A minimum of 50 percent (average) of all building facades must contain Class I materials (75 percent for facades facing Arapahoe Road), including:
 1. Fired clay brick;
 2. Natural stone;
 3. Natural wood; and/or
 4. Glass (transparent).
- ii. Class II. A maximum of 50 percent (average) of all building facades may contain Class II materials (25 percent for facades facing Arapahoe Road) to serve as an architectural accent, including:
 1. Split-face or ground-face block;
 2. Manufactured stone or tile;
 3. Cementitious stucco;
 4. Architectural metal; and/or
 5. Other similar materials, as approved by the Director.
- iii. Class III. A maximum of 10 percent (average) of all building facades may contain Class III materials (not permitted on facades facing Arapahoe Road) to serve as an architectural accent, including:
 1. Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EIFS);
 2. Fiber cement board;
 3. Reflective glass;
 4. Textured architectural concrete; and/or
 5. Other similar materials, as approved by the Director.
- iv. Class IV. Materials prohibited on commercial buildings, including:
 1. Untextured tilt-up or poured-in-place concrete
 2. Vinyl siding or other plastic material
 3. Materials not otherwise a Class I, II, or III, as determined by the Director.

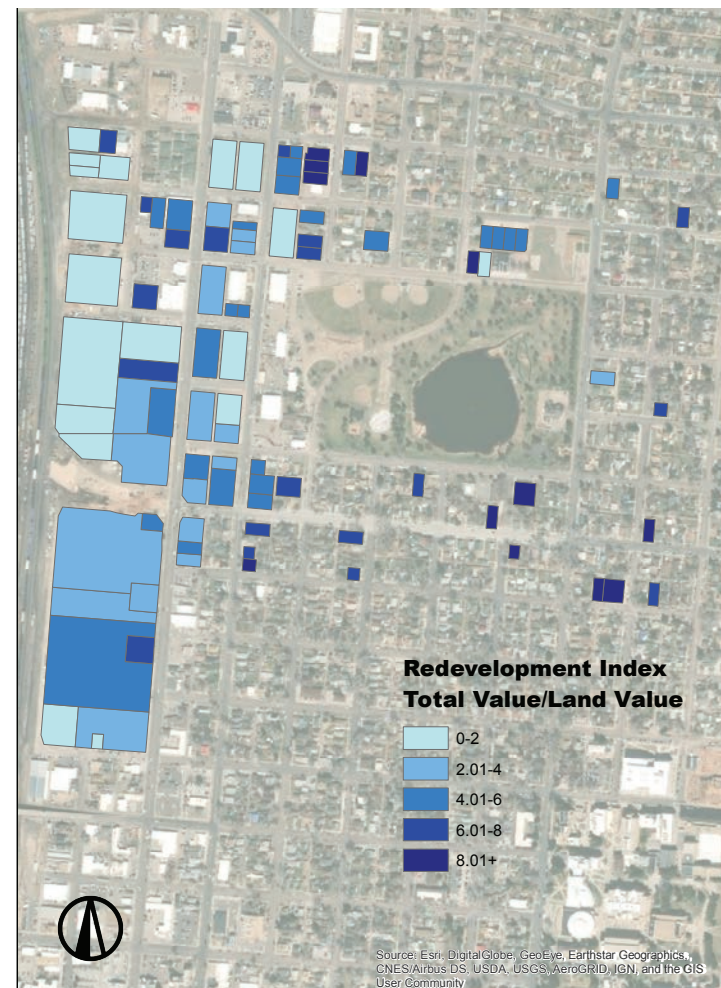
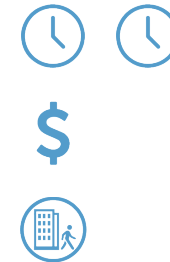
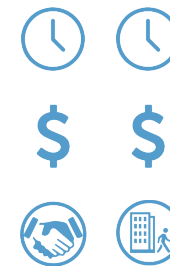


Figure 30: Redevelopment Index

4. Implement standards for pedestrian amenities and public plazas in the North 4th Street Study Area. With this we recommend standards for square footage of plaza space per linear foot of total façade width. For instance, the standard could be 100 square feet of plaza space for every 50 feet of façade width. In addition to this requirement, the plazas should have requirements for public seating and additional pedestrian amenities, such as fountains. Additionally, the Sketch-up model depicts wide sidewalks constructed out of brick-like material. We recommend sidewalk widths of at least 8 feet on the east side of North 4th Street. We also believe using brick materials or encouraging sidewalk art will only further the pedestrian experience.



5. Complementary to the pedestrian amenities, we encourage the City to build upon the Laramie Mural Project and use the public art plan to encourage art in the Study Area. we recommend using the plan to build on partnerships ranging from the Laramie Main Street organization to the J. Darryl and Terry I. Cooper Center for Creative Arts. The art plan may bring about public art requirements in the Unified Development Code or mandate different art districts within the City of Laramie.



6. Consider the influence the North 4th Redevelopment will have on the surrounding parcels. The map on the previous page in [Figure 30](#) depicts the land values of surrounding parcels compared to the total values of the parcels. The total value divided by the land value shows parcels that are more likely to redevelop in the future. On the map, these lower values are depicted in light blue while higher values are depicted in dark blue. The lightest parcels on the map are those that are ripe for redevelopment. This analysis considers commercial properties within one-half mile of the Study Area. We recommend the City Plan for these parcels by considering redevelopment that may happen on the parcels while also addressing those that may be displaced by redevelopment. This may factor into the North 4th Redevelopment by allowing mobile home residents in the



vicinity to have the first option to lease affordable units in the Study Area. Creating a cohesive document that addresses these issues will serve to mitigate issues of gentrification.

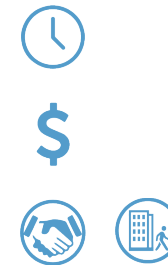
Infrastructure

1. Explore the possibility of creating an Urban Renewal Authority in the City of Laramie. We recommend forming an Urban Renewal Authority not only for this project, but also for other projects throughout the City of Laramie. An Urban Renewal Authority will allow the City to use tax increment financing, or TIF, to fund redevelopment projects like the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan. Funds from the Urban Renewal Authority would allow the City to reimburse developers for infrastructure improvements, allow developers to bond to reduce risk, or allow the City to use the funds to improve the infrastructure themselves. Many of the improvement that follow could utilize funds from the Urban Renewal Authority to come to fruition.

2. Improve the streetscape in and around the Study Area. This recommendation builds upon the streetscape improvements recommended in the WYDOT 3...2...1... 3rd Street Plan by expanding this to the Study Area. These improvements include bike lanes (discussed further below), on-street parking painting, bulbouts, enhanced cross walks, and widened sidewalks. We recommend these changes on both the east and west sides of North 4th Street and in the immediate vicinity of the Study Area. Again, this may be funded by an Urban Renewal Authority or by the sale of the North 4th Street parcels if they are not gifted.



3. Complete the bicycle network from the North 4th Street properties to Downtown Laramie and the University of Wyoming. The network is currently made up of sharrows, however we recommend implementing 5-foot-wide bike lanes down North 4th Street to Downtown and from Harney Street to North 9th Street and the University of Wyoming. This connection will allow cyclists safe passage from the Study Area to these destinations while also providing better visual indication of cyclists to motorists.



4. Perform stormwater and wastewater feasibility studies. The increase of residents in the area may require enhancements to the current wastewater facilities in the area. Additionally, Labonte Park serves as stormwater detention for the area. Although preliminary studies have shown stormwater concerns to be minimal, we feel it is important to investigate this further with the complete conceptual plan. The buildings, treatments, and greenspaces in our recommendation do not necessarily create additional impervious in the area, yet may change drainage patterns. If improvements are required, this may be another opportunity for Urban Renewal funds.



5. Create a shared parking agreement for this area and consider using funds from a potential Urban Renewal Authority or the sale of the property to fund a large shared parking lot for the Study Area. Our conceptual models have shown the opportunity to use on-street parking to reduce off-street parking requirements and potential locations for larger lots in the Study Area. If the City takes the lead in creating parking in the area it may entice developers to propose projects in line with the North 4th Street vision. Again, the City will need to determine the sale price of the parcels through an economic feasibility study, but, if the City does not gift the properties, using funds from the sale of the parcels to reduce required parking for developers may entice the development community. Additionally, reducing parking requirements city-wide can significantly lower the price of development.



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5. Conclusion



Conclusion

The North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan has the potential to have a significant impact in the City of Laramie. The visioning sessions held with City Council, Planning Commission, and City staff painted a clear picture of what the City would like to see in the Study Area. Although the different groups had varying degrees of density, all opted to utilize a mixed-use vision for the North 4th Street parcels. Every group, as seen in the visioning maps in the Project Content Chapter, placed multi-family housing uses coupled with retail and office uses to fulfill their vision for the properties. The uses employed by the different groups show a desire for multi-unit housing with enhanced building materials to be built in the area. All groups had the opportunity to do stand-alone retail and office or an extension of the park, yet none did. Furthermore, several groups drew enhanced landscaping, pedestrian-oriented street treatments, and bicycle lanes that connected to key areas of the City as part of their visioning exercise. Many groups mentioned the need for affordable housing in the area and felt that any redevelopment should be conscious of its surrounding uses. All of this together illustrates a desire for a new and exciting mixed-use district that provides business-friendly development and housing for all that is designed for human scale in the City of Laramie, and we believe the preferred alternative of the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan will accommodate this vision.

The preferred alternative not only addresses the vision shared by community leadership, but also accomplishes several set out in adopted planning documents by the City of Laramie. First, the preferred alternative will provide between 180 and 200 housing units. These units will provide significant progress

to the Housing Study 2030's demand cited at 4,106 units. Although there is still notable room for improvement, providing this many units in the form of multi-family development and varying sizes is a substantial step towards meeting demand. Furthermore, several of these units should be allocated to be affordable at various levels of Area Median Income, further substantiating goals of the Housing Study 2030 and the Comprehensive Plan. Secondly, the preferred alternative will deliver between 50,000 and 60,000 square feet of new retail to the Laramie market. Phasing of the plan should account for the fact that this is 3-6 years of market absorption, but it is noteworthy that this incites the opportunity to fill retail leakage in the City of Laramie. The North 4th Redevelopment Plan recommends filling the ground floor retail spaces with restaurants, small furniture shops, small convenience stores coupled with pharmacies, personal services, and small hobby shops; all areas of leakage cited in the Retail Coach Study. Lastly, the redevelopment will create an exciting urban district built for pedestrians with ample opportunities for public art. The urban feel of the district will encourage recent graduates to stay within the community, the public art will provide opportunity to forge lasting community partnerships, and the active uses will provide a western anchor for a beloved City park. The preferred alternative for the North 4th Street properties provides a great opportunity for the City of Laramie to address planning objectives and satisfy the vision of its elected officials.

We would like to thank the City of Laramie Planning Department and Elected Officials for the opportunity to complete this visionary plan and for sharing your great

community with us. The final work product could not have been completed without the vision provided by City leadership and the robust knowledge of Planning Manager, Derek Teini. Our work on the North 4th Street Redevelopment Plan allowed us to craft a visioning session in which we scaled different potential uses to a redevelopment map; have insightful dialogue with elected officials during the visioning process; synthesize different visions into three distinct alternatives; analyze the alternatives for compatibility with adopted documents, housing data, and market conditions; present the alternatives and analysis at both Planning Commission and City Council meetings; consider feedback and build a preferred alternative in Sketch-up to display a rendering of potential development with a description of characteristics this development ought to have; and give a final synopsis on implementation of the preferred alternative. The project has been a great professional experience and provided immense exposure to a true planning process. The journey has brought us to a distinct preferred alternative which we believe will satisfy the vision for the area and will provide an exciting new district for the City of Laramie.

LARAMIE CITY COUNCIL

Finding a new use for an old space

City Council shares ideas, concerns with redeveloping old Public Works facility

By JORDAN ACHS
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As the city moves forward with the new Municipal Operations Center north of Laramie, the City Council, the Planning Commission and members of city staff have been brainstorming possible uses and development ideas for the current Public Works facility on Fourth Street once it's vacant.

During the Laramie City Council's Tuesday work session, several council members expressed their excitement about the presented options for potential mixed-use buildings in the old facility by LaBonte Park. Councilman Bryan Shuster noted, however, Council was told during the initial visioning exercise "there are no boundaries," when in fact there are some, including cost,

LARAMIE BOOMERANG

LARAMIEBOOM



JORDAN ACHS/BOOMERANG STAFF

The city's current Public Works facility on Fourth Street will be vacant once the new Municipal Operations Center north of town is complete. City staff and the City Council have been brainstorming potential new uses for the facility, including mixed-use commercial and residential space.

Visioning/ from A1

"I know that the city is in no way available to where we can build a building hoping somebody will come, because our funding just isn't there," Shuster said during the work session. "It's great that we show this, but in actual reality, are we going to be able to do much of this?"

University of Denver graduate students Mark Christensen and Max Gesten have been working as interns with the city to research and design what kind of development, if any, the city would like to see replace the old facility. After visioning sessions with the three groups, Christensen

and Gesten came up with three options for potential development, each with varying intensities of zoning use.

All three options featured a mix of retail and residential space, with the highest intensity option of the three featuring about 60,000 square feet of retail space. The three options all included necessary parking and street enhancements, and they also followed guidelines from the Unified Development Code and the City Council's own goals set earlier this year.

"Into the bigger picture in looking at ... the policy goals and objectives that the City Council adopted for this year," Christensen

said during his presentation, "these call for a holistic, Laramie-centric economic development strategy, and we believe the redevelopment of these parcels would lend itself to that."

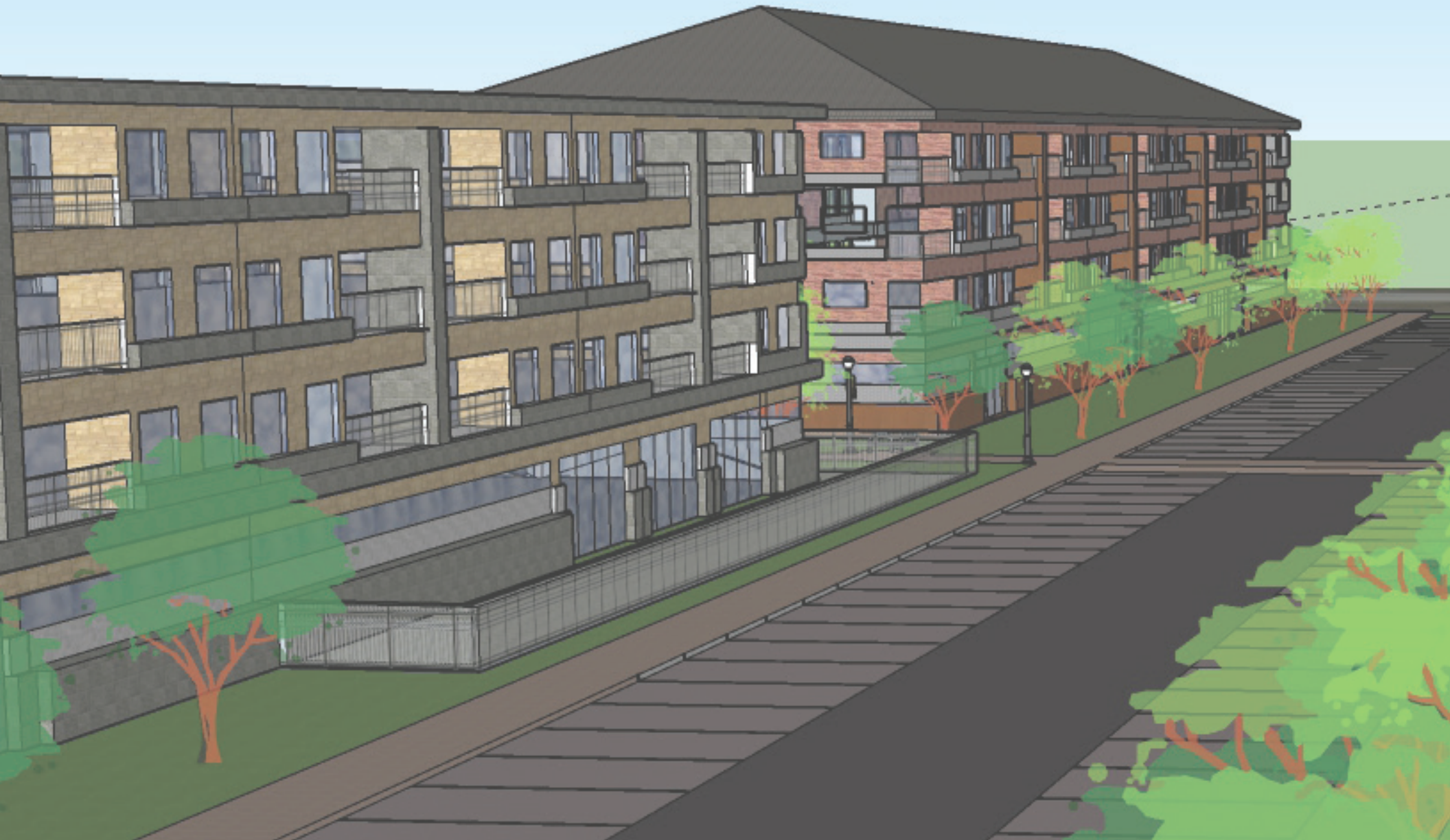
City Manager Janine Jordan added the Council should "keep at the forefront of our mind" not having the city necessarily be the developer, but instead pursuing public-private partnerships and grants to alleviate some of the potential strain on the city's most limited resources, funding and staff time.

Christensen and Gesten are taking Council's feedback about each of the three options and creating a final design and project to present to the city again in May.

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GIS

All GIS data was gathered from the City of Laramie, Wyoming. Parcel data is based on data provided by the Albany County Assesor.

Appendix A

Alternatives Development Matrix

Planning Staff										
Total:	14	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	51,200	4			Bulbouts	Dog Park	Planning Staff	
Total Square Footage	187,300	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	48,000	3			Parking/Bike Lane/Tree Lawn	Parking		
Mixed Use	67%	1 Mixed Use (20 Units)	25,600	2			Visual Corridors			
Residential	13%	3 Small Residential (townhomes)	24,000	2						
Commercial	15%	5 Small Commercial	20000	1					Planning Commission 1	
Other	5%	1 Medium Commercial	8000	1						
		1 Parks Maintenance	4500	1						
		1 Animal Shelter (Relocated)	6000	1						
Regular Staff										
	7	1 Mixed Use (60 Units)	64,800	4	Rear	Surface	Placemaking	Reorient Softball Field	Planning Commission 2	
Mixed-use	172,400	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	48,000	3			Public Art	Parking		
Commercial	80%	1 Mixed Use (20 Units)	25,600	2			Enhanced Lighting			
Other	16%	3 Medium Commercial	24,000	1			Bike lanes			
	4%	1 Small Commercial	4,000	1					City Council 3	
		1 Animal Shelter (Relocated)	6,000	1						
City Council Group 3										
	11	1 Mixed use (32 Units)	51,200	4	Everywhere	surface	Adaptive reuse	Remove Softball Field		Regular Staff
Mixed-use	128,200	1 Large Commercial	15,000	2				Add athletic fields		
Commercial	40%	6 Medium Commercial	48,000	1				Dog Park		
Other	55%	2 Small Commercial	8,000	1				Dead-end road		
	5%	1 Animal Shelter	6,000	1				Basketball Court on 4th	City Council 1	
City Council Group 2										
	17	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	51,200	4	Rear	surface	Bike Path	Plaza		
Mixed-use	230,300	2 Mixed Use (32 Units)	96,000	3			Pedestrian Walkway	Parking		
Residential	75%	1 Mixed Use (20 Units)	25,600	2				Picnic Area		
Commercial	7%	2 Small Residential (Townhomes)	16,000	2				Basketball courts		
Office	16%	1 Large Commercial	15,000	2				Playground		
	2%	1 Medium Commercial	8,000	1						
		1 Small Commercial	4,000	1						
		7 Baby Commercial	10,500	1						
		1 Small Office	4,000	1						
City Council Group 1										
	10	1 Multi Family (40 Units)	43,200	3	Rear/tucked	Surface	Connectivity	Basketball Courts	12800	
Mixed-Use	247,700	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	51,200	4				Playground	16000	
Residential	71%	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	48,000	3				Pickle Ball Court	12800	
Other	27%	3 Mixed Use (20 Units)	76,800	3				Park Storage Facility		
	2%	3 Small Residential (Townhomes)	24,000	2						
		1 Park Maintenance	4,500	1						
Planning Commission 1										
	13	1 Multi Family (40 Units)	43,200	3	Everywhere	Surface	Connectivity	Remove Softball Field	14400	
Mixed Use	241,400	1 Mixed Use (32 Units)	51,200	4				Picnic area	12800	
Residential	61.00%	2 Mixed Use (32 Units)	96,000	3				basketball court		
Commercial	31.00%	4 Small Residential (townhomes)	32,000	2				playground		
General Office	5.00%	2 Small Commercial	8,000	1						
	3.00%	2 Baby Commercial	3,000	1						
		1 General Office	8,000	1						
Planning Commission 2										
	12	2 Residential (60 Units)	129600	3	Rear	Surface	Connectivity	Rotate Softball field		
Residential	409200	1 Residential (40 Units)	43200	3				remove road		
Mixed Use	46%	3 Mixed Use (32 Units)	153,200	4			Placemaking			
Office	50%	2 Mixed Use (20 Units)	51,200	2			Art			
	4%	2 Small Residential (townhomes)	16,000	2						
		2 General Office	16,000	1						

[illegible]