

# ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Community input across economic development,  
housing, and downtown & retail corridors

YARD & CO.

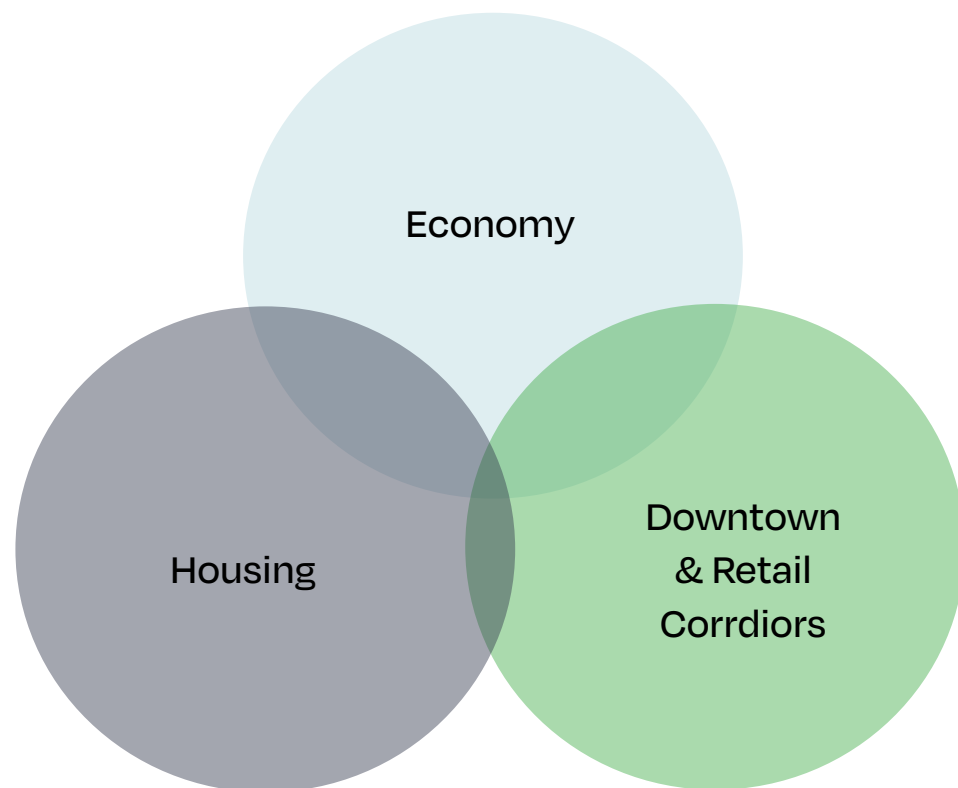
# WHAT IS FORGE EXCHANGE?

Forge Exchange is a space for the community to explore how Laramie grows, intentionally, thoughtfully, and together.

This exchange is part of Forge Laramie, the City's Comprehensive Plan process guiding decisions that will shape Laramie for the next 20 years.

Growth is not one thing. It is how our economy evolves, how people find homes, and how our downtowns and corridors thrive.

Forge Exchange brings these conversations together because each one depends on the others.



**JANUARY 16 - FEBRUARY 10**

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**How Laramie supports jobs, businesses, innovation, and long-term opportunity**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**BIG PICTURE TAKEAWAY**

The community supports growth, but wants it to be targeted, connected, and aligned with Laramie's identity.

**THREE KEY INSIGHTS**

**GROW INWARD,  
NOT OUTWARD**

**FOCUS ON  
JOBS AND  
HOUSING  
TOGETHER**

**PROTECT  
COMMUNITY  
CHARACTER  
AND KEY AREAS**

# Growth and Protect STATION 1



## Help Us Understand Where Laramie Should Grow

Place a dot wherever you feel each type of housing is appropriate.

### How it works

- Green dot: Places where Laramie should build new housing.
- Blue dot: Good areas for infill or redevelopment
- Yellow dot: Places that could support university student housing
- Red dot: Places that should be preserved or protected from development.
- Post-it notes: Add if you want to explain why you placed a dot.

### What the map shows

Infill and redevelopment opportunities inside Laramie, based on existing infrastructure, zoning potential, and physical constraints.



As You Mark the Map, Think About:

- Where should new housing go, and why?
- Where does infill or redevelopment make the most sense?
- Where could student-oriented housing fit without creating conflicts?
- Which places should be protected from development?
- What should any new development include or avoid in these areas?

There are no right or wrong answers. We are looking for common priorities, and good insight.

# WHERE GROWTH SHOULD HAPPEN

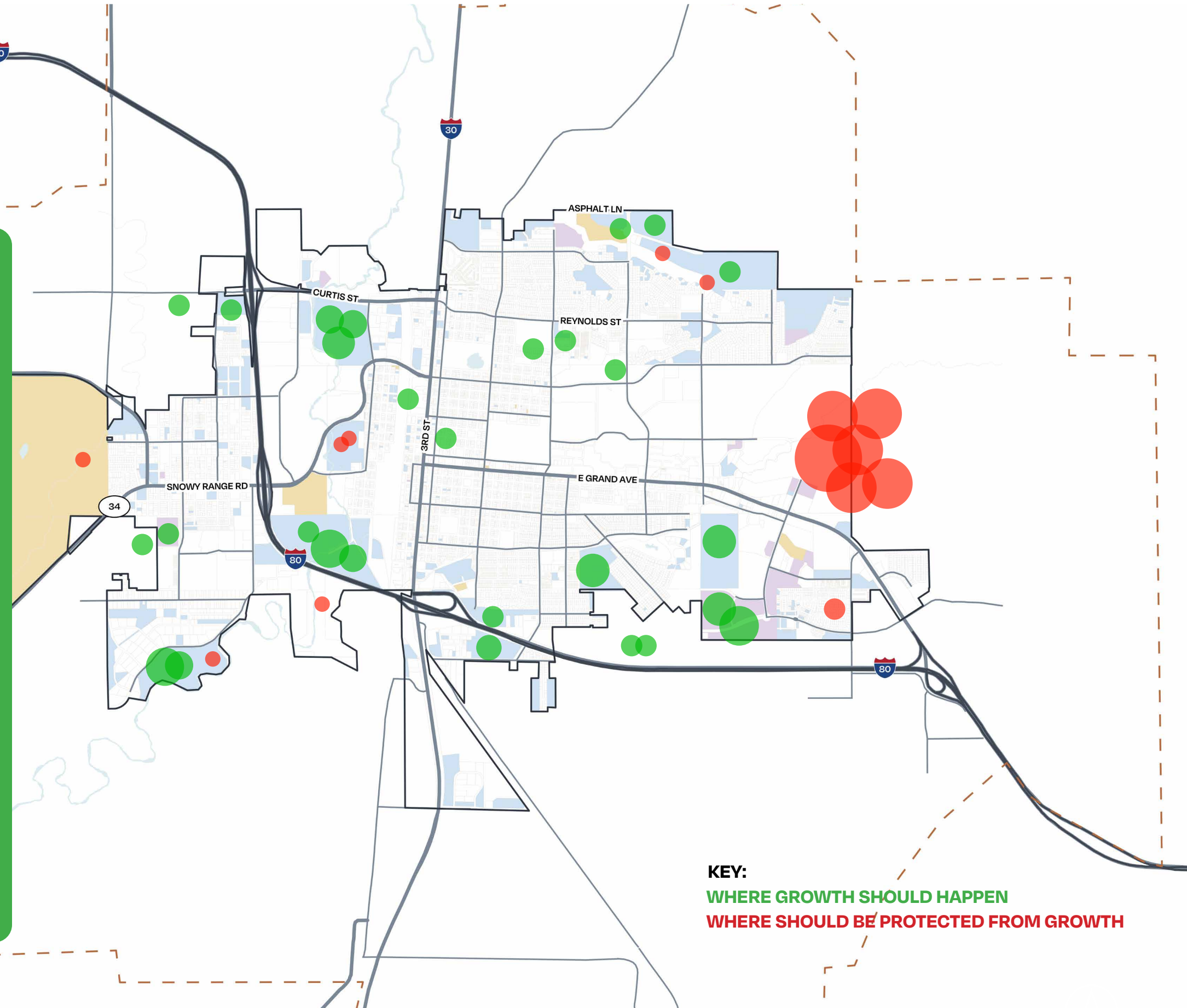
The mapping exercise revealed a clear pattern: participants overwhelmingly support growth in Laramie's existing core and developed areas.

Clusters of "growth" markers were concentrated in:

- Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods
- Areas with existing infrastructure and connectivity

This suggests strong support for:

- Infill development
- Redevelopment of underutilized parcels
- Increased density in walkable, central locations



**KEY:**

**WHERE GROWTH SHOULD HAPPEN**

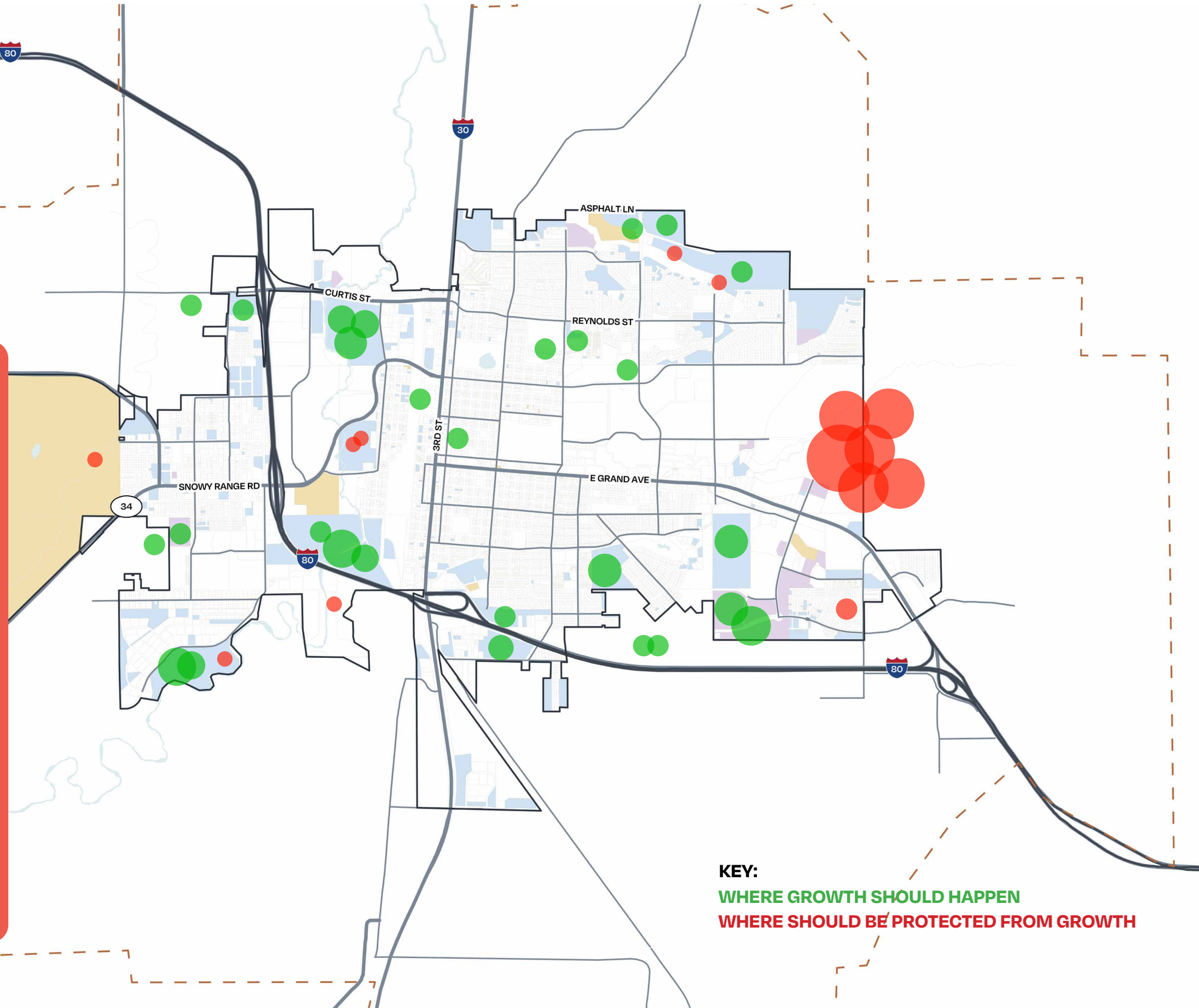
**WHERE SHOULD BE PROTECTED FROM GROWTH**

# WHERE GROWTH SHOULD BE LIMITED

Participants also identified specific areas where growth should be limited or avoided. The most notable concentration of “protect” markers occurred on the east side of the city, along with smaller clusters elsewhere.

These areas likely reflect concerns about:

- Preserving neighborhood character
- Avoiding incompatible development
- Protecting environmental or community assets



**KEY:**

**WHERE GROWTH SHOULD HAPPEN**

**WHERE SHOULD BE PROTECTED FROM GROWTH**



# Top Issues Identified STATION 2



## TOP ISSUES IDENTIFIED

**Written feedback highlighted several recurring challenges that residents believe are holding Laramie back:**

- Housing affordability and availability, particularly for local workers
- A lack of higher-paying jobs that align with local education and skills
- Gaps in connectivity, including walkability, bike infrastructure, and transit
- Concerns about investor-owned housing and short-term rentals

*“NEED HOUSING BEFORE BUSINESS WILL COME”*

*“NOT ENOUGH JOBS FOR GRADUATES”*



# HOUSING & JOBS ARE INTERCONNECTED

Housing and economic development must be solved **together**.

## What we heard:

- New businesses struggle to expand without adequate housing for workers
- Residents, particularly graduates, leave due to a lack of job opportunities
- Housing affordability is directly tied to wage levels

***"YOU CAN'T SOLVE JOBS WITHOUT HOUSING, OR  
HOUSING WITHOUT JOBS"***



## WHAT MAKES LARAMIE...LARAMIE

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the qualities that define Laramie, including:

- Its small-town feel and strong sense of community
- Access to outdoor recreation and natural landscapes
- A growing arts and cultural scene
- Its connection to the University of Wyoming

At the same time, there is concern about losing these qualities through unmanaged or poorly planned growth.

# WEAVE YOUR PRIORITIES

How important is it to...  
**walk to daily needs?**  
(groceries, cafes, sidewalks)

How important is it to...  
**feel safe where you live?**  
(street lighting, traffic, security)

How important is it to...  
**find housing you can afford?**  
(rent or mortgage, monthly budget, stability)

How important is it to...  
**keep heating and energy costs low?**  
(utility bills, insulation, efficiency)

How important is it to...  
**live close to work or school?**  
(commute time, transit, walking or biking)

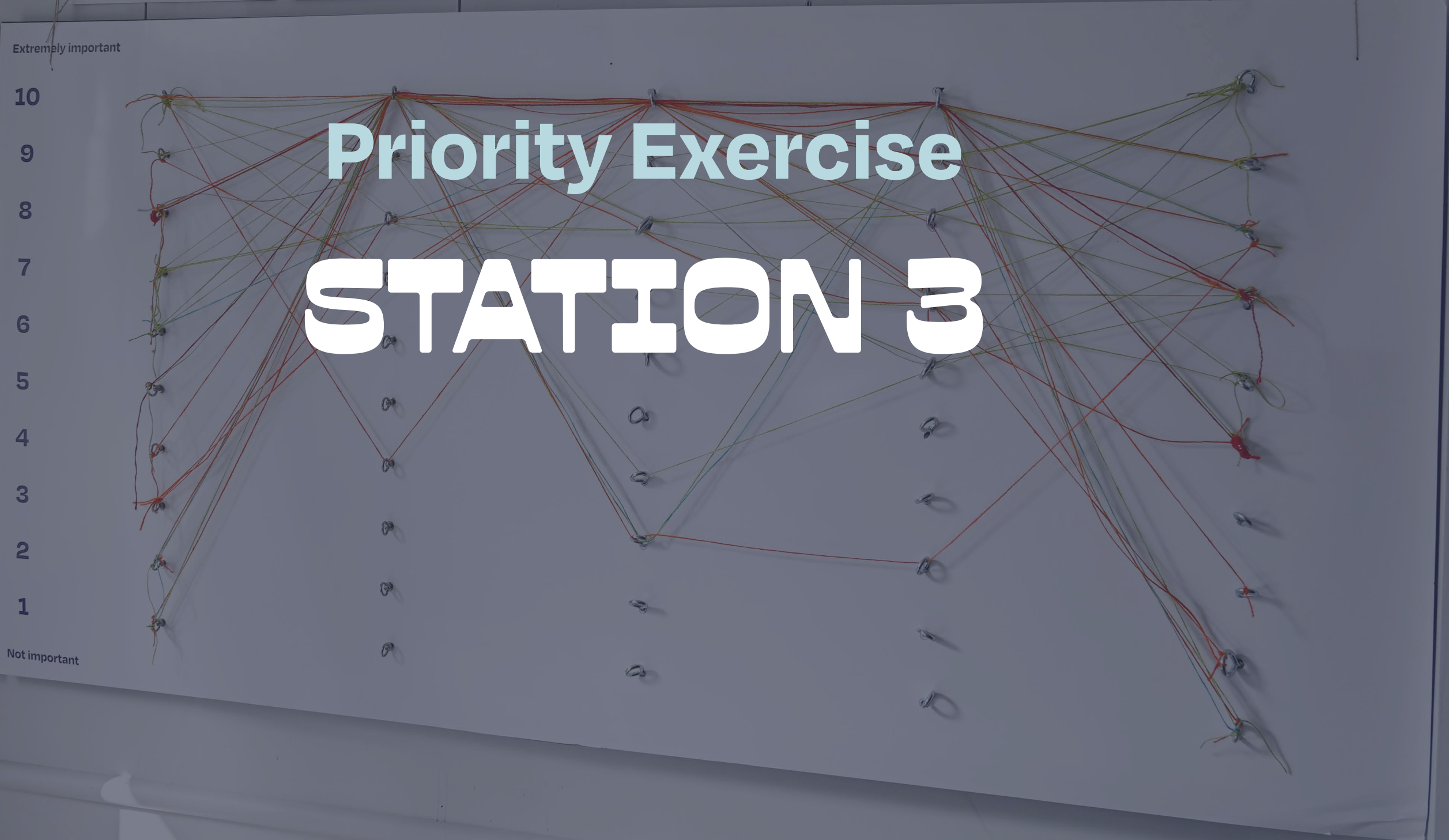
I am a Homeowner

I am a Renter

I am a Business Owner

I am a College Student

I am a Child/Teen





## WHAT MATTERS MOST

*THESE ARE UNIVERSALLY SUPPORTED  
GOALS ACROSS ALL GROUPS!*

### **Top Priorities:**

1. Growing higher-wage jobs is the top priority across all groups
2. Retaining workers after their educational years is also highly ranked
3. Making Laramie more attractive to businesses is widely supported

## WHERE OPINIONS DIVERGE

While there is strong agreement on outcomes, there is less consensus on how to achieve them—particularly when it comes to infill and redevelopment.

Responses to this topic showed the widest range of opinions:

- Some participants strongly support increased density and redevelopment
- Others expressed concern about impacts on neighborhoods and character

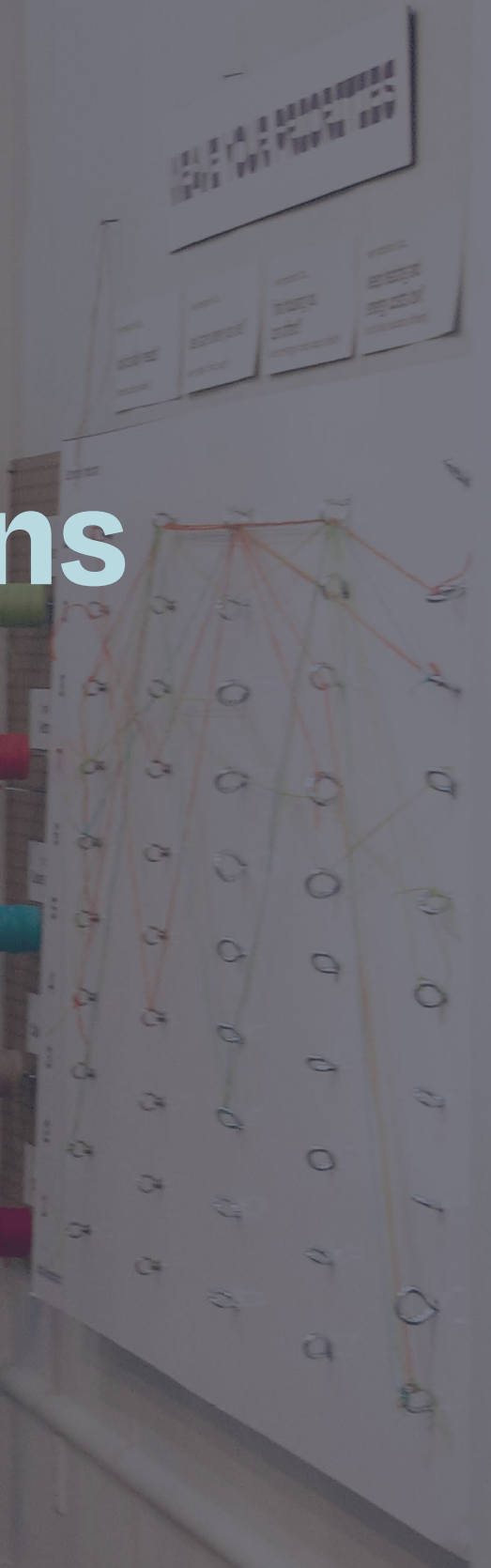
***THE TENSION IS NOT WHETHER TO GROW, BUT HOW***

# Synthesis Across All Stations

# ALL STATIONS

WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR LARAMIE'S FUTURE?

THE FORGE EXCHANGE





## **CONNECTING THE DOTS**

- 1. Growth in core, protect key areas**
- 2. Housing and jobs work hand in hand**
- 3. Jobs and retention are a top priority**

A landscape photograph featuring a wide, grassy field in the foreground, rolling hills in the middle ground, and a sky filled with scattered clouds. The lighting suggests a time of day like dawn or dusk, with a soft glow on the horizon. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

# IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGY

# WHAT THIS MEANS FOR LARAMIE

## **Top Priorities:**

### **1. Focus growth in targeted areas**

- Downtown
- Existing corridors
- Infill-ready parcels

### **2. Pair housing & economic development**

- Workforce housing
- Jobs aligned with UW graduates

### **3. Invest in connectivity**

- Walkability
- Bike infrastructure
- Linking west Laramie to core

### **4. Protect key neighborhoods**

- Maintain identity
- Avoid blanket upzoning

FEBRUARY 10 - MARCH 06

# HOUSING

How Laramie supports jobs, businesses, innovation, and long-term opportunity

## HOUSING

### **BIG PICTURE TAKEAWAY**

Laramie's housing challenge is not just a shortage—it's a mismatch between what's being built and what residents need, can afford, and want.

#### THREE KEY INSIGHTS

**THE BIGGEST  
GAP IS "MISSING  
MIDDLE"  
HOUSING**

**AFFORDABILITY  
IS A MIDDLE-  
INCOME ISSUE**

**GROWTH IS  
SUPPORTED—  
BUT MUST BE  
THOUGHTFUL**



- Laramie City Boundary
  - Growth Area
  - Parcels
- Future Land Use**
- Agriculture
  - Estate Residential
  - Suburban Residential
  - Auto-Urban Residential
  - Auto-Urban Multifamily
  - Auto-Urban Commercial
  - Urban Residential
  - Suburban Commercial
  - Urban Commercial
  - Urban University
  - Industrial
  - Public / Institutional
  - Park / Open Space
  - Not Assigned

Multi-family housing near the river / greenbelt / I-80 ext seems very desirable

Laramie River

Shovel Ready Sites, Baby!

Blun Cr, S of 4th St → very noisy & impacts residential.

expensive housing - many old & run-down - affordable student housing

unused / not used well

high-density throughout neighborhoods!

Major wildlife corridor

Business corridor for Commercial Development off S 30th to Interstate

The downtown area is beautiful and very walkable. However, the parking is terrible. They need to do something about that. They need to build more parking and maybe a few more bike racks.

There are a lot of parking spaces in the downtown area. They need to be better organized. They need to be better organized. They need to be better organized.

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Identify vacant lots and develop them into housing. (Some are 1/2 acre or more) and develop them into housing. (Some are 1/2 acre or more) and develop them into housing.

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More housing (high density) Town town

Most commercial plans to develop outside the city / fewer jobs, lower costs, more parking available

Bring in things of downtown - most dense housing - like having more businesses in downtown

More housing similar to Grand Villa - dense, but does not feel pushed on top of each other - all eyes & looks

Housing should include 3rd spaces - normally spaces, bike club, game groups - lots of these spaces - all community spaces

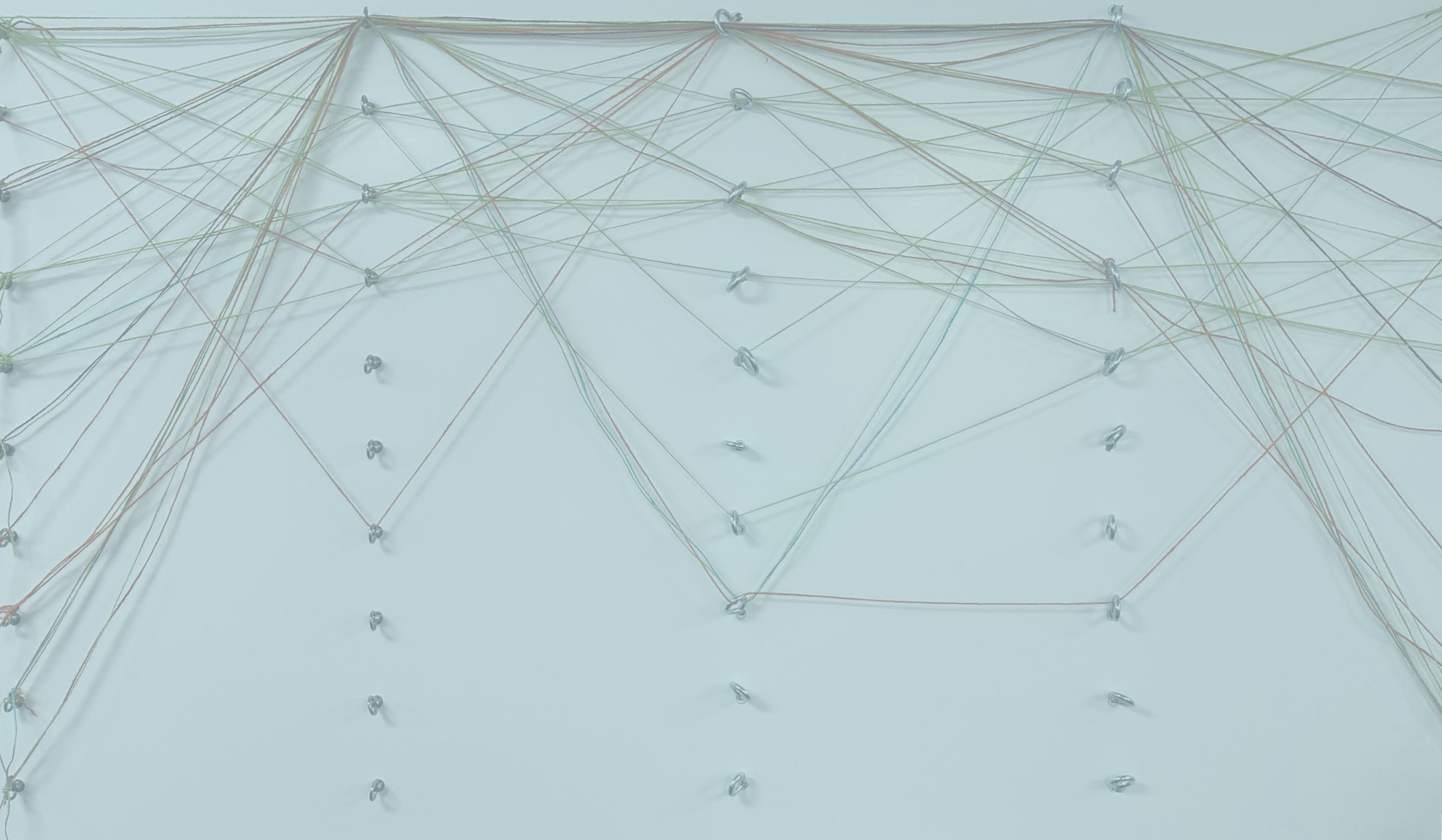
Area - preserve historic buildings - reuse them - create a density of them

Older buildings should be kept but not torn down for new housing - reuse historic - reuse historic - reuse historic

Noted 3rd party interested in some of the buildings to see what they can do with them - search project for student housing, etc.



Miles



# LARAMIE IS MISSING “MIDDLE” HOUSING OPTIONS



**Across responses, there is a consistent gap identified between:**

- Large, higher-cost single-family homes
- Smaller apartments or student-oriented housing

**Residents repeatedly called for:**

- Starter homes (≈1,000–1,500 sq ft)
- Townhomes and duplexes
- Small multi-family options

**Interpretation:**

- The housing market lacks options for first-time buyers, young families, and middle-income households, creating pressure across all segments.

# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IS A “MIDDLE-INCOME” PROBLEM



## **Residents clearly defined affordability as:**

- Spending less than ~30% of income on housing
- Being affordable to households earning above poverty but below ~\$100k

## **There is strong frustration that:**

- Many do not qualify for subsidized housing
- But still cannot afford market-rate options

## **Interpretation:**

- The housing system is failing moderate-income households, not just low-income residents.

# HOW HOUSING SHOULD BE BUILT

## Clear Preferences for How Housing Should Grow

### Preferred approach:

- Infill and redevelopment within existing city areas
- Walkable, connected neighborhoods
- Housing near jobs, schools, and services

### Design expectations:

- Smaller, more efficient homes
- Human-scale density (not high-rise)
- Diverse housing types and neighborhood character



# HOUSING IS A STRUCTURAL MISMATCH

## **Community input points to a broader issue:**

- The current housing supply does not match:
  - What residents can afford
  - What types of housing they need
  - Where they want to live

## **Challenges are driven by:**

- Gaps in housing types
- Cost barriers
- Development patterns



*LARAMIE'S HOUSING CHALLENGE IS  
NOT JUST ABOUT BUILDING MORE.*

**It is about building the right housing,  
in the right places, for the people who  
live and work here.**

MARCH 06 – MARCH 30

# DOWNTOWN & COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

How Laramie supports downtown and other commercial corridors and districts

## FUTURE LAND USE

### THE ASK

Participants were asked to review Laramie's commercial corridors and mixed-use areas on a Future Land Use Map and show how they think those areas should evolve. They used colored dots to mark corridors that should:

**Intensify with more activity — green**

**Become more mixed-use with housing and businesses — blue**

**Stay mostly the same — yellow**

**Become more walkable or better designed — red**

They could also add post-it notes explaining their choices. The goal was to identify patterns around where commercial or mixed-use development makes sense, how those areas should connect to neighborhoods, whether they are accessible by walking, biking, driving, or transit, what services are missing, and where future growth should be supported.



- Laramie City Boundary
  - Growth Area
  - Parcels
- Future Land Use**
- Agriculture
  - Estate Residential
  - Suburban Residential
  - Auto-Urban Residential
  - Auto-Urban Multifamily
  - Auto-Urban Commercial
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Multi-family housing near the river / I-80 exit seems very desirable

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Shovel Ready sites, Baby!

Blow 1/2, 3rd, & 4th St → very noisy & impacts residential.

improving housing - many old & run-down - affordable student housing

unused / not used well

high density throughout neighborhoods!

Business corridor for commercial development off south 30th to interstate

the town square plan is beautiful and very comprehensive. However, walking about first steps in the plan, they are so disconnected and the sidewalk and street. Pedestrian and bicycle path along the square.

Propose to take down the vehicle and parking lot and the town square. The town square is the heart of the town. It is the place where people meet and interact. It is the place where the town's identity is expressed.

Plan for the town square. It is the heart of the town. It is the place where people meet and interact. It is the place where the town's identity is expressed.

Public transportation is a difficult and complex issue. It is the place where people meet and interact. It is the place where the town's identity is expressed.

Identify vacant lots and develop them into a mix of uses. Encourage development to provide more and better housing with more amenities. Focus on the lower end of the price range and provide all in the same place.

Move housing (high density) downtown

Most economical place to develop: Outside the city! Fewer obstacles, lower costs, more choices available

Encourage development to provide more and better housing with more amenities. Focus on the lower end of the price range and provide all in the same place.

AGREE - PRESERVE OLDER BUILDINGS! KEEP THE CHARACTER & BEAUTY OF THEM!

Housing on fringes of downtown - more dense housing - like housing above businesses in downtown

More housing similar to Grand Villa - denser, but does not feel crowded on top of each other - all ages & styles

Housing should include 3rd spaces - meeting spaces, book club, game groups - but of these spaces - need community spaces

Neutral 3rd party - interview owners of vacant land/buildings to see what makes sense / what they desire. - Research project for student projects, etc.



# TAKEAWAYS

## **1. There is strong support for more activity in existing commercial areas, especially along central and east-side corridors.**

The green dots appear heavily concentrated around the downtown/core area, the 3rd Street corridor, Grand Avenue, and commercial areas extending east. This suggests participants generally favor intensifying already-developed corridors rather than pushing major new commercial growth to the edges.

## **2. Mixed-use is seen as appropriate in several corridor locations, but especially near the city core.**

Blue dots cluster around central Laramie and along key east-west corridors, indicating support for combining housing, businesses, and services in places that already have access, visibility, and proximity to neighborhoods.

## **3. Walkability and design quality are major concerns.**

The red dots are prominent along commercial corridors, particularly in eastern and edge commercial areas. The pattern suggests people are not necessarily rejecting commercial use in those places, but they want corridors to become safer, more attractive, and easier to navigate on foot or by bike.

# TAKEAWAYS

## **4. Grand Avenue, 3rd Street, and east-side commercial areas appear to need special attention.**

These corridors received a mix of green, blue, and red dots, which likely means they are seen as important commercial/mixed-use places but also places where current design, access, or pedestrian conditions are not meeting community expectations.

## **5. Some areas should remain relatively stable.**

Yellow dots appear in a few corridor areas, suggesting that participants do not want every commercial location to change dramatically. Some places may be functioning adequately or may not be viewed as priorities for intensification.

## **6. The western growth area received little support for new commercial activity.**

Compared with the central and eastern parts of the map, the west side appears to have fewer dots. That suggests participants may prefer focusing commercial growth inward and along existing corridors rather than expanding commercial development into more peripheral areas.

**LARAMIE SHOULD FOCUS FUTURE COMMERCIAL AND MIXED-USE GROWTH ALONG EXISTING CORRIDORS, BUT PAIR THAT GROWTH WITH BETTER WALKABILITY, DESIGN, AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS.**

Participants seem to support more intensity and mixed-use where infrastructure and activity already exist, while also signaling that many commercial corridors need to become more people-friendly, not just more developed.



## **Downtown should be more walkable, bikeable, and connected.**

Participants identified major needs around safer crossings, better sidewalks, protected bike routes, improved snow removal, more transit, and stronger connections between downtown, UW, and West Laramie. Third Street was frequently viewed as a barrier.



## **Downtown needs more activity beyond 9-to-5.**

Responses called for later business hours, Sunday hours, more events, arts, music, theater, festivals, outdoor dining, family-friendly activities, and more places to gather without needing to spend money.



## **Laramie should grow without losing its character.**

Participants value downtown's historic buildings, local businesses, murals, trees, footbridge, small-town feel, and community identity. They want growth that supports local character rather than chain-dominated or generic development.



## **UW is a major asset that could be better connected to downtown.**

Participants saw opportunities for stronger student engagement, internships, events, dining partnerships, seminar space, and better bike/pedestrian connections between campus and downtown.

