

Agenda Item: FYI

Title: Joint Work Session with Planning Commission to review the DRAFT “Thrive Laramie: A Community and Economic Development Action Strategy for the Next 10-Years”

Background

In 2019, City Council adopted annual goals via Resolution 2019-23B to pursue “Holistic Economic Development.” A crucial milestone under that goal was to: *Adopt Updated 10-Year Economic Development Plan in 2019 to Replace Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan in Partnership with Residents and Stakeholders. Partners include the University of Wyoming, Laramie County Community College, Albany County Campus, Wyoming Technical Institute, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance, Laramie Main Street Alliance, Wyoming Business Council, Albany County Tourism Board, Laramie Regional Airport Joint Powers Board, and Albany County. The Plan will incorporate community characteristics and “sense of place” as part of the overall economic development strategy and, also, contemplate specific programs for retaining entrepreneurs and qualified workers”*

During its January 21, 2020 meeting, the Laramie City Council passed Resolution 2020-08 to adopt goals for 2020. Several milestones were included under the goal of “Holistic Economic Development (Laramie-Centric)”, including: *Milestone #1: Adopt Updated 10-Year Economic Development Plan to Replace Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan.*

Selection Process

Following the adoption of the 2019 Annual Goals, staff circulated an RFQ for an economic development plan and assembled a selection committee to review proposals and make recommendations. Four proposals were submitted, and two firms were selected for follow up interviews via conference call/ webinar. Fourth Economy was unanimously selected by the committee as the finalist and its President and CEO, Rich Overmoyer, was invited to Laramie for 1.5 days of in-person interviews. The agenda for the in-person interviews included individual meetings with City Manager Jordan and Administrator, Economic & Community Initiative, Reese, a whole-group interview with members of the selection panel, a community tour with LCBA Director, Brad Enzi, a meeting with Laramie Main Street Director, Trey Sherwood, and a campus visit with Vice President for Research and Economic Development, University of Wyoming Ed Synakowski. Fourth Economy remained the committee’s top-pick, The Pittsburgh, PA-based firm that has worked with large and small communities and regions on a variety of economic planning projects. The firm’s strengths include its blending of quantitative and qualitative data to develop practical recommendations, creative approaches to stakeholder engagement, a value system that prioritizes unique and authentic community assets, and experience in helping college towns to leverage campus assets for off-campus prosperity. (Rich Overmoyer is the previous director of the University Economic Development Association and

About the name, Fourth Economy....

“In 2010, we founded Fourth Economy to define a new approach to economic development. One that puts people first and empowers organizations to serve with greater impact, positioning our partners to succeed in the “fourth economy.”

The “fourth economy” represents the convergence of three prior economic phases— agricultural, industrial, and technological—and is defined by collaborative approaches to solving problems, attracting investment, and creating equitable growth.”

Fourth Economy was hired by the United States Economic Development Administration to evaluate its RIS i6 Grant program through which federal funds are awarded to universities to support innovative programs that propel entrepreneurship and economic development).

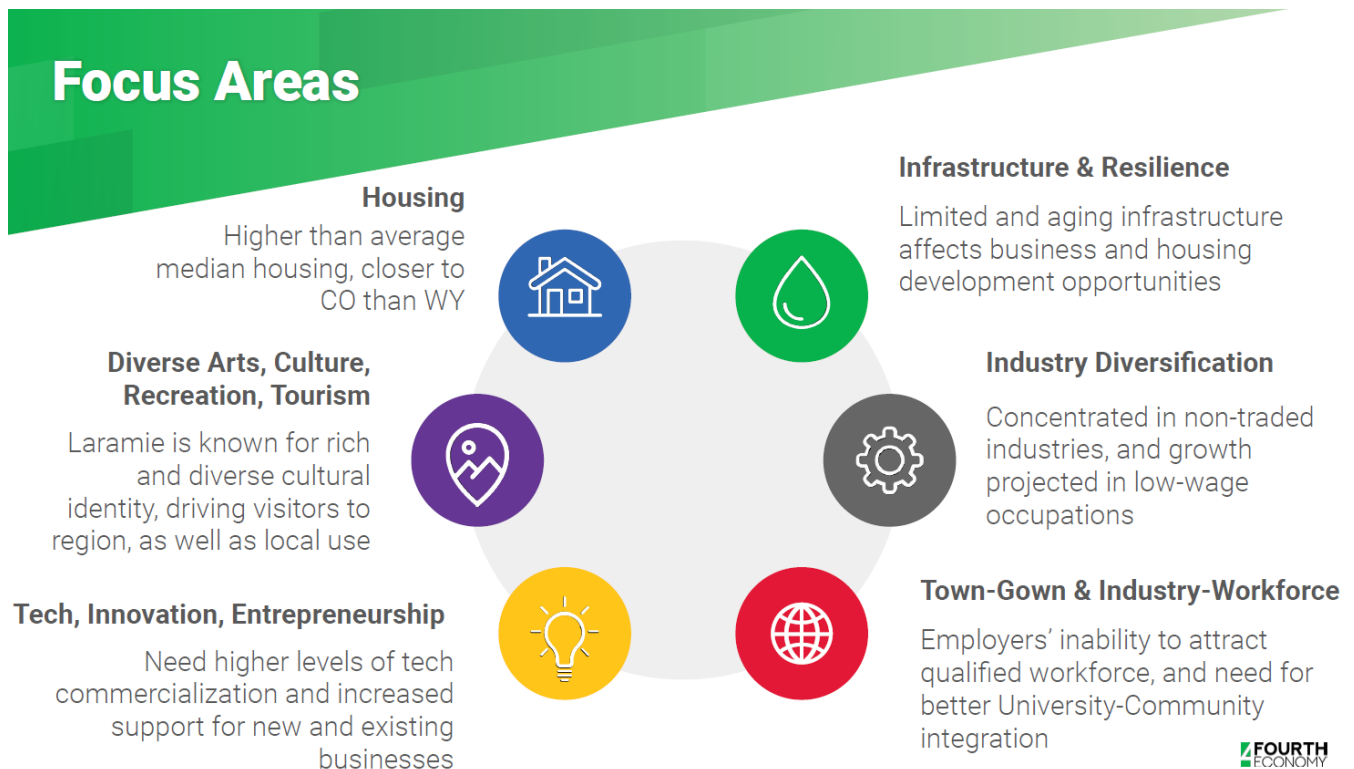
Planning Process

The plan launched in July 2019 following the City Council’s approval of the Professional Services Contract with Fourth Economy. In keeping with the spirit and intent of the Council’s adopted goal, the planning process focused heavily on public engagement. This included the promotion of a community survey that was spread through social media channels of the City and Steering Committee members as well as throughout Laramie with business cards with the survey link distributed at area businesses and events, and also a landing page on the City’s website with information about how to engage in the planning process. The community survey reached over 900 respondents, of which 664 completed the survey.

One of the foundational steps in the planning process was the formation of a 25-member steering committee which helped, in the early stages of the plan, to identify priority planning areas.

Note- A detailed summary of Stakeholder Engagement (Selection Committee, Steering Committee, and Sub-Committee Co-Chairs) and Community Outreach (surveys, public forums, etc.) is attached.

The following six focus areas are detailed here:

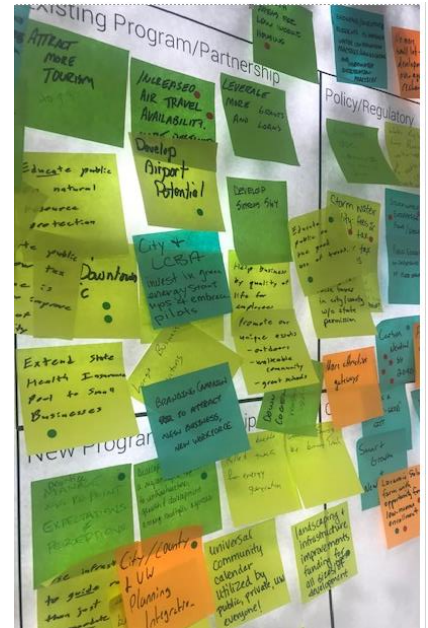


Following the identification of each focus area, Co-Chairs of ad-hoc sub-committees were appointed to advise the Fourth Economy and Steering Committee on local challenges and opportunities related to each focus area, identify additional stakeholders who should be engaged with each focus area, and invite stakeholders to “Build Sessions”.

The Build Sessions functioned like a focus group through which local subject matter experts, advocates, or stakeholders related to a topic area were invited to identify challenges, opportunities, etc, pertaining to that topic area. Each focus area had two Build Sessions. The emphasis of the first Build Session was idea-generation, and the second Build Session focused on refining and prioritizing ideas. A total of twelve Build Sessions were conducted, each lasting two hours. Approximately 122 community members attended the Build Sessions during which 3,360 ideas were generated on Post-its.

The Fourth Economy synthesized and analyzed each idea generated through Build Sessions and presented its findings first to the Sub-Committee Co-Chairs, who in turn, helped to refine various themes and goals. Build Session outcomes were then formulated into draft recommendations and action strategies for the larger Economic Development Steering Committee to consider.

In doing so, the Steering Committee filtered the publicly-generated goals through local data, national trends, best practices, community assets, potential challenges, and organizational capacity to further help the Fourth Economy to bolster, articulate and prioritize each of the recommendations included within the DRAFT plan.



Next Steps

Council’s intent for the economic development plan was that it would replace Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan (attached). Accordingly, the Planning Commission will need to pass a resolution to adopt Thrive Laramie - Community and Economic Development Action Strategy for the Next 10-Years and authorize the replacement this plan with Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan. That action is tentatively scheduled for Planning Commission’s February 10, 2020 meeting.

During its February 18 meeting, the City Council will pass a resolution certifying the Planning Commission’s Action.

Implementation

Implementation will move forward in a manner similar to the development of the plan whereby an Implementation Committee will be formed to, *“provide oversight, direction and accountability, and to be the lead cheerleaders, advocates, and where possible fundraisers for the plan’s recommendations.”* Additionally, Strategy Working Groups will be formed to help propel Implementation Matrix (example attached).

A Thrive Laramie ‘charter’ will be developed and Implementation Committee members will be asked to pledge their engagement. Implementation Committee Co-chairs will be nominated, and Strategy Working Group Lead Conveners will be identified. Lead Conveners of each working group will recruit working group members, who will join Action Teams, and nominate Action Team co-chairs, where applicable. Working Groups will create/update their annual work plan with actions, partners, goals, and metrics.

Stakeholder Engagement & Community Outreach

Stakeholder Engagement

Selection Committee

Role

The role of the Selection Committee is to review proposals, interview candidates and make recommendations to City staff for the hiring of a firm to provide economic development planning services.

Members

Ed Syankowski, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, University of Wyoming
Heather Tupper, Regional Director, Wyoming Business Council
Brady Hammond, Vice President, Laramie County Community College, Albany County Campus
Terri Jones, Albany County Commissioner
Brad Enzi, Executive Director, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
Trey Sherwood, Executive Director, Laramie Main Street Alliance
Janine Jordan, City Manager
Sarah Reese, Administrator, Economic and Community Initiatives

Steering Committee

Role

The role of the Steering Committee is to participate in the development of the recommendations, serve as an advocate and influencer to propel those recommendations into investable actions, and to be a champion of the plan within professional and social networks.

Members

***Chair**, Janine Jordan, Laramie City Manager
***Co-Chair**, Brad Enzi, Director, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
***Co-Chair**, Heather Tupper, Regional Director, Wyoming Business Council
Co-Chair, Sarah Reese, City of Laramie
Jack Skinner, Director Laramie Regional Airport
***Michael Peck**, Vice President, First Interstate Bank & President, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance Board of Directors
***Chaz Avila**, Assistant Vice for President Commercial Banking, ANB Bank & President, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
***Rebecca Miller**, President, ANB Bank & Board Member, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
***Jean Anne Garrison**, Director, University of Wyoming Office of Outreach and Engagement & Liaison, Laramie Main Street
Jack Bedessem, CEO, Trihydro

Anja Bendel, Vice President, Cheyenne LEADS & Past President, Wyoming Economic Development Association
Chris Rothfuss, Senator, Wyoming State Legislature
**Dan Furphy Representative, Wyoming State Legislature
Ed Synakowski, Vice President, of Research & Economic Development University of Wyoming
*BradyHammond, Laramie County Community College, Associate Vice President
Randal Six UL LLC
Kendall Hutchison, Development Specialist, Wyoming Smart Capital Network
Shannon Polk, Chief Operations Officer & Senior Project Manager
Center of Innovation for Flow through Porous Media (COIFPM), High Bay Research Facility & City Planning Commission
Terri Jones, Albany County Board of Commissioners Chair
Trey Sherwood, Director, Laramie Main Street Alliance
Bryan Shuster, City Council Representing Ward 3 & Liaison to Planning Commission
Jayne Pearce, Member, City Council Representing Ward 2 & Liaison to Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
Jessica Stalder, Member, City Council Representing Ward 1 & Liaison to Laramie Main Street Alliance, Downtown Development Board, Airport Board
* **Tim Stamp Development Director, Coffey Engineering Business & Member, Laramie Regional Airport Joint Powers Board
Derek Teini, Planning Manager, City of Laramie

*Sub-Committee Co-Chair

**Past Director, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
(formerly, Laramie Economic Development Corporation)

Sub-Committees

Role

The primary role of the sub-committee is to connect the consulting team to additional community stakeholders that should be engaged and to collaborate with the Steering Committee in the development of consensus around a portfolio of recommendations that will form the basis of the actions that form the implementable plan.

Co-Chairs

Housing

Warren Greaser, Rawstone Development & Vice Chair, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance
Chaz Avila, President, Assistant of Commercial Lending, ANB & President, Downtown Development Authority

Arts, Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Scott Larsen, Director, Albany County Tourism Board
Brian Harrington, Member, City Council Representing Ward 1 & Liaison, Town & Gown Association, Laramie Public Art Coalition, Wyoming Territorial Prison Board, and Laramie Youth Council, and Committee Member, Community and Economic Development Committee, National League of Cities

Tech, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

Mike Peck, VP, First Interstate Bank & Chair, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance

Audrey Jansen, Market Researcher, Small Business Development Center & Chief of Marketing ENDOW Engage

Infrastructure and Resilience

Janine Jordan, City Manager

Heather Tupper, Regional Director, Wyoming Business Council

Industry Diversification

Brad Enzi, Director, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance

Rebecca Miller, President ANB Bank & Member, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance Board of Directors

Town & Gown

Brady Hammond, Associate Vice President, Laramie County Community College

Steve Farkas, Assistant Dean, College of Business MBA Program

Jean Anne Garrison, Director, University of Wyoming Office of Outreach and Engagement

Ed Synakowski, University of Wyoming VP of Research & Economic Development

Community Outreach

35+ individual interviews conducted

Public meetings in each Council Ward

A communitywide survey with 900+ responses (of which 640 were complete)

12 build sessions with 122 participants

3,360 ideas on Post-it Notes

Livestream of Steering Committee Meetings

Outreach at local events, including Thursday Local Market, Downtown Farmer's Market, Student Union Breezeway, e2e, and Mountain Film Festival

Monthly updates to City Council, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance Board and Laramie Main Street Boards

One meeting with former President Nichols and two meetings with Interim President Theobald

