



City of Laramie

Planning Division
P.O. Box C
Laramie, WY 82073

Planning: (307) 721-5207
Fax: (307) 721-5248

LARAMIE PLANNING COMMISSION

April 13, 2020
STAFF REPORT

FILE: CPA-20-02 Amendment to the Laramie Comprehensive Plan 2015, Future Land Use Map 3.2

REQUEST: Adoption of a revised Future Land Use Map (Map 3.2) from Suburban Residential (SR) to Auto-Urban Multi-Family (AUM) and Urban Residential (UR) for an area approximately 24.34 acres in size

LOCATION: Southwest corner of Colorado Ave. and Venture Dr.

APPLICANT(S)/AGENT: Laramie Reboot, LLC

OWNER: Regions Holdings Group LLC, Mark Gunnerson, City of Laramie

PREPARED BY: Matthew Cox, Associate Planner

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move to **approve** Planning Commission Resolution 2020-03, amending Future Land Use Plan Map (Map3.2) of the Comprehensive Plan for the property described in the resolution, located at the southwest corner of Colorado Ave. and Venture Dr, for an area approximately 24.34 acres in size, by changing the Future Land Use Designation from Suburban Residential (SR) to Auto Urban Multi-Family (AUM) and Urban Residential (UR), based on findings of fact and conclusions of law, and to forward the item to City Council for certification.

APPLICABLE CODE SECTION(S):

Wyoming Statutes (W.S.) §15-1-502 authorizes Cities to adopt a Master Plan for the physical development of the City. The Laramie City Council certified the Laramie Comprehensive Plan on August 21, 2007.

The UDC (LMC §15.06.060.X – Comprehensive Plan Amendments) sets forth the procedure for amending the Comprehensive Plan. All Comprehensive Plan amendments must follow the same approval process as the approved Laramie Comprehensive Plan. All requests must receive approval from the Laramie Planning Commission in order to take effect. Planning Commission action will be forwarded to City Council for their certification.

BACKGROUND:

Currently the lot at the Southwest corner of Colorado Ave. and Venture Dr. is in the county and its identified Future Land Use designation is **Suburban Residential**. **Suburban Residential** environments are sought as relief from more intensive urban settings, thereby leading to the

popularity of contemporary neighborhoods denoted for their larger lots, privacy fences, and open areas. This classification would be considered your typical suburban subdivision.

The proposed development proposes that the future land use be amended to **Auto-Urban Multi-Family** and **Urban Residential**. Auto Urban Multi-Family designations typically include apartments and townhouse-style attached single-family units manufactured home communities, and site-built homes on small lots with open space devoted to play areas and perimeter green space. Urban Residential is typically defined as a single-family and attached housing. New development is recommended to provide parks and public open space. This differs from Auto-urban Single-Family primarily by providing all garage access from alleys to create a pedestrian streetscape. In addition, multi-floored and mixed-use units can allow for apartment and condominium living.

SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:

	Future Land Use Designation (Map 3.2)	Zoning	Land Use
Subject Property	Suburban Residential (SR) [Proposed Auto-Urban Multi-Family and Urban Residential]	County Rural Residential	Undeveloped/City Pump Station
North	Urban Residential (UR)	Limited Multi-Family w/ independent Manufactured Homes (R2M)	Mobile Home Park/Undeveloped
East	Public Institutional (PI)	General Commercial (C2)	Undeveloped
South	Suburban Residential (SR)	Rural Residential (RR)	Single Family Residential
West	Suburban Residential (SR)	County Rural Residential	Undeveloped

Comprehensive Plan & Housing Study 2030 Relationship

The Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use (FLU) Map (Map 3.2) shows this area as Suburban Residential. The development requests for a comprehensive plan amendment that changes the future use of Suburban Residential (SR), which are sought as relief from more intensive urban settings, thereby leading to the popularity of contemporary neighborhoods denoted for their larger lots, privacy fences, and open areas, to Auto Urban Multi-family (AUM) and Urban Residential (UR) which is intended for apartments, townhouses, and attached single family homes. The Auto Urban Multi-Family (AUM) and Urban Residential (UR) land use designation would allow for approval of a request to R3 (Multi-Family Residential), R2 (Limited Multi-family) and R2M (Limited Multi-family w/independent Manufactured Home) zoning.

Staff believes this use still lies within the Comprehensive Plan’s parameters due to the variety of housing needed in this part of town. Land for almost all housing types, including single-family housing and multi-family housing is in short supply within the city and annexing land for this purpose falls in direct line with the Laramie Comprehensive Plan, Thrive Laramie Community and Economic Development Action Strategy and the Housing Study 2030.

1. Activity #17 under Section 6 of the Housing Study 2030
 - a. **General Rental Housing Program, 515 to 560 Units**, scattered site, mixed income, consisting of 2- & 3- bedroom duplexes/triplexes, patio and town home units with standard amenities, to meet the affordable rental housing needs of low- to moderate-income workforce households (51% to 125% AMI).
2. Action Step 5 under Section 2 of the *Housing Study 2030*
 - a. Support a pro-active approach towards **rental housing development projects** to meet the needs of **local college students** and young professionals in Laramie. These projects should be designed and developed in a size and scale suitable for the neighborhood locations. **The development of single room occupancy multi-unit housing, targeted to students and young professionals, should be considered.**
3. Under Chapter 3: Community Character of the Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Policies and Action Statements:
 - a. 9. Neighborhoods shall be designed with a variety of housing types and sizes thereby offering affordable living options in all areas.
 - i. In this area, the housing style is generally single-family detached. So, allowing lots for single-family townhomes or other multi-family structures will provide housing for a mixed level of income.
4. Thrive Laramie Community and Economic Development Action Strategy 2020:
 - a. Initiate planning efforts that consider growth opportunities in north and **West Laramie** to determine how these areas should grow and aid the city and county in conversations around what type of **development should occur to attract investment.**
 - i. Staff believes that developments of this size are needed to market West Laramie in order to attract investment for the development of amenities in West Laramie.
5. Thrive Laramie Community and Economic Development Action Strategy 2020:
 - a. A second foundational barrier to business readiness is housing that is of high quality and quantity – a requirement of all people that is in short supply in Laramie.
 - b. Increasing the availability of workforce housing will give employers confidence that they can invest in Laramie and support their employees.
 - c. Increase the volume of construction, as well as enhance the existing quality and diversity of housing stock in strategic locations to contribute to a more livable Laramie.
 - d. In the case of parcels that sit on the city-county line and that abut city land but are technically outside of its limits, a best practice solution is for the city to annex the intervening property to easily extend city infrastructure to that property.

Furthermore, staff believes that this area lends itself to higher density development, particularly due to the distance to Snowy Range Rd. and the commercial corridor. Not only is this area located nearby the infrastructure that is necessary to support a development like this, including major roads, water and sewer. Other amenities, such as pathways, schools and retail services are all located nearby. These components make it reasonable to consider that including a mixture of housing types in the area will only help achieve a more balanced approach to housing in the area and hopefully spur the investment into more amenities.

The proposed Zoning Amendment generally complies with the Land Use Plan and does not prohibit future development in accordance with the Plan.

JUSTIFICATIONS REGARDING THE AMENDMENT AND ANALYSIS OF REQUIRED FINDINGS:

Pursuant to LMC § 15.06.060.X, the following findings must be considered and as applicable, made in the affirmative, in order to approve the amendment to the Comprehensive Plan:

1. The proposed amendment is based on a change in projections or assumptions from those on which the comprehensive plan is based;

1. *Staff Response:* Under Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan – Thrive Laramie Community and Economic Development Action Strategy 2020.
 - a. Consider growth opportunities in north and west Laramie and what type of development should occur to attract investment.
 - i. This is identified as action item under #4 of *Strategy 13. Work to Expand the Quality and Quantity of Housing Options Available*. A development of this size, bringing a large population to West Laramie, staff hopes that this spurs investment into the Snowy Range commercial corridor.

This area, under chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan is identified as an urban growth area and is also surrounded by urban growth designations.

Based on support from these plans and the general lack of higher density zoning within the community, staff believes that this area lends itself to higher density development due to the fact that Laramie is constrained to grow either north, west or south because of the Aquifer on the east side and existing utility infrastructure needed to support development of this scale. Due to this finding, staff believes that the area is adequate for denser urban growth.

2. The proposed amendment is based on identification of new issues, needs, or opportunities that are not adequately addressed in the comprehensive plan;

Staff Response: This amendment falls in line with goals and actions identified within the Comprehensive Plan, Housing Study and the Economic Development Plan, but the current land use does not allow for the type of density needed that R2, R2M and R3 does allow for in order to reach our housing numbers needed and to encourage amenity investment into West Laramie.

3. The proposed amendment is based on a change in the policies, objectives, principles, or standards governing the physical development of the city;

Staff Response: No major policies have changed regarding the physical development of the community. Policies relating to this development pertain to increasing density within our city boundaries and increasing the amount of housing. The current, future land use was not in line with these objectives are more in line with county objectives of retaining a more rural, suburban development pattern.

4. The proposed amendment may result in unique development opportunities that will offer substantial benefits to the city; or

Staff Response: The Comprehensive Plan Amendment does offer unique development opportunities in this part of town if approved, that have previously been dominated by large lot, single-family residence. Due to reasons stated above a higher density development will support goals from the Comprehensive Plan and Housing Plan. More specifically, the R3 zoning and in part the R2M zoning will allow for multi-family residential units in West Laramie that are rare in this part of Laramie as well as the rest of Laramie.

5. The proposed amendment is based on an identification of errors or omissions in the comprehensive plan.

Staff Response: Not applicable.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Legal notice was published in the Laramie Boomerang on March 28, 2020. Letters were sent to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the subject property on March 27, 2020. Additionally, the property has been posted with the required development proposal sign. Staff has received multiple enquiries surrounding the project, mainly the Preliminary Plat.

Below is a summary of the public comments that we have received. Attached to the Staff Report are copies of the emails we received from the public.

- 1) Privacy concerns of neighbors during construction
- 2) Neighbors concerns of livestock escaping into the development

Staff's Response to Public Concerns:

Staff believes that concerns around privacy are not of detrimental to the public's health and well-being. Development is necessary for the growth of Laramie and the land under consideration is surrounded by the city on the north, south and east side. Staff believes this is a natural urban growth area for Laramie.

Concerns around livestock should be solved through the construction of a fence, separating the site under consideration and that of the concerned public. There is also residential development to the south and staff has not heard any concern of livestock entering the residential land at that location.

CONCLUSION OF FINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT FINDINGS AND FINDINGS OF LAW:

Findings of Fact:

- The amendment complies with applicable approval criteria LMC §15.06.060.X.

Conclusions of Law:

- The applicant is proceeding in accordance with the requirements of Laramie Municipal Code Title 15.

ALTERNATIVES:

Following the public hearing and review of the testimony and staff report, the Planning Commission may choose to take one of the following actions:

1. Approve the revised Future Land Use Map 3.2; (**Staff's Recommendation**)
2. Deny the resolution;
3. Modify the revised Future land use Map as warranted by the Commission's consideration and discussion of evidence; or
4. Postpone the revised Future Land Use Map until issues identified during the meeting can be resolved.

Majority Vote of the Commission Required:

Wyoming law requires a higher level of approval for Comprehensive Plan amendments than a simple majority of those present. Here is the relevant subsection from Wyoming Statutes:

"The adoption of the plan or any part, amendment or addition shall be by resolution carried by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of the commission." [W.S. 15-1-501]

As our Planning Commission is a seven-member body per Municipal Code, a Comprehensive Plan amendment cannot be approved unless it receives four or more favorable votes – no matter how many Commissioners are absent from a meeting or how many vacancies exist on the Commission. For this plan to be approved, at least four members are required to vote in the affirmative.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Move to recommend that the City Council **approve** Planning Commission Resolution 2020-03 amending the City of Laramie's Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Map (Map 3.2) changing the designation from Suburban Residential (SR) to Auto-Urban Multi-Family (AUM) and Urban Residential (UR) according to the findings of fact and conclusions of law.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map (1 page)
2. Future Land-Use Map Amended (1 page)
3. Public Comment (4 pages)
4. Resolution 2020-03 (2 pages)
5. Attachment A (1 page)