



January 14, 2021

Members of City Council -

LMSA supports the proposed amendments to the UDC as they are in line with national best practices in downtown redevelopment and strategies documented in the 2012 Downtown Development Plan. While we support holistically the adoption of Design Standards in order to preserve the unique character of the downtown district; taking into consideration the economic downturn and feedback received, at this time, we recommend focusing on the standards that encourage new construction so it is easier to build and more effective do business downtown, as well as still providing continuity of design for the district.

We believe these standards include:

For new construction, remove the building height limit and allow for a 30 feet minimum

Ensure parking requirements for all new construction, both commercial and residential are the same (i.e. no parking requirement)

For new construction, allow developers to build lot line to lot line, with an 80/20 minimum to maximize land use in the district

For new construction, support the installation of 70% storefront window transparency

After feedback from businesses and property owners, Main Street understands the timing is not right for full adoption of the design standards. In the midst of the pandemic and economic crises, businesses, developers, and downtown advocates haven't had the bandwidth to fully understand how these changes will impact them. There is a perception that these standards will place a burden on entrepreneurs.

To assist in the improvement of economic conditions, Laramie Main Street believes the focus at this time should be on making it easier to do business downtown. By updating design standards for new construction, we support budding entrepreneurs, developers, and investors in growing the diversity of businesses within the district. A strong mix of both new and existing businesses benefits us all by driving additional traffic downtown, increasing property values, and generating new sales.

Once Laramie gets back on its feet, LMSA will work with the Planning Dept. to bring back the remaining standards that will assist the commercial district in maintaining its economic and cultural vibrancy. We believe by preserving downtown's built environment, including authentic building materials, transparency and historic storefront styles, we are creating a more resilient local economy for years to come.

Sincerely,

Chaz Avila, Board Chair
307-745-1452

Trey Sherwood, Director
307-760-3355

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**National Main Street
Center**
a subsidiary of the
National Trust *for* Historic Preservation



July 7, 2020

Laramie City Council
406 Iverson Avenue
Laramie, WY 82070

To Members of Laramie's City Council:

On behalf of the National Main Street Center, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the proposed design standards for Laramie.

Since 1980, Main Street America™ has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for 40 years. Today, we have a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. We work closely with the Laramie Main Street Alliance (LMSA) and Wyoming Main Street to support these comprehensive downtown revitalization efforts in Laramie.

Quality commercial district design is a cornerstone of our comprehensive Main Street Approach to commercial district revitalization, as design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart. The proposed design standards will support continued quality design in downtown Laramie and help ensure Laramie's historic buildings are there for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

Further, these design standards will help Laramie in its current preservation and economic development efforts. As you may know, LMSA has been selected as one of twelve Main Street organizations to participate in MSA's inaugural National Park Service Façade Improvement Grant Program, which will provide up to \$47,000 in commercial façade improvement grants per community. Laramie's proposed design standards will support LMSA's outreach to building owners and help building owners in their project designs. And, as you know, once these standards are adopted by Council, LMSA will reactivate its local façade improvement program.

Façade improvement programs like these not only encourage historic preservation of the built environment, but also contribute to business owners' operational support and the local economy.

We are excited to see these efforts develop in Laramie. If I can provide more information or be of assistance in some way, please call me at 312-610-5605 or email at lwallace@savingplaces.org.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrice R".

Patrice Frey
President and CEO



June, 25, 2020



To whom it may concern;

The Community Builders team, in collaboration with Cascadia Partners, strongly supports the zoning code amendments under consideration for the DC Zoning District. The proposed changes to height and parking requirements will be a major boon to Downtown Laramie and will support the city's goals for a vital and walkable downtown. Based on analysis of these amendments, we can state with confidence that they will increase the feasibility, affordability, and urban form of development in Downtown Laramie.

Feasibility

Easing parking requirements and increasing maximum height will allow for a greater variety of high-quality building types that match the largely 2-story character of downtown. This is especially important for the Downtown real estate market which has seen relatively little activity in recent decades. Our experience working in towns across the intermountain west has taught us that expanding the range of building types, heights, and parking configurations possible, leads to greater developer interest. In fact, real estate pro-forma testing done during this project showed a clear relationship between parking, height, and the feasibility of downtown construction.

Affordability

Laramie lacks the "entry level" housing needed to attract and retain young professionals. Current parking requirements and height limits in the DC zone make building low cost housing such as studios and one-bedroom apartments financially infeasible. By easing parking requirements and increasing maximum height, developers will be able to fit more units in downtown development projects thereby reducing the overall rental rate they need to charge.

Urban Form

Current height and parking requirements make it impossible to build the types of buildings that make Downtown Laramie attractive. These historic structures, many of which were built with no off-street parking, add to the vitality and walkable nature of Downtown Laramie. Removing parking requirements for residential construction will allow new buildings to be built that better match the character of existing structures. Moreover, the relatively small lots that exist throughout much of Downtown Laramie make providing off-street parking difficult or impossible given space constraints. Given the cost of shared municipal parking structures or on-site underground parking, reducing parking requirements is the cost-effective way to encourage more walkable urban form.

Sincerely,

Alison Bourquin, AICP, PLA
Community Builders
Senior Project Manager

Alex Steinberger
Cascadia Partners
Partner