

LARAMIE AREA GROWTH PLAN: PHASE 1 SUMMARY

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

What's the Laramie Area Growth Plan?

Albany County and the City of Laramie are collaborating on the Laramie Area Growth Plan for the unincorporated County area surrounding the City. This effort will result in a land use map and associated and an Intergovernmental Agreement that will allow the County and City to respond to development pressures in a more proactive manner, resulting in better service provision, greater predictability for property owners, policy direction and a higher quality of life for the community. As shown on the timeline below, the project is anticipated to last from March through November 2022.

Project Timeline



Why is this plan needed?

The County and City are seeing an increase of growth pressure in the rural-urban interface at the edge of Laramie. Most of Albany County's residents (total population of 39,000) live within the City of Laramie (total population of 32,000) or the immediately surrounding area. While growth in our community can be beneficial and allows us to continue to thrive economically, appropriate policies and standards are needed to ensure logical patterns of development and cost-effective provision of services like roads and utilities.

How will this plan help the Laramie Area community?

- For **residents and visitors**, the growth plan will identify elements of community character and provide details like general locations for future commercial, residential (all density types) and open space that will guide the future of our community.



- For **business and property owners**, the growth plan will include land use recommendations and overall development policies.
- For **community leaders and decision-makers**, the growth plan will provide guidance for future growth and development; policies, programs and services; resource allocation; potential code updates; and capital improvements.

What has been done so far?

Phase 1 of the Laramie Area Growth Plan involved **kick off activities** with City and County staff. In addition to presentations to elected and appointed officials, a key activity was **touring the area** to see and discuss the existing challenges and opportunities and inform the next steps in the process. Another foundational piece of Phase 1 was gathering data to understand existing development patterns and infrastructure, and the need for future infrastructure and utility investments.

In addition to this behind-the-scenes work, Phase 1 marked the beginning of **public engagement activities**, resulting in 40 stakeholder interviews and 190 questionnaire responses.

2. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

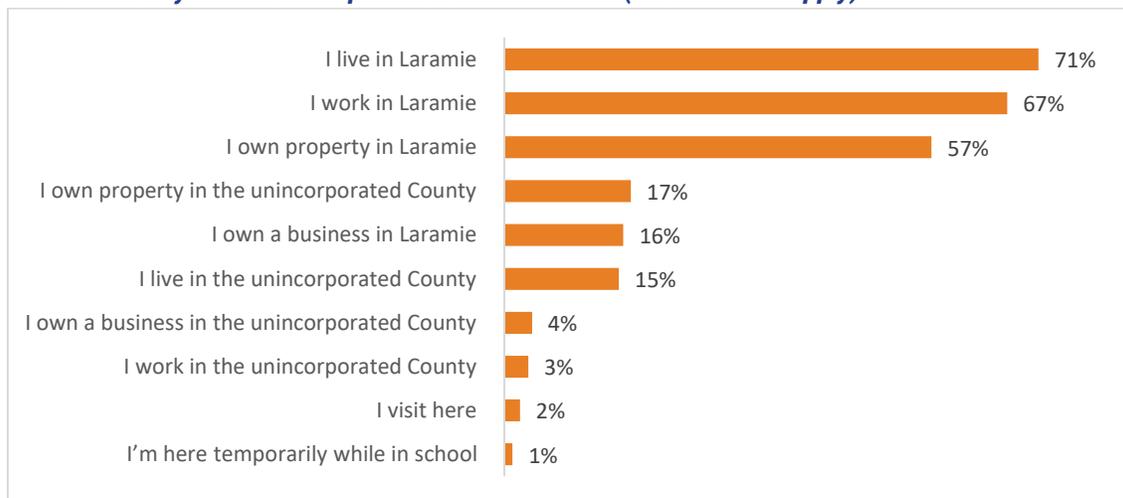
WHO WE HEARD FROM

Stakeholders represented a variety of residents, business owners, landowners, developers, real estate specialists, utility districts, university staff, community groups, and other community interests.

The **online questionnaire** included a series of ‘optional’ demographic questions that offered a more complete picture of who we heard from.

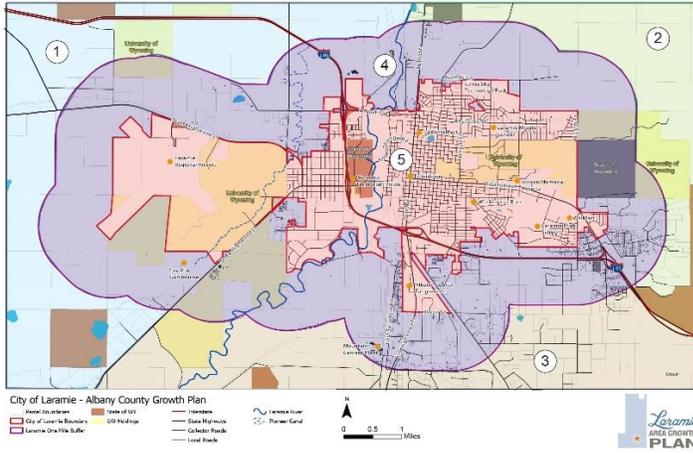
Here are the questionnaire responses:

Tell us a little about your relationship with the Laramie Area. (Check all that apply)



Total responses: 189

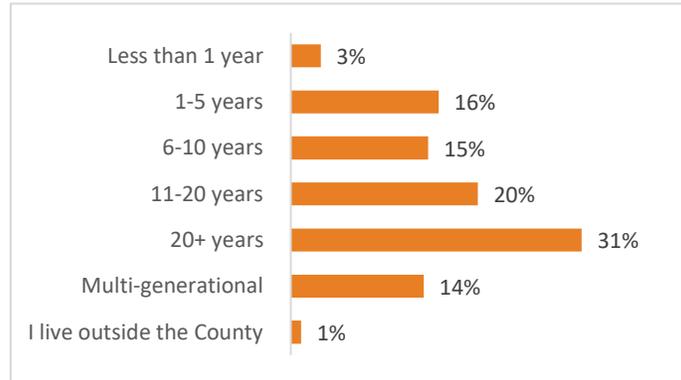
Where is your primary residence?



- 3%** Area 1 (light blue)
Northwest of the one-mile buffer
- 3%** Area 2 (light green)
Northeast of the one-mile buffer
- 8%** Area 3 (beige)
South of the one-mile buffer
- 7%** Area 4 (purple)
Within the one-mile buffer
- 73%** Area 5 (pink)
Within Laramie
- 7%** Outside the map extent

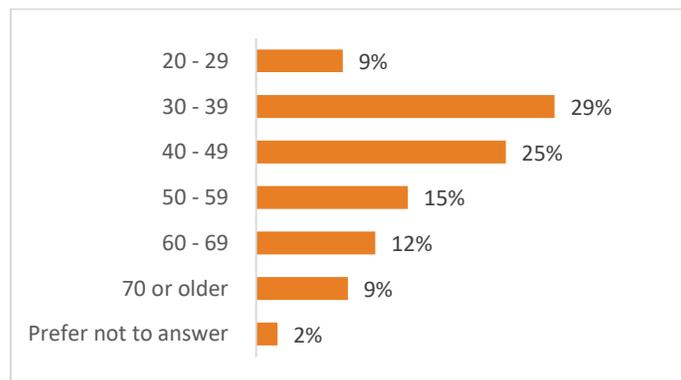
Total responses: 189

How long have you lived in the Laramie Area?



Total responses: 190

What is your age?



Total responses: 188



WHAT WE HEARD

Community interviews revealed more points of general agreement than disagreement. Many interviewees agreed that the Laramie area has faced challenges providing adequate workforce and attainable housing, as well as diverse economic development opportunities. In addition, many interviewees noted opportunities to improve transportation connectivity (of roads, trails, neighborhood), access to 'in-town' outdoor recreation, and water quality protection. However, the primary points of disagreement or tension were concerning the type and enforcement of regulations, the cost of development, financial responsibility for infrastructure improvements, and the dynamic between the community and the University of Wyoming.

Below are a series of opportunities revealed from the **community interviews**. Further below is a summary of responses to the **online questionnaire**.

Opportunities identified during community interviews

Opportunities have been categorized by key themes revealed during the interviews and are presented in no particular order. For a list of the questions used to guide the community interviews, please refer to Appendix A.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Honor Laramie's "small-town" and "rural feel" character." (Note: these two terms are described in the questionnaire summary further below)
- Preserve viewsheds
- Improve the visual appearance of the Highway 287 and I-80 entryways to enhance Laramie's character
- Promote public art, spaces, and amenities (e.g., parks, community centers, plazas, and historic buildings)
- Support "Open Streets" programs (pedestrian-oriented events that replace vehicle traffic for a few hours) in denser areas
- Prioritize pedestrian-scale design (e.g., small-scale buildings oriented toward the pedestrian, and a comfortable place to walk) in denser areas of the community
- Balance new development with infill and redevelopment of existing developed areas

HOUSING

- Collaborate with builders/developers to create opportunities for the construction of attainable housing as well as housing options for workers at different pay scales
- Work with the University of Wyoming and other community partners to improve student housing options
- Attract and retain builders and trades workers to mitigate housing shortages
- Ensure denser areas are developed as "complete neighborhoods" (with shopping, services, jobs, recreation, and other amenities nearby) rather than solely residences
- Provide smaller lot size and home options
- Promote neighborhood development near existing infrastructure/developments in proximity to existing services and amenities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Promote neighborhood retail spaces that contribute to better pedestrian and bicycle connections and shorter vehicle trips
- Attract businesses that provide vital community services (hardware stores, grocery stores, etc.)
- Advertise “move-in ready” properties with special attention given to offices (e.g., for a tech company), light industrial uses (e.g., warehouse and manufacturing), and big-box stores (e.g., large-scale home supply store)
- Balance the needs and community benefits of new vs. established local businesses
- Collaborate with incoming employers to promote competitive career options
- Promote the establishment of those stores that can mitigate economic leakage to other communities

CONNECTIVITY (ROADS, TRAILS, AND NEIGHBORHOODS)

- Improve and expand connections between existing and new trails; with attention to connecting the west part of town
- Integrate plowable multi-modal trails to allow for year-round transportation
- Reassess speed limits to enhance safety for drivers, pedestrians, and wildlife
- Identify connections for new roads to increase transportation efficiency
- Construct a commercial interchange at 30th Street and I-80

OUTDOOR RECREATION (OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND TRAILS)

- Expand parks
- Leverage outdoor recreation opportunities for visitors and tourism
- Include dog-friendly parks and trails

REGULATIONS (ZONING AND STANDARDS)

- Revise land use codes to allow for a wider typology of housing, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and mixed-use housing
- Assess need to differentiate regulations for out-of-town homeownership and short-term rentals
- Increase flexibility in land use code/regulations to incentivize to streamline the development process
- Consider the development of a fee-in-lieu system for developers to contribute to transportation projects
- Encourage xeriscaping to conserve water
- Develop/improve information guides on design standards for developers
- Provide a practical rationale for all new or updated regulations
- Ensure fair treatment by enforcing regulations consistently
- Balance the need for urban agriculture with that of housing and urban services

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Maintain quality service provision as the community continues to grow
- Collaborate with service providers on unique development proposals that may require review of infrastructure capacity (e.g., high energy/electricity users and technology warehouse uses)
- Assess the need and timeline for landfill expansion to support population growth
- Assess opportunities to connect to City sewer systems to minimize the use of septic systems in sensitive groundwater areas
- Collaborate with districts to ensure timely delivery of emergency services (Fire, EMS, Police)



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- Identify opportunities for the City, University, and community to collaborate on key projects
- Collaborate with existing and prospective employers and educational institutions to keep skills development on par with jobs trends
- Increase transparency around management of government funds
- Streamline funding and implementation of projects to keep pace with demand

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Expand commonly used notification platforms (i.e., social media, email) with other news outlets (radio, local news, direct mail)
- Identify and equip community connectors or influencers that can share City news with the networks
- Collaborate with [Laramie Live](#) to raise awareness of City projects and programs
- Facilitate public events (e.g., speaker panel events, town halls, etc.) that address community concerns
- Make information easily accessible on a "one-stop-shop" community website

NATURAL RESOURCES

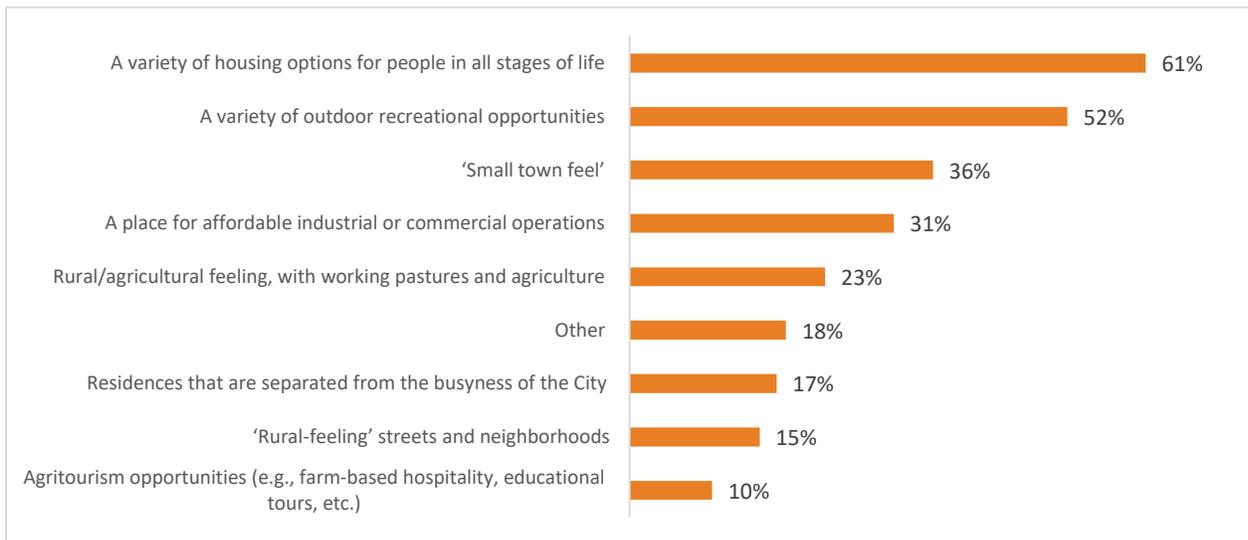
- Implement and/or reinforce dark sky policies
- Preserve wildlife corridors and habitat in and around Laramie (e.g., wetland and riparian zones)
- Maintain open spaces to increase wildlife safety and protect viewsheds
- Protect Laramie River water quality
- Educate public on the responsibilities of living in and around the aquifer protection area as well as general education about water conservation
- Promote use of solar panels on residential homes and in grazing and agricultural areas
- Protect Laramie's air quality

Responses to online questionnaire #1

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING THE PROJECT AREA?



WHEN YOU THINK OF THE PROJECT AREA IN 2050, WHAT FEATURES WOULD MAKE IT AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE OR VISIT? (SELECT YOUR TOP 3)



Total responses: 190

DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT THE DIFFERENT SELECTIONS MEAN TO QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

'A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS'

- Smaller-style homes that can accommodate single families and professionals, and people just starting out. Houses that help retain the current workforce and university graduates
- Age-in place housing that is attainable and accessible
- Housing that integrates amenities into the community, keeping residents from needing to travel for the basics

'A VARIETY OF OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES'

- Multi-use trails, access to open space, dog-friendly areas, and river-front development
- Year-long recreation such as: recreational sports fields, walking paths, parks, and biking lanes throughout the community
- Activities both in and outside of Laramie that allow for multi-generational participation and are accessible and inclusive

'SMALL TOWN FEEL'

- A well-connected, friendly community where members feel excited about their town. A quiet place where the community design is people-centered and there is little traffic
- A safe and walkable community with a rich downtown area that hosts a multitude of local businesses, attractions, and activities
- An aesthetically consistent town that remains loyal to its historic roots and protects its viewshed to the surrounding natural areas

'A PLACE FOR AFFORDABLE INDUSTRIAL OR COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS'

- Big box stores that offer the 'basics': home improvement/hardware, supermarkets, clothing stores, and health clinics
- Entertainment businesses that cater to young professionals, college students, and families.
- Manufacturing businesses; more industry to increase jobs in the area
- Office space for tech companies

'RURAL/AGRICULTURAL FEELING, WITH WORKING PASTURES AND AGRICULTURE'

- Preservation of local ranches, integration of ranching/agriculture into community (community gardens, backyard chickens, 4-H), and support for small-scale, local agriculture
- Open spaces, plentiful grazing land and pasture with allowance for livestock, appreciation for rural and agricultural lifestyle
- Residential areas with large lots, no subdivisions, and enough space to preserve the natural habitat for wildlife

'OTHER'

- More dynamic and integrated living options to amenities
- Entertainment options for the community during the winter months
- Small-scale, unique developments that add to Laramie's community character and increase connectivity, bikeability, and walkability
- Paved roads, safer streets for pedestrians, increased public spaces that add to the social enrichment of the community



'RESIDENCES THAT ARE SEPARATED FROM THE BUSYNESS OF THE CITY'

- Separated communities from the University that allows students the "college experience" without disturbing family-oriented residential areas
- Distance from main roads, high-traffic areas, and busy parts of town
- Emphasize development of residential areas and parks outside of the city, while implementing infill and redevelopment of the city center

'RURAL FEELING STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS'

- Single-family homes on larger lots with an ample yard and enough space between homes to preserve privacy
- Low density residential homes surrounded by open space, trees, and native plants
- Places where neighbors know each other, where streets are safe and urban agriculture is allowed

'AGRITOURISM OPPORTUNITIES (E.G., FARM-BASED HOSPITALITY, EDUCATIONAL TOURS, ETC.)'

- Opportunities that cater to the local community: educational classes on gardening, seasonal events (Fall/Halloween/Christmas), farmer's markets
- Opportunities that bring in outside visitors: Horse riding, farm tours, pick-your-own produce
- Collaborate with local organizations or businesses who are already participating in agritourism (Audubon, University, local landowners, Game and Fish)



APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction Questions

1. How long have you lived within the Laramie Area or operated a business here?
2. What attracts you/keeps you here?
3. What is your association with the community?

General Questions

1. What are your future plans for your property and/or business?
2. What are the top challenges or opportunities you would like to see addressed during the Area Growth Plan process?
3. What are the key features that the County and City need to provide specific focus? (e.g., infrastructure, development process, regulations, resource protection, coordination etc.)?
4. How can the County and City best respond to current/future market demands for land use changes (residential, commercial, and industrial development)?
5. Regulations are a likely second step on this process, what do you hope or expect to see?
6. How can we ensure that the Laramie Area Growth Plan process supports existing businesses?
7. As the community develops in the future, do you have any concerns with the availability of infrastructure/services?
8. What is the best way to engage stakeholders/ the public throughout the Plan Area? In key areas?
9. What is the most important question that we didn't ask you, from your perspective, that needs to be answered as part of this effort?