

CONDITIONS AND OUTLOOK



CHAPTER

This assessment of demographic and socioeconomic factors offers a brief snapshot of the past conditions and present characteristics of Laramie and Albany County. This assessment provides an understanding of their constraints and opportunities and what the future may hold. The findings of this analysis will be used for more detailed evaluations of historic trends and future planning considerations as each element of the plan is assembled. This outlook provides a basis for determining future land use requirements and demands for public facilities and services, but also allows advance planning to effectively guide future development in a desirable and fiscally responsible manner.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine how Laramie has grown since its incorporation, identify current characteristics and resources that will contribute to the community's vision for the Year 2025 and beyond, as well as identify the trends that will impact the future course of its physical and economic development. This chapter provides baseline data and analyses that underscore the issues and problems outlined in *Chapter 1, Planning Challenges*, which will guide policy development and implementation in the subsequent chapters of this plan. It is not intended as a comprehensive assessment of the City's demographics, but, rather, as a foundation from which the other elements of this plan may build upon in their more detailed analyses, policy formulation, and recommendations.

This chapter briefly assesses and compares with the county, state, and other cities both demographic and socio-economic trends, including historic, current, and projected population; ethnic and household composition; age and gender; income and poverty level; housing occupancy, tenure and value; and employment and labor force statistics. This analysis is valuable in that it allows assessment of the community in terms of where it has been in years past, where it is presently, and where it appears to be headed in the forthcoming years based upon the best available data and forecasts. The use of other communities, as well as the County and State, provides a baseline comparison to signify how Laramie is doing relative to other proximate jurisdictions. This "big-picture" view

Laramie was named one of the best locations for outdoor activities in 2005, and the State has been consistently in the top 15 most livable states, ranking 4th in 2005 behind New Hampshire, Minnesota, and Vermont. These and other livability factors are significant to the attractiveness of the community as a place to live, work, and recreate.

enables community decision-makers and residents to better understand the issues and challenges and, subsequently, develop policies and implementation strategies to proactively manage the future course of the community. Central to this plan is that there are clear connections between the identified issues and the corresponding policy response and strategic implementation plan.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

This section is intended to briefly provide regional context of the community, in terms of its geographic and natural settings. The audience of this plan extends beyond the current population to include future permanent citizens, student residents, prospective businesses and investors, tourists, and visitors. Therefore, this section provides information for all readers of this plan, including those who are not yet familiar with the qualities and values of the community.

Location

Laramie is located in southeast Wyoming, within Albany County. It is situated approximately 47 miles west of the State capital, Cheyenne, along Interstate 80. The Wyoming-Colorado State line is 26 miles south along U.S. 287, which extends southeasterly toward Fort Collins, Colorado, and continues south toward Denver, Colorado, the closest major metropolitan area.

Interstate 80 traverses the state in an east-to-west alignment, providing an interstate highway connection from Laramie east to Cheyenne and west through Rawlins, Rock Springs, Green

River, and Evanston, Wyoming. This interstate highway provides national inter-modal access for the community, which aids in its visibility and, thus, its economic development. Laramie is also relatively close to Interstate 25, which provides north/south access from Interstate 90 in Buffalo, Wyoming, south through Wyoming and into Colorado. Both Interstates 80 and 25 give Laramie good national and international accessibility.

Within Albany County, Laramie covers an area of 11 square miles and is the most populous community, consisting of over 80 percent of the County's population since 1950. Other communities within the County have small populations, including, 235 persons in Rock River, 191 persons in Centennial, and 80 persons in Albany (2000 US Census). Within the County, the Medicine Bow National Forest occupies a significant portion of the land area, including a considerable amount to the east and west of Laramie, as well as in the



Laramie is located within Southeast Wyoming's Albany County, adjacent to the Medicine Bow National Forest.

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northern portion of the County. The City's location on the banks of the Laramie River was, in part, the reason for the City's founding as a home to early trappers and traders. This attractive resource continues to play a role today in the natural environment and urban development form.

SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT

Laramie is located on a high prairie in an environment rich in natural and scenic resources, including the meandering Laramie River, the Laramie Range framing its eastern edge, and the Snowy Range Mountains visible on the western horizons. The natural features contribute significantly to the western character of the community, which is highly valued by residents and appreciated by passers-by and visitors.

The confluence of water, mountains, and flatland vistas contributes to Laramie's quality of life and the active lifestyle of its citizens. The emphasis on the outdoors is a contributing factor to the recognition of the State and City being regarded as an enjoyable place to live and raise a family.

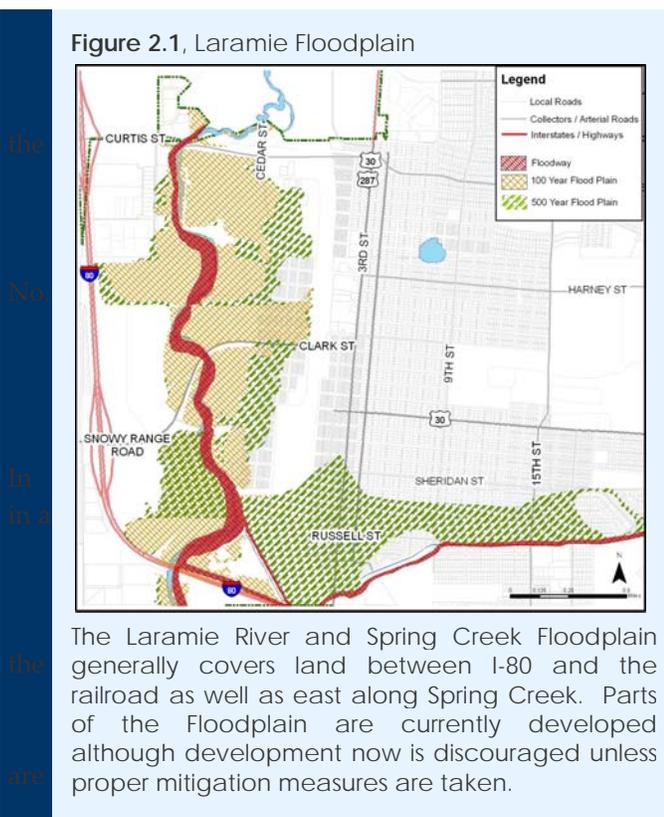


Figure 2.1, Laramie Flood Plains and Map 10.3 Flood Plains. The inundation generally falls within the low-lying flatland immediately abutting the river channel, but extends into a portion of the developed areas, as well. There is also floodplain reflected along the Spring Creek Channel, although its spread is generally limited to the channel itself. The remainder of the community is outside of the floodplain and, thus, not at risk to flood inundation. Localized flooding may, however, occur on the basis of individual storm events. More issues regarding the City's storm drainage system is addressed in *Chapter 7, Urban Growth*.

Laramie River

The Laramie River flows from Rawah Mountains in northern Colorado, through Woods Landing and Laramie, and supplies Wheatland Reservoir 2, located approximately 35 miles north of Laramie. From Wheatland No. 2, the Laramie River flows east through the Laramie Range to Wheatland. Laramie, the river meanders northeasterly direction, passing beneath I-80 and continuing northward through the western part of community, generally between I-80 and the railroad. Along either side of the river areas within the 100- and 500-year floodplains, as shown in

"You can find a combination of western heritage and college-town charm in Laramie, nestled in a valley between the Snowy Range Mountains and the Laramie Range. Residents enjoy outdoor activities in nearby Medicine Bow National Forest which include skiing, snowshoeing, boating, cycling, and camping. Fishing enthusiasts will find many opportunities, ranging from lakes on the plains to mountain streams."

Source: Real Estate Department, MSN.com

A Sole or Principal Source Aquifer is defined as an aquifer that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined under the Safe Drinking Water Act to be, "the sole or principal drinking water source for an area and which, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health."

National Forests

Serving as a scenic backdrop to Laramie and a grand entryway corridor from the east, the Medicine Bow National Forest sits within the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, which together span over 2.2 million acres in Wyoming and Colorado. The two National Forests share the State border, Medicine Bow National Forest in southeast Wyoming – around Laramie - and Routt National Forest in north central Colorado. Three mountain ranges lie within Medicine Bow National Forest: Medicine Bow Mountains, Sierra Madre Mountains, and the Laramie Range. Elevations in the national forest range from 5,500 feet to as high as 12,013 feet. The mountainous region greatly contributes to the character and attractive appearance of Laramie, which may be seen on the distant horizon from virtually any point within the community. Preservation of these uninterrupted scenic views is essential to the natural and visual character of the community, which is further addressed in *Chapter 3, Community Character*.

Casper Aquifer

Within the Laramie Range there are a number of aquifers, including the smaller Chugwater, Satanka, Forelle, and the regional Casper Aquifer. Approximately 60 percent of the water supply for the City is drawn from the Casper Aquifer, which lies along the western flank of the Laramie Range, adjacent to and east of Laramie. The Casper is the only aquifer in the formation sequence that contains potable water, underscoring its importance as a source for drinking water for the City of Laramie and Albany County residents. Ground water from the Casper aquifer is obtained from four municipal well fields, including from north to south: Spur Ridge, Turner, Pope Springs, and Soldier Springs (*Map 10.4 Casper Aquifer Protection Area*). The aquifer is recharged by snow melt from the Laramie Range and by rain storm events that infiltrate the highly-permeable and fractured surface that is exposed in a north-south swath between Laramie and the range crest to the east. Due to the exposed nature of the surface of the Casper aquifer, prevention against contamination of this essential water source is of great importance to the long-term sustainability of the community.

Monolith Ranch

In 1981, the City purchased the Monolith Ranch (*Map 2.1, Monolith Ranch*) as a long-term investment for a reliable and secure water supply. This purchase included a significant portion of the Dowlin Ditch, which is the most senior priority water right in the Laramie River basin. To date, no portion of the water rights associated with the Monolith Ranch acquisition has been transferred from its original irrigation use since the City has not needed additional water supply. Nonetheless, it is available to the City should it need additional water supply in the future. The water supply of the City is highly productive and reliable into the future. Therefore, the municipal system can be expanded to meet the forecasted water demands for an increasing population for the long-term.¹ This area is not only important for its water resources but for its future open space, recreational and developmental potential.

¹ Executive Summary, Management Plan for Water Rights on Monolith Ranch, May 2004

Habitat

According to the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments, there are antelope and mule deer migration patterns along the Laramie Range, as well as critical habitat areas, as displayed in *Figure 2.2, Habitat Areas*. The blue and red line segments delineate the antelope and mule deer migration routes, respectively, while the shaded and cross-hatched areas represent the critical habitat crucial designation areas for these two animal species. As expected, there are protective habitat areas around the community for which sensitivity is an important future planning consideration.

Mineral Resources

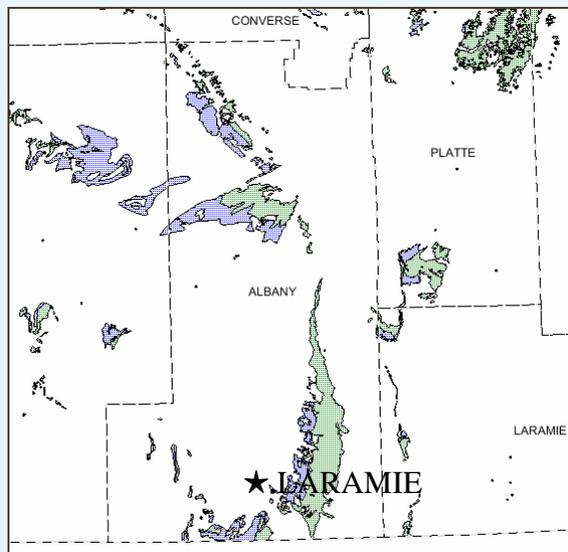
As displayed in *Figure 2.2, Minerals*, there are both gypsum (purple) and limestone (green) mineral deposits along the western flank of the Laramie Range. These formations or deposits are often adjacent to or a part of the Casper aquifer and its permeable recharge areas. Sensitivity to the geologic formations is an important consideration with respect to disruption of sub-surface water flows and the vulnerability for aquifer contamination from mining operations.

DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

An assessment of demographic and socio-economic characteristics is useful to understand the influencing factors and economic forces that have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the composition of the community. While not necessarily a determinant of the future, historical and recent figures give an indication of past trends, allowing a sound basis from which to evaluate and forecast likely future scenarios. Together with empirical data and both known and planned occurrences, such as economic development initiatives and outcomes, student enrollment projections, and ongoing building activity, a likely future scenario may be derived with relative confidence as to its accuracy. As with all projections and forecasts, they must be regularly evaluated and periodically adjusted to account for actual and changed conditions. Therefore, the purpose of this assessment is not to predict the future, but to establish a baseline for future planning, given certain assumptions and due consideration of past occurrences and historical trends.

The approach for deriving an estimate of future population was two-fold. First, a series of projections were prepared based upon standard statistical techniques and the use of historical U.S. Census population figures and historical and recent building permit activity. These alternatives provided a range of possible scenarios from which to evaluate a probable future population estimate. Secondly, a targeted estimate of the Year 2025 population was determined. The targeted population is intended to account for local plans and initiatives, which may then be reviewed on an ongoing basis against known indicators of growth, such as new jobs, building permits, water connections, and other quantifiable factors. The targeted population is used throughout this plan to estimate future land use demands, requirements for parks and open space, infrastructure capacity needs, and future growth strategies. The understanding of population characteristics and future

Figure 2.2, Minerals



Source: Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments

requirements is essential to determine the anticipated level of development and the resulting demands on the community and its facilities and services.

Historical Population

The historical population of Laramie is shown in *Table 2.1, Historical Population*. As demonstrated, the amount of population growth over the span from 1930 to 2000 has been significant, increasing from 8,609 persons in 1930 to 27,204 persons in 2000. The highest percent change in population was between 1940 and 1950 when the City experienced a 46.60 percent increase in population. This time coincided with the era of the “baby boom,” along with a continued increase in student enrollment at the University. Other reasons for this period of growth are unconfirmed, but may be attributable to increased employment, expansion of the Union Pacific Railroad operations, and improvements to the Interstate 80 corridor. The second highest percent change in population was seen between 1960 and 1970, with a 32.10 percent increase from 17,520 persons to 23,143 persons. This growth coincides with the origination of WyoTech, which contributed to growth and economic

development of the City. Since 1970, population growth has slowed to 5.57 percent per decade, or just over one-half percent annually.

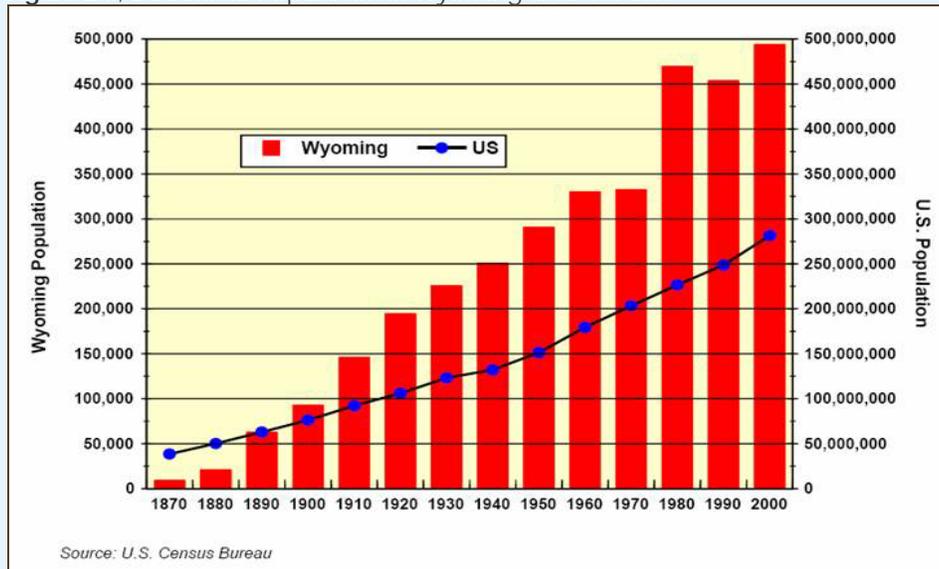
In Albany County, the 1940s was also the time of the highest percent change in population when it increased by 36.60 percent. This growth increase coincided with that of Laramie, primarily due to the City’s 81.8 percent share of the County population. The population growth of the County continues to be largely a reflection of the City since Laramie’s population accounts for roughly 85 percent of the County population, which has been generally consistent dating back to 1950. The growth in the County has maintained a higher rate over the last three decades, though, providing an indication of the amount of

Table 2.1, Historical Population

Year	Laramie			Albany County		Wyoming	
	Persons	% Change	% County	Persons	% Change	Persons	% Change
1930	8,609		71.5%	12,041		225,565	
1940	10,627	23.4%	76.2%	13,946	15.8%	250,742	11.2%
1950	15,581	46.6%	81.8%	19,055	36.6%	290,529	15.9%
1960	17,520	12.4%	82.3%	21,290	11.7%	330,066	13.6%
1970	23,143	32.1%	87.6%	26,431	24.1%	332,416	0.7%
1980	24,410	5.5%	84.0%	29,062	10.0%	469,557	41.3%
1990	26,687	9.3%	86.7%	30,797	6.0%	453,588	-3.4%
2000	27,204	1.9%	85.0%	32,014	4.0%	493,782	8.9%
2005	26,050	-4.10%	84.40%	30,857	-3.6	508,798	3.00%

Source: Demographic Trends in the 20th Century, Census 2000, Special Reports, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 2.3, Decennial Population in Wyoming and the U.S.



development occurring around the periphery of Laramie and, to a lesser degree, throughout the rural unincorporated areas. Rural water providers, State law exemption for 35-acre lots outside the City limits and family exempt subdivision are at least partly responsible for this recent shift. For instance, in the 1970s the growth in the County was double that in the City, as it was most recently during the 1990s.

The State’s population has generally increased each decade dating back to the late 1800s, as shown in *Figure 2.3, Decennial Population for Wyoming and the*

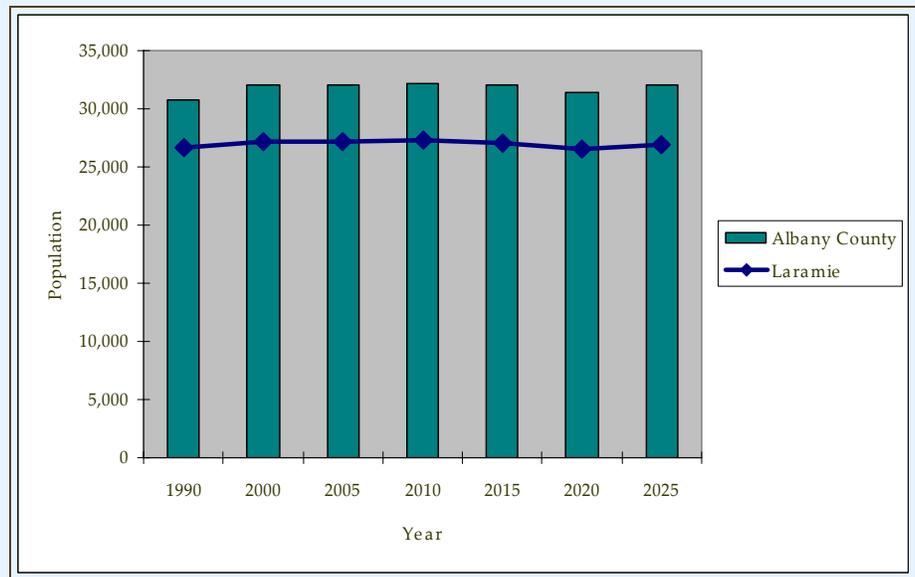
U.S. The percent change has ranged from 0.7 percent in the 1960s, followed by a high of 41.3 percent between 1970 and 1980. The drastic shifts in population between decades are the result of the boom-bust energy economy.² Most recently, there was a decline in the 1980s – shown by the 1990 bar in the graph - followed by a strong rebound of 8.9 percent in the 1990s.

Projected Future Population

According to the Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division, as shown in *Figure 2.4, Projected Population of Laramie*, there is a projected decrease in the population of Albany County by the Year 2020, from a Year 2000 population of 32,014 persons to a projected Year 2020 population of 31,401 persons. Since the horizon of this plan is the Year 2025, the State’s Year 2020 projection was extended to the Year 2025 to maintain consistency throughout the plan document. The resulting Year 2025 population in the County reaches 32,061 persons, nearly the same as in 2000.

The State projects a 2.3 percent decline in population for Laramie from a 2000 Census population of 27,204 persons to a Year 2020 population of 26,590 persons. Similar to the projected County population, the State’s estimate of Laramie’s population in 2020 was projected to 26,933 persons in 2025, which is still below the 2000 Census population. The State’s projection methodology resulting in a declining population is likely due, in part, to modest gains in population since 1970 and the trend of the County’s population growth outpacing that of the City, as shown in *Table 2.1, Historical Population*. The State notes that the projections for 2001 to 2004 were prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau and from 2005 to 2020 were developed based on trends of demographic and economic variables. Further, the State indicates that the population forecast for Laramie was simply calculated using a population ratio of the City and County. Therefore, since they are projecting the County’s

Figure 2.4, Projected Population of Laramie



Source: Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis

The alternative projection techniques include the following:

- ♦ **Linear regression** forecasts are straight-line projections of historical population, where the same absolute number of additional persons is added to the population each period. This results in a declining rate of growth over time since the same amount is added to an ever-expanding base.
- ♦ **Exponential growth** assumes a constant rate of growth in establishing a forecast, which results in an increasing trend over time.

² 10 Year Outlook, Wyoming Demographic and Economic Forecast, 2005 to 2014, Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division

population to decline, they are also projecting a decline in Laramie – regardless of recent building activity and local initiatives that are showing early success.

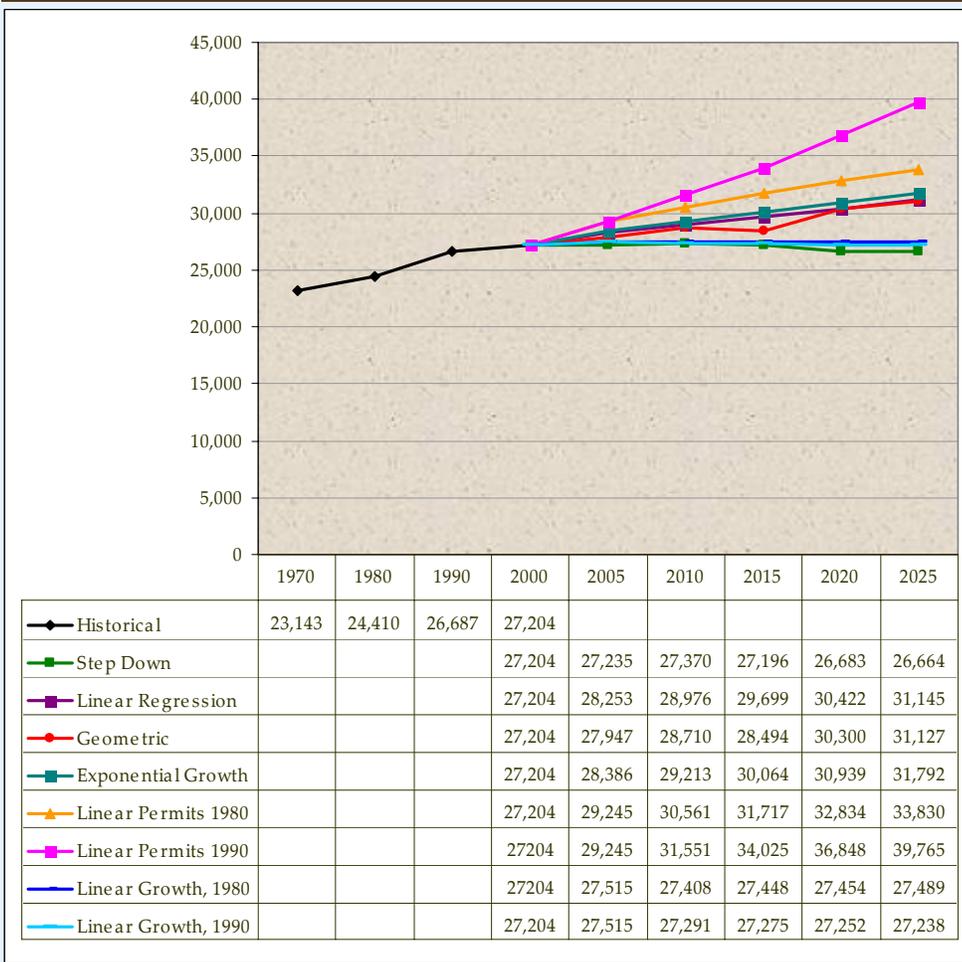
A series of population projections were used to evaluate a range of possible future population scenarios for the City. In addition to the projection prepared by the Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division, four additional methods were used, each of which rely upon historical trends since 1970. Each statistical technique uses varying methodologies, including the addition of the same absolute number of additional persons each time period, assumption of a constant rate of growth, and use of an average rate of growth over a historical period and projected forward. The results are reflected in *Figure 2.5, Alternative Population Projection Scenarios*.

Conflicting Growth Trends

The above projections, however, do not account for the amount of recent building activity, the Partners in Progress initiative, the recent and ongoing development of the Turner Tract, numerous other residential subdivisions among many other issues. Therefore, four additional population scenarios were generated to reflect recent building permit activity,

dating back to 1980 and 1990. The Linear Permits (1980 and 1990) and Linear Growth (1980 and 1990) techniques extrapolate the actual growth and the rate of growth in residential building permits since 1980 and 1990, respectively. Due to the overall amount of recent permitting activity, the two linear permit scenarios reflect higher future populations. The linear permit method extrapolates the growth in residential building permits since 1980 and 1990, assuming an estimated 142 permits in 2005. The projections resulting from the linear growth method reflect two of the lowest populations due to the great variation in permit activity from year to year.

Figure 2.5, Alternative Population Projection Scenarios



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Kendig Keast Collaborative

The eight projected populations for the Year 2025 range from 26,664 persons to 39,765 persons. As shown in *Figure 2.6, Alternative Population Projection Scenarios*, there is a fairly considerable separation between the highest and lowest projections. Following the historical trend line from 1970 to 2000 and extending it forward to the Year 2025, either the Exponential Growth or Linear Permits, 1980 methods appear to offer realistic scenarios, based upon a four-decade trend. These two scenarios generally mirror the trend that occurred between 1970 and 2000 when there was modest growth followed by a slow-down before, again, reflecting an increase.

It is important to understand that population projections are generated by statistical methods that are all based on past trends. As a result of the modest population gains in the City since 1970, averaging about one-half percent annually, coupled with the most recent numbers reflecting a greater percent increase in the County, each of the above methods reflect modest gain or loss in the future. Adding to the complexity and, hence, the outcomes are several additional demographic factors. For instance, the number of persons per household is decreasing, which is a national phenomenon and present in Laramie. Between 1990 and 2000, the persons per household in Laramie decreased from 2.31 to 2.19 persons. In effect, this means there are more housing units required to support the same population. Therefore, new residential building activity may not necessarily be an accurate indicator of a net increase in population.

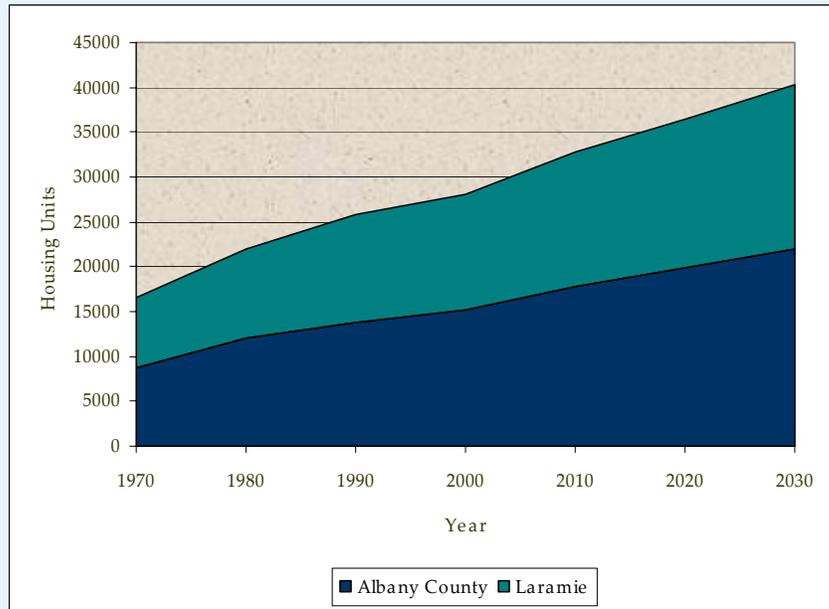
Projecting the number of dwelling units and applying the persons per household generally produces a comparable future trend. As displayed in *Figure 2.6, Laramie and Albany County Housing Units*, the total number of housing units in both the City and County is projected to increase. However, the City's proportionate share is shown to decrease over the next 20 years due to the declining percentage of the County population from 87.6 percent in 1970 to 85.0 percent in 2000. This, together with a decreasing number of persons per household, also results in a declining population. The persons per household in Albany County, 87.6 percent of which was in Laramie, was 2.91 in 1970. It decreased to 2.47 in 1980, 2.35 in 1990, and 2.23 in 2000. Extrapolating these numbers to the Year 2030, assuming a continuation of this trend, results in 1.43 persons per household in 2030. If this trend continues the population of the City and County may decrease.

Projected Versus Targeted Future Population

The Exponential Growth method reflects a relatively conservative projection of an additional 4,588 persons by the Year 2025. Based upon the input of the Citizens' Project

- ◆ The **geometric** technique projects the future using a growth factor that is the average rate of growth over a historical period of time.
- ◆ The **step-down method** was used to project the City's population based on its share of the total Albany County population, which is based on a proportionate share of the County's future population, using the forecast of the Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis

Figure 2.6, Laramie and Albany County Housing Units



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Kendig Keast Collaborative

Advisory Team (CPAT), considering past trends and recent development activity, this was the consensus among the alternative projections. Reflecting the optimism of the community and assuming success in the implementation of this plan and the economic development initiatives that are already under way in the community, the Linear Permits, 1980 projection of **33,830** persons in the Year 2025 is the targeted population that is used throughout this plan for the purpose of quantifying future demands. This targeted future population adds 6,626 persons by the Year 2025.

The demographic factors identified above are the reason for the use of a targeted future population estimate. While there are indications of a continued modest population growth, based upon the use of statistical projections of past trends, there are reasons for the community to be optimistic about its future, among them including:

- ♦ The creation of 84 new jobs meeting the goal of an hourly rate exceeding \$15.27 per hour since the formation of the Partners in Progress initiative;
- ♦ The success of the University of Wyoming Business Center Incubator, which has already spawned expansion of a company and their development in the business park and the success of the School of Energy Resources;
- ♦ The new airport business park, is intended to provide opportunities for air-side business, industrial development and speculative business space.
- ♦ The planned campus expansion of WyoTech and its continued growth in student enrollment;
- ♦ Expansion and good economic health of the University of Wyoming and the influence of its student population on the community as well as new scholarships such as the Hathaway Scholarship will also influence student population.
- ♦ A total of 538 residential building permits since the Year 2000, which amounts to 1,178 more residents, based upon 2.19 persons per household; and
- ♦ Ongoing development of the Turner Tract.

Furthermore student population does have an impact on these numbers. Laramie is unique in the sense that several post-secondary schools are located within the City. When it is time for a Census this population group is difficult to accurately assess. Many times errors result when students fill out residency information due to a lack of knowledge about properly classifying themselves as a resident or not. Thus, when calculating overall population for the community, there is a strong possibility that a number of students may have not been counted, creating a shortfall, thus making the projected target population even more realistic.

The targeted population of **33,830** persons amounts to an addition of 6,626 persons by the Year 2025. To ensure advanced planning of infrastructure facilities and municipal service provision, this is the estimate used throughout this plan for determining future demands. It will be important for the community to continually monitor this target to measure its progress. It is recommended for the City to estimate its population on an annual basis, with a re-evaluation of the target each five years. Revision on an annual basis will not account for the cyclical nature of the economy. A five-year review will allow sufficient time to more accurately gauge the community's growth relative to the target population.

The targeted population for 2025 that is used throughout this plan for the purpose of quantifying future demands is **33,830** persons.

Implications of Population Change

The population projections of 33,830 and associated shifts in the community's socio-economic characteristics that are identified in this chapter are used to formulate the City's growth policies. In particular, the aforementioned population scenarios will help the City better evaluate the following:

- Demands for varying housing types, sizes, and prices;
- Employment for residents of Laramie and the surrounding area;
- Changes in the median household income and the effective buying power of residents;
- Numbers of school-age children and the impact on demand for school facilities;
- Projected future traffic volumes, congestion, and demands for new roadway infrastructure and alternative modes of transportation;
- Use of local parks and recreation facilities and the demand for additional areas, facilities, and programs;
- Capacity requirements for water and wastewater service, storm drainage improvements, and the requisite capital investments; and
- Impact on the number of police, fire, and emergency medical service calls and their response times, service levels, and facility and staffing needs.

Table 2.2, Median Age

Jurisdiction	Median Age
United States	35.3
Wyoming	36.2
Albany County	26.7
Casper	36.1
Cheyenne	36.6
Gillette	31.7
Laramie	25.3
Rock Springs	34.5
Sheridan	39.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

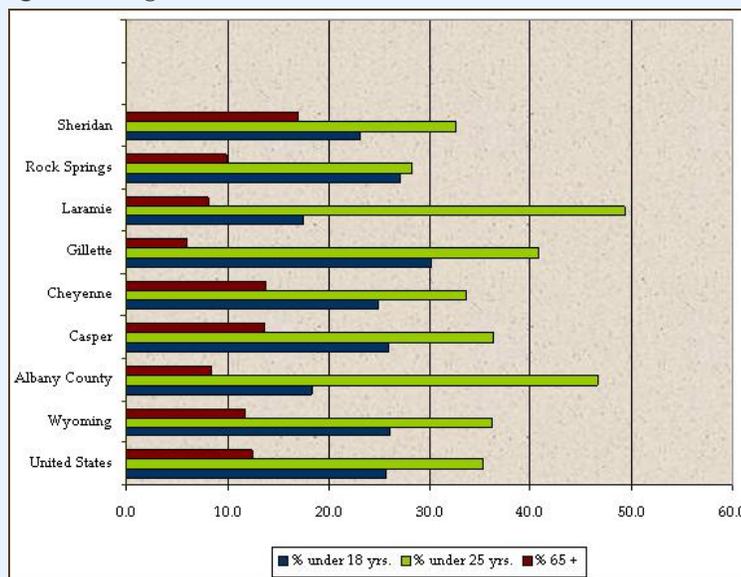
The implications of the expected future population characteristics and the physical and economic growth of Laramie and its one-mile area are reflected in other areas of this plan, such as *Chapter 3, Community Character; Chapter 4, Parks and Recreation, Chapter 5, Housing and Neighborhoods; Chapter 7, Urban Growth; Chapter 9, Economic Development; and Chapter 10, Public Safety.*

Age

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median age in Laramie is 25.3 years, as shown in *Table 2.2, Median Age*. This is quite young compared to 36.2 years in the State and 35.3 years in the U.S. Compared to other communities, each have a median age over 30 years, with Sheridan having a median age of 39.3 years. This statistic is due, to a degree, on the student populations of the University of Wyoming, WyoTech, and Laramie County Community College (LCCC). While the median age is generally increasing across the U.S. as the baby boomers age, it is not expected that it will increase as dramatically in Laramie as a result of the University and its attraction to a younger population.

As shown in *Figure 2.7, Age Breakdown*, while only 17.5 percent of the population is below the age of 18 years, which is lower than each of the selected

Figure 2.8, Age Breakdown



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

cities, the percentage of the population under 25 years is significant. In other words, a large percentage of the population is between the ages of 18 and 25, which, again, is due to the student populations of the University, WyoTech, and LCCC. Among the U.S., State, Albany County, and five selected cities, Laramie has the highest percentage of population within this age cohort, which substantially contributes to the low median age. As the median age of students continues to increase, which is a national phenomenon, the percentage of population between the ages of 18 and 25 may slightly decrease in the future. Nonetheless, Laramie is still expected to have a larger percentage of its population below 25 years compared to other communities. As may be expected, the percentage of the population that is over 65 years is quite small at 8.1 percent. Other than Gillette, which has 6.1 percent of its population in this age cohort, Laramie has the lowest percentage of mature and retired residents.

Compared to the County, State, U.S., and other communities, Laramie has the lowest percentage of persons under the age of 18 years (17.5 percent) followed by Albany County (18.4 percent), Sheridan (23.1 percent), and Cheyenne (24.9 percent). With 30.2 percent, Gillette had the highest percentage of persons 18 years and younger. Comparatively, Laramie (49.3 percent) and Albany County (46.6 percent) had the highest percentage below the age of 25 years, as discussed above. Each of the other selected cities is well below these percentages, ranging from 28.3 percent in Rock Springs to 40.8 percent in Gillette. Sheridan had the highest percentage of persons over 65 years with 16.9 percent of its population.

This age breakdown is important due to its implications on the community's median household income, housing needs and affordability, employment, and alternative modes of transportation. For instance, the median household income of younger persons is lower because they have not yet had time to mature in their careers. Therefore, they are not yet able to afford the median or higher priced housing, thereby contributing to the high rental rate and multiple family building activities. Since such a large percentage of the population falls within this age cohort, it significantly influences the overall housing affordability of the community. Similarly, employment for recent graduates of all three institutions is essential to maintaining their residence in the community. Without ample

opportunities for well-paying employment, many choose to move elsewhere in search of a gainful position. This further emphasizes the importance of a proactive economic development program to attract employers and promote entrepreneurialism and business start-ups. The age of the population also influences the local transportation system as many students and young adults prefer a bicycle or walking as their means of transportation. Combined with the fitness and exercise needs of community residents, sidewalks and trails emerge as a priority in the community.

Housing and Household Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, households are classified as either "family" or "non-family" units. Family units are generally defined as those with a married couple or a single head of household with or without children. Non-family households include those with one person living alone. The household composition of Laramie is 49.47

Table 2.3, Persons Per Household

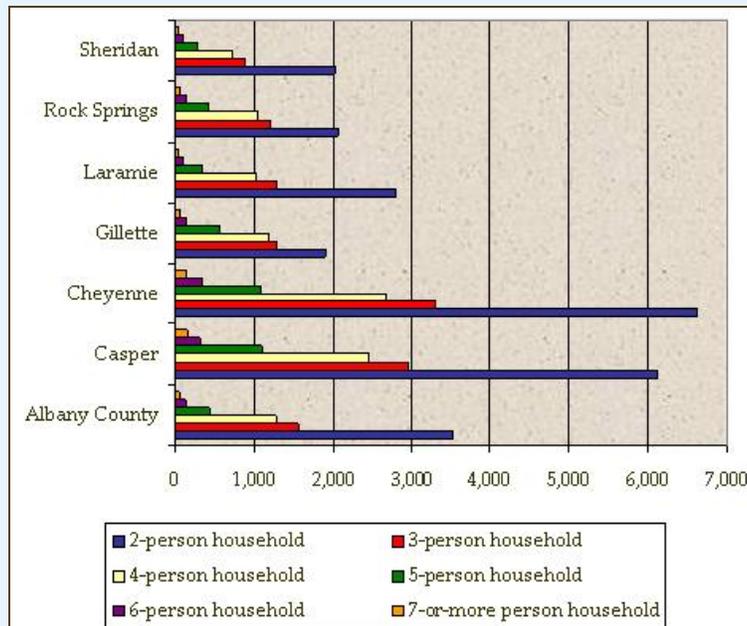
Jurisdiction	1990	2000
United States	2.63	2.59
Wyoming	2.63	2.48
Albany County	2.35	2.23
Casper	2.49	2.38
Cheyenne	2.44	2.33
Gillette	2.78	2.62
Laramie	2.31	2.19
Rock Springs	2.65	2.48
Sheridan	2.32	2.21

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

percent family households and 50.53 percent non-family households. The percentage of family households, as expected, is lower in Laramie due to the student populations of UW, WyoTech, and LCCC, as discussed above. The percentage of family households for the other cities ranges from 57.97 percent in Sheridan to 69.24 percent in Gillette.

As shown in *Table 2.3, Persons Per Household*, Laramie had 2.19 persons per household according to the 2000 U.S. Census. This is the lowest number of any of the other cities, which ranged from a low of 2.21 persons per household in Sheridan to a high of 2.62 persons per household in Gillette. As of the most recent Census, there were 2.48 and 2.59 persons per household in the State and nation, respectively. Considering the student populations, the ordinary assumption is that the persons per household would be higher in a college town as a result of students sharing houses and apartment units.

Figure 2.8, Household Size



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

These statistics reflect on the community's current and future needs for a variety of housing types, sizes of units, pricing of units, and an overall heightened demand for housing units. When examining the change from 1990 to 2000, in all cases, the persons per household has decreased. In Laramie, it dropped from 2.31 to 2.19 persons, reflecting a decrease of 5.5 percent. This decline is not out of line with the other jurisdictions as they, too, had declines ranging from 4.6 to 6.9 percent. Therefore, there is nothing out of the ordinary in the decline in Laramie.

Table 2.4, Housing Changes

Statistic	1990	2000	Percent Increase
Households	10,400	11,336	9.0%
Housing Units	11,076	11,994	8.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The distribution of family households by number of persons is illustrated in *Figure 2.8, Household Size*. The largest segments of the population in Laramie, as may be expected by the number of persons per household, are in two-person (36.9 percent) and three-person (14.7 percent) households, followed by four-person households (10.5 percent). The number of five-, six-, and seven-person households in Laramie (4.73 percent) is lower than any of the other comparable cities of the County, which range from 5.13 percent in the County to 10.35 percent in Gillette.

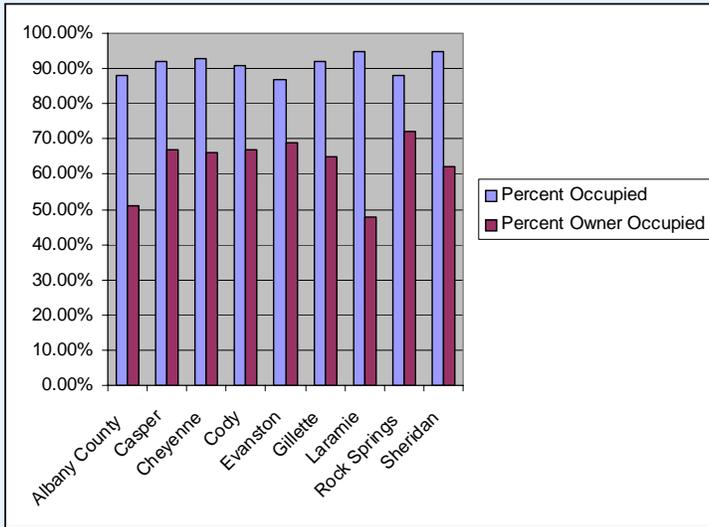
Housing Occupancy, Tenure and Value

Between 1990 and 2000, the average household size decreased from 2.31 to 2.19 persons per household, which created an increased demand for new housing units. This demand has presented itself in the amount of building activity occurring in the community since 2000. In fact, in the last five years, there have been building permits for 443 single-family units and 95 multiple-family units, for a total of 538 units. Also reflective of this is the

Family householder is a householder living with one or more people related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. The householder and all people in the household related to him or her are family members. A **non-family householder** is a householder living alone or with non-relatives only.

number of households increasing by nine percent and the number of housing units increasing eight percent, as shown in *Table 2.4, Housing Changes*.

Figure 2.9, Owner Occupancy



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

had a 7.4 percent vacancy, followed by Cody with an 8.8 percent vacancy. The City of Evanston had a vacancy rate of 18.9 percent. It is not uncommon for a University town to have such a low vacancy rate due to the student population and the amount of rental properties. However, the optimal rate of vacancy is between five and eight percent, meaning that the City is on the low end of this range. A vacancy rate below five percent suggests a saturated market that requires residential construction activity. A vacancy rate above 10 percent is highly undesirable. It is important for economic development purposes to have a sufficient supply of housing to accommodate the needs of prospective buyers, which is the reason for having up to eight percent vacant or unoccupied units. In addition to the supply, however, it is also important to have both quality and affordable housing units in attractive, safe, and stable neighborhood environments.

As depicted in *Figure 2.9, Owner Occupancy*, Laramie had the highest percentage of occupancy among the selected communities, with 94.8 percent occupied. There is not a lot of difference among the communities with respect to total occupancy as they all are between 86.9 and 94.8 percent. In addition, between 1990 and 2000, all communities witnessed an increase in their percent occupancy. In the case of Laramie, the percent occupancy increased nearly one full percentage point, from 93.9 to 94.8 percent. This represents the demand for housing as residents are choosing to occupy vacant units due to a shortage of supply.

In Laramie, 45.8 percent of the residential units were owner-occupied in 1990. By the Year 2000, 47.5 percent were owner-occupied. While the increase is a positive indicator during the last decade, the overall percentage of owner-occupied units is significantly lower than those of the other communities. This is

Table 2.5, Housing Affordability

Percent of Median Income	Household Income	Affordable Mortgage Payment
180%	\$49,174	\$1,229
150%	\$40,979	\$1,024
120%	\$32,783	\$820
100%	\$27,319	\$683
80%	\$21,855	\$546
50%	\$13,660	\$341
30%	\$8,196	\$205

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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not a surprise as a result of the student populations of the University, WyoTech, and Laramie County Community College, but is, nonetheless, of importance for the community to monitor and address. A preferred rate of owner occupancy would be 55 percent or higher. It is not reasonable to try to meet the owner occupancy rates of the other communities due to Laramie's unique circumstances; however, it is important to focus attention on increasing the rate of owner occupancy. The outcome of this effort would have spin-off benefits on local economic development, including strengthening neighborhood integrity, increasing investment and reinvestment in property, improving the appearance of homes and properties, and boosting single-family home construction.

Affordability

Affordability is typically defined as a percent of a household's income spent on housing. In other words, housing is typically considered affordable if no more than 30 percent of household income is devoted to housing costs. As depicted in *Table 2.5, Housing Affordability*, \$683 per month is an affordable mortgage payment for a median household income of \$27,319 in Laramie. For households earning 30 percent of the median income, affordable housing means a monthly mortgage payment of \$205. On the opposite end of the spectrum, households earning 180 percent of the median household income can afford \$1,229 per month on housing.

The City's Housing Study and Action Plan sheds more light on the topic of affordability, expanding upon the simplified affordability tabulation in *Table 2.5, Housing Affordability*, to show specifics as to affordability by family size for extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income households. Essentially, it indicates that a median priced home in Laramie is affordable to a median income family. However, it is noted that there are significant constraints to affordability resulting from a 10 percent down payment requirement (assumed by the calculations in the Housing Study and Action Plan) and lack of new construction at the affordable price range. Policies and actions of the plan include continuing support of rental assistance, support to nonprofit organizations assisting lower income citizens, acquiring and banking land for affordable housing, and allowing single-room occupancy units in downtown. For more information, also refer to *Chapter 5, Housing and Neighborhoods*.

As shown in *Table 2.6, Housing Costs*, the median gross rent kept pace with the growth in the City's median household income during the 1990s. While the median household income increased by 39.10 percent, the median gross rent increased by 35.60 percent. Generally, this means that the increase in the median household income is only staying on par with inflation. Therefore, residents are not gaining in their wealth relative to their cost of living, which has implications in terms of their disposable income and purchasing power. The fact that the median house value increased at a much faster rate than income meant that persons trying to upgrade their housing were spending a larger percentage of their income in order to afford it. As home prices increase, so do their valuations and, hence, property taxes. Therefore, all costs related to housing – some hidden – continue to

Table 2.6, Laramie Housing Costs

Statistic	1990	2000	Percent Change
Median Household Income	\$19,642	\$27,318	39.10%
Median Gross Rent	\$343	\$465	35.60%
Median House Value	\$66,500	\$116,500	75.20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

inflate without a proportionate and offsetting increase in income. This further exacerbates the housing problems in the community.

The demand for housing that resulted from the decreased household size was, in part, responsible for the increase in the cost of housing in Laramie during the 1990s. As shown in Table 2.7, *Comparable House Values and Rents*, the median house value in 2000 of \$116,400

was higher than the State's median housing value and higher than all other selected cities. Only the resort community of Jackson had a higher house value (\$260,600) in 2000 than Laramie. The median gross rent of \$465 is also relatively high. Laramie's median gross rent is third highest among other sizeable cities in the State. Only Cheyenne and Jackson had a higher median gross rent in 2000. The median housing costs among comparable cities is graphically displayed in Figure 2.10, *Median Housing Costs*.

Estimates from the Wyoming Department of Administration

Figure 2.10, Median Housing Costs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

and Information, Economic Analysis Division, show that housing costs in Albany County have continued to rise in the years since the last Census. In the Wyoming Cost of Living Index,³ the average rent for apartments in Albany County increased from \$454 in 2000 to \$594 in 2004, an increase of 31 percent. The average rent for houses increased from \$603 to \$849 for the same time period, an increase of 41 percent. Mobile home rent also increased from \$491 to \$541, representing a 10 percent increase over the same four years. Sales prices also continue to increase. The Wyoming Community Development Authority surveyed County Assessors' offices to develop average sales prices for each county in the State. The Albany County data show the average sales prices for existing detached single-family homes increased from \$118,196 in 2000 to \$175,320 in 2004, an increase of 48 percent. This increase is higher than the statewide increase of 32 percent. Statewide, the average sales prices

Table 2.7, Comparative House Values and Rents

Jurisdiction	House Value	Gross Rent
Casper	\$84,500	\$408
Cheyenne	\$102,400	\$470
Cody	\$107,200	\$441
Evanston	\$86,600	\$427
Gillette	\$99,800	\$453
Jackson	\$260,600	\$717
Laramie	\$116,400	\$465
Rock Springs	\$103,900	\$416
Sheridan	\$90,700	\$433
Wyoming	\$96,600	\$437

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

³ Wyoming Cost of Living Index, Table Vb, Average Rental Rates

were \$111,437 in 2000 and \$147,588 in 2004.

The City’s Housing Study and Action Plan acknowledges several important considerations relating to the issue of increased housing costs. Among them is a slower growth in wages compared to housing prices. This is a result of 75 percent of the City’s economic growth over the last 20 years being in the services and retail sectors, which have annual wages of \$18,300 and \$12,250 – well below the median income needed to afford a median priced home. Therefore, it is the wage rates of community residents that are of greater influence on affordability, rather than home prices. Therefore, the economic development initiative of targeting new employers with higher minimum and average wages is both a sound and essential strategy for addressing this issue.

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Income and Poverty

The median income of households for 1989 and 1999 are Displayed in *Table 2.8, Median Household Income*. The table indicates that Laramie had a 39.1 percent increase in its median household income between 1990 and 2000, which is in the upper tier of the selected cities. The State of Wyoming had a higher percent change of 39.8 percent. Since Laramie contains a large percentage of the Albany County population, the County’s percent change is virtually the same (39.0 percent). Otherwise, the next closest percent change was in Cheyenne (38.2 percent), followed by Casper (32 percent), Gillette (30.9 percent), and Rock Springs (23.9 percent). This is a positive indicator for Laramie, which may continue to increase its median household income with the successful attraction of higher paying employers.

While the percent change is a positive indicator of what has occurred in the last decade, the amount of median household income is significantly less than the other cities. In 1990, the median household income was \$19,642, which was as much as 80.9 percent less than the median household income in Gillette, which had the highest median income. The next closest community was Sheridan with a median household income of \$23,819. By the 2000 Census, Laramie had narrowed the gap by reducing the difference to 70.3 percent less than Gillette. The average of the median household incomes in the eight other jurisdictions was \$36,243 in 2000, which is still 32.7 percent higher than that of Laramie. Therefore, initiatives to attract new business and industry in the community must focus attention on their wage rates in order to sustain the recent percent change and, ultimately, increase the median household income.

Table 2.8, Median Household Income

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income		Percent Change
	1990	2000	
Wyoming	\$27,096	\$37,892	39.8%
Albany County	\$20,715	\$28,790	39.0%
Casper	\$27,698	\$36,567	32.0%
Cheyenne	\$28,117	\$38,856	38.2%
Gillette	\$35,532	\$46,521	30.9%
Laramie	\$19,642	\$27,319	39.1%
Rock Springs	\$34,372	\$42,584	23.9%
Sheridan	\$23,819	\$31,420	31.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

Table 2.9, Poverty Level

Jurisdiction	Rate of Poverty		Difference
	1990	2000	
Wyoming	11.9%	11.4%	-0.5%
Albany County	13.2%	21.0%	7.8%
Casper	24.2%	11.4%	-12.8%
Cheyenne	12.6%	8.8%	-3.8%
Gillette	11.4%	7.9%	-3.5%
Laramie	10.6%	22.6%	12.0%
Rock Springs	26.2%	9.4%	-16.8%
Sheridan	9.6%	11.2%	1.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

Table 2.10, Number of Establishments

Industry	Number of Establishments		Percent Change
	1997	2002	
Retail Trade	158	156	-1.3%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	98	113	15.3%
Health Care Social Care	70	101	44.3%
Accommodations, Food Service	92	85	-7.6%
Other except Public Adm.	56	85	51.8%
Real Estate, Rental Leasing	44	50	13.6%
Administration, Support and Waste Management	34	39	14.7%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	14	20	42.9%
Wholesale Trade	19	19	0.0%
Information (Communications and Data Processing)	n/a	15	100.0%
Educational Services	5	8	60.0%
Total	590	691	17.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.11, Employment By Industry

Industry	Employees	Percent
Education Services	4,185	28.63%
Accommodations and Food Service	1,386	9.48%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,380	9.44%
Retail Trade	1,530	10.47%
Professional, Scientific and Management Services	982	6.72%
Construction	773	5.29%
Information (Communications and Data Processing)	678	4.64%
Other Service, except Public Administration	678	4.64%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (F.I.R.E.)	603	4.13%
Public Administration	577	3.95%
Manufacturing	567	3.88%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	445	3.04%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	327	2.24%
Agriculture	256	1.75%
Wholesale Trade	206	1.41%
Mining	43	0.29%
TOTAL	14,616	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Of the total population in Laramie, 10.6 percent was considered to have poverty status, based on 1989 income levels. By contrast, the latest census identifies that Laramie experienced an increase in the number of persons below poverty level, as depicted in *Table 2.9, Poverty Level*. Of the total population, 22.6 percent had a 1999 income that was below poverty level. This poverty level is higher than all other jurisdictions, including the State of Wyoming at 11.4 percent poverty. While Laramie had a 39.1 percent increase in its median household income between 1990 and 2000, it did not keep pace with the overall cost of living. As discussed earlier, housing costs, for instance, grew at a faster rate than income, meaning that residents had to spend a larger percentage of their income on housing, leaving less for disposable spending. This is yet another indicator of the income levels in the community, which warrant near-term and ongoing attention on behalf of the City. It should be also noted that the high student population, with the University and Wyoming Technical Institute, could skew the numbers related to poverty.

Employment

As displayed in *Table 2.10, Number of Establishments*, the composition of Laramie's economy witnessed significant

growth between 1997 and 2002 (the latest for which comprehensive data is available) in the number of establishments, particularly in certain industry sectors. In fact, there was a 17.1 percent increase over the five-year period, including 15 establishments in the Information Sector where there were too few to report in 1997. The largest percent

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increase in the number of establishments occurred in Educational Services, which had a 60 percent increase. Industry, Other, except Professional Administration, had the next largest percent change with 51.8 percent, followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (44.3 percent) and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (42.9 percent). The smallest percent change was Accommodations, Food Service with a 7.6 percent decrease in the number of establishments between 1997 and 2002. However, recent development of new hotels/motels in the community will most assuredly reflect an increase when the next report is prepared in 2007.

While Educational Services contained only five establishments in 1997 and eight in 2002, this sector employed over 28 percent of the City's workers in 2000, as displayed in *Table 2.11, Employment by Industry*. This statistic is expected as a result of the school system, University, Wyoming Technical Institute trade school, and Laramie County Community College (LCCC). The industries that provide the next highest percentage of employment include Retail Trade (10.47 percent), Accommodations and Food Service (9.48 percent), and Health Care and Social Assistance (9.44 percent). Therefore, these four industries provide over one-half of all employment in Laramie.

The Wyoming Department of Employment, Research, and Planning calculated that in the 4th Quarter of 2003, the most recent date for which this information is available, private businesses employed 9,664 persons, which represented 62.8 percent of the workforce. The local, State, and Federal governments employed 5,724 persons, or 37.2 percent of the City's workers. This is not an unexpected statistic given the location of the University, WyoTech, LCCC, and City and County governments, but it, nonetheless, significantly contributes to many of the other demographic and socio-economic characteristics cited in this report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following briefly summarizes the findings of this chapter, which are more fully addressed by way of goals and action statements in the subsequent chapters of this plan.

1. Growth is likely to occur in and around Laramie. It is essential that this plan accommodate and plan for growth. Though planning, the scenic setting, environment, character and identity, along with all the features that make Laramie, a unique community can be protected.
2. The Wyoming Department of Administration and Information, Economic Analysis Division, projects a 2.3 percent loss of population in the City by the Year 2020. This is largely the result of both distant and recent historical trends witnessed in the City, County, and Statewide, as well as the student population creating a shortfall in projected population. This State projection is recognized as one of several projection scenarios considered in this plan. Since the basis of this plan is pro-active in nature on behalf of the City, a more optimistic scenario should be utilized for future planning purposes.
3. The historic population growth since 1970 has averaged approximately 0.56 percent annually, which significantly contributes to future projections of the City since all statistical methodologies rely on past trends to anticipate the future. Consideration of other factors, however, must also be considered so as to ensure the plan accurately reflects expected future conditions. For this reason, the use of a targeted population must be used to account for local activities and initiatives. It is incumbent upon the community in its commitment to long-range planning to regularly monitor the targeted population and make adjustments, as necessary. At a minimum, the

consensus projection (Linear Permits, 1980) should be updated annually, with adjustments to the plan conducted on a semi-annual basis. This will allow the City to track its progress against its targets, giving it benchmarks from which to judge its ongoing success.

4. The City's proportionate share of Albany County has remained relatively steady since 1950, increasing from 81.8 percent to 85 percent in 2000. As the major population center, Laramie serves as the employment and economic hub of the County and an expanded region extending in each direction. Since 1980, the population has increased at a faster rate outside of the City. This presents important growth policy considerations with respect to future fiscal consequences since those outside the City reap benefits from their access to municipal facilities and services, such as parks, trails, and libraries, but do not share the tax burden associated with constructing and maintaining them.
5. The amount of recent development occurring outside of the City limits - much of which appears to be around the near periphery of Laramie - threatens to blur the once definitive edge to the community. Protection of the free standing nature of the City is essential to preserving and enhancing its character. This plan must, therefore, establish the growth and development policies for the City and its one-mile planning area. This does not mean halting any development in the outlying areas, but, rather, establishing standards to ensure it is consistent and compatible with the City's future vision. This plan will, identify the strategies and actions to better manage and effectively guide development in the future.
6. With nearly 45 percent of the population below the age of 25, largely due to the student populations of the University, WyoTech, and LCCC, the community must consider economic development strategies to retain a portion of this young population after graduation. To be successful in its economic initiative, there must be an available and well-educated work force. Therefore, the work force training and degree programs must be suited for the types of employment in the community to avoid their departure elsewhere. A partnership is warranted between the City and each of its educational institutions to achieve a retention strategy.
7. Among the eight projection scenarios produced in this chapter, the Linear Permits, 1980 estimate of 33,830 persons in the Year 2025 will be the basis for estimating future service demands and facility requirements. In planning for an additional 6,626 persons in the next two decades, it is essential for there to be community dialogue about how and where to accommodate the requisite housing and business development. Considering the state of the existing infrastructure and the seemingly insurmountable reinvestment required for its rehabilitation and replacement, it draws into perspective a warrant for increased density, infill development, and redevelopment. This represents a significant shift in land use planning policy, which must be addressed as part of this comprehensive planning process.
8. Should the trend in the decline of persons per household continue as in the last three plus decades, there is reason to believe that it could drop below two persons per household in the coming years. Based upon this decreasing trend - whether or not it reaches two persons per household - there will continue to be an increase in the demand for housing. This statistic makes the effort of estimating population difficult because new housing units will not necessarily be commensurate with an increase in population unless the person per household stabilizes. Monitoring this will be an important factor in estimating the future population.
9. The median age of 25.3 years in Laramie will continue to have implications on the community's demographics. With respect to higher demands for active recreation versus passive facilities, emphasis on both primary and secondary education for the children of young adults and the young adults themselves, progressive and upwardly

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mobile employment opportunities, and alternative housing types and price ranges. These and other influences of the age characteristic will be addressed in the subsequent chapters.

10. The presence of the University has had an influence on the types of industry sector growth, with the most significant increases in the service and retail sectors. While increased spending in the community is positive for the local economy – and particularly that expended from persons who reside outside of the community – the wage rates of the employees of these sectors are not positive contributors. Therefore, the City must seek ways to balance this with the growth of higher economic producing industries, such as manufacturing; wholesale trade; information (communications and data processing); finance, insurance and real estate; professional, scientific and management services; and health care. The target sectors identified by the Locational Assessment of the Wyoming Business Council also offer industries to achieve this objective.
11. The percentage of the population that is under 25 years of age will continue to affect the median household income, its housing needs and affordability, and employment. Persons who are in school or recently out of school are generally part-time or entry-level employees who do not yet have the income or financial resources to invest in home ownership. Without deliberate strategies and actions to affect change, this will perpetuate the current conditions.
12. The amount of median household income must be a focus of attention for the community as it is well below that of other communities in the State. There must be strong initiatives – backed by viable strategies – to attract new business and industry with wage rates that are much higher and on par with other communities. This is a significant economic development consideration in terms of its target industry marketing. Economic incentive programs must be structured to attract and reward businesses who contribute to the community’s objectives for increasing wage rates and adding jobs with acceptable benefits. This is also applicable to existing businesses in their expansion and continued investment.
13. The increase in the rate of poverty from 10.6 percent in 1990 to 22.6 percent in 2000 is alarming. This, together with the low median household income, is a key indicator warranting immediate and corrective action. Gaining good sources of higher paying employment for local residents is a primary objective. Support of social service agencies to reintroduce residents back into the work force through counseling and job skill training is also vital. While students have some influence on the reported rate of poverty, the change between 1990 and 2000 cannot be entirely attributable to the student populations. Therefore, there remain issues of poverty to be further explored and addressed.