

Introduction

The Laramie Comprehensive Plan is the outcome of a visioning and action plan adopted by the City Council on May 30, 2003, entitled The Laramie Plan - A Blueprint for the 21st Century. The Laramie Plan was developed by a citizen task force, extensive public input, countless hours of staff and volunteer time as well as tax payer dollars. The Laramie Plan describes the visions and hopes of our community as we plan for our future. The Laramie Plan outlines possible actions to help Laramie reach beyond its geographic confines to make it a center of economic, educational, and cultural excellence in our region. Laramie is more than a pleasant place to live. It is a place where business and opportunity can flourish.

The process began in 2001 with a series of visioning workshops, public forums, and meetings where residents contributed their ideas to the development of The Laramie Plan. People from throughout the City and County brought together their opinions, expertise, hopes, and dreams. They infused the planning process with a determination that we should and could become a better community. The Laramie Plan expresses our community's belief that this area is blessed with a rich heritage, a vibrant people and workforce, and a location as a crossroads for business, research, and education in Wyoming.

COMMUNITY VISION

The Laramie Plan established a Community Vision that was used as the foundation for the Laramie Comprehensive Plan. The Community Vision was built around shared values of Laramie's citizens that are critical to health and stability as the City moves into the future.

The Community Vision is:

"Laramie will be a strong, energetic, growing community bringing talent, technology, and a great "western" lifestyle together. Above all, Laramie will continue to be our hometown."

The City of Laramie will be a community with pride in its appearance.

We want a well-planned city with high quality development, clean and inviting streetscapes, parks, and neighborhoods. We want to ensure that the past is reflected in the future through the thoughtful conservation of the city's natural and historic resources.

The City of Laramie will be a city that offers convenient transportation access and mobility.

We want a safe and efficient transportation system that is well integrated with land use and offers access to goods, services, and regional destinations. We want a transportation system that recognizes that the automobile will continue to be a dominant force while recognizing the needs of pedestrians and bicycles. We want a transportation system that provides access to air, rail, bus, and interstate highways to move products and people and that offers choice and opportunity.

The City of Laramie will be a community with an abundance of parks, open space, and recreational opportunities.

We want to have access to a diverse array of pristine, undeveloped, natural areas and attractive, strategically located, well-connected parks. We want to benefit from healthy lifestyles and affordable recreation opportunities. We want access to an interconnected system of bikeways and trails with access to public lands. We want to have a variety of programs in arts, entertainment, recreation, and leisure available to explore. We want adequate sport facilities to meet the needs of our youth and adults.

The City of Laramie will have strong and continuing economic prosperity.

We want to benefit from a selective, dynamic, growing, and diverse economy that promotes new knowledge-based businesses, export-based manufacturing, and environmentally sensitive industries that are innovative and employ technology and the related businesses and services that support them. We want a community that encourages entrepreneurs and local business starts and expansion. We want a city that recruits and helps to grow businesses, which create higher incomes and wealth.

The City of Laramie will be a city with orderly, well-planned land-use and development.

We want an attractive, efficient, well-planned city with a compatible mix of uses. We want development that respects Laramie's unique character and identity. We want a community that has identified and protected the open spaces that help define who we are.

The City of Laramie will be a city of unique, attractive and vital neighborhoods.

We want to have neighborhoods with a range of housing alternatives that provide social and economic choice. We want neighborhoods that are conveniently located with access to services to meet our daily needs.

The City of Laramie will have a lively and healthy downtown.

We want to benefit from a revitalized, accessible, customer-friendly downtown that is the civic heart and soul of Laramie. We want a downtown that instills a sense of pride in our community and encourages people to want to live, work, play and invest in Laramie. We want to preserve and enhance the existing historic character of our downtown to create a unique, charming, and vibrant area.

The City of Laramie's municipal government will be innovative, proactive, and citizen-oriented.

We want a government that is the standard for local government in the Rocky Mountain region; a government that is responsive, modern, well organized, accessible, and user-friendly. We want a local government that contributes to a healthy economy. We want city and county governments that work together. We want to have meaningful ongoing opportunities to participate in government. We want to have convenient, affordable access to basic urban infrastructure and services that provide energy, communications, water, sanitation, flood protection, emergency services, safety, recreation, solid waste, and a cohesive transportation network. We want to commit to maintaining existing infrastructure as we expand our infrastructure to serve new development. We want to invest wisely in new infrastructure as a means of stimulating economic development.

THE LARAMIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

To achieve the Community Vision, the Laramie Comprehensive Plan has been adopted to coordinate decisions involving planning, land use, infrastructure and natural resources. This Comprehensive Plan is designed to be dynamic while responding to changes of the community and its environment. The legislative authority given to the City to adopt a comprehensive plan is in Wyoming Statutes Sections 15-1-501 through 15-1-512, inclusive. The Statutes authorize the City Planning Commission to prepare and adopt a master (comprehensive) plan for the physical development of the City. The City, pursuant to Wyoming Statutes, also adopted zoning and subdivision regulations as part of the Laramie Municipal Code. Together, the Comprehensive Plan and the Laramie Municipal Code are to be used during the decision making process on development in the City and its extraterritorial boundaries.

This Comprehensive Plan is divided into 12 chapters listed below. Each chapter provides background information, analyzes current conditions and projections, and provides goals and implementation strategies.

Chapter 1 - Planning Challenges This chapter explains the purpose of planning and the value that will be accrued from undertaking a comprehensive planning process in Laramie and its one-mile planning area. It also outlines the public participation program that served as a foundational element of the planning process.

Chapter 2 - Conditions and Outlook This chapter offers an in-depth introduction to Laramie and Albany County, which documents existing socioeconomic conditions and demographic characteristics pertaining to historical and current population; the age, gender, and educational attainment of its people; and the economic position of the community and its businesses. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the community has grown since its settlement, to identify its current characteristics and resources that will contribute to the envisioned future, and to analyze where the community appears to be headed in the future.

Chapter 3 - Community Character This chapter provides a vision for the future physical development of Laramie and its one-mile planning area. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the necessary policy guidance that will enable sound decision-making about the

compatibility and appropriateness of individual developments within the context of the larger community. An essential component of this chapter is the land use plan, which serves as the City's policy for directing ongoing development and managing future growth, preserving valued areas and lands, protecting neighborhoods, and realizing the envisioned community character.

Chapter 4 - Parks and Recreation The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that the City "catches up" on any deficiencies in the provision of parks and recreation areas and facilities, and then keeps pace with the facility requirements to support new development. A system plan serves as the basis of this analysis, which complements the future land use plan. The system plan also indicates the effective service areas of the existing parks, but, more importantly, identifies areas of future needs. The chapter includes an adequacy assessment of the current parks and a needs assessment determining future needs for additional land and improvements.

Chapter 5 - Housing and Neighborhoods This chapter evaluates the design of neighborhoods and the impact they have on community form, land use compatibility, and connectivity. The focus is to create livable neighborhood environments. There are direct ties to the City's zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure provisions that allow development to occur in a manner that meets the City's expectations and is compatible to adjacent development. The underlying premise of this element is to ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing within varying price ranges so as to accommodate persons desiring to relocate within or to the community. In addition to livability, the housing element is also essential in the community's economic development program.

Chapter 6 - Public Utilities This chapter summarizes the City's water, wastewater, drainage and solid waste disposal services and conditions. This chapter is supplemented by other specific operational and capital improvement studies performed separately from this comprehensive plan.

Chapter 7 - Urban Growth The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance on future development within the city and surrounding the City, particularly within its extraterritorial areas. Urban growth policies are important to assure that land is developed in a logical pattern to prevent leap-frog and disjointed development that fiscally burdens public facilities and infrastructure. Just as important, development should be appropriately managed to preserve land for continued future expansion.

Chapter 8 - Transportation The purpose of this chapter is to address community-wide mobility needs on all levels, from sidewalks and trails, to local streets and neighborhood access, to arterial roadways and highways. This element of the plan includes a Thoroughfare Plan, which is the long-term plan for developing an overall system of roadways for the City and its planning area. This long-range transportation plan is to be used as a guide for securing rights-of-way and upgrading and extending the network of local, collector, and arterial roads and highways in an efficient manner.

Chapter 9 - Economic Development The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance about how the community can achieve its vision while being proactive about economic development. This chapter contains an economic assessment and outlines ways to support

and retain existing businesses, attract and grow new businesses, and train the community's workforce - all with a view to achieving improved livability.

Chapter 10 - Public Safety The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the provision of safety-sensitive public services, including fire and police protection, emergency medical services, and security and establish policies and provisions to ensure the maximum protection of residents.

Chapter 11 – Reserved (Conservation) This chapter has been reserved for a conservation chapter. This chapter will address issues related to the environment and natural character of the community. Other issues such as energy efficiency, green building and alternative energy sources will be addressed.

Chapter 12 - Implementation The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the different elements of the plan together in such a way as to provide a clear path for sound decision-making. It outlines the organizational structure necessary to implement the plan, including roles and responsibilities, establishes a process for annual and periodic evaluation and appraisal of the plan, and sets forth a five-year action plan.