

VISION STATEMENT AND PRIMARY GOALS

INTRODUCTION

The vision statement and primary goals of the Town Master Plan are statements of what the plan intends to achieve. Such statements of purpose are critical in preparing a plan that meets the particular needs of the community. The vision statement and goals of the plan provide citizens with a basis for understanding the plan. If citizens find the mission statement and goals agreeable, then they may review the remainder of the plan to see if the plan actually helps accomplish the mission statement and goals. On the other hand, if the vision statement and goals are not correct they can be revised, possibly triggering further changes to other parts of the plan. The best community plans are those that make their vision and goals explicit and finalize them after thorough public review and discussion.

In Thermopolis, the vision statement and primary goals were prepared following two steps that were undertaken to understand and summarize the values, needs, and priorities of Thermopolis and its citizens. The first step was to ask each member of the Master Plan Committee and the Town Council to complete a questionnaire concerning assets, needs, issues and priorities in Thermopolis. The second step was to conduct the Thermopolis planning survey, through which over 300 town citizens expressed their views on town planning issues. These two steps have yielded important information about what Thermopolis desires for its future.

THERMOPOLIS VISION STATEMENT

In creating a vision statement to summarize the overall purpose of the Town Master Plan, one need look no further than to the Town Hall where a mission statement for the Town government is posted. This mission statement is pertinent to the Master Plan because it addresses what the town wants to be and what it values. Therefore, the mission statement is adopted as the vision statement for the plan.

VISION STATEMENT

Thermopolis -- A viable progressive community with an unsurpassed quality of life.

The Town of Thermopolis shall advance and foster:

- A caring and compassionate citizenry
- Orderly growth
- A safe and healthy environment
- Medical services
- A clean and attractive appearance
- Education
- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Tourism
- Economic stability

PRIMARY GOALS

The Primary Goals are the basic goals that form the foundation of the Master Plan. The Primary Goals are intended to be concise, general statements on land use issues that can be supported by most people in the town.

The overall themes of these goals are to:

- Improve the ability of the town to increase its population base and economic vitality;
- Capitalize on Thermopolis's unique history and resources that make the town a center for health and recreation; and
- Strengthen the core of town including the downtown and existing residential neighborhoods.

The Master Plan is based on the following nine primary goals, Goals A through I. It should be noted that these goals overlap and interrelate with each other. These goals should be considered within the overall context. Consequently, the following goals are coequal and have not have not been assigned any priority order.

GOAL A: DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Focus development efforts within and close to the existing town to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and retain rural landscapes.

GOAL B: ECONOMY

Improve the community's economic competitiveness and expand employment opportunities

GOAL C: NEIGHBORHOODS

Foster healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods and protect them from incompatible land uses.

GOAL D: HOUSING

Expand housing choices for people of all ages and incomes.

GOAL E: TOWN APPEARANCE

Intensify beautification efforts to increase the town's desirability as a tourist destination and as a place to live, work, and play.

GOAL F: PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Retain and improve the natural resources and park lands, especially Hot Springs State Park, that define Thermopolis as a unique, beautiful, and attractive community.

GOAL G: TRANSPORTATION

Provide safe, reliable, convenient, and economical facilities for all modes of transportation.

GOAL H: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Promote efficiency in public services and infrastructure improvements.

GOAL I: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Coordinate and cooperate with Hot Springs County, East Thermopolis, the water and sewer districts, and other governmental entities to encourage planned development of the town and surrounding areas.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

This Master Plan is a comprehensive, long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community. The Vision Statement (presented earlier in this chapter) is a brief declaration of the overall goal or purpose of the plan and of what the town should strive to be. The Primary Goals (of preceding section) further refine the results the Master Plan is attempting to achieve. However, the goals are still fairly general and more specific strategies are needed to explain how the Town can achieve the goals and vision of the Master Plan.

On the following pages are a series of Planning Strategies that are intended to summarize the main themes of action the Town should undertake to achieve the goals of this Master Plan. For each of the Primary Goals, several strategies are identified. These strategies represent the direction the Town should take.

It should be recognized that while the strategies are more specific than the Vision Statement and Primary Goals, still more detail is needed and will be provided later in the planning process. Specifically, this additional detail will consist of specific actions the Town can take to implement the strategies. Later in the planning process, we will evaluate a variety of possible actions, narrow the list to a workable number of preferred actions, and present those preferred actions as the way to implement this plan.

On the following pages are the Planning Strategies for each of the Primary Goals. Each goal is stated, followed by the context or rationale for the goal which explains why the goal is appropriate for

Thermopolis. Following that, the Planning Strategies are listed under each goal.

Note that the strategies make reference to the "designated urban growth area." This area is shown on the Future Land Use Map (Chapter __) and designates the geographic limits for future urban growth in the Thermopolis area. Urban growth refers to residential, commercial, industrial and public land uses that require city services and are developed at greater density or intensity than is appropriate for rural areas.

Certain other planning terminology here is defined at the end of this chapter. Such defined terms are [highlighted](#) to indicate that their definitions are provide on page 13.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

GOAL A: Focus development efforts within and close to the existing town to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and retain rural landscapes.

CONTEXT

For several reasons, the existing town is the best location for future development and for investments in infrastructure that supports development:

- The town will be more prosperous when growth occurs in and near it instead of in remote locations.
- The Town and other public entities can provide many public services more efficiently and at lower cost when development geographically concentrated rather than dispersed.
- When rural areas are not disrupted by development, the county's scenic views, wildlife habitats, and agricultural lands can be retained.

Consistent with this, the citizen planning survey found that most town citizens (68%) felt that the downtown should remain the town's main business district. In addition, most citizens (52%) also said that new subdivisions would be more beneficial if located in town rather than in rural parts of the county. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of town citizens (72%) agreed that Thermopolis's long term goal should be to encourage growth. The survey revealed little support for annexation of additional land to the town. Together, these results show support for further growth and development in and very near town. Such a development pattern

would be the most efficient and beneficial way for Thermopolis to grow.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy A-1: Encourage **infill** and **redevelopment** within the city's designated **urban growth area**.

Strategy A-2: Create regulatory , financial, and infrastructure incentives for developing in town.

Strategy A-3: Avoid creating regulatory, financial, or infrastructure advantages for building outside the designated urban growth area.

Strategy A-4: Coordinate with Hot Springs County to develop specifications for rural development in unincorporated areas of Hot Springs County near Thermopolis beyond the designated urban growth area.

Strategy A-5: Focus public investment in the ongoing maintenance, upgrading, and expansion of the city's urban services within the designated urban growth area.

Strategy A-6: Support public and private efforts to retain agricultural land use outside the designated urban growth area.

Strategy A-7: Evaluate the potential for re-use of the old refinery site for new development.

Strategy A-8: Work with Hot Springs County to reserve land within the Public Use Reserve (see Future Land Use Map) until there is proven need and feasibility for new uses of the land.

ECONOMY

GOAL B: Improve the community's economic competitiveness and expand employment opportunities.**CONTEXT**

In the citizen planning survey, the greatest need identified by the town citizens is more employment opportunities. The survey also shows that there is widespread support in Thermopolis for further development of the retail, industrial, tourism, and health care sectors of the local economy.

The diminishing local economy is a prime factor in Thermopolis's loss of population since the 1980s. It is difficult to reverse these trends in the short term. However, if Thermopolis has a consistent, long-range view towards increasing competitiveness and employment opportunities, the prospects for success will be greater.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy B-1: Focus economic development efforts on clean, non-polluting businesses and industries whose products are not affected by Thermopolis's geographic distance from major consumer markets.

Strategy B-2: Retain and expand Thermopolis's health care sector.

Strategy B-3: Promote tourism and recreation to bring more outside dollars into Thermopolis.

Strategy B-4: Reduce [retail leakage](#) and keep more Thermopolis dollars at home by offering more local shopping diversity.

Strategy B-5: Improve the economic vitality Thermopolis's downtown business district.

Strategy B-6: Encourage development of the Big Horn Basin Nature and Discovery Center.

Strategy B-7: Foster the relocation of retirees to Thermopolis.

Strategy B-8: Improve the livability and attractiveness of the town.

NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL C: Foster healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods and protect them from incompatible land uses.

CONTEXT

One of the most basic aspects of economic competitiveness is having a desirable and attractive community. This includes having desirable residential neighborhoods where people will want to live and raise families. Protecting and enhancing the existing residential neighborhoods is an important part of this.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy C-1: Promote compatible [infill](#), [redevelopment](#), and improvements to existing homes that strengthens and improves established neighborhoods.

Strategy C-2: Protect residential neighborhoods from conflicting land uses.

Strategy C-3: Ensure that new neighborhoods include a variety of housing types and include quality of life features, such as parks and pedestrian connections to surrounding areas.

Strategy C-4: Provide sidewalks and pathways for bicycles and pedestrians in all residential areas.

HOUSING

GOAL D: Expand housing choices for people of all ages and incomes.

CONTEXT

Variety in housing is important in retaining existing town residents and for attracting new people to the area. The citizen planning survey revealed that most citizens believe there is a need for additional senior citizen housing and newer housing in general. The availability of affordable housing received low marks in the survey. To be able to support a growing economy, Thermopolis needs a greater variety of housing choices.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy D-1: Promote the construction of a wide range of housing types, sizes, and costs.

Strategy D-2: Support [mixed-use developments](#) so that housing units may be incorporated into plans for commercial development, such as using upper floors for apartments or condominiums and the lower floor for commercial purposes.

Strategy D-3: Adopt and apply a definition of affordable housing as part of any new affordable housing initiatives.

Strategy D-4: Participate in Wyoming's housing rehabilitation program.

Strategy D-5: Continue supporting the efforts of non-profit housing organizations to improve the quality and affordability of housing in town.

TOWN APPEARANCE

GOAL E: Intensify beautification efforts to increase the town's desirability as a tourist destination and as a place to live, work, and play.

CONTEXT

Thermopolis is situated in a particularly beautiful location, surrounded by red hills and high mountains, with a clear river running through town, and with Wyoming's most visited state park located within the town. This setting is a strong advantage that Thermopolis has and that the town should build upon for the future.

Most citizens felt the appearance of the town was fair (45%) or good (41%). However, the clean-up of junk and weeds was one of the greatest needs reported in the citizen planning survey--83% of the citizens felt more needs to be done in this area.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy E-1: Strengthen the enforcement of existing town codes on unsightly conditions (weeds, junk vehicles, and etc).

Strategy E-2: Improve the appearance of the main entry routes into Thermopolis.

Strategy E-3: Improve the appearance of town and county facilities (storage yards, road maintenance shops, and etc).

Strategy E-4: Discourage visually obtrusive development (communication towers, major electric transmission lines, large signs, etc.) on mountain tops and ridge lines.

Strategy E-5: Encourage design improvements to existing commercial corridors so they are more economically successful and attractive.

Strategy E-6: Develop [design guidelines](#) or standards to achieve new development that enhances the appearance of the town.

Strategy E-7: Encourage new building designs that are consistent with traditional building styles in Thermopolis.

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL F: Retain and improve the natural resources and park lands, especially Hot Springs State Park, that define Thermopolis as a unique, beautiful, and attractive community.

Strategy F-4: Work cooperatively with Hot Springs State Park to improve the park and resolve problems.

CONTEXT

Parks and recreation opportunities are important to existing and prospective town residents. In the citizen planning survey, most citizens(71%) felt town parks are in good condition. Another 58% agreed that the town-owned Legion Golf Course is important to the Thermopolis economy. Thermopolis is unique in that over one-quarter of the town is park land, primarily Hot Springs State Park. Most town citizens (93%) strongly agree that the future success of the town is dependent on the existence of the state park. Retaining and improving these assets is clearly important to maintaining Thermopolis's unique character as well as to creating a more prosperous future.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy F-1: Improve pedestrian connections and vehicular access to state park.

Strategy F-2: Connect and extend recreation paths and trails in and around the town.

Strategy F-3: Ensure that new residential developments include access to [neighborhood parks](#).

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL G: Provide safe, reliable, convenient, and economical facilities for all modes of transportation.

CONTEXT

Thermopolis is relatively free of traffic problems. However, improving existing streets and providing better and more complete facilities for pedestrians will strengthen Thermopolis as a desirable place to live. Most town citizens (74%) agreed with the idea that sidewalks should be installed around most blocks in town. Most people feel that streets and sidewalks are only of fair condition. Surely, there is room for improvement and improved streets and sidewalks will enhance the image of Thermopolis and make the town a more desirable place.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy G-1: Progressively improve existing town streets.

Strategy G-2: Complete installation of sidewalks and walkways for all developed blocks in town.

Strategy G-3: Ensure that all new developments have streets and sidewalks constructed to town standards.

Strategy G-4: Design streets for all users including vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Strategy G-5: Use modern street design standards, including narrower streets and [traffic calming](#) for new and reconstructed streets.

Strategy G-6: Support the enhancement of inter-community public transportation within the Big Horn Basin.

Strategy G-7: Ensure the continuation of community's existing public and institutional transportation services.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOAL H: Promote efficiency in public services and infrastructure improvements.**CONTEXT**

It is critical for Thermopolis to prioritize its public works investments to ensure that the most "bang for the buck" is achieved. Most town citizens (55%) feel Thermopolis needs improved water and sewer systems. In addition, most citizens believe town streets and sidewalks need improvement. With the never-ending demands for infrastructure improvements and limited funds available for these purposes, it will be increasingly important for the town to prioritize its efforts.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy H-1: Give highest priority to improving in-town infrastructure.

Strategy H-2: Prioritize the expansion of utilities and services for development that is located within the designated urban growth area.

Strategy H-3: Use infrastructure incentives to attract development to target areas.

Strategy H-4: Annex developing areas into the town when extending of town water and sewer service to such areas.

Strategy H-5: Avoid further extension public services and infrastructure to distant areas.

Strategy H-6: Develop a multi-year [Capital Improvements Program](#) and update it annually.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

GOAL I: Coordinate and cooperate with Hot Springs County, East Thermopolis, the water and sewer districts, and other governmental entities to encourage planned development of the town and surrounding areas.

CONTEXT

Most residents of Hot Springs County live in Thermopolis and the town provides governmental services, most notably water service, to many of those who do not live in town. Yet development outside the town boundaries is managed by other entities. The Town and County and other entities can coordinate and cooperate to fulfill a common vision of how the area should grow and develop. Such efforts can lead to greater efficiencies in public investments and more effective improvement of the town and surrounding areas.

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Strategy I-1: Work with Hot Springs County and the Town of East Thermopolis to create a joint towns-and-county zoning and review board.

Strategy I-2: Work jointly with Hot Springs County to improve the appearance of main entry routes into Thermopolis.

Strategy I-3: Seek County Planning Commission support for and approval of the Thermopolis Master Plan.

Strategy I-4: Develop joint Town-County agreement regarding review of developments in the county near Thermopolis.

Strategy I-5: Involve water and sewer districts in planning for future development of area near Thermopolis.

PLANNING TERMINOLOGY

Capital improvements: An acquisition of real property, major construction projects, or acquisition of expensive equipments expected to last a long time. Capital improvements are usually large, non-recurring items.

Capital Improvements Program: A timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project.

Design guidelines: A set of guidelines defining parameters to be followed in site and/or building design and development; typically address architectural appearance of a building and other related features such as building setbacks, landscaping, outdoor lighting, parking areas, and signs; can be regulatory or advisory.

Designated Urban Growth Area: The area where urban growth is encouraged and urban services may be provided. Urban growth is development that is of high enough density or intensity at urban services are needed. Urban services include town water, sewer, police protection, garbage collection, and parks. The urban growth area is designated on the Future Land Use Map of the Master Plan.

Infill: The development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant sites within a built-up area.

Mixed-use development: The development of a tract of land or building with a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such

as but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment, in a compact urban form.

Neighborhood parks: A small park of one-acre or less serving people living within one-half to one-quarter mile of the park

Redevelopment: To demolish existing buildings or expand and existing building on a property to create a newer and larger building.

Retail leakage: Retail sales lost by a community to a competitive market, indicating the need for more retail development in an area.

Traffic calming: Street desing techniques concerned with reducing the adverse impact of motor vehicles on built-up areas; usually involves reducing vehicle speeds and providing more space and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.