

MISSION STATEMENT AND PRIMARY GOALS

INTRODUCTION

The mission 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 mission 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 mission 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 mission and goals explicit and finalize them after thorough public review and discussion.

In Thermopolis, the mission 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 MISSION STATEMENT

In creating a mission 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 mission statement for the plan.

MISSION 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 goals address the topics of the town development pattern, local economy, neighborhoods, housing, town appearance, parks and recreation, transportation, public services and infrastructure, and inter-governmental coordination. Later in the planning process, more detailed strategies will be added for each goal.

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: 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.

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

- The Town and other public entities can provide many public services more efficiently and at lower cost when development geographically concentrated rather than dispersed.
- The town will be more prosperous when growth occurs in and near it instead of in remote locations; and
- 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.

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

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 greater the prospects will be for success.

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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

DEFINITIONS

MASTER PLAN - A comprehensive, long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community.

MISSION STATEMENT - A declaration of the overall goal or purpose of a plan.

GOAL - The result a plan is attempting to achieve.

STRATEGY - A plan of action intended to accomplish a specific goal.

ACTION - Something done so as to accomplish a purpose.