

# BASIN MASTER PLAN GOALS

## Economy

Goal #1: Improve Basin's economic competitiveness and expand employment opportunities.

**Context:** For the long term, it is important for Basin to improve its competitiveness and increase its employment opportunities. The citizen survey identified employment opportunities and economic development as the greatest needs in Basin. The survey results suggest that Basin people would like to see enhanced economic development efforts. The survey also showed broad support for additional motels and promotion of tourism.

As a small town, Basin is fortunate to have a relatively diverse and stable local economy. The Big Horn County Courthouse, jail and other county facilities add to the economy as do the WYDOT facilities, the State Retirement Home, the communications company TCT West, the South Big Horn County Hospital, the School District, and the various downtown businesses. Because of these employers, Basin has seen modest population growth in recent years while other towns in the Big Horn Basin have lost population. It is important to retain the existing major employers in Basin.

## Infrastructure

Goal #2: Maintain and improve Basin infrastructure to provide affordable service, to meet applicable regulatory standards, and to prepare for future growth.

**Context:** To be competitive in economic development, Basin must provide affordable utility services. At the same time, Basin needs to improve its facilities, especially the wastewater treatment system, in order to stay current with regulatory standards. To capitalize on economic development opportunities, Basin needs to have its infrastructure in good condition with capacity to handle additional growth. These are significant challenges for small towns.

The citizen survey showed the three-quarters of the population felt Basin's long term goals should be to encourage growth. Furthermore, a majority said that improving the electrical system, the streets, sidewalks and street lighting, and the sewers and sewage treatment should be high or medium priorities for the Town. With substantial demands for infrastructure improvements and limited funds available, it will be increasingly important for the Town to prioritize its efforts.

It is imperative that Basin carefully and diligently plan all infrastructure improvements. This must include making sure that town residents support planned improvements. It also must include assuring that town residents can afford those improvements.

## **Development Pattern**

**Goal #3:** Locate new development within or near town to maintain an efficient land use pattern that reflects Basin's character, conserves property values, and facilitates orderly development.

**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 town and near town 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, scenic views, wildlife habitats, and agricultural lands can be retained.

Consistent with this, the citizen survey showed that over three-quarters of the population felt that downtown should remain Basin's main business district and over 60% felt that making downtown more attractive is a high or medium priority. In addition, 84% felt that new developments should have adequate streets, sidewalks, and utilities. Most people also felt that

new developments have been beneficial. The survey also showed little support for annexation of additional land into the town.

Together, these results suggest support for further growth and development in and very near town. Such a development pattern would be the most efficient and beneficial way for Basin to grow in the future. Such a development pattern is feasible in Basin because there is ample vacant land and redevelopment opportunities within or immediately adjoining the current Town limits.

## **Downtown**

**Goal #4:** Improve downtown as the business heart of Basin and an attraction for visitors.

**Context:** Basin has many elements of a great small town downtown. The attractive county courthouse, other historic buildings, and the many downtown businesses contribute to making Basin's downtown the business heart of the Basin area. As the citizen survey indicated, Basin people overwhelmingly believe downtown should remain the main business district while almost two-thirds of citizens support improving the appearance of downtown. There are challenges, as the survey indicated--citizens felt the overall appearance of town was lacking and the downtown is not meeting all their retail needs. Overall improvement of downtown will not only benefit the businesses and their customers, but will enhance the image of Basin in the region as a place to live, visit, and have a business.

## **Neighborhoods**

**Goal #5:** Protect and maintain the best features of Basin's peaceful and attractive residential neighborhoods.

**Context:** One of the most basic aspects of economic competitiveness for cities and towns is having a desirable and attractive community. This includes having desirable neighborhoods where people will want to live and raise families. Basin already has peaceful, quiet, and well-

kept residential areas that provide nice living situations. Protecting and enhancing the existing residential neighborhoods is important as is improving neighborhoods where possible. In the citizen survey, the highest rated priorities identified by town citizens were eliminating weeds and junk vehicles and removing or restoring dilapidated buildings.

## Housing

**Goal #6:** Plan for and promote a sufficient supply of sound housing to meet the needs of all ages and income levels.

**Context:** In the citizen survey, about two-thirds of citizens said Basin needs more affordable housing, new housing including rentals, and assisted living facilities for seniors. Furthermore, most people consider the condition of Basin's housing stock as only "fair." Having a variety of housing types available is important for retaining existing residents and for attracting new people to the town. To be able to support a growing economy, Basin will need a greater variety of quality housing choices.

## Parks and Recreation

**Goal #7:** Provide abundant recreational opportunities for town residents at reasonable cost and in a manner that adds to Basin's sense of community.

**Context:** Basin, for its size, has a good variety of recreation opportunities. Bike paths and town parks were rated highly by town citizens in the survey. Basin's parks and recreation opportunities are an asset for community attractiveness and economic development. Basin should continue efforts to maintain and enhance these for the future.

## Transportation

**Goal #8:** Maintain a safe and efficient transportation system for both vehicular travel as well as pedestrian and bicycle travel.

**Context:** Basin is relatively free from traffic problems. However, improving existing streets and providing safer facilities for pedestrians will strengthen Basin as a desirable place to live. Regular maintenance of streets is typically more cost-effective than putting off maintenance until more costly repairs are eventually required. The citizen survey showed support for the idea that Basin should encourage alternatives to automobile travel. At the same time, the condition of town streets were only rated "fair" by most town citizens.

## Public Services

Goal # 9: Retain critical public services (such as the hospital, school system, and fire district) that support the quality of life in Basin.

**Context:** It is important for the future of Basin that it maintain critical public services the availability of which make Basin a more viable place to live. Retaining the schools, the hospital and related clinics, and the volunteer fire department are all important for the future prosperity of Basin.

## Citizen Participation

Goal #10: Inform, involve, and consult the town's citizens in community planning and development decision making.

**Context:** Citizen participation is the best way to ensure that growth and development in Basin will be consistent with the values and aspirations of town residents. Citizens should be involved in making long range plans and the review of individual developments. The Town has a website with information on town planning. However, communication between citizens and town government was not rated well in the citizen survey. Efforts for improving communication and participation can be hard to maintain but are worth it in the long run.