

## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

This chapter presents an overview of current land use patterns and recent development activity within the Town of Basin. The town encompasses about 1,462 acres or 2.25 square miles and extends about 11,900 feet north to south and 9,500 feet east to west.

### Current Land Use

The current land use pattern of Basin is summarized by the following table. In addition, the Master Plan map series includes a [Current Land Use Map](#) that depicts existing land uses in the town.

As the table below indicates, 31.5 percent of the town's land area is classified as vacant or agricultural land. Much of these lands are west of the Big Horn Canal. There are also relatively large vacant or agricultural tracts east of the railroad and at the north end of town where there are older subdivisions that are still largely vacant.

Residential land use is the second largest category, with 21 percent of the town's land area taken up by homes on lots--these are concentrated in the core of town in residential areas north and south of C Street (Highway 30). Public street right-of-ways occupy a substantial part of Basin (15 percent) although not all of this land area is pavement--sidewalks and boulevard strips are included in right-of-ways.

<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Vacant or agricultural land</b>	454	31.5 %
<b>Residential</b>	303	21.0 %
<b>Street right-of-ways</b>	217	15.0 %
<b>Town Property - other than parks</b>	160	11.1 %
<b>Town Parks</b>	89	6.2 %
<b>State property</b>	53	3.6 %
<b>Industrial</b>	44	3.1 %
<b>Commercial</b>	37	2.6 %
<b>Big Horn County property</b>	31	2.2 %
<b>Tax exempt (churches, etc.)</b>	21	1.4 %
<b>Big Horn River</b>	17	1.2 %
<b>Public schools</b>	10	0.7 %
<b>Residential - apartments</b>	5	0.3 %
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1442</b>	<b>100%</b>

Lands owned by the Town of Basin, not counting town parks, constitute another 11.1 percent of the town's land area--these holdings include the sewage lagoons, Mount View Cemetery, undeveloped recreational land west of the Big Horn Canal as well as various town buildings. There are 89 acres of town parks in Basin, which amount to 6.2 percent of the town's land area.

Other smaller land use categories include 37 acres of commercial properties (2.6 percent of the land area), 53 acres of State of Wyoming properties (primarily the Wyoming Retirement Home), 44 acres of

industrial properties (primarily the BNSF railroad), 31 acres of Big Horn County property including the Fairgrounds and Courthouse, 21 acres of tax exempt properties, including churches, the medical clinic, the fire station, and similar facilities, 17 acres of land under the Big Horn River, 10 acres of public school properties, and five acres where apartment buildings are located.

Residential Neighborhoods: Residential land use is the largest active (non-vacant) use of land in Basin. Single family homes, of both site-built and manufactured construction, are the most common form of housing. Multi-family housing is less common with about twelve apartment buildings located throughout the town.

There are a total of 571 housing units in Basin on lots occupying about 308 of residential acreage (not counting streets). This equates to a housing density of 1.9 housing units per acre in the residential areas. Put another way, this equates to an average land area of 23,500 square feet per house (about one-half acre). This is a relatively low density for an incorporated town.

Older parts of town are somewhat more dense. For example, the four-block area bounded by 5th and 7th Streets and Holdredge and Wyoming Avenues contains 34 housing units on 48 lots of 7,000 square feet each. This equates to a housing density of 4.4 units per acre or about 10,000 square feet of land per home (some of the lots are vacant or only have a garage).

If the streets and alleys are added into the land area the density is 2.5 units per acre. This density is still on the low side, but is more consistent with the density of an incorporated town.

Overall, Basin's residential densities are fairly low and this gives the town an open and uncrowded character.

(Note: When measuring housing densities, if only the land in lots is counted, the result is called "net density". When the land for streets and alleys is added in, the results is called "gross or overall density".)

Downtown: Basin's downtown is roughly defined as centered on the main intersection of town, where US Highway 16/20 and Wyoming Highway 30 meet and then extending a block north, two blocks west, three blocks south, and one block east. The delineation of the downtown includes buildings and lands listed *Businesses and Land Uses in Downtown Basin* (attached). In general, the downtown is like many downtowns in that it has stores, bars, a bank, offices, public buildings, and some residences.

Two downtown buildings, the Post Office and the Republican Rustler building are on the National Register of Historic Places. Many of the other buildings downtown are old, having been constructed in the early 20th century. Some contribute to the downtown's historic ambience while others have deteriorated or have been remodeled to cover up the original building exterior. The downtown area is generally lacking in trees.

Commercial Corridor: Basin's one commercial corridor extends south from the downtown (transitioning at South Street) to the County Fairgrounds on US 20/16 (4th Street). The corridor extends over one-half mile south from the downtown, past the Fairgrounds, to the town limits.

The northern three blocks of the corridor are not distinctly different from the downtown. The part of the corridor includes various offices as well as the headquarters of the regional communications company TCT West, one of the larger employers in Basin. This area also has a variety of storage buildings, small warehouses and some single family homes.

The next two blocks south has a residential character with about a eight single family homes on either side of the corridor as well as a café and a small store building. This area also includes a small RV park.

Further south, the corridor has the Fairgrounds on the east side of the highway and new storage buildings and a few other small buildings. Most of the land across from the Fairgrounds is vacant and could accommodate additional businesses.

Basin is fortunate in that highway commercial activity is contained within the town and has not sprawled out past the town into the county, as occurs in so many other towns. Big Horn Avenue marks the end of the commercial corridor. However, the town limits actually extend another half-mile south to Orchard Street to include the Retirement Center and about 20 acres of largely vacant land on the west side of the highway.

Industrial: Basin has little industrial activity. The major industrial land use of the town is the BNSF railroad and related businesses include grain elevators.

Public and Semi-Public: Basin has a wide range of public and semi-public lands and facilities, including the 47-acre State Retirement Center, the Town wastewater lagoons (37 acres), the County Fairgrounds (20 acres), the Town-owned Mount View Cemetery (about 18 acres), the County Courthouse square (11 acres), public school sites (10 acres), and 89 acres of town parks. Basin also has an assortment of other governmental facilities (fire station and WYDOT), churches and other non-profit activities.

Vacant Land: Basin has a significant amount of vacant land within its borders, 416 acres or 29% of the town.

Some of this is in large tracts that are not imminently developable including over 100 acres on the western side of town above the Big Horn Canal as well as other larger vacant lands include low, wet areas east of the railroad and another wet area north of Richardson Avenue.

More developable, large vacant tracts include the east side of Highway 36 (Golf Course Road) south from Richardson Avenue; the unfinished 24-lot LaMax subdivision, and vacant areas between Big Horn Avenue and the Retirement Center. There are also eleven vacant residential lots in the new subdivision west of E Street.

Within the core of the town, there are few vacant residential lots. Many residential properties in Basin consist of more than one lot--in some case, it would be possible to "infill" such lots, adding homes between existing homes.

BLM Lands: The Bureau of Land Management has custody of extensive federal land holdings west of Basin. These lands are generally available for informal recreation use, grazing, and resource development. The BLM land is far enough from the developed areas Basin that it is not likely that any BLM land will be needed for expansion of the town.

### Development Trends

Basin has experienced a very modest amount of development activity in recent years. In the years 2001- through 2010, Basin issued building permits for 41 new, privately owned residential housing units. Most of these were for single family homes although 16 multi-family units were permitted in 2008.

In terms of subdivision activity, there have been only two subdivisions approved in Basin since 2000. The 14-lot "Basin Housing" subdivision on West E Street was approved in 2010 while the 24-lot LaMax subdivision on North 5th Street was approved in 2008.

The Master Plan map series includes a [Subdivisions Map](#) showing the locations of the various subdivisions that have formed the current town and surrounding area.

Year	Units
2001	1
2002	0
2003	0
2004	7
2005	4
2006	5
2007	3
2008	16
2009	4
2010	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>

### Town Zoning

Basin has had zoning since the 1970s. The zoning ordinance has been updated from time to time but for the most part, is largely the same as the original ordinance. The ordinance divides the town into several zoning districts or zones:

- **Mixed Agricultural:** allow agricultural activities within the town and very low density single family dwellings; commercial and industrial uses are prohibited.
- **Residential:** single family residential zone where site-built and "modular" construction homes are allowed as well as town houses; commercial and industrial uses are prohibited except home occupations are permitted; multi-family homes are not allowed; lots must be at least 5,000 square feet.
- **Mixed-Residential:** residential zone for multi-family dwellings and mobile homes; commercial and industrial uses are prohibited except home occupations; lots must be at least 5,000 square feet.
- **Recreation:** for public parks and recreational areas open to the general public.
- **Commercial:** all land uses are permitted except industrial uses and keeping livestock.
- **Industrial:** commercial and industrial land uses except commercial livestock operations, oil refineries, power generating stations, rendering plants, and other similar unsuitable uses.

- Political Subdivision: for lands of public entities such as the Town, County, School District, Fire District, Retirement Center, etc.; allows existing land uses but requires Planning Commission review of any new uses.
- Residential Holding: originally applied to large undeveloped areas within the town; was replaced by the Mixed Agricultural zone.

The Master Plan map series includes a [Zoning Map](#) depicting the current locations and boundaries of the various zoning districts.