

Implementing the Master Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter concerns actions and policies the Town can use to implement or carry out this Master Plan. An action is simply something done to accomplish the plan; a policy is a specific guiding principle that if followed will help accomplish the plan.

The Master Plan Committee has reviewed a long list of proposed actions and policies that could be used to carry out the plan. The actions and policies were generated by the Master Plan Committee members and the Town's planning consultant. Additional ideas were contributed by the general public through various outreach efforts including the citizen survey, the open house meeting, and the student photo essay.

The Master Plan Committee used a ranking system to rate each proposed policy and action. Each Committee member individually rated each action or policy and their rating were all averaged together. The resulting priority list (Appendix A) was useful for discussing priorities of individual actions and policies. But the list lacked coherence and did not correspond well to the results of the citizen survey.

Therefore, a new Priority List was developed. The new list is shorter, with only the most important actions and policies. The new list better reflects citizen input and provides a more logical road map for implementing the Master Plan.

BASIS FOR THE PRIORITY LIST

The Master Plan Committee's recommended Priority List identifies the highest-priority actions and policies the Town of Basin should pursue to carry out the Master Plan. The Priority List is designed to achieve the Master Plan's Vision Statement which is:

"Making Basin and the local economy strong enough for the next generation to grow up and have a good life here -- by building on the progress achieved by our citizens and community leaders -- progress that has continually improved our town -- making Basin an ever more desirable place to live, visit, and have a business."

Furthermore, the Priority List is organized to reflect the results of the Citizen Survey. The survey provided a lot of information but the most loud and clear messages expressed by a large majority of Basin people were the following:

- Employment opportunities, economic development and adding more visitor accommodations are the town's top needs.
- Cleaning up junk/ weeds and removing or rehabilitating dilapidated buildings are two of the highest priorities.
- Communication between the Town government and its citizens needs improvement.

- Downtown should remain Basin's main business district.
- Basin's long-term goal should be to encourage growth.

FLEXIBLE PRIORITIES

Basin will need to take a flexible approach with regard to the Priority List. The Priority List is ambitious. Yet the Town should pursue all the listed items to effectively implement the Master Plan.

Several factors will limit the Town's ability to accomplish the Priority List and implement the Master Plan. Funding availability is a major constraint and pursuing these recommendations is contingent on available funding. The Town's administrative capacity is small and this needs to be considered when pursuing these actions and policies. Similarly, the ability of the community at large to consider proposals and adjust to change has limits--pursuit of priority actions and policies must proceed at a pace that allows for formation of community consensus about issues and solution.

Taking a flexible approach means holding back on the more difficult actions until resources are available and community sentiment supports moving ahead. Smaller, easier tasks can be accomplished in the meantime. Achieving the Master Plan's vision for Basin's future will not happen in months or a few years; it is a long term project.

BASIN'S PRIORITY LIST

The Priority List is organized by community development topics. These topics are ones that the Master Plan Committee and general public identified as Basin's most important topics--the economy, housing, the town's appearance, infrastructure, the development pattern, and citizen involvement. Each of these topics is covered below. It should be noted that many actions and policies would impact more than one of the topics; for example, cleaning up unsightly properties obviously helps Basin's appearance and this in turn helps with economic competitiveness. Similarly, appointing a citizen committee to study infrastructure issues addresses infrastructure and advances citizen involvement.

The Priority List is as follows:

ECONOMY: The Master Plan seeks to improve Basin's economic competitiveness and expand employment opportunities. To accomplish this, the Town should use the following five strategies (in bold type) and the corresponding actions and policies:

Strategy 1) Retain existing major employers

- Keep an open line of communication with major employers.
- Work with major employers on issues or problems with town services, infrastructure, zoning, etc.

Strategy 2) Increase the town's competitiveness and attractiveness as a location for new businesses.

- Create an inventory of available, ready-to-build commercial and industrial sites and use it to market Basin to potential businesses.
- Review the zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure they work smoothly and efficiently and do not impose unnecessary requirements on business development.

Strategy 3) Increase visitor accommodations in Basin.

- Facilitate development of additional restaurants and lodging establishments. (Recommended means of facilitating this are detailed in the 2011 Community Assessment.)

Strategy 4) Encourage additional retail and service businesses, especially those that provide for the needs of town residents.

- Facilitate additional shopping opportunities. (Recommended means of facilitating this are detailed in the 2011 Community Assessment.)

Strategy 5) Expand Basin's economic base

- Evaluate feasibility of recruiting an assisted living facility. Such a facility would be an excellent addition to the Town's economic base. The Town can advance this by working with the Wyoming Business Council to evaluate feasibility.

HOUSING: The Town should do its part to promote a sufficient supply of sound housing to meet the needs of all ages and income levels. To do this, the Town should employ the following two strategies and related actions and policies:

Strategy 1) Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, sizes and costs. (single-family, multi-family, senior housing, etc.)

- Review zoning ordinance to ensure that it allows a variety of types, sizes and costs of housing units.

Strategy 2) Promote the rehabilitation or replacement of substandard housing units.

- Promote awareness of available housing rehabilitation programs. The State of Wyoming sponsors several programs that Basin property owners could use to improve housing quality.
- Work with property owners to encourage rehabilitation of existing housing.
- Create an inventory of existing housing units that would be good candidates for rehabilitation.

- Consider a higher standard for manufactured homes, such as the 1994 HUD standard instead of the 1976 HUD standard. This would gradually improve the housing stock by specifying that newly installed manufactured homes should be 1994-vintage or newer.

TOWN APPEARANCE: Basin should intensify its beautification efforts thereby increasing the town's desirability as a place to live, work, and visit by using the following three strategies and the corresponding actions and policies:

Strategy 1) Support residents' efforts to improve their neighborhoods.

- Sponsor town clean up days to help residents remove brush and unwanted items.
- Clean up town properties on east end of B Street. These sites were identified by the public. The Town can lead by example here.

Strategy 2) Remove or restore blighted buildings in the Town's residential areas.

- Work with property owners to encourage restoration or removal of blighted buildings.
- Consider adopting an ordinance to regulate abandoned or dangerous buildings. Such an ordinance would prevent blighted buildings from degrading their neighborhood.
- Strengthen the enforcement of existing town codes on nuisance conditions (weeds, junk vehicles, and etc).

Strategy 3) Protect residential areas from encroachment by intensive commercial activities or other incompatible land uses.

- Review zoning regulations to ensure they provide adequate protections for established residential neighborhoods from incompatible land uses.

INFRASTRUCTURE: The Town must maintain and improve its infrastructure to provide affordable service, to meet applicable regulatory standards, and to prepare for growth. The following four strategies and corresponding actions and policies are recommended to help the Town achieve this goal:

Strategy 1) Coordinate improvement of wastewater treatment system, sewer lines, and groundwater seepage problem.

- Appoint a citizen advisory committee to review issues, alternative solutions and their costs, and funding options.
- Consult with an engineer specializing in waste water treatment.
- Conduct an engineering evaluation of the sewer lines.

Strategy 2) Continue to improve and update the Town's infrastructure.

- Work with the fire district to ensure adequacy of fire hydrants and fire flows.
- Develop a multi-year Capital Improvements Program and update it annually.

Strategy 3) Ensure that the construction and operation of all infrastructure improvements are the most cost-effective possible.

- Vigorously pursue grant opportunities to assist with funding improvements to town infrastructure.
- Conduct a cost assessment on all major infrastructure improvement proposals to evaluate both construction costs and operating costs.

Strategy 4) Require new developments to provide necessary public utilities, streets and sidewalks that meet town codes.

- Develop a written development specifications manual that includes street and utility construction standards.
- Require developers to provide at their expense all utilities in all new subdivisions.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN: The Master Plan recommends the Town maintain an efficient land use pattern that reflects Basin's character, conserves property values and facilitates orderly development. To accomplish this goal, the Town should

Strategy 1) Ensure that new developments are well-planned and beneficial additions to the town.

- Review all proposals for land development, annexation, and town utility extension in light of the recommendations of the Master Plan and approve only those that comply with the plan.
- Review all subdivision proposals outside of town within the Town's one-mile planning jurisdiction.
- Review the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations and revise them as necessary so that they conform to guidelines of the Master Plan's Future Land Use Plan.

Strategy 2) Concentrate the location of future development in town to avoid strip development along U.S. Highway 16/20.

- Work with Big Horn County to ensure that Basin's entranceways remain attractive and free from detrimental land uses.
- Work with property owners to improve the appearance of vacant lots and unoccupied buildings.

Strategy 3) Improve the commercial corridor streetscape.

- Work with WyDOT to install sidewalks and streetlights along the commercial corridor.
- Review the zoning ordinance's performance standards to ensure that new development positively contributes to corridor improvement.

Strategy 4) Promote and retain downtown Basin's architectural style.

- Promote the preservation of important historical buildings including the courthouse and post office.
- Work with building owners to explore ways of improving commercial building facades and awnings, especially in the Downtown.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT: The Town should pursue the following two strategies and related actions and policies to inform, involve, and consult the Town's citizens in decision making:

Strategy 1) Increase opportunities for citizen involvement in town affairs.

- Consider using more ways to involve citizens including creating advisory committees, periodic surveys, community newsletter, public hearings, etc.

Strategy 2) Ensure that affected residents are given an opportunity to comment on development proposals.

- Review the public notice and public comment rules of the zoning and subdivision regulations to make sure they provide adequate notice and comment opportunities.

OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND POLICIES

As mentioned in the Introduction of this Chapter, the Master Plan Committee reviewed a long list of potential actions and policies for implementing the Master Plan. Many of those actions and policies have not been included on the final Priority List but still have merit. While the Town's attention should be focused on the Priority List, the Master Plan does not discourage the Town from pursuing these other actions and policies. Unforeseen opportunities and changing conditions could increase the importance and feasibility of these other actions and policies; if that occurs, the Town should adapt its priorities accordingly.