

DIRECTIONS, VISION AND GOALS

2

2.1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Comprehensive Plan will guide development and re-development, as well as many other decisions related to Albany County, over the next planning period, about a 20-year horizon, to benefit current and future residents. In recent years, the county's growth has been stable. However, the southern portion of Albany County is experiencing accelerated growth.

2.2 BACKGROUND

As the county grows, it will likely change in character too. What kind of community do we want Albany County to be? Comments received during the public input process of the Comprehensive Plan included statements such as, "manage growth to ensure a long term development horizon," "reduce expenditures," "protect natural resources," "reduce leapfrog development," "address 35-acre conversion of agricultural land," "conserve resources," and "address sprawl."

These statements can be categorized into three basic directions that underscore:

- ✧ The health, safety, and welfare of our citizens;
- ✧ Minimizing the cost of essential services on our taxpayers (cost to public); and
- ✧ Quality of life.

These themes in turn have been translated into a vision and goals that guide the Comprehensive Plan.

2.3 VISION STATEMENT

The Citizens' Advisory Committee used public input to generate the Community Vision Statement for Albany County. (See Text Box)

Community Vision Statement

Our vision is to support responsible and sustainable growth while conserving the natural and social character of Albany County. With this vision, Albany County is prepared to shape its future by conserving traditions and character; promoting sustainability; supporting agriculture, wildlife, habitat, and scenic vistas; and recognizing property rights.

2.4 DETAILS OF THE VISION

OUR VISION IS TO SUPPORT RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH...

Change is happening in Albany County, and we do not wish to stifle growth, but accommodate and welcome growth that offers positive impacts to our community. Through responsible growth, development and planning, our present and future citizens can live and work while maintaining a quality of life unique to Albany County that preserves the public health, safety, and welfare of our citizens.

WHILE CONSERVING THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTER OF ALBANY COUNTY. WITH THIS VISION, ALBANY COUNTY IS PREPARED TO SHAPE ITS FUTURE BY CONSERVING TRADITIONS AND CHARACTER...



Albany County is a treasure, an open landscape with abundant wildlife, clean air and water, and clear night skies. Our natural environment will continue to define our identity, and we will embrace our role as responsible land stewards. Our small communities, with their unique traditions, history and character, offer a safe environment, abundant recreational resources, and first class educational facilities. Our traditions and character are important to consider in new developments. Albany County will continue to attract new residents. Long-time and newer residents can live side by side, with city and rural residents working together to make decisions. We will respect the diversity of our county residents, and work to provide safe and healthy living environments for all. Rural and urban residents must accept the reality that country living is not accompanied by some of the amenities of town living. Albany County is an ideal location for individuals and families to grow.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY...



Sustainability is an attempt to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. There are many kinds of sustainability. For example, our local economy must remain strong and diverse so that our youth can make a viable living here. Our development pattern must be such that we can afford to efficiently provide necessary services to our residents. To do this, growth should be concentrated around existing infrastructure (while considering the land's suitability for development). Growth outside this realm should be managed in such a way as to not overburden county services, help sustain the agricultural economy, and minimize impacts to natural resources. Natural resources must be conserved in order to sustain a healthy environment, reduce pollution of all forms, and provide a nurturing community for our children's children.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE...

Agriculture is an integral part of our landscape, our culture, and our history. Ranching is instrumental in supporting and maintaining our natural resources, wildlife populations, open spaces, and rural quality. Albany County promotes agriculture and will work to ensure that agriculture is a viable option for landowners.



WILDLIFE, HABITAT, SCENIC VISTAS...

Albany County's mixture of public and private lands has long been a haven for wildlife. Sustainable growth and development must recognize the needs of wildlife. Habitat, wildlife, environmentally sensitive areas, and scenic vistas are all linked. Protecting scenic vistas and environmentally sensitive areas will contribute to habitat conservation.

AND RECOGNIZING PROPERTY RIGHTS.

Albany County residents wish to retain the privacy and individuality of our own ranches and homes, and be in charge of our own destinies. We do not wish to be overburdened with regulations that inhibit our freedom to live and work. We believe that all landowners possess private property rights as well as responsibilities, and we hope that citizens and businesses will take responsibility for maintaining the quality of our landscape, natural resources, and safe and healthy living for their neighbors, and present an appealing image to residents and visitors. A balance must be established between property rights and regulations.

2.5 GOALS FROM THE VISION

The goals represent "big picture" ideas stated in the vision.

1. Protect natural and environmental resources (health, safety, welfare, and quality of life),
2. Promote economic development (health, safety, welfare),
3. Encourage growth efficiency (health, safety, welfare, and cost to public),
4. Conserve agricultural land (rural quality of life),
5. Enhance county identity (quality of life),
6. Provide recreation opportunities (quality of life).

2.6 OBJECTIVES

How do we achieve the community vision and goals? It is helpful to break down the broad vision into objectives, which are more specific, quantifiable steps. From objectives, implementation actions are created to outline specific measures that can be taken to achieve the goals and objectives. With this organization, if the goals and objectives are achieved, so too is the vision.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- LU1. Promote development patterns that are growth efficient and logically sequenced to be efficiently served by public services. Direct development to specific areas, facilitating this by phasing infrastructure and service investments.
- LU2. Preserve open spaces, agricultural lands, and environmentally-sensitive areas



Figure 2.1:
Rural residential development is growing in various parts of the county.



that are not currently suitable for development.

- LU3. Fulfill needs for various kinds of housing and employment opportunities for current and future residents.
- LU4. Provide recreational opportunities.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OBJECTIVES

- IR1. Take a regional approach based on sound planning principles by acting in cooperation with other government agencies.
- IR2. Promote contiguous and orderly development and the provision of adequate services to such development.
- IR3. Coordinate efforts of local jurisdictions, agencies, and special districts in order to achieve common goals.
- IR4. Work with local jurisdictions, agencies, and special districts to conserve important natural resources, open space, agricultural land, cultural resources, and other valuable assets that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- IR5. Combine efforts of local jurisdictions, agencies, and special districts to better promote economic development in the county.

AGRICULTURE OBJECTIVES

- A1. Conserve and protect agricultural land and practices in Albany County so that agriculture can continue to be a viable industry.
- A2. Concentrate agricultural land conversion around the City of Laramie and existing developed areas, and direct it away from other areas of the county.
- A3. Continue support for locally accepted, traditional agricultural management practices and land uses.
- A4. Create new opportunities for diversifying the agricultural economy, including agro-tourism, and the establishment of new, compatible uses such as alternative energy development.
- A5. Encourage the conservation of agricultural and ranch lands through various voluntary and incentive-based programs and educational efforts.
- A6. Promote good conservation practices through encouragement of good stewardship and best management practices.
- A7. Promote such development as properly sited and designed wind farms, solar energy projects, and transmission infrastructure, in conjunction with good planning practices.
- A8. Encourage continued use of existing water rights.

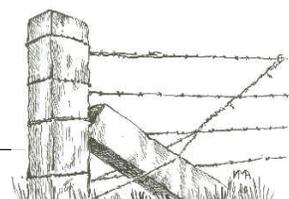
NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OBJECTIVES



- NR1. Conserve and enhance natural and environmental resources.
- NR2. Delineate hazardous or sensitive places on plats and/or site plans, which include, but are not limited to, areas of slope movement, fire hazard, aquifer recharge, steep terrain, non-reclaimed mined lands, unstable soils, shallow ground water, hazardous waste deposits, and flood plains. Discourage unsafe development in these areas.
- NR3. Protect riparian habitat, wetlands, aquifer recharge lands, and other areas that determine watershed health, as well as scenic vistas.
- NR4. Conserve native wildlife species and habitat.
- NR5. Encourage development of natural resources in an environmentally responsible manner.
- NR6. Consider the economic impact of proposed land use changes and promote the economic utilization of natural resources, including land, water, wildlife, timber, grasses, and open spaces, that enhances or conserves those resources.

OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC LANDS OBJECTIVES

- OS1. Protect the county's identity and quality of life by conserving valuable open spaces and public lands and the services that they contribute.
- OS2. Concentrate growth near existing developed areas on semi-productive agricultural lands and lands with low levels of environmental and natural resources, in order to promote growth efficiency and development with a small footprint.
- OS3. Construct or extend greenways to create open space corridors that provide non-motorized connections between neighborhoods and activity centers such as schools, parks, and commercial areas.
- OS4. Preserve existing recreational opportunities and develop new recreational facilities with cooperation of property owners and appropriate government agencies.
- OS5. Enhance access to public lands and lands with natural and environmental resources.



CULTURAL RESOURCES OBJECTIVES

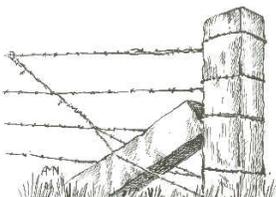
- CR1. Promote the identification, evaluation, and protection of cultural resource sites throughout the county.
- CR2. Encourage permanent protection, interpretation, and maintenance of all identified Albany County archaeological sites of significance.
- CR3. Protect, preserve and restore buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, natural features and districts which represent or reflect elements of Albany County's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history.
- CR4. Increase public awareness and appreciation of historic and archaeological resources.
- CR5. Preserve the historic visual character of state-designated roads.
- CR6. Interpret the significance of historic and archaeological sites to educate visitors about the sites, increase interest, and preserve area history.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- ED1. Expand the economic and tax base of the county through economic development opportunities, while working toward diversification of the economy through environmentally-friendly, profitable basic industries and tourism.
- ED2. Promote renewable energy development while ensuring fair lease or rental terms for landowners and support landowner initiatives to develop wind energy cooperatives. Work with landowners and other interested agencies to identify suitable locations for renewable energy development.
- ED3. Retain existing businesses by identifying and remedying strategic areas of economic deficiency. Encourage youths to remain in, or return to, the county to fill employment vacancies.
- ED4. Appeal to new businesses by promoting existing assets and enhancing first impressions of the county image.
- ED5. Improve the permitting process associated with business and industry development.
- ED6. Promote agriculture so that the sector remains as a contributor to the local economy.

TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

- T1. Build, improve, and maintain a safe and cost-effective transportation system in Albany County while respecting natural resources, agricultural resources, and other valued elements of this plan.
- T2. Ensure maintainable roads and access to county services.
- T3. Allow new development only where adequate transportation facilities exist or could be constructed prior to development. Phase new development to coincide with construction or upgrading of street or road improvements in a



manner that meets the demand for new development.

- T4. Preserve adequate right-of-way and infrastructure at the time of subdivision approval process to meet future transportation network needs.
- T5. Establish and enforce standards for road construction within the county through subdivision and development review processes.
- T6. Identify system-wide improvements to meet existing and future demands, prioritize improvements, and develop a financial plan for project implementation and maintenance. Coordinate the plan with local, state, and federal systems and reinforce the comprehensive land use plan to assure that roads provide traffic capacity consistent with the land uses.

HOUSING OBJECTIVES

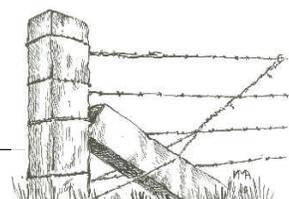
- H1. Assure construction of safe, affordable, and quality homes while using land efficiently and sensibly and protecting our environment and natural resources.
- H2. Promote continued and sensible growth in developed areas, protecting the character, scenic views, and resources of our lands.
- H3. Direct developments close to major roads where possible in order to help maintain the quality of public services, promote growth efficiency, and respect landscape sensitivity.
- H4. Locate housing that can accommodate employment.
- H5. Locate and promote housing that can efficiently accommodate future growth.
- H6. Encourage a mix of housing types, sizes, and styles to meet the demands of county citizens.
- H7. Ensure that new development is safe to inhabit.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OBJECTIVES

- CS1. Provide orderly, efficient, cost effective services that result in a livable, healthy, attractive, and safe community.

Law Enforcement/Search and Rescue

- LE1. Effectively respond to law enforcement needs of the community.



Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

- FE1. Provide adequate coverage for fire protection and emergency response over the entire county.
- FE2. Improve cooperation between fire zones, Fire District #1, responders in the northern part of the county, and mutual aid responders in adjoining counties.
- FE3. Reduce wildland fire hazards and risk from wildfire ignitions through public education.
- FE4. Reduce threat of fire in the wildland-urban interface by having homeowners apply Firewise practices.

Emergency and Natural Hazard Management

- NH1. Protect citizens, critical facilities, infrastructure, private property, and the surrounding environment from natural and man-made hazards.
- NH2. Effectively respond to and mitigate emergencies.
- NH3. Direct development away from the Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone and other vulnerable recharge areas through regulations, incentives, purchase of lands, or establishment of easements with landowners.

Schools

- S1. Provide quality education for Albany County residents who request it.

Library

- L1. Meet the needs of the public by offering open access to a diverse collection of materials, a friendly environment, and community-based programs to encourage learning throughout life.

Water and Sanitation

- WS1. Direct development to locations that have adequate access to water and are suitable for sanitation facilities.

Solid Waste

- SW1. Provide for an effective means of solid waste disposal for county residents.
- SW2. Promote recycling and re-use of materials as an alternative to landfill disposal.



Telecommunications and Other Utilities

TE1. Support an effective, coordinated network of telecommunications systems throughout the county.

2.7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

City of Laramie Comprehensive Plan guides land use planning and development within the city and in an Urban Growth Area around the city (2007).

Casper Aquifer Protection Plan delineates Casper Aquifer Protection Area, threats and mitigation actions (2002, update in progress 2007).

Major Street and Highway System Plan Map includes roadway classifications for existing and future roads in the city of Laramie and immediate vicinity (2001).

City of Laramie Housing Study and Action Plan includes housing and needs assessment for the city of Laramie (2003).

Rawlins Resource Management Plan guides management of Bureau of Land Management lands for the Rawlins Resource Area, including Albany County (in progress 2007).

Medicine Bow National Forest Plan guides management of Medicine Bow National Forest Land within Albany County (2003).

A Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for Wyoming identifies wildlife species of concern, as well as threats, challenges, and proposed conservation actions; Wyoming Game and Fish Department (2005).

Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Laramie Plains National Wildlife Refuges provides direction and guidance for Bamforth National Wildlife Refuge, Hutton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and Mortenson Lake National Wildlife Refuge (in progress 2007).

Keinath, D., B. Heidel and G.P. Beauvais. 2003. *Wyoming Plant and Animal Species of Concern*. Prepared by the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database—University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY. (Plant species of concern updated in 2007).

Respect the Past, Live the Present, Dream the Future: Preservation Planning in the Cowboy State was created by the State Historic Preservation Office to preserve and promote Wyoming's heritage; focuses on education, tourism and funding (2002, revision in progress 2007).

Partners in Progress is an economic development initiative created through the Laramie Economic Development Corporation (2001).



Albany County, *Wyoming Hazard Mitigation Plan* prepared by the Albany County Emergency Management Agency (2004).

Albany County Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan provides direction to mitigate risk in the wildland urban interface (2004).

