

# WORK SESSION AGENDA


**Casper City Council**  
**City Hall, Council Meeting Room**  
**Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.**



<b>Work Session Meeting Agenda</b>		Recommendation	Beginning Time	Allotted Time
Recommendations = Information Only, Move Forward for Approval, Direction Requested				
1.	Council Meeting Follow-up		4:30	5 min
2.	Council Straw Poll	Direction Requested	4:35	10 min
3.	Wind Turbine Art Installation Update	Direction Requested	4:45	20 min
4.	Unsafe Structures Update	Information Only	5:05	30 min
5.	Council Goals Update	Information Only	5:35	45 min
6.	Agenda Review		6:20	10 min
7.	Legislative Review		6:30	20 min
8.	Council Around the Table		6:40	20 min
Approximate End Time:				7:00

*\*Please silence cell phones during the meeting\**

November 16, 2022

**MEMO TO:** J. Carter Napier, City Manager   
**FROM:** Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation, & Public Facilities Director  
**SUBJECT:** Wind Turbine Art Installation (“Windshenge”) Update

**Meeting Type & Date**

Work Session  
November 22, 2022

**Action Type**

Direction Requested

**Recommendation**

That Council provide direction regarding the wind turbine blade sculpture donation proposed by local artist, Chris Navarro.

**Summary**

Local sculptor, Chris Navarro, engaged City Council on June 14, 2022 with the idea of building a sculpture replicating *Stonehenge* that would be built from reclaimed wind turbine blades. Mr. Navarro proposed to donate the sculpture to the City of Casper, but requested half an acre of City property for the installation. Council directed staff to seek out city property for the installation, an effort that has been ongoing since that time.

Staff has considered several city-owned parcels for the installation, including existing parks, existing snow dump sites, city-owned property adjacent to Interstate 25 and to the Ford Wyoming Center, and land near the intersection of Amoco Road and Bryan Stock Trail. Each site has been fraught with challenges. The primary concern for most sites is lack of parking and other support infrastructure needed for an anticipated tourist attraction. However, other valid concerns have included safe access to sites, increased traffic in residential areas, remoteness that may lead to security issues and vandalism, lack of visibility from a major highway, and opportunity loss associated with alternative land uses.

On September 20, 2022 Council was presented with an option to utilize a piece of land on the Fort Caspar Museum grounds for the installation. The site was desirable due to available parking, the prospect of bolstering visits to Fort Caspar Museum, and the existing gift shop within the museum that could naturally lend itself to souvenir sales. That proposal, however, was met with strong opposition from two organizations that work closely with the City, the Fort Caspar Museum Association and the Casper Historic Preservation Commission. The primary reason for opposition was that the sculpture does not thematically or aesthetically align with the nature of the historic Fort grounds. Letters of opposition are attached for Council reference.

To date, City staff has been unable to locate a City-owned parcel of land that is well suited for Mr. Navarro's art donation. Staff recommends that a formal commissioning process be considered if the direction is to locate the sculpture within the City of Casper.

**Financial Considerations**

Mr. Navarro has expressed intention to donate the sculpture to the City, but is requesting half an acre of City property for the installation. It is unclear if support infrastructure required for the installation, such as parking, lighting, security, etc. will be included in the donation. There is no funding available for the City to construct support infrastructure at a sculpture site.

Ongoing maintenance costs associated with an installation are also a concern, especially with regard to graffiti. Charging admission to site is one possible way to fund ongoing maintenance.

**Oversight/Project Responsibility**

Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation, & Public Facilities Director  
Liz Becher, Community Development Director

**Attachments**

Casper Historic Preservation Commission Letter  
Fort Caspar Museum Association Letter



October 30, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Fort Caspar Museum Association (FCMA), I am writing this report in strong opposition to the placement of the sculpture "Windhedge" upon the grounds of the Fort Caspar Museum. To be perfectly clear, neither the FCMA nor myself are expressing views that the sculpture should not find a home in Casper, we simply feel that the placement on museum grounds does not fit the site practically, thematically, or aesthetically. It is our hope that we can have an open and honest conversation moving forward and that all parties may find some common ground. The following are our concerns in more detail:

Practicality:

The sculpture as designed needs a half acre of land. The only place on the Fort Caspar Museum site with enough area to accommodate this is near the entrance to Fort Caspar Campground. This eliminates any possibility for potential visitors to view the sculpture from a main road. This removes any chance for visitation by those that have not heard of the sculpture. Additionally, it has been noted that vandalism is on the rise. The white frame of the sculpture is the perfect "tagging" object and with the installation out of sight from the main roads it could open it up to vandals. This also brings concerns of security for the museum which, compared to other areas of town, has very few issues with trespass or vandalism.

While it is true that the sculpture would be a gift to the City, we caution that gifts often have long term financial impacts. Specifically, we are concerned with who's budget the maintenance of the sculpture would be. Though we were assured that FCMA would never be approached to foot the bill for maintenance, our fear is that it will be placed into the museum's budget. This then directly impacts the "return on subsidy." We encourage you to consider our contributions, both in terms of labor and financially, that our organization makes when calculating the "return on subsidy".

We also urge the City to evaluate what they are prepared to spend in marketing dollars on a yearly basis in order to bring the visitors to the sculpture. If it is not in view of a main road then marketing will be needed. While the sculpture may have some national news coverage, we warn this will just be flash in the pan of a society that is constantly bombarded with the "latest things." Any such coverage can not be expected to provide long term visitation numbers.

Thematically:

The Fort grounds are on the National Historic Register of Historic Places, a designation granted due to the cultural and historical significance of the site. The site a crossroads of history, a place where our tribal, pioneer, military, agriculture, energy and

social histories all meet. The purpose of the Museum is to curate this history, collecting artifacts and stories and making sense of this unique location. Museums do not accept items "just because it is given." Artifacts are selected for their ability to share the history. The blades to be used in this installation are not even blades that were used in our windfarms. Instead the museum would collect things such as documents, photographs, tools, and other such items that could be used in formal displays on history, not an abstract story told by art.

Such an installation of a modern sculpture based upon a Neolithic European monument would create a harsh juxtaposition between the frontier history of this site. Such a jarring view would diminish the value of the site as a historic teaching tool. That being said, we were informed there was another sculpture that better fit the theme of the Museum. We are told the artist also has a tipi design which would better suit the site.

#### Aesthetically:

As mentioned above, this sculpture does not aesthetically fit the historic grounds. We encourage the City of Casper to form a commission, committee or even a staff person dedicated to the curation of a public art collection. Any such collection requires basic curation in the form of a collections policy. This states what the City would collect, how they would determine to accept any proposals, where art of specific styles or themes would be displayed and plans for their long-term care. Perhaps this could be in cooperation with the Chamber's Beautification Committee? With no system in place, the City cannot expect the art to compliment the regions of the city in which it is placed and, in many instances, can affect the artist's intent for their piece.

#### Other Concerns:

When talks of closures were had at the City Council level, the Fort Caspar Museum and the FCMA were directed by the City to develop new ways to attract visitors. In doing so, we worked on a potential donation of the largest collection of Pony Express materials in the world to create what could have become the National Museum of the Pony Express. Not only would the collection have had a national draw for visitors, it came with an \$800,000 endowment for the collections care and would have allowed the FCMA to apply for national level sponsorships and grants for the construction of the building required to house the collection. For reasons never explained to our organization, the City turned down the proposal.

#### Potential Solutions:

The FCMA would like to offer the following ideas and items for consideration in the sculpture's placement.

- 1) We feel the best location in the City of Casper for such a sculpture would be the Amoco property. Placed along the trail system, the sculpture could be located on grounds deemed unsuitable for building construction. Interpretive signs could discuss Casper's changing energy industry and reuse and recycling efforts. The

location is near enough to the Museum to attract visitors to the site and the gift shop could sell the souvenirs. No structures would impede the view of the sculpture and it would not impede views to historic or cultural sites. In view of one of the main roads into Casper, visitors could be drawn organically. We were informed the City would not approach the Amoco Joint Powers Board for such a proposal. We would be glad to approach the trust with such a proposal for them to house the sculpture.

- 2) Any such sculpture needs to be in the view of a major road into Casper, otherwise serious marketing dollars are going to be needed to bring people.
- 3) We also felt the area around the Ford Wyoming Center would be appropriate for the sculpture. We were informed that the City would not consider land there due to speculation that the land would be highly valuable after the completion of a Sports Complex. To this we would counter with, if the sculpture is going to bring so many people to view it, then why not make it the centerpiece of the speculated development? Would not the placement of such a draw increase the value of the surrounding land more than what would be lost by the half an acre for its placement? If the City still does not want to place it there, then are there other potential areas of development that this could be used as a centerpiece for?

While FCMA remains committed to our goals of volunteer, fiscal and advocacy support of the Fort Caspar Museum, we also take a vested interest in the community in which we serve. It is our deepest feelings that this sculpture would be better suited at another location in town. Should there be other art installations that better fit the theme of the Museum, we would gladly be open discussions for our organizations potential support of their placement.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at [contrumbull07@gmail.com](mailto:contrumbull07@gmail.com) or (307)277-1695.

Thanking you for your time and consideration,

-Con Trumbull  
President, Fort Caspar Museum Association



Casper Historic Preservation Commission  
City of Casper Community Development Dept.  
200 North David Street  
Casper, WY 82601  
Phone 307-235-8241

November 2, 2022

Casper City Council  
c/o J. Carter Napier, City Manager  
200 N. David St.  
Casper, WY 82601

RE: Wind Turbine Art Installation

Dear Casper City Council,


Please be informed that the members of the Casper Historic Preservation Commission are not in support of the proposed Wind Turbine Art Installation based on its current intended location at Fort Caspar.

The Historic Preservation Commission believes that the Art Installation is not in keeping with the historic nature of Fort Caspar and that it would be ill-suited to this location. We would strongly recommend that, should the project move forward, a different location is found that would be better aligned with the nature of the medium.

We appreciate your consideration as you review this matter.

Regards,  
Casper Historic Preservation Commission  
Jeff Bond  
Robin Broumley  
Carolyn Buff  
Connie Hall  
Anthony Jacobsen  
Bob King  
John Lang  
Maureen M. Lee  
Paul Yurkiewicz

November 15, 2022

MEMO TO: J. Carter Napier, City Manager   
FROM: Dan Elston, Building Official  
SUBJECT: Unsafe Structures/Complaints Update  
CC: Liz Becher, Community Development Director

**Meeting Type & Date:**

Council Work Session, November 22, 2022.

**Action Type:**

Information Only

**Recommendation:**

City staff will update Council about the complaints it has received, pertaining to the Unsafe Structures Ordinance, which was adopted in June 2020.

**Summary:**

For the calendar year 2022, the following is a summary of the complaints received by the City of Casper Building Division concerning unsafe structures.

Complaints are received when tenants believe they were living in unsafe conditions. These are typically received by email directly to the Building Official. Those calling by phone are requested to provide a letter of complaint via email concerning unsafe conditions to the Building Official. Once the letter of complaint is received, the City of Casper responds with a copy of the Unsafe Structures Ordinance and procedures to the complaining party with an explanation of the process for the complaint to move forward. In the process, the responsible party for the structure is notified with a copy of the complaint and a response is requested. On occasion, the complaining party does not respond with a formal complaint once they understand they will be identified to the owner/responsible party during the process or that their complaint does not meet the requirements of the Unsafe Structures Ordinance.

Nine (9) complaints have been received thus far in 2022. Of those complaints,

- Three (3) did not respond with a letter of complaint after receiving the ordinance and procedures;
- One (1) did not have an address to determine if it was in the City of Casper's jurisdiction and there was no response to the request for the address;
- One (1) did not meet the requirements for continuing with the ordinance;
- Three (3) were resolved with the owner/responsible party to alleviate the unsafe condition; and,



- One (1) is still active where the structure has been deemed unsafe for human occupancy. The structure with the active complaint has been evacuated by the occupant, the utilities are disconnected, and it is posted with the required documentation that it is unsafe to occupy. A certified letter was sent to the owner who is out of the country and it was returned undelivered.

**Financial Considerations:**

None


**Oversight/Responsibility:**

Building Official, inspection staff, and appropriate departments as required.

**Attachments**

None.

November 17, 2022

**MEMO TO:** J. Carter Napier, City Manager   
**FROM:** Pete Meyers, Management Analyst  
**SUBJECT:** Council Goals Update

**Meeting Type & Date**

Council Work Session  
November 22, 2022

**Action Type**

Information Only

**Recommendation**

None – for information only.

**Summary**

On May 18, 2021, the Casper City Council set three Council Goals to be their long-term strategic objectives:

1. **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Maintain infrastructure with proactive capital planning and investment strategies.
2. **BUSINESS INVESTMENT:** Make Casper the preferred location for business investment in the surrounding region.
3. **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:** Increase citizen opportunities for information about and engagement in City management and operations.

Each of these goals was then broken down into a detailed list of supporting tasks and objectives. The intent was to have a list of tangible steps that could be taken by June 30, 2023.

The attached progress report is a summary of the work that has been done so far on each of these goals and objectives.

**Financial Considerations**

All of the goals have financial considerations; please see the attached report for a summary of financial impacts.

**Oversight/Project Responsibility**

Executive Team

**Attachments**

Council Goals 2021-2023 Progress Report

# Council Goals 2021-2023 Progress Report

*November 17, 2022*

# Summary of Council Goals, as Adopted on May 18, 2021

*To Be Completed by June 30, 2023*

## **Goal 1: Maintain infrastructure with proactive capital planning and investment strategies**

### *Infrastructure Tasks:*

	<u>Page</u>
1. Perform a citywide facility assessment	2
2. Take tangible steps toward securing a new police facility	2
3. Develop plans related to the Wastewater Treatment Plant	3
4. Publish a street repair priority list	4
5. Develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a Stormwater Utility	4
6. Review and update the River Master Plan	5
7. Assess the City of Casper's digital infrastructure	5
8. Complete a broad study of the City's recreational facilities and programs	6
9. Implement the strategic plan for the City's transit system	7

## **Goal 2: Make Casper the preferred location for business investment in the surrounding region**

### *Business Investment Tasks:*

1. Complete a legal assessment of potential business incentives	8
2. Develop cooperative goals with local economic development agencies	8
3. Produce an annual publication that highlights key economic development facts	9

## **Goal 3: Increase citizen opportunities for information about and engagement in City management and operations.**

### *Citizen Engagement Tasks:*

1. Develop a plan for effective communication with citizens	10
2. Assess technological solutions for gathering and sharing information	10
3. Develop a plan for utilizing citizen input to benefit the City	11

*Note: This list includes the addition of the Transit Strategic Plan (Goal 1, Task 9) as added on 11/9/21*

# Goal #1: INFRASTRUCTURE

***Maintain infrastructure with proactive capital planning and investment strategies.***

- Goal:**           **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- Task 1:**        *Perform a citywide facility assessment.*

City facilities provide services to citizens and workplaces for employees. Many of the City’s primary buildings were built in the late 1970’s or the early 1980’s. They are old enough to require major renovation. For that reason, one of the council goals called for executing a citywide facility assessment to verify their condition, and if necessary, come up with plans for repair.

On 10/26/21, Council signed an agreement with Alpha Facilities Solutions to perform an assessment of every city building, including a systems breakout for plumbing, roofing, structural integrity, HVAC, and electrical. The result was a report that showed \$33 million of systems that had exceeded their expected useful lives, including \$20 million of systems that were considered to be medium or high priority. Because of this report, Council has stated its intent to set aside more than \$5 million of One Cent 17 for the repair of City buildings, including \$2 million for roof replacement and \$3.4 million for HVAC and general repairs.

A second aspect of this task was to ensure that input is being collected from the users of the selected facilities, with a particular emphasis on the Park and Recreation facilities, since those receive the greatest amount of public use. The Parks and Recreation Department has responded by implementing a system of pre-season and post-season meetings with each of the major recreational user groups. These meetings give users a chance to identify the repairs and the enhancements that will make the most difference to them. The reports are then forwarded to the full Park and Recreation Advisory Board; from there, the Board will make capital recommendations to staff and to Council.

A final aspect of this task, which is still ongoing, is to enhance the existing 311 app so that citizens can report damage at City facilities. Conversations have begun on this topic; it will likely be ready for rollout sometime in the next few months.

- Goal:**           **INFRASTRUCTURE**
- Task 2:**        *Take tangible steps toward securing a new police facility.*

The acquisition of a singular police headquarters has been a long-term goal of the Casper Police Department. Since 1978, Casper PD has been based in the Hall of Justice, a County-owned building that was paid for with funding from the very first One Cent initiative. In the forty years since, the Police Department has expanded. Now, in addition to its rented space within the Hall of Justice, the Casper Police Department has been forced to move recruitment and administrative functions to the City Center Building; its emergency dispatch center has been relocated to a rented space on Landmark Drive; and the storage of vehicles, equipment, and evidence has been sent to the Marathon Building on North Market Street.

Having all of these functions in various places harms the operational effectiveness of the department, and the payment of rent to the County and to private landlords is an ongoing financial burden. It is for these reasons that Council decided to find or build a new facility that would become the consolidated headquarters for the entire police department.

Considerable progress has been made toward the completion of this goal. A site selection firm was hired on 10/10/18 to find and evaluate potential building sites. After a detailed review of eleven potential locations, Council chose to purchase the Casper Business Center, an eight-story commercial office building at First and David Streets, which was valued for its size, for its downtown location, and for its on-site tri-level parking structure. On 4/29/22, the City used \$8 million of federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to purchase the Business Center, and on 5/17/22, the City hired an architectural firm to design the building improvements.

Work on this goal is ongoing, but the current timeline calls for architectural work to be done by June 2023. Renovations could commence soon after, with a goal of having the building ready for occupancy by March or April of 2025.

**Goal:**            **INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Task 3:**        **Develop plans related to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.**

The City's wastewater treatment plant is a vast facility that covers more than 20 acres and includes more than a dozen buildings and major mechanical structures. The conversion of raw sewage into clean water requires more than a dozen steps, including industrial pretreatment, inorganic screening, aeration, centrifugal separation, anaerobic digestion, and ultraviolet disinfection.

In order to remain operational, the plant must receive a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the Environmental Protection Agency. These permits must be renewed every five years. The wastewater treatment plant spends roughly \$2 million per year on maintenance and repair of its existing facilities, and this expenditure allows it to meet the requirements of the current NPDES permit. Unfortunately, this maintenance budget does not include funding for major plant upgrades. When the EPA issues a new five year permit, it has the authority to require greater stringency in sewage treatment. Greater stringency would force the City to add additional layers to its sewage treatment process.

The implications of additional regulation are extreme. Many cities have already been required to add nutrient removal to their sewage treatment regimen; the addition of this step in Casper would take years to implement and would cost tens of millions of dollars. It is for this reason that long term planning and regulatory monitoring were included within the slate of Council Goals.

By its nature, this goal will always be ongoing, but City staff have stayed engaged with this topic over the last two years. City officials continue to communicate regularly with their counterparts at the EPA and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. The most recent NPDES permit was renewed in 2018. At that time, nutrient removal was not included on the list of City requirements, and staff in the Public Services Department remain confident that it will not be added in 2023.

**Goal:           INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Task 4:        Publish a street repair priority list.**

The City is behind on its street maintenance. In 2019, a study was done to determine the City's pavement condition index (PCI), which is a rating of street quality based on cracking, age, roughness, and similar signs of distress. PCI is rated on a 100 point scale, with 100 indicating a new and flawless street. Casper's streetscape earned a score of 59. The study indicated that more than \$7 million per year will be needed to maintain the current street network and to prevent future degradation. In response to this study, Council established citywide street repair to be one of its council goals.

Significant progress has been made on this goal. The fiscal year 2023 capital plan includes projects on Mariposa Boulevard, Bryan Stock Trail, Coffman Avenue, Midwest Avenue, East 21<sup>st</sup> Street, College Drive, East Second Street, Oak Street, D Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Center Street, and Wolf Creek Road. These streets were selected primarily because of their PCI ranking. This repair list includes spending that is almost twice the amount that was available in previous years. Most of the funding for this first round of projects will come from One Cent 16, but additional funds from federal grants (Midwest Avenue) and historical impact funding from Natrona County (Wolf Creek Road) will also be applied.

The financial sustainability of the street network will require reliable sources of ongoing funds. Some of this need has been addressed by the adopted resolution for One Cent 17, which will put aside \$4.8 million per year for street repair. This is a 20% increase from the \$4 million per year that was set aside from One Cent 16. Despite this enhancement, other funds will still be needed from other sources; grants from the federal government, especially grants through the infrastructure bill (the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), remain a plausible source for FY24 and FY25.

**Goal:           INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Task 5:        Develop recommendations regarding Stormwater System Development.**

Stormwater is generated by rain and melting snow. It flows from rooftops to streets, from streets to gutters, from gutters to underground storm sewers, and from storm sewers to creeks or to the North Platte River. Stormwater systems feature large concrete structures, including stormwater outlets and pipes that are more than six feet in diameter. In order to keep the system operational, major investments are needed to keep the concrete repaired, but the City must also spend time and effort to prevent stormwater pollution. Stormwater is untreated, so efforts must be made to keep citizens from pouring motor oil, cooking grease, RV waste, and other liquids into the storm drain or onto the street.

Stormwater management requires an ongoing source of funding. Wyoming State Statute 15-7-101 allows cities to build stormwater systems, including systems of funding that could bill customers on a monthly basis so long as that funding is used strictly to maintain the stormwater system. However, developing the stormwater system in this way would be a major undertaking. Laws and procedures would be needed in order to get the system established, and rules and rates would have to be adopted in order to start collecting any stormwater fees.

City staff has only taken preliminary steps toward the completion of this goal. Staff intends to renew this discussion in the coming months with additional council presentation(s) in the winter of 2022-2023.

**Goal:**           **INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**Task 6:**        Review and update the River Master Plan.

The North Platte River Environment Restoration Master Plan was written in 2012. It identified seven reaches of the North Platte River, each with specific needs for environmental mitigation. Since its adoption, mitigation projects have been implemented along four of the reaches: Morad Park, First Street, Wyoming Boulevard, and Water Treatment Plant. The adopted Council Goals call for staff to update the master plan document. More specifically, they call for coming up with a plan to mitigate the final three reaches, and they ask for a review of existing and potential funding that could be used to pay for those projects.

The review of existing funds was conducted in the fall of 2021, and it was updated again this year. The River Fund currently has about \$960,000 of funding available for projects, including funds from contributions, the One Cent, and from miscellaneous interfund transfers.

In regards to the final three reaches, preliminary plans already exist for the mitigation of the Izaak Walton reach. Like the previous reaches, Izaak Walton will require bank stabilization, mitigation of wildlife habitat, and the removal of invasive species (including Russian olive trees). Grants are being sought to fund this project. A preapplication was recently submitted for a \$2.4 million grant from the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Program. If awarded, the grant would fund 80% of the work on the Izaak Walton reach; the remainder would be paid for with local funds and other grants. In-river work for this project would likely be completed by December 2023 with additional riparian work done in the spring of 2024.

This Council Goal also calls for updating the master plan itself. This document is now ten years old; it will need to be updated and enhanced so that it can be a reliable guide for the final three reaches of the river (and perhaps for other projects beyond.) City staff from the Manager’s Office are now in discussions with the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish about how to fund those updates to the document.

**Goal:**           **INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**Task 7:**        Assess the City of Casper’s digital infrastructure.

This Council Goal was explicitly twofold. For the first part of the goal, City staff was charged with doing what it could to make internet access in Casper faster, more available, and more affordable. Staff was also charged with looking at the City government’s own access: staff was asked to ensure that City facilities had network connectivity that was fast enough to meet city needs and redundant enough to prevent outages and service disruptions.

Work began with a detailed look at the internet services currently available. City staff met with local business leaders to learn where deficits were causing problems for employers. Staff also met with internet service providers and with the State’s Broadband Coordinator to ascertain what plans were in place to expand or improve access throughout the community and throughout the state. A report on the City government’s internet access was produced in September 2021, and a report on public internet access (including price by type of service, and variation by neighborhood) was produced the following month. This was followed in November by a report on State-level activity, including the state’s Broadband Enhancement Plan (as published by the Wyoming Business Council in 2018).



This collection of studies shed some light on the deficits in public internet access, and it documented connectivity limitations for City buildings. Blue Peak confirmed that it would be entering the Casper market as an additional provider. Visionary Communications confirmed that it had been awarded the State contract to provide internet service to local schools.

With this information in hand, the City Council took a step that would optimize the government's own connectivity, and in so doing, it would have the secondary effect of enhancing access for citizens. In September 2022, the City signed a \$1.1 million agreement with Mountain West Technologies. The agreement called for Mountain West to provide dark fiberoptic connections to twelve City facilities, including City Hall, the Water Distribution Garage, Community Service Center, Recreation Center, Ford Wyoming Center, the Municipal Golf Course, and each of the five municipal fire stations. This list of facilities included downtown buildings as well as more remote locations at the northern, southern, eastern, and western ends of the City.

Having high speed cable from many providers in many neighborhoods is the key to providing enhanced internet access. The Mountain West contract with the City and the Visionary Communications contract with the State will require those providers to run fiber through an array of city neighborhoods. The entry of Blue Peak, plus the ongoing presence of other providers such as Charter and CenturyLink, will mean that customers throughout the City will have more options. More options will lead to better pricing and a chance to buy the kind of connectivity that fits the particular needs of each customer.

**Goal:           INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Task 8:           Complete a broad study of the City's recreational facilities and programs.**

All of the City of Casper's recreational facilities generate revenue through admissions, classes, and concessions, but most of them also require a subsidy to cover their operational costs. These subsidies are paid with taxpayer dollars, so the Council has set a goal to review each of those operations with an eye toward finding ways to reduce their costs or to increase their revenue.

A great deal of work has been done toward completing this goal. A financial analysis of each operation was done in the fall of 2021. Since then, operational reviews have been conducted; these reviews have all involved a detailed breakdown of how each operation generates its revenue. Beyond the revenue analysis, staff went looking for creative ideas on what else could be done for revenue generation. In every case, the Parks and Recreation team has been able to identify new opportunities. Some of those opportunities involve increases to fees, but staff is most optimistic about increasing revenue through better marketing, better sales technology (especially for online sales), better pricing on merchandise and concessions, and by providing more of the services that are most desired by the citizens.

Council presentations on these opportunities have or will occur throughout the fall of 2022. The scheduled presentations are:

- August 9, 2022 - Hogadon Ski Area
- September 27, 2022 - Fort Caspar Museum
- October 11, 2022 - Aquatics
- November 8, 2022 - Ice Arena
- January 10, 2023 - Municipal Golf Course

- January 24, 2023 - Recreation and Sports

As a follow up to these presentations, staff in the Parks and Recreation Department will be using Council's input to establish written business plans to codify these operational changes. Business plans will be presented to Council in the early months of 2023.

**Goal:**           **INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Task 9:**        Implement the strategic plan for the City's transit system.

The City of Casper began operating the transit system in May 2021. This was a major undertaking which started with the hiring of staff (bus drivers, dispatchers, managers, and others) and then led to the array of other tasks which must all be done in order to assimilate a new team into the City operation.

Council's adopted goal on this topic called for rebranding the system, marketing the system, and implementing the recommendations from the approved transit strategic plan. A great deal of work has been done on this goal. In August 2021, the main bus system was rebranded as the Link, and the dial-a-ride service was rebranded as Assist. The new website is now updated frequently, and all printed collateral pieces reflect the updated branding. Outreach meetings have since been held with key user groups, including the Casper Re-entry Center, City Disability Council, Casper Senior Center, and NCSO Purposeful People. Route changes to account for the State Office Building and for the new Chili's restaurant were implemented in March and April 2022. TripMaster dispatching software was purchased in July 2022; the new system has given transit managers better access to bus ridership data, and this will be used in the future to create more informed decisions about bus routing and bus stop locations. Redesigned bus stop signs for three of the six routes are being produced; they are being placed on the streets as part of the continual marketing initiatives.

# Goal #2: BUSINESS INVESTMENT

***Make Casper the preferred location for business investment in the surrounding region.***

**Goal: BUSINESS INVESTMENT**

**Task 1: *Complete a legal assessment of potential business incentives***

Wyoming is famously business-friendly, with a flexible regulatory environment and minimal taxes. However, Wyoming also has constitutional restrictions against providing certain kinds of benefits to private entities. This means that some business incentives that are common in other states are not legally available here.

This goal called for identifying incentives that are both legal and effective. Work on this goal is ongoing, with discussions taking place between the Community Development Department and the City Attorney's Office. A council presentation will be scheduled to discuss this topic in the upcoming months.

**Goal: BUSINESS INVESTMENT**

**Task 2: *Develop cooperative goals with local economic development agencies.***

Economic development is often a regional activity. Regional action requires cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries.

One recent success in this area was the adoption of the Tourism Master Plan. This plan was written in 2021 by a large coalition of municipal, business, and organizational entities, including:

- City of Casper
- Town of Mills
- Town of Bar Nunn
- Town of Evansville
- Natrona County (including representatives of the library and the airport)
- Casper College
- Downtown Development Authority
- Casper Area Chamber of Commerce
- Visitors Bureau
- Advance Casper
- Various Local businesses

The plan was adopted by the City Council in May 2022. The Tourism Plan addresses five strategic issues:

1. Tourism and Economic Development partnerships
2. Enhancing existing community attractions
3. Improved transportation and connectivity options
4. The sustainable development of Casper Mountain
5. The promotion of recreation and mixed-use opportunities along the North Platte River.

The Plan includes specific tasks for specific partners within the coalition. This kind of workplan means that the entities will continue to meet so that they can execute their respective areas of the Plan.

Having cooperative plans like this help to establish working relationships among the various parties. It is hoped that additional economic development plans of this sort will be generated in the future.

**Goal:**            **BUSINESS INVESTMENT**

**Task 3:**            *Produce an annual publication that highlights key economic development facts.*

The intent of this goal is to produce a printed snapshot about Casper that can be used with outreach initiatives to potential incoming businesses. Businesses need information about Casper. They need statistical information about its consumers, workforce, climate, and quality of life. They need factual information about its attractions, geography, infrastructure, and taxes. Having a publication that is updated annually with reliable information will help business leaders to know whether Casper is a good fit for their businesses.

The first issue will be published in January 2023.

# Goal #3: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

***Increase citizen opportunities for information about and engagement in City management and operations.***

- Goal:** PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
- Task 1:** Develop a plan for effective communication with citizens.

In response to this task, a public communications team has been assembled in the City Manager’s Office. The FY22 and FY23 budgets included two staff positions within the City Manager’s Office, with costs shared between the General Fund (25%) and the utility funds (75%). A communications and marketing generalist was hired in April 2022 and a marketing and graphic designer was hired in August 2022.

Some of the team’s immediate responsibilities have included the public education and outreach required by the City’s stormwater permit with Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the citizen outreach and education inherent in Platte River Revival Volunteer Day and Keep Casper Beautiful programs, such a litter cleanups. Since July 1, 2022, about 200 Casper citizens have been involved in City volunteer activities through these programs. The end of the season Pooch Pool Party at Washington Park Pool (which included education on scooping poop and the City’s pet ownership-related ordinances) sold out two hours after the event announcement, and all water bill recipients will receive a card insert in their October water bill explaining how One Cent subsidizes their water bill.

Work on this task is ongoing. Communication is required for successful events and activities such as these. Engaging the team in this sort of work should have the effect of setting a new standard for when and how citizen engagement should occur.

- Goal:** PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
- Task 2:** Assess technological solutions for gathering and sharing information.

Traditional means (letters, press releases and such) of conversing with the citizens are no longer the only communication avenue. Some communication will always be done through email, press releases, and public meetings, but these avenues are no longer adequate. In the modern age, many public discussions will be online discussions. This objective called for a review how the City conducts its online communication. From there, it asked for staff to find ways for online communication to be improved.

The first part of this task was a review of the City’s current social media presence. It was found that the City has a sprawling array of social media accounts, including five accounts with Instagram, five with Twitter, six with YouTube, one with LinkedIn, and sixteen with Facebook. These accounts are managed by different people in different departments, and each of them tries to engage with a different set of citizens on a different set of topics. The report also revealed that in 2020, the Police Department’s Facebook page had the lion’s share of the social media activity with 118,293 page views and a reach of 4,630,596. The City Manager’s Office Facebook page was also popular with 85,189 views and a reach of

2,212,732. The City Manager’s YouTube presence was also significant with 43,900 views and a total watch time of 390,000 minutes.

Grappling with social media also means trying to understand the content that is being produced and shared by the public. Many companies use social media monitoring software (SMM) to keep tabs on online conversations, so this objective also asked for a review of SMM software and an assessment of whether SMM would be valuable for the City. The assessment was done in the winter of 2022, and it involved a review of several leading providers, including Meltwater and Zen City. It was found that these systems have some potential, but all of them lack strong tools for monitoring Facebook. In Casper, Facebook is the primary social media venue for the voting-aged public. By its nature, Facebook broadcasts to Friends and to Followers. Unlike Twitter, Facebook messages are not automatically public, so they are not automatically available to SMM. This means that in Casper, the power of SMM is somewhat limited.

Other forms of direct electronic communication were also reviewed. The City has a website (Casperwy.Gov). The City can also send push notifications through its mobile app/311 service. It also has access to two mass-texting services: BDS Alerting (operated by the Finance Department) and AlertSense (through a partnership with the Sheriff’s Office). While these push notification and mass-texting services exist, they are not robust enough at this time to move forward with a strong holistic plan to communicate with citizens.

Work on this objective is ongoing. The communications and marketing office is becoming established in the City Manager’s Office, and this will involve developing expertise in electronic media. The immediate focus is to build procedures and habits that will give the City’s electronic communication more consistency and power.

**Goal: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Task 3: *Develop a plan for utilizing citizen input to benefit the City.***

The best conversations are two-way, and sometimes in person, and some of the best communication includes shared experiences. As the communication and marketing team moves its agenda forward, differing methods are being explored for how to activate conversations between citizens and their city.

Work on this objective is also ongoing. It has already been noted that upgrades in city technology will be required; some of those initiatives will likely be brought forward as FY24 budget requests. In the immediate future, projects are underway that will serve as a trial run for new citizen engagement methods. In conjunction with the City’s Land and Water Conservation Fund grant application, an October and November conversation for the Washington Park remodel will occur with two public meetings, and a month-long citizen input opportunity will be set up on the City’s website. To invite citizens to the conversation, neighborhood door hangers or postcards, social media, press releases, and other identified outreach opportunities will be used.