



Casper Area

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

January 18, 2000



Casper Area



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

BALLOFFET 
& Associates, Inc.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Why Plan?	4
Organization of the Plan	5
Key Policy Framework Concepts	6
The Casper Area’s Vision	8
Preface	13
Comprehensive Land Use Plan Overview	17
Introduction	17
Plan Themes	21
The Context and Horizon	27
How the Plan was Developed	27
Planning Horizon	29
Scope and Purpose of Comprehensive Land Use Plan	33
Authority to Plan	37
The Setting	41
Panel 1—Location Map	43
Trends and Assumptions	47
The Policy Framework	53
Vision 1: Diverse Economy	54
Vision 2: Vital City Center	56
Vision 3: Compact Development	58
Vision 4: Cohesive Residential Neighborhoods	60
Vision 5: Open Space Connections	61
Vision 6: Views of Casper Mountain	62
Vision 7: Casper’s History	63
Vision 8: Distinct Character	64
Vision 9: Attainable Housing	65
Vision 10: Cultural Amenities	66
Vision 11: Transportation Choices	68
Vision 12: Attractive Gateways	70

Design and Development 73

- Introduction 73
- The Community’s Design 74
 - Panel 2—Parks, Trails and Open Space Concept Plan Map .. 87
 - Panel 3—Casper Area Street Network Map 91

The Land Use Concept Plan 101

- Introduction 101
- Land Use Concept Plan Development and Purpose 101
- Relationship to Urban Services 102
- Relationship to Environmentally Sensitive Areas 102
- Land Use Concept Plan Summary 103
- Description of Proposed Land Uses 105
- Land Use Concept Plan Map 119
 - Panel 4—Land Use Concept Plan Map 120

Subplanning Areas 125

Current Conditions and Trends 129

- Historic Resources 129
- Natural Systems 130
- Circulation System 134
- Utilities and Services 138
 - Panel 5—Planning Influences Map 151
- Community Amenities 153
- Land Use Characteristics 155
- Population 157
- Economy and Employment 161

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CASPER AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Typical strip commercial development does not facilitate pedestrian movement or create an appropriate image for the Casper Area.



Redevelopment of existing commercial strip malls and new commercial development should incorporate landscaped pedestrian ways, smaller parking lots, and a variety of pedestrian-scale architectural elements. Second story offices and residences should be incorporated whenever possible.

CASPER AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Executive Summary

The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan (“Plan”) is a guidance document that provides a general statement of the desired long-term future development, redevelopment and preservation of the Casper Metropolitan area. The Plan suggests where housing, businesses, offices, industries, parks and open space could be located and how they relate to one another, and provides guidelines for decisions concerning development and redevelopment in the Casper area. The Plan also provides direction for public service and capital facilities decisions, as well as environmental resource protection. The Plan has been developed as a tool to encourage private investment and guide public investment in a manner that enhances our community and environment.

The Plan is intended to be a living document. Implementation should be monitored and the Plan reviewed periodically and amended as necessary, to reflect changing conditions and values.

The Plan applies to the Casper Metropolitan Planning Area, and could be used by each Casper area municipality and Natrona County in supporting regional efforts to sustain and enhance the area.

WHY PLAN?

There are a number of reasons why a Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Casper Metropolitan Planning Area was prepared.

First, the Plan establishes a cohesive decision-making strategy for the community.

Second, the Plan considers the social, economic and environmental conditions that currently prevail, promotes development and redevelopment of the community, and tries to anticipate future demands for facilities and services.

Third, the Plan allows the community to make decisions, spend funds, and assess programs and services in an informed and consistent manner; create opportunities; and coordinate land uses in a way that benefits the community.

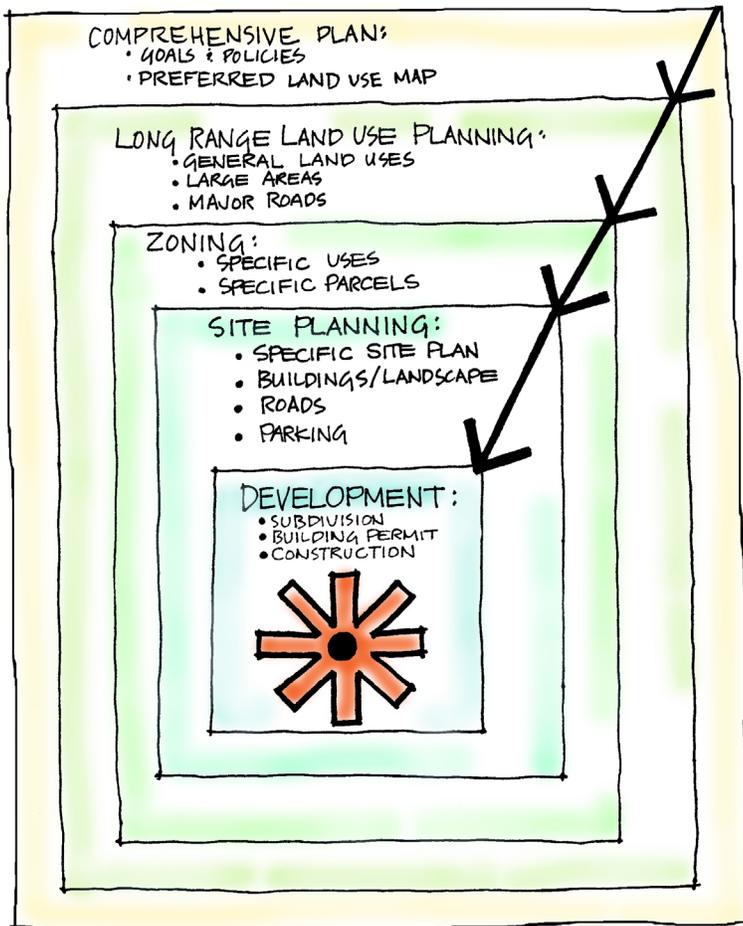


Figure 1. This figure depicts the relationship between land use planning, zoning, and site development. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the Casper Area's official policy guide to how land should be used and developed. The purpose of the Plan is to capture, at the most general level, the community's values, intentions, and aspirations for the physical growth and development of the area. It is meant to be a reflection of the collective thinking of the community and a vehicle for building consensus on the directions of future growth. To effectively implement the Plan at the land development stage, the land use and development regulations should explicitly define the relationship between land use planning, zoning, site development, and enforcement. They should also incorporate performance standards for new development.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

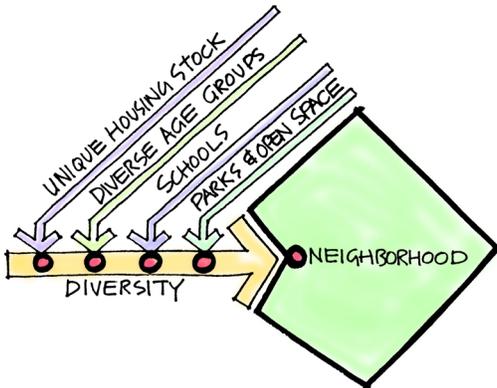
The Plan is organized into three major sections.

The first section is the **“Policy Framework”**. The Policy Framework outlines the Concepts, Visions, and Goals that the community should promote through decisions concerning land use, infrastructure, and public programs and services to help achieve the future desired by the residents of the Casper area. The Policy Framework includes development, design and locational guidelines for various land uses that are promoted by the Land Use Concept Plan.

The second major section of the Plan is the **“Land Use Concept Plan”**. The Land Use Concept Plan identifies where various land use types could be most logically located. The Land Use Concept Plan Map is not parcel specific and is not meant to eliminate the opportunity for the free market to operate, but was developed in an effort to try to anticipate new development, establish reliability for developers and residents concerning future land uses, and influence the free market in a manner that will promote the development of a more desirable community that better meets the expectations of its citizens.

The third section is **“Background Material”** that summarizes the existing situation and data concerning the Casper area’s economy, socioeconomic situation, land use, public services, etc. This section is provided as background material that the community may use to measure the level of success the community has had in promoting the Plan’s Vision and Goals.

KEY POLICY FRAMEWORK CONCEPTS



The Plan strives to provide stability and consistency for the community by defining what the community values and wants to accomplish. The Concepts, Visions and Goals outlined in the Policy Framework section of the Plan represent the community's growth and redevelopment strategy.

Although there are many ideas and philosophies concerning future development and redevelopment of the community contained in the Policy Framework, five Key Concepts underlie the Visions, Goals, Guidelines and Land Use Concept Plan.

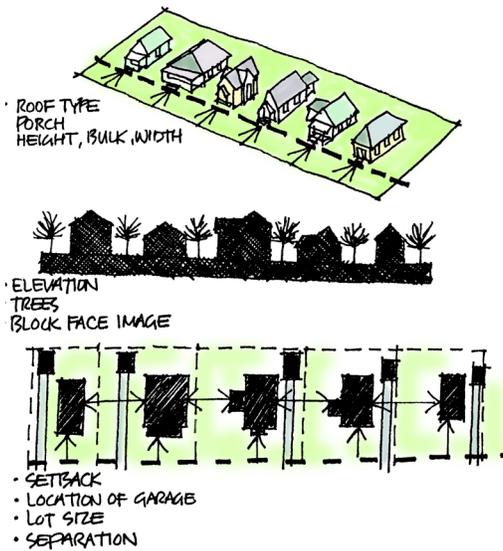


Figure 2. Physical elements that contribute to the individual identity of neighborhoods, such as natural features, historic and cultural resources, parks, and other focal points, will be protected. Proposed land use changes for neighborhoods will be evaluated according to the type of neighborhood affected: whether established and stable, new and emerging, or aging and in need of improvement. Land use changes will be compatible with the type, scale, and physical character of the neighborhood. Neighborhoods will incorporate mixed uses that are compatible in location and design. The stability and diversity of existing neighborhoods will be protected. The emerging identities of new neighborhoods will be recognized and promoted.

1 Concurrency

The Plan supports the concept that public facilities and services should be available when new development occurs, without compromising existing service levels or burdening existing residents with the costs of growth.

2 Compatibility

The Plan promotes the concept that new development should be compatible with existing development and the natural environment.

3 Connectivity

The Plan emphasizes connections. The Plan recognizes the need to examine and promote all modes of travel, not just the automobile, to connect people to shopping, services, and jobs. The Plan further encourages the community to provide for living, working and shopping opportunities within neighborhoods and in mixed use developments to connect people to people, and to services they demand on a regular basis.

4 Compactness

The Plan promotes a compact development form, strong central business and commercial district, clustered neighborhoods, and a unified parks and street system. The Plan discourages the premature development or commitment of land to development patterns that might impact the community's ability to grow in the future. The Plan supports land use patterns that are financially efficient to serve with water, sewer, power, police, fire, roads and other services. The Plan focuses on enhancing the feasibility of infill development, redevelopment, or proposed development that is contiguous or an efficient extension of existing development patterns.

5 Character

The Plan strives to promote the unique character of the area by protecting existing neighborhoods from the encroachment of land uses that impact the quality of life and property values; providing development and design guidelines for new development that will enhance the way the community looks; and encouraging the thoughtful design of the community's gateways and public facilities.

In any planning effort, compromises must sometimes be struck between purposes where they conflict. But if the balancing question at the time of compromise is "which decision will do the most to enhance the quality of life," the community that emerges in the years ahead will be the community the citizens of the Casper area really want it to be, and the one their heirs will thank them for.

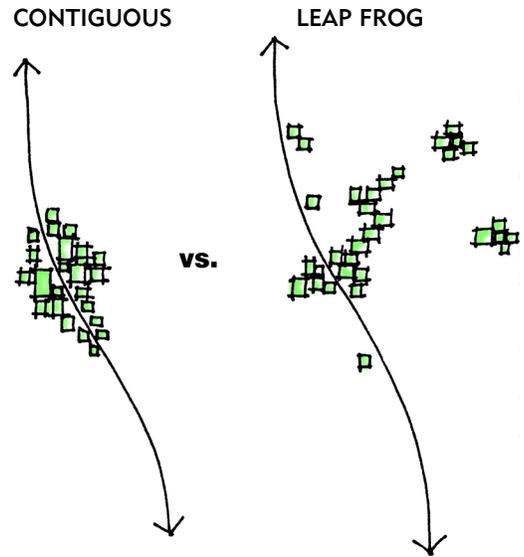


Figure 3. The Plan discourages "leap frog" development by promoting infill opportunities, higher densities, and mixed use development. Scattered site development increases the costs of providing services and impacts future urban development by prematurely establishing a development pattern that is difficult and expensive to serve with urban utilities.

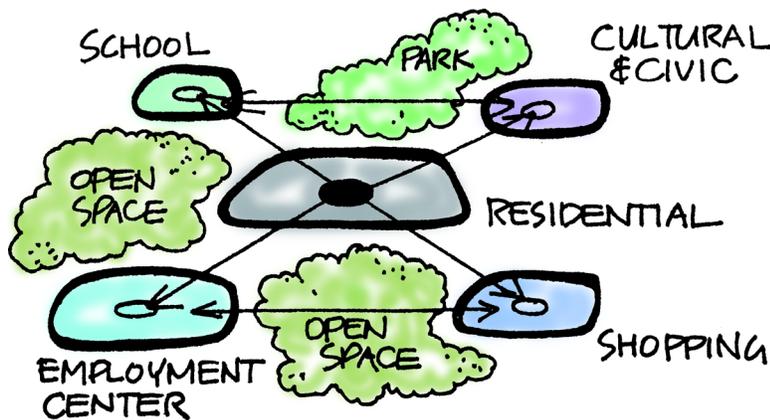


Figure 4. The pattern of land use and development of the region will be consolidated and focused to foster contiguous development and reflect a mix of interdependent, compatible, and mutually supportive land uses. The area's land use pattern will also contribute to the self-sufficiency of areas, reduce automobile travel, and promote compact pedestrian-oriented development. To further this pattern, government will encourage infill development by providing site information, development criteria, and recommended uses for infill parcels.



Figure 5. Fill vacant lands within the existing city limits before expanding infrastructure to serve new areas.



Figure 6. Create a vibrant downtown.



Figure 7. Support neighborhood identity through the integration of small-scale commercial enterprises.

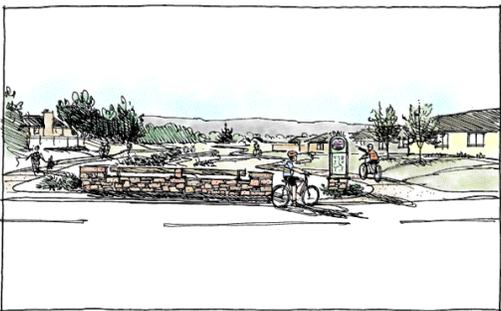


Figure 8. Connect the area's recreational resources with trails.

THE CASPER AREA'S VISION

The Key Concepts were derived from the Casper Area's Vision. The Vision took shape over a period of months as the community came together to address their concerns. The basis of this plan is a Vision that we can aspire to and work towards. The Casper Area's Vision is composed of twelve components that address housing, parks, transportation, development, gateways, and our economy.

The following is our Vision for the Casper Area's future:

1 *Diverse Economy*

An expanded, more diversified, and stable local economy that continuously grows new jobs that pay a higher-wage than the current average (See Figure 5).

2 *Vital City Center*

A vibrant downtown that provides a blending of land uses and fosters a unique living, working, regional shopping, and entertainment experience (See Figure 6).

3 *Compact Development*

A compact development pattern of cohesive neighborhoods and corridors.

4 *Cohesive Residential Neighborhoods*

Stable, safe, easily accessible, interconnected, cohesive residential neighborhoods (See Figure 7).

5 *Open Space Connections*

A system of connected parks, open spaces, and trails that enriches the lives of citizens by providing opportunities for education, nature, art, fishing, wildlife observation, exercise, hiking, conservation of natural areas, and social interaction (See Figure 8).

6 *Views of Casper Mountain*

Protected strategic view corridors of Casper Mountain.

7 *Casper's History*

A community that supports reuse and restoration of buildings that define the history of the Casper area (See Figure 9).

8 *Distinct Character*

An attractive community with a distinct character as reflected by the streetscape, buildings, neighborhoods, and public facilities.

9 *Attainable Housing*

A community that offers a full range of housing types to meet the needs and expectations of people of all incomes, lifestyles, and age groups.

10 *Cultural Amenities*

A community that supports artistic enrichment and cultural opportunities as vital parts of the community's values, quality of life, and economic vitality.

11 *Transportation Choices*

A safe, efficient, convenient, cost-effective, multi-modal transportation system (See Figure 10).

12 *Attractive Gateways*

A series of gateways and major travel corridors that are planned and built to create an positive and attractive image and identity for the area (See Figure 11 and 12).



Figure 9. Reinvest in Casper's history.



Figure 10. Develop choice in mode of transportation by creating safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

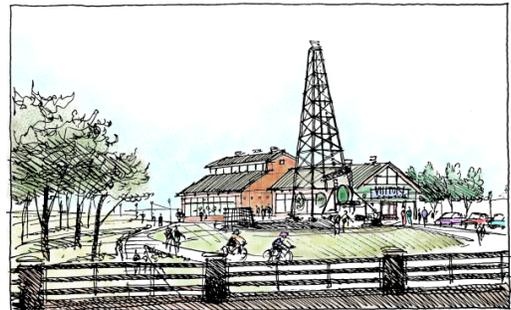


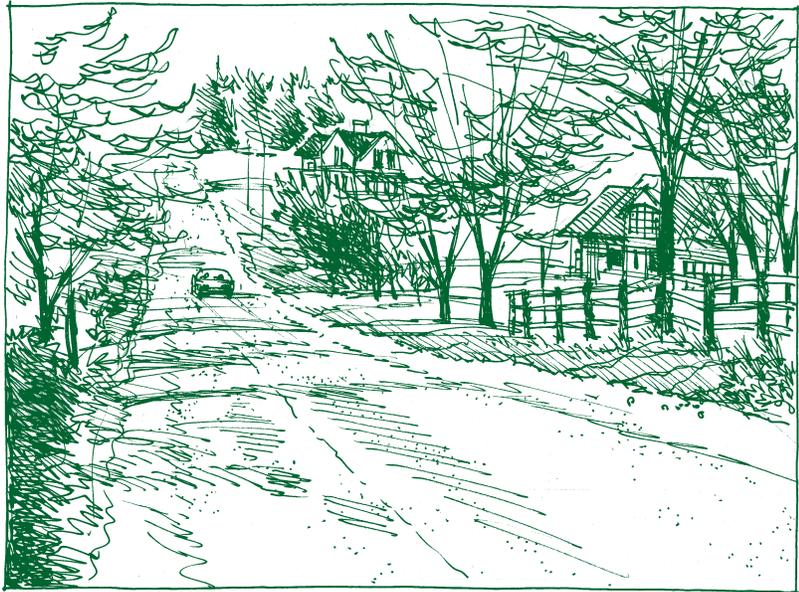
Figure 11. Promote our heritage.



Figure 12. Let visitors feel our pride.

CASPER AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

More and more residents of the Casper Area are choosing to live in a more rural setting. Rural development has the potential to substantially impact views and wildlife.



By developing cluster subdivisions that protect views and wildlife corridors rural development can proceed with more minimal community impacts. By using rural development standards (e.g., requiring gravel roads), the rural agricultural qualities of these areas can be maintained.

Preface

Only 20 years ago, the Casper area was booming. Oil and gas prices were strong, exploration and oil service industries were expanding, and the community expected to grow to over 200,000 people by the turn of the century. However, in the mid 80s oil prices dropped and the economy stalled. The region lost over 13,000 people in a matter of only a few years, properties were repossessed, and industry after industry closed its doors.

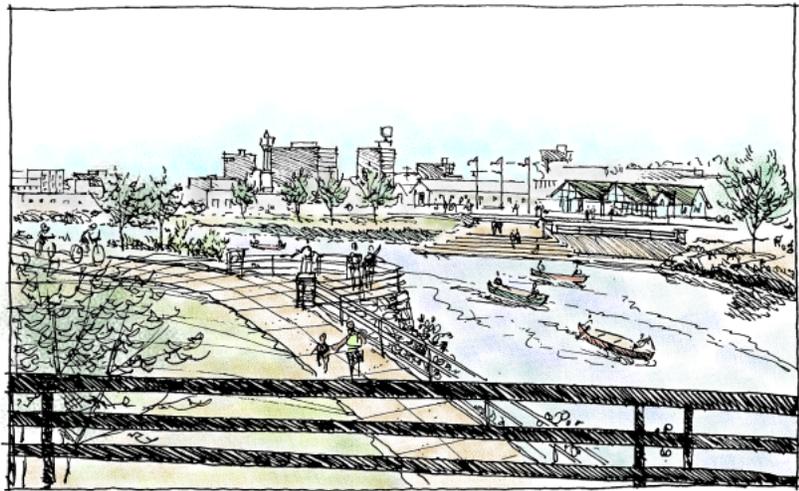
The Casper area has slowly rebounded. While the area has not regained all the economic losses suffered, it has an improving economy with greater and greater diversity. The population has grown to near pre-bust levels. Housing starts have increased through the 90s. A number of companies have located new facilities in Casper and have put people back to work. While the Casper area isn't growing as quickly as many western communities, it is growing again, investments in its future have increased, and its future is looking brighter.

During the next two decades, Casper and the surrounding area have the opportunity to grow by building new homes and creating new jobs. The Casper Area is projected to build nearly 275 new housing units per year—adding 6,100 households by 2020. As the business climate continues to improve, the Casper area is also expected to create nearly 9,000 new jobs.

With this growth comes new challenges. In developing and adopting this Plan, the Casper area has prepared itself to embrace its future and enhance the quality of life it can offer its residents. The Plan will help the Casper area target investments, identify opportunities, and design projects that take advantage of anticipated development. This Plan will become the guideline that allows individual actions to be of collective benefit to residents of this community.

CASPER AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In its current state, downtown riverfront access is limited and generally uninviting.



Redevelopment of the riverfront as a park and pedestrian promenade creates a new attraction in downtown for visitors and residents.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Overview

INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Casper Metropolitan Planning Area has evolved out of extensive community discussion and debate over the last two years. The Plan considers and consolidates a variety of planning efforts completed by the City of Casper and Natrona County during the last 15 years.

Casper area residents have tackled the difficult question of how to grow. Determining how to grow has required the citizens to consider:

What type of growth to pursue?

Where growth should occur?

What growth should look like?

Whether developers should be required to provide or pay for infrastructure to serve new development?

What should be the balance between the development of raw land and redevelopment within the existing urban boundaries?

What lands should be prioritized to receive new industrial and commercial development?

Addressing these questions has required balancing complex and often conflicting issues. What has emerged is a set of priorities; priorities about protecting and enhancing the high quality of life residents enjoy by creating attractive, affordable, and livable neighborhoods that have sufficient open space and public services. Citizens have voiced strong reservations and concerns about following the course of development established elsewhere. In many places, sprawl and growth have defeated the objective of creating livable neighborhoods, by escalated housing costs, increasing traffic congestion, and deteriorating the social fabric of the community.

The priorities contained in this Plan, in the form of its Visions and Goals, Development and Design Guidelines, and Land Use Concept Plan, establish a strategy for growth in the Casper Metropolitan Area that has the ability to stand the test of time. The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan reflects the community's desires for the Casper area and balances those desires with local and regional constraints.

The comprehensive land use planning process in the Casper area was a three step process.

The first step was to develop the Policy Framework. The Policy Framework is intended to:

- Develop and express a shared community vision;
- Establish broad land use and development goals;
- Outline general land use concepts to guide development of the community as public investments are made and development proposals are reviewed;

- Establish interagency coordination between the municipalities, County, and other agencies;
- Provide a basis for grant applications and other partnership activities by various public agencies;

The second step of the planning process, which took place subsequent to the development of the Policy Framework was the development of a Land Use Concept Plan. The Land Use Concept Plan projects where various land uses should be anticipated and encouraged during the next 20 years in an effort to further the Visions, Goals, and Guidelines contained in the Policy Framework.

The third step of the planning process is district, corridor and project specific planning and implementation. District, corridor, and project specific planning will use the Policy Framework and Land Use Concept Plan as its primary guidance tool. The implementation plan will be developed by the Planning Commissions, City Councils, and Board of County Commissioners following review and acceptance of the Policy Framework and Land Use Concept Plan.

The Plan's Key Concepts, Visions, and Goals were established in concert with the towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills as well as Natrona County. They were established as the basis for future and more detailed planning within each jurisdiction. The Land Use Concept Plan depicts a land use pattern that would help to further the Concepts, Visions, and Goals contained in this Plan. The choice to utilize this Plan as the basis for area planning is up to each jurisdiction. It is hoped that through coordination and implementation of this Plan by each jurisdiction we can achieve the future desired by the residents of the Casper area.

CASPER AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PLAN THEMES

The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains the Visions, Goals, Guidelines, and Maps which together set direction for the Casper Area’s next twenty years. These statements describe Casper’s future with confidence, optimism, and a belief that the Casper area will continue to be a great place to live, work, start a business, and raise children. This Plan sets forth a vision for Casper’s future which not only responds to current trends, but puts the Casper area in a position to react positively to opportunities as they arise.

For all the words and maps contained in this Plan, the themes embodied by the Vision, Goals, Guidelines and Maps are constant. The Casper Area desires to:

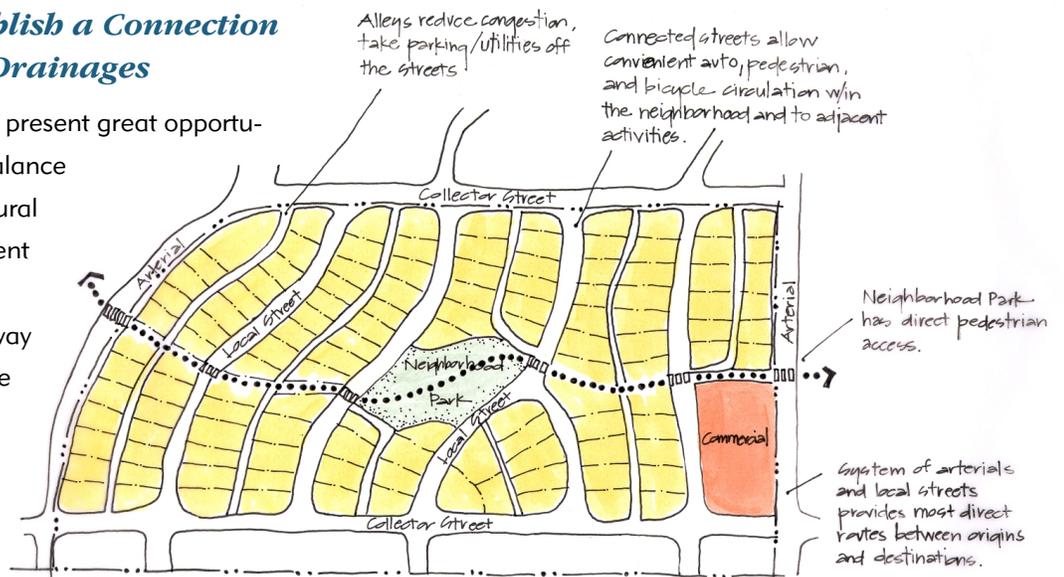
1 Evoke a Sense of Place

Casper has a unique and beautiful natural setting, many exceptional buildings and neighborhoods, and a rich history. These assets will be enhanced.

Figure 13. Pedestrian and bicycle connections through neighborhoods shall be promoted. Off-street trails offer unique recreation opportunities and facilitate connections to other areas and neighborhoods within the area.

2 Restore and Establish a Connection to the River and Drainages

The river and drainages present great opportunities to reestablish a balance between urban and natural systems. Public investment during the 1990s in the North Platte River Parkway has already set the stage for new private development. The North Platte River will emerge as a key to Casper’s identity.



Pedestrian Compatible Residential Subdivision

3 Invest in the Public Realm

Streets, sidewalks, and parks provide the public an opportunity to connect to their neighborhoods and surrounding areas. Well-designed and maintained streets, streetscapes, sidewalks, trails and parks will contribute to a sense of community and attract investment.

4 Broaden the Mix of Land Uses

In Downtown Casper and in other commercial centers, a mix of land uses can create a more vibrant community by encouraging people to live, work, and recreate in their neighborhoods. The Casper area will encourage neighborhood centers and focal points in the community to strengthen neighborhoods and the cohesiveness of the community.

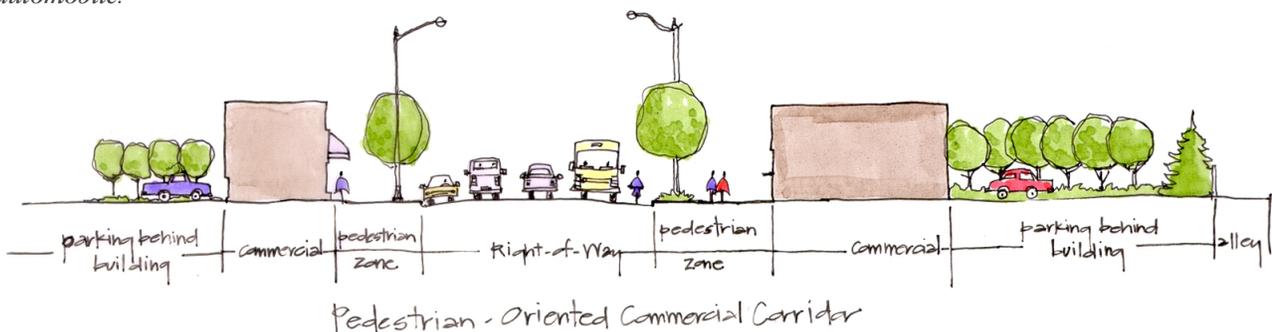
5 Improve Connectivity

Within neighborhoods, and even region-wide, life is improved by facilitating movement, access, and connection. Parks, schools, institutions, businesses, and housing should be related and dependent on one another, but they can't be if they are disconnected. Casper will be a connected community.

6 Ensure that Buildings Support Broader Goals

Buildings should make a contribution to their neighborhood and the community. Buildings will be designed to enhance the community.

Figure 14. The streetscape will promote pedestrian use while efficiently serving the automobile.



7 Build on Existing Strengths

The positive impact of the area’s development successes can be increased by extending and replicating them. Casper will target investment dollars where positive change is underway.

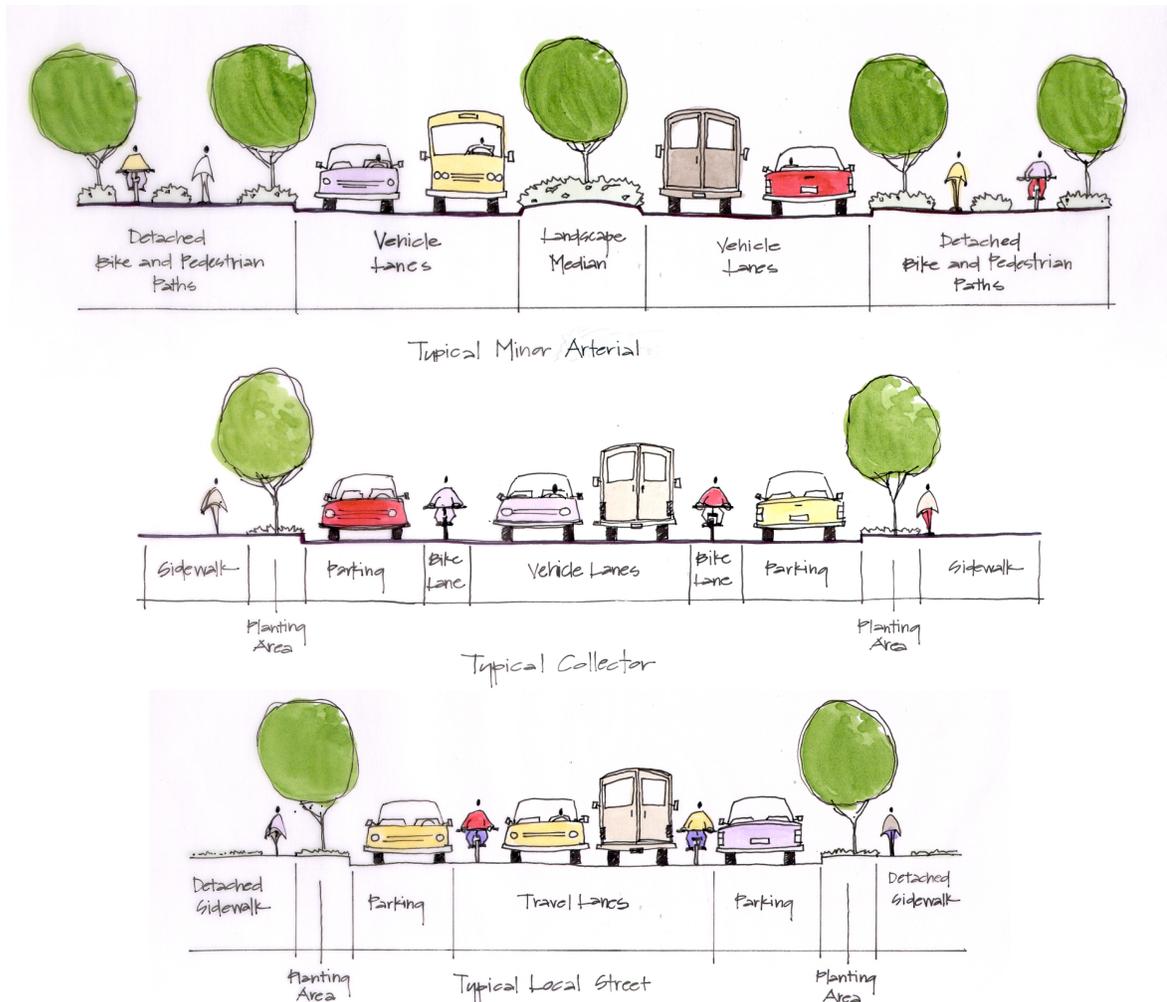
8 Preserve and Enhance Heritage Resources

Casper has a rich legacy of buildings, landscapes and monuments that help define an area rooted in local history. The Casper area will make its legacy part of its future.

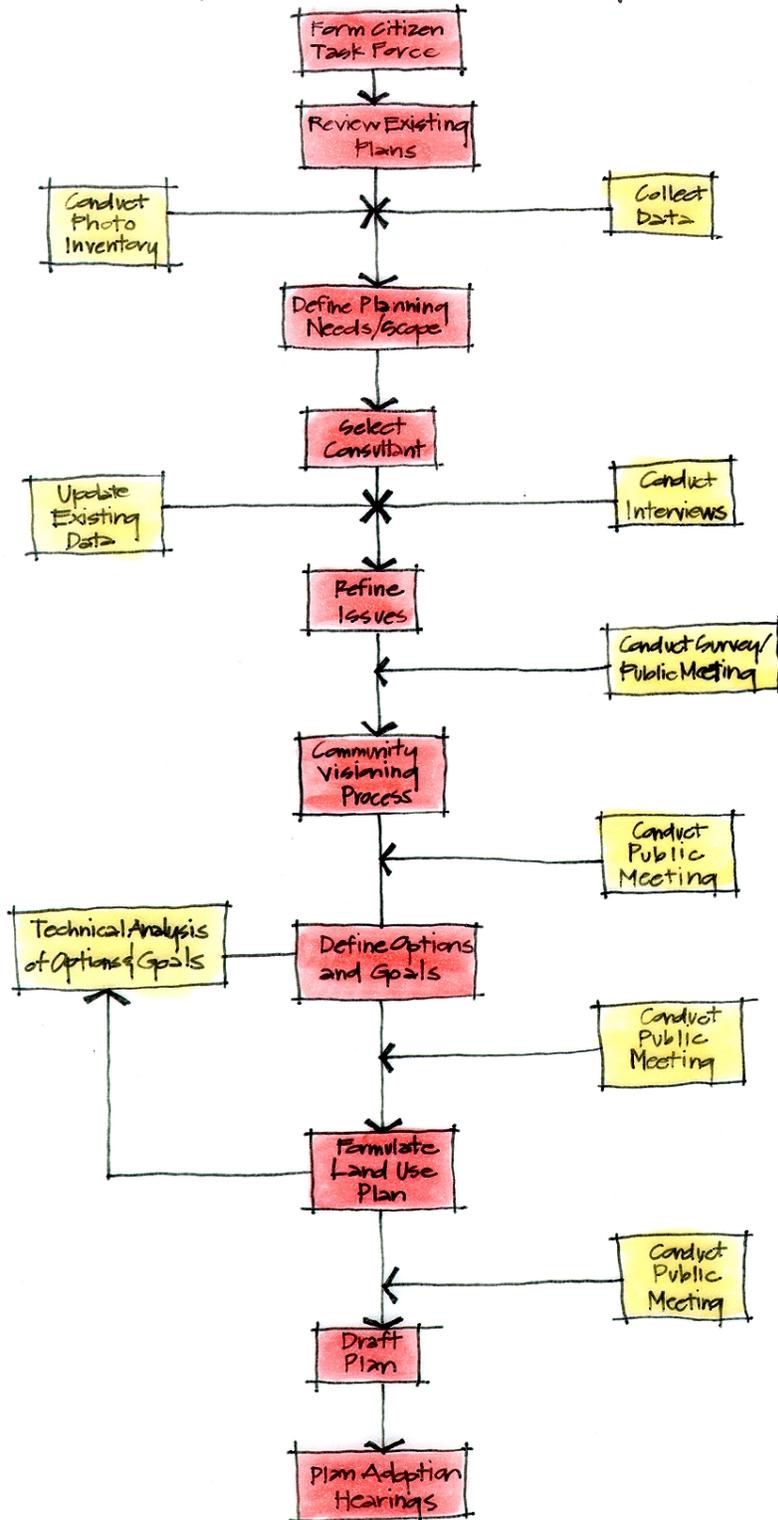
9 Provide a Balanced Network for Movement

A balanced network for movement supports travel by car, bicycle, and foot. Rights-of-way should be designed to be shared, attractive, and safe for all modes of movement. The Casper area will facilitate choice in transportation.

Figure 15. A balanced transportation system is designed to serve automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycles. Each street type requires different means of accommodating multiple modes of travel.



Casper Area Comprehensive Planning Process



The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan was developed using a process that involved the review and consolidation of a substantial amount of data, the development of a vision and series of goals, public involvement and input, and citizen task force oversight.

The Context and Horizon

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The Task Force

The Casper City Council, in February of 1997, appointed a 15 person Task Force to spearhead the development of a Plan. The Task Force was charged with producing a long-term plan for the physical development of the region.

The Task Force membership included key individuals and citizens from area neighborhoods and the business community, as well as representatives from:

- the City of Casper,
- the Town of Bar Nunn,
- the Town of Evansville,
- the Town of Mills, and
- Natrona County.

The membership was somewhat fluid with members appointed, as necessary, to maintain a broad representation of interests on the Task Force. The Task Force was staffed by a collaborative group of individuals from the City of Casper Community Development Department and the consultant team. The consultant team included professional planners, economists, designers, and attorneys from Balloffet and Associates, Inc., Clarion Associates, and RNL Design.

REDEVELOPMENT • INDUSTRIAL AREA • RIDGELINE DEVELOPMENT
AFFORDABLE HOUSING • OPEN SPACE • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING CASPER'S FUTURE

PARTICIPATE

YOU ARE INVITED TO
HELP US PLAN THE
CASPER AREA'S FUTURE

ATTEND A TOWN MEETING:

7:00 PM
September 23, 1998
Casper City Hall

7:00 PM
September 24, 1998
Commons Room
Highland Park
Community Church
411 South Walsh Drive

Casper Area
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL DAVE HOUGH AT 338-2241

Have you gotten involved?

Perhaps some of the most important decisions concerning the Casper area are going to be made over the next few months...decisions YOU should be involved with.

The City of Casper in cooperation with Natrona County and the Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills are developing a blueprint for our community—the Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan. When the plan is complete, it will establish the Casper area's priorities and guide decisions about neighborhoods, new development, transportation, capital improvements, parks and recreation, and redevelopment of blighted areas. The plan will help guide the use and development of lands within the City of Casper, unincorporated areas of Natrona County near Casper, and the Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills.

Millions of dollars are invested by both the private and public sectors to make our community work. The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan will help determine where investments are made to make the Casper area a better place to live and work.

Casper Area
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Casper Senior Center
1831 East 4th Street
Wednesday, May 26, 1999
6:30 to 9:00 PM

Casper City Hall
200 North David Street
Thursday, May 27, 1999
6:30 to 9:00 PM

Your input is needed to strengthen the plan before it is finalized this summer. To offer your ideas or request more information, contact the City of Casper Community Development Department or participate in one of the upcoming public open houses.

Now, don't you think your input is critical?



Figure 16. Substantial effort was made to get the public involved throughout the development of the plan.

Give Us Your Thoughts!
 We need your feedback and advise. Please answer the following questions and return this survey by September 25, 1998.

- Should we promote infill development before allowing new land to be developed? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should we encourage further revitalization of the Downtown by promoting a greater range of activities including, but not limited to, entertainment, restaurants, hotel/convention facilities, and residential living opportunities? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should business uses be allowed in residential neighborhoods negative impacts such as traffic, lighting, signage, and noise can be mitigated? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should the City of Casper Nations County or surrounding towns develop new infrastructure such as roads, bridges, or water and sewer lines to serve undeveloped areas around Casper using taxpayer dollars?
 If so, when? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Is it O.K. to allow commercial development to occur along undeveloped portions of Wyoming Boulevard, CY Avenue or the Yellowstone Highway? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should Parks be interconnected by bikeways and trails? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should ridgeline or hillside development be allowed on the foothills at the base of Casper Mountain?
 If so, are there any places that development is not appropriate? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should the community require improvements to existing commercial areas such as parks, sidewalks, landscaping, and new or restored building facades? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Should the Downtown be connected to the river by a riverfront park or expanded commercial activity on the Westside? YES NO DON'T KNOW
- Do you think new development should be responsible for paying all costs associated with serving the development with public services and infrastructure such as water, sewer, roads, fire and police?
 If not, how much is fair for the developer to pay for? YES NO DON'T KNOW

11. You have read a description of our goals, what else should we set out to try to achieve?

12. What is your zip code?

If you want to shape our future, we need to hear from you.
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT.

Throughout the process, the Task Force members involved and informed the members of their various interest groups, and represented those interests in the decisions of the Task Force. In addition to this outreach to constituent groups, the Task Force sought input from the community at large. The public was regularly informed about the plan through news media, public open houses, speaking engagements and citizen inquiries.

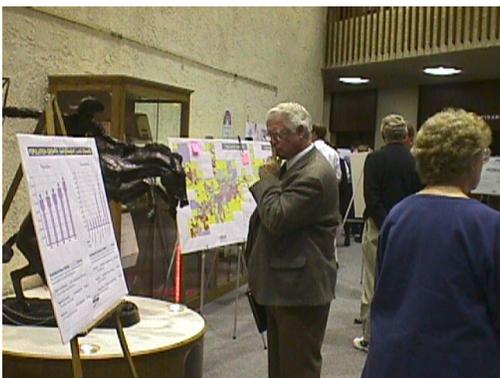
Citizen involvement and input was crucial to developing the Plan. The Plan developed by the Task Force was endorsed by the community through surveys and public open houses.

The Plan's progress was reviewed and endorsed periodically throughout the process by the Casper City Council. Presentations were also made before the town councils, and feedback from these meetings was used to revise the Plan's Concepts, Visions, and Goals.

Decision Process

The Task Force's goal was to develop a plan that addressed the interests of all its diverse members, recognizing that it is the public and private stakeholders with direct interest in the community who would build the vision and help achieve the goals. All decisions—regarding both the content of the Plan and the process of developing it were made by general agreement rather than voting. Therefore, the needs represented by each individual Task Force member had to be resolved in order to reach agreement.

The Task Force worked in partnership with staff and the consultant team, identifying the area's problems and possible solutions. The Task Force examined what the Casper area is today, its strengths and weaknesses, and then envisioned what the community can and should be in the year 2020 and beyond. From this work, the Task Force developed a series of Visions, Goals, Guidelines and the Land Use Concept Plan for the community. The Task Force met intensively for nearly 24 months, considered various responses received in open houses, meetings with interest groups and through surveys, and refined its recommendations in consideration of the public comments. The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the product of that process.



PLANNING HORIZON

The length of the planning period is approximately twenty years. This term has been determined to be reasonable and has been arrived at after weighing a combination of facts and policy considerations. Growth projections to the year 2020 were used to evaluate long-term trends, analyze problems and opportunities that could occur during the period, and project long-term infrastructure needs.

Although the Plan considered a 20-year period, the Plan is a work in progress that must be reviewed and updated at least every 5 years as conditions change.

Affordable housing often has fewer architectural elements and limited neighborhood amenities.



Infrastructure costs can be reduced and amenities strengthened in many affordable neighborhoods. Small additions like front porches and higher quality windows can improve appearance of home and add to the neighborhood's integrity.

Scope and Purpose of Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the Casper area's "blueprint". The purpose of the Plan is to present a clear statement of the Casper area's intent concerning future development and a long-term vision for the City of Casper and the metropolitan area. The Visions, Goals, Guidelines and Land Use Concept Plan are intended to provide specific guidance to decision-makers, the general public, public agencies, and property owners regarding the physical structure of the Casper area.

The Plan has several purposes:

- To establish a framework for preserving and enhancing the existing communities of Casper, Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills;
- To communicate the land use and development policies of the region to citizens, landowners, developers, and other government entities;
- To provide a policy basis for updating zoning and subdivision codes and determining whether they are in agreement with the community's vision;
- To provide a basis for intergovernmental agreements;
- To encourage government agencies and private developers to design projects in harmony with the natural characteristics of the land, the capabilities of public services and facilities, and existing development;
- To prioritize reinvestment in strategic residential, commercial and industrial areas;

- To offer opportunities to preserve the natural environment by integrating natural lands and drainages with urban uses;
- To encourage coordinated investment by the public and private sector in the community;
- To guide public and private investments in urban revitalization and redevelopment efforts;
- To stimulate and coordinate actions among private, nonprofit, and public development organizations;
- To offer governmental actions that will help provide adequate land for housing, employment, business opportunities, recreation, education, and other uses; and
- To provide a basis for setting priorities and funding mechanisms for public capital improvements.

More specifically, the Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan:

- Identifies the major redevelopment and revitalization opportunities in the Casper area;
- Provides a series of Visions, Goals, Guidelines, and Maps that citizens and developers can use in their planning and that the Planning Commissions and City Councils can use in reviewing area plans, corridor plans and developments;
- Promotes a balance of land uses in the metropolitan area to strengthen the Casper area's tax base;
- Encourages and assists real estate developers in making investments in the Casper Area;
- Interrelates land use and transportation to minimize traffic congestion and reduce dependence on automobiles;
- Takes advantage of anticipated regional growth by attracting and providing for a significant share of residential, commercial, and industrial development in the Casper area;
- Advocates brownfield reclamation, mixed use development, a strong urban core, livable neighborhoods, and revitalization of older commercial corridors; and
- Protects existing neighborhoods from the encroachment of new uses that could negatively impact property values or the quality of life.

Neck downs at street corners create more attractive intersections, safer pedestrian crossings and slow traffic. Establishing safe routes to school is a critical element in all development and transportation planning.



Authority to Plan

The development of a comprehensive plan by a city or county government is authorized in Wyoming State Statute. The county authority is provided by Section 18-5-202(b) which states that the county planning and zoning commission may prepare and amend a comprehensive plan including zoning for promoting the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the unincorporated areas of the county, and certify the plan to the board of county commissioners. The municipal authority is derived from Section 15-1-503(a) which states that the commission, after holding public hearings, shall adopt and certify to the governing body a master plan for the physical development of the municipality. Section 15-1-504 further defines the purpose of a master plan by stating that the plan shall be made for the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will best promote the general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

Existing parking area is barren and uninviting, with no shade or protection from the wind.



Addition of landscaping and access control improves overall look and feel of development.

The Setting

The Casper Metropolitan Planning Area is the largest urban core in the State of Wyoming. It is an area of about 62,000 people. As illustrated by Panel 1, the Casper Metropolitan Planning Area is located in the North Platte River Valley along Interstate 25 in eastern Natrona County, Wyoming. The Planning Area consists of approximately 37,000 acres primarily located from west of the Hat Six Road/Interstate 25 interchange to east of the Natrona County Airport and from Bar Nunn south to Casper Mountain. The City of Casper and Town of Bar Nunn, Town of Evansville, and Town of Mills are located within the Planning Area, as well as approximately 28,000 acres of unincorporated land.

The Casper Metropolitan Planning Area sits at the foot of Casper Mountain. The climate is a major attribute. The sun shines more than 300 days a year. The dry climate makes the presence of water even more critical and is, in fact, the reason for Casper's location on the North Platte River.

There are four municipalities that are included within the planning area: the City of Casper, Town of Bar Nunn, Town of Evansville, and Town of Mills.

The area has experienced significant boom and bust cycles in both land development and population, and in the past 13 years has been recovering from one of the most substantial downturns in the local economy the community has ever experienced. During the mid to late 80s, the population declined by more than 13,000 people. Since 1990, the population has grown from 60,001 in 1990 to approximately 62,367 persons in 1997.

Historic buildings like the fire station present many redevelopment opportunities for the downtown.



For example, the fire station could be reused as a restaurant.

Trends and Assumptions

The main trends and assumptions that underlie the Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan are detailed in the “Current Condition and Trends” section of the Plan. These trends and assumptions can be summarized as follows:

The main trends and assumptions that underlie the draft Land Use Concept Plan Map are as follows:

1 *Opportunity for Growth*

From 2000 to 2020 the Rocky Mountain region is projected to grow and Casper can expect to share in the growth by adding 6,100 households and 9,000 new jobs. This projection is based on State and regional trends. The average annual growth rate is expected to closely mimic the country’s growth rate for the period (i.e., 0.7% annually). The average annual job growth rate is anticipated to slightly exceed the State average and national average at approximately 1.2% annually for the period.

2 *More Transportation Options*

Although automobiles will continue to be the primary mode of transportation, there will be an increasing number of residents choosing to bicycle or walk to work. In addition, walking and bicycling are expected to continue to increase as a recreation choice.

3 *Competitive Advantages of a Central City*

Downtown and older city neighborhoods have a sense of place and history that is special in a region where suburbs predominate. Large infrastructure investments are already in place. The mixture of people, businesses, housing types, and architectural styles and parks—all within walking distance—creates market opportunities. The city center must remain competitive and retain and attract residents, businesses, and institutions.

4 *Building the Regional Economic Base*

Economic development is at least as much an issue of jobs and human capital as it is an issue of real estate development. Redevelopment sites in the area should provide for a significant number of jobs that pay family-supporting wages for skills that fit Casper workers. The Land Use Concept Plan should support economic development in the downtown, neighborhood retail areas, and industrial areas. In consideration of the dispersed commercial and industrial development pattern, the Plan should focus resources whenever possible toward consolidating industrial and commercial uses and making new land available for future development beyond the 20-year horizon.

5 *Attracting People and Business to the Region*

In simple terms, people, businesses, and institutions should be attracted to live, work, and invest in the Casper area because they like the quality of life here and they have confidence in the area's future.

6 *Shrinking Financial Role of Public Sector in Redevelopment*

Public programs that subsidize redevelopment (CDBG, HOME, Livable Communities, etc.) have received smaller and smaller shares of public budgets over the past decade. Now redevelopment requires partnerships with multiple stakeholders and investors and greater market discipline.

7 *Fewer Roadway and Water/Sewer Extensions and Higher Infrastructure Maintenance Costs*

As the area's infrastructure ages, it will require more maintenance and replacement. As a result, fewer public resources will be allocated to expansions of roadways and water/sewer systems.

8 *Higher Public Awareness of River Ecology*

Environmental knowledge and awareness continue to grow, placing more attention on the balance between urbanization and natural systems.

9 *Continued Industrial and Business Park Development and Redevelopment*

Industrial and office park sites have been in steady demand and represent the most continuous urban development and redevelopment program in the Casper area. There will continue to be strong demand for clean industrial land with good truck access and office park sites with good visibility.

10 *Continued Growth of Office Employment both Downtown and in Homes*

As the Casper economy continues to grow, downtown Casper can capture its share of office growth by offering a special sense of place, selection, and proximity to supporting uses that is different than that offered by suburban centers. There is a strong trend toward home-based businesses and of live/work housing designs.

11 *Steady Neighborhood Retail Demand and Large Retailers*

In neighborhood locations, smaller shops can be successful in special market niches. The vacancy rate in neighborhood commercial space is low in comparison to previous years. In the discount and large retailer segment, Casper has more than its market share, especially given the area's moderate income population. Retail in the downtown depends primarily on the number of downtown employees and residents.

12 *Some Institutions are Growing, Others are Contracting*

State and federal government continues to experience little overall growth. Casper College continues to grow. Public schools at all levels are reducing their space demands while at the same time the population shift to the east may cause the district to demand more space on the east side. The hospital has undergone great changes to remain competitive within the region. Nonprofit agencies have multiplied and occupy a substantial amount of commercial space.

13 *Growing Opportunity for New Urban Housing*

Regionally, as the population ages, there is a growing demand for urban housing for smaller households, empty nesters, and live/work lifestyles. There is a large demand for low-income housing, which sometimes competes with neighborhood reinvestment and preservation goals.

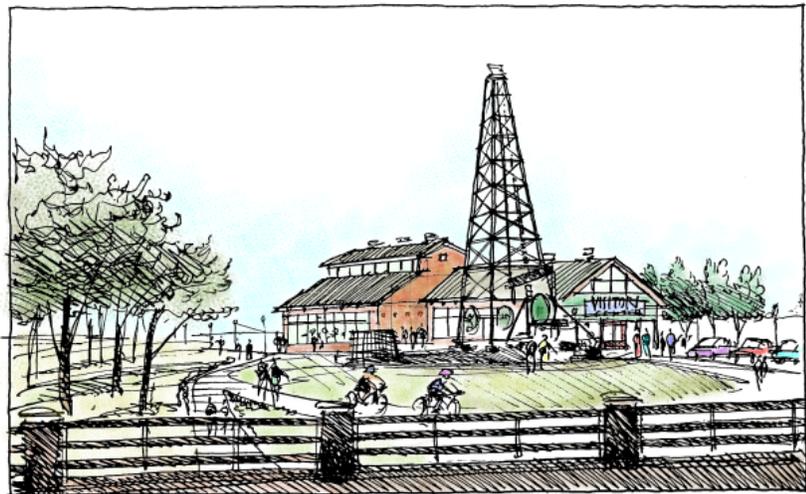
14 *Significant Need to Increase the Tax Base*

The School District, Natrona County, and the City of Casper and towns all share the need to raise values downtown, in commercial and industrial areas, and in neighborhoods with depressed values.

15 *Need for Workforce Development and More Jobs*

Even though the number of jobs in the region has rebounded since the 1980s, low wages are still a problem in the region. With welfare reform, hard-to-employ people urgently need work readiness skills, training, and jobs. If old industrial sites are redeveloped and the downtown grows, Casper could add 8,200 jobs between 1998 and 2020.

Oil and Gas are an important part of Casper's history.



Interpretive visitor center located at one of the community's gateways could focus on the history of drilling in the Casper Area. The center would provide an interesting attraction for visitors and a unique gateway to Casper.

The Policy Framework

In consideration of the issues, trends and inventory, it seems clear that the Casper area must advance a regional comprehensive strategy for its continued development and redevelopment. This strategy must recognize the complementary roles that the natural environment, transportation systems, and infrastructure play in shaping the development of the community.

The Policy Framework describes the values and ideals expressed by the community for its future. The Policy Framework should be used by the City of Casper, Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills, and Natrona County to help make decisions about regulations, and public programs and investments. The Land Use Concept Plan, which defines the physical development of the Casper area, reflects these adopted visions and goals.

The Policy Framework contains many goals that address a wide range of issues. The goals use the words “will”, “should”, “encourage”, “ensure”, and so forth. These words should be read to describe the relative degree of emphasis which a goal imparts, but do not establish a specific legal duty to perform a particular act or undertake a particular program or project. Although the Policy Framework may be used to create specific regulations for land use and development, the Framework is not regulatory.

Some goals may appear to conflict with one another, particularly in the context of a specific situation or when viewed from a different perspective than the context within which the Policy Framework was written. Framework goals do not exist in isolation. They relate to one another. It is in the implementation of the goals that these apparent conflicts are reconciled and balanced by the governing bodies. Their judgment is critical to the implementation of a Policy Framework that provides only general direction regarding the myriad factors affecting growth and development in a complex urban setting.

VISION 1: DIVERSE ECONOMY



Figure 17a. As evidence of the “oil boom” years, the Casper Area has many deteriorating industrial buildings. Many of these buildings, such as the Salt Creek Millworks Buildings in Evansville, are located in prominent locations. A variety of older warehouse and industrial buildings are also apparent near downtown Casper. These buildings represent an important part of the Casper Area’s history which should be retained.

An expanded, more diversified, and stable local economy that continuously grows new jobs that pay a higher-wage than the current average.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE A

Promote Space for Industry, Commercial Development, and Employment

Goal 1

Provide an adequate supply of both serviced and raw industrial and commercial land for expanding the Casper Area’s economic base.

Goal 2

Identify and inventory existing buildings and/or districts with redevelopment and rehabilitation potential for industrial and commercial uses.

PRINCIPLE B

Redevelopment of Salt Creek and Other Underutilized Industrial Areas



Figure 17b. Many of these prominent sites are candidates for reuse as new office, manufacturing, and retail space. While some buildings like the Salt Creek Millworks would require substantial investment, others are more easily converted. Metal structures which served the oil and gas industry can be redeveloped showcasing the Casper Area’s unique character and history.

Goal 3

Establish design standards for both new and rehabilitated industrial and commercial employment areas that address landscaping, signage, and building design to improve Casper’s image and promote further investment in Casper.

PRINCIPLE C**Improve the Casper Area's Tourism Industry and Regional Retail Prominence*****Goal 4***

Increase the Casper Area's attractiveness to tourists and regional shoppers by enhancing and emphasizing the area's natural and man-made environments. Examples of these include: riverfront retail, restaurants, and decks; cultural and historic attractions; Casper College events; and views of Casper Mountain.

PRINCIPLE D**Provide Adequate Infrastructure and Capital Facilities*****Goal 5***

Ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place, within the fiscal constraints of the facility providers, to support commercial and industrial development. Identify and coordinate these areas with the Casper Area Economic Development Alliance.

Goal 6

Target infrastructure investments toward identified redevelopment areas or new development areas based on the community's demands for various types of commercial and industrial space. Redevelopment areas should be given priority over new development areas when they can meet the demand for the specific type of commercial or industrial space required. New development areas should only be given priority for new infrastructure where no redevelopment areas can accommodate the proposed use. Identify and coordinate these areas with the Casper Area Economic Development Alliance.

PRINCIPLE E**Balance Housing Supply with Demands Created by Economic Growth*****Goal 7***

Provide a variety of housing types and densities offering convenient and affordable housing to meet the demands created by growth in industrial and commercial development.

VISION 2: VITAL CITY CENTER



Figure 18a. Downtown Casper has many great attributes including interesting buildings and a good pedestrian network. Downtown Casper serves the entire region and contains a mixture of synergistic uses. The downtown is composed of a variety of unique areas that help to create interest and a sense of discovery. After the “oil bust” many buildings were vacated and activity in the downtown declined. However, downtown Casper has survived and is recovering quickly with significant investment by the private sector in new theaters, renovated office space, new stores, and renovated facades.

A vibrant downtown that provides a blending of land uses and fosters a unique living, working, regional shopping, and entertainment experience.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE F

Create a Special Downtown Use District

Goal 8

Establish a Special Downtown Use District that incorporates a mix of employment opportunities, offices, housing, shopping and entertainment.

Goal 9

Strengthen the role of the downtown as a unifying element for the Casper area.

Goal 10

Encourage and enhance the connectivity of the Downtown District to local hotels, convention facilities, and other commercial areas.



Figure 18b. Downtown Casper should be a vibrant center of community activity. Special events, festivals, and activities should help citizens discover Casper’s downtown and its history. The downtown activities and retail/entertainment businesses should be encouraged to locate on the west side of the downtown to begin to connect the downtown to the North Platte, North Platte River Parkway and the redeveloping Amoco property.

PRINCIPLE G

Increase Intensities and the Variety of Uses

Goal 11

Expand the range of activities occurring in the downtown including entertainment (cinema, music, live theater, and outdoor cultural activities), restaurants, hotel/convention facilities, and a variety of residential living opportunities for families, seniors, couples, students, and singles.

PRINCIPLE H

Enrich Uniqueness and Appearance

Goal 12

Restore and enhance the Downtown District through urban design,

streetscape, landscape, and signage improvements.

Goal 13

Encourage the development of greenspaces in the Downtown District. Potential greenspaces could include a Town Square Park, Riverfront Park and a “Rails to Trails” project which utilizes the abandoned railroad right-of-way, as well as pocket parks and plantings.

Goal 14

Preserve, enhance, and restore the unique and historic architectural fabric of the downtown.

Goal 15

Encourage facade restoration of historic buildings.

PRINCIPLE I

Increase Consumer Services

Goal 16

Promote consumer services within the downtown necessary to support the needs of downtown employers and residents, residents of adjacent neighborhoods, and the community at large.

Goal 17

Support underground and rooftop parking to ensure that consumer businesses requiring substantial close-in parking can locate in the downtown. Parking should be designed to be shared with off-peak businesses nearby where appropriate in an effort to meet overall parking demand and reduce parking lot costs.

PRINCIPLE J

Expand Residential Uses within the Downtown

Goal 18

Expand residential uses within and immediately surrounding the downtown.

Goal 19

Preserve and stabilize the existing residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown by ensuring an appropriate mix of local and regional traffic utilizes area and neighborhood roads.

VISION 3: COMPACT DEVELOPMENT



Figure 19a. Downtown Casper has many vacant buildings and parcels of land. The vacant buildings and parcels including large parcels being used for surface parking disrupt the flow of pedestrians from business to business and reduce the level and intensity of activity and interaction between businesses in the downtown.

A compact development pattern of cohesive neighborhoods and corridors.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE K

Direct Growth to Encourage Infill and Redevelopment

Goal 20

Direct future development to underutilized or vacant parcels within the developed urban area where City services and infrastructure already exist.

Goal 21

Encourage a separation of urban and rural uses.

Goal 22

Centralize commercial, governmental, retail, residential and cultural activities. Increase the intensity of land uses and employment within the urban core(s).



Figure 19b. Infill development that includes a mixture of office, retail, and residential should be encouraged to help enliven the downtown, increase connectedness, encourage pedestrian activity, and create a sense of security. Parking should be located in parking structures that incorporate retail and office uses, when possible, to serve infill development and create connections and a sense of security.

PRINCIPLE L

Encourage Mixed Uses and Compatibility

Goal 23

Enhance the cohesiveness and identity of neighborhoods by encouraging a healthy mixture of commercial, employment, and cultural uses that support the everyday needs of residents in a neighborhood.

Goal 24

New infill development should be consistent with existing development.

PRINCIPLE M

Require Facilities and Infrastructure to be Available Concurrent with the Impacts of Development

Goal 25

Ensure that facilities and services are available concurrent with the impacts of development and that local capital improvement elements are being constructed in accordance with adopted schedules and plans.

PRINCIPLE N

Protect Existing Rural Estate Type Development from Encroachment by Non-Compatible Uses.

Goal 26

Identify and protect existing residential rural estate areas within the County to preserve their semi-rural character and life-style.

Goal 27

Discourage land uses changes in rural estate areas that incorporate more intensive uses or incompatible uses which alter the rural character.

Goal 28

Discourage transportation and other infrastructure improvements and expansions that encourage premature development of raw land.

Goal 29

Reinforce and strengthen the existing urban boundary by supporting a separation of urban and rural uses.

VISION 4: COHESIVE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Existing



Figure 20a. Commercial uses will continue to encroach into residential neighborhoods particularly where residential lots front collector or arterials roads. Many residential properties are impacted by noise, dust, and traffic in these locations making them somewhat undesirable places to live.

Stable, safe, easily-accessible, interconnected, cohesive residential neighborhoods.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE O

Minimize Changes to Existing Residential Neighborhoods

Goal 30

Ensure that changes to existing residential neighborhoods are compatible in terms of use, design and scale, and that negative impacts are adequately mitigated.

Goal 31

Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of residential neighborhoods while ensuring the infrastructure design and placement protects residential character. Do not dissect residential neighborhoods by major roadways or other obstructions.

Future



Figure 20b. Some residential properties can be redeveloped as small businesses that serve a neighborhood or specialized market. These businesses if developed correctly can support a neighborhood's identity and allows some impacted properties to be improved based on the anticipated additional property value and revenue generation that will result.

PRINCIPLE P

Allow for Compatible and Supporting Commercial Uses in Residential Neighborhoods

Goal 32

Provide for commercial uses in and adjacent to residential neighborhoods in a manner that contributes to the neighborhood's integrity and identity, including elements like signage, lighting, buffers, and parking.

PRINCIPLE Q

Eliminate Inconsistent Land Uses

Goal 33

Encourage the elimination or reduction of existing incompatible land uses and prevent incompatible uses in the future.

VISION 5: OPEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

A system of connected parks, open spaces, and trails that enriches the lives of citizens by providing opportunities for education, nature, art, fishing, wildlife observation, exercise, hiking, conservation of natural areas, and social interaction.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE R

Increase Interconnection of Open Spaces and Recreational Resources

Goal 34

Develop a system of parks, open space, recreation facilities and residential neighborhoods interconnected by pedestrian and bicycle trails and greenways.

PRINCIPLE S

Create a Network of Drainageways and Railroad Rights-of-Way

Goal 35

Utilize drainageways and abandoned railroad rights-of-way as the backbone of the parks, open space and trails system.

PRINCIPLE T

Define the Need for New Parks

Goal 36

Identify the need and establish priorities for new and expanded park and recreation facilities including the types and locations.

Existing



Figure 21a. The Casper area has made a strong commitment to the development of a drainage-based trail system. A number of trails have been constructed in recent years including the Sage Creek drainage.

Future

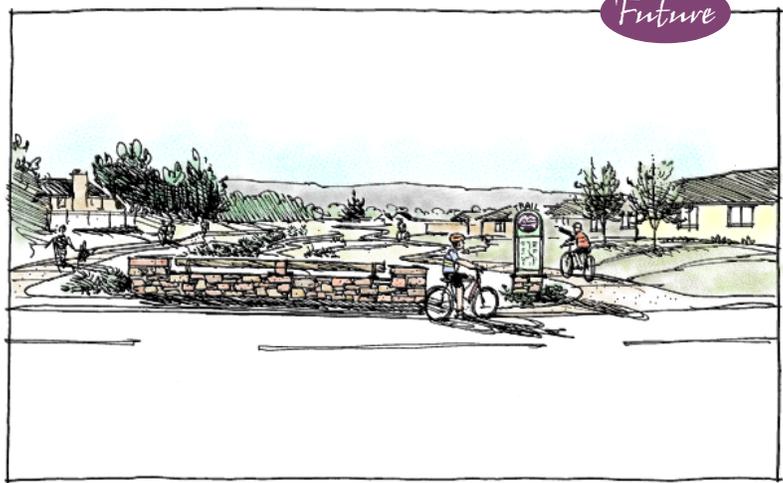


Figure 21b. Casper's bicycle and pedestrian trail network is a somewhat unrecognized resource. Trail connections should be better identified and a design theme established to help create a visual connection and clear identification of where trails intersect roads and join community facilities.

VISION 6: VIEWS OF CASPER MOUNTAIN

Existing



Protected strategic view corridors of Casper Mountain.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE U

Secure Important Views

Goal 37

Identify, acquire, and protect view corridors to Casper Mountain from the City and from Casper Mountain to the City. Development options that protect important views and a property owners right to develop their property should be considered as an alternative to acquisition whenever possible.

Goal 38

Within view corridors, limit signage, billboards and overhead utility lines.

Goal 39

Provide sensitive roadway alignment to avoid visible scarring of the mountain face as viewed from the City.

Goal 40

Develop well-designed neighborhoods in the foothills that limit grading by working with the natural topography, avoid blocking views to the mountain, and ensure that rooflines are not visible above the ridgeline.

Figure 22a. Limited development has taken place along the foothills of Casper Mountain. Pressure to develop this land has increased as more and more homebuyers are looking for seclusion and views. Development to date has generally been located on the lower slopes and bidden from view helping to maintain a sense of ruralness and preserve key views of Casper Mountain.

What We Don't Want to See

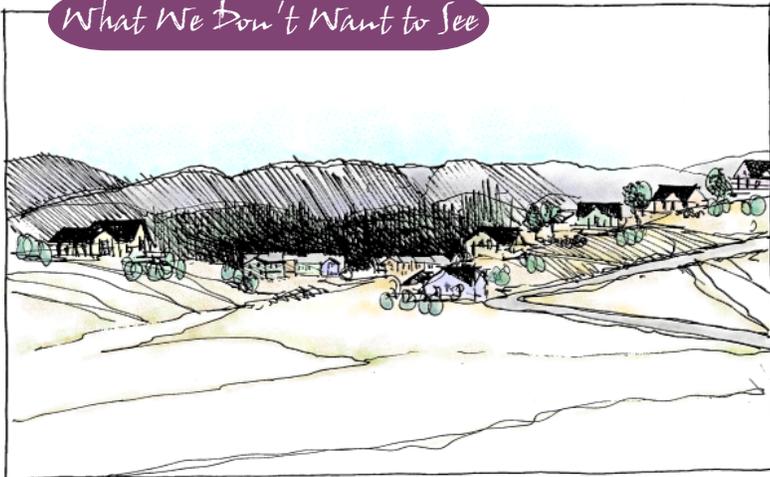


Figure 22b. Ridgeline and scatter site development shall be avoided along the foothills of Casper Mountain. Casper Mountain provides a beautiful backdrop for the City of Casper. A drive along Wyoming Boulevard, Casper Mountain Road, or Popular Street provide scenic views of Casper Mountain that could be severely impacted by ridgeline or poorly planned development.

VISION 7: CASPER'S HISTORY

A community that supports reuse and restoration of buildings that define the history of the Casper area.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE V

Identify and Protect Existing Historic Resources

Goal 41

Identify the location, significance, and potential for reuse and renovation of historic resources.

Goal 42

Support the reuse and renovation of important historic resources through appropriate planning that limits or eliminates obstacles to reuse, and provides incentives such as a streamlined approval process for renovation.



Figure 23a. Many buildings in Casper have been remodeled. Some remodels have resulted in removing or covering up important historic architectural elements.



Figure 23b. As buildings are redeveloped or remodeled efforts should be made to restore the historic features and facades that help define Casper's history and accentuate the Casper Area's uniqueness.

VISION 8: DISTINCT CHARACTER



Figure 24a. Many commercial areas in Casper are characterized by “strip commercial development.” Much of this development is located along primary transportation corridors. The development not only impacts traffic flow with numerous curb cuts, but does not speak to Casper’s unique identity.

An attractive community with a distinct character as reflected by the streetscape, buildings, neighborhoods, and public facilities.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE W

Protect Casper’s Character

Goal 43

Foster new development that respects the character of existing neighborhoods and the Casper area.

PRINCIPLE X

Attractive New Development

Goal 44

Encourage attractive new development and beautify commercial strips by providing parks, sidewalks, landscaping, and restored or new building facades.



Figure 24b. By using access control, landscape medians, and parking lot landscaping, the visual streetscape can be greatly enhanced and traffic flow improved. Wyoming native plants and trees could help lend a uniqueness to the landscape features that speaks to Casper’s location and natural history. Building facade improvements including moving buildings up close to the street and placing parking lots in the rear, adding pedestrian scale windows and awnings, and breaking long facades with architectural features could also be used to improve the appearance of commercial development.

PRINCIPLE Y

Promote High Quality Design

Goal 45

Promote excellence in site planning, architecture, and the design of landscaping, lighting, and signage in all commercial, industrial and residential developments.

Goal 46

Ensure new developments are pedestrian friendly.

Goal 47

Encourage designs that limit the amount of vehicular paving and provide landscaping to frame and enhance development.

VISION 9: ATTAINABLE HOUSING

A community that offers a full range of housing types to meet the needs and expectations of people of all incomes, lifestyles, and age groups.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE Z

Provide for Adequate Attainable Housing

Goal 48

Promote the availability of adequate, safe, and well-served housing for all age groups and populations in the Casper area.

Goal 49

Provide adequate land to meet anticipated housing needs.

Goal 50

Encourage design that mitigates potential impacts of high-density residential development on established residential neighborhoods.

Goal 51

Encourage the distribution of affordable housing in order to achieve a diversified community.



Figure 25a. Multifamily development and other high density residential development provides a substantial portion of the affordable housing for the Casper Area. Historically, citizens have been discouraged by the design and appearance of multifamily developments due not just to the densities, but the lack of architectural identity associated with many of the existing multifamily developments.



Figure 25b. Multifamily developments can be significantly improved through the addition of architectural features that make buildings more closely resemble single family homes, by adding landscaping and breaking the parking into small internal lots.

VISION 10: CULTURAL AMENITIES

A community that supports artistic enrichment and cultural opportunities as vital parts of the community's values, quality of life, and economic vitality.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE AA

Encourage Public and Private Partnerships and Support of Cultural and Civic Facilities

Goal 52

Sustain and enhance government-owned and private cultural and civic facilities and programs.

PRINCIPLE BB

Expand the Presence and Prominence of Public Art

Goal 53

Support the acquisition of public art of local, regional, national and international significance.

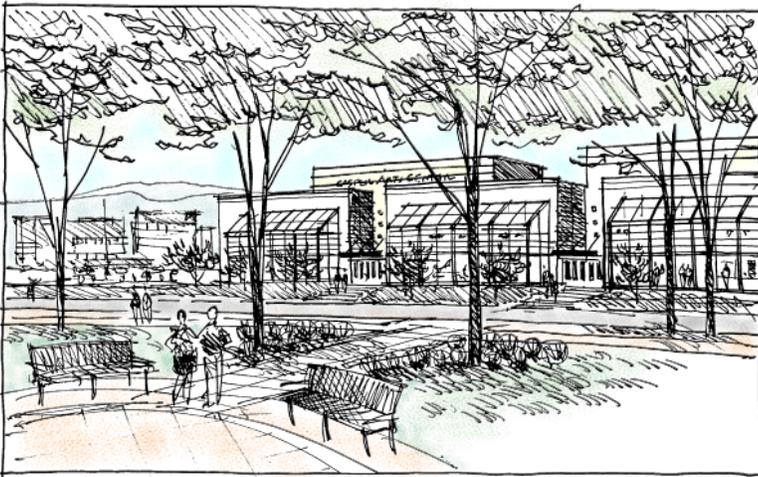


Figure 26. Casper has a wide assortment of community amenities and cultural facilities including a number of museums, educational institutions, and sports/events center. As Casper grows and the demands for entertainment and variety of entertainment increase Casper must work closely with citizens to help support the development of facilities needed to attract high paying jobs and meet the needs of existing residents.

PRINCIPLE CC

Collocate and Centralize Cultural and Civic Facilities

Goal 54

Centralize or collocate new public and private cultural and civic facilities so as to support other existing cultural facilities and create a synergy between these institutions. Where possible, cultural facilities shall be located to take advantage of and support commercial activities.

PRINCIPLE DD

Encourage the Use and Reuse of Schools as Community Facilities

Goal 55

Create opportunities to utilize school facilities for neighborhood and community functions.

Goal 56

Explore opportunities to reuse surplus school property as it may become available for community and neighborhood facilities.

VISION 11: TRANSPORTATION CHOICES



Figure 27a. The Casper Area has allocated a significant share of its transportation resources toward accommodating cars and trucks. While the auto will continue to dominate transportation choice, citizens are demanding safe alternative modes of travel.

A safe, efficient, convenient, cost-effective, multi-modal transportation system.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE EE

Integrate Land Use Patterns and Transportation Facilities

Goal 57

Encourage land uses and land use densities that are consistent with the roadway capacities and limit the impacts of new development on the existing road network in existing neighborhoods.

Goal 58

Restrict the number of access points to new developments to limit curb cuts and the number of intersecting streets along major roadways.

Goal 59

Balance traffic on collector and local streets from new development to minimize traffic through established residential neighborhoods.

Goal 60

Design new streets and redesign existing streets to be pedestrian-friendly and compatible in scale, width, and design speeds with the adjacent land uses.

Goal 61

Improve the network of trails and off-street paths and sidewalks.

Goal 62

Promote traffic calming designs and solutions to reduce speeds through residential neighborhoods.



Figure 27b. By adding a detached meandering sidewalk adjacent to the Salt Creek Highway, bicyclist and pedestrians have a safe haven from motorists. Providing a safe route for alternative modes offers citizens a choice.

Goal 63

Utilize existing transportation infrastructure before expanding transportation infrastructure to accommodate new development.

Goal 64

Review transportation plan in relationship to Comprehensive Land Use Plan to ensure that transportation needs are adequately addressed.

PRINCIPLE FF

Improve Automobile Alternatives

Goal 65

Promote the use of bicycles and walking as a viable alternative to driving.

Goal 66

Provide direct pedestrian and bicycle connections from residential neighborhoods to schools, parks, public facilities, shopping areas, and downtown.

PRINCIPLE GG

Create Continuous and Direct Travel Routes

Goal 67

Promote a system of streets that provides continuous and direct travel while minimizing neighborhood impacts.

Goal 68

Provide for multiple points of connection to neighborhoods in order to create a variety of travel paths for all modes of transportation.

PRINCIPLE HH

Require Concurrency Between Traffic Facilities and Development

Goal 69

Ensure that transportation facilities and services are available concurrent with the impacts of development.

VISION 12: ATTRACTIVE GATEWAYS



Figure 28a. The existing community gateways do not project the Casper Area's unique identity. The gateways are dominated by commercial enterprises that occur in town after town. Corporate architectural styles are beginning to dominate the streetscape.

A series of gateways and major travel corridors that are planned and built to create a positive and attractive image and identity for the area.

Principles and Goals

PRINCIPLE II

Focus Gateway Improvements

Goal 70

Convey a positive visual image of the community by focusing gateway and corridor enhancements at entry points to the communities, key attractions, and special districts such as the downtown.

PRINCIPLE JJ

Landscape Thoroughfares

Goal 71

Develop enhanced landscape improvements along major transportation routes and encourage the placement of public art where appropriate to add cohesiveness and interest to thoroughfares and public places.



Figure 28b. Through thoughtful design and articulation of Casper's unique history and location, the gateways can become important points of identification for the community's residents and visitors. Gateways should incorporate historic elements and native materials whenever possible.

PRINCIPLE KK

Improve I-25, Yellowstone Highway and Highway 20/26 Corridors

Goal 72

Continue to improve the community's image through improvements to streetscape and commercial building and site design.

Vertical mixed-use development
in downtown would provide
a combination of residential
and office uses.



Design and Development

INTRODUCTION

Good design is the key to whether the Casper area is attractive and livable. In the context of the Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan, good design means more than just how well buildings are designed or parking lots landscaped. Good design is related to how a community's land use patterns, transportation system, parks and open spaces, and public facilities fit and work with one another.

The Land Use Concept Plan, while important, only identifies the desired locations for various types of development based on the Vision and Goals contained in the Policy Framework. The Land Use Concept Plan provides guidance concerning the use of land in at a broad scale.

Site specific information is needed before development of any parcel of land proceeds. Good site and building design is critical in establishing compatibility with adjacent uses as well as the Concepts, Visions and Goals contained in this Plan.

The design and development guidelines outlined below are part of the overall Comprehensive Land Use Plan and should be used to help obtain compatibility between uses, achieve good design within the community, and support the Concepts, Visions and Goals of this Plan.

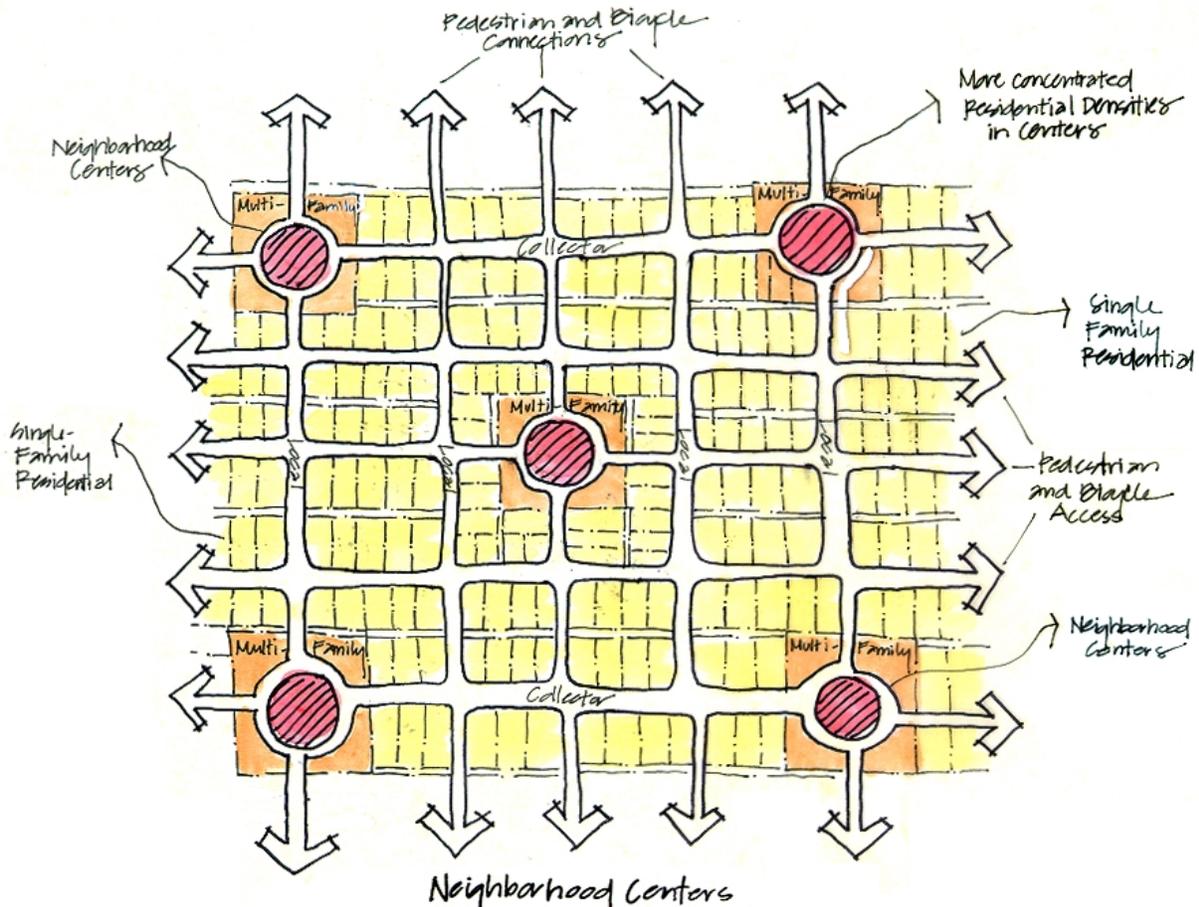
THE COMMUNITY'S DESIGN

The Casper Area's design is based on four key elements. These include land uses, the river, open spaces, and transportation system. The Land Use Concept Plan and the underlying Visions and Goals help organize these elements into an integrated whole so that people and activities flow and relate to one another seamlessly.

Land Uses in the Community's Design

Figure 29. Neighborhood commercial centers should be spaced to serve a one to two square mile area to help support the identity of each neighborhood and allow for easy accessibility by foot, bicycle or automobile. Multifamily or high density residential uses should be used to buffer commercial centers from single family residential uses.

The way in which land uses are integrated; transitions between land uses; where land uses and buildings are located with respect to roads, trails open space, and other types of land uses; and how individual sites are designed and developed will determine how the Casper area looks and functions.



When considering the placement and design of specific land use types, the following guidelines should be used to help achieve the community's Visions and Goals.

RESIDENTIAL USE GUIDELINES

Residential uses should:

- 1 Be located on parcels of land of sufficient size to support the intended level of development and to provide adequate light, air, and open space.
- 2 Be conveniently accessible to the City's and County's arterials.
- 3 Be protected from through traffic and incompatible uses.
- 4 Be conveniently located in relation to:
 - A. shopping, employment, and entertainment centers.
 - B. community activities and services such as parks, libraries, community centers, churches, and social clubs.
 - C. basic services of police, fire, rescue, and schools.
- 5 Be encouraged as infill in areas with adequate existing infrastructure or as an expansion into areas capable of meeting the residential development's needs with regard to these types of facilities.
- 6 Be allowed to locate in association with environmentally sensitive or unique natural sites, where it can be demonstrated that the built environment can be designed to minimize the impact on the natural qualities of the site through; buffering, preservation, and restoration.
- 7 Be developed using a grid system of streets and alleys with pedestrian scale blocks. In order to be conducive to walking, block size should be limited to 300 to 700 feet with frequent street connections.



Figure 30. Variation of setbacks enhances streetscape experience in residential neighborhoods.



Figure 31. Residential design should de-emphasize garage doors.

- 8 Be designed to incorporate a mixture of houses, duplexes, and apartments. Very low, low, and moderate income households shall be integrated into neighborhoods through the use of innovative housing types, rather than merely creating isolated pockets of apartments.
- 9 Be encouraged to incorporate ancillary housing units in areas of North and Central Casper designated for high-density residential development to increase affordability and diversity.
- 10 Be compatible with the existing residential development, primarily through appropriate density placement. Generally, multifamily and duplex residential development is suitable transitional use that should be effectively located when possible between higher density development (such as commercial) and lower density development (such as single family residential) or integrated into a mixed use neighborhood.
- 11 Be varied in design. Building facades should be articulated to provide visual interest to pedestrians. Frequent building entries and windows should face the street. Front porches, bays and balconies are encouraged. Neighborhoods should not consist of unarticulated blank walls or unbroken series of garage doors. Detached rear-yard garages are encouraged. Multifamily housing should offer variation between buildings while maintaining an "overall design theme".

Figure 32. Multifamily structures should incorporate single family home architectural elements such as varied roof lines, breaks in the facade with architectural elements, window variation and quality. Building heights should be reduced where multifamily buildings abut single family neighborhoods.



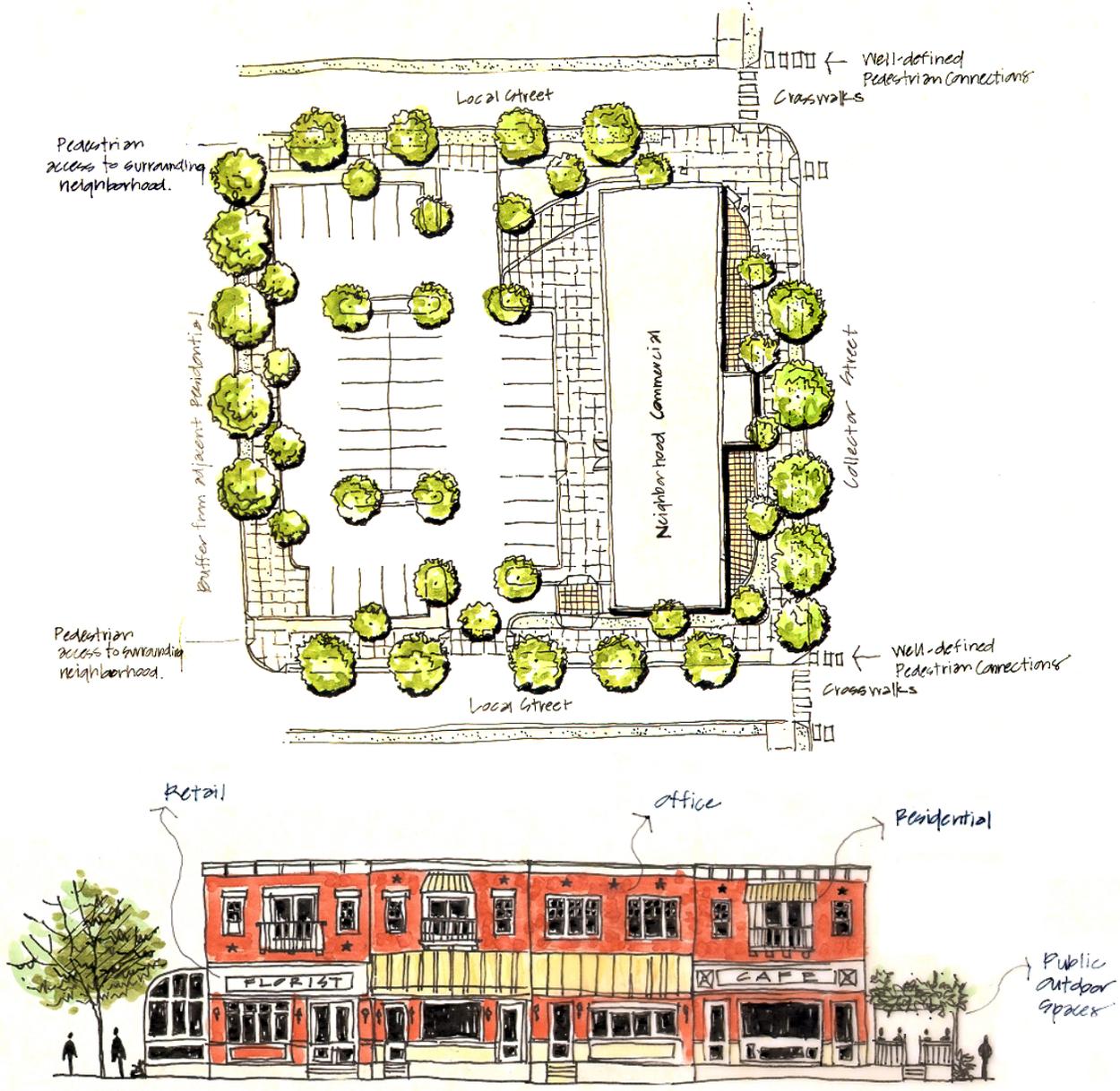
- 12 Be designed in rural estate or agricultural areas as clustered developments to maximize the existing agricultural viability, avoid piecemeal development, utilize land efficiently, and maintain a rural atmosphere.
- 13 Incorporate into Multifamily Housing Projects, the characteristics and amenities typically associated with single family homes. These characteristics include orientation of the front door to a neighborhood sidewalk and street, individual identity, private outdoor space, privacy, and security.

RETAIL, SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT AREA GUIDELINES

Retail uses should:

- 1 Be located in planned centers, whenever possible, to avoid strip commercial development.
- 2 Be located in areas which are adequately served by the arterial and collector road system so as not to unduly burden the local road network serving adjacent neighborhoods.

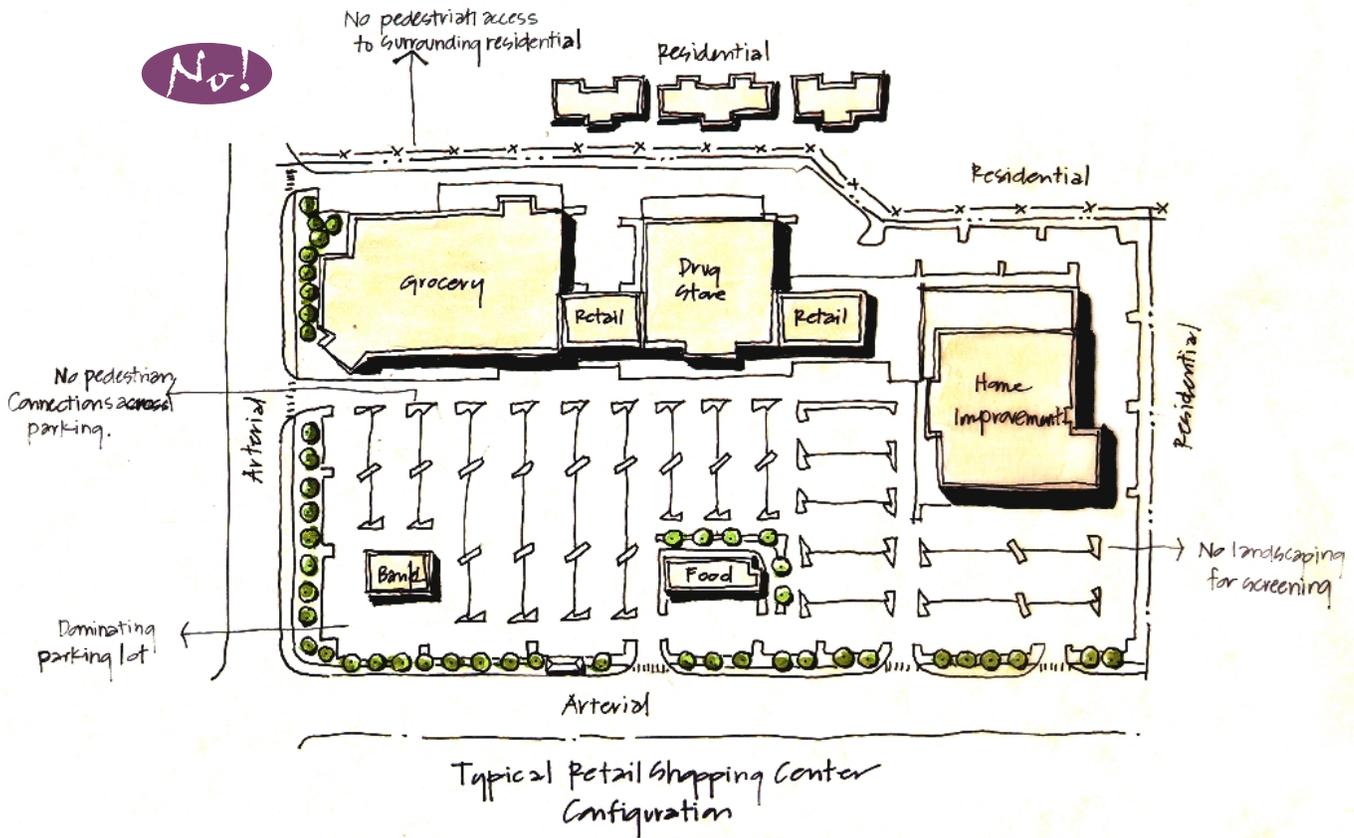
Figure 33. Neighborhood commercial uses should be designed as one and two story buildings with retail uses on the first floor and office or residential uses on the upper floor. Parking should be located in the rear and be screened with landscaping from adjacent residential uses. Pedestrian connections should be a prominent feature facilitating the movement of pedestrians and bicycles. All neighborhood commercial uses should be located on collector streets. Building features should include residential characteristics.



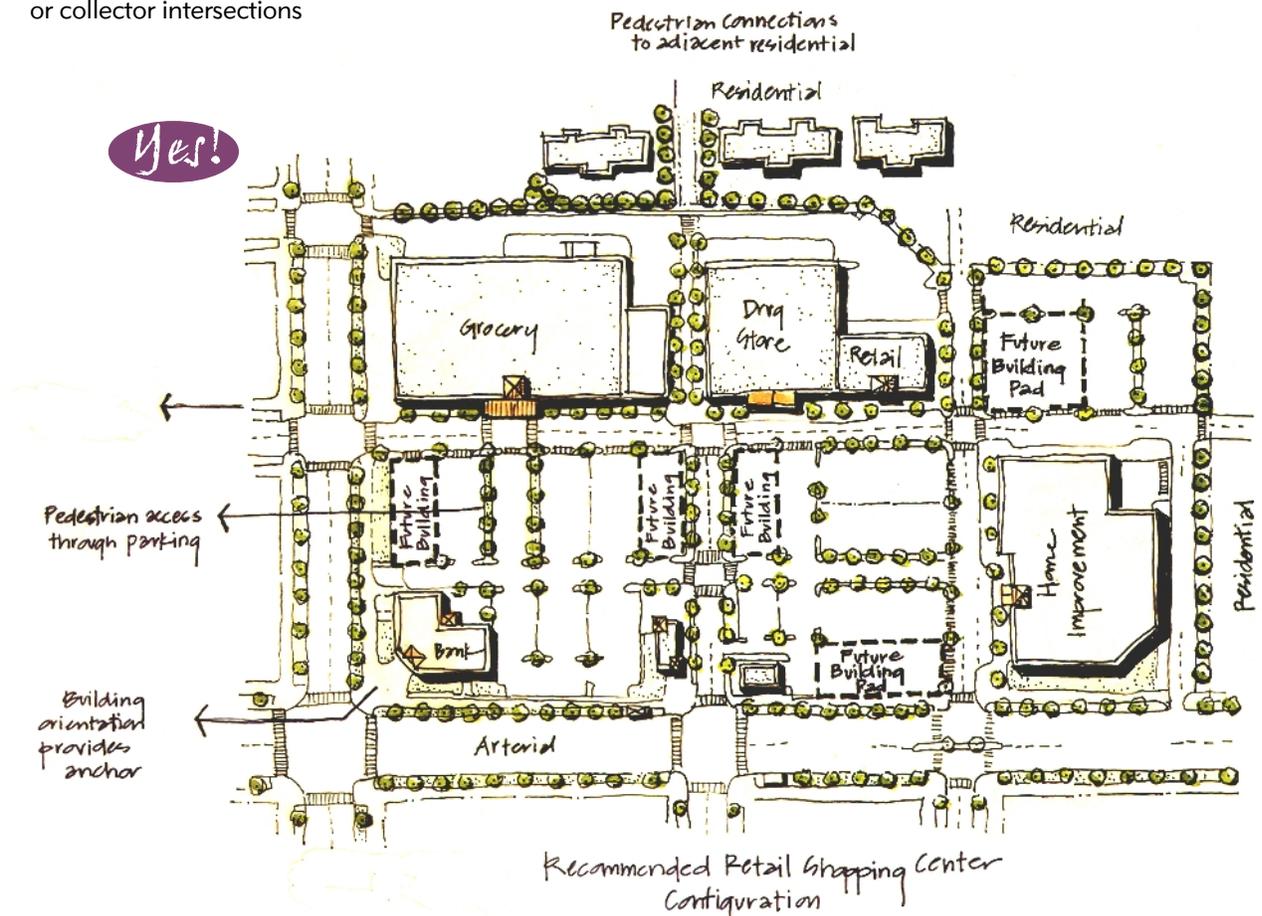
Mix of Commercial and Retail Uses

- 3 Have adequate area and road frontage to allow for controlled access points and proper spacing between driveways to minimize the impact on the operating capacity and safety of the adjacent road network.
- 4 Have sufficient area to provide adequate parking, landscaping, stormwater management, and building setbacks.
- 5 Be located in areas to best serve population concentrations and be compatible with market demand and development practices.
- 6 Consist of retail convenience and personal services when designed to serve as a local-serving commercial center.
- 7 Not be located on local streets.
- 8 Be developed to provide adequate buffers, maintain adequate tree cover, and maximize visual compatibility.
- 9 Be compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Figure 34. Strip commercial development is generally characterized as development with poor pedestrian access and circulation and relatively uncontrolled vehicular access. Highway-oriented commercial development should be designed to facilitate pedestrian access, be oriented toward the street, and provide for internal circulation of automobile traffic. Commercial developments should be adequately landscaped to buffer parking and identify accessways, as well as accentuate building forms.

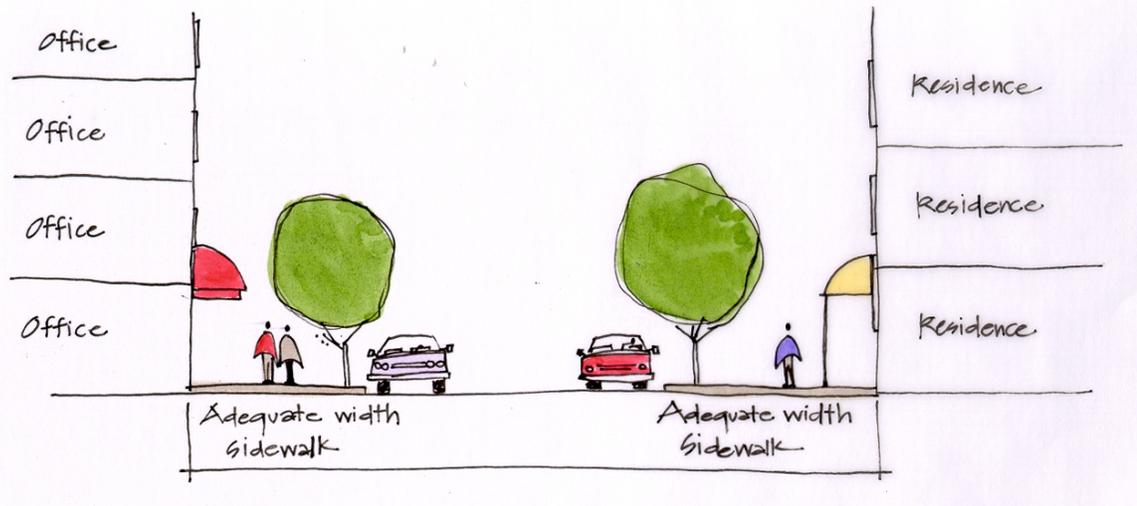


- 10 Be located and restricted to uses that service primarily that neighborhood when located in residential areas. Direct local street and pedestrian connections from the surrounding neighborhood will be required. Neighborhood centers should offer a small grocery or drugstore as an anchor and a mix of retail, professional office, and other services oriented to serve the neighborhood as secondary offerings.
- 11 Be designed to form attractive commercial street fronts. Signage should be coordinated to reinforce the commercial uses unique identity and character. In the case of neighborhood centers, the projects should be limited to two stories with residential architectural features and a comfortable public gathering place with benches and public art.
- 12 Provide a mix of commercial uses (i.e. office, retail, and service) and a wide range of goods and services when located at arterial or collector intersections



- 13 Provide appropriate pedestrian linkages connecting parking lots to encourage internal trip capture and reduced impact on roads.
- 14 Provide just enough commercial parking in small parking lots at the side or rear of buildings. Parking lots shall not be permitted to dominate the frontage of pedestrian-oriented streets, interrupt pedestrian routes, or negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods. Parking in the downtown should be adequate to support the anticipated uses and when possible shared to limit areas devoted to parking in the downtown to those spaces absolutely necessary.
- 15 Have primary business entrances oriented to the sidewalk.
- 16 Incorporate residential uses within single buildings and in separate buildings in close proximity, when possible, particularly in the downtown and neighborhood centers.

Figure 35. Vertical mixed used development helps to create more activity and reduce vehicular trips. Vertical mixed use is encouraged in all commercial settings, but particularly in the central business district and neighborhood commercial areas.



17 Be segregated by purpose and market. Highway commercial should cater to the need for both large and small businesses serving the traveling public and selling products such as automobiles and lumber which require large outdoor storage or display and should not be allowed to compete with neighborhood-serving commercial centers.

18 Only be allowed to infill between existing commercial uses, so that strips of highway commercial use are not increased in length, but merely filled in.

Office/Business Park Employment uses should:

1 Be used as a transitional use between higher density development, retail, commercial, or industrial and lower density development, such as single family residential. Office development may also be used to provide a transition between single family development and public facilities.

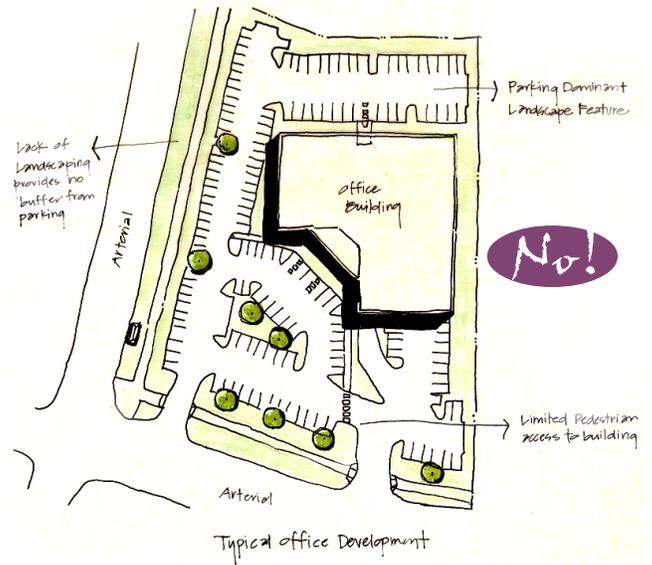
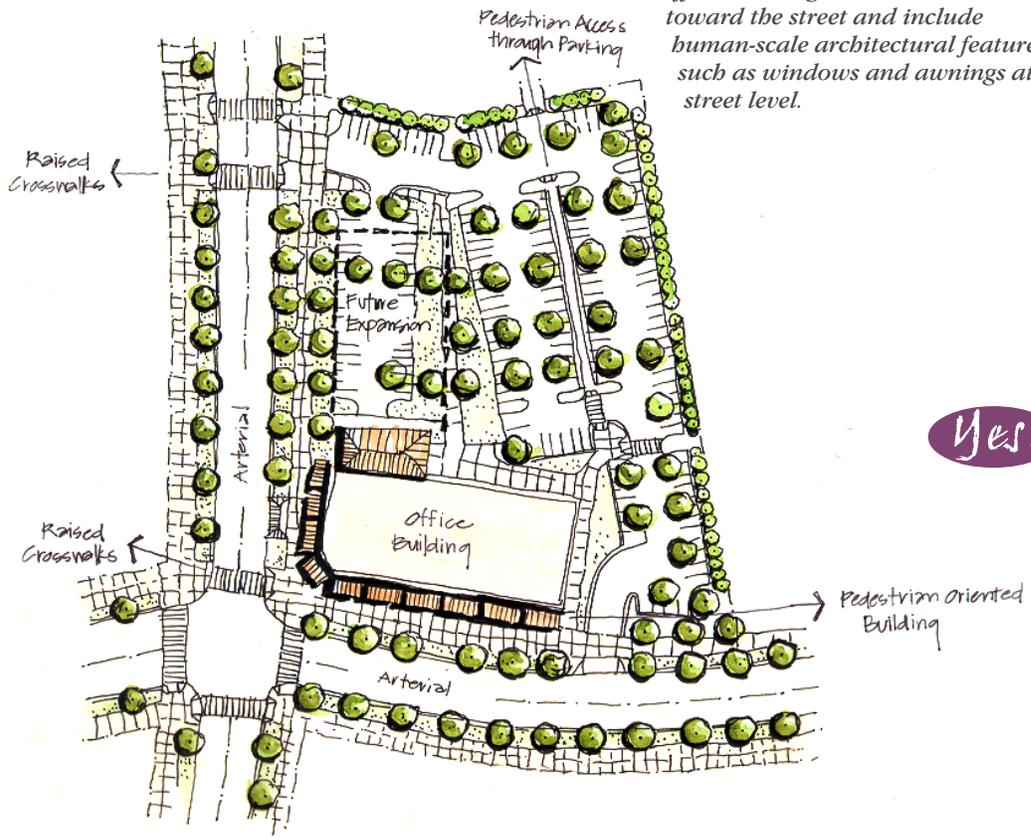


Figure 36. Office development is often setback from the street and framed by a parking lot. In Casper, office development should be well landscaped, offer parking in the rear, and be connected to pedestrian trails and sidewalks. Office buildings should be oriented toward the street and include human-scale architectural features such as windows and awnings at street level.



Preferred Office Development

- ② Conform with the general guidelines established for retail commercial uses.
- ③ Be encouraged to locate at the intersections of major roads developed with commercial uses, to provide for a mixture of uses.
- ④ Be encouraged to locate at premium and high visibility sites within the central business district.
- ⑤ Be encouraged to incorporate residential uses, when feasible.

Industrial Employment Uses should:

- ① Be located outside of the 100 year floodplain.
- ② Have vehicular access to one or more major transportation systems such as railroad, major trucking routes, or airport.
- ③ Be accessible only to arterial roadways, either by direct access or via an internal street system within a planned industrial area.
- ④ Be located in a manner that will not cause through traffic in nearby residential neighborhoods.
- ⑤ Be within commuting time of the labor force and accessible to the labor force via the major transportation system.
- ⑥ Be served by central utilities and services.
- ⑦ Be connected by pedestrian and bicycle routes and trails to promote alternative transportation modes for commuters.
- ⑧ Be located on parcels of land large enough to adequately support the type of industrial development proposed including possible expansion, and minimize any adverse effects upon surrounding properties.

River and Drainages in the Community's Design

The Casper area's original structure was determined by the location of the North Platte River. The area's development has been strongly influenced by the drainages that intersect the area and feed the North Platte. Though the North Platte is the reason for Casper's location, it has lost much of its influence on development.

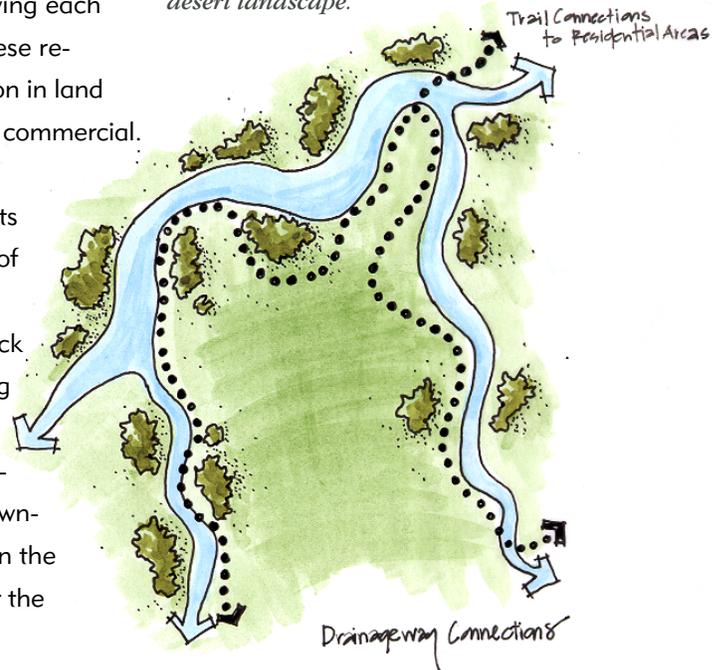
The North Platte River is a potentially powerful asset. Unfortunately, in the downtown the river is bounded by both underutilized land and industrial uses with little or no orientation toward the river. The North Platte is all but invisible from the downtown and access to it is all but impossible.

The area's structure is dependent on the community's connection to the North Platte River and other waterways. The North Platte is an integral part of the community and could be an unforgettable part of the downtown. The river and drainages are elements of relief in the Casper area's arid climate.

The intent of this Plan is to connect the North Platte River and drainages to the community. The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan Map shows a system of trails and parkways following each drainage that link the community and its citizens to these resources. The downtown is connected through a transition in land use on the west side of the downtown from industrial to commercial.

The process of connecting the region to the river and its drainages is already underway. As result of the efforts of the North Platte River Parkway, some portions of the riverfront have been transformed from an unsightly back door to an attractive, recreational resource. Developing a new major park along the North Platte on the west side of Downtown Casper is an important step to transforming the way the community views the river and downtown. The riverfront park would act not only as a link in the system of trails and parks, but provide a focal point for the community's open space and parks system.

Figure 37. Casper's drainageways should be protected as important wildlife habitat. The drainageways could be used as major trail corridors to connect various parts of the community to the North Platte Parkway. The wetland and other vegetation associated with the drainages also provide relief from the desert landscape.

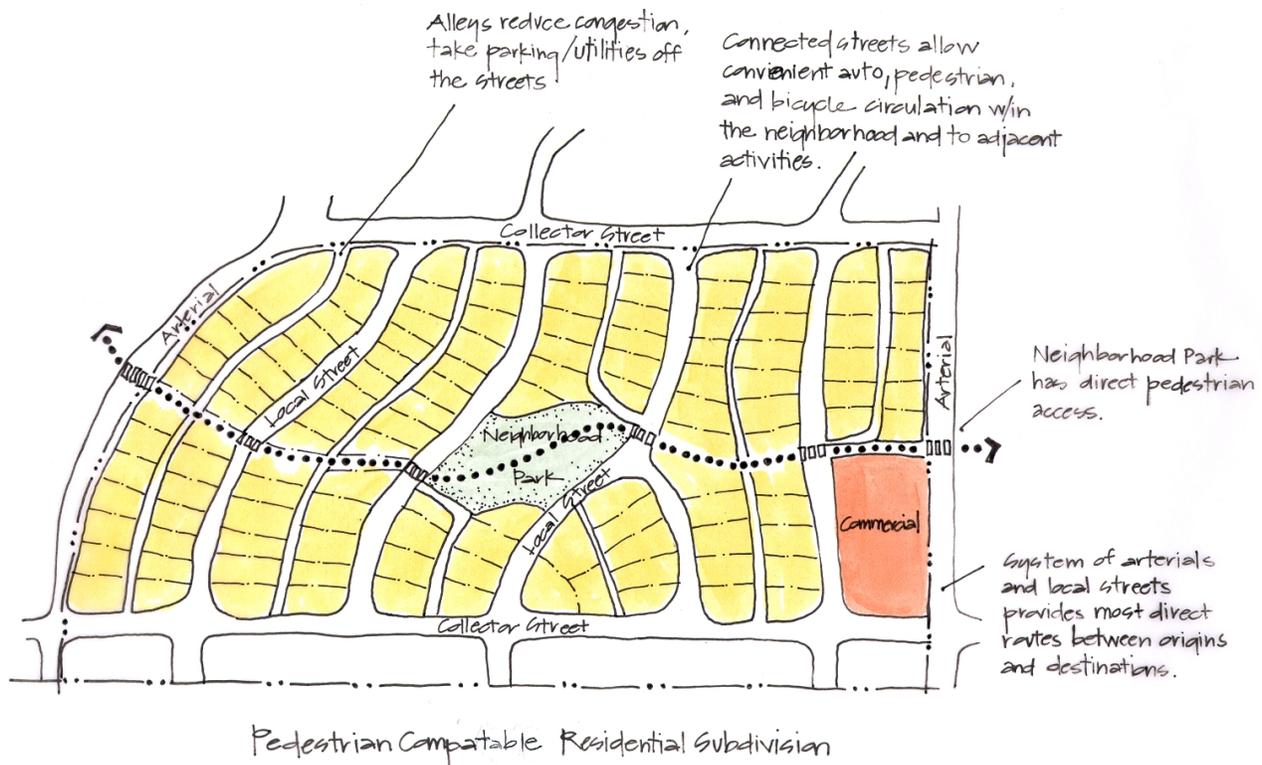


RIVER AND DRAINAGE GUIDELINES

Recapturing this community's connection to the rivers and drainages involves:

- 1 Beautifying the waterfront landscape.
- 2 Creating gathering places at strategic points along the water's edge.
- 3 Overcoming the barriers that separate downtown from the water.
- 4 Creating a strong visual connection to the river and its tributary drainages at street crossings that establish the river and tributaries as prominent features.
- 5 Establishing more pedestrian connections to the river and its tributaries that draw people to the water.
- 6 Repeating the image of the river when possible throughout the downtown with shallow pools, fountains, reservoirs, and channels along pedestrian paths.

Figure 38. Pedestrian connections through neighborhoods should be aligned with the drainages, where possible.



Open Space in the Community's Design

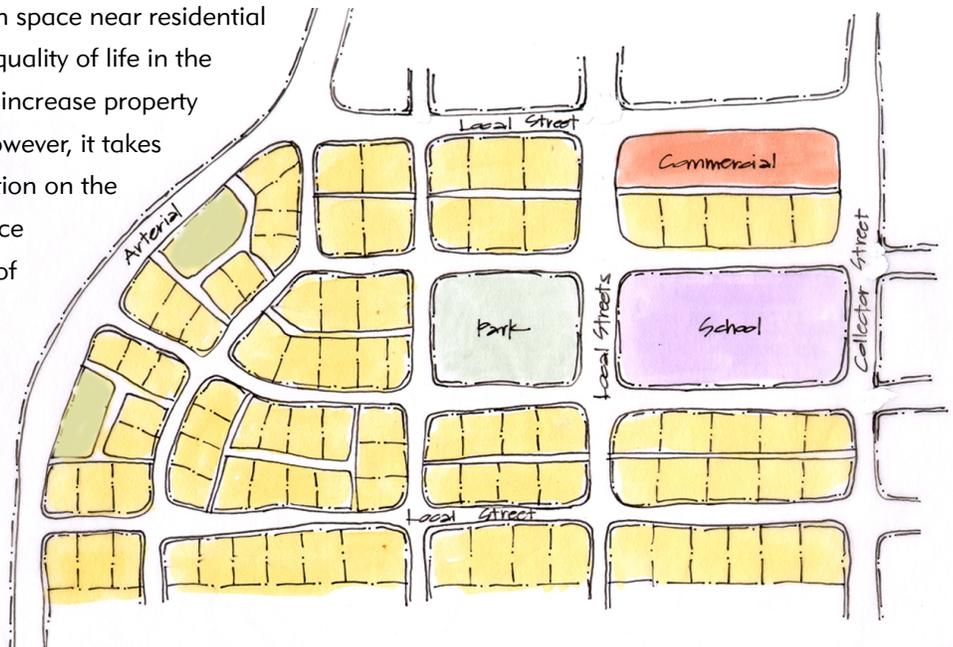
Open space is a key contributor to the community's structure. The Casper area's open space is widespread. It includes parks, plazas, waterfronts and city streets. Unfortunately, much of the open space is not serving at peak potential due to isolation, design problems, or poor programming and management.

The Parks, Trails and Open Space Concept Plan Map (Panel 2) depicts the open space, trails and parks concept. The open space, trails, parks network and river crossings have been deliberately portrayed as corridors, indicating general areas that have been identified as important travel ways that link key commuter and recreation destinations and open spaces. However, it is only with the full involvement of users and neighbors of trails, open space and parks that the community can develop the best trail system for the Casper area.

A concern frequently expressed by citizens living near any proposed trail, park or public open space is the general impact of a trail segment, park or open space on privacy, security and quietude in the neighborhood. Communities across the country have demonstrated the ability to successfully build and use trails and parks and to provide public open space near residential properties while enhancing the quality of life in the neighborhood. In general, trails increase property values and enhance security. However, it takes careful thought and consideration on the part of trail, park, and open space planners, and the commitment of neighbors to learn and be involved, to achieve mutually beneficial results.

In addition to the typical open space features and parks, the Casper area's spacious streets and, in some cases, sidewalks afford open space opportuni-

Figure 39. Neighborhood parks should be accessible by collector streets, should be located adjacent to schools, and be used to buffer residential neighborhoods from the impacts of commercial development or traffic or to separate high density residential development from lower density residential developments.



ties. Streets are important gathering places. Even without eliminating traffic, they can be a resource for activities such as sidewalk cafes, performance areas, stages for art exhibits, and more spontaneous gatherings. However, in order for streets to function as a gathering place, they need to be planned and built to accommodate these uses and create a safe and attractive environment.

OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

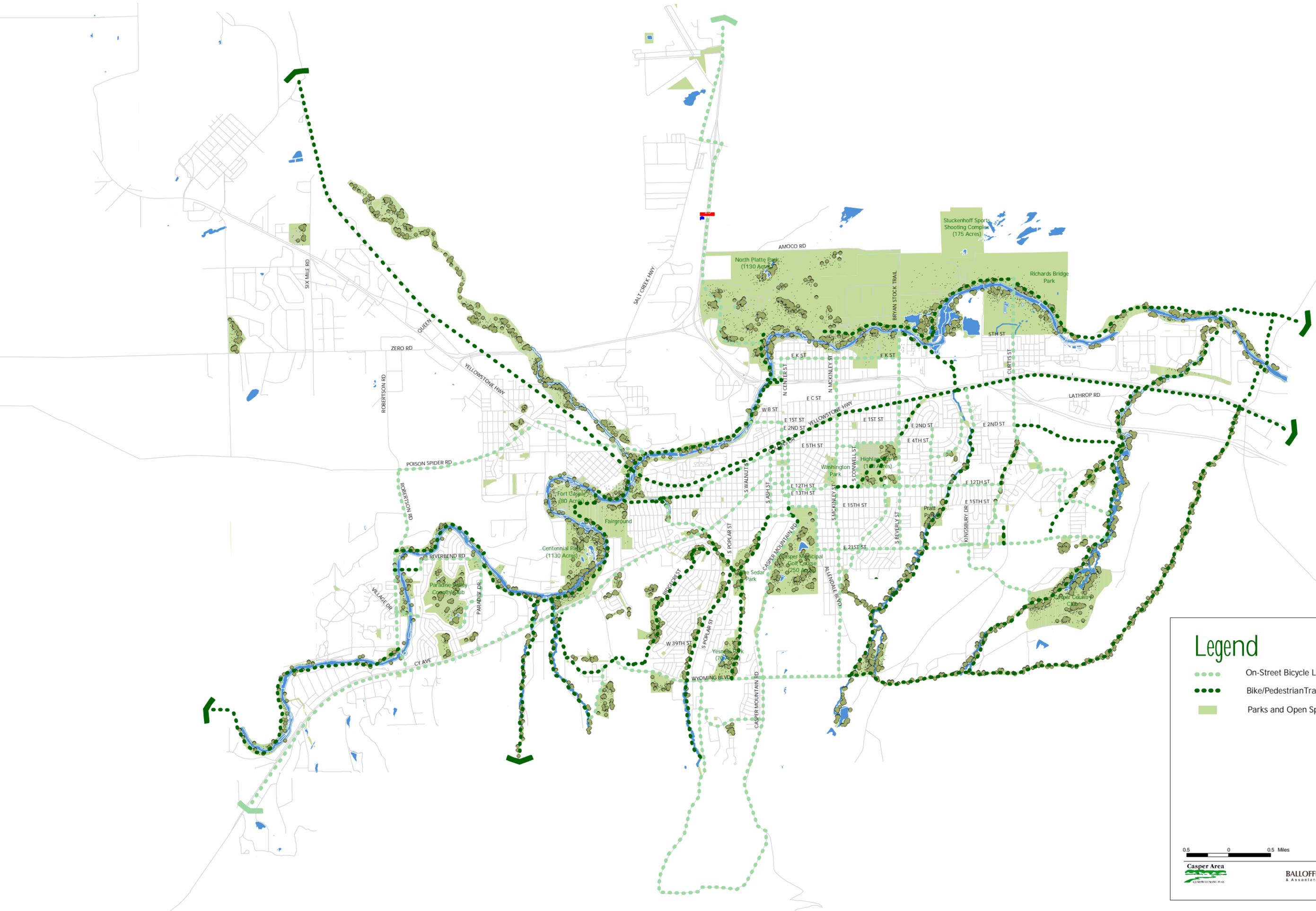
Parks should:

- ① Be conveniently located. Neighborhood-level recreational facilities needed by their residents including playgrounds, free play areas, basketball courts, picnic tables, etc. should be provided in association with all developments.
- ② Be designed in conjunction with streets and walkways, to be a purposeful part of any land development, and not merely the residual leftovers from site planning for other purposes.
- ③ Be mostly surrounded by local or collector streets or house fronts, to maintain safety and visibility.
- ④ Be connected to a system of bike trails following important drainages in the community.

Open Space should:

- ⑤ Be located to serve concentrations of residents, particularly the user-oriented recreation areas.
- ⑥ Be located in association with the highest quality land/water resources available within the Casper area.
- ⑦ Be located to protect views of Casper Mountain as viewed from Wyoming Boulevard and the planned residential areas within the southern areas of the identified urban area, discourage "leap frog" development, and foster a compact urban form.
- ⑧ Preserve environmentally sensitive areas including wildlife habitat, wetlands, steep hillsides, unstable soils, ridgetops, and riparian corridors.
- ⑨ Be connected by a trail system that provides public access along major creeks and rivers, and connects with regional open space resources to promote public recreation.

Parks, Open Space, and Trails



Legend

- On-Street Bicycle Lanes
- Bike/Pedestrian Trails
- Parks and Open Space

0.5 0 0.5 Miles

Casper Area
BALLOFFET & Associates, Inc.

- 10 Be connected or adjacent to schools, whenever possible.

Streets and Sidewalks Should:

- 1 Be widened, in some cases, to allow for landscaping and other special design treatments;
- 2 Be designed to respond to adjacent uses, such as restaurants and cafes to permit seating and other activities on the street;
- 3 Include temporary and permanent art along major pedestrian corridors;
- 4 Be considered when buildings are designed and constructed to maintain a sense of spaciousness and activity at street level.

Transportation System in the Community's Design

A DRIVABLE COMMUNITY

The automobile will continue to be the dominant form of transportation. The Casper Area has adopted a transportation plan that addresses the system-wide roadway needs. The plan is depicted on the Casper Area Street Network Map (Panel 3). The transportation system was found to generally function adequately with only minor deficiencies particularly on the east side of Casper. The transportation plan proposes a series of road connections to alleviate the roadway deficiencies.

The Casper Area streets form a simple network of arterials and collectors which provide connections between and through the community. Inside the arterial and collector network is a system of local streets which serve residences and commercial areas.

A WALKABLE COMMUNITY

The Casper Area's vision is to create a walkable community—where pedestrians can easily walk to activity areas, schools, and parks. The problem is that there needs to be a major retrofit of the existing environment and proactive, sound pedestrian principles for new development so as not to perpetuate the problem.

One of the repeated themes heard throughout the planning

process was that sidewalks and pedestrian facilities are lacking or in need of repair throughout the Casper Area. In many areas, one must walk on the street with traffic because sidewalks or paved shoulders don't exist. Walking in some of these areas is becoming increasingly difficult as traffic volumes increase.

Dense commercial areas suffer from the same problem. In other areas, a sidewalk or shoulder may exist in one block, and not the next. This stop and start nature of sidewalk development hinders pedestrian travel.

A continual sidewalk/shoulder system should be created to accommodate pedestrian travel.

A BIKABLE COMMUNITY

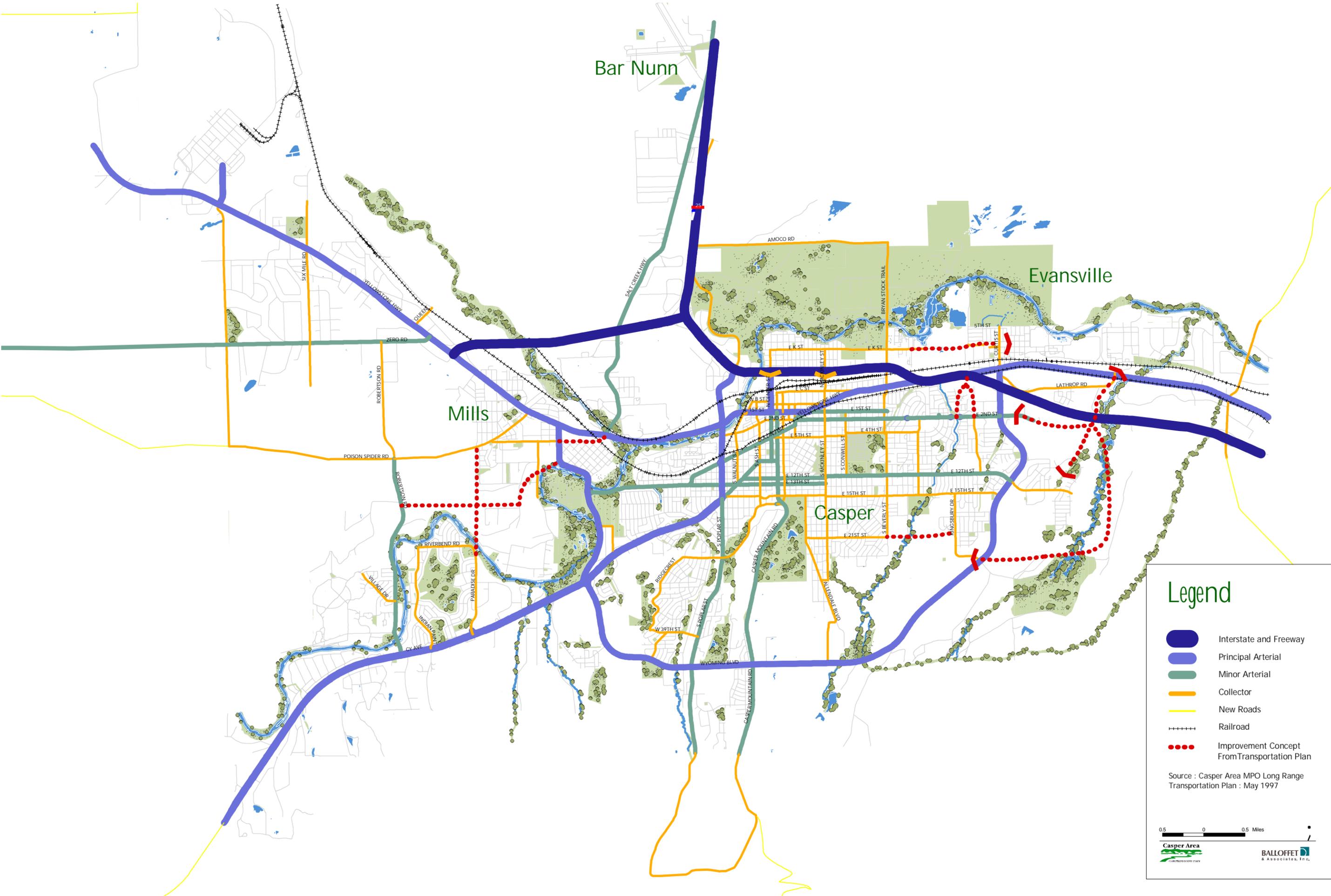
The Casper Area should allow for the safe and efficient use of bicycles. Ultimately, all Casper Area streets should provide adequate space for non-motorized travel. A "share-the-road" philosophy provides a wide outside lane for bicyclists so they can have a space to share the road with motor vehicles and promotes safe driving/riding behaviors.

In the Casper Area, many cyclists prefer the lower volumes of local streets in the older neighborhoods because of the unsafe conditions on collectors and arterials. Unfortunately, these streets are not as convenient for commuting cyclists. Uncontrolled intersections and stop signs on local streets makes cycling time-consuming and inefficient.

A system of safe connected routes is needed in order to accommodate bicycling opportunities.

The first step to improving on-street facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians is to designate a system of preferred on-street and sidewalk corridors which link neighborhoods to key destination points through a network of identified and well maintained routes. There should be routes that are comfortable for intermediate and novice cyclists, as well as routes direct and fast enough for commuting cyclists.

Casper Area Street Network



Legend

- Interstate and Freeway
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- New Roads
- Railroad
- Improvement Concept From Transportation Plan

Source : Casper Area MPO Long Range Transportation Plan : May 1997



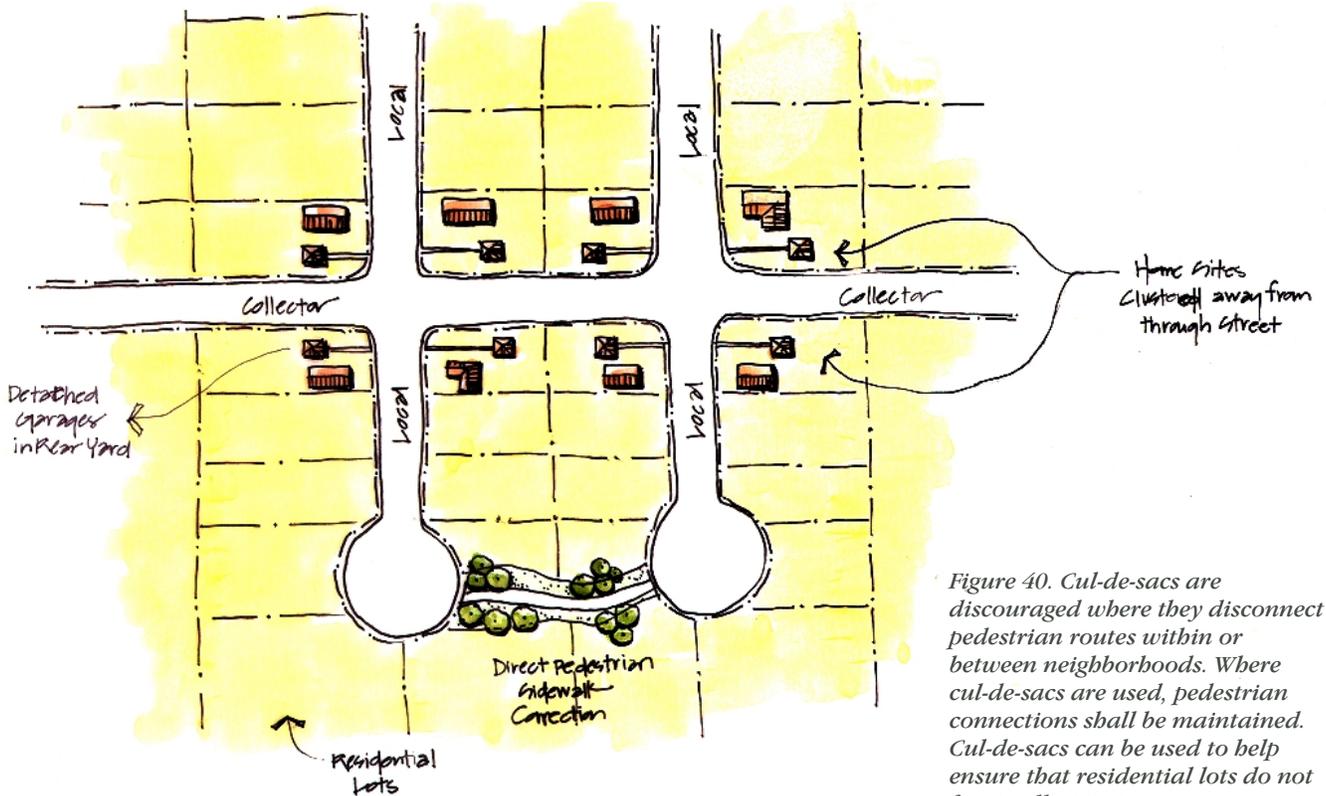
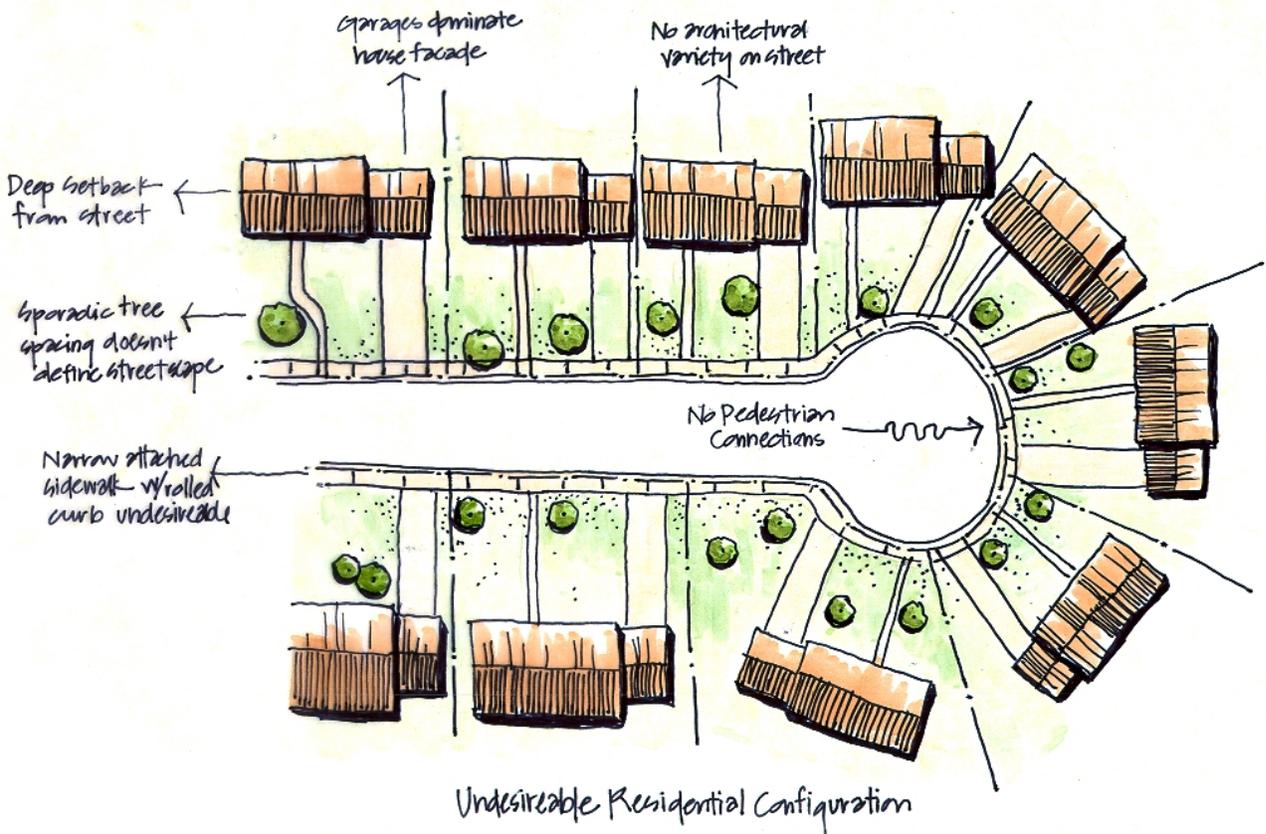


Figure 40. Cul-de-sacs are discouraged where they disconnect pedestrian routes within or between neighborhoods. Where cul-de-sacs are used, pedestrian connections shall be maintained. Cul-de-sacs can be used to help ensure that residential lots do not front collector streets.

Given the number of different user groups and skill levels in the Casper area, the non-motorized transportation program must offer a comprehensive package of facilities (streets, sidewalks, and trails) which promote the safest and most pleasant ways to travel. For commuters, the system must also provide a network of direct routes to and from desired destinations to encourage greater use of non-motorized transportation.

Successful development of the system requires integration of diverse processes such as subdivision regulation, sidewalk master planning, neighborhood street collector development, and parks/open space planning. In addition, operating, maintenance, signing, and enforcement standards must be common across the system to assure full availability of the system year round.

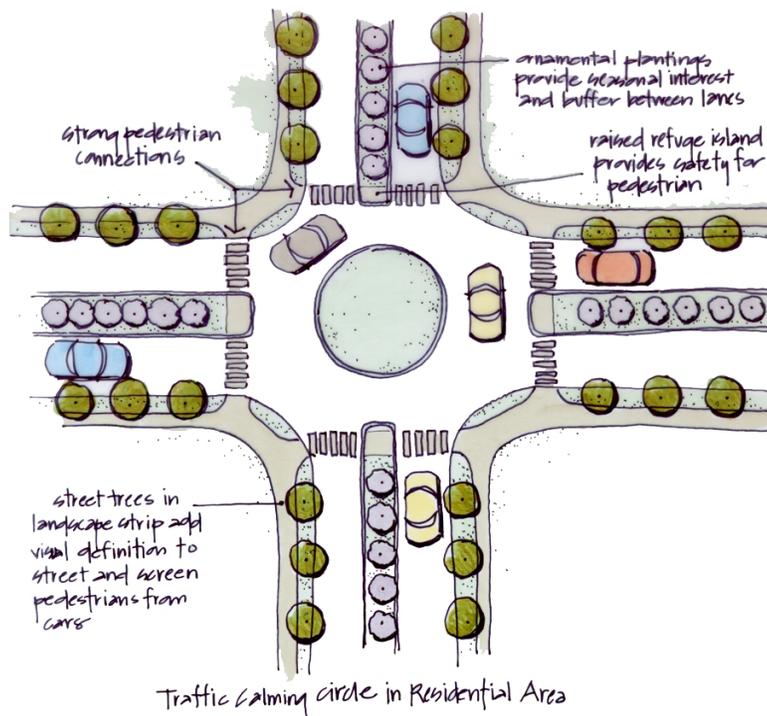
Figure 41. Traffic calming techniques such as traffic circles are encouraged as a means of slowing traffic and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment in residential neighborhoods. Traffic calming measures should be incorporated into new subdivisions at the time the subdivision is developed in anticipation of future traffic volumes and speeds.

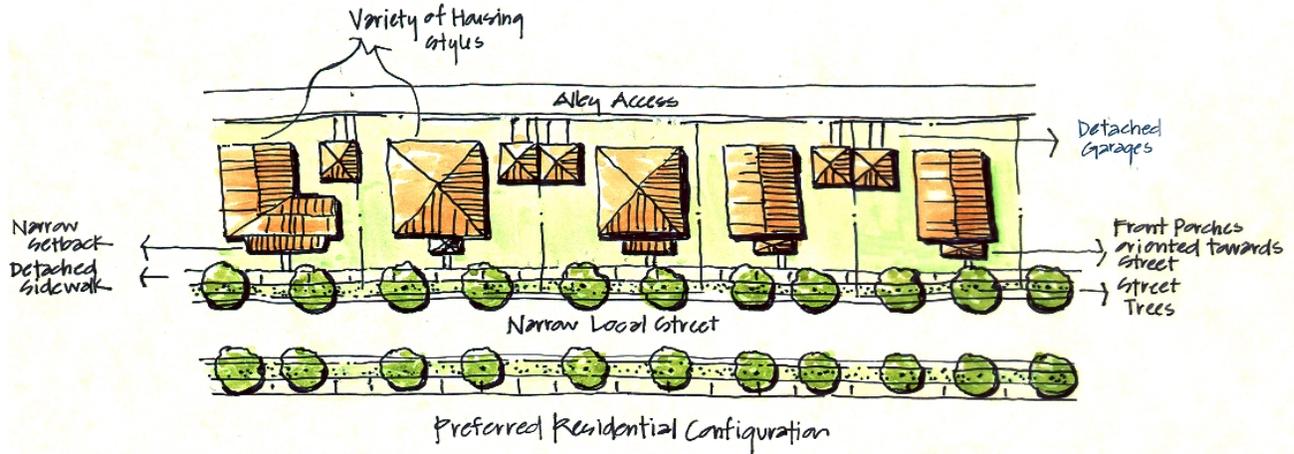
It is important to focus on establishing a quality core system to demonstrate what non-motorized travel can be and to set a standard of quality for all future projects.

Another important aspect to recognize is that all non-motorized routes should interconnect, bearing in mind that each type of

facility relies on the other to form a complete and comprehensive, non-motorized network. For example, on-street routes and sidewalks must link with trails to form a unified system serving major destinations and allowing users continuous travel on a safe, high-quality system.

The Parks, Trails, and Open Space Concept Plan Map begins the process of identifying a series of preferred streets for inclusion in the system. Specific locations and design features should be fully evaluated before construction of new facilities.





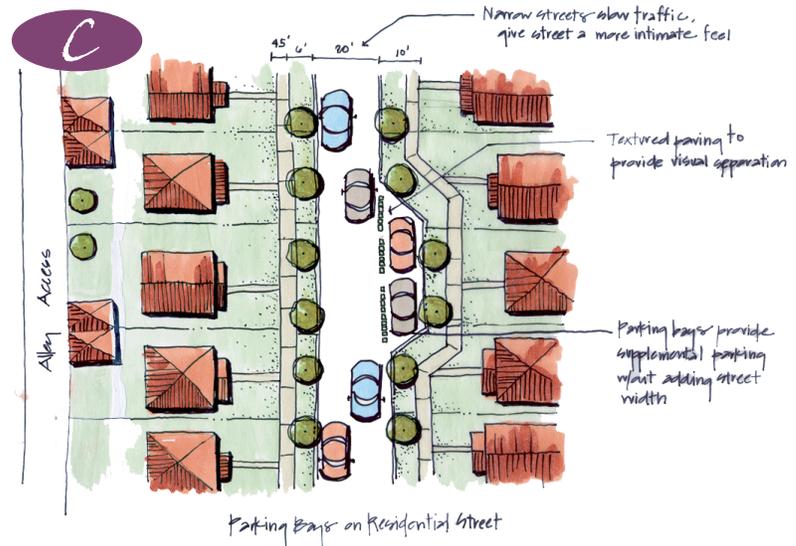
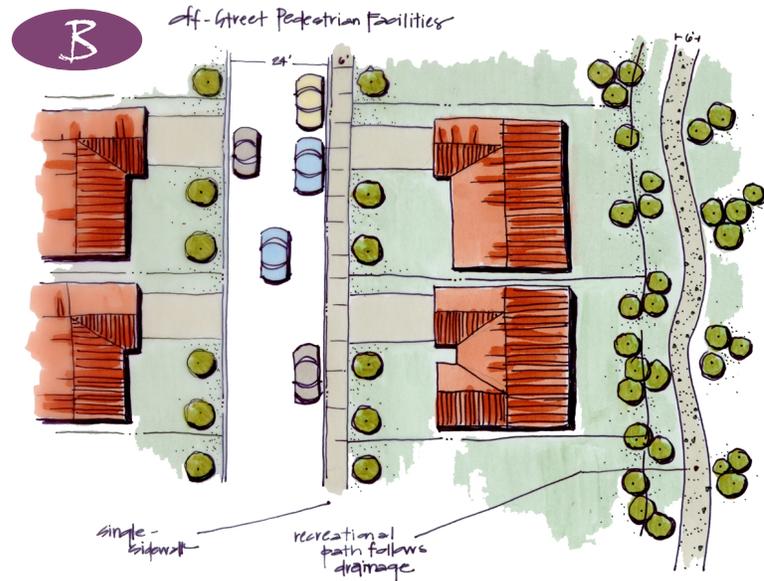
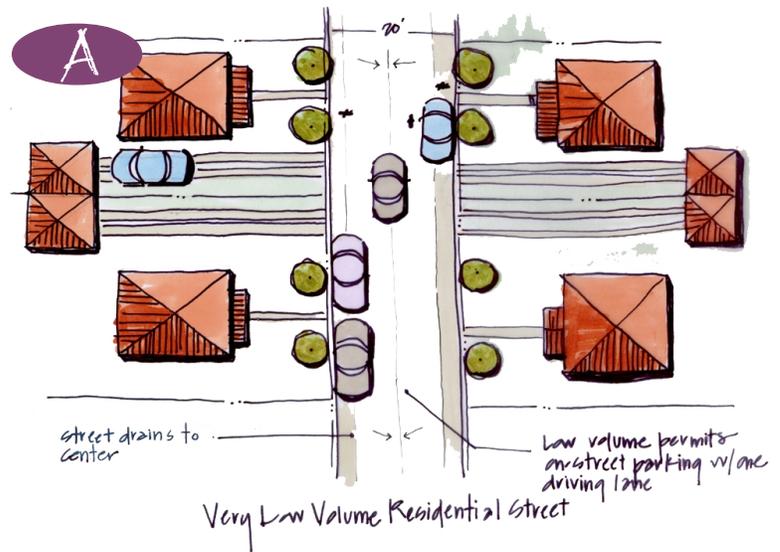
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM GUIDELINES

Streets should:

- 1 Be designed to slow traffic in residential neighborhoods.
- 2 Be designed such that arterials or through traffic streets are located on the periphery of residential neighborhoods. Arterials should never bisect neighborhoods.
- 3 Be designed and constructed to ensure an acceptable level of service. Connections of new streets and access from private development to the arterial street system should be required to demonstrate a systematic access control plan for the streets that they connect.
- 4 Not accommodate the automobile at the expense of other modes of transportation. Improvements identified to achieve a desired level of service for the automobile must not negatively impact the level of service for pedestrians or bicycles.
- 5 Incorporate pedestrian levels of service measurements including directness, continuity, street crossings, visual interest and amenities, and security.
- 6 Provide street crossings for pedestrians which include crosswalks, lighting, median refuges, corner sidewalks widening, ramps, signage, signals, and landscaping. Crosswalks should be well marked and visible to motorists.
- 7 Form an interconnected network of neighborhood streets and

Figure 42. Narrow local residential streets with limited on-street parking and alley-loading residential lots are encouraged. Narrower streets create a more interconnected neighborhood and reduce travel speeds.

Figure 43. A number of options exist to narrow streets, slow speeds, and create a safer pedestrian environment in residential neighborhoods. These include: (A) low volume local residential streets connecting short blocks with 20 foot wide, center draining roads with on-street parking and no sidewalks; (B) low volume local residential streets with 24 foot wide streets, on-street parking, and attached sidewalk on one side of the street; and (C) low volume local residential streets with 20 foot wide streets, parking in parking bays, and a detached sidewalk. Many other options exist. The goal is to provide safe residential streets that support neighborhood continuity.



sidewalks within a neighborhood and between neighborhoods, knitting neighborhoods together and not forming barriers between them.

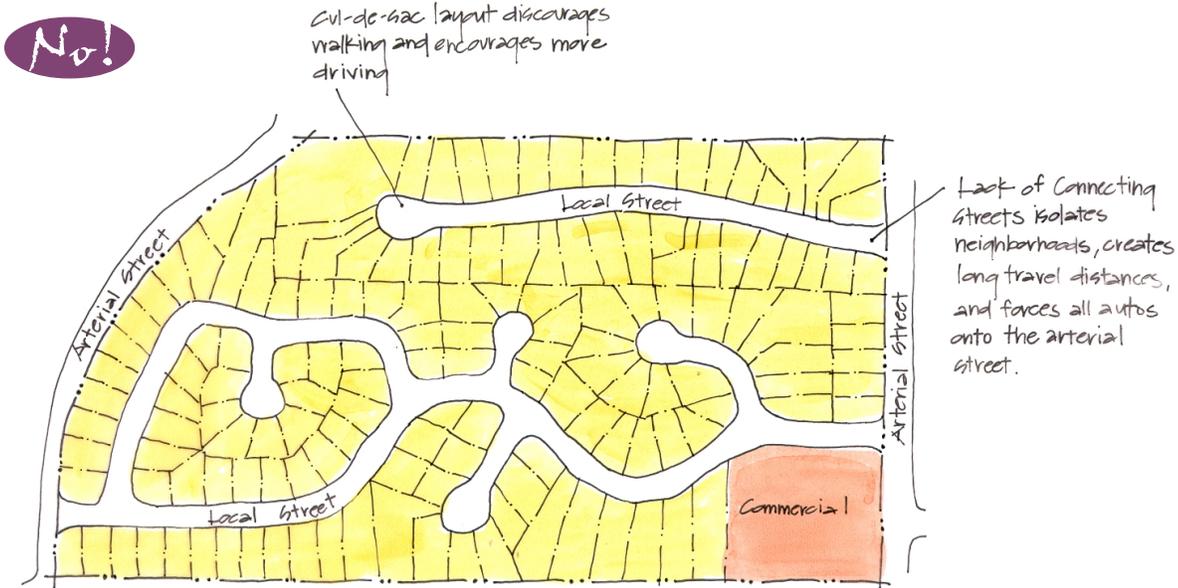
- 8 Avoid the use of deadends and cul-de-sacs.
- 9 Encourage multiple connections into neighborhoods.
- 10 Promote local street widths that are as narrow as possible, while still providing safe access for emergency and service vehicles. Traffic calming measures should be used where appropriate.
- 11 Be maintained at a Level-of-Service C or better. If traffic from a proposed development causes degradation below a Level-of-Service C or causes unacceptable community and environmental impacts, the developer will be required to adequately mitigate these negative impacts.

Trails, Sidewalks and On-street Bicycle Facilities should:

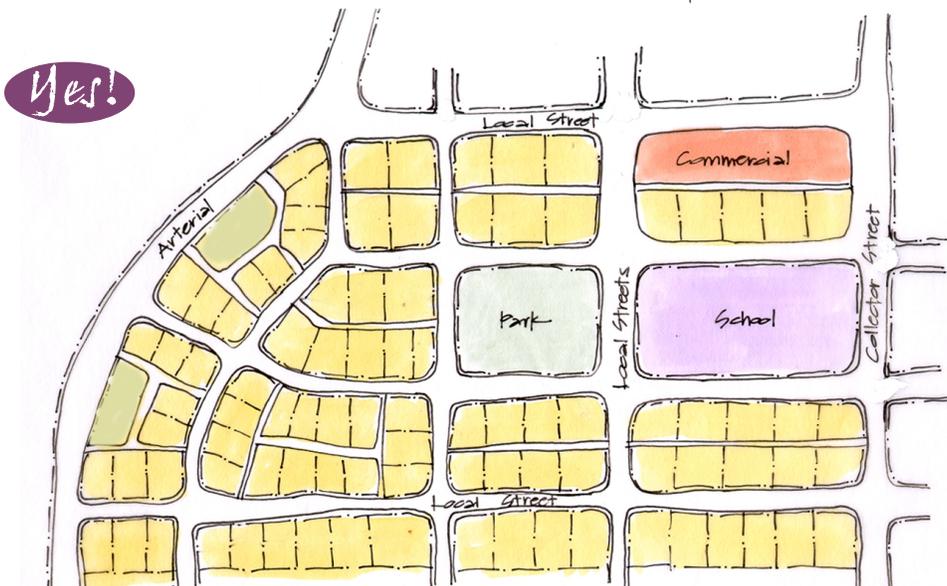
- 1 Be located in association with utility easements (overhead transmission lines, gas and water) and along abandoned rail rights-of-way, when practical. This off-road corridor system should be designed and developed to connect neighborhoods to recreation and open space facilities.
- 2 Be built when roads are under construction or reconstruction where an on-street trail would support linkage between residential neighborhoods or between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- 3 Be established along a series of identified "preferred streets" as a means of establishing an interconnected base network. The first step to improving on-street facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians is to designate a system of "preferred" on-street and sidewalk corridors which link neighborhoods to key destination points through a network of identified and well-maintained routes.
- 4 Be designed and constructed to minimum specifications for safety, type of use specifications, and appearance. The major goal in design is to create a trail system that addresses quality, consistency, safety, security, ease of use and cost-effective maintenance.

Figure 44. Residential streets should promote connectivity. Cul-de-sacs and curvilinear developments often promote higher concentrations of traffic on a more limited number of collector streets. The Casper Area prefers to promote a modified grid system of streets that better distributes traffic and reduces congested areas.

- 5 Link activity centers, landmarks, and parks in as direct a line as possible, providing visual cues that draw people along it.



Residential Subdivision - Typical



Parking lot seems bleak and undefined without landscaping or other visual barrier adjacent to homes. Impact to adjacent homes can be severe.



Addition of an attractive wall and additional landscaping provides a visual barrier between parking and residential area. The buffer allows the two uses to coexist in reasonable harmony.

The Land Use Concept Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Concept Plan Map identifies land uses for all areas within the Casper Metropolitan Area. The Plan represents the growth policy from which the Casper Area ensures that physical expansion of the area is managed (1) at a rate to accommodate projected population and economic growth; (2) in a contiguous pattern centered around existing urban areas; and (3) in locations which optimize efficiency in public service delivery and conservation of valuable natural resources.

The Land Use Concept Plan identifies locations in the Casper Metropolitan Area where various land uses and intensities of use are anticipated to occur in the future and where the Casper Area should support the development of these uses. It establishes and articulates broad policy in keeping with the traditional role of the comprehensive plan as a framework for future development.

LAND USE CONCEPT PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND PURPOSE

The Land Use Concept Plan reflects previously adopted plans, current development trends, established land uses and zoning patterns, and the vision and goals established by the Task Force. Upon the Plan's adoption, the Land Use Concept Plan sets the government policy regarding future zoning and land use patterns.

The Land Use Concept Plan reflects existing urban service capacities and constraints and establishes locations where future service improvements should follow. The Plan also provides direction to the private sector with respect to the desired development activity.

RELATIONSHIP TO URBAN SERVICES

The future land use pattern is strongly influenced by the availability of urban services. The Plan encourages new growth adjacent to the existing municipalities that have a full range of urban services.

In establishing the urban service policy, the Plan assumes that areas adjacent to existing public infrastructure should be the primary areas for future infrastructure extension, and that expansion of existing facilities should be the primary option in obtaining urban services. The intent of this concept is to maximize the efficiency of urban services by encouraging compact development and utilization of existing facilities prior to the expansion of facilities.

RELATIONSHIP TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

In addition to encouraging development near existing or planned public facilities, areas that are outside the proposed development areas or that contain environmentally sensitive features have received special attention to ensure proper management of the County's natural resources. For example, floodplain areas have generally been identified as open space or greenways in an effort to promote the protection of the flood storage capacity of the floodplain, and protect riparian areas, water quality, and creeks.

LAND USE CONCEPT PLAN SUMMARY

Table 1 is a summary of projected new residential and nonresidential land demand for the 20-year period.

Table 2 is a summary of projected buildout of the Casper Metropolitan Area over the next 20 years, based upon the Land Use Concept Plan combined with existing land uses and projected land demand within the area.

As indicated in Table 2, development of vacant land and redevelopment of developed lands in the Casper Area designated for residential land uses would result in approximately 6,100 new dwelling units (DUs), or

Table 1. Land Demand.

Land Use Type	Land Demand 2000-2020		
	Projected New DUs	Density (DUs/Acre)	Projected Average Required
Single Family, Rural	100	0.2	500
Single Family, Low Density	700	1.0	700
Single Family, Moderate Density	3700	4.0	925
Single Family, High Density	200	8.0	25
Multifamily	1400	18.0	78
Subtotal	6100		2228
Non-Residential Land Use Type			
Central Business			16
General Commercial			80
Highway Commercial			20
Neighborhood Commercial			26
Limited Industrial			100
Heavy Industrial			39
Professional Office			20
Business Park/Office			55
Subtotal			356
Total			2584

Table 2. Land Demand and Plan Allocation.

Land Use Type	Land Demand 1998-2020			Land Use Concept Plan Allocation		
	Project New DUs	Density (DUs/Acre)	Projected Acreage Required	Allocated New DUs	Density (DUs/Acre)	Acreage Allocated
Conversions from Other Uses and Densities	0	8.0	0	400	8.0 (2 New DUs / acre)	200
Single Family, Rural	100	0.2	500	160	0.2	800
Single Family, Low Density	700	1.0	700	600	1.0	600
Single Family, Moderate Density	3700	4.0	925	6800	4.0	1700
Single Family, High Density	200	8.0	25	4200	8.0	525
Multifamily	1400	18.0	78	900	18.0	500
Subtotal	6100		2228	21160		4325
Non-Residential Land Use Type						
Central Business			16			20
General Commercial			80			190
Highway Commercial			20			160
Neighborhood Commercial			26			20
Limited Industrial			100			1000
Heavy Industrial			39			450
Professional Office			20			10
Business Park/Office			55			390
Subtotal			356			2240
Total			2584			6565

Table 3. Land Use Descriptions.

Land Use Category	Range of Densities	Average Density	General Characteristics and Uses
Agricultural	1 DU/20-1200 acres	1 DU/160 acres	Areas identified for continued ranching and other agricultural uses. A single family home, ranch hand living quarters and other ancillary uses are anticipated.
Residential Uses			
Single Family, Rural	1 DU/2-20 acres	1 DU/10 acres	Areas designated for single family detached ranchettes and horse property development. These areas are anticipated to develop at an average density of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres.
Single Family, Low Density	1/2 - 2 DUs/acre	1 DU/acre	Areas designated for very low density single family detached home development, to develop at gross densities of 1 dwelling unit per acre. Building lots of 17,500 sq ft, with a minimum of 30% of the overall site preserved as common open space will be encouraged over developments that do not encourage the retention of common open space.
Single Family, Moderate Density	2-7 DUs/acre	4 DUs/acre	Conventional single family detached homes development with average lot sizes of 7,000-10,000 square feet.
Single Family, High Density	6-10 DUs/acre	8 DUs/acre	Areas designated for single family attached dwellings, including duplexes, townhomes, and other similar types of dwellings, at densities of up to 10 dwelling units per acre.
Multifamily	10-20 DUs/acre	18 DUs/acre	Areas designated for apartment, condominiums, and other similar types of dwellings, at densities up to 20 dwelling units per acre.
Non-Residential Uses			
Central Business	n/a	n/a	The central business area incorporates retail, employment, entertainment, civic and residential uses in an urbanized, pedestrian-oriented environment. These areas generally should include special urban improvements to make rich and enjoyable public spaces.
General Commercial	n/a	n/a	Areas designated for retail, trade, service uses, and offices.
Highway Commercial	n/a	n/a	Areas designated for highway commercial services and highway-oriented special sales areas such as automobile dealerships.
Neighborhood Commercial	n/a	n/a	Areas designated for low scale commercial uses supporting general neighborhood needs.
Limited Industrial	n/a	n/a	Areas designated for light industrial, manufacturing and warehousing uses.
Heavy Industrial	n/a	n/a	Areas designated for heavy industrial, manufacturing and mining.
Professional Office	n/a	n/a	Areas designated for professional offices.
Business Park/Office	n/a	n/a	Office, research and development, light industrial, warehousing, and some limited commercial support uses are the designated for use as business park areas. These areas should be developed in a campus-like master planned setting.
Open Space, Parks, and Trails	n/a	n/a	Land remaining undeveloped as natural open space, lands along drainageways identified as floodplain and protected as greenways, trails, parks and golf courses.
Educational	n/a	n/a	Areas owned by educational institutions and used or contemplated for use by educational facilities.
Future Development Areas	n/a	n/a	Areas identified as brownfields for potential reclamation and development, or lands identified as having development potential beyond the 20-year planning horizon.

14,640 new residents between 2000 and 2020. Of the new dwelling units, approximately 57 percent would be single family homes, 7 percent would be single family attached dwellings, such as townhomes or duplexes, 25 percent would be multifamily dwellings, and approximately 12 percent would be mobile/manufactured homes.

New nonresidential land uses would result in the development of approximately 356 acres, of which 194 acres (54%) are designated for employment or industrial uses, 125 acres (35%) are designated for new retail development, and 37 acres (11%) are designated for office uses.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED LAND USES

The following is a description of the land use categories contained in the Land Use Concept Plan.

Table 3 describes future land use categories, range of allowable densities, average density or intensity, and the general characteristics and typical uses anticipated in each land use category. The statistics provided concerning average density are not regulatory, but have been used to indicate what the desired or anticipated densities and lot coverage is for each land use category identified in the Land Use Concept Plan. If properties develop at lesser densities, more acreage may have to be designated to accommodate the use category for which development occurred at lower densities. If properties develop at higher densities, lesser acreage than has been allocated by the plan will be utilized during the period.

Central Business Land Uses (Mixed Use)

The essence of the Central Business Area is diversity, with a range of choices in things to do and see, drawing people throughout the day and evening. This area has been designated in the Land Use Concept Plan as a area that should embrace the fullest possible range of



Figure 45. The heart of downtown Casper's walking and shopping district.



Figure 46. New movie theatres in downtown Casper help add to evening and nighttime activities.



Figure 47. New opportunities for commercial, recreational, office, and educational uses have been created in the older industrial district west of downtown.

human interactions, from the buying and selling of goods and services to providing people with the widest spectrum of cultural, educational and entertainment experiences.

Diversity means that the Central Business Area must include office, finance, civic, government, living, and entertainment in addition to retail shops, services, and restaurants.

The Central Business Area should allow for considerable flexibility for developers to invent new combinations of housing and nonresidential land uses. A mix of housing units should be permitted and encouraged in association with nonresidential development, including small lot single family cluster homes, townhomes, condominiums, and apartments. Vertical mixed use (multistory buildings) should be encouraged with housing and/or offices located above ground floor retail and services.

Figure 48. Rural residential development is currently in high demand and is beginning to encroach on nearby Casper Mountain.



In addition, the Central Business Area should include civic uses such as a school, library, post office, or public plaza; a neighborhood park; recreation center; and other neighborhood services.

The Land Use Concept Plan recognizes the opportunity that exists to expand the retail/employment/office core of the Casper Area. The Plan has added approximately 16 acres to the Casper Central Business Area and supports the continued conversion of industrial uses on the north, east and west sides of the downtown area to retail/office and employment uses. Older industrial buildings could reasonably accommodate a variety of residential and commercial uses. The buildings offer a sense of Casper’s industrial past and offer a variety of unique architectural features.

Expansion of the Central Business Area also means that parking issues must be adequately addressed. Parking should be conveniently provided for residents, employees, as well as shoppers and visitors if the area is to be competitive with outlying areas.

Residential Land Uses

Areas are designated for residential land uses based on a variety of densities. The density of development and unit type have been determined in response to compatibility with existing and proposed development, site constraints, and market trends.

Other factors the Land Use Concept Plan considered when determining an area's residential land use were availability of utilities, the development's impact on the local and regional traffic system, vehicle accessibility, market demands associated with area commercial development, and proximity to and impact upon community facilities (such as schools, parks, and open space).

Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle routes should be accessible, yet residential areas should be protected from heavy traffic. In addition, most residential areas should be within convenient proximity to neighborhood commercial centers.

Churches, day care centers, and schools are generally considered to be traditional neighborhood uses that are acceptable if the scale of the development results in impacts which are equal to residential impacts, or if they are otherwise compatible with the surrounding uses by virtue of location.

The following is a description of the various residential land use categories contained in the Land Use Concept Plan.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The areas identified in the Rural Residential Area are generally located in areas of steeper terrain or areas with soil and water limitations in unincorporated Natrona County. These areas should be designated for very low-density single family development, in order to maintain the area's rural character and to protect natural resources. Single family homes should be developed at a gross density of no more than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.



Figure 49. Older residential neighborhoods with detached sidewalks.



Figure 50. One of a variety of quiet, attractive residential neighborhoods in Casper.

The Land Use Concept Plan provides limited opportunity for developing additional Rural Residential Areas. Rural residential growth encourages sprawl and the premature commitment of lands for residential uses, which limit future urban development for the City of Casper, and Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills. Where rural residential developments are proposed, the City and County should encourage the clustering of lots to maximize the preservation of open space and agricultural lands or to maintain future development options.

Rural areas should be developed in a manner consistent with the retention of agriculture and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Strict limitation of development in rural areas contributes to the efficient growth and operation of public services and facilities, thus ensuring the most effective use of public resources. The natural features and constraints should be the primary determinant in deciding whether or not an area is suitable for rural type development.

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The Single Family Residential Areas are generally designated for conventional detached single family dwellings or manufactured homes, although, by clustering lots to preserve open space areas, attached single family dwellings could be permitted. Lot sizes may vary, according to the characteristics of each area. Single family residential areas are divided into 3 categories: Single Family-Low Density (SFLD), and Single Family-Moderate Density (SFMD), Single Family-High Density (SFHD).

SINGLE FAMILY-LOW DENSITY (SFLD)

Single Family-Low Density areas are proposed to develop at an average density of 1 dwelling unit per acre, with lots clustered to

preserve additional open space whenever practical. Other subdivision methods that utilize the area more efficiently should also be considered.

As in the case of rural residential development, the Land Use Concept Plan identifies limited additional development of low-density residential development within the Casper Metropolitan Area. The areas identified are generally located in areas along Highway 220 southwest of Casper and on moderately sloping ground along Wyoming Boulevard on Casper's south edge. Low density development should generally be reserved for lands that cannot be served with public services or lands which because of other development constraints (e.g., steep slopes, access, view impacts, soil constraints) do not have significant additional development potential. The development of large blocks of land at low densities can prematurely commit lands to low density residential use and effectively block future economic growth and development of the Casper area.

SINGLE FAMILY-MODERATE DENSITY (SFMD)

Single Family-Moderate Density areas should develop at a net average of 4 dwelling units per acre. Attached single family dwellings could be permitted in moderate density areas through the utilization of a plan that incorporates substantial open space.

Moderate density residential development makes up the majority of residential land identified for future residential growth in the Casper area. Most of the SFMD lands have been identified in east and south Casper.

The east Casper SFMD lands have tremendous potential and are likely to develop more quickly than other Casper area residential property.

However, it is anticipated that east side growth will impact transportation and other infrastructure that is either deficient or more limited resulting in additional public expenditures.



Figure 51. Casper contains a wide variety of housing styles, ranging from newer, more auto-oriented suburban neighborhoods (top) to older, moderate density neighborhoods that encourage pedestrian movement with detached sidewalks and tree lawns. (below)



Figure 52. Older style row housing in Casper. Increasingly, row houses are becoming a popular way to increase housing densities.

SINGLE FAMILY-HIGH DENSITY (SFHD)

A variety of single family housing types are permitted within areas designated for Single Family-High Density, including duplexes, patio homes, townhomes, condominiums, mobile home parks, and other similar types of dwelling units. This designation is anticipated to be developed at an average density of 8 dwelling units per acre. Areas near downtown Casper have been identified for Single-Family High Density conversions to increase residential densities where existing infrastructure and services can support higher densities than currently exist.

The Land Use Concept Plan identifies the south side of the central business area along Collins Street as an area to promote conversion of existing single family residential uses to higher densities to support services and employment in the central business area. In addition, SFHD uses have been identified for areas south of CY Avenue east of Wyoming Boulevard. This area was targeted for high-density development to help balance infrastructure utilization and create a population center that should sustain a variety of public facilities and west side commercial development.

North Casper residential densities have also been increased from SFMD to SFHD. The increased densities should allow the area to incorporate a greater mix of housing types including duplexes, as well as permit property owners to take advantage of ancillary dwelling unit rental opportunities.

MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Multifamily Residential Areas are designated for apartment, condominiums, and similar higher density types of dwelling units.

The maximum development density is not generally expected to exceed 18 dwelling units per acre. These areas tend to be located near arterial streets or existing or proposed commercial development.

Multifamily developments should provide private recreational facilities or be located close to existing parks and recreational facilities that have adequate capacity.



Figure 53. Other alternatives for increasing housing densities are townhouse and condo-style developments like these units found in Casper.

Significant multifamily residential areas have been located on the west side of Casper to support existing commercial development and revitalization of the CY Avenue Corridor.

Multifamily development areas have also been identified in east central Casper south of 12th Street and in east Casper.

Retail Commercial Land Uses

Retail Commercial Areas include a wide range of community and regional retail uses, as well as offices, business and personal services, and to a lesser extent residential uses. While these areas are generally auto-oriented, Casper has the opportunity to create new areas and transform existing developed areas, over time, from being exclusively auto-oriented places to areas which accommodate pedestrians and bikes. Commercial areas should relate better to the community as a whole and to the surrounding residential uses.

Retail commercial areas in the Casper area tend to serve either neighborhood or regional retail needs and can be comprised of a variety of uses.

Retail commercial areas may include the following: retail stores, shops, eating establishments, banks, supermarkets, service stations, and professional offices. Certain uses may be limited or prohibited depending on their proximity to residential neighbor-

hoods. These uses may include: pawn shops, new and used car sales, massage parlors, tattoo parlors, video and other arcades, off-track betting, auction houses, mini-storage facilities, thrift stores, used merchandise sales, and billiard parlors.

The Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan has established a goal of limiting strip commercial development in order to protect the quality of residential neighborhoods, limit traffic congestion, and preserve the visual environment.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood Commercial Centers are primary areas of activity within the community. These areas are recommended within each neighborhood, and are intended to serve as primary activity centers and an important component of community life.

Uses for each Neighborhood Commercial Center should vary, but all should serve as important destinations for working, shopping, and entertainment for the surrounding neighborhood.

While the mix of uses and focus for each center should be unique, these areas should be pedestrian-oriented, and special improvements should be considered to make them enjoyable public places (e.g., parks, a square, plaza, or other public gathering place). The centers should be linked to the area's open space and trails system and be adequately buffered from adjacent residential uses.

Neighborhood Commercial Centers have been identified on the Land Use Concept Plan based on identified deficiencies. Where commercial service areas existed within close proximity to a neighborhood, no neighborhood center was identified.



Figure 54. Grant Street grocery is an example of neighborhood-scale commercial that meets the day to day needs of a localized area.

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

General Commercial Areas provide the full range of sales and service activities. These uses may occur in self-contained centers, campus parks, central business areas, or along arterials. The specific intensity and range of commercial uses, and site design should depend on a variety of factors, particularly compatibility with adjacent uses, roadway capacity, ease of access and availability of other public services and facilities. Commercial uses should be designed to protect adjacent residential uses from such impacts as noise or traffic.

General commercial development in newly developing areas is designated in nodes at major arterial and collector intersections. New development should be designed to utilize internal accessways and not designed to encourage strip style commercial development. However, the plan recognizes that existing strip commercial development along many arterial roadways is likely to remain.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

There are two distinct Highway Commercial Areas, which include:

1. Highway service areas oriented towards the traveling public (service stations, motels, restaurants, and truck stops); and
2. Highway oriented special sales areas that normally require large floor areas (discount stores, furniture and appliance stores, and automobile sales and service areas).



Figure 55. Maintaining businesses in the downtown district is an important part of maintaining Casper's vitality and economic health. Here, the historic Rialto theatre in Casper's downtown still operates under its original premise.



Figure 56. Highway-oriented commercial development on CY Avenue and Wyoming Boulevard.

Uses in Highway Commercial Areas should cater to the needs of area residents, as well as travelers. Highway Commercial Areas should generally accommodate uses which require large floor areas and outdoor display and not include commercial uses that would be better located for convenience in neighborhood serving commercial centers or general commercial areas.

Employment Land Uses

Employment areas include office, research and development, warehousing, and light and heavy industrial uses, in land use categories described as follows:

BUSINESS PARK

Business Park Areas may contain a variety of employment generating uses, including office, research and development, light industrial and manufacturing, and warehousing. These areas should be in a campus-like, master planned setting with large setbacks, abundant open space, trails, and attractive landscaping. Business Park Areas may also contain commercial support uses that primarily serve employees of the business park. Permitted commercial support uses may include: restaurants, coffee shops, health clubs, office supply stores, cleaners, and drug stores.



Figure 57. Many buildings in downtown Casper have undergone renovation such as this large office building ready for occupancy.

A business park development must provide for adequate buffers between adjacent uses. Depending on ease of access, certain business park areas may be appropriate for larger scaled regional commercial uses.

OFFICE

Areas designated for office are intended for professional and commercial office uses, such as medical, real estate, and law offices. Offices shall be the primary use, and manufacturing or warehousing uses should be prohibited.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial areas are typically comprised of a variety of businesses that may require on-site storage of materials, larger lot sizes and structures for operations, and direct access to trucking routes. Examples include: warehousing, fabrication facilities, repair shops, wholesale distributors, and light manufacturing. Industrial areas should be adequately buffered from other land uses. Because of the types of uses and the community's need for lower cost economic opportunities, the design features are not as extensive as business parks or office areas.

Therefore, industrial areas have been generally located away from residential neighborhoods.

Industrial areas accommodate the full range of industrial activities. Quarrying activities, oil refineries and other uses that have substantial off-site impacts may be approved in areas designated heavy industrial where compatible with the surrounding area and the environment.

Agricultural Land Uses

Agricultural areas represent land that is suited to ranching, and oil and gas production. The criteria used to identify these areas include the existing or potential value of production, existing agricultural uses, parcel size, and ownership patterns (as they relate to agricultural viability).

In order to protect the ranching industry, it is important that uses incompatible with ranching, and uses and facilities that support or encourage urban development, are not allowed.



Figure 58. Large amounts of industrial land are available in Casper and the surrounding communities.



Figure 59. Ranching is still very much a part of Casper's economy and day to day life. Ranchlands like these at Casper's edge also provide scenic relief from the development of the city.

Parks, Open Space and Trail Land Uses

Parks, golf courses, and open space make up approximately 8% percent of the Casper Metropolitan Area land base in the Land Use Concept Plan. The Plan, recognizing the citizens' strong support for additional open space and parks, calls for a more ambitious and accelerated space acquisition and park development program. The following is a description of the open space and parks categories contained on the Land Use Concept Plan.

PUBLICLY-ACQUIRED OPEN SPACE

Publicly acquired open space areas have been purchased by the City of Casper, towns and Natrona County to remain in their natural, undeveloped state. Open space may be used as a buffer between conflicting land uses, as an edge to a community, and as a means to preserve natural areas and prominent views.

In general, open space is not developed into areas for active recreation, but may include minor improvements, such as trails and parking areas. Trails may link together other parks and open space areas to form a comprehensive system.

PARKS

Developed parks and public/ private golf courses and parks are intended to provide for the active and passive recreation needs of the community. Where possible, the City of Casper, towns, and Natrona County should locate and design parks to take advantage of natural features or amenities. The area's parks are divided into three categories: neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional parks.

RECREATION AND LEISURE FACILITIES

The Casper Area has developed a number of public and private recreation and leisure facilities to provide citizens with variety in recreational and leisure opportunities. These facilities are often operated in association with open space and parks facilities.



The Casper Area offers an assortment of community facilities which include the Casper Events Center, the Casper Recreation Center, the Casper Planetarium, the Werner Wildlife Museum, the Fort Caspar Museum, and the Casper Ice Arena.



GREENBELTS AND OTHER OPEN SPACE

Greenbelts and other open space include all other public and private open areas. These areas include public/private greenbelts that are found throughout the City of Casper and the unincorporated area. Greenbelts can be used as trail corridors connecting many different neighborhoods in the Casper Area. Greenbelts may include passive recreational opportunities such as walking, hiking, biking, and horseback riding.



FLOOD CORRIDOR

Flood Corridor areas are located within the 100 year floodplain. Flood Corridor areas should remain undeveloped to protect property from flood damage, and to preserve the riparian habitat and wildlife.

Figure 60. The flood corridor (top) and the Platte River Parkway (center, bottom) provide opportunities for bicycling, walking, jogging, and wildlife watching in a scenic setting.



Figure 61. Some of the many recreational leisure facilities the Casper Area has to offer. The Casper Soccer Complex has hosted a variety of State tournaments (top). Fort Caspar offers residents and visitors an opportunity to explore the early history of Casper (center), while the golf course provides active recreation for a variety of residents (bottom).

TRAILS

Trails are off-street recreational systems for bicycling, jogging, walking, skating, and horseback riding. They may also accommodate commuter bicyclists if the trail routes link residential areas with employment areas. Trails should also access and provide connections to neighborhoods, schools, parks, recreation and other public facilities, employment centers, neighborhood parks and commercial centers, and larger commercial areas.

Future Development Area (Brownfields)

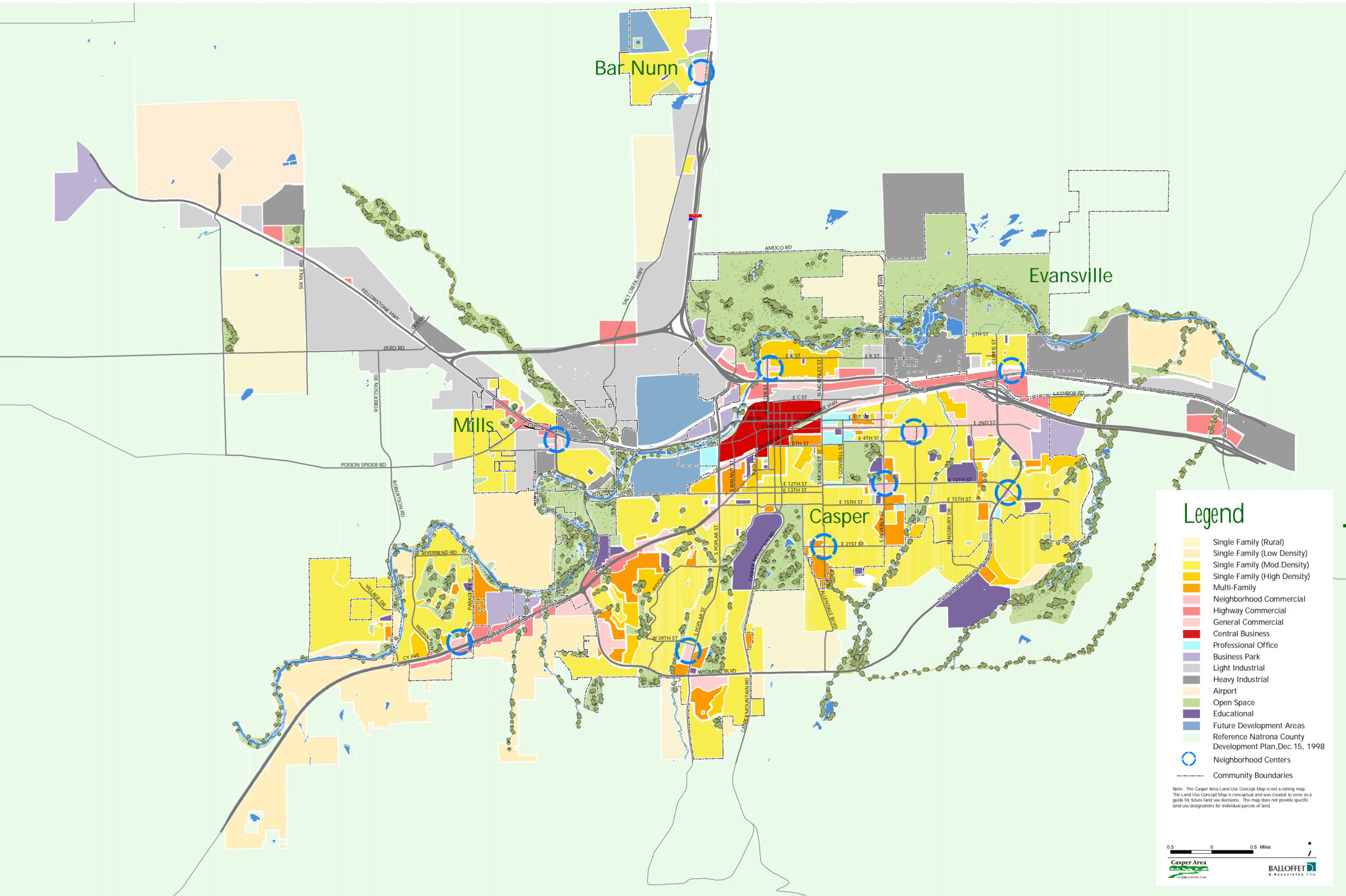
The City and County should continue to support redevelopment of sites with contaminated soil as rapidly as the funding for soil cleanup and the legal steps for acquiring polluted land permit. While the City and County should not necessarily be the agency overseeing or participating in cleaning up contaminated sites, and the City and County may not desire to specifically acquire a site unless absolutely necessary to ensure its redevelopment, the City and County need to take a strong leadership role in facilitating reclamation and redevelopment of brownfield properties. Roughly speaking there are 1,000 acres of old industrial sites in the Casper area. Redevelopment costs include acquisition, relocation, and infrastructure as well as land cleanup. Most of the sites are best suited to industrial reuse, but a number of sites could be transformed to residential or commercial land uses or community parks.

LAND USE CONCEPT PLAN MAP

The Casper Area Land Use Concept Plan Map is not a zoning map (Panel 4). The Land Use Concept Map is conceptual and is created to serve as a guide for future land use decisions. The map does not provide specific land use designations for individual parcels of land.

There are two reasons for not doing a future land use map that is parcel-specific. First, most of the developed property will stay in the same land use category it is now. Second, unlike the clear separation of land uses typically found in suburbs, the Casper Land Use Plan seeks to increase the fine-grained mixture of different land uses. Fine-grained land use patterns must be planned and illustrated in neighborhood plans, one small area at a time.

Land Use Concept Plan



Legend

- Single Family (Rural)
- Single Family (Low Density)
- Single Family (Mod. Density)
- Single Family (High Density)
- Multi-Family
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- General Commercial
- Central Business
- Professional Office
- Business Park
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Airport
- Open Space
- Educational
- Future Development Areas
- Reference Natrona County Development Plan, Dec. 15, 1998
- Neighborhood Centers
- Community Boundaries

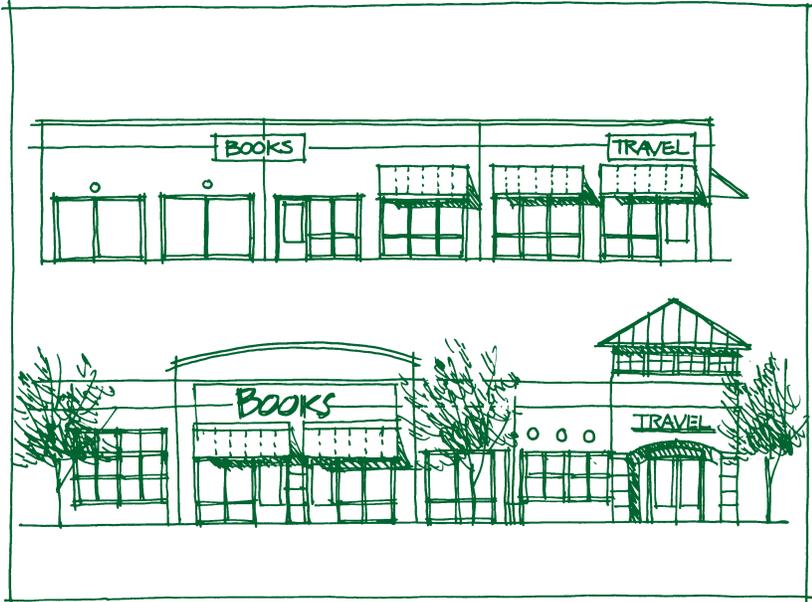
Note: The Casper Area Land Use Concept Map is not a zoning map. The Land Use Concept Map is conceptual and was created to serve as a guide for future land use decisions. The map does not provide specific land use designations for individual parcels of land.

0.5 0 0.5 Miles

Casper Area
PLANNING BOARD

BALLOFFET
& ASSOCIATES, INC.

Commercial developments often fail to provide visual interest and inviting pedestrian-scale architectural features.



Facades of commercial development should incorporate architectural details such as street-level windows, canopies/awnings, and architectural breaks in the building facades.

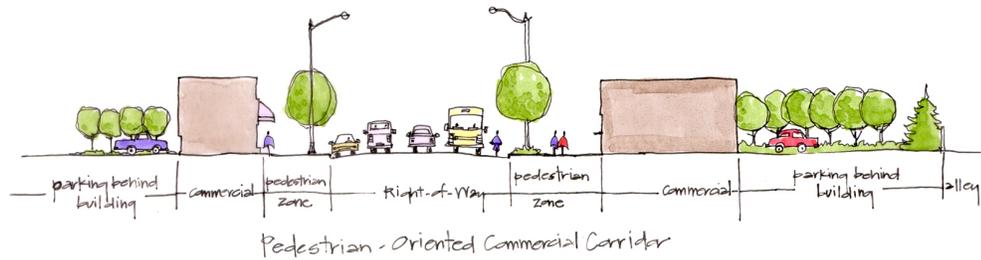
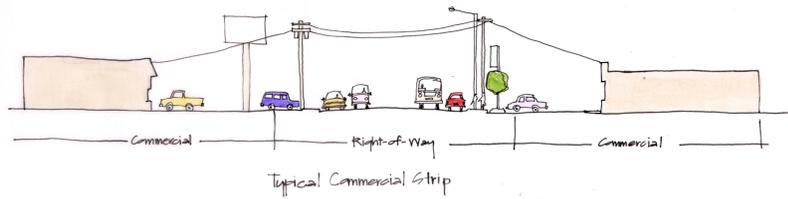
Subplanning Areas

The Casper Area is composed of a number of districts, easily identifiable, with each contributing to Casper's special character. These distinctive districts are identified on the Planning Area Map.

In order to adequately and properly address the unique features of each area, specific plans will need to be developed that build on the overall Vision and Goals for the community, but recognize and reinforce each district's identity. In each district, the Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan's values and guidelines apply, but modifications will need to be made through area plans to recognize the roles and character of each district.

The Town of Bar Nunn, Town of Evansville, and Town of Mills are responsible for their own planning efforts, as is Natrona County. Although the Plan recommends that specific area plans be developed, each jurisdiction has to make its own determination on whether or not to pursue further planning or implement this Plan's Concepts, Visions, and Goals.

In the typical commercial strip development, buildings are setback from the street, parking lots dominate the streetscape, and pedestrians are left in an unsafe and uncomfortable area between the street and parking lot.



The Casper Area prefers to promote commercial development where buildings are placed close to the street, parking lots are located behind, and a pedestrian friendly zone is provided adjacent to the street. Buildings with entrances oriented toward the street's pedestrian facilities will be encouraged. Landscaping is critical to softening the impacts associated with more paved and built areas.

Current Conditions and Trends

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Casper Area has a rich history and legacy of historic neighborhoods, landmark structures, archeological remains, monuments, trails and historic places. The livestock, oil and gas, and uranium industries have all had their own influence on the development of the Casper Area. The influence of each period can be seen in the architecture and character of the community.

The historic resources in the community are somewhat undervalued and unrecognized. As each economic boom came and went, the architectural resources from the last period were often replaced with newer, more modern facilities to accommodate another use. Many historic resources are unrecognized. Some of these resources include industrial facilities built in the 60s and 70s. These metal structures represent an important era in Casper's history and give Casper a unique identity in the Rocky Mountain West.

In lower downtown Casper, there is a significant concentration of older buildings and unique architectural elements, such as the street level awnings. Because so much demolition has occurred, it is not simply individual architectural gems that are important to the character of the area, but the critical mass of the remaining buildings. A variety of homes that hold significance to the community can also be identified adjacent to the downtown.

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Slopes/Topography

The predominant topographic features of the Casper area are the North Platte River floodplain, old stream terraces dissected by drainages west of Casper Creek and north of the river, narrow remnant terraces on the south of the river and adjacent to the dissected outwash fans and pediments which join Casper Mountain, and rolling sand hills north of the river and east of Casper Creek.

In general, slope does not prohibit construction in the Casper Area. Slope limitations occur only in the extreme southern area of the Casper Metropolitan Planning Area on the ridges adjacent to Casper Mountain, and along the drainages dissecting the Casper Area. In both cases, slopes can exceed 40 percent. Generally, topography is related to development suitability in terms of least cost construction and least environmental damage.

Vegetation/Habitat Types

The Casper Area lies between the semidesert and Great Plains vegetative community types. Sagebrush, saltbush, and greasewood are all characteristic of the semidesert forage type, and are predominant on dry alkaline soils. Short grass expanses alternating with sagebrush is common to the Great Plains and dominates the upland areas. Riparian areas include buffalo berry, gooseberry, cottonwood, choke cherry, and Russian olive. This streamside woodland and brush area is important habitat. Higher elevations include juniper stands, as well as pine and spruce.

The Casper Area vegetative communities provide important habitat for several species of big game herds. Antelope, mule deer, and white-tailed deer inhabit ranges which cover portions of the planning area. Soda Lake and several wetlands located north of Casper serve as important habitats for waterfowl. Waterfowl also nest along the North Platte River, and the streamside woodland

areas provide ideal habitats for numerous raptors. The North Platte River contains an abundant variety of fish including rainbow trout, brown trout, and cutthroat trout.

Water Resources

GROUNDWATER

The Casper area is underlain by the Cody formation. This formation dips to the northeast at an angle of approximately 15 degrees. The Cody formation is a soft marine shale of about 3200 feet in thickness. The Cody formation is not a water-bearing formation in this area. Since this is not a water bearing unit and it lies at a relatively shallow depth, the thickness of this formation and lack of groundwater creates a problem in water well development in this area. The overburden in the area transmits shallow groundwater. The capacities of these alluvial-colluvial aquifers is related to the thickness and permeability of the overburden and its proximity to the source of recharge. As a result of the geology and soils, two types of problem areas are typically apparent in the Casper area that could place limitations on development: (1) a wet saline condition which may be observed along the lower slopes adjacent to draws and creeks such as Sage and Eastdale Creeks; and (2) perched water tables that outcrop relatively high on the valley walls where the water hits the impervious shale, such as areas along the east side of Garden Creek on South Poplar and on the west side of Eastdale Creek.

The fact that the water bearing soils are shallow alluvial-colluvial deposits that are unprotected from the surface substantially increases the threat of surface activities interfering with production or impacting water quality. The Regional Water System has identified a large wellhead protection area around the community's water supply wells located just west of the North Platte River near the fairgrounds. This wellhead protection area is of critical importance in helping to ensure that the community's water supply is safe. Some of the area has been developed for residential use.

WATER QUALITY

The Casper area has endured some water quality problems in the past, predominately associated with surface water. Surface water concerns have centered largely on industrial and domestic waste loads from sources in the Casper area and upstream sediment loads. Concerns still exist, but have been largely abated by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and improved sewage treatment and storm water systems. Water quality problems have occurred in Casper Creek, Poison Spider Creek, and the North Platte River. Oil fields located in the upper reaches of the drainage area may be responsible for some of the salinity increases in Poison Spider Creek, while urban runoff and wastewater treatment plant effluents impact both Casper Creek and the North Platte River. Mean concentrations for metals in excess of EPA criteria have occurred historically for total cadmium, lead, and mercury. In addition, some naturally occurring levels of zinc and iron indicate problems for protecting aquatic habitat. At present, clean-up of the Amoco site along the North Platte River and nonpoint pollution is of the greatest concern with respect to surface water and groundwater quality in the area.

FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are those areas of land adjacent to bodies of water that are subject to periodic flooding. Because these lands are subject to flooding, their development potential is limited. Developments such as housing subdivisions, industrial parks, or commercial buildings are inappropriate in a floodplain because damages will be high in the event of a flood. Floodplains should be maintained in open space or parkland to maintain the natural environment of the river or stream and to prevent exorbitant property losses. It should be noted that upstream dams have reduced the recurrence of flooding along the North Platte River.

There is a history of damaging flooding from many of the North Platte tributary drainages entering the planning area from the south including Garden, Squaw, Wolf, Katy, Sage, Eastdale and

Elkhorn Creeks, as well as some of the smaller unnamed drainages. The City of Casper Stormwater Management Plan indicates that lack of detention facilities, infilling of channels, road crossings, and other encroachments into the floodplain of these tributary drainages has increased the intensity, duration, recurrence, and extent of flooding.

Soils and Geologic Hazards

Soils in the Casper Area vary substantially in their characteristics and capabilities. Some soils have characteristics that make them suitable for almost any use, while others may have severe limitations for development. A predominance of the soils in the Casper Area are suitable for buildings and septic fields. The unsuitable soils in the area are generally associated with occasional zones of expansive clay or shallow groundwater which require onsite evaluation and identification.

CIRCULATION SYSTEM

The current transportation system for the Casper Metropolitan Area is composed of state and federal highways and a local road system, the Natrona County Airport, a dial-a-ride transit system, bicycle pathways and signed routes, intercity passenger transit, and freight rail. Each of these means of transportation provides a different type of service to meet specific transportation desires.

The circulation system infrastructure has developed around the automobile over the past 50 years. The automobile emphasis has created extensive mobility for residents who can commute from outlying areas or across the community with relative ease. Widening roads and intersection to accommodate the automobile has significantly impacted pedestrian and bicycling modes of transportation to where they are almost nonexistent. Road improvements to improve cross-town movement such as 12th Street and 13th Street in Casper have dissected residential neighborhoods—cutting off residential blocks within the community.

Roadway Facilities

The Casper area has an excellent set of roadways. The transportation plan prepared in 1996 identified very few congested intersections and arterials. Traffic congestion in Casper tends to be for short peak periods. However, one concern is the congestion at Wyoming Boulevard and 2nd Street. In some areas, such as the downtown, traffic has actually decreased from peak periods in past years. There is a perception that delays and congestion have increased. Throughout the community, most delays and congestion appear to be caused by additional vehicles, by outdated signals that cannot accommodate varying traffic demands during the day, and poor intersection configurations.

The Street System Map illustrates the principal traffic circulation network in the Casper Area and its relationship to elements of the regional and statewide transportation system. The existing highway

and roadway system was categorized by the Casper Long Range Transportation Plan completed in 1997 into a functional hierarchy based on the type of facility, facility ownership and the role the facility serves in the local transportation system. Within the Casper Area, the roadways are grouped into four general categories: principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local roads. Table 4 shows the number of road miles by functional classification within the Casper Metropolitan Area.

Based on current traffic counts, the majority of highways and roads in the Casper area are operating below capacity. The Long-Range Transportation Plan indicates that most roadways in the Casper area have sufficient capacity available to accommodate reasonable increases in volumes. However, the Casper Long Range Transportation Plan identified a number of minor capacity deficiencies and some continuity deficiencies.

The Casper Long Range Transportation Plan identifies future arterials and collectors. Although it is critical that the east/west and north/south facilities be planned and constructed to improve traffic movement, the strategic timing of these improvements and type of facility must be clearly determined. The timing of these improvements will affect development within the City of Casper and surrounding area.

Access control is and will probably continue to be a major issue, particularly in emerging development areas. There needs to be a balance between providing traffic flow along the street with adequate access to development. Arterials have been virtually the only access to development. Shopping centers have been located at the intersections of arterials because the high traffic volumes are desirable for commercial retail businesses. These high traffic volume uses located at arterial intersections have significantly increased congestion, requiring wider and wider streets to accommodate both regional demand and local traffic. A parallel system of streets, such as a grid system would provide, has not been developed in growth areas to ease access problems to development.

Table 4. Miles of Road by Functional Classification, Casper MPO

Functional Classification	Miles
Principal Arterials	48.4
Minor Arterials	33.5
Collectors	58.2
Local	297.2
Interstate and Freeway	27.5

Source: Casper MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan 1996.

As commercial centers are proposed, the residents or developers often request signalization where local or collector streets intersect an arterial to accommodate safe and convenient access. Instead of an arterial street system with defined spacing between signals to permit traffic progression and continuous flow, the requested signalized intersections occur randomly, causing major delays. The problem is particularly pronounced in emerging development areas where there is not a sufficient parallel grid system which would permit diversion of some local arterial trips to lesser facilities.

Transit

Transit creates mobility to jobs, health care, and other essential services for residents who do not drive. The Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC) provides a door-to-door, demand responsive transit service for people living in Casper, Bar Nunn, Evansville and Mills. Priority services are provided to elderly, disabled, and “transportation disadvantaged” residents. Trips are not restricted by purpose. The CATC fleet includes 10 lift-equipped, “cut-away” conversion buses, rated at a capacity of 14 to 18 passengers. Daytime service is maintained by seven vehicles, with three vehicles maintained in reserve.

Because of relatively inexpensive or free parking and low congestion, the transit system is underutilized. The Casper Area Long-Range Transportation Plan recommends that the service be modified to operate as a mixed demand responsive/service route system. The system would utilize five buses and include the following components:

- A door-to-door demand responsive (DR) system for passengers whose disabilities or needs require such a service.
- A hybrid demand responsive service route (DR/SR), combining aspects of a DR service with a scheduled service route (SR).

Bikeways and Trails

Facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists are generally incomplete or even nonexistent in some areas. Except for the older core areas,

developments have often not included a direct, continuous, and safe pedestrian system. There is also no formal bicycle system in the Casper Area for commuter transportation.

The proposed Casper Area bikeway and trail network has six components: exclusive multi-purpose trails, on-street trails, roadway shoulders, on-street routes, connecting links, and paths. The system's primary benefits are considered to be recreational. The planned bikeway and trail network consists of 86.6 miles of bikeways and trails. The planned network is identified on the Park, Open Space and Trails Concept Plan Map.

Air Traffic

The Natrona County Airport provides air service for the Casper Area. The airport is located on US 20/26 in the northwest corner of the Casper MPO. The airport provides origin/destination and connector passenger services, industrial support services, and cargo services. Enplanements at NCIA have generally dropped since 1980. Based aircraft dropped by more than 50% between 1982 and 1990, but have been rising slightly since 1990.

UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Water Supply

The Casper Area has a plentiful supply of raw water from the North Platte River alluvial aquifer system and a series of adequate water treatment facilities including a new water treatment facility designed to meet at least the projected 20 year needs of the community. The water distribution system is also generally in good shape and has capacity to serve additional development, particularly within older developed areas of the community. However, some water system capital investment is needed, as well as ongoing improvements and maintenance of the existing system.

From the standpoint of efficiency of investment for water service, development should occur to take advantage of available capacity. If sited in areas removed from existing service, development should pay a greater share of the full costs of system extension.

Water is provided via three major water providers, which include the Central Wyoming Regional Water System Joint Powers Board, the Town of Evansville, and the Town of Mills. Other entities including the Casper Public Utilities only operate distribution systems.

The primary system of water distribution mains that serve the area are 8 inches or larger. These are accessible to much of the area, including significant undeveloped acreage. The secondary system of distribution mains is less well developed, although it does serve populated areas and some largely agricultural areas. Most of the remaining areas are served by rural water systems, which generally have 2-inch distribution lines.

CENTRAL WYOMING REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM JOINT POWERS BOARD (CWRJPB)

In 1986 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) resulted in more stringent state and federal drinking water regula-

tions. Consequently, small community water systems began facing increasing difficulties meeting water demands. In addition, individual well water supplies were extremely limited or contaminated in many areas where development had or was occurring. The pressures from these two factors resulted in the formation of the Regional Joint Powers Board.

In 1994, the City of Casper decided to join the Central Wyoming Regional Water System Joint Powers Board (Regional JPB) to help alleviate water supply problems. Mills and Evansville have not joined to date. As a result of joining, Casper's water treatment plant and well fields were transferred to the Regional JPB. Today, a majority of the Casper area's water supply is provided by the CWRJPB.

The CWRJPB operates its well fields year-round. They are supplemented by a surface water treatment plant when demand exceeds capacity.

The *Casper Public Utilities Wellhead Projection Plan* prepared by Black & Veatch, reported that the well fields can pump up to 18 mgd of groundwater from the North Platte River alluvium. During May through September, peak demands are met by supplemental surface water. The total sustainable maximum daily production was reported to be 25 mgd.

The JPB's Regional Water Supply Project has established a phasing plan that details various upgrades and expansions of the WTP and proposed locations of new wells. The Phase 1 Expansion will be completed in 1999 and will result in a maximum water supply of 52 mgd. According to the *Casper Public Utilities Wellhead Projection Plan*, this should be sufficient to serve projected growth to the year 2012 (based on an annual growth rate of 1.25 percent). Phase 2 Expansion is planned for 2012 and will provide 65 mgd, serving projected growth to the year 2030. Phase 3 Expansion is set for the year 2030, providing a total of 77 mgd. This should serve the projected growth of Casper through the year 2045.

CASPER PUBLIC UTILITIES (CPU)

The Casper Public Utilities (CPU) current service area includes the City of Casper as well as areas outside of the city limits that are not currently serviced by other water providers and are expected to develop at densities that would make the provision of water economically viable. The Casper Public Utilities distribution system serves the City of Casper and some unincorporated areas.

Currently, there are seven different pressure zones in the Casper system. Water is pumped from the well field and treatment plant into Zone 1. Water from Zone 1 is then pumped into the next highest pressure zones, Zone 2, 2A, and 2B. Similarly, Zone 2 pump stations pump water to Zone 3, which in turn pumps water to Zone 4. CPU cannot provide service to homes above 5,700 feet along Casper Mountain Road and above 5,500 feet in other areas on Casper Mountain.

In determining the projected water demands, the 1997 *Casper Public Utilities Water Master Plan Update* used population growth projections prepared for the *Casper Area Long-Range Transportation Plan*. The annual population growth rate established in that study is approximately 1.5 percent over a 30-year time span. According to the Water Master Plan, Zone 2 is the only zone that will require additional treated water storage tanks before the year 2010. If Casper chooses to use a 6-hour peak demand event, as opposed to the current 4-hour, then additional storage will be needed sometime after 2010 for Zones 3, 4, and 2A. Zone 2 is also the only area where additional pumping capacity was recommended. The report indicates that only one of the existing five pump stations in the zone will need improvements to meet maximum day demands by the year 2025.

The highest priority improvement recommended by the 1997 *Casper Public Utilities Water Master Plan Update* is a cross town line in Zone 2, to serve existing customers in central and east Casper where much of current growth is concentrated. The line

would be adequate to provide water to Evansville if they decided to join the Regional JPB. A new tank and a few pipelines are recommended in Zone 3, a new booster pump station in Zone 2, and a line allowing the City Reservoir, in Zone 2, to help supply Zone 1 in the event of a power outage.

Recommendations for improvements for the year 2010 and 2025 are also made. 2010 improvements will enhance service to areas that are already developed, and other improvements will serve new growth areas. 2025 improvements are designed to extend services to new developments, provide reinforcing mains to areas with adequate capacities, and provide a looped system to as much of the service area as possible.

Corrosion and deterioration of existing water lines in the older areas of town and areas with ductile iron pipe installed in the 1970s is the biggest problem facing CPU with respect to the distribution system. As a result of deterioration and corrosion, CPU has more water main breaks than the other communities its size. Water main age, materials and the corrosive nature of the soils in the Casper area are responsible.

TOWN OF MILLS

The Town of Mills is responsible for supplying water to the Town of Mills and a portion of the Brooks Water and Sewer District. Mills operates a water treatment plant and wells. The current combined pumping capacity of the wells is about 1600 gpm or 2.3 mgd. The water treatment plant was constructed in 1981-1982 when the population was growing and has adequate capacity for at least 20 years. No major distribution problems have been identified.

TOWN OF EVANSVILLE

The Town of Evansville receives water from their 2 mgd WTP that treats raw water from the North Platte River. The WTP serves the Town of Evansville and will serve the Hat Six Commercial area and Brookhurst Subdivision. The plant can probably meet the demands to at least 2040 when maximum daily water demands are ex-

pected to reach 2.3 mgd. No major distribution problems have been identified.

WARDWELL WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

The Wardwell Water and Sewer District provides service to the Wardwell area and Town of Bar Nunn. The District utilizes water supplied by the Central Wyoming Regional Water Joint Powers Board and transmission through the Casper Public Utility water lines. The District operates its own distribution system. No major distribution problems have been identified.

OTHER DISTRICTS/SUBDIVISIONS

Five other community water systems are operated currently within the Casper area including Hillcrest Water Company, Poison Spider Water Company, Sandy Lakes Estates Subdivision, Pioneer Water and Sewer District, Ten Mile Industrial Park, and Riverside Trailer Park. These systems provide service for about 1000 people. Pioneer, Sandy Lakes, Ten Mile and Poison Spider will all utilize water supplied by the Central Wyoming Regional Water Joint Powers Board.

Wastewater

The Casper Area is served by a regional wastewater facility located north of I-25 off of Bryan Stock Trail. The facility serves the City of Casper, and Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville and Mills, as well as some unincorporated areas. Much of the unincorporated area is served by on-site sewage disposal systems.

Generally, sanitary sewer services are in somewhat less favorable position to support development than water supply. Older portions of the system are in need of rehabilitation, which includes some increases in capacity. Although there is a perceived need to provide sewer to rural areas, the priority of investment for such services should be governed by public health and environmental concerns. If lines are extended to serve rural areas, development should pay a greater share of the full cost of system extension.

REGIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The City of Casper completed a Facility Plan in 1981 that established an average day design flow from the 201 Planning Area of 14.4 mgd by 2005. The actual population growth was far less than projected, and according to the November, 1997 *Waste Water Facility Plan* prepared by Burns and McDonnell, the average daily flow for the Casper WWTF in 1995 (the last full year of records) was 7.5 mgd. At the time of the 1997 plan's completion, the WWTF was operating at a daily flow of 7.1 mgd.

Based on the population growth projections prepared for the *Casper Area Long Range Transportation Plan* (i.e., 1.5 percent annual growth rate), the 1997 *Waste Water Facility Plan* estimated that the short-term design flow rate of 10 mgd would not be reached until approximately 2017 and the ultimate design flow of 14.4 will not be reached until after 2040. However, some plant modification will be necessary. The plan details modifications that must be made to the secondary treatment system, the disinfection system, and the biosolids dewatering and disposal system to meet future flow demands and water quality discharge standards.

SEWAGE COLLECTION SYSTEM

As a result of the 201 *Facilities Plan* developed by CH2M Hill in 1981, the City of Casper, Evansville and Mills made extensive upgrades to the interceptors, pump stations, and force mains to accommodate the expected population growth. The population growth rate used was estimated to exceed 3% per year. A gravity interceptor exceeding 48" was constructed between the Casper and Mills to serve the west side of Casper. A 36" interceptor serves the Mills area, an 18" interceptor serves the Town of Bar Nunn, and a 30" interceptor serves the Paradise Valley. All of the lines are substantially oversized resulting in excessive costs and corrosion problems. East of the Casper WWTP, lines were also oversized to serve the areas around Evansville.

Corrosion and deterioration of existing sewer lines in the older areas of town as well as oversized lines are the biggest problems facing CPU with respect to the collection system.

ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Some of the unincorporated area has soils with severe limitations for septic systems. Permits must be obtained from the Natrona County Environmental Health Department to construct an on-site sewage disposal system. The permitting of on-site sewage disposal systems is conducted on a case-by-case basis. On-site sewage disposal systems are permitted only if public sewer is not available. The Health Department inspects all on-site systems to assure compliance with state and county rules. A number of areas have significant problems with conventional on-site sewage disposal systems including areas from Paradise Valley to Indian Springs and the Vista West area south of Natrona County Airport. Regional community water has aggravated the problem since the source of water is no longer a limiting factor. Many areas south of Casper also experience problems due to steep slopes and geologic limitations.

Storm Water

A plan was prepared in 1981 to provide design procedures and techniques for the management of urban stormwater. The plan identifies need and sets priorities for storm drainage improvements. Garden Creek and Eastdale Creek were identified as having major problem areas due to road crossings obstructing flow, encroachment into the floodplain, no detention cells, infilling of the natural channel and few large detention sites. The plan recommended prohibiting filling natural channels, restricting development in the floodplain, and special prohibitions on development at road crossings to minimize damages from major flood events. A list of priority drainage improvements was developed. The list was prioritized based on risk to existing improvements and flood hazards associated with the 100-year flood.

Telecommunications

Telecommunication services are undergoing tremendous change. These changes will directly or indirectly influence land use and development. The Casper Area has good access to a wide variety of telecommunication options although choice of providers is limited.

Fire Protection

Fire protection in the Casper Area is provided by the City of Casper Fire Department, Natrona County Fire District, and the Volunteer Fire Departments in the Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville and Mills.

CITY OF CASPER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The City of Casper is responsible for fire protection within the City of Casper which encompasses 18.27 square miles. The City also has mutual aid agreements with the Natrona County Fire Protection District and towns to assist in areas that are within a 10 mile radius outside of the City. This area includes the Towns of Mills, Evansville, Bar Nunn and parts of the Casper Mountain Area. The City of Casper is an automatic responder for a majority of the unincorporated area within a 10 mile radius of the City except within the Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville, and Mills. The Casper Fire Department has 73 professional, full-time fire fighters and 8 staff officers capable of responding to emergencies. The department operates 5 fire stations located throughout the City. The department is equipped with a variety of equipment including 5 engines, a truck company, 1 stand-by, a rescue truck, a wildland fire specialty truck, a stand-by dispatch center and a mobile command unit which is a county unit shared by both fire and police departments. Generally, fire fighting water supplies are adequate throughout the City.

National fire protection standards (i.e., ISO Standards) suggest that the distribution of engine companies within the built areas of a city should have a first due engine company within 1½ miles and a truck company within 2½ miles. A number of areas within

the City and developed areas adjacent to the City are currently located outside the recommended fire equipment distribution areas. Continued growth on the east side of Casper could result in the need for an additional station, as could growth south of Paradise Valley.

NATRONA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT

The Natrona County Fire District is responsible for fire protection in Natrona County which includes the rest of the Casper Area Plan Study Area. The Natrona County Fire District has one station located in the Town of Mills. The district relies heavily on mutual aid agreements with the City of Casper and Towns of Bar Nunn, Evansville and Mills to provide fire protection services in areas south, east and north of the City of Casper as well as areas south of Paradise Valley. The Department has 10 fire fighting personnel supported by 15 volunteers, a structure truck (engine), extensive reconditioned wildland fire fighting equipment, and several tenders that have been located strategically throughout the jurisdiction. New development south of Casper is creating some additional burdens for the district. Water is generally unavailable for about 50% of the area served. However, improvements by the Regional Water System will be able to provide supplemental water for fire fighting.

OTHER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Town of Bar Nunn, Evansville and Mills Volunteer Departments:
The three incorporated towns have volunteer departments that support and are supported by the Natrona County Fire District and City of Casper. The departments have various capabilities. Each operates a station, engine, and an ambulance in coordination with the Wyoming Medical Center.

Law Enforcement

The City of Casper Police Department provides law enforcement services for the City of Casper. The Natrona County Sheriff's Office provides services for the unincorporated area and under contract for the Town of Bar Nunn. The Towns of Evansville and Mills also

have police departments that provide law enforcement within the municipal limits.

CITY OF CASPER POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Casper Police Department operates out of a main station in Downtown Casper and employs 78 police officers and 15 civilian staff. The City is responsible for operation of the 911 system and dispatches fire, emergency medical services, and law enforcement for the City of Casper, Towns of Bar Nunn and Mills and the Natrona County Sheriff and Fire District. The City contracts with the Natrona County Jail, as well as the privately owned Community Alternatives Correction Facility (CFC), for prisoner housing.

TOWN OF MILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Town of Mills Police Department has 8 police officers, all of whom are deputized by the Natrona County Sheriff's Office and have jurisdiction to act within the unincorporated areas of the County. The department also participates in Mutual Aid Agreements with the City of Casper and Natrona County Sheriff's Office. Mills dispatches fire and police services for Mills during the day.

TOWN OF EVANSVILLE

The Town of Evansville Police Department has 8 officers and provides support for the Sheriff's Department in the unincorporated area surrounding Evansville. Evansville dispatches its own fire and police services.

NATRONA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Natrona County Sheriff's Office has 83 sworn officers and 23 other staff. The County completed the construction of a new jail two years ago. The 210-bed facility houses approximately 160 prisoners on an annual basis. Approximately 40 prisoners are housed for other law enforcement agencies. The facility has capacity for 32 adult females and 72 individual holding units. The

remainder of the facility is operated as dormitory style accommodations. Staffing issues may impact the department as Cave Gulch and other outlying communities continue to grow and place greater demands on the department staff by requiring the department to reassign officers from the Casper Area. The department has had some difficulty retaining officers particularly in consideration of the wage disparity between City and County officers.

Educational Facilities

NATRONA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

The Natrona County School District operates and maintains a total of 129 building facilities. There are currently 25 kindergarten and elementary schools in the County, 5 rural and elementary schools, 7 junior high schools, and 3 senior high schools (see map 1-14 for locations). School district data indicates that overall enrollment has declined for the kindergarten, elementary, and Junior high schools since the 1986-1987 school year. Senior high school enrollment has increased by approximately 100 students in an 11 year period. Elementary and junior high school enrollment was on the increase in the late 1980s and early 1990s but has since then been declining. Senior High School enrollment was declining until the 1992-1993 school year and has been slowly increasing since 1992.

Generally, many of the school district facilities are aging and in need of maintenance and repair. Nearly 60% of the buildings are over 20 years old and over 40% are greater than 30 years old. Major building systems are in worse condition on average than those around the State. Statewide school funding and budget limitations have made it difficult to keep up with needed building maintenance. The school district has identified a major list of needed repairs totaling nearly 77 million dollars.

While no major new facilities are needed to deal with capacity issues, the school district has identified approximately 7 million dollars worth of improvements necessary to deal with school capacity issues.

CASPER COLLEGE

Casper College is located in south-central Casper and is surrounded largely by open space with the Community Golf course to the east and Mike Sedar Memorial Park to the southwest. Over the past 5 years, enrollment of full-time students at Casper College has been just over 2000 students. The College enrolls approximately 3000 full-time equivalent students each year.

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING AT CASPER COLLEGE

University of Wyoming at Casper College is an affiliate of the University of Wyoming with an extension located on the Casper College campus. The University has its own facilities on the campus and offers several degree programs. Currently, the majority of students enrolled at the University are part-time students. Total enrollment varies depending on the semester, with enrollments around 650 students in the fall and spring, which drop to around 400 in the summer.

Other Community Facilities

LIBRARIES

The Natrona County Library, located in downtown Casper, is funded by Natrona County. The library operates a branch in the Town of Mills, as well as a bookmobile that visits the communities of Bar Nunn and Evansville.

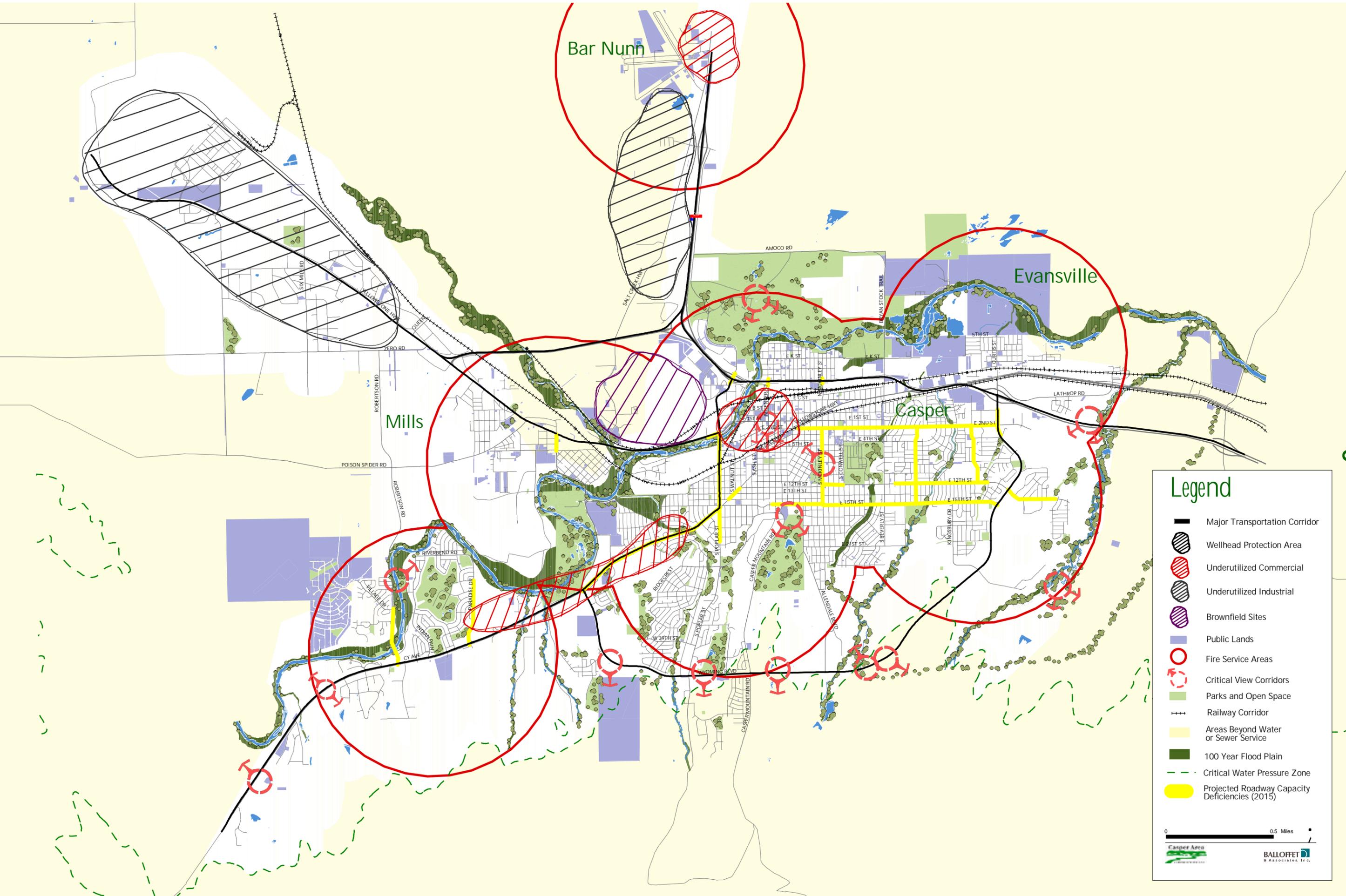
WYOMING MEDICAL CENTER

The Casper Area has one privately owned hospital that provides 385 beds and operates 4 ambulances. The Wyoming Medical Center also coordinates ambulance services offered in Bar Nunn, Mills, and Evansville. The facility is undergoing extensive renovation. The renovation will result in additional services being offered, but will not increase the facility's capacity.

OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Casper Area offers an assortment of community facilities which include the Casper Events Center, the Casper Recreation Center, the Casper Senior Center, the Casper Planetarium, the Werner Wildlife Museum, Nicolysen Art Museum, Science Adventure Center, Energy Museum, the Fort Casper Museum, and the Casper Ice Arena.

Planning Influences



Legend

- Major Transportation Corridor
- Wellhead Protection Area
- Underutilized Commercial
- Underutilized Industrial
- Brownfield Sites
- Public Lands
- Fire Service Areas
- Critical View Corridors
- Parks and Open Space
- Railway Corridor
- Areas Beyond Water or Sewer Service
- 100 Year Flood Plain
- Critical Water Pressure Zone
- Projected Roadway Capacity Deficiencies (2015)

0 0.5 Miles

Casper Area
BALLOFFET & Associates, Inc.

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Parks and Open Spaces

MUNICIPAL PARKS

The City of Casper currently maintains and operates 49 parks which can be divided into 6 categories: neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, special use areas, natural areas, and triangular areas. Park locations are identified on Map 1-9. Twenty-eight of Casper's parks are neighborhood parks that range in size from ½ to 10 acres. There are 5 community parks that range from 25 to approximately 70 acres in size. The North Platte River Park is the only regional park and is also the largest park in Casper totaling approximately 1000 acres. The parks department also maintains a number of small landscape display areas of less than ½ acre.

Casper operates 4 special use areas and 2 special purpose community parks. The special use areas and special purpose community parks include the 27-hole community golf course, Crossroad Park (a baseball and soccer facility), the Casper Soccer Complex. The Hogadon Ski Area, a 153-acre facility on Casper Mountain, is a special use area owned by the City of Casper.

Beartrap Meadows and Rotary Park are other tracts of land owned, but not currently operated, by the City. Beartrap Meadows is a 400-acre tract on Casper Mountain and Rotary Park is a 39-acre tract on Garden Creek at the falls. Both areas are leased to Natrona County which operates and maintains them as parks. In total, the City of Casper owns approximately 2100 acres of developed and undeveloped parkland.

In addition to the parklands, the City of Casper has title to substantial portions of the drainageways within the developed areas of the City. The City began initial development of pathways and parks along portions of them in the 1970s and 1980s, most noticeably at Nancy English Park. Since that time, work on the Garden Creek

drainage, a relatively undeveloped drainage in good condition, has generally been abandoned in favor of improvements to developed drainages that were considered to be more impacted and in need of improvement including Sage Creek and the Platte River Parkway.

The emphasis on the type and demand for park facilities has shifted since the Park, Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan was completed in 1982. The plan, while emphasizing the development of paths and trails linking parks, placed less importance on community and recreational parks and bike trails linking parks than on neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks have been a common element throughout the community, but their use has dwindled significantly in favor of linear parks with trails and community parks offering a larger variety of recreational alternatives and connections to other neighborhoods. Major trail development has been identified in the *Casper Area Long-Range Transportation Plan*.

NATRONA COUNTY PARKS

Natrona County administers five major parks on Casper Mountain that total approximately 3649 acres. Ponderosa Park is the largest of them all, totaling 2640 acres. Other parks include Beartrap Meadows (160 acres), Casper Mountain Park (400 acres), Rotary Park (40 acres), Crimson Dawn (198 acres), and Mountain View Park (4 acres).

The County administers 10,769 acres at three Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs. Grey Reef Reservoir, Alcova Reservoir, and Pathfinder Reservoir are all within an hour's drive of Casper and provide recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, and swimming. The County also administers a 113-acre archery range and a 200-acre rifle range on Casper Mountain.

LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

Within the Casper Area, the largest percentage of land is in agricultural use. Relatively large tracts still exist along the City of Casper's southern and eastern boundary, as well as directly west and southwest of the Town of Mills. Some agricultural properties are currently served by all major utilities and roadways, including arterials and highways, while others do not have sewer, water or adequate roads. In many of the agricultural areas, some dispersed residential development has also occurred. Often, public facilities have been extended to this "leapfrog" development through low intensity use agricultural property. As a result, the Casper Area is comparatively large in area and low in density when compared to other communities.

Residential land uses, including single and multifamily uses, are collectively the area's second largest use. This is typical of urban areas.

When viewed from the point of intensity, the land use patterns in Casper Area are dominated by the central business district, east side commercial area, and the connecting 2nd Street commercial corridor. The area is also dominated by industrial spines following the I-25 corridor and Yellowstone Highway. Other pockets of commercial and industrial land are dispersed throughout the Casper Area with heavier concentrations occurring in areas along CY Avenue from Paradise Valley to Popular, on Wyoming Boulevard near South Poplar, along East 12th Street between Beverly and McKinley, and in Mills, Bar Nunn, and Evansville.

Industrial uses are generally oriented around the Yellowstone Highway in northeast Casper and from Mills to the Natrona County Airport. Another large pocket of industrial land exists north of Hwy 20/26 along I-25.

Residential development, while dispersed throughout the area, is concentrated in Casper south of CY Avenue and north of Wyoming Boulevard. Estate type residential development is generally occur-

ring in the unincorporated area near or on Casper Mountain, along Casper Mountain Road south of Casper College, and in east Casper south of Eastridge Mall and south of the Casper Country Club. Other significant residential areas have developed near the Natrona County Airport between the Yellowstone Highway and Zero Road and along CY Avenue west of Paradise Valley.

A significant amount of undeveloped land still exists south of East 21st Street both north and south of Wyoming Boulevard, as well as north of Amoco Road. Unbuilt lands comprise the majority of the land use by area in the Casper Area. While unbuilt lands are distributed throughout the community, a majority of unbuilt lands are located in the unincorporated area.

Existing land uses generally conform to the zoning. However, there are a significant number of nonconforming uses within the Casper area (i.e., where the existing use does not match the underlying zoning). Zoning, as a system of land use control, typically has a significant influence on the market and impact on land use patterns. In the Casper Area, however, zoning has generally been established in a manner that recognizes and preserves the established land uses rather than having been used as a tool to affect change.

Clearly, when considering future development issues, one of the most important influences is the zoning of unbuilt or undeveloped lands. The majority of unbuilt lands within the City of Casper are zoned for industrial use, but a significant number of unbuilt residential and commercial lands also exist in the Casper Area.

POPULATION

Population Trends

As reported by the State's Division of Economic Analysis, population in Wyoming declined from the energy boom peak of an estimated 510,360 in 1983 to a low of 453,590 in 1990. In Casper, the City lost about 4,250 persons (8.3%) during the 1980s boom/bust cycle, which was a better performance than Natrona County as a whole, which suffered a nearly 15% loss in population during the decade. In the City of Casper's 1993 Housing and Land Use Plan, it was estimated that net migration during the 1980s for Natrona County (the difference between the number of persons moving into an area and the number of persons leaving an area) was nearly 20,000 persons.

Since 1990, population levels of the State, Natrona County, and City of Casper have rebounded, although the State has not fully regained the population losses it experienced during the 1980s. State population began to grow again after 1990 and grew at a steady rate until 1996, when the population growth declined. Natrona County followed a similar pattern, slowing in growth during 1996 and then losing a small amount of population in 1997. The primary factor in the slow down at both the State and County level is the drop-off in the flow of new in-migrants from other states due to the recovery in the nation's economy from the recession of the early 1990s.

Generally, population growth in Natrona County and Casper has tracked that of the State during the last decade, but at a slightly lower rate. Natrona County grew more slowly during the first half of the 1990s than the State as a whole (0.82% per year versus 1.07%, respectively), and the County experienced a drop in population sooner than the State—registering a decline in growth in 1996 versus 1997 for the State. As a comparison, the United States has grown at about 1% on average annually during the 1990s.

In Casper, between 1990 and 1996, population grew at a slow average annual pace of about 0.71%. This was the same pace as the County's average annual growth rate, but slightly behind the State's average annual growth rate of 0.95% during the same time period 1990-1996.

Like the rest of the nation, the average age of the population in Casper and Natrona County is growing older as the oldest of the large baby boom generation reach retirement age. Statewide, the number of senior citizens (over age 65) stood at about 11% in 1997, a 15% increase since 1990. The percentage was slightly higher in Natrona County, about 12.5% in 1997. However, statistics reveal that the senior population in the County increased almost 23% since 1990. For purposes of comparison, in 1995 the number of persons age 65 or older in the United States as a whole stood at 12.7%.

In 1996, the largest age group in the County is the 40-44 year cohort—the heart of the baby boom generation. As this group and the succeeding 45-49 cohort age, the senior population in the City and the County will continue to grow. Of the 1996 population age 50 years or younger, the smallest age cohorts were the under 5 years, reflecting a drop in birth rates in the early 1990s, and the 20-24 and 25-29 year age groups, the latter indicating that young adults are leaving the Casper area for college or job opportunities in other areas. Between 1990 and 1996, the largest decline in the number of persons by age occurred in the 25-29 and 30-34 year age groups, again suggesting the County's young adults and persons still early in their careers are likely leaving the area for better job opportunities elsewhere.

The number of children in Natrona County aged 9 and under has dropped significantly in the six years between 1990 and 1996. Reflecting this, primary and secondary school enrollment in Natrona County (one school district covers the entire county) has also decreased in recent years. The school district reports that as of the start of the 1997-1998 school year, total K-12 enrollment

(average daily membership) stood at 12,014 students, down from a peak of 12,523 students during the 1993-94 school year. As a result of the drop in the County's 9 and under population, as well as declining birth rates and a relatively flat economy, the school district projects that total K-12 enrollment will drop by anywhere between 100 and 200 students per year during the next decade.

Population Projections

The Wyoming Division of Economic Analysis, in its Wyoming Economic Forecast Report: 1997-2006, has projected that the state's population will grow by a modest 0.7% per year in the forecast period 1997-2006. In comparison, national population is projected to grow at an annual rate of 0.8%. The projected growth rate will result in an estimated state population of 515,330 in the year 2006, an increase of about 35,590 persons or 7.4% in the 9 years since 1997.

The 1993 City of Casper Housing and Land Use Plan, prepared by Front Range Research Associates, Inc., assumed a County growth rate for the years 1990-2002 slightly faster than the State's then-projected rate of 0.63% per year and a net migration factor of plus 100 per year for the County. The *City of Casper Long Range Transportation Plan* assumed a more optimistic growth rate of 1.5% per year for the entire forecast period 1995-2020. Finally, the population projections from the *Natrona County Comprehensive Plan* apply an assumed future annual growth rate of 1.0% to arrive at its forecasts for the 20-year period 2000-2020.

Probably the most important factor in the future population growth of Natrona County, as indicated by historic trends, will be net migration. As a general rule, net migration is primarily influenced by the perception and availability of economic opportunities in an area; an attractive quality of life plays a secondary role in attracting new residents to an area. Thus, actual or anticipated employment growth—especially in higher wage paying sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing and certain services—can help to attract new residents to Natrona County.

For purposes of this Casper Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan Policy Framework, the following assumptions are used in projecting future Natrona County population:

- Modest economic/job growth is anticipated, without the dramatic swings of either another boom or bust as witnessed during the last 20 years;
- Job growth, reflecting national and regional trends as well as state forecasts, will be primarily in the retail trade, FIRE (financial, insurance & real estate), and services sectors, as opposed to the goods-producing agriculture, mining, and manufacturing sectors;
- Future population growth will be fueled more by natural increase (births minus deaths) than by net migration;
- Future population will grow at modest average annual rates between 0.7% and 1.0%, at or slightly faster than the State, and at slightly higher levels than experienced in the period 1990-1997.

The projections for the year 2020 range from a low of 74,712 (averaging 0.7% growth per year over the next 23 years) to a high of about 80,000 (reflecting an average annual growth of 1%). For purposes of this analysis, we will use the medium projections as a reasonable mid-point between the high and low forecasts. This medium range results in an assumed average annual growth rate of 0.85%. Accordingly, by the year 2005, Natrona County is forecast to reach a population of about 68,000, an increase of 4,500 persons since 1997. By the end of the forecast period in 2020, the County is projected to hit a population of 77,360 (rounded).

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment Trends

The State has witnessed employment growth since 1990, but the economic rebound began to cool in 1996. By 1994, the state had regained enough jobs to be on par with the level of jobs that existed in the State during the peak of the energy boom in 1981 (about 290,000 jobs). Job growth was a healthy 4.7% in 1994 and 2.0% in 1995. Job growth slowed to only 0.9% in 1996 as population growth slowed and the economy in the rest of the nation picked up steam. Total employment in 1996 was 309,294, led by gains in the FIRE, services, and manufacturing sectors (the latter sector gained about 290 new jobs). The State, in its Wyoming Economic Forecast Report: 1997-2006, projects future job growth at an annual average rate of 1.3% through the year 2006, to 350,860. The state projects 85% of all new job creation will be in the service-producing sectors, such as services and retail trade, versus goods-producing sectors, such as mining, construction, and manufacturing.

Since 1990, job growth in Natrona County and Casper has generally tracked that of the State. In 1995, job growth was 2.1% over 1994 jobs. In 1996, however, job growth was flat. According to the Wyoming Department of Employment, Natrona County performed well in 1997 and is doing the same thus far in 1998, with jobs growing by 1.7% in 1997 and expected to grow at the same rate this year. Through March 1998, County employment was up by 0.3% over 1997 totals. Much of the boost in 1998 is expected to come from the start of several major construction projects in the County. In 1996, the total number of wage and salary employment in Natrona County, which includes the self-employed and agricultural jobs) was estimated to be 31,310. Nonagricultural wage and salary jobs totaled an estimated 30,000 in 1997 and, according to the Wyoming Department of Employment, represents about 95% of total employment, up from an estimated 29,500 non-agricultural wage and salary jobs in 1996.

Since the peak of the prior boom in 1981, the mining sector in Natrona County, just as in the rest of the State, contracted from a high of 8,870 jobs in 1981 (comprising nearly a quarter of all jobs in the county), to a low of 1,800 jobs in 1996 (with the industry shrinking to only 6% of all jobs in the county). Preliminary mining sector employment estimates for 1997 show a slight rebound with a gain of 200 mining jobs. All sectors of the goods-producing industries lost jobs in the prior 17 years, including manufacturing (loss of 547 jobs) and construction (loss of 1,710 jobs). The only sector to show job growth since 1981 were the government employment sector (gain of nearly 4,000 jobs). However, several sectors have bounced back from the bottom of the cycle experienced in the late 1980's: Services and retail trade have gained between 1990 and 1996 a total of 1,500 and 400 jobs, respectively.

The economic rebound did not begin until after 1990, when job growth turned positive, registering an average rate of 0.7% annually between 1990 and 1995. As discussed above, while the County economy turned in a relatively strong job growth performance in 1995 and in 1997, the flat growth in 1996 kept the annual average gain below 1% between 1995 and 1997.

Employment Projections

Future job growth depends on a host of variables, including the County's ability to retain existing jobs, expand the existing job base, and attract new jobs and industries. These in turn will rely on an available and skill-suitable labor force, attractive wages, adequate land or facilities to meet future business growth demands, incentive packages, infrastructure (including transportation and telecommunications capacities such as fiber optics lines), attractive and affordable housing, and intangibles such as all the elements comprising an attractive quality of life including good schools, access to medical services, low crime, cost of living, cultural and recreational amenities, and the like.

Casper today is in a relatively better position to attract new jobs, particularly service jobs, the fastest growing sector in the State and

nation, than it was in the early 1990's. The economy has stabilized and stopped the outflow of jobs, for the most part. New jobs and businesses have been added to the county's and Casper's base since 1990, establishing at least some track record to point to. Public sector investments in new and improved roads, fiber optic lines, and other infrastructure not only primes the pump for private investment, but also underscores a commitment to the community's future. On the other hand, Casper still must compete with larger and recently more vibrant Rocky Mountain communities and must overcome the disadvantages of a relatively remote location, including access to market issues and culture shock for transplanted managers and workers, and a relatively small existing manufacturing base with which to attract enough newcomers to build critical mass.

Forecasting future employment is, of course, more an art than a science. For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the following are assumptions regarding future job growth:

- Future job growth in the Casper Area/Natrona County will be positive, but moderate. Average annual growth rates will improve on the County's performance during the mid-1990's, but will closely track the State's projected growth rate of 1.3% at least until the year 2005. After 2005, job growth is assumed to moderate slightly further to a sustainable rate of about 1.0%.
- Tracking state and national trends, the fastest growing sectors of the economy will be the non-goods producing sectors such as services, retail trade, FIRE, wholesale trade, and construction. While services and retail trade in 1996 already accounted for 48.5% of the local economy, this share can be expected to increase. At the state level, 65% of the new job creation between 1996 and 2006 is expected to be in service and retail trade jobs. At the very least, the same magnitude of services and retail growth could be expected in the Casper Area, which is already a regional education/health/business services, FIRE, and retail trade provider. The State forecasts relatively smaller gains in the manufacturing sector, averaging only 1.3% average

annual increases to 2006. The TCPU, government, and agriculture sectors are forecast to add jobs, but at rates less than 1% annually. Mining sector employment statewide is forecast to decline an annual rate of 0.1%, continuing its downward trend.

Applying the above assumptions results in a forecast non-agricultural employment of 31,185 in 2000, or a gain of 1,185 new jobs. Non-agricultural employment represents, on average, about 95% of total employment. Therefore, for example, the 2000 total employment forecast is expected to be 32,744 jobs. By 2020, jobs are forecast to grow to about 38,620, representing an average annual projected growth rate of 1.1% over the next 23 years.

Land Use Implications

The population and employment forecasts have important ramifications for the Policy Framework and Land Use Concept Plan. Because an important role of any plan is to anticipate and efficiently accommodate future growth, the quantification of that growth is necessary.

The demand for land is a more important component of planning on the east and south sides of Casper, where new development will absorb land that is now vacant or agricultural or has some other low density use. In the urbanized area, where growth will occur as infill, redevelopment, or reduced out-migration, the quantification of land absorption is a less critical consideration.

The estimated land needs for the Policy Framework and Land Use Concept Plan are based on typical ratios of development in the Casper Area and national trends. If the projections and ratios are fully realized, the Casper Area will absorb:

- 140 acres of retail land
- 210 acres of "service" employment and industrial land
- 2,228 acres of residential land

Some of the growth will be accommodated on infill sites. Depending on the growth assumed to be accommodated by infill sites, and redevelopment of the urbanized area, the additional land utilized could be as little as 2 square miles. There is sufficient vacant or redevelopment land within the urbanized area to accommodate over 50% of the expected growth.