



Economic Development

Public Feedback
August 25 and 26, 2008

- **Retail Leakage.** Retail leakage out of Riverton is not just to Casper, but increasingly to on-line merchants as gas prices increase.
- **Expanded Training.** Riverton has a need for expanded vocational/technical training at CWC and other institutions.
- **Cultural Tourism.** There is great potential to attract more “cultural tourists” such as retirees and higher income empty nesters who are curious about Western history and Native American culture.
- **Hospital.** The hospital has a perception problem in that local residents are not aware of its quality health care and customer service.
- **Economic Development Function.** Riverton is well-served by having economic development performed by IDEA, Inc. and not just solely a government function.
- **Riverton Influence Area.** All statistics about job growth and spending power should include Eastern Fremont County beyond the city limits of Riverton.
- **Strategies.** Riverton should pursue all of the traditional “Big 6” economic development strategies commonly found in other small Western cities: 1) stop retail leakage/increase retail importation; 2) stop health care leakage/increase health care importation; 3) increase post-secondary educational enrollment; 4) promote recreation and tourism; 5) attract retirees; and 6) focus on specialty manufacturing.
- **Wind River Casino.** The casino is a significant “economic development engine.” The parking lot has cars with tags from 6 states on most weekends, plus 8-10 Wyoming counties.
- **Student Housing.** Although CWC has no enrollment cap, it is losing potential new students due to the lack of rental housing.
- **Employee Retention.** It is difficult for Riverton employers to retain quality employees due to “poaching” from energy companies elsewhere in Wyoming.



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- **Retirees.** Although attracting retirees can be an economic development strategy, Riverton should realize that this can create more service and health care costs.
- **Child Care Facility.** The new child care facility will be a huge plus for this community by allowing single parents to participate more fully in the labor force.
- **Mineral Industry Services.** A good economic development strategy for Riverton would be to “insource” mineral industry services so that Wyoming energy companies have a local source for all of their equipment, repair, training, logistics, wholesale supply and professional service needs.
- **Economic Development Participation.** Riverton (like many smaller Western cities) has an “STP problem” meaning the “Same Ten People” are involved in economic development efforts. The City needs to involve more and new citizens and stakeholders in the process.
- **Workforce Housing.** Severe shortage of workforce housing is creating a “logjam” for economic development. Riverton can’t add new jobs if there is no place for the new employees to live.
- **Construction Labor.** Riverton has many experienced construction contracting firms which could expand statewide and bid on government industry projects. However, the shortage of skilled construction labor and employee housing is holding them back.
- **Infrastructure.** One of the best things the City of Riverton could do to promote economic development is to finance and install infrastructure for residential growth, and get paid back from builders as the lots sell. This would break the jobs/housing logjam.



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- **Manufacturing.** Although Riverton manufacturers face higher transportation costs to ship their products nationwide, this can be overcome by the relatively low production worker wages here.
- **Festivals and Events.** There is great economic development potential in “home grown” festivals, events and tournaments. For example, the annual Riverton Gun Show has more than 1,000 attendees including many from out-of-state who stay in hotels and eat in restaurants.
- **Golf Course.** The Riverton County Club golf course is ranked in the Top 5 in Wyoming, and hosts multiple tournaments each year that bring in tourist dollars. It is a great economic development asset that could be promoted even more.
- **Fairground Expansion.** An expanded Fairground Exposition building is critical for Riverton, because Lander and Douglas have room to lure away some of Riverton’s existing events.



Housing

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- **Allow for a variety of housing types¹.** Diverse types (condos, apartments, townhomes, single family), smaller lot sizes, and variety of home sizes are part of the solution to the housing problem. (Not everyone needs a 2,000 square foot single family home).
- **Relax zoning barriers to housing development and provide incentives.** Current zoning districts are dated in some cases and don't allow the city to achieve a beneficial variety of housing types in quality neighborhoods. Take a hard look at lot sizes, street standards.
- **Quality of neighborhoods and walkability important.** Neighborhoods should be walkable. Schools important.
- **Identify "stable" neighborhoods;** identify other locations where redevelopment and infill can occur. Protecting existing viable single family neighborhoods has been a sticking point to developments in the past.
- **City promotes workforce housing growth.** City takes more proactive role in providing housing/partnerships. Private market can not provide workforce housing alone. City may need to help "prime the pump" to incentives housing growth, plan for utilities expansions, etc. CWC could play a role in providing for its housing needs with private market. Tap into other state funding.
- **Do HUD "rent reasonableness study"** to change fair market rents, allow for renter assistance.
- **Underutilized industrial areas** could become housing redevelopment areas.
- **Commercial areas** could have more housing. City downtown should have more housing.
- **Extension of Utilities.** Determine who pays for extensions, utilities.

¹ Background: We're planning for 611 new single family homes and 234 new apartments by 2015. (2,000 new people). This total number varies, depending on the source. Senior population is growing. Median wage is \$15.74 per hour (\$32,000 annual) and median family income is \$49,700. Housing needs to be in the range of \$130,000 to \$150,000 to be affordable. Median home price is about \$150,000. About 40% of the housing units are rentals currently. (Fremont County Workforce Housing Assessment, 2008).

Housing shortage is a key issue. Riverton has a lack of rental units, affordable for-sale units. People are living in sub-standard rentals. Students can't find places to live.



Growth & Development Patterns

Public Feedback—August 25th&26th

- **Future Growth Areas.** Consider future growth in all locations—within city limits and into unincorporated areas—but establish clear policy direction on what is desired in different locations based on services, existing development patterns, etc.
- **Infill and Redevelopment.** City only has jurisdiction within city limits and can emphasize redevelopment of underutilized or vacant parcels to accommodate housing needs. It is also more efficient to provide utilities within city limits. Clean up of incompatible uses, vacant buildings is necessary.
- **Agricultural Character.** Some participants expressed a desire to retain agricultural and agrarian character of community as future growth occurs. Options discussed included cluster development and conservation easements to allow for some growth while protection a portion of the property.
- **Utilities.** Establish clear parameters for connection to city services to minimize need for expensive connections/retrofits in the future.
- **Higher Density Development.** Some expressed possibility of growing up (number of stories) in Downtown and other locations. Others expressed locations where higher-density development would not be desirable (e.g., existing neighborhoods).
- **Workforce Housing.** Many expressed the need to provide workforce and low-income housing; however, it was also acknowledged that often this type of development is fought by existing neighborhoods when it is proposed. Options discussed included neighborhoods with a blended mix of housing to avoid stigma associated with large pockets of workforce and low-income housing.
- **Industrial.** Need to continue to accommodate industry, but ensure it doesn't negatively impact neighborhoods or highly visible commercial areas. Existing industrial areas were viewed as suitable (e.g., Airport Industrial, CWC Industrial Park).



Growth & Development Patterns

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- **Downtown (CWC connections)** Better ties to CWC and students. Perhaps a satellite classroom. How about a trial or demonstration shuttle bus loop that gives frequent service to/from CWC and downtown. Continue partnerships between IDEA, Inc., Chamber, City, etc. to attract offices and restaurants and other uses downtown. Diagonal parking on side streets.
- **Zoning and Regulation Reform.** Some zoned uses are incompatible. Look at where districts might create conflicts (e.g., industrial next to residential and low and high density uses). Current districts create barriers to vibrant neighborhoods with a mix of housing types. General commercial district may be too lax on some uses that are more industrial.



Parks and Recreation

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- **Park Level of Service.** Parks are well maintained. The current park level of service (14 acres per 1,000 people) is good. Riverton needs to maintain this level as growth occurs. Make sure that new developments provide parks.
- **New Parks.** Need a larger park on the south side (not just the Monroe pocket park). Explore opportunity for new park on old Grainery site on Pershing—accessible from trail and also would serve concentration of housing in area.
- **Animal Enforcement/Dog Park.** Loose dogs are an issue. Consider a dog park. Put dog waste station at each park with bags and trash cans. Enforce dog waste pick up. Rein Park may be a good location for dog park.
- **Drinking fountains** would be nice, but they get vandalized.
- **Pocket parks** (even if privately maintained) offer some green space and break up the monotony of rows of houses. New neighborhoods should have some green. Existing neighborhoods might need to be retrofitted in some places to add green.
- **Shared Park Facilities.** Work with school district to share facilities.
- **Community Garden.** Establish community gardens (where residents can have a patch of ground to grow food). Perhaps one could be in a city park where the city provides water. City could also encourage as part of private neighborhoods or developments.
- **Riverwalk is an opportunity.** Has taken a long time to plan. Include loop trails, historic interpretation, natural areas.
- **Recreation Center.** All agree it is needed. The group debated the best locations and can see pros and cons of sharing with CWC. Make sure the recreation center is family-oriented. It should also have bicycle and trail access to it.
- **Kid-Friendly Activities.** Need more inexpensive options for family recreation. Options discussed included improving access to Hockey Rink beyond just hockey—need to consider adding cooling system and opening for broader use.



Trails/Recreational Pathways

Public Feedback—August 25th&26th

- **Future Trails/Recreational Pathways.** Work towards a connected system! Needs to include both on-street and off-street opportunities. Prioritize those connections that will have biggest benefit to the most people, e.g., Riverwalk Trail that provides access and views of river. Explore opportunity to provide connection from Rein Park to river.
- **Sidewalks.** Continue to extend sidewalk connections where they are lacking; add ramps and other ADA features to improve safety.
- **Destinations.** Tie trail/recreational pathways extensions to potential destinations of interest. St. Stephens Mission Museum, Heritage Center, etc.
- **Regional Bike/Pathway Connections.** Explore opportunities to establish connections to Lander, Hudson, Shosoni and other regional destinations. This could serve Riverton residents as well as be a potential draw for tourism purposes.
- **Exercise Circuit.** WYDOT reconstruction project is opportunity to improve appearance of North Federal gateway at same time—streetscape, sidewalk enhancements. Require more landscaping as new development occurs.
- **Public Art.** Explore opportunities to incorporate public art along trails/recreational pathways, particularly along Riverwalk. Explore opportunities to work with local artists to showcase history and culture of region.
- **Visual Amenities.** Consider visual amenities you can see from trails as part of experience, e.g., river corridor. Adds additional layer of value to function of trail.
- **Maintenance.** Establish program for on-going maintenance of existing and future facilities to ensure they remain in good condition.
- **Public Education.** Need to educate motorists and bicyclists about the “rules of the road” to ensure safety for both groups.



Transportation

Public Feedback—August 25th&26th

- **Address Current Traffic Volumes:** Traffic volumes on Federal and Main are within the standard operating capacity of a 5 lane roadway. The community is uncomfortable with the current level of traffic and would like to improve how traffic flows between major destinations. However, the congested segments of arterial roadways do not have adequate space in the public right-of-way to expand.
 - The community should pursue a multimodal strategy that identifies improvements to the transportation system that addresses all modes of travel.
 - The current signal timing plan should be evaluated to identify opportunities to improve all modes of travel.
- **Connect Major Destinations:** The CWC, public schools, and hospital are major destinations that have different travel demands. This area could benefit from additional east-west connections from Federal.
 - Connections along Webwood, Sunset, Pershing, and Park should be evaluated to identify new connections for pedestrians, bicycles, transit, emergency vehicles, passenger vehicles, and trucks.
- **Improve Walking & Bicycling Conditions:** The traffic volumes on Federal and Main are dangerous for pedestrians and bicycles. The current Intersections have short walk times for pedestrians and limited crosswalk markings.
 - Safety improvements should be identified at intersections that connect neighborhoods to schools.
 - Connections on parallel roadways that connect major destinations should be improved.
- **Address Travel for All Residents:** The existing sidewalks, crosswalks, bike trails, and transit services do not adequately address travel for seniors, teenagers, college students, and families.
 - Connections should be improved along existing roadway corridors and identified along future corridors to meet the travel needs of all residents.
- **Commit to a Multimodal Transportation Future:** The community is cautious about new pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements based on previous experience. Previous projects might have not addressed specific needs or been constructed with long term objectives.



Community Image & Design

Public Feedback—August 25th&26th

Gateways: North Federal

- **North Federal Reconstruction.** WYDOT reconstruction project is opportunity to improve appearance of North Federal gateway at same time—streetscape, sidewalk enhancements. Require more landscaping as new development occurs.

Gateways: South Federal

- **Gateway/bridge feature.** Enhance appearance of bridge over river with decorative lighting, materials, and other features to announce arrival in Riverton.
- **Extend streetscape enhancements.** Work of Downtown Committee on streetscape was very positive—should use this approach as a model for future enhancement projects
- **Livestock Sale Yard.** Consider re-locating sale yard along river to allow for Fairground expansion and improve appearance of gateway.

Gateways: West Main

- **Airport Road.** Enhancements should be incorporated as part of future roadway reconstruction efforts—consistent lighting, streetscape, sidewalks—this is a major gateway for people coming into Riverton.
- **Screening of outdoor storage.** Alternative approaches to screen outdoor storage should be pursued to enhance appearance of this gateway—sculptural walls, landscaping, etc.
- **Sidewalks.** Extend sidewalks past CWC on West Main.
- **Billboards.** Billboards detract from gateway—explore opportunities to prevent more and/or phase out over time.
- **Job Corps.** Need to ensure design of new Job Corps facility enhances appearance of gateway—should be attractive and thoughtfully designed.

General

- **WYDOT Enhancement Grants.** Need to explore WYDOT Enhancement Grants—on and off-system—as a means of helping fund various improvements suggested above.
- **Use Landscaping Wisely.** Streetscape enhancements are needed in a number of locations, but use landscaping thoughtfully—where it will have most visual impact and with maintenance and water usage in mind.
- **Medians.** Medians can be a strong community feature. Should explore opportunity to incorporate more in gateways where appropriate.