



# Planning and Development Department

## 2021 Annual Report

A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE

### Mission:

The mission of the Planning and Development Department is to manage growth and change and support economic development in a way that preserves and enhances the qualities that make Cheyenne a Community of Choice; and to facilitate the development review process by providing quality, effective, and efficient professional planning services.

### 2022 Strategic Goals:

- ◆ Continue to oversee the implementation of adopted plans such as PlanCheyenne, West Edge Initiative, and the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor Master Plan.
- ◆ Update the Belvoir Ranch and Big Hole Master Plan to recognize changes in development patterns on the ranch, incorporate newly obtained lands, fiscally balance proposed improvements with future staffing needs, and focus on alleviating access barriers presented by the Union Pacific Railroad.
- ◆ Expand the newly formed Urban Renewal Authority.
- ◆ Continue to improve transparency regarding the development process through continued improvement of the Department's website, revising applications, and improving stakeholder communication between departments and outside agencies.
- ◆ Utilize current and upcoming technology to aide in development review, facilitate meetings, and streamline the development process.
- ◆ Revise development regulations to provide clarity in development expectations, reflect best practices, and streamline the development process.
- ◆ Begin annexation of high priority county pockets.
- ◆ Explore and allocate, as available, resources to update the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- ◆ Implement permit/project tracking software in collaboration with other departments.
- ◆ Archive and digitize past projects.

# 2021 Strategic Goals Progress Report



## Goal

Continue to oversee the implementation of adopted plans such as PlanCheyenne, West Edge Initiative, and the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor Master Plan.

Update the Belvoir Ranch and Big Hole Master Plan to recognize changes in development patterns on the ranch, incorporate newly obtained lands, fiscally balance proposed improvements with future staffing needs, and focus on alleviating access barriers presented by the Union Pacific Railroad.

Continue to improve transparency regarding the development process through continued improvement of the Department's website, revising applications, and improving stakeholder communication between departments and outside agencies.

Utilize current and upcoming technology to aide in development review, facilitate meetings, and streamline the development process.

Revise development regulations to provide clarity in development expectations, reflect best development practices, and streamline the development process.

Review Planning and Development related fees and financial security requirements to determine if they serve the best interests of the City, adequately represent development review costs, or create an unreasonable fiscal burden on the City.

Update the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Continue to explore options for permit/project tracking software.

Archive and digitize past projects.

## Progress Report

Engineering continued to lead the Reed Rail Project in conjunction with the Long Range Planner II to create 35% design plans for the corridor. Obstacles with the Burlington Northern Railroad have slowed progress on this project. The Planner II focused on the West Edge Initiative and other Code amendments to implement PlanCheyenne.

Staff did not have the bandwidth to move forward with this plan, however in 2021 the City partnered with Visit Cheyenne to explore and design a trail connection to the Big Hole.

Staff continues to make improvements to the website regarding structure, organization, and information with a goal to "reduce clicks", streamline information, and provide information. In September 2021 the department rolled out an easy to use Google Map detailing active development projects within the City.

Staff continued to utilize new software introduced in the FY 21 Budget, including AutoCAD, Adobe Professional Suite, and Bluebeam Revu to facilitate internal reviews. And additional forms were added to OpenForms.

Eleven text amendments were approved to address code deficiencies and concerns and staff drafted ordinances and resolutions to create the Urban Renewal Authority.

Staff finalized tracking review times for specific applications in preparation for introduction of a new fee schedule in early 2022.

A funding request for an update to the plan was not included in the FY 22 Budget. 2020 Census data was released detailing areas of growth in the community adding pressure to update the Parks and Recreation element of PlanCheyenne.

Staff continued to evaluate permit/project tracking systems on a collaborative basis with other departments. Additionally, staff continued to offer all City staff training on existing systems.

Some, not all, paper files have been purged or disposed of in accordance with retention policy. Projects were scanned on a case by case basis and added to appropriate digital archives.

## Organizational Structure:

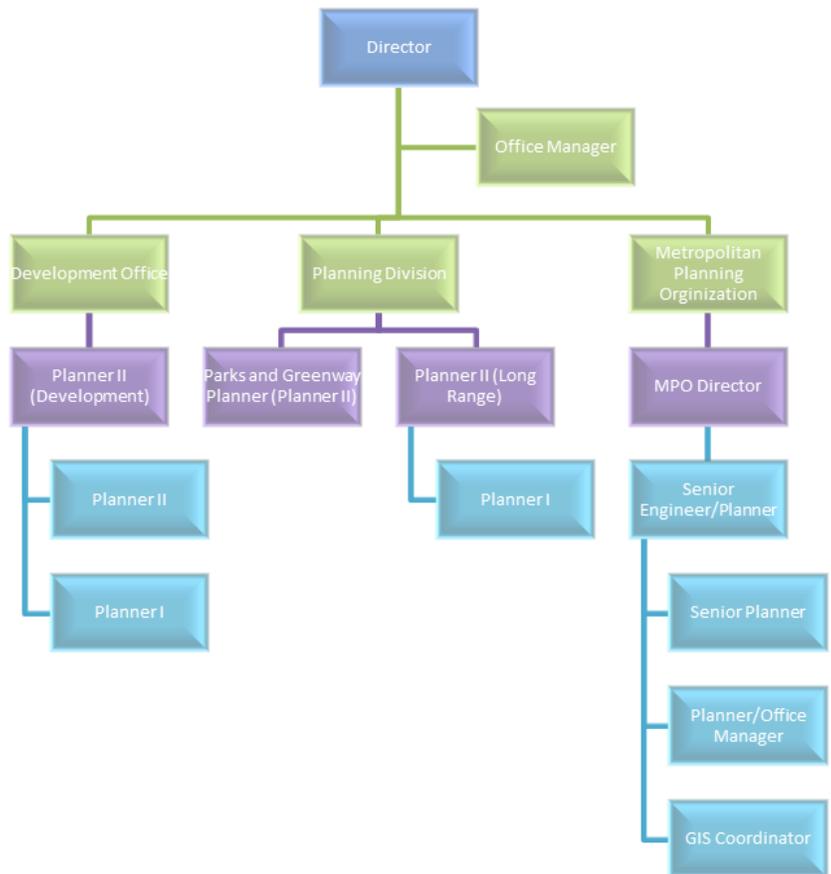
The Planning and Development Department is organized into three divisions comprised of thirteen staff members. The Department serves as the fiscal agent for the Metropolitan Planning Association (MPO). The MPO is also funded by the Wyoming Department of Transportation and subsidized by Laramie County and the City of Cheyenne.

### Development Division (Current Planning)

The Development Division works with developers, consultants, residents and the public to ensure that development complies with applicable plans, policies, and codes. This includes review of rezoning applications, planned unit developments (PUDs), subdivision plats, annexations, site plan review, conditional uses, variances, sign permits, and zoning enforcement. Staff also reviews all residential and commercial development permits for compliance with the Unified Development Code (UDC). The Division provides the staff support for the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment.

### Planning Division (Long Range Planning, Parks and Greenway Planning, and Historic Preservation)

The Planning Division provides long-range planning services, reviews development proposals within the City's nine historic districts, implements and manages the greenway system, coordinates future park planning, prepares long range planning documents, manages the Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund, and provides technical planning support to the City. The Division is comprised of a Planner II, Greenway and Parks Planner (Planner II), and Planner I. The Division provides staff support to the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Board, the Brownfields Revolving Loan Committee, and the Greenway Advisory Committee.



### Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The MPO facilitates the planning for transportation needs in the City and County. The MPO is funded by the City, Wyoming Department of Transportation and Laramie County and is comprised of five employees: a Director, Senior Engineer/Planner, Senior Planner, Office Manager, and GIS Coordinator. The Director is appointed by the Mayor, County Commissioner representative, and Wyoming Department of Transportation District 1 Engineer. The City serves as their fiscal agent and all employees are employees of the City.

## Board, Committee, and Commission Support

### Board of Adjustment

The Board of Adjustment is the appointed body of the City responsible for appeals and quasi-judicial decisions under the zoning regulations. In general, the Board of Adjustment hears appeals of decisions rendered by staff, decides on applications by landowners requesting relief to the requirements of the Unified Development Code, and approves Conditional Uses.

### Historic Preservation Board

The Historic Preservation Board works in cooperation with city officials and property owners to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and the protection of buildings, sites, places, and districts of historic interest. They also make recommendations regarding the State's Certified Local Government (CLG) grants.

### Brownfields Revolving Loan Committee

The Brownfields Revolving Loan Committee oversees grant and loan requests related to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program. Requests can be for brownfield inventories, planning, environmental assessments, community outreach, and property cleanup.

### Urban Renewal Authority

New in 2021

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is comprised of a board of five members knowledgeable in community planning, urban renewal, and business management. The URA reviews Urban Renewal Plans and Projects for specific areas and makes recommendations regarding the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Urban Renewal Plans and Projects and TIF-related development agreements require approval by the Governing Body

### Greenway Advisory Committee

The Greenway Advisory Committee provides community representation and specialized expertise to support the Greenway Project. They direct, set priorities, and make recommendations for decisions and suggest solutions to conflicts and problems that may arise. The Committee solicits financial support for the Project through a variety of ways, including, but not limited to personal donations, corporate donations, fund raising campaigns, sales tax ballot initiatives, and grant applications. The members serve as liaisons between their group or agency and the Greenway Project.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is an appointed committee comprised of seven members to review and act on matters related to planning and development. The Planning Commission's primary purpose is to review and make recommendations based on applicable codes and plans to the City Council regarding development actions such as subdivisions, rezonings, and amendments to the Unified Development Code (UDC). The Planning Commission relies on the Unified Development Code (UDC), Plan Cheyenne, and other area



## Workload Snapshot

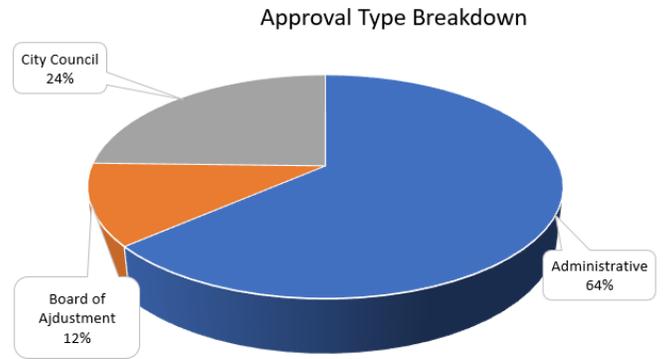
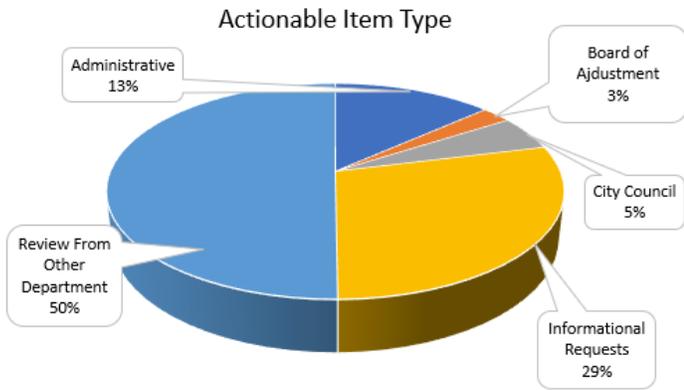
Despite the ongoing pandemic, actionable items remained consistent in 2021, with staff being involved in 1,444 actionable items compared to 1,440 in 2020. Actionable items can range from quick inquiries to projects requiring 2-4 months of technical review. Typical pre-application meetings require a minimum 30-minute research to prepare for the meeting, a one-hour pre-application meeting, and another hour to prepare and send a summary of the meeting to all meeting attendees. In 2021 the Planning and Development Department continued to coordinate dedicated weekly pre-application meeting times that were implemented in early 2020..

Actionable items are mostly distributed amongst the Development Division, which in 2021 was comprised of two Planner IIs and one Planner I positions. Projects were generally worked on during the 250 working days (M-F, excluding holidays) of the year. Until another planning position is funded and available, actionable items will be distributed to two Planner IIs and one Planner I position. A new Senior Planner position is proposed for the second half of FY 23 which will aide in distribution of workload.

The Division continues to track building permits that require their review. These typically require quick review and any problems identified must be addressed by Development staff promptly. Review entails permit compliance with approved site plans, zoning, and Unified Development Code requirements. Building permit review types are broken down on the following page.

Type	2020	2021	Percent Change
Accessory Dwelling Unit	6	3	-50%
Administrative Adjustment	26	42	62%
Administrative Plat/Replat	20	21	5%
Administrative Use Approval	12	4	-67%
Annexation	4	8	100%
Appeal of Admin. Decision	1	0	-100%
Board Approval (Conditional Use)	13	20	54%
Building Permit Review	663	537	-19%
Child Care In-Home Minor (3-10)	4	3	-25%
Demo. of Contributing Structure	0	0	-
Engineering Plan Review	43	83	93%
Development Agreement	0	2	-
Final Plat/Replat	14	12	-14%
Financial Surety (Bond, Escrow, Etc.)	24	0	-100%
Home Occupation	16	8	-50%
Inquiry	230	229	0%
Outside User Agreement	3	4	133%
Planning - UDC Text Amendment	12	11	-8%
Planning Project	5	6	20%
Pre-application Meeting	84	129	54%
Preliminary Plat	16	12	-25%
PUD	3	2	-33%
Sign Permits	96	104	8%
Site Plan	54	63	17%
Site Plan Adjustment	20	11	-45%
Special Use	1	1	-
Subdivision Standards Waiver	0	18	-
Temporary Use	3	14	367%
Vacation	3	1	-67%
Variance	12	16	33%
Wireless Modification	2	6	-
Wireless Telecom	7	1	-86%
Zone Change	14	16	14%
Zoning Letter	29	57	97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1440</b>	<b>1444</b>	<b>0%</b>

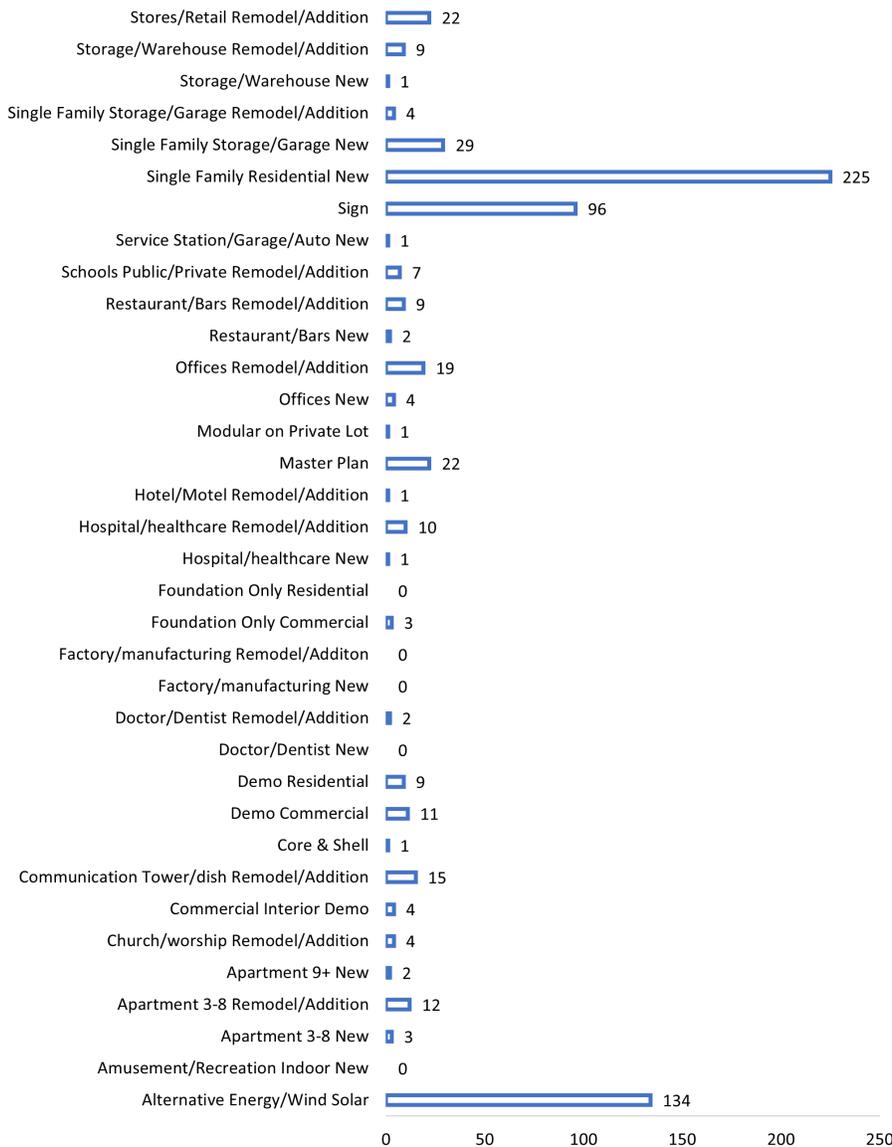
Actionable Item Type	Number	Percent
Administrative	194	13%
Board of Adjustment	36	2%
City Council	75	5%
Informational Requests	415	29%
Review From Other Departments	724	50%
	<b>1444</b>	



Between 2020 and 2021, all externally created actionable items increased. The largest increase was in requests for information totaling 29%. Internal reviews decreased by 4%.

Between 2020 and 2021, ten additional cases were heard by the Board of Adjustment resulting in more approvals requiring a public review process.

### Number of Building Permits Reviewed by Development Staff



Building permits review that requires review by the Development Division has remained relatively the same as 2021. In fiscal year 2022, the City adopted a revised Development fee schedule with a \$50 fee for each of these reviews.

## Enforcement Statistics:

In 2020 the Planning and Development Department received 31 zoning enforcement complaints, two were received by the Compliance Division. Zoning enforcement addresses properties that are not in compliance with the Unified Development Code or approved site plans and development of or establishment of uses on properties without necessary approvals. Zoning enforcement does not include junk or nuisance violations, abandoned vehicles, or right-of-way use violations.

Common violations included:

- ◆ Persons living in a recreational vehicle on private property.
- ◆ Fences exceeding height allowance or constructed within the setback.
- ◆ Unlawful Home Occupation (Business)
- ◆ Establishment of use without approvals
- ◆ Accessory building in setback
- ◆ Illegal signs

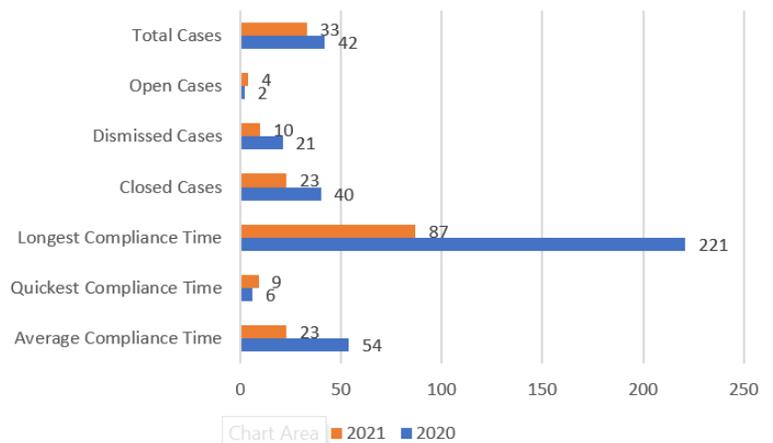
On July 1, 2021, enforcement began transition to the Compliance Division. In October of 2021 the new position authorized in the FY 2022 budget was filled, allow for complete case management by the Compliance Division. To date, Planning and Development staff has

worked hand-in-hand with the Compliance Division. The new partnership and additional staff member has increased the time in which compliance is reached. Of the 33 violations, 29 have been closed. The four outstanding violations are still in process. The closure rate did decrease from 95% to 88%, however. No cases have warranted forwarding to the City Attorney's office for prosecution. Staff continues to work on public education of rules and regulations to prevent accidental violations.

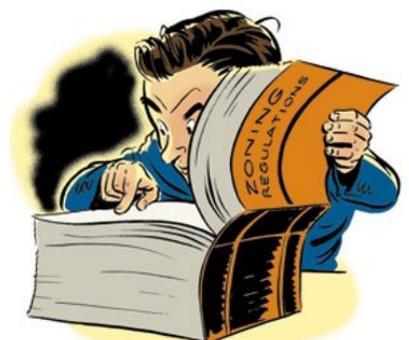
### When does staff investigate?

- ⇒ Citizen compliant with complainant identified.
- ⇒ Elected official complaint based on citizen complaint.
- ⇒ Development staff initiated in the following cases:
  - ⇒ Is an imminent threat to the public safety, health, and welfare of the community.
  - ⇒ The violation is on a high visibility property.
  - ⇒ The violation may enable other to pursue similar violations.
  - ⇒ The violation blatantly disregards approved development plans.

Case Statistics



Zoning Enforcement Breakdown



## Notable Parks and Greenways Projects:



- The Department assisted in coordination with multiple events related to the 30th Anniversary of the Greater Cheyenne Greenway celebrating the 45-mile Greenway system.
- Educational campaign regarding the affect of passing the 6th Penny Ballot relating to Greenway expansion and maintenance.. These items were topics were on the ballot as Proposition 7(9), \$2.5 million for maintenance of the Greenway system and Proposition 8(4), \$3.5 million for expansion of the Greenway system and approved by voters in November 2021 and ultimately passed..
- Completion and ribbon cutting for the Dey Avenue Connector on June 3rd, 2021.
- Ongoing design and coordination of multiple Greenway connector projects to include, Downtown Connector, Sun Valley to East Park Connector, and Avenues/Airport Connector.
- Construction of Sweetgrass/LCCC underpass and Carey/Kennedy Greenway Connector in Lions Park with completion expected summer 2022.
- Design and installation of Phase II Wayfinding signage and completion of Phase III Wayfinding plan set for bidding.
- Assistance with development review and coordination of Greenway and Parks improvements associated with new developments.
- Management of the Adopt-a-Spot Greenway maintenance program.
- Coordination and completion of the East Cheyenne Community Open Space which opened to the public July 1, 2021.
- Project management and coordination for the East Cheyenne Community Park Master Site Development Plan public process with final plan completion expected July 2022.



Mayor Patrick Collins cuts the ribbon at the Dey Avenue Connector ribbon cutting June 3rd, 2021. This segment connects Martin Luther King Jr. Park to the Crow Creek Greenway system.

## Notable Preservation Projects:

- Completion of the Capitol North Historic District expansion.
- Continued the ornament fundraiser selling limited edition ornaments depicting the Airport Fountain to promote the Airport Fountain Restoration project. Phase II of the Airport Fountain project is now fully funded
- Received \$22,687.77 in funding from the State Historic Preservation office in Certified Local Government (CLG) grants
- Held 12 monthly meetings, one work session, one new member orientation, and several events, including, Cruise the Legend.
- Updated the strategic plan to serve as a guide for the Historic Preservation Board.
- Awarded the LeClercq Jones award to Times Square Title at 719 East 17th Street. This award celebrates historic preservation of a commercial property.
- Awarded the Dubois Award to the Bond Home at 1214 West 32nd Street for historic preservation of a residential property.



CHEYENNE  
*Historic Preservation Board*



*Right:* A historic photo of 719 East 17th Street, the recipient of the 2021 LeClercq Jones award.



*Left:* The 2022 ornaments featured the historic airport fountain. All revenue generated was earmarked for the final pieces of restoration.

*Below:* In May of 2021 the Board held a fire up ceremony to turn on the Historic Airport Fountain. In 2021 it ran during select hours, three days a week.



## Notable Long-Range Planning Projects:

- ◆ Continued implementation of the 2016 West Edge Area Wide Plan
  - ◆ Facilitate community surveys, stakeholder interviews, and online workshops to aide in drafting of the Urban Use overlay district regulations which are anticipated to overlay the West Edge neighborhood.
  - ◆ Urban Use overlay district regulations adopted
  - ◆ Public meeting on West Edge rezoning September 29, 2021
- ◆ Creation of the City of Cheyenne Urban Renewal Authority
  - ◆ Blight Study adopted June 28, 2021
  - ◆ Creation of Urban Renewal Authority Website, [www.CheyenneCity.org/URA](http://www.CheyenneCity.org/URA)
  - ◆ Creating the Urban Renewal Authority Board; first meeting on July 22, 2021 with 10 meetings through the year
  - ◆ Hitching Post Urban Renewal Plan and Project adopted August 23, 2021
  - ◆ \$1.2 million in tax increment financing approved for the Hitching Post Urban Renewal Project for building demolition and asbestos remediation, with two more applications for supplemental TIF funding in progress
- ◆ Multiple Future Land Use Map amendments to support concurrent zoning map amendments
- ◆ Phase I assistance with EPA Brownfields assessments were performed at several properties at no financial cost to the City or property owner to assist in reinvestment in potentially contaminated sites.

### Urban Renewal

#### What is Urban Renewal?

Urban renewal is a state-enabled economic development tool used to revitalize deteriorating or underdeveloped areas. Redevelopment of urban areas is often more expensive than new development, so public action through an Urban Renewal Authority can be used to encourage private investment in the area. The Wyoming Urban Renewal Code enables municipalities to set up Urban Renewal Authorities which have the ability to designate Urban Renewal Projects. These projects can use a variety of tools for redevelopment, including tax increment financing (TIF).

#### How will the City of Cheyenne incorporate Urban Renewal into our community?

In June of 2021, the City Council passed an [ordinance](#) (PDF: 2659B) creating the Urban Renewal Authority and a [resolution](#) (PDF: 659MB) determining blighted areas in the community. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is comprised of a board of five members knowledgeable in community planning, urban renewal, and business management. The URA reviews Urban Renewal Plans and Projects for specific areas and makes recommendations regarding the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Urban Renewal Plans and Projects and TIF-related development agreements require approval by the Governing Body.



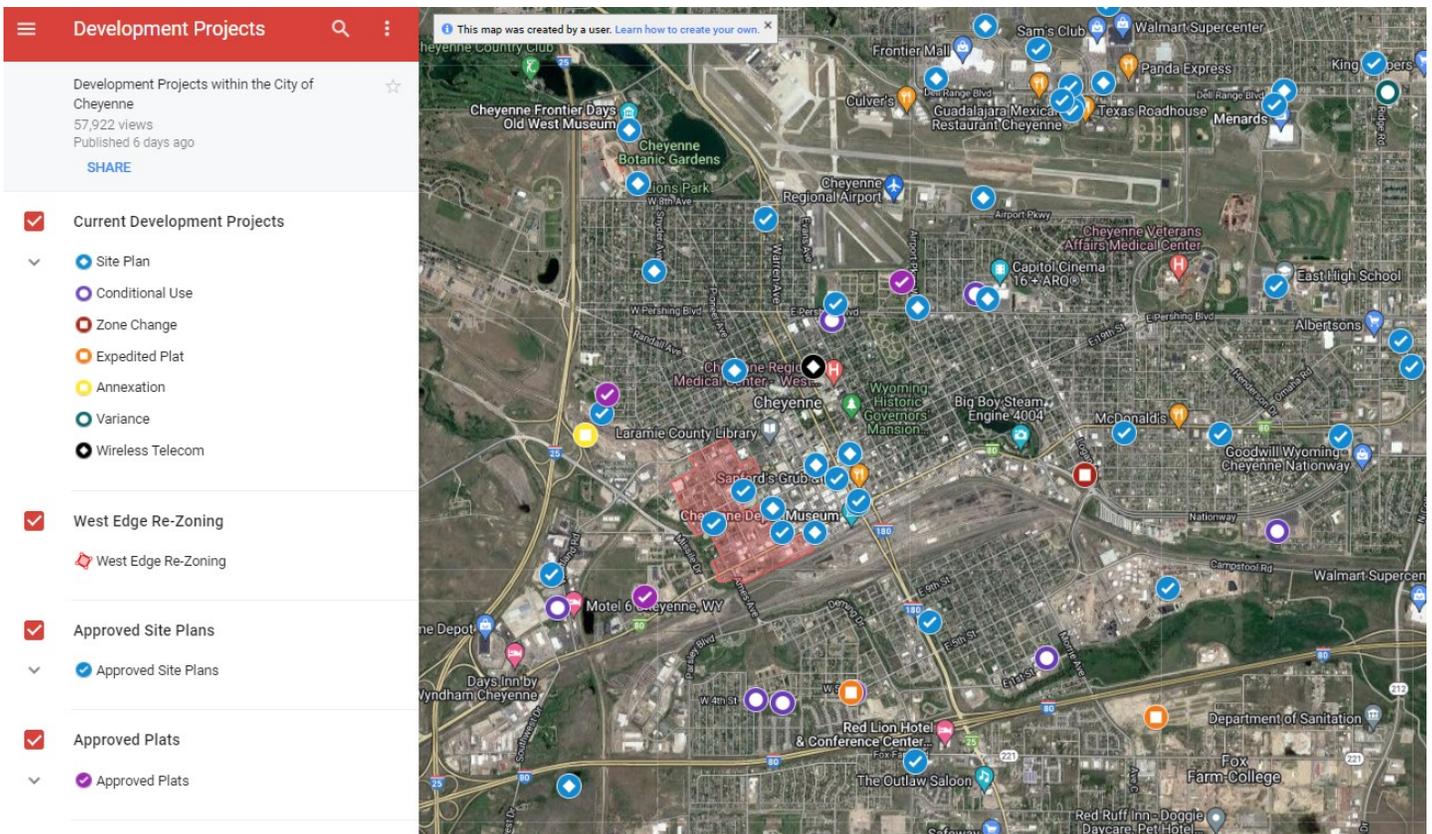
*Left:* The Planning and Development Department created a website dedicated to the Urban Renewal Authority. An important element of the department is to provide the community with information. This website explains urban renewal, provides information on how to apply for financing, and features information regarding all URA documents.



*Above:* In late fall of 2021 the Hitching Post Plan and Project was approved assisting with removing the financial “gap” that had prevented redevelopment of the former Hitching Post Inn. Demolition began shortly after plan and project and tax increment financing approval. Above, is an aerial photo of the demolition in progress looking at the site from the northwest towards Lincolnway.

## Operational and Customer Service Improvements:

- ◆ 2021 marked the first full year of digital application submittals. Paper applications were phased out in November of 2020. In turn 604 digital applications were submitted in Calendar year 2021. It was estimated that paper applications or phone calls replaced with applications required an average of 30 minutes of handling time by staff from receipt to filing. It is estimated that the conversion to digital only applications saved the Planning and Development Department at least 5.8 hours of staff time per week.
- ◆ 140 pre-application meetings were held. This is approximately 2.7 meetings per week. Pre-application meetings are designated office hours that are free to the public and involve BOPU, Building, Fire, Planning, Development, Greenway, Engineering, WYDOT (as needed), and other review agencies to clarify necessary applications. They are used to identify expected improvements, identify potential issues and concerns, and detail necessary processes and timelines. Pre-application meetings are typically held within 7-days of request. These office hours were first rolled out in calendar year 2020.
- ◆ In 2021 staff worked with all City review agencies to determine time associated with development review. This analysis led to development of a new fee schedule which was adopted in 2021.
- ◆ In August of 2021 the new FY 22-funded Office Manager position was filled relieving planners of clerical tasks, application entry, and pre-application meeting scheduling.
- ◆ In September 2021 the department rolled out an easy to use Google Map detailing active development projects within the City. This map had several thousand views within the first few weeks and almost 30,000 views in 2021. The map is easily accessible on the Planning and Development Department.
- ◆ Staff continues to make improvements to the website regarding structure, organization, and information with a goal to “reduce clicks”, streamline information, and provide information.



The new Development Projects map has become popular in the community oftentimes being shared in community groups on Facebook to alert others of development happening in the community.