



# Planning and Development Department 2022 Annual Report



# Planning and Development Department

## 2022 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.

# 2022 Strategic Goals Progress Report



## Goal

## Progress Report

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

Engineering continued to lead the Reed Rail Project. Consultants have been retained which have made great progress regarding the development of the corridor.

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.

Similar to 2021, staff did not have the bandwidth to move forward with this plan. Over the course of the years staff did work with State Lands to regarding access to a proposed trailhead for access to the Big Hole via a proposed bridge and trail connection.

Expand the newly formed Urban Renewal Authority.

Staff continued to work with the URA to expand blight areas within the City and two create two new Plan and Project areas eligible for tax increment financing development.

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.

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 2022 the department transitioned the Google development map to an ESRI-based map. rolled This map details active development projects within the City.

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

Staff continued to utilize new software introduced in the FY 21 budget, including AutoCAD, Adobe Professional Suite, and Bluebeam Revu to facilitate internal reviews.

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

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

Begin annexation of high priority county pockets.

In December of 2022 staff began the process of annexing five properties within three County pockets. Public outreach occurred in advance of the annexations and was completed in April of 2023.

Explore and allocate, as available, resources to update the 2006 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

A funding request for an update to the plan was not included in the FY 23 Budget. 2020 Census data was released detailing areas of growth in the community adding pressure to update the Parks and Recreation element of PlanCheyenne.

Implement permit/project tracking software in collaboration with other departments.

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.

Archive and digitize past projects.

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

## Organizational Structure:

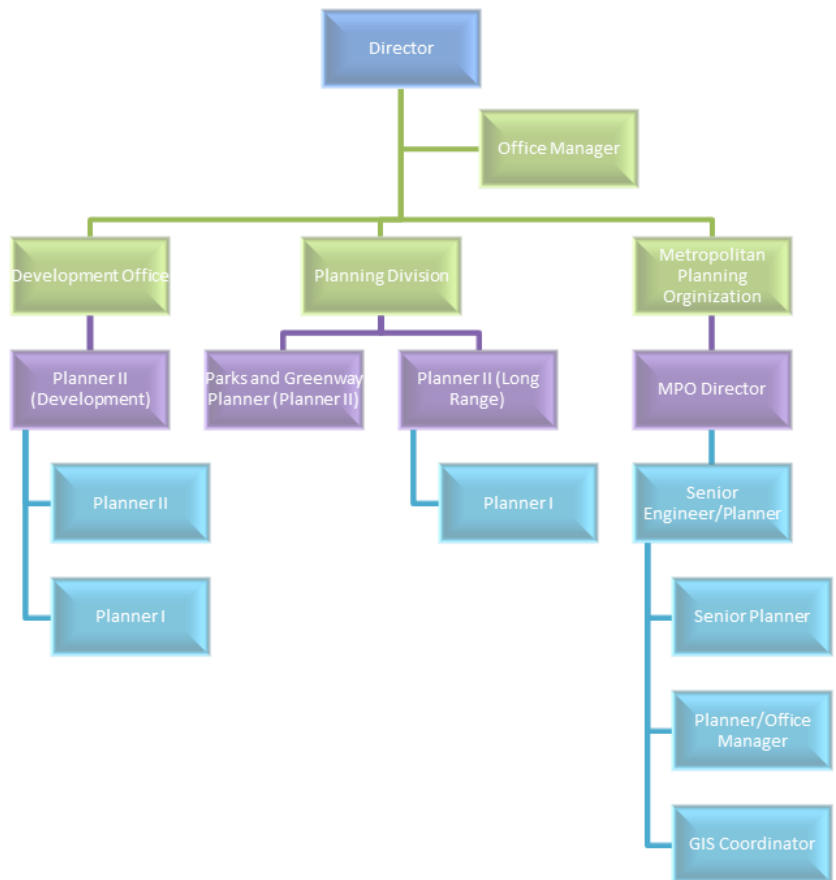
The Planning and Development Department is organized into three divisions comprised of thirteen staff members. The Department serves as the fiscal agent for the Metropolitan Planning Association (MPO). The MPO is also funded by the Wyoming Department of Transportation and subsidized by Laramie County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

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

Actionable items remained relatively consistent in 2022 with a meager 2% increase in actionable items that involved staff. Actionable items increased to 1,470 compared to 1,440 in 2021. 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.

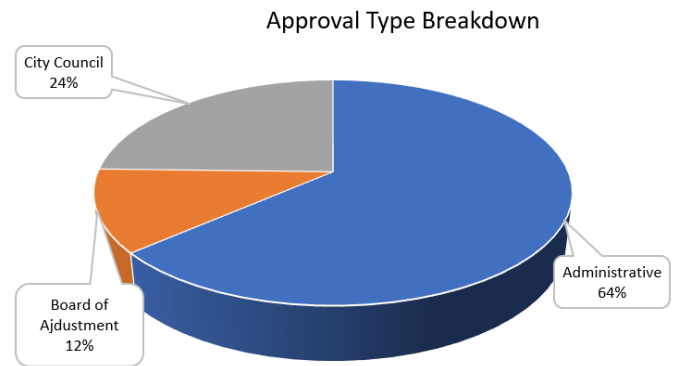
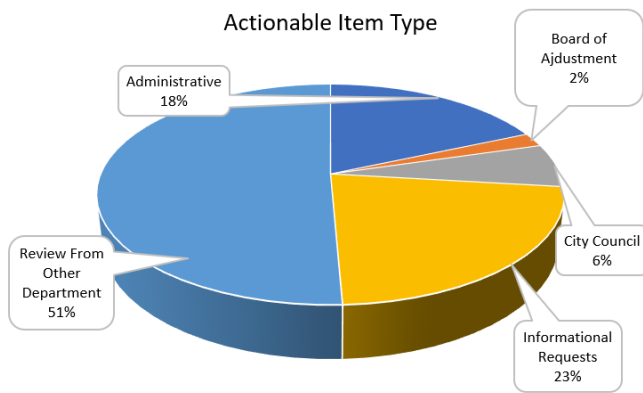
Actionable items are mostly distributed amongst the Development Division, which in 2022 was comprised of two Planner IIs and one Planner I positions. The Senior Projects were generally worked on during the 250 working days (M-F, excluding holidays) of the year. Until another planning position is funded and available, actionable items will be distributed to two Planner IIs and one Planner I position. A new Senior Planner position is proposed to join the team in October of 2023 which will aide in distribution of workload. This position will primarily be focused on Long Range Planning activities.

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	2021	2022	Percent Change
Accessory Dwelling Unit	3	5	67%
Administrative Adjustment	42	36	-14%
Administrative Plat/Replat	21	41	95%
Administrative Use Approval	4	3	-25%
Annexation	8	10	25%
Appeal of Administrative Decision	0	0	-
Board Approval (Conditional Use)	20	20	0%
Building Permit Review	537	550	2%
Child Care In-Home Minor (3-10)	3	4	33%
Demo. of Contributing Structure	0	0	-
Engineering Plan Review	83	84	1%
Development Agreement	2	3	50%
Final Plat/Replat	12	20	67%
Financial Surety (Bond, Escrow, Etc.)	18	29	61%
Home Occupation	8	8	0%
Inquiry	229	155	-32%
Outside User Agreement	4	6	150%
Planning - UDC Text Amendment	11	8	-27%
Planning Project	6	7	17%
Pre-application Meeting	129	126	-2%
Preliminary Plat	12	6	-50%
PUD	2	1	-50%
Sign Permits	104	111	7%
Site Plan	63	105	67%
Site Plan Adjustment	11	7	-36%
Special Use	1	1	-
Subdivision Standards Waiver	18	36	100%
Temporary Use	14	14	0%
Vacation	1	6	500%
Variance	16	10	-38%
Wireless Modification	6	10	-
Wireless Telecom	1	2	100%
Zone Change	16	26	63%
Zoning Letter	57	49	-14%
Total	1444	1470	2%

Actionable Item Type	Number	2022 Percent	2021 Percent
Administrative	271	18%	13%
Board of Adjustment	30	2%	2%
City Council	94	6%	5%
Informational Requests	330	22%	29%
Review From Other Departments	745	51%	50%
	1444		

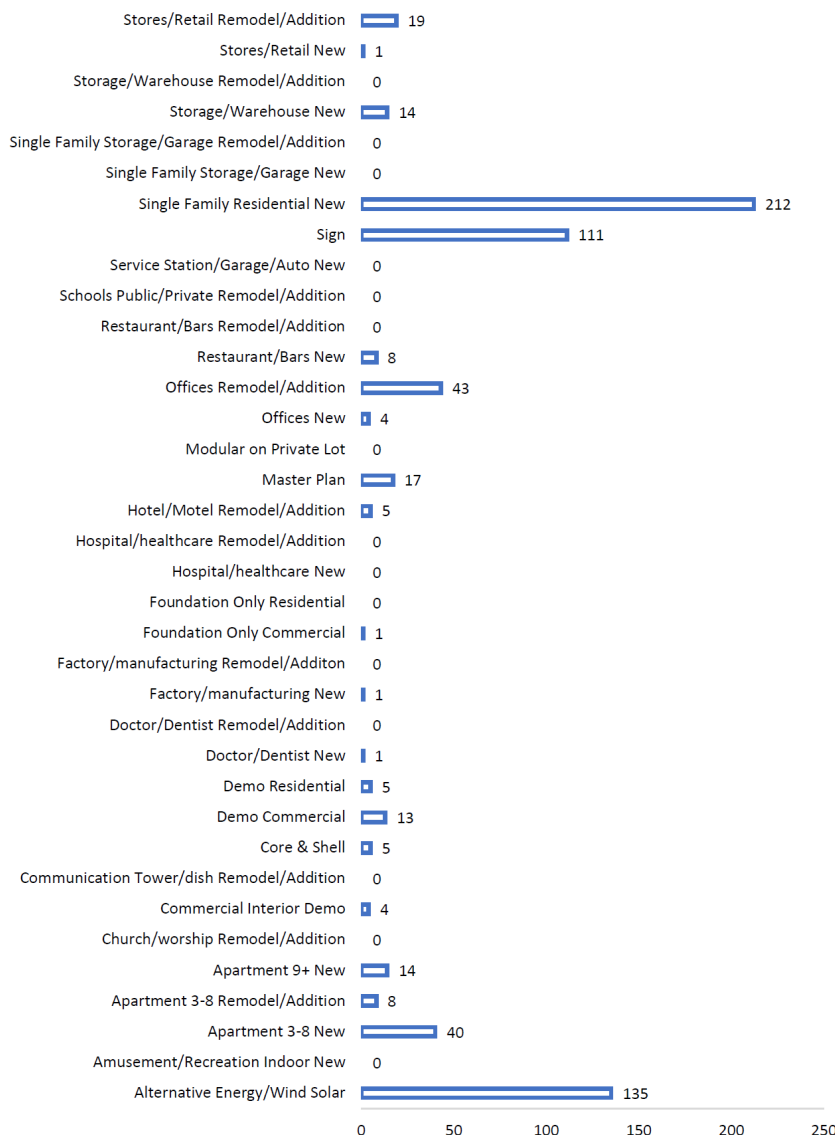




Between 2021 and 2022, most reviews remained consistent, however items requiring City Council approval increased by 25%.

Between 2021 and 2022, 77 additional Administrative applications were considered. The Department received 85 fewer informational requests.

**Number of Building Permits Reviewed by Development Staff**



Type	2021	2022
Administrative	194	271
Board of Adjustment	36	30
City Council	75	94
Informational Requests	415	330
Review From Other Department	724	745
	1444	1470

Building permits review that requires review by the Development Division has remained relatively the same as 2022. There was an increase in multifamily permits reviewed and commercial and office remodels. In fiscal year 2022, the City adopted a revised Development fee schedule with a \$50 fee for each of these reviews.

## Notable Parks and Greenways Projects:



- Construction completion and ribbon cutting for LCCC/Sweetgrass Underpass and Lions Park, Carey Ave and Kennedy Dr Greenway.
- Installation of Phase III and design of Phase IV of Greater Cheyenne Greenway Wayfinding Signs.
- Landscape Design for island at 26th and Randall and islands at 12th St and Sun Valley Dr.
- Completion of East Cheyenne Community Park Master Plan and commencement of construction plans for first phase of construction at Kiwanis Park.
- Preliminary planning and property acquisition for reconstruction of U.S. 30 Greenway Underpass.
- Property acquisition for Sun Valley to Kiwanis Community Park Greenway Connector, Keiser, Sun Valley LLC (land swap) Lewark. Annexations and Zoning.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Conversion for Fire Station at Converse Ave. Environmental Impact Statements, Appraisals, NEPA sign off.
- Winkler Property acquisition as addition to Kiwanis Community Park, Appraisals, Phase 1 and 2 EAS
- Saddle Ridge MOU and negotiations
- Development submittals, RFP and Scope for Pickleball Courts and Gymnastics Facility
- Water Wise Action Committee
- Assistance with development review and coordination of Greenway and Parks improvements
- Management and coordination of Greenway Adopt a Spot Program.



Mayor Patrick Collins cuts the ribbon at the College Drive underpass connecting Laramie County Community College and the Sweetgrass Development. This underpass provides a safe connection between the South Cheyenne and the existing Greenway system.



## Notable Preservation Projects:

- Finished Phase II of restoration work on the Airport Fountain and now the fountain has been completely restored. In total the project cost \$132,684.08, with funding from multiple sources including; Certified Local Government grants from the State Historic Preservation Office, Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund Grants, the Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce's 2016 Leadership Cheyenne class, and fundraising efforts of the Historic Preservation Board.
- Continued the popular holiday ornament fundraiser which sells limited edition ornaments annually. 2022's ornament depicted the Historic Governors Mansion.
- Two board members and two staff members attended the Colorado Preservation Inc. Conference in Denver, CO (February 7-8, 2022).
- Two board members and two staff members attended the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Forum in Cincinnati, OH (July 15-17, 2022).
- One Certificate of Appropriateness was reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Board.
- Held 12 monthly meetings, one new member orientation, and several events, including the LeClerc Jones award celebration.



*Above:* The 2022 ornaments featured the Historic Governor's Mansion. All revenue generated was earmarked for restoration.



*Above:* A detailed look at the terracotta prior to restoration.



*Below:* A detailed look at the terracotta post-restoration.

## Notable Long-Range Planning Projects:

- ◆ After development of the Urban Use Overlay District in 2021, the West Edge was rezoned to MUR in January of 2022 with the Urban Use overlay district to support the West Edge Initiative.
- ◆ Urban Renewal Authority (URA)
  - ◆ At the March 3, 2022, meeting the URA approved a TIF application for overages related to radiation of the former Hitching Post Hotel. The award amount was \$461,500 and was subsequently approved by the Governing Body.
  - ◆ The URA Board established review criteria for new tax increment financing applications on June 2, 2022.
  - ◆ The Hynds and the Hole Plan and Project adopted June 13, 2022.
  - ◆ The 15th Street Plan and Project adopted June 13, 2022.
- ◆ Staff planners assisted the Metropolitan Planning Organization by serving on corridor study steering committees.
- ◆ Phase I assistance with Environmental Protection Agency (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.
- ◆ The City contracted with Granite Peak Environmental for a an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. The grant expanded on a prior 2011 EPA Assessment Grant to expand on continued investment and interest in the redevelopment of the area.
- ◆ Staff started work with other City departments and the Board of Public Utilities to investigate implementation of water wise practices to make the city more sustainable with the uncertain future of the Colorado River.

In June the URA Board approved an Urban Renewal Project for the Hynds and the Hole in downtown Cheyenne to help support preservation and redevelopment of the iconic





## Operational and Customer Service Improvements:

- ♦ The City adopted a new development action fee schedule on March 14, 2022. The new fee schedule was effective March 30, 2022.
- ♦ 2022 marked the second full year of digital application submittals. Paper applications were phased out in November of 2020. Staff worked with OpenGov over the course of 2022 to take the digital application process even further. The City's contract with OpenGov led to the implementation of a new digital permit process that went into effect in April of 2023.
- ♦ 127 pre-application meetings were held. This is approximately 2.4 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 November of 2022 the department rolled out an ESRI based map to replace the Google Map detailing active development projects within the City. This map continues to be a popular destination on the Planning and Development Department website.
- ♦ Staff continues to make improvements to the website regarding structure, organization, and information with a goal to "reduce clicks", streamline information, and provide information.
- ♦ MPO was awarded a Safe Routes to School Grant.
- ♦ The City kicked off its County pockets annexation goal and held a community meeting with affected property owners in December of 2022.

