

### CHAPTER 2 — PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the plan are what the plan intends to achieve. Without such statements of purpose, it is difficult to prepare a plan that meets the particular needs of the community. The goals and objectives of the plan provide citizens with a basis for understanding the plan. If citizens find the goals and objectives agreeable, then they may review the remainder of the plan to see if the plan actually helps accomplish the goals and objectives. On the other hand, if the goals and objectives are not correct they can be revised, possibly triggering further changes to subsequent parts of the plan. The best community plans are those that make their goals and objectives explicit and finalize them after thorough public review and discussion.

In Cowley, the planning goals and objectives were prepared following two steps that were undertaken to understand and summarize the values, needs, priorities of Cowley and its citizens. The first step was to ask each of the 18 planning committee members to complete a questionnaire concerning assets, needs, issues and priorities in Cowley. The results helped educate the planning consultant on the committee's goals and objectives for planning Cowley's future. The second step was to conduct the Cowley planning survey, which is described in the next section. These two steps have yielded important information about what Cowley desires for its future. This chapter culminates by presenting Cowley's community planning goals and objectives

#### COWLEY PLANNING SURVEY

The Cowley planning survey was developed by the planning consultant with extensive input from the planning committee. The survey was sent to all town utility customers and registered voters. By mid-April 2007, 153 surveys were completed and returned out of 404 surveys sent out, giving a response rate of 38 percent. When response rates are over 50-60 percent, the results can be said to be representative of the entire population. Cowley's survey cannot make that claim. However, 153 people were able to contribute their thoughts to the process and everyone else had the opportunity to do the same.

Among the major findings of the survey were:

- ▶ Most survey respondents felt that a number of town-managed facilities were in good condition. These included sidewalks, the irrigation system, the drinking water system, and town parks.
- ▶ Most respondents rated the community "poor" with respect to the availability of affordable housing.
- ▶ Over two-thirds of respondents believed Cowley should encourage growth and that new subdivision developments have been beneficial.
- ▶ Nearly three-quarters of respondents supported growth and use of the local airport.
- ▶ Three-quarters of respondents indicated that Cowley needs more rental housing and a town-wide

clean-up of empty lots.

- ▶ Over three-quarters of respondents felt Cowley needs a master plan for future growth and development.

Detailed results for these and other questions are presented in the plan Appendix. The original questionnaire is also included to show exactly how the questions were worded. 65 respondents provided written comments including some that were very insightful and informative. The written comments are not summarized here but are available in a report on file at the Town Office.

### COWLEY'S TOWN PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Cowley, a town with a rich pioneer heritage, has maintained a safe, friendly, small-town atmosphere. Cowley is recognized as one of the nicer towns in Big Horn County and one that energetically continues to improve itself. Decades of steady growth attest to the fact Cowley is a great place to live and raise a family.

Cowley's citizens appreciate the need for a long-range plan to guide the growth and development of the town. In planning for the future, Cowley will strive to retain and enhance all that is best about small-town living. Cowley's future is to be a beautiful, growing community with a family-oriented, friendly ambience; with well-managed town services and infrastructure; and with a high quality of life for all residents. This master plan for the Town of Cowley seeks to organize community development activities to advance this vision of the town's future.

To further describe the intentions and purposes of this plan, the following town planning goals are established for each of the major topical areas of the plan. Each goal is further defined by policy objectives that follow immediately after each stated goal.

Citizen Participation Goal: To involve the town's citizens in community planning and development decision making.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Keep citizens informed about planning and development activities in town.
- ▶ Ensure that citizens have opportunities to comment on proposed developments and plans.
- ▶ Establish a town planning commission as a way of involving more citizens in the planning and development of the town.

Environment Goal: To sustain and enhance important features of the natural environment in and around Cowley.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Minimize development activity within flood prone and steep slope areas (mainly the Wash on

## COWLEY MASTER PLAN

the western end of town).

- ▶ Encourage the planting of additional trees as part of any development projects.
- ▶ Encourage energy efficient site planning, landscaping and building designs.
- ▶ Support the establishment of a solid waste recycling program in Cowley.

Population Goal: To continue moderate population growth.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Plan ahead to ensure that adequate provisions are made to accommodate probable population growth.

Housing Goal: To have a sufficient supply of wholesome housing to meet the needs of all ages and income levels.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Promote the rehabilitation or replacement of substandard housing units.
- ▶ Encourage the development of a variety of housing types, sizes and costs. (single-family, multi-family, senior housing, etc.)
- ▶ Support efforts aimed at increasing the availability of affordable housing.

Economy Goal: To maintain and expand the businesses and institutions that provide goods, services and employment for area residents as well as contribute to a balanced tax base.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Work with existing businesses to help them remain in Cowley.
- ▶ Encourage additional retail and service businesses, especially those that provide for the needs of town residents.
- ▶ Support the recruitment of new businesses that are compatible with the town's size and rural character.
- ▶ Ensure that new commercial and industrial developments have well-designed architectural and site layout plans.
- ▶ Support tourism and tourism-related businesses in northern Big Horn County.
- ▶ Encourage and promote compatible businesses at and near the airport.
- ▶ Support regional economic development efforts for the northern Big Horn Basin.

Public Services and Facilities Goal: To continue the economical delivery of necessary town services and facilities to existing residents and businesses while wisely planning ahead for improvements and efficient expansions of these services in anticipation of future needs.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Continue providing safe, adequate, and cost-effective water supply, sewage treatment and irrigation water services to all town residents.

## COWLEY MASTER PLAN

- ▶ Continue planning ahead for needed improvements to town utilities.
- ▶ Continue vigorously pursuing grant opportunities to assist with funding improvements to public facilities.
- ▶ Continue providing town services, such as police and fire protection, and annually review the need to add new services or increase existing services.
- ▶ Require new developments to provide necessary public utilities, streets and sidewalks similar or better than the existing facilities in town.
- ▶ Carefully scrutinize the extension of town services and facilities outside the town limits.

Parks and Recreation Goal: To have abundant recreational opportunities for town residents provided at reasonable cost and in a manner that adds to Cowley's sense of community.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Continue providing a variety of parks and recreational facilities that serve a wide range of ages and interests.
- ▶ Encourage cooperative partnerships with the school district, non-profit organizations, and others to provide new recreational opportunities.
- ▶ Ensure that all residential areas have adequate proximity to parks or other recreational open space.

Transportation Goal: To have a transportation system that provides safe and efficient movement of people and goods while stressing a balance between vehicular and pedestrian modes of travel.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Continue the long-term process of upgrading town streets, sidewalks and walkways.
- ▶ Support making U.S. Highway 310 more visually attractive and pedestrian friendly and safer for vehicular traffic.
- ▶ Provide pedestrian access throughout town, especially to connect residential neighborhoods and areas with high pedestrian traffic such as schools and parks.
- ▶ Provide a pedestrian network of sidewalks, walkways and trails that is as complete and well maintained as the street network.
- ▶ Ensure that new developments provide streets and sidewalks that meet the town's standards.
- ▶ Support the use and development of the North Big Horn County Airport.

Land Use Goal: To have an efficient land use pattern that reflects Cowley's existing character, conserves property values, and facilitates orderly development.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Encourage infill development in vacant areas in town where town services, utilities, and streets are already available or easily provided.

## COWLEY MASTER PLAN

- ▶ Promote compact growth and extension of the town as opposed to low-density developments in Cowley's future growth areas.
- ▶ Promote the physical improvement of Cowley's Main Street business district through landscaping, sign control, facade renovation, and other public and private improvements.
- ▶ Promote the preservation of important historical buildings and sites including the Big Horn Academy Historic District.
- ▶ Concentrate the location of future commercial development to avoid strip development along U.S. Highway 310.
- ▶ Ensure that the town's development ordinances are up-to-date and supportive of the new master plan.

Neighborhoods Goal: To protect and maintain the best features of Cowley's peaceful and attractive residential neighborhoods.

*Policy Objectives:*

- ▶ Protect residential areas from encroachment by intensive commercial activities or other incompatible land uses.
- ▶ Ensure that infill residential development is compatible with the character, scale and design of surrounding land uses.
- ▶ Support and expand on-going efforts to improve the appearance of Cowley's residential neighborhoods.