

# Planning and Economic Development: Making the Connection

Whether you are having company over for dinner, contemplating a career move, or building a house, you probably have a plan.

A plan provides you with a strategy for accomplishing what you want to do. Without a plan ... well, this saying sums it up: "If you don't know where you are going, that's where you'll end up."

Wyoming cities and counties are authorized by state statute to engage in planning and zoning for the betterment of the public's health, safety and general welfare.

Sheridan's planning history is pretty typical of what has happened around the state — it is a fairly recent effort and it is disjointed.

The lack of effective planning was identified as one of the weaknesses during the recent Forward Sheridan SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) process as well as during the community assessment a few years earlier.

The county's last, full-fledged Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1982. Approval of a county zoning resolution followed in 1985.

In 2001, the "Vision 2020 Sheridan County Growth Management Plan" was prepared but did not provide the detail necessary for a workable comprehensive

plan. And a recent effort to prepare a new zoning resolution was never adopted.

Sheridan County is operating on a planning and zoning resolution from an era when CBM meant conventional ballistic missile, the PC was unheard of, and a home in the country nearly always came with a herd of cows.

Times have changed. The need for a new plan and subsequent zoning resolution is evident, though the link between a solid comprehensive plan and effective zoning is not always understood.

A plan is just that. It is a strategy or a map for how to proceed. But it, by itself, is NOT enforceable. Zoning is the principal implementation tool of the plan.

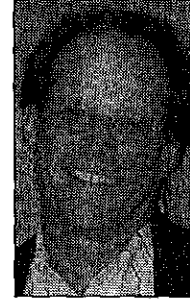
The plan is put into effect chiefly through a carefully crafted set of zoning regulations and a commitment to provide the resources to effectively and consistently administer those regulations.

In terms of the importance of good

## A Community Affair

Mark  
Reid

*Planning for Sheridan's economic development*



planning, planning processes and zoning on economic development, one can easily observe the behavior of corporate America.

Communities that are well planned and managed are more valued and sought after than those which simply offer

financial incentives.

As a community, we need to encourage development patterns that seek to integrate land uses utilizing good design principles. This "smart growth" uses landscaping, sensitive design and open space to mitigate any negative effect.

We must insist on a coordinated and collaborative effort between the city and the county. A memorandum of understanding was recently created and can serve as the foundation for identification of additional areas of cooperation.

A liaison committee including members of the city and county planning commissioners is a natural place to start.

Essential for any plan to be carried out is a set of regulations providing

detailed information to the developer and builder. Trained staff that will offer multiple avenues for training and keeping the public up to date on the regulations is an essential element for success.

The old adage that "you can please some of the people some of the time" will certainly be true with any comprehensive plan. For our community to prosper and economy to grow, good planning is essential.

Forward Sheridan is committed to both our community and economic development. If you have interest in getting involved or if you have questions, please call Forward Sheridan at 673-8004.

*Mark Reid has been county planner for the Sheridan County Public Works Department since January 2007. During the last 25 years, he has held various public planning positions in the Intermountain West and worked in the land-development business for several years in Buffalo.*

*He currently serves as president of the Wyoming Planning Association.*

*"A Community Affair" is a weekly column from citizens who support Forward Sheridan, a professional business organization of invested partners whose purpose is to develop and maintain a sound economy in Sheridan County. Philippe Chino is president/CEO of Forward Sheridan.*