

GROWTH MODELING SESSION (12.05.18)

Pace of growth in Casper

- Population growth is dependent on the prices of oil and gas
- Boom and bust cycles end up being a wash over a long-term period (trends closer to medium growth)
- Planners confirmed growth scenarios – will work with a future additional population of 50,000

Infill development

- Types of infill
 - Walkable infill: Central Casper multifamily, North Casper (small format single family development of multiple lots), empty parking lots in downtown
 - Driveable infill: Where water and sewer is laid down, small format single family
 - Development along the edge
- Subdivisions – Heritage Hills, Fossil Creek – participants will show platted development by TAZ
- Good candidates for infill: Empty parking lots, empty lots on eastern edge
- North Casper
 - Not many infill opportunities here
 - Railroad is a barrier
 - Lots of people walk here, especially along Center Street
 - Small lot sizes
- Makers District has great potential and lots of neighborhood interest
- Mills
 - Focusing on riverfront property with future potential for new services
 - Lack of services/hotels/schools is hindering development
 - Low-income housing apartments (66 units) near the Maverik on Hwy 20
 - Most growth will occur along Robertson Rd
 - Small lot sizes
- Evansville
 - Railroad divides neighborhood; housing on the north side and services on the south side
 - Curtis Street is main thoroughfare and node for services

Development challenges

- Infill areas may be costly to clean and not enticing for developers
- Multi-family is driven by tax credit programs (proximity to services)

- USDA rural financing program (low interest, no down payment) pulling single family homes to the edge – the incorporated area cannot go over 20,000 people within ~30 horizon
 - Attractive for developers
- Water and sewer extensions are paid for by the developer and then added into the home price

Traffic model

- High growth scenario assumptions
 - 5% small format SFH in centers
 - 95% SFH outside centers
 - Zone 3 water (closer to Casper mtn)
 - 75% MFH in centers
 - 100 multi-family homes in Mills and the rest in Casper
- Incorporate into model: new block sizes, two urban growth boundaries (UGB), street plan
 - UGB #1 - agreement between all municipalities on where future growth can occur and who owns the land
 - UGB #2 – e.g. 4 min response time for ambulances within this area
 - Show cost of infill v greenfield of costs to taxpayers (water, sewer, services, emergency response times)

Action items

- Aaron to send TAZ map to group

CITIZEN, POLICY, AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING (12.05.18)

Discussion of Goals

- Increase Transportation Options for All Modes
 - NN to add piece about emerging technologies and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
- Safety and Health - no comments
- Enhance the Region's Distinct Character
 - Comment from participant that air quality may not fit here
 - Communities are having discussions about gateways and beautification (e.g. looking at streetscape); NN to add this as a metric; already included in Connecting Casper
- Support Diversifying Economy
 - “How will this be measured? “By identifying employment centers not energy-related (e.g. Downtown Casper, Mills)
- Affordable solutions
 - Feasible methods of financing will be addressed as a part of this goal
- Request for team to review previous LRTP goals and benchmark progress

Group discussion

- Challenges
 - Difficulty convincing WYDOT to change design standards in urban environment; local communities and WYDOT often have different priorities
 - Limited funding
- Bar Nunn (along Salt Creek Hwy at Howard St): 4-way stop at Loaf ‘N Jug has no sidewalks ([map here](#))
- As part of this plan we will set up prioritization process (e.g. sidewalks near schools, sidewalks near transit centers)

Action items

- NN to add piece about emerging technologies and MaaS under goal of “Increase Transportation Options for All Modes”
- NN to add evaluation of streetscape/concept of gateways to metric under “Enhance the Region's Distinct Character”
- NN to provide a “meeting kit” for staff to use during outreach
- Aaron to send follow up asking reps about best ways to communicate with individual communities
 - Bar Nunn: Meetings sometimes held @ elementary school; town hall newsletter
 - January 12: health fair at both Walmarts (Ruth Heald suggestion)

CATC MEETING (12.05.18)

General

- Balance between providing service for greatest number of people and productivity is always a struggle
- Service area cannot continue expanding east/west – not sustainable

Funding

- No sustainable funding source
 - This was most difficult year for funding. City was operating in deficit for various reasons. General funding was cut for things not seen as critical city services. CATC was not perceived as a critical city service and lost half of its general fund allocation.
 - Difficulty convincing city leadership that transit is critical city service. Eventually had funding reinstated but the city increased costs of holding buses at garage.
- Searching for new Executive Director (ED) and do not currently have a succession plan (nor is new ED written in budget). New ED will cost more.
 - Puts dire constraints on CATC system. Using foundation money for ED search.
- DID receive \$1.6M annually for 4 years (through 1 Cent funding – renewable every 4 years)
 - Not a reliable funding source; don't always know how people will vote
 - CATC worried about volatility of general funds
- Paul asked if they have looked at other funding models
 - Last MPO manager explored idea of a transportation district
 - Requires buy-in and more money from other small towns from Casper and county
 - Not a political sell and smaller towns can't accommodate this with current budget
- Another idea: Making transit a city department. However, bringing in-house would be major effort.
 - City of Casper willing to explore this
 - Gives City more control, simplifies coordination efforts especially in regards to FTA compliance
- Currently receive matching funds from other towns but county contributes \$13,000/yr
- Marge thinks high activity destinations will have to contribute money (e.g. Walgreens, doctors' offices, Walmart)

Dial-A-Ride

- Sprawling community puts a strain on operations (longitudinal sprawl from Robertson Rd to Hat 6 Rd)
 - Turning down 30 rides a month b/c of growing service area
 - Operating with same number of buses from 1950s even with expanded service area due to sprawl

- Population is aging and DAR use is increasing
- Cost per passenger is \$20, approximately \$57/hr
 - All DAR users are registered primarily for fare determination. Non-disabled riders are never denied service.
 - System could not handle going to ADA eligibility (would be incredibly unpopular)
- Fixed route service costs: \$30-40/hr; \$5-6/passenger; not ADA compliant
- Blue Route (along 2nd Street) - People often have to stand on the route; most productive route

Other challenges

- Low pay
 - Drivers start at \$15/hr and many are retirees
 - Recently received 2% raise, but prior to this had not received raise in 5 yrs
 - City drivers start at \$22/hr

Action items

- Use LRTP to discuss the decisions that would need to be made (e.g. service area footprint that matches funding)
- NN to explore transit tradeoffs, funding decisions; scope out new TDP
 - Look at comparable funding models and systems
 - See if there are instances of where employers were convinced to self-tax
 - E.g. Louisville has employee tax for those working in Louisville
 - Note: Important for CATC to determine what their service goals are

DEVELOPERS' FORUM (12.06.18)

What types of infill would work?

- 2-3 story, modern, not massive is favorable (DC example)
- Could see riverfront development being mixed-use

What are some obstacles?

- Vehicles and parking in residential areas - one-way residential streets are narrow, especially since many people drive large vehicles
- Cheaper and more reliable to develop on fringe
 - *How will opportunity zones change this equation?* Remains to be seen

PLATTE RIVER TRAILS TRUST (12.06.18)

Planned/proposed projects

- Rail Trail to Edness K. Wilkins State Park
- River Trail to Walmart at CY Ave (near Fort Caspar Academy)
 - Still need buy-in from Walton Family Foundation (they do not accept unsolicited grants)
- Smaller projects addressing sidewalk gaps (e.g. side trail by Armory Park)
- Building out Rail Trail to State Park as part of the Great American Trail (from Washington, DC to Washington state)
- Addressing both large maintenance and smaller projects this year

Things to improve

- Connectivity: Would like to pick 3-4 critical points to connect to the trail system
 - People want connections from home to the River/Rail trails
- Wayfinding: Less frequent users may not know where the trails are
- Many network gaps that are on city right-of-way; these projects will be easy to implement
 - PRT is trying to catalog these gaps and prioritize these projects

Who are the River Trails' community partners?

- NCSJ Joint Powers Board is a funding partner
 - Helped fund last 10 years of projects
- Windy City Striders use facilities often
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is biggest funder in the state
- Word that a legislator may propose 1-cent from gas tax for the trails
- Corporate sponsors to help fund things like mile markers
- PRT has also built up their own cash reserves

Action items

- NN will look at which gaps in the network could unlock more potential

INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE (12.07.18)

General

- Infrastructure subcommittee drives the implementation of plans
- Prioritizes capital planning
- Resurfacing is maintenance-driven (e.g. replacing water and sewer lines) and not plan-driven due to lack of funds
- Projects are implemented a few blocks at a time instead of entire corridors at a time, so they need to be tied into existing infrastructure
 - Exception of West Yellowstone (received state/fed funds)
- Eastside bypass loop – State building new road that Casper doesn't need; suggestion to look at this through LRTP (i.e. is this road needed/supported); trying to stress to WYDOT that investments should be made to improve what's already there instead of building something new. Eastside bypass loop was in prior LRTPs.
- Almost all capital dollars come from the one-cent sales tax which is voted on every four years, recently reapproved
- No local support to turn 1-way pairs to 2-way pairs in downtown Casper; need support from Downtown Commissioners and other downtown stakeholders
- May have champions at charrettes but in past experience, those champions do not support project all the way through
 - Will need to be strategic about how we communicate benefits/goals of individual projects to community

Traffic signals

- Signal timing: Made effort to remove unwanted signals, still contentious, 2 were near elementary schools; still continuing this effort to remove unwarranted signals
 - Spent time educating public about why this was a good idea
 - Difficult to convince public because people don't see heavy pedestrian/bicycle activity
- Casper traffic signals don't communicate/coordinate with WYDOT system
 - Casper moving away from traffic signal loop system; putting in thermal cams, trying to keep up with technology

Pedestrian connectivity/experience

- Local connections to trails
 - North Casper prime for more connections
 - Suggestion to prioritize trail system instead of on-street network
- Bus stops: not safe for people waiting for the bus, poor lighting, poor user experience
- Busy trails: Robertson Rd trail and path to Rotary Park
- Important narratives to use in future implementation of bike/ped: using bike infrastructure to connect to trails, public safety

Action items

- Aaron to ask for trail data and counts from Tim Cortez
- Aaron to send copy of Midwest project to NN
- NN to map: Zero/1 car households and/or include in transit propensity maps
- Suggestion to invite Coffee Talk (Developers Forum) attendees to March charrette
- Suggestion from Paul to crosscheck MTIP, PSD CIP, and other Plans

WYOMING MEDICAL CENTER/CASPER-NATRONA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (12.07.18)

Access to healthy food and healthcare

- North Casper is area of concern as a food desert; separated by interstate and mini marts shut down possibly due to theft
- Health Department is studying link b/t low-income areas and health disparities
- People call ambulance to get to hospital if they have no car access
- “Sensible Nutrition” program at University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension – teaches people how to shop at grocery stores
- Access to medical center isn’t difficult. More difficulty accessing post-hospital care (e.g. clinics)
 - Patients are given bus tokens or CATC tickets.
 - Issues: Spreading of germs are not good for other bus patrons, lack of bus service on Sundays
 - Approximately 30-40% outpatients are given bus tokens or CATC rides
- Transportation for seniors is lacking in the region
- Work with CATC to coordinate on getting patients that need to come in for daily trips
- Wait times of CATC can be an issue for patients
- CATC routes too circuitous, wait times too long
 - Bus tokens given to normal patients with no cognitive, physical ailments, able-bodied
 - CATC rides given to patients needing antibiotics, over 65, disabled
- WMC utilizes CATC more than bus tokens
 - For wheelchair users, sometimes CATC is only option because family members may not be available or cannot transport wheelchair in vehicle

Wyoming Medical Center (WMC)

- 1,100-1,200 employees; telemedicine is a fast-growing trend which is expanding around the state
- Level 2 trauma center (don’t have surgeon or anesthesiologist 24/7)
- Serious child patients are sent to clinics
- No existing TDM – free parking for employees
- Transit here not practical as means to/from work
 - During bad snowstorm, security trucks bring staff in to work
- Many employees bike. Recently installed new bike racks. Wellness Center promotes biking to work
- Patients in-state are transferred here for higher level care
 - More serious patients sent to Denver
 - First responsibility is to Natrona Cty, but try to help those living outside the county
- Proposed “ambulette” service – can’t take patients home but can take them to other facilities such as nursing home

- 1-2 years out
- Currently sometimes send patients home in an ambulance at hospital's cost

General health issues in the region

- COPD (cardio pulmonary disease, i.e. emphysema, asthma and pneumonia) – might be tied to altitude
- Health Department is reaching out to school districts on children's weights; expectation for a response is low
- Increase in suicidal attempts
- Increase in readmits for pneumonia/COPD

Action items

- Suggestion from WMC to talk to Home Health agencies
 - Director of Nursing for Health Department has contact info
- Suggestion to talk to Cari Hacking, trauma coordinator for WMC
 - Can share data on trauma admits (i.e. car accidents, bicycle, ped injuries)
 - Has data on how many were admitted, how many got sent to ER

WYDOT (12.07.18)

District 2 State of Affairs

- For capital projects, infrastructure preservation is main goal
- In “Preservation mode” – taking care of existing infrastructure instead of adding facilities
 - This is true department-wide but also same for this district
 - Likely due to nature of energy economy, which is “boom and bust”; when there is a “boom” in the energy industry” there is an uptick in traffic
- Boost in energy economy does not equate to a boost in funding; revenue to state’s general fund has to be approved by legislature

Project prioritization

- Pavement management system came online 8-10 years ago
 - Helps prioritize projects
 - Provides comprehensive analysis on NHS, interstate, and non-NHS routes
 - Rutting, cracking, skid resistance, other factors are collected and equations are developed to quantify deterioration rate
 - Results tend to confirm what WYDOT already knew
- Bridge management system also brought online recently
 - Similar system to pavement management
 - Confirms what WYDOT already knew
- These management systems are driven by FHWA and performance measures
 - Helps forecast which structures and facilities will become deficient in the future
- Struggling to find balance between all three systems
 - Pavement is sometimes main emphasis, because it is the biggest square yard investment.

Safety

- Safety is nebulous. Can never be 100% sure that the project will actually improve safety. Rumble strips are most effective safety improvements WYDOT does.
- How does WYDOT score safety with projects?
 - Score safety by roadway segments. Similar segments of roadway are compared with each other and a relative score is given to each segment. Evaluate “hotspots” based on crash data, fatalities, critical injuries, etc.
- Seeing slight increase of head-on crashes
- Current systemic safety improvements: rumble strips, no passing signs

Performance measures

- Don’t have many issues with travel time, congestion in this district

Current projects

- 1st/Poplar intersection – adding turn lane capacity, moving greater volume of traffic through intersection.
 - Proactive move anticipating growth.
 - Without improvements, this intersection could be LOS F; currently pushes LOS D.
- 15th from Wyoming to Casper Mtn Rd – capacity increase put on backburner

Process for wanting to reduce restrictions?

- No formal process, but always open to discussion
- Example: 4 lane to 3 lane conversion – never had formal talks about any sections, many of those sections haven't gone through rigorous enough traffic analysis to determine what benefits are and to see if pros outweigh cons

Accommodating pedestrians and crossings at transit stops

- Not many examples of this along DOT ROW but should have actuated signals
- Willing to have discussion

Roundabouts

- Open to roundabouts if location is right and it is done correctly
- Haven't identified areas in region where this would be beneficial

Signal timing

- WYDOT tried to coordinate with City of Casper on traffic signals (~15 years ago). City had to upgrade signals, but failed to keep up with technology and controllers that WYDOT moved forward with
- Many studies done on how to improve flow on 2nd/Wyoming
- Much advancement made with smart signals and detection
- No WYDOT were signals recommended for removal during last study
- Just added signal on US-87 and Curtis near Hat 6 Rd
- First instinct for people who perceive there to be an issue is to add a traffic signal
- WYDOT checks to see if traffic volumes necessitate new signal

What's needed for better communication between MPO and WYDOT?

- Technology upgrades because signals can't speak to each other

Transportation impacts of energy sector (e.g. funding, travel demand)

- Casper to remain centralized hub for energy industry, which puts pressure on every system; will see LOS D and F on many intersections

- West Belt loop was a good addition. Very expensive but added new capacity. Cannot continue to afford to implement projects like this.
- Major nodes (Wyoming Blvd intersection at I-25, 1st/Poplar, 220 and 226) are impacted when energy sector is booming
- Casper not seen as final destination for many of energy sector workers but more of a place to pick up supplies, etc.
- Increase in energy activities in Douglas; seeing increase in traffic and likely to bleed over into Casper
- Energy sector puts massive pressure on network but when it bottoms out, the volumes and the funding dry up making it very difficult to be proactive

How does WYDOT prepare for population growth?

- No-win situation. Balance between being proactive and reactive.
- With revenue streams, impossible to be proactive with some aspects.

Associated impacts with rail/freight and priorities for the region?

- 20/26 Granite Peak transloading area was extremely busy during the last uptick
- Seeing increase in wind turbine parts coming in by rail
- BNSF takes care of at-grade crossings pretty well, with exception of rural crossings
- Unaware of planned pipeline projects in this area. Heard of a few planned projects (Wyoming Blvd over the mountain, more of an upgrade than a new line)