CHEYENNE MASTER PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE

Economic Development Agencies
Amber Ash, Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
Domenic Bravo, Visit Cheyenne
Betsey Hale, Cheyenne LEADS
Dale Steenbergen, Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce

City of Cheyenne
Charles Bloom, Planning and Development
Jason Sanchez, Community Recreation and Events

City/County Elected Officials
Linda Heath, Laramie County Commission
Pete Laybourn, Cheyenne City Council

Higher Education
Steve Farkas, University of Wyoming College of Business
Penny Fletcher, Laramie County Community College

Businesses & Attractions
Desiree Brothe, Arts Cheyenne
Hamilton Byrd, Blue Pig Productions
Heather Foster, Little America Hotel and Resort
Jon and Renee Jelinek, Lincoln Theater and Paramount Ballroom
Christy McCarthy, Cheyenne Depot Museum
Irving Mercado, Urban Art/Music Scene

State of Wyoming
Senator Affie Ellis, Chair of the Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resource Committee
RJ Glantz, WY Workforce Services and Ballet Wyoming
Brain Morgan, WY Dept. of Enterprise Technology Services
Darin Westby, WY State Parks and Cultural Resources and Cheyenne Frontier Days
CHEYENNE TOURISM
MASTER PLAN

April 2021

WHY A CHEYENNE TOURISM MASTER PLAN? 4
THE PLANNING PROCESS 6
STRATEGIES – VISITOR EXPERIENCES 8
DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCES & DEVELOPMENT 12
OUTDOOR RECREATION 14
COMMUNITY BRANDING 16
TRAVEL INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK 18
APPENDICES 20
I. WHY A CHEYENNE TOURISM MASTER PLAN?

This Cheyenne Tourism Master Plan establishes a vision of where the Cheyenne travel industry wants to be in 10 years. The plan is a road map for action to help Cheyenne and Laramie County provide a positive experience for visitors, while enhancing the quality of life for residents. The plan will do this through collaborative development and marketing efforts for both the public and private sectors.

Because so many entities participate in the travel economy, this plan seeks to strategically align efforts to produce tangible progress and minimize duplications of effort. The Master Plan will guide year-to-year budgeting and operations of relevant Cheyenne entities, but also inspire efforts to larger, long-term objectives.

This Cheyenne Tourism Master Plan includes the City of Cheyenne and all of surrounding Laramie County.
**THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT**

This Tourism Master Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. At each year’s review, the Master Plan Steering Committee (page 2) may add new strategies, provide more detail and action steps to existing strategies, mark some items as complete, and remove others as impractical or unfeasible. As a result, some of the strategies that are less developed now may become more developed and detailed in the future as more information is available.

In addition, the Steering Committee will measure and note progress on the various strategies for project refinement and accountability.

During the first year (June 2021 – May 2020), the Steering Committee will meet quarterly to fine-tune implementation and funding steps.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

The travel industry is quite fragmented with numerous attractions, businesses, and other entities all playing roles, so inclusion and buy-in are vital for the success of a tourism plan. Consequently, the planning process put a premium on the engagement of the Cheyenne hospitality and broader business community, the public sector, area residents, and visitors. In addition, this planning process was overseen by a Steering Committee composed of 21 business and community leaders who advised and reviewed progress along the way both with online comments and in-person meetings.
II. THE PLANNING PROCESS

To coordinate and conduct the planning effort, Visit Cheyenne engaged Rudloff Solutions and students from the University of Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program. (Appendix A)

The planning process was divided into two phases. Phase 1 included extensive research on the Cheyenne and Laramie County travel industry and the identification of six strategic issues affecting the industry going forward. Phase 2 included the development of actual plan elements to improve the Laramie County travel economy.

PHASE I: RESEARCH

Rudloff Solutions and two University of Wyoming tourism students implemented a comprehensive research methodology to access the current Cheyenne area travel industry and engage stakeholders in the process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewed 36 reports, plans, and research studies related to the travel industry, the local economy, and current development efforts from Cheyenne economic development agencies, the City of Cheyenne, Laramie County, Cheyenne Frontier Days, state agencies, and others (Appendix B). From this analysis, the research team identified 6 major themes as vitally important to the local travel industry. In other words, the literature review revealed the major issues previously identified and studied by several groups.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviewed 33 travel industry, business, and community leaders to gather input on the 6 strategic issues in greater detail. (Appendix C)

RESIDENT SURVEY

Surveyed Laramie County residents (500 respondents) in an online questionnaire about Cheyenne’s brand, the local travel industry, and Cheyenne area attributes (downtown, attractions, hospitality, etc.). (Appendix D)

VISITOR SURVEY

Surveyed previous visitors to Laramie County (79 respondents) in an online questionnaire about Cheyenne’s brand, desired activities for a return trip to the area, and Cheyenne area attributes. (Appendix D)

PHASE 2: MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Rudloff Solutions developed draft recommendations for the Tourism Master Plan and refined them from Steering Committee feedback provided through an online survey. During this step, it became apparent that two initiatives contained significant overlap so they were combined. The recommend strategies were presented to the Steering Committee again in person for final adjustment and approval.
Reviewed **36** reports, plans, and research studies

Interviewed **33** travel industry, business, and community leaders

Surveyed **500** Laramie County residents

Surveyed **79** previous visitors to Laramie County
III. STRATEGIES

**Vision for the Cheyenne Travel Industry:**
Cheyenne is an authentic and dynamic destination, proud of its pioneering accomplishments and featuring year-round attractions and activities benefiting both visitors and residents.

The strategies below contain recommendations for Lead and Support Entities that will be responsible for implementation. In addition, each strategy contains implementation time frames defined as follows: Short term 1-2 years, Medium term 3-5 years, Long term 5-10 years.

I. VISITOR EXPERIENCES

a. Develop an **events strategy** that helps create and manage a series of events for both residents and visitors with an emphasis on the winter and shoulder seasons. Commit to create and promote one or more signature winter events (either new or built on existing events). Promote them under a unified brand where appropriate.

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b. Improve **entryways / gateways** into Cheyenne and downtown, especially from the interstates.

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- Implement features such as medians, fencing, and vertical art elements to create “wow” experiences on W. Lincolnway and S. Central Avenue, both at the interstates and the entries into downtown. Ensure appropriate maintenance for new and existing enhancements. (Short-Medium term)
- Develop an action plan to cleanup and redevelop the Hitching Post Inn property, both as a gateway project and new business opportunity. (Short-Medium term)
c. Create more **railroad attractions** to attract year-round visitation, engage the local population, support the Cheyenne brand, and create valuable public relations for Union Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF).

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- Work closely with UP to help promote and tell the UP Steam Story through steam shop tours, Depot Days efforts, Big Boy viewing opportunities, UP presentations, etc. (Short term)
- Explore options and develop feasible plans for greater access and for the development of larger attractions with both UP and BNSF. (Medium term)
- Completion of the larger railroad attraction (to be determined). (Long term)

d. Support the implementation of the **Cheyenne Frontier Days** Trail Guide for the Future to grow the CFD experience.

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e. Encourage **sports facility** development for use by residents and visiting tournaments in a manner acceptable to Laramie County residents.

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f. Support development of **additional attractions or amenities** as they become feasible (Ex: Archer Complex additions, Cheyenne Children's Museum, Recreation Center, former Airport Terminal, High Plains Arboretum, etc.).

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2. DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCES & DEVELOPMENT

a. Improve downtown’s infrastructure and appearance to encourage private development of retail, dining, residential, meeting space, and lodging businesses.

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- Pursue modernization of the alleys in the downtown core. (Short term)
- Encourage and support improvements / updating of other infrastructure when feasible (examples: overhead lighting, depot lighting, murals, wi-fi, banners, curb and gutter improvement, interstate highway sign pole replacement, etc.). (Short-Medium-Long term)

b. Develop and implement a plan to make the Hynds Building and adjacent vacant lot financially feasible for development.

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c. Monitor and assist with the Reed Ave Corridor Plan to develop the west edge of downtown. Provide input on development options during the planning phase.

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d. Support modern downtown policies and regulations to maintain a visitor and family-safe environment (parking, panhandling, graffiti, security, etc.).

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3. OUTDOOR RECREATION

a. Continue to develop the Cheyenne Greenway with an emphasis on connections into downtown and ways to activate the Greenway with activities and events. Ensure adequate ongoing maintenance.

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b. Help develop and promote existing outdoor recreation options such as Vedauwoo Recreation Area, Curt Gowdy State Park, Pine Bluffs Recreation Areas, etc. Possible enhancements: equipment rentals, new trails connecting recreation areas.

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c. Foster development of the **outdoor recreation industry** (outfitters, recreation providers, recreation manufacturers).

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- Explore opportunities for contracted services for equipment rentals. (Short term)
- Provide consumer education about how to enjoy local outdoor recreation amenities for both visitors and residents via videos, social media, trade shows, etc. (Short term)
- Investigate creating an outdoor recreation incubator, outdoor recreation business park, or a recruitment effort for outdoor recreation businesses. Possible locations: Cheyenne Business Parks, Belvoir Ranch. (Medium term)

d. Develop and implement a **Big Hole / Belvoir Ranch** multi-year action plan that attains step-by-step progress toward opening these lands to outdoor recreation. Consider adding outdoor recreation business options to the land use plan.

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e. Make modifications or significant enhancements to **Crow Creek** to create a waterway attraction and Greenway extension from FEW to downtown.

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4. COMMUNITY BRANDING

a. Develop and use a unified community brand for Cheyenne and Laramie County to promote the benefits of Laramie County externally and create pride among residents.

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- Establish a committee of economic development and local government entities to:
  1. Review existing brands;
  2. Consider the branding needs of the organizations (for instance, how local brands interact with state brands);
  3. Review research on brand perceptions of both visitors and residents; and
  4. Decide how best to implement a county-wide brand. (Short term)

- Consider Live Legendary as either the brand or an option to build upon. Share Live Legendary creative / explanatory documentation with branding committee. (Short term)

- Formally adopt and use the brand and promote it to local attractions, events, and the private sector for their use. (Short term)

b. Use the new brand in a community pride campaign targeted at Laramie County residents.

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5. TRAVEL INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK

a. Broadly adopt and implement this **Tourism Master Plan.** Communicate the benefits and economic impact of the plan and its projects to residents. Paint the picture of an improved community.

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- Adoption by economic development boards, planning commission, city, county, and others. (Short term)
- Promote the plan to entities in destination services and marketing to build networks of partners working together on unified efforts (restaurants, transportation, etc). Develop new communication tools as needed. (Short term)
- Integration into government master plans and annual budgeting (Cheyenne Plan, County Comprehensive Plan, etc.). (Short-Medium-Long term)
- Provide regular updates to elected officials, the travel industry, and the public on the status of this plan. Highlight successes to engage residents and the hospitality industry. (Short-Medium-Long term)

b. Develop and implement strategies to address **workforce** availability and quality challenges (recruitment, hospitality training).

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- Promote positives of working in the hospitality industry and available positions. (Short - Medium term)
- Provide hospitality training to workers already in the industry at area lodging, dining, and retail operations. (Short-Medium term)

c. Advocate and support **transportation** infrastructure developments (road, air, rail).

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d. Monitor and support development of **funding** options for projects and organizations critical to this plan and overall economic development.

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- Support 2021 Capital Facilities/6th penny election items included in the Master Plan. Take lead in preparing Master Plan projects for consideration for future Capital Facilities ballots. Lead or support promotion campaigns to support passage of future Master Plan projects by the voters. (Short-Medium-Long term)

- Be ready for possible covid-related funding options (CARES, ARP, EDA). (Short term)

- Develop and use funding options and tools for economic development purposes as appropriate (examples: urban renewal district, tax increment financing, business and tourism improvement districts, economic development sales tax). (Short-Medium-Long term)

e. Support overall Laramie County **business vitality and activity** that creates year-round business travel.

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IV. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CHEYENNE MASTER PLAN PROJECT TEAM

Darren Rudloff, Rudloff Solutions

University of Wyoming Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program
  Levi P. Kaiser, B.S. Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management
  Hailey Moss, B.S. Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management
  Dan McCoy, Ph.D., Degree Coordinator & Associate Lecturer

Visit Cheyenne
  Domenic Bravo, CEO
  Jim Walter, Vice President / Director of Sales and Marketing
  Andi Jaspersen, Experience and Marketing Manager

APPENDIX B: CHEYENNE AND LARAMIE COUNTY DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AND USED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Visit Cheyenne Destination Next Assessment 2015
Visit Cheyenne Destination Next Assessment 2018
Visit Cheyenne Business Plan FY 2021
Visit Cheyenne Strategic Plan 2017
Visit Cheyenne Meeting Planner Research 2018
Cheyenne and Laramie County Economic Development Grid
Downtown Core Working Plan 2016
Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority Strategic Action Plan FY 21-22
Cheyenne Chamber Priority Assessment 2019
LEADs Strategic Plan 2020-2025
LEADS Cheyenne Competitive Assessment 2021
Forward Greater Cheyenne Community & Economic Development Strategy 2018
Forward Greater Cheyenne Implementation Plan 2018
Cheyenne Frontier Days Strategic Trail Guide to the Future (2020 Update)
Downtown Alleyway Enhancements 2017
Reed Ave. Rail Corridor Master Plan 2018
West Edge Area Wide Plan 2016
Cheyenne Lincolnway Placemaking 2016
Arts Cheyenne Visioning Framework FY 2020 - FY 2025

Arts Cheyenne Strategic Plan FY 2021
Artspace – Preliminary Feasibility Report 2014
Laramie County Comprehensive Plan 2016
Plan Cheyenne Community Plan (2014 Update)
Connect 2045 - Plan Cheyenne Transportation update
Pine Bluffs Community Analysis 2008
Archer Trail Connector Plan 2019
Laramie County Community College Strategic Plan 2020
The Belvoir Ranch and Big Hole Master Plan 2008
Indoor Sports Facility Cost and Revenue Projections 2019 (UW MBA project)
WY State Parks & Cultural Resources Strategic Plan FY 20-23
Report of Wyoming Governor’s Task Force on Outdoor Recreation 2017
WY Outdoor Recreation Office Strategic Plan 2019
WY Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-23
Wyoming’s Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2016-2026
Wyoming Arts Council Strategic Plan
WY Cultural Trust Fund Revised Strategic Plan 2019
APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Economic Development Agencies
Amber Ash, Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority
Domenic Bravo, Visit Cheyenne
Betsy Hale, Cheyenne LEADs
Andi Jasperson, Visit Cheyenne
Dale Steenbergen, Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce
Jim Walter, Visit Cheyenne

City of Cheyenne
Charles Bloom, Planning and Development
Jillian Harris, Metropolitan Planning Organization
Tom Mason, Metropolitan Planning Organization
Jason Sanchez, Community Recreation and Events
Jeanne Vetter, Cheyenne Greenway

City/County Elected Officials
Patrick Collins, Mayor of Cheyenne
Gunnar Malm, Laramie County Commission
Tom Segrave, Cheyenne City Council
Jeff White, Cheyenne City Council

Businesses & Attractions
Astrid, Plains Hotel
Chad Banks, Pine Bluffs Malting
Desiree Brothe, Arts Cheyenne
Curtis Crowton, Outlaw Saloon
Sam Galeotis, The Metropolitan Restaurant
Bryan ‘Alf’ Grzegorczyk, Alf’s Pub
Tom Hirsig, Cheyenne Frontier Days
Mike Kassel, Old West Museum
CJ Kopek, WY Rib & Chop House Restaurant
Morgan Marks, Old West Museum
Tyler McLachlan, Towneplace Suites
Bob Nelson, Nelson Museum of West
Tony O’Brien, Little America Hotel & Resort
John Rimmasch, Wasatch Railroad Contractors
Bryan Thompson, Terry Bison Ranch

State of Wyoming
David Glenn, WY Parks Outdoor Recreation Office
Stephanie Lowe, WY Dept. of Transportation
Diane Shober, WY Office of Tourism
Appendix D: Phase 1 Research Highlights

Word or Phrase that Represents Cheyenne

Visitors

Residents
Top Activities **VISITORS** Want To Do on their Next Cheyenne Trip

RESIDENT Views on the Local Tourism Industry

82% Agree or Strongly Agree that the Laramie County travel industry has a *positive economic impact* on Cheyenne and Laramie County

81% Agree or Strongly Agree that the *benefits of the travel industry* outweigh its negatives

RESIDENT Support for Development Options

**Percentage** that Agree or Strongly Agree Cheyenne/Laramie County **should**:

- actively pursue **new attractions** for visitors and residents 90%
- develop/host more **major events** for residents and visitors 90%
- actively work to improve **downtown Cheyenne** 91%
- develop and promote local **outdoor recreation** options 89%