

CHAPTER SEVEN LAND USE MANAGEMENT



7.1 GENERAL

The adoption of a municipal master plan and a municipal zoning ordinance are two of the primary tools that can be used by Wyoming communities for land use management. The potential use of these management tools is authorized in Title 15 of the Wyoming Statutes.

It is important that these management tools are regularly updated to reflect ever-changing demographic, economic and land use trends, as well as insights and preferences of the community. The Town of Alpine has recognized this need through its authorization of the ongoing update of its municipal master plan and a subsequent revision of the municipal zoning ordinance.

These tools and other potential land use management options are discussed in Chapter Seven. The evaluation of existing municipal zoning is limited to identifying the potential scope of recommended changes to the municipal zoning ordinance.

7.2 MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN

The municipal master plan, defined in W.S. 15-1-503 through 15-1-506, is to serve as a guide to:

- the general location of future municipal roads and other transportation facilities, water and sewer systems, parks playgrounds, and other public facilities; and,
- the general location and character of community centers and neighborhoods, as well as areas of the community that may be considered for future redevelopment.

For example, Chapter Eight of this municipal master plan presents and evaluates three alternate land use plans for the Town of Alpine, as well as a recommended land use plan for the community. These alternate plans depict the recommended type and location of future land uses in the community for, at least, the next 10 years. Recommendations concerning potential annexations of selected lands north of Alpine are also presented in Chapter Seven. Recommended infrastructure improvements to support future land uses in Alpine are also discussed in Chapters Six and Eight.

An adopted master plan is to serve as a general vision that the community can use to encourage a combination of future private and public investments. Through their review of the municipal master plan, private investors and public agencies can learn of the type and location of land uses that the community prefers, as well as planned expansions to municipal infrastructure. This information enables private investors and other public agencies to have fruitful negotiations of proposed projects with the Town of Alpine.

The availability of the municipal master plan also facilitates the recommendations of the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission and the ultimate decision-making of the Alpine Town Council. The scope of proposed projects can be reviewed, in part, in terms of their consistency or compatibility with the land use plan adopted by the community.

The municipal master plan can also be used by the Town Council and municipal staff to help plan, determine and prioritize future budgetary expenditures. The municipal master plan provides recommendations concerning proposed infrastructure improvements and the development of other community amenities that may be needed to support existing land uses and anticipated land use expansion.

As one of Wyoming's more rapidly growing communities, it is recommended that Alpine's municipal master plan be updated every three to four years. Once a municipal master plan becomes considerably out-of-date, the potential use of the municipal master plan to help attract private and public investments, facilitate decision-making concerning land use proposals, and the planning of municipal budgets, is often hampered.

7.3 MUNICIPAL ZONING

7.3.1 Regulatory Authority

The authority to regulate land uses within any Wyoming municipality is provided in W.S. 15-1-601. This statute provides municipalities with the opportunity to regulate:

- height and size of buildings;

- amount of land area that may be occupied or developed;
- size of yards, courts and other open space;
- the type and location of land uses; and,
- building setbacks.

W.S. 15-1-601(b) envisions the adoption of a traditional zoning ordinance that includes the establishment of various zoning districts. Alternate approaches to municipal zoning are not authorized or prohibited by this statute. Otherwise, zoning regulations are to be in accordance with a municipal comprehensive plan, i.e., municipal master plan.

7.3.2 The Alpine Zoning Ordinance

A municipal zoning ordinance was initially adopted by the Town of Alpine on June 18, 1991. Since that time, a considerable number of amendments to the zoning ordinance have been adopted by the Alpine Town Council. Municipal staff members are uncertain whether or not a complete version of the amended ordinance is available. However, amendments adopted by the Town of Alpine, through 2003 are reflected in the copy of the zoning ordinance that was reviewed for this report.

The existing zoning ordinance is generally consistent with W.S. 15-1-601. The ordinance establishes seven different zoning districts. These districts include:

- R-1 single family residential;
- R-2 single family/multiple family residential;
- R-3 multiple family residential;
- B-1 light commercial;
- C-1 commercial;
- I-1 industrial; and,
- PUD planned unit development

With the exception of the PUD district, each of the district regulations generally includes a description of purpose, permitted uses, conditional uses, and property development standards.

Chapter V of the zoning ordinance provides general regulations for a variety of land use management considerations. These provisions include considerations such as building height requirements, walls and fences, animals and pets, home occupations and exterior lighting.

Signage regulations that are applicable to all zoning districts are also included as part of the general regulations. These provisions outline the procedural requirements for obtaining a sign permit, as well as standards associated with various types of signage.

Vehicular parking and loading requirements are summarized in Section 503 for a variety of land uses. These requirements consider the design and location of parking spaces, as well as off-street parking and loading spaces.

Landscaping requirements are provided in Section 504 of the zoning ordinance. Landscaping requirements are presented only for yards and setback areas, as well as vehicular parking areas.

7.3.3 Zoning Ordinance Needs and Potential Revisions

7.3.3.1 Make the Ordinance More “User Friendly”

A general re-organization is needed to make the ordinance more “user friendly” for the general public, the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission, municipal staff, and the Alpine Town Council. Several of the general provisions, e.g., building height and home occupation requirements, can easily be incorporated into each of the specific zoning district regulations. While this approach will increase the length of some provisions, it will enable users of the zoning ordinance to more easily locate requirements that are applicable to their specific land use development project, e.g., a new residence or new commercial facility.

7.3.3.2 Incorporate Building and Construction Code Standards

The Town of Alpine adopted the 1991 Uniform Building Code as the construction standard for the community on June 18, 1991. This adoption was made by the Alpine Town Council via Alpine Ordinance No. 1992-15.

Prior to the adoption of the 1991 Uniform Building Code, the original zoning ordinance adopted by the Town of Alpine was referred to as the “Building and Zoning Ordinance”. The future revision of the municipal zoning ordinance should consider the incorporation of adopted building standards. This would facilitate a more convenient reference to overall land use and building requirements.

A transition is being made by many Wyoming and other U.S. communities to adopt one or more portions of a comprehensive set of construction codes that have been developed by the International Code Council. These codes primarily include the following:

- International Building Code
- International Residential Code for One and Two-Family Dwellings
- International Plumbing Code
- International Mechanical Code
- International Fire Code
- International Electric Code Administrative Provisions
- International Private Sewage Disposal Code
- International Fuel Gas Code
- International Urban-Wildland Interface Code
- International Energy Conservation Code

The 2003 edition of these codes is the most current version available at the time of this report. However, some revisions to these codes are expected in a planned 2006 edition of these codes which are in progress at the time of this report.

It is recommended that the Town of Alpine adopt, at least, the following codes published by the International Code Council:

- International Building Code
- International Residential Code for One and Two-Family Dwellings
- International Plumbing Code

- International Mechanical Code

The National Electric Code (NEC), published by the National Fire Protection Association, addresses the installation of electrical systems and equipment to help protect people and property from potential hazards associated with the use of electricity in buildings and structures. The NEC generally encompasses standards related to the installation of the following:

- a. electric conductors and equipment within or on public and private buildings or other structures, including mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and floating buildings; and other premises such as yards, carnivals, parking lots, and industrial substations.
- b. conductors and equipment that connect to the supply of electricity.
- c. other outside conductors and equipment on the premises.
- d. optical fiber cable.
- e. installations in buildings used by an electric utility, e.g., office buildings, warehouses, garages, machine shops, and recreational buildings that are not an integral part of a generating plant, substation, or control center (National Fire Protection Association, 1999).

This widely accepted set of standards is well known to electrical contractors. The National Electrical Code has also been adopted by the Wyoming Fire Marshall. Consequently, it is recommended that the NEC be adopted rather than the International Electrical Code.

7.3.3.3 Encourage Home Occupations and Improve Home Occupation Requirements

Expanded use of the Internet and other telecommunication services has greatly enhanced the feasibility of operating small, home-based businesses throughout the United States. The ability to operate a small, home-based business in Alpine will likely be an important consideration for some existing and future residents who desire to establish or relocate an existing small business in the community.

The geographical location of Alpine and its proximity to natural assets and related recreational opportunities offers a potential opportunity for some Alpine residents to establish a bed-and-breakfast operation within their homes. This opportunity is another potential home occupation that can be used to generate supplemental household income on, at least, a seasonal basis.

Home occupation standards within the municipal zoning ordinance are unnecessarily restrictive concerning the use of employees and the proportion of floor area devoted to the home occupation. Further, they do not address the important issues that are important to neighboring landowners.

The zoning ordinance should enable the opportunity to pursue potential home occupations in selected residential zoning districts. At the same time, the zoning ordinance should recognize and address potential impacts of a home occupation, e.g., increased vehicular traffic and parking requirements, that can make the home occupation undesirable to the surrounding neighborhood. Reasonable vehicular parking requirements and selected operational requirements can be stipulated by the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission to help ensure the compatibility of home occupations with adjacent land uses.

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7.3.3.4 Encourage Mixed Residential and Commercial Land Uses

Traditional zoning codes often include sets of permitted uses that often segregate residential and commercial land uses. In many situations, the separation of these issues is appropriate to sustain residential property values in established residential neighborhoods or the financial viability of concentrated commercial areas.

Alpine's municipal zoning ordinance does permit the mixing of some residential and commercial land uses in the R-3 multiple family residential district. However, the existing zoning map does not reflect any area zoned for multiple family residential uses (Figure 7-1). In the C-1 commercial district, certain residential uses are subject to conditional approval.

In smaller communities that are distant from regional population and economic centers, consideration needs to be given to potential opportunities to make residential and commercial investments attractive from the perspective of a potential return-on-investment, the desired lifestyle of the investor, as well as the functionality of different land uses. Mixed commercial and residential uses can sometimes improve the financial viability of small retail businesses, particularly if adjacent commercial activities conveniently provide marketable goods and services that are desired by local residents.

Consequently, revision of the municipal zoning map should consider potential mixed residential and commercial areas. The establishment of a separate zoning district for mixed residential and commercial land uses should also be considered for selected areas of the community.

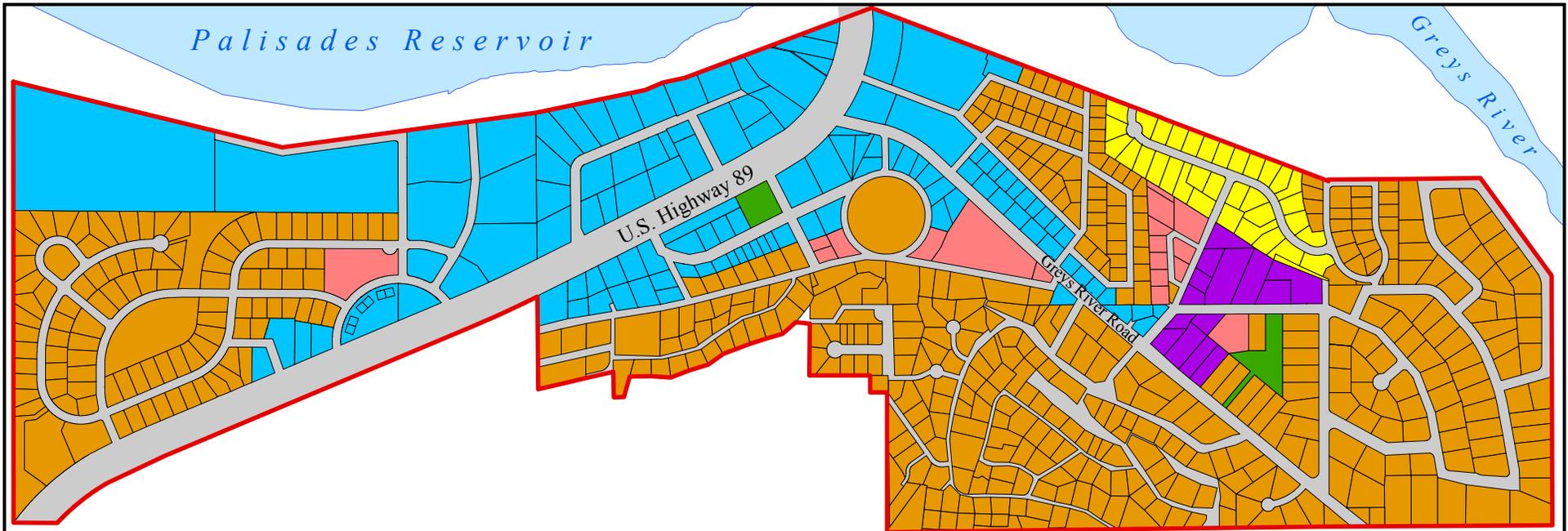
Property development standards associated with the R-3 multiple family district should also be re-evaluated. A wide variety of effective residential designs for residential apartment and condominium complexes have emerged from the construction industry during, at least, the past 30 to 40 years. It is important that this type of residential development is not unnecessarily discouraged by arbitrary site and facility development standards.

7.3.3.5 Make PUD a Process Rather Than a Zoning District

One of the seven zoning districts reflected in the municipal zoning code is Planned Unit Development. The establishment of a Planned Unit Development district is used by some communities. More commonly, Planned Unit Development is a regulatory process reflected in zoning ordinances that enable a community to:

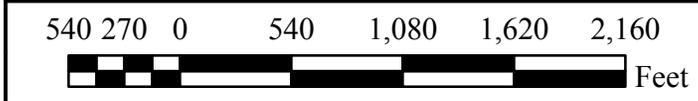
- Encourage a combination of land uses that would not be possible via the range of permitted uses authorized for each zoning district;

Encourage the creative design of residential and commercial areas, open spaces, and public facilities that may vary from development standards reflected in municipal zoning and subdivision ordinances.



Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Zoning Designation**
- B-1 Business
- C-1 Commercial
- Parks
- Planned Unit Development
- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Single Family, Multi-Family Residential



Alpine Municipal Master Plan

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Source: Town of Alpine, 2006

Existing Zoning Map Alpine, Wyoming

Figure 7-1

Development projects considered as a planned unit development typically receive greater scrutiny by municipal planning and zoning commissions in exchange for consideration and potential approval of more flexible development standards. Project approvals are often accompanied by specific stipulations or development requirements to mitigate potential project impacts.

Future revision of the municipal zoning code should establish a PUD process for various types of land uses. Existing PUD district designations should be eliminated as these designations incorrectly presume that land use development projects containing mixed land uses and/or variable development standards can only occur in selected areas.

7.3.3.6 Incorporate Measurement of Radon into Building Inspections

In view of elevated radon levels that are generally present throughout much of Lincoln County, the Town of Alpine should incorporate the measurement of radon levels during the final phase of building inspections. This requirement should be included in a future revision of the zoning ordinance unless the Town of Alpine elects to refine its building inspection process in a separate municipal ordinance.

The adoption of the International Residential Code for One and Two-Family Dwellings will also facilitate the application of this recommended requirement. Appendix F of the International Residential Code outlines radon control methods that, when appropriate, can be required for new residential construction. The zoning ordinance would need to specify what levels would generate the implementation of specific radon control methods.

7.4 SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

7.4.1 A Guide to Future Subdivision Development

Noticeably absent from Alpine's municipal codes is a set of subdivision regulations. These regulations are necessary to guide the future development of undeveloped properties within the existing municipal boundary, or potential annexation areas, that are being subdivided to accommodate future land uses. In their absence, future land use development may be incompatible with existing municipal roads, municipal water and sewer systems, and other quasi-public utility systems within the community. When this occurs, the reliability and efficiency of supporting utility system operations and maintenance may be jeopardized.

The implementation of subdivision requirements involves an effective subdivision review process and the application of effective and reasonable development standards for subdivision design and construction. The regulatory or land management objective should be to enhance the quality of land use development in Alpine to sustain property values. At the same time, site and facility development standards should be reasonable to ensure that Alpine remains attractive to future private and public investment.

7.4.2 The Process of Developing Subdivision Regulations

A planning and/or engineering consultant should be retained by the Town of Alpine to prepare subdivision regulations for the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission. If feasible, the combined use of selected planning and engineering consultants is preferred to ensure careful consideration of both the regulatory process, as well as appropriate site and facility development criteria and standards.

Draft subdivision regulations developed by Town consultants should be refined following an initial evaluation by the Planning and Zoning Commission, as well as the municipal public works director, town clerk, and municipal attorney. The second draft of the subdivision regulations should be made available for public review via the Internet or hardcopies that can be borrowed from the Town Hall. Public comments should be received during a related public information meeting and related public hearing. Following the hearing, Town consultants should refine the draft regulations to the satisfaction of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission will recommend and transmit the refined subdivision regulations to the Alpine Town Council for its review and consideration.

Following review by the Alpine Town Council, the Town Council would ideally meet with the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission and Town consultants to further refine the draft subdivision regulations. Once this refinement occurs, a revised set of subdivision regulations should again be made available for public review. A final public hearing would also be held to enable the receipt of insights and comments from the general public prior to ordinance adoption by the Alpine Town Council.

7.4.3 Scope of Subdivision Regulations

The scope of future subdivision regulations should generally include a detailed description of the required subdivision review and approval processes, appropriate subdivision application requirements, as well as applicable design criteria and infrastructure requirements for site and facility development.

7.4.3.1 Minor and Major Subdivisions

The regulatory process may desirably reflect and outline different review and approval processes for different types and sizes of land subdivisions. For example, a minor subdivision process could be established for land subdivisions that create one to five lots. This subdivision process would be organized to facilitate the processing of lot splits, utility easements, and other smaller subdivisions. The application for and approval of a minor subdivision process would be considerably less arduous than a larger residential subdivision containing, at least, 25 lots.

In contrast, the review and approval process for a larger subdivision containing 25 or more lots would involve the review of sketch, preliminary and final plat drawings, as well as a more detailed review of proposed site development. Stipulations by the Town of Alpine would typically accompany any subdivision approval to mitigate the impacts of proposed land development projects.

7.4.3.2 Pre-Application Process

In either case, a key point at the beginning of any subdivision review and approval process is an initial pre-application conference between a subdivision applicant and a representative of the Town of Alpine. It is important that the municipal representative has considerable experience working and communicating with private landowners and developers, well-versed in the land development process, and has expertise associated with the review and evaluation of land development projects. The first encounter that landowners and/or land developers have with a local jurisdiction should make a positive impression upon the potential investor.

Pre-application conferences are very useful to gain an understanding of the intentions of incoming applicants, desired project schedules, as well as the experience of the subdivision applicant with the land subdivision process. At the same time, the subdivision applicant can ask for and receive clarifications concerning the subdivision process before committing labor and resources for the preparation of a subdivision application.

7.4.3.3 Subdivision Evaluation

The Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission serves at the pleasure of the Town Council. It is responsible, in part, for providing recommendations to the Town Council concerning the denial or approval of a subdivision application. Following the pre-application conference, subdivision applicants that pursue subdivision approval will make application to the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission. The final decision relating to subdivision approval rests with the Alpine Town Council.

To carry out their respective duties, both municipal bodies will need a substantive technical review of each proposed subdivision in order to effectively make their recommendations and decisions. Since members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, as well as the Town Council, faithfully serve on a volunteer basis, their evaluation of each subdivision should represent their review of information provided by the subdivision applicant, as well as a documented project evaluation report that is prepared by a Town Planner representative. Otherwise, volunteer municipal leaders are required to expend considerable efforts researching a proposed subdivision that often extends far beyond the time they may have available or the experience necessary to address selected planning issues.

The scope of the evaluation will depend initially upon whether the proposed subdivision is a minor or major subdivision. Beyond that difference, a consistent set of review criteria will be used to review all subdivision projects. Using that approach, applicants can be assured that their projects will generally receive the same type of evaluation made for other subdivision projects.

The project evaluation report prepared for each subdivision application should consider a range of land use development issues. These issues should be clearly identified in conjunction with subdivision application requirements.

Such issues will address the potential impacts and benefits associated with development of the proposed subdivision. Considerable attention will be given to municipal requirements and the subdivision applicant's capability to construct infrastructure improvements that would connect the subdivision to municipal water and sewer systems, as well as the municipal road network.

The report would also include recommended measures that would be intended to mitigate anticipate project impacts. However, recommended mitigative measures would generally be consistent with the type and scope of recommendations determined for other proposed subdivisions in the community. Using this approach, despite differences in the location, size and scope of each project, the stipulations assigned to one subdivision applicant would not be significantly different from the type of measures and commitments required of others.

7.4.3.4 Subdivision Standards

A critical part of the subdivision regulations is the design criteria and development standards that landowners and/or subdivision applicants will be required to use for the design and construction of proposed subdivisions. These standards should outline specific requirements concerning how subdivision plat maps are to be prepared, e.g., size, format. Specific design criteria should be provided for the design of municipal roads, drainage systems, water distribution systems, and wastewater collection systems. These standards should be prepared by the Town engineers in close coordination with the Town Public Works director and the Town Planner.

7.4.4 Implementation of the Subdivision Process

The backbone of the subdivision process will be those individuals that are designated by the Town of Alpine to carry out various aspects of the subdivision process on behalf of the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission and the Alpine Town Council.

Overall coordination of the subdivision process should be assigned to a Town Planner. This individual may be a part-time employee of the Town that resides in the community, or an outside planning consultant retained on a part-time or as-needed basis. The Town planner would coordinate the review and evaluation of proposed subdivisions, prepare the subdivision evaluation report, present findings and recommendations concerning proposed subdivisions to the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission and the Alpine Town Council. It is also important that the designated Town Planner coordinate its review and evaluation of proposed subdivision applications with the municipal Public Works Director and Town Clerk, as well as Town engineers who are familiar with the municipal roads, water and sewer systems. The municipal budget should annually reflect available funds to support these administrative activities.

Dependent upon the technical skills and experience of municipal representatives, one or more Town representatives will ultimately need to inspect the scope and quality of constructed site improvements, roads and streets, water distribution systems, sewer collection systems, drainage systems and other improvements that may be required by the Town of Alpine. The inspection of these improvements should be accomplished by the Town Public Works Director and/or Town engineers who have experience with the design and construction of municipal roads, as well as water, sewer and drainage systems. The information gained from these inspections should be documented and provided to the Town Planner. In response, the Town Planner would incorporate inspection reports in the municipal subdivision files and share this information with the Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission, as well as the Alpine Town Council.

7.5 IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE

7.5.1 Need to Support Capital Improvements Associated with Potential Annexations

As land use expansion continues to occur north of Alpine, some land developers, landowners, and municipal representatives have recognized that some unincorporated areas may be desirable for potential annexation into the Town of Alpine. Regardless of the variable community perceptions concerning desirability, annexations of improved residential and commercial properties into the Town of Alpine would generate increased costs to the municipality. The costs would be derived from, at least, the potential extension of water transmission and distribution lines, wastewater collection lines, a potential expansion of the wastewater treatment plant, as well as expanded police protection. The extent of these costs would depend, in large part, upon the financial resources allocated by landowners and/or developers for these improvements.

The potential imposition of exactions, e.g, impact fees, is one approach to obtaining the financial resources necessary to implement these improvements. An exaction is a condition or financial obligation imposed upon land developers or landowners to help municipal government provide public services. Further, exactions are a financial contribution, payment or land donation that is required as a precondition to approval of a land development project (Freeman, Shigley and Fulton, 2005).

7.5.2 Lessons from Wyoming

The imposition of exactions in Wyoming communities is limited, largely due to the limited growth experienced by most Wyoming communities outside of northwest Wyoming. Aside from this important factor, Wyoming Statutes provide no direct authority for the imposition of exactions by municipalities.

Limited case law in Wyoming provides some guidance concerning the imposition of municipal exactions.

“In the 1983 case Coulter v. City of Rawlins, the (Wyoming Supreme) court addressed whether a Wyoming municipality has authority under either existing statutes or home rule powers to charge fees for connecting to water and sewer lines. Wyoming Supreme Court also addressed whether a municipality has the authority to require either the dedication of land or fees in lieu of dedication for parks. In both circumstances the court held that a municipality has implied authority to impose such exactions. It is important to note that a municipality’s authority to impose such exactions is not derived from the state constitution’s home rule provisions. In fact, the court expressly denied home rule as a basis of authority. Instead, the court determined that authority for connection fees and park dedications arises from Wyoming’s planning statutes” (The Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, 2006).

7.5.3 Guidance from Landmark Legal Precedents

Landmark legal precedents such as the 1987 case of *Nollan v. California Coastal Commission* (483 U.S. 825), *Longridge Builders, Inc., v. Planning Board of the Town of Princeton*, and other case law provide additional guidance concerning what constitutes reasonable impact fees. A review of relevant case law suggests use of the following guidelines that are relevant to the potential imposition of impact fees upon future land use development projects.

- a. Impact fees should help accommodate the population growth and land use expansion that is envisioned in the most recent municipal master plan adopted by the Town of Alpine.
- b. Impact fees should reflect the construction of planned infrastructure improvements that are outlined in the municipal master plan, recent facility or system master plans, or other capital improvement plans.
- c. Impact fees should not incorporate operational costs associated with public facilities or utility systems, or anticipated repair costs associated with correcting facility deficiencies.
- d. Use a deductive method of calculating impact fees. This approach helps provide equity, nexus, and sufficient impact fees that are necessary to support needed capital improvements (Ross and Thorpe, 1991).
- e. Credits associated with impact fees typically apply to property owners/developers that agree to participate in an improvement district or otherwise contribute funds for capital improvements.
- f. An impact study report should be prepared that, at least, discloses relevant population growth and land use expansion assumptions, planned capital improvements and anticipated costs, the method used to calculate impact costs for each property or area under consideration for annexation, and the recommended impact fee calculations for each development project or area.
- g. Update impact fees about every two years to ensure that land use expansion and population growth assumptions remain valid.

7.5.4 Recommended Adoption of Impact Fee Ordinance

The preparation of a municipal impact fee ordinance is also recommended to establish and clarify the purpose of the impact fees to the general public and private developers. The scope of the ordinance should also include a description of the process and procedures associated with:

- how impact fees will be calculated and collected; and,
- how collected impact fees will be applied to relevant capital improvement projects.

7.6 REGIONAL PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LINCOLN COUNTY

7.6.1 General

Continuing land use expansion in the vicinity of Alpine is expected to result in increased land use development north of Alpine to the Wyoming-Idaho border, as well as some potential land use expansion on privately-owned lands south and west of the community. Ongoing and anticipated land use trends prompt the recommendation of various land use policies to the Lincoln County Planning and Zoning Commission and Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners. These policy recommendations are presented in the following paragraphs.

7.6.2 Encourage the Concentration of Commercial Areas

Many of the commercial land uses in Star Valley are located along the U.S. Highway 89 corridor. The gradual development of a commercial land use strip between the communities of Afton to Alpine is understandable in light of potential opportunities to attract customers who are residents of Star Valley, as well as visitors passing through the area. While understandable, this form of commercial development holds limited retail potential for Star Valley communities such as Alpine.

The opportunity to develop a more financially viable commercial environment in Alpine can be achieved by the development of more concentrated areas of retail activity. These areas should be conveniently accessible from U.S. Highway 89, but designed to bring vehicles to a central parking area that is away from the highway.

Vehicular parking areas that serve more concentrated commercial areas should be attractively landscaped and surrounded by a wide variety of eating and drinking establishments, sporting good stores and various other shops, as well as a wide range of retail services. The incorporation of secondary entertainment, e.g., a small visitor attraction, athletic club or movie theatre, within a concentrated commercial area also enable the commercial area to become attractive as “a place to be” rather than solely a place to shop. This type of commercial retail environment entices residents and visitors alike to “stop and shop” rather than “stop and go”.

Conceptual plans for the Alpine Meadows and Snake River Junction projects generally promote this commercial development concept. Both of these projects are recommended for annexation into the Town of Alpine in light of their potential opportunity to generate increased retail expenditures in Alpine.

Concentrated commercial activities associated with these two projects are also expected to strengthen the viability of commercial enterprises along U.S. Highway 89 in Alpine. A greater number of “stop and shop” customers will encourage future shoppers to explore retail outlets and services throughout the entire community.

From a land use planning perspective, it is important that the attractiveness of concentrated commercial areas is maintained to attract future commercial traffic. Vehicular access points to the vehicular parking areas need to be convenient and attractive to entice passing vehicular traffic off of U.S. Highway 89. Future land uses adjoining concentrated commercial areas need to be complementary so that potential customers are not discouraged by unattractive buildings or incompatible land uses, e.g., light industrial operations.

For example, two undeveloped properties are located between U.S. Highway 89 and the planned commercial area associated with the Alpine Meadows project. At the time of this report, no plans have been announced concerning the potential development of the Hafeez and Landis properties. Both of these properties would ideally be accessed from the primary access road into Alpine Meadows to avoid the establishment of unnecessary curb-cuts along U.S. Highway 26. Attractive landscaping, as well as appropriate signage and lighting, along the primary access road to Alpine Meadows will be essential to help draw highway traffic into the commercial area within Alpine Meadows.

Future development plans for these and other properties north of Alpine should be carefully reviewed by the Lincoln County Planning Office. Review comments should be solicited from the Town of Alpine to ensure consideration of the relevant planning issues.

7.6.3 Limit the Type of Highway Commercial Land Uses Along U.S. Highway 26

During the next 10 years, the commercial core of Alpine will likely include the expansion, development or re-development of commercial land uses in the following areas:

- highway business along U.S. Highway 89 within the existing municipal boundary;
- commercial activity along Greys River Road;
- the planned commercial area in Alpine Meadows;
- the planned commercial area in Snake River Junction;
- potential commercial activities on the northeast corner of Alpine Junction that is owned by Carl Rinehart;
- the Best Western and Nordic Inn properties east of Alpine Junction.

In order to sustain the financial viability of commercial activities in these areas, it is important that other land uses north of Alpine Junction do not detract or move commercial traffic away from this commercial core. Highway business along U.S. Highway 26 (north of Alpine Junction) should be limited to commercial uses such as visitor accommodations. Retail services and retail establishments should not be extended along the east and west sides of Highway 26 because such development would only encourage “stop and go” commercial traffic. As stated earlier, “stop and shop” customers will more likely be attracted through the development of more concentrated commercial facilities that contain a diverse range of commercial retail activity and other attractions.

7.6.4 Residential Expansion North of Alpine

North of Alpine Meadows, rural residential subdivisions will continue to see an expanded development of residential homes within existing subdivisions. Land values in the areas north of Alpine are rising rapidly at the time of this report. Increased values may eventually encourage the potential re-development or re-platting of existing rural residential subdivisions.

Future residential expansion north of Alpine Meadows Subdivision and the Rinehart property is compatible with planned residential and commercial development in Alpine Meadows and the Snake River Junction project. The presence of a greater residential population will help strengthen the viability of the anticipated commercial core within the present municipal boundary and recommended annexation areas north of Alpine.

At the same time, it is important for the Lincoln County Planning and Zoning Commission to consider future residential densities. Residential densities exceeding two dwelling units per acre should be discouraged unless they are connected to centralized water and wastewater systems. Otherwise, higher residential densities may impact regional groundwater quality where homes are supported by individual groundwater wells and septic tanks. The identification of areas that are more susceptible to potential groundwater contamination is beyond the scope of the municipal master plan study.

7.7 APPLICATION OF PLANNING TOOLS TO LAND USE MANAGEMENT

7.7.1 Maintain a Geographical Information System for Alpine

Future land management by the Town of Alpine can be enhanced through the maintenance and application of a geographical information system (GIS) for the Town of Alpine. Pedersen Planning Consultants developed a GIS for the Town of Alpine as part of planning process associated with preparation of the municipal master plan. The Alpine GIS should be updated annually to incorporate new and revised tabular and spatial data.

Municipal staff regularly provides land use information to a wide variety of interests. The application of the GIS by municipal staff will expedite responses to the general public. The future use and maintenance of an existing land use database in the Alpine GIS is a valuable planning tool that could be used extensively by municipal staff to support a variety of municipal administrative functions.

The Alpine Planning and Zoning Commission and Alpine Town Council regularly review and process building permits, re-zoning applications, and variances. Application of the GIS would enable municipal staff to conveniently prepare location maps and provide other relevant data to both the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council. Such information would facilitate their review of specific applications. As changes are made to existing zoning and new building permits are issued, municipal staff can easily make revisions to the municipal zoning map, as well as maintain an up-to-date land use database for every land parcel in Alpine.

Some initial staff training and the purchase of ArcView GIS software would be required to make use of the Alpine GIS. Day-to-day changes in the land use database, data queries, and the preparation of color illustrations can be effectively accomplished by municipal staff. It is recommended that a contractor having considerable experience with ArcView GIS be used to periodically make any substantive additions to tabular and spatial data files in the GIS.