

SPURR

A WYOMING BROWNFIELD INITIATIVE:
**STATE PARTNERSHIP FOR
URBAN & RURAL REDEVELOPMENT**



REDEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL WHEATLAND, WYOMING

June 2026



WWC
ENGINEERING



WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY

AYRES

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INTRODUCTION

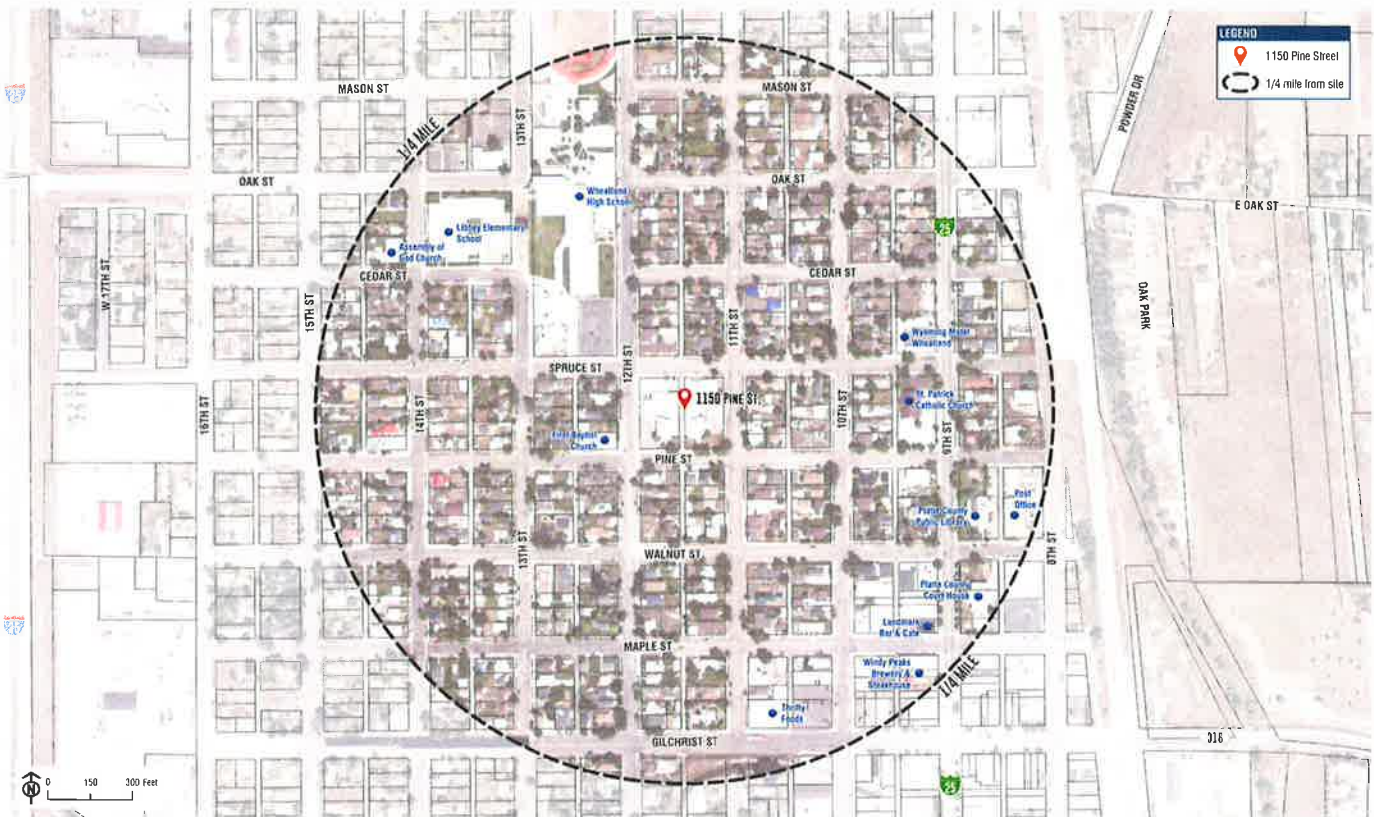
This Redevelopment Roadmap presents an analysis of the former Wheatland Junior High School property located at 1150 Pine Street in Wheatland, Wyoming. The report describes the building's use and condition, summarizes relevant evaluations of the building, and outlines options for its future.

This study was funded through the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) State Partnership for Urban and Rural Redevelopment (SPURR) program, a technical assistance initiative under the Wyoming Brownfields Initiative. SPURR funds environmental assessments and redevelopment planning services to support reinvestment in underutilized properties across the state.

Presently the Platte County School District #1 is weighing the options of demolition or redevelopment of the former school building. As part of the SPURR program, Wyoming DEQ staff and Ayres Associates worked with the school district administration and assessed the site. Ayres Associates explored a mix of potential uses as an alternative to demolition. This report outlines several options from full demolition of the building to adaptive re-use. Data used throughout the assessment is drawn from the most recent available sources at the time of the report's preparation.



SITE LOCATION



SITE OVERVIEW

The former Wheatland Junior School, located at 1150 Pine Street, Wheatland, Wyoming, is a historic facility that has evolved in purpose and function over nearly a century. Constructed in 1927, the original building served as a grade school and included a two-story central classroom wing and a main gymnasium forming a "T" layout when viewed from above.

Through aerial photo analysis and district records, the property evolved over time in the following ways:

- In the early 1950s, a northwest one-story addition was constructed, which included a wrestling gym, all-purpose space, and a commercial kitchen.
- In 1977, a northeast one-story wing was added to expand classroom capacity. During this time, it is likely that major mechanical upgrades were implemented, including replacement of HVAC boilers and an upgraded electrical system.

The facility operated as Wheatland Junior High for several years before the construction of the new Wheatland Middle School in 2002. After that transition, the original school building was vacated for traditional educational purposes. Despite this and further captured below, the property is still in use and provides the community with educational necessities that are not captured in the new educational facility.



PROPERTY FAST FACTS



1.61 ACRES
(~70,000 sqft)

TOTAL BUILDING SIZE
39,043 sqft



ZONED
RESIDENTIAL (R)



ORIGINAL
CONSTRUCTION IN
1927

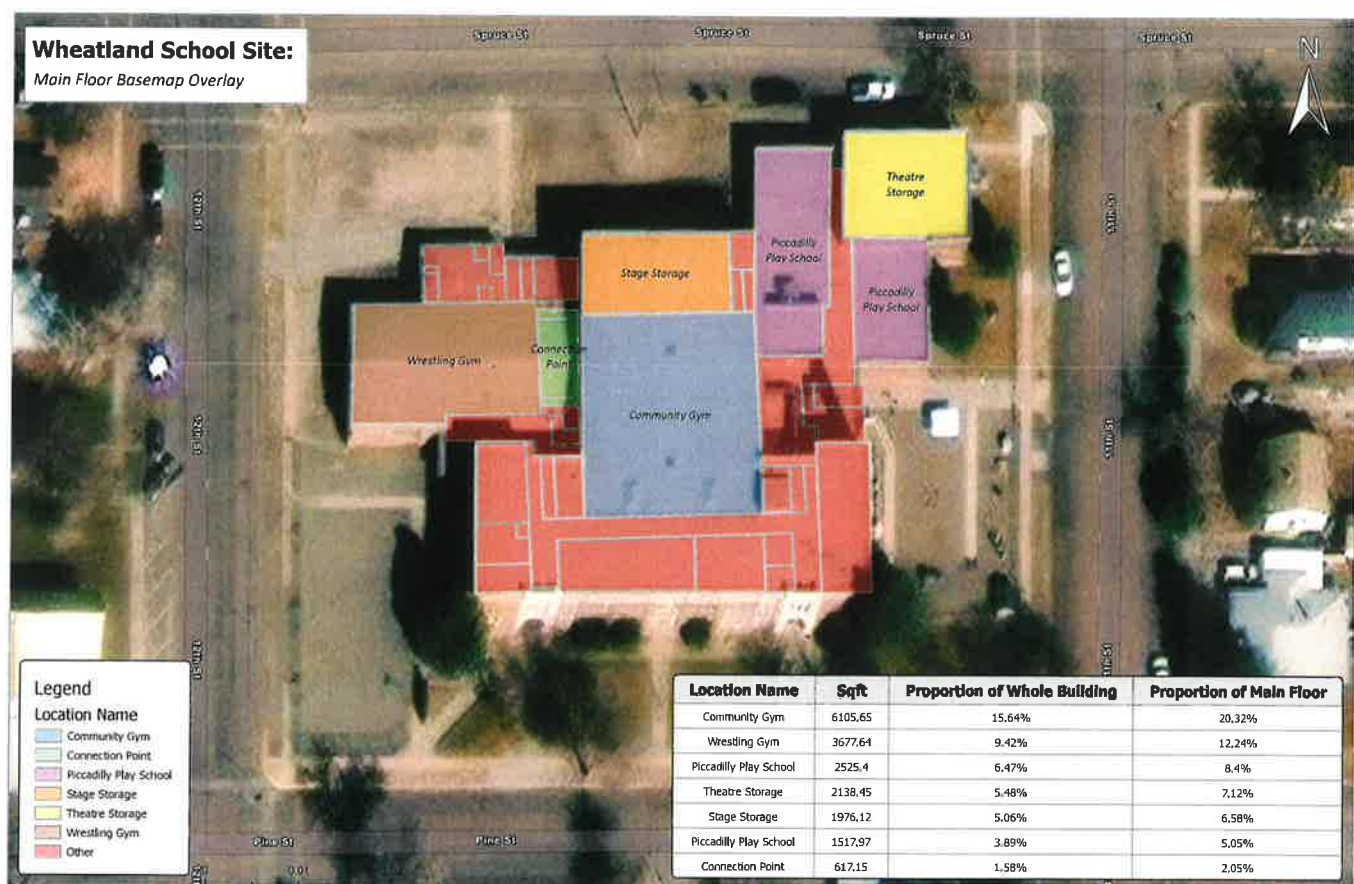


CURRENT USE AND OCCUPANCY

Today, the facility remains partially active, fulfilling a variety of community needs including:

- A daycare, the Piccadilly Play School, currently occupies the northeast wing.
- The main gymnasium and wrestling gym continue to support community athletics including wrestling, basketball, and exercise classes.
- The school also serves as a community emergency shelter and hosts a local food bank.
- Other areas of the building are used extensively for storage of excess school district materials, including theater props, old furniture, and archived items.

The diagram below shows each space and outlines the size and proportion of each use to the main floor and the whole building.



These spaces have been essential to the community. Despite these continued uses, the building is underutilized and partially deteriorated. Many sections are in poor condition, with aging finishes, worn-out interiors, and outdated mechanical systems. Several rooms are used for activities that differ from their original design, and some are essentially abandoned or overcrowded with stored items.

The current uses make up 47.54% of the building, a little less than half of the total building space available.

DEMOLITIONS/REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

The Wheatland Junior High School, while currently functional in a limited capacity, faces a pivotal moment. Its age, layout, and condition raise questions about the feasibility of long-term reuse without substantial investment. School administration staff estimates that it costs approximately \$60,000 a year to keep the building open, and demolition has been discussed to cut the district's losses.

At the same time, the building's central location, historical value, and ongoing community function offer strong arguments for preservation and redevelopment.

There are five major options when it comes to the Wheatland Junior School's future:

- Demolish the building and leave an empty lot
- Partially demolish the building, keeping space for the existing uses like daycare
- Redevelop the building, keeping the existing uses and adding new ones
- Redevelop the building into an entirely new use
- Demolish the building and construct a new use on the parcel to meet the needs of an evolving community

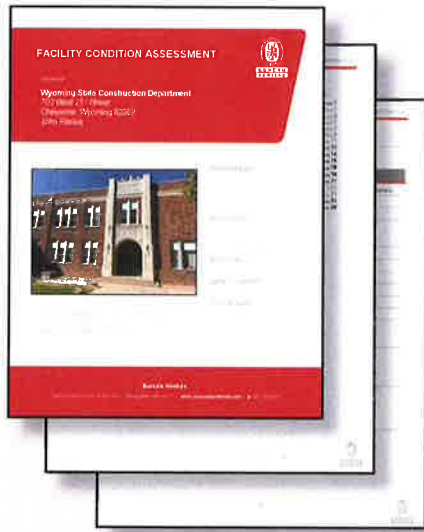


This report aims to help the community weigh these opportunities and challenges and better understand the benefits and drawbacks that come with each. The analysis seeks to help the community in building a shared vision for the future of the site.



BUILDING ASSESSMENTS

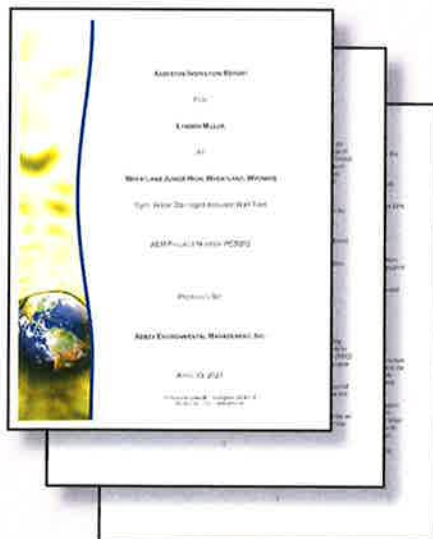
Several studies of the building have already been completed. A facility condition assessment was done as well as an asbestos survey and an asbestos abatement estimate. It is important to note that the existing asbestos may have to be removed as part of a potential future renovation or prior to demolition.



FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Bureau Veritas
April 25, 2023

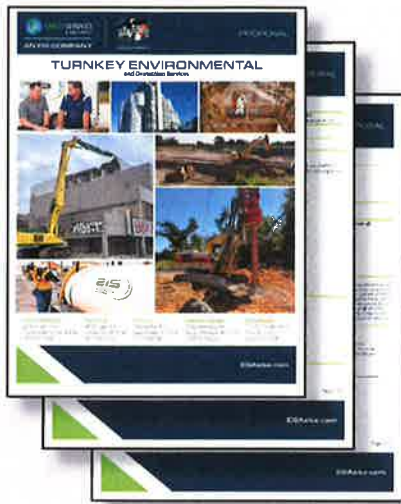
This report noted that the following building elements are in poor condition: fire escapes, sidewalks, interior fixtures, exhaust fan systems, plumbing, interior walls, stairs, stair lift, stair/ramp rails, and electrical system. In addition, the following building elements were listed as being in failed condition: interior flooring, water softener, wall finishes, boiler, and HVAC system.



ASBESTOS SURVEY REPORTS

Abbey Environmental Management, Inc.
April of 2021 and 2023

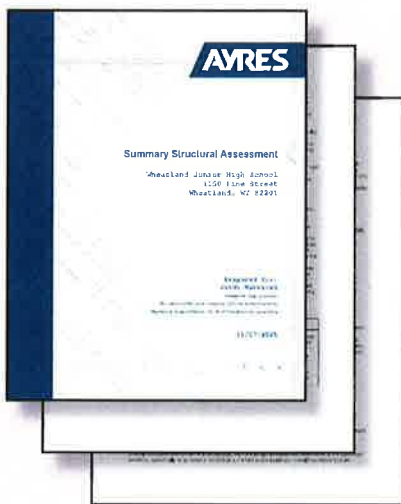
In the initial 2021 survey, testing was done within the original gymnasium and found no presence of asbestos. In a later and more comprehensive survey conducted in 2023, asbestos-containing materials were identified throughout the property. Asbestos was identified in materials including but not limited to floor tiles, pipe insulation, mastic, drywall, plaster, and other materials. The assessments also identified other environmental concerns around deteriorating structural sections, water damage, and other potential contaminants.



WHEATLAND JH ABATEMENT ROM

Earth Services & Abatement
March 24, 2025

A preliminary report was developed in March of 2025 to provide a proposed scope of work for asbestos removal. The proposal identified areas where asbestos containing materials would need to be abated. The report proposed 25 working days for the abatement effort. Estimated costs for abatement in the kitchen and the Piccadilly Play School fell around \$450,000 and removal of plaster around \$400,000.



STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT

Ayres Associates
November 11, 2025

Ayres Associates completed a Limited Structural Condition Assessment in association with this study. Overall, the structural systems were found to be in Fair to Good condition. The primary gravity and lateral load-resisting systems appeared structurally stable, with only localized concerns, including deteriorated exterior stairs, corrosion of fire escapes, minor masonry cracking, parapet rolling, concrete masonry unity (CMU) cracking in the wrestling room, and localized settlement at the southwest entrance. The most pressing structural concern identified, although not a component of the structural system, was improper roof drainage at select locations in the gymnasium and wrestling room, specifically at the gutter/drainage points, which is causing continued deterioration of the masonry façade, including water staining, mortar loss, and damage to the brick masonry.

MOST COST-EFFECTIVE REMEDY STUDY (MCER)

School Facilities Division
Pending

A preliminary report was developed in March of 2025 to provide a proposed scope of work for asbestos removal. The proposal identified areas where asbestos containing materials would need to be abated. The report proposed 25 working days for the abatement effort. Estimated costs for abatement in the kitchen and the Piccadilly Play School fell around \$450,000 and removal of plaster around \$400,000.

BUILDING CONDITION

✓ BACKGROUND

Lead was commonly used in paints before WWII and until 1977. Despite 1978 regulations limiting lead content, some paints still contain up to 90 ppm. Deteriorating lead-based paint releases hazardous dust and chips, posing risks during construction, demolition, and certain activities, particularly for children and the elderly.

Asbestos, a naturally occurring fibrous mineral, was widely used in building materials for its durability, insulation, and fire resistance. While intact asbestos poses little risk, deterioration or disturbance can release harmful fibers, increasing inhalation risks. Exposure can cause diseases like asbestosis and cancer, leading to strict regulations on its use, removal, and disposal. The EPA classifies materials with over 1% asbestos into three categories: Regulated Asbestos-Containing Materials (RACM), Category I, and Category II, each with specific handling guidelines. Renovation or demolition involving asbestos must comply with NESHAP and WDEQ notification protocols.

The following section assesses environmental conditions related to the Wheatland School.

An asbestos inspection survey was first conducted in April of 2021. The survey was limited to tiles on the perimeter walls of the original gym. The tiles were tested due to recent water damage and remodeling plans. Two samples were collected at the time of assessment, which found no levels of asbestos present in the samples tested.

A secondary asbestos inspection survey was conducted again in April of 2023, two years later. The second survey provided a more robust analysis of the entire building in addition to the Picadilly School. The inspection was conducted in preparation for the sale of the building and/or potential reconstruction efforts. Seventy-two samples were collected and ten of the samples contained detectable levels of asbestos. The samples that tested positive for asbestos included floor tiles, pipe insulation, joint tape, mosaic tiles, mastic behind wall boards, drywall texture, insulation, and plaster.



MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL, AND PLUMBING

An evaluation by Ayres Associates MEP staff was conducted in March of 2025 to assess the Wheatland Junior High School's existing infrastructure. The assessment indicates that several building systems offer a viable foundation for redevelopment, though selective upgrades will be required to support future use and ensure environmental efficiency.

Electrical System:

The building is currently served by a 600 Amp, 208V/3-phase electrical service, which appears to be in good condition. While this capacity may present limitations for intensive redevelopment, opportunities exist to manage electrical demand by decommissioning unused portions of the building. A comprehensive electrical load analysis will be necessary during any potential future project planning to determine whether the existing system can accommodate the proposed use. From an environmental standpoint, retaining and optimizing the current electrical infrastructure can reduce material waste and construction-related impacts, though efficiency improvements may be warranted to align with current energy standards and sustainability goals.

HVAC System:

The existing HVAC system is functional for current occupancy levels, with recently installed York rooftop units (RTUs) operating effectively in active areas. Additionally, if portions of the building were brought back into use, the structural capacity to support additional RTUs will need to be evaluated. For long-term adaptability and energy efficiency, a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system is recommended. VRF systems offer modular, less invasive installation options and improved performance over conventional units, particularly in phased renovations. Incorporating a VRF system would also contribute to reduced energy consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with sustainable redevelopment practices.

Plumbing and Utility Infrastructure:

The condition of the plumbing system remains largely unknown due to limited access to concealed piping. However, the building is equipped with a 1½-inch medium-pressure gas line and a 2-inch water meter, both of which are considered sufficient for typical building operations. Should future renovations introduce more intensive programming or higher water demand, an upgrade to the water main may be required. Existing plumbing fixtures are in poor condition and should be replaced in all areas designated for reuse. The replacement process offers an opportunity to install water-efficient fixtures that support long-term conservation objectives and reduce overall utility demand.



BACKGROUND

Renovations and contractors working on pre-1978 buildings must comply with EPA's Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) rule and OSHA regulations. Lead-based paint (LBP), whether intact or deteriorating, requires careful handling. OSHA mandates worker safety measures, including respiratory protection, personal protective equipment, designated changing areas, hand-washing facilities, blood testing, and training.

Asbestos was previously identified in some original building materials at concentrations above 1%. Before demolition or renovation, asbestos abatement design documents should be prepared, and an accredited contractor must complete the abatement. A third-party company should then conduct clearance testing. Asbestos was found in some ceiling tile mastic but does not meet regulatory thresholds for asbestos-containing material. OSHA requires proper removal and disposal methods, and contractors must provide a negative exposure assessment or conduct monitoring with protective measures. The asbestos survey report must be kept on-site during abatement and subsequent work and made available to WDEQ upon request.

STRUCTURAL

The structural systems were assessed to be in fair to good condition. Deteriorated exterior stairs, corrosion of fire escapes, minor masonry cracking, parapet rolling, CMU cracking in the wrestling room, and localized settlement at the southwest entrance were noted. In addition, concerns were raised about improper roof drainage at select locations in the gymnasium and wrestling room.

SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

Several health and safety issues have been identified, particularly in areas like the old kitchen, locker rooms, and backstage where materials like theater costumes and furniture are densely packed. These areas pose significant fire hazards, especially where flammable materials are stored in confined spaces that block egress routes. Immediate steps should be taken to declutter high-risk zones and restore safe access paths for occupants and first responders.



PLANNING

The following section explores how current zoning and land use around the school site influence potential redevelopment opportunities.

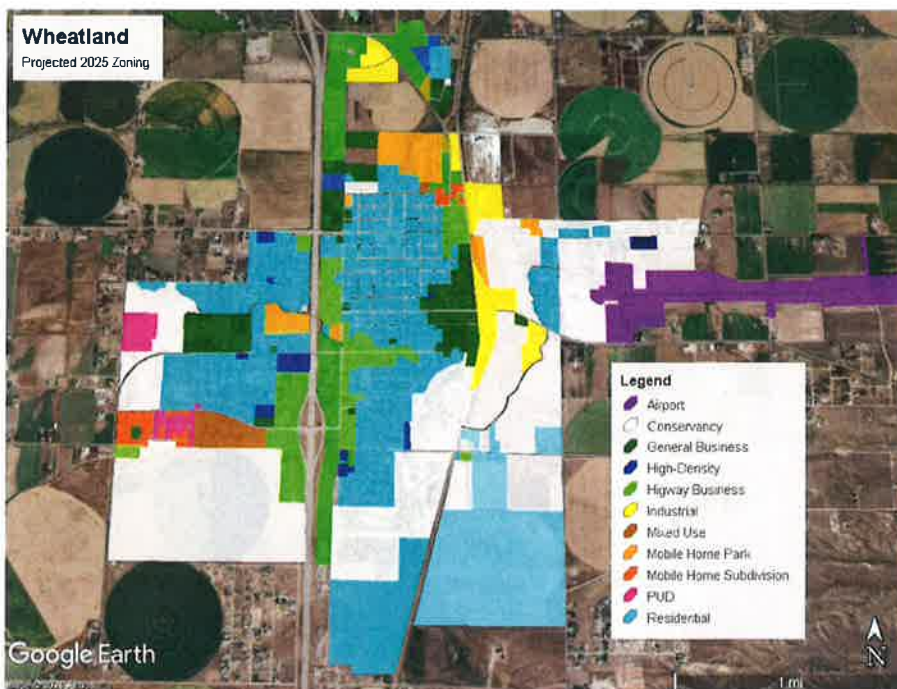
The Wheatland Junior High School is located within the Residential (R) zone district. This district was established to provide single-family residential areas while also allowing flexibility when it comes to alternative uses. The surrounding area is characterized by residential neighborhoods which extend to the west towards Highway 25. Towards the south and east are commercial properties which fall within the General Business (GB) zone district. Further north is a mix of zoning including Highway business (HB) zoning and other districts like industrial and mobile homes zones.



BACKGROUND

To learn more about the R Residential zoning, follow the link below:

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WY/Wheatland/#/Wheatland18/Wheatland1875.html#18.75>



The existing zoning primarily allows residential uses, including duplexes, townhomes, and condominiums. Home occupations and parks are also permitted. The zoning code allows for certain "special uses", and following ones could be relevant to the re-use of the Wheatland school: hospitals and health care facilities, community centers, government buildings, churches, schools, and childcare and adult care facilities. There is also the possibility zoning for the site could change, but the impact on the surrounding area and setting a precedent for future changes could be an issue. The permitted and special uses of the current zone district would allow for a variety of uses within the existing building and a variety of uses if the site were redeveloped.

Ensuring strategic planning around redevelopment with communication between school district and town staff will be necessary to ensure project success. This is the case whether the property is redeveloped or if a new development on the existing lot is suggested.

SITE USE OPTIONS

The reuse vision section of this report weighs the benefits and drawbacks of demolition versus redevelopment opportunities. The following analysis explores key considerations related to either opportunity, painting a preliminary picture of each scenario. Analysis below does not promote either option as being better but seeks to provide a picture of the options and how they differ. The following options are outlined below:

- Demolish the building and leave an empty lot,
- Partially demolish the building, keeping space for the exiting uses like the daycare.
- Redevelop the building, keeping the existing uses and adding new ones,
- Redevelop the building into an entirely new use,
- Demolish the building and construct a new use on the parcel.

While opportunities and constraints are presented, cost estimates for each are not readily available and are beyond the scope of this study. The pending MCER will provide more details on cost and state participation.

SCENARIO 1: FULL DEMOLITION/EMPTY LOT

This option may be the most direct way of dealing with the building. The State of Wyoming will provide \$1,319,839 in funding for the demolition of the school. However, the school district would have to pay for asbestos removal and any other costs above the budgeted amount. Demolition offers a clean slate but carries risk without a clear plan for the site.

Benefits:

- **Eliminates maintenance burden:** This option uses assistance from the State to eliminate an ongoing maintenance cost for the school district

Drawbacks:

- **State funding will not cover full cost:** school district would have to pay for asbestos mitigation and other costs above the budgeted amount
- **Displacement of existing uses:** This option displaces the Piccadilly Play School, eliminates the option for use of the wrestling room, larger gym, and storage areas
- **Obligation of an empty site:** Without a plan to redevelop the site, this option leaves the school district with the obligation to maintain an empty site
- **Loss of community heritage:** The demolition of the historic building would represent a loss of cultural history in the community



SCENARIO 2: PARTIAL DEMOLITION KEEPING CURRENT USES

It may be possible to demolish portions of the building while keeping space for the daycare, gym use, and storage. This presents opportunity to keep current uses while eliminating portions of the building that are problematic.

Benefits:

- Eliminates the risk of holding un-used, deteriorating space: This option uses assistance from the State to eliminate an ongoing maintenance cost for the school district.
- Preserves current uses: In particular, the daycare could remain in this scenario. Keeps valuable gym and activity space active for local use.
- Keeps the site active and retains some of the historic building: Wheatland wouldn't be left with an empty lot.

Drawbacks:

- Feasibility and Cost: The full cost and feasibility of this option isn't known at this time. The MCER study could potentially provide more details.



SCENARIO 3: REDEVELOPMENT WITH CURRENT USES

An alternative to demolishing part of the building is to seek out uses to occupy extra space. There are many uses that could be compatible with the daycare, gym functions, and storage. In fact, a recreation center has been discussed for several years, and components of that might fit into the school building. Potential opportunities include:

- **Housing:** Convert upper-floor classrooms into rental apartments, potentially with a focus on units for teachers. This would involve partnering with a housing developer. Several communities have experienced success with the transformation of schools, or portions of schools, into housing. Case studies are in the appendices.
- **Mixed-use educational and community hub:** Unused portions of the school could be used for childcare expansion, business spaces, office suites, or school board functions. This option could be a joint venture between the school district, town, and other community focused partners.
- **Recreation facilities:** The remainder of the building could be retrofitted for recreation such as classes and workout space. In 2023, a measure to spend approximately \$10.5 million on a county wide recreation/wellness facility was defeated, but interest in a multi-use facility remains, and the model could be retrofitted to fit within the school building. This would likely involve a new ballot measure.

Benefits:

- **Provides needed facilities:** All the uses mentioned above could benefit Wheatland. There is a need for more housing options; the community has already shown some interest in a recreation facility, and an educational/community hub can further the mission of the school district.
- **Preserves current uses:** The current uses could remain and even be enhanced or expanded in this scenario.
- **Creates synergy between current uses and new ones:** The various uses in a building can benefit one another. While the building couldn't be both housing and a recreation center, both these uses work individually with the existing daycare, gym uses, and school related storage.
- **Keeps the site active and retains some of the historic building:** Wheatland wouldn't be left with an empty lot. Maintains the historic character of the school while adapting it to modern needs.
- **Generates revenue:** Through leases, program fees, or housing rents, the facility could reach a breakeven point.
- **Grant potential:** Adaptive reuse aligns with education, housing, and economic development funding streams.

Drawbacks:

- **Time:** The development of a re-use plan, particularly a mixed-use one, takes time and energy. The effort would require community champions.
- **Cost:** The costs are not known at this time, and funding commitments would need to be made by multiple organizations including the school district.
- **Operational complexity:** Phased upgrades and user management may be challenging.



SCENARIO 4: REDEVELOPMENT WITH ALL NEW USE

Renovating and reactivating the entire existing building would preserve its character while allowing for new uses. In this scenario the school district would likely sell the building to a developer that would redevelop the building into housing or another use. The school district could control the use by issuing a request for proposals and setting certain criteria.

Benefits:

- Releases the school district from control of the site: The school district could sell the property.
- Keeps the site active and retains the historic building: Wheatland wouldn't be left with an empty lot.

Drawbacks:

- Displaces existing uses: If the building were sold, the existing uses would have to be relocated.
- Weak market: It may be hard to find a buyer given the niche/small market and high renovation costs. A developer would likely need to seek out grant support.

SCENARIO 5: DEMOLITION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

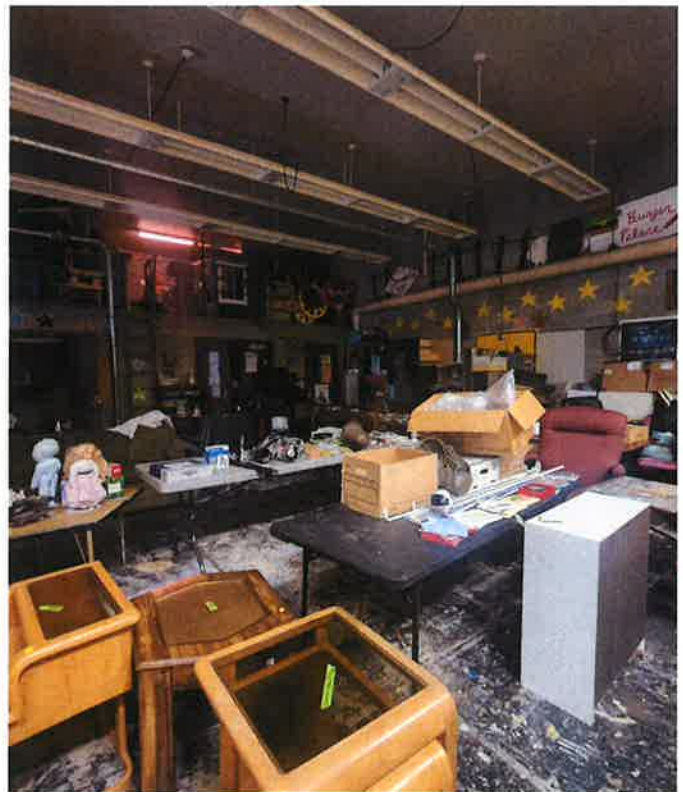
This option is similar to the first in that the school district would demolish the building, but in this scenario the district would actively work to encourage new construction on the site. The site would offer a major opportunity as a space for future development. However, a clear and feasible redevelopment plan must accompany demolition to avoid a long-term vacant lot. The site could be developed into all new housing, either apartments or single family lots.

Benefits:

- Development flexibility: Opens new options without being constrained by existing structure layout or limitations.
- Revenue from the sale of the site: If an interested developer could be found, the school district could sell the land.

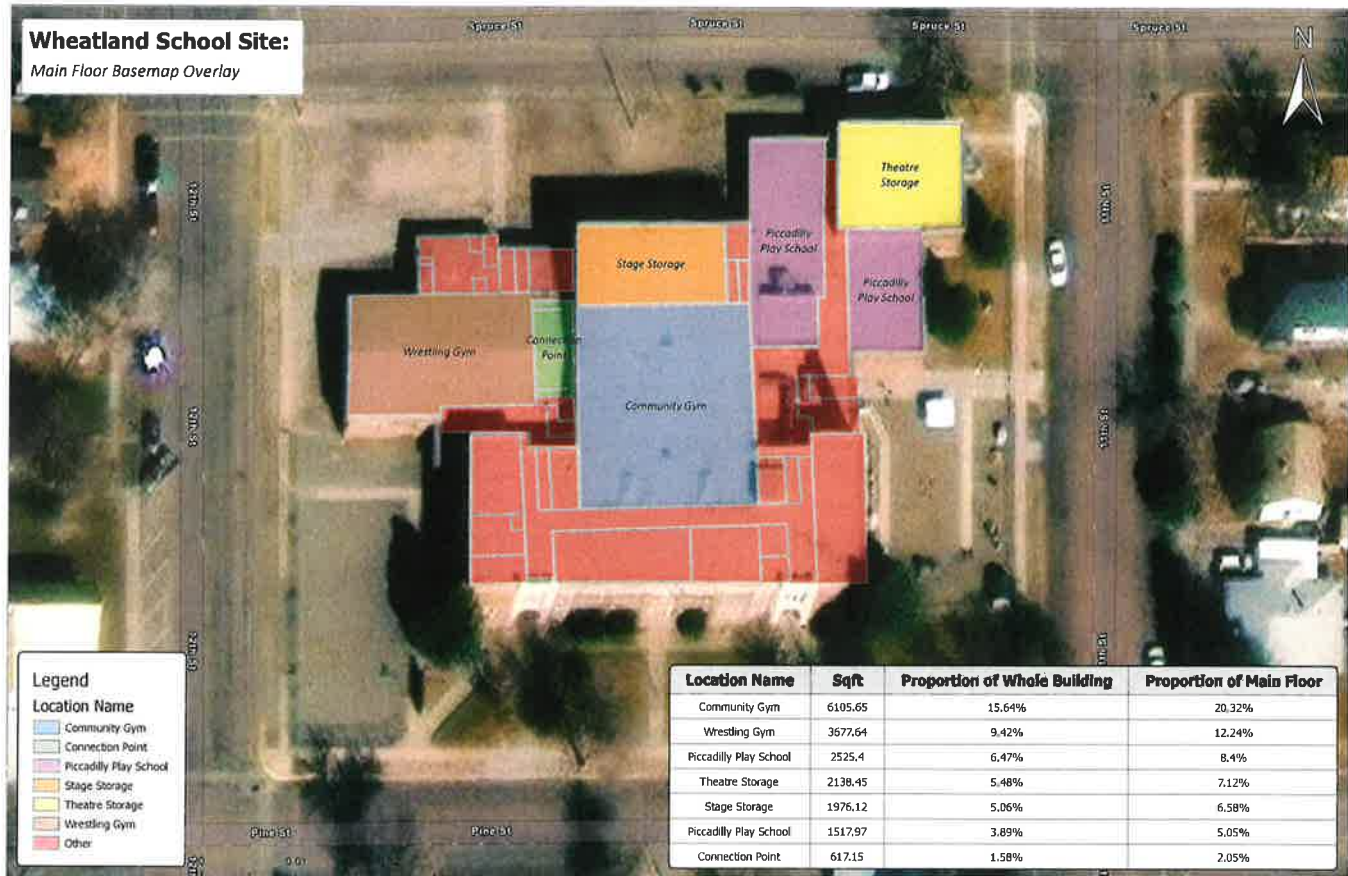
Drawbacks:

- The need for feasible new construction: In order to attract new construction, the school should take an active role in planning single family lot divisions or rezoning for multi-family development. Without that, the site is likely to sit vacant.
- Displaces existing uses: This option displaces the Piccadilly Play School, eliminates the option for use of the wrestling room, larger gym, and storage areas.



COST CONSIDERATIONS

The following section provides a cost analysis of the Wheatland Junior School site by assessing the revenue and expenditures for the site. In addition, the chapter explores environmental considerations that come with demolition or redevelopment efforts to inform findings around the cost analysis.



VALUE OF CURRENT USES

The school site is currently broken down by several major uses, including the community gym, wrestling gym, Piccadilly Play School, theatre storage, stage storage, and connecting points. These spaces make up an estimated 18,558 square feet when combined. Some of the actively used areas generate revenue, while others do not. Despite that, the existing spaces still provide value to the community and without them would see indirect losses.

The actively used sections of the site have been visualized in the accompanying graphic and are broken down as such:

- Community gym: ~6,105 sqft
- Wrestling gym: ~3,668 sqft
- Piccadilly Play School (sites combines): ~4,043 sqft
- Theatre storage space: ~2,138 sqft
- Stage storage: ~1,976
- Active connection points: ~617 sqft

When valuing the current spaces, local real estate resources were used to measure the average local cost per square foot of commercial spaces. Given that the actively used space was roughly 18,558 square feet, similarly sized properties were compared to identify the cost per square foot. The average cost per square foot of similarly sized properties for sale in Wheatland was determined to be \$118.23. Applying that valuation to the active spaces used at the school site would equate to an assessed value of \$2,194,174.

This is further broken down below by the actively used spaces with the applied cost per square foot. The estimates below are intended to be used at a high level, not accounting for the value of how the spaces are used and whether they actively generate income or not.

- Community gym: \$721,794
- Wrestling gym: \$433,667
- Piccadilly Play School (sites combines): \$478,003
- Theatre storage space: \$252,775
- Stage storage: \$233,622
- Active connection points: \$72,947

MAINTENANCE EXPENSES

Despite the building largely remaining vacant since 2000, the annual cost to currently run the facility partially is \$60,000. Improvements have been made over time, including a heater being added within the last decade to avoid lines becoming frozen. While partially vacant, some areas of the school are still being used, including but not limited to, the gym, preschool, and wrestling spaces. However, there are serious concerns regarding structural and environmentally hazardous sections of the building. Asbestos was identified in 2023 in areas throughout the site, there is also evident areas with water damage, foundation degradation, and other concerns.

Regarding annual costs, natural gas was estimated to cost \$6,861.89, electricity at \$9,862.99, water at \$1,663.75, and sewer at \$1,891.80. Property owners noted that the total cost to run the facility was close to \$60,000 annually, however the additional costs were not available at the time of the report's development. Despite that, the following information provides high level estimates for environmental costs for other portion of the building.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- The Wheatland Junior School site retains a number of functional infrastructure components that provide a strong starting point for potential redevelopment or adaptive reuse. The building is currently equipped with a 600 Amp, 208V/3-phase electrical service that is in generally good condition. While this capacity may limit larger-scale renovations, opportunities exist to offset demand by decommissioning or reducing loads in unused areas. A detailed electrical load calculation will be essential once a redevelopment concept is selected to ensure the existing system can meet future needs.
- The HVAC system includes recently installed York rooftop units (RTUs) that are adequately serving the occupied spaces and appear to be in good working order. Expanding HVAC coverage to additional parts of the building could be achieved with additional RTUs if the structure allows. However, a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system is recommended for any major remodel, as it offers a more flexible, efficient, and less invasive option for heating and cooling reactivated areas over time.
- Plumbing infrastructure poses more uncertainty. Much of the system is concealed, limiting the ability to assess its full condition. However, the site has a 1½-inch medium pressure gas line and a 2-inch water meter, both of which should be sufficient for most redevelopment scenarios assuming typical heating and water demands. Any significant changes to building programming could warrant upsizing the water main. Notably, most plumbing fixtures are outdated and should be replaced in any reused or renovated sections of the building.

NEXT STEPS



DEVELOP A CLEAR PROJECT VISION

Decide whether complete redevelopment through demolition or redevelopment through improvements is the preferred direction for the Wheatland School site. Once this has been decided, identify what the end product is. If that is too general, review the concepts and case studies provided to get a better understand of what opportunities exist for new uses. Review local demographic, economic, and housing statistics and trends as well to understand what the community needs and would support with the updated site. Once a project vision is clear, committing to it and ensuring efforts lead to the end goal will be necessary.



IDENTIFY KEY PARTIES INVOLVED & BUILD LOCAL SUPPORT

With a clear vision, the next steps will be to initiate conversations with community stakeholders, such as residents, organizations, local government, and others. Present the project as early as possible in the process to ensure feedback is received before tangible efforts are made. Input can be gathered through public meetings, focus groups, or other opportunities to promote engagement and feedback. Engaging with interested parties can build support for the project, provide valuable insights, and build momentum for large projects like the Wheatland School site.



ESTABLISH FINANCING STRATEGY

Once the project vision has been cemented and the right parties involved, establishing a financing strategy will be necessary for the project's success. Using resources provided in the report, tapping into resources through connections and partnerships, and exploring alternative funding opportunities can help bridge financial gaps. Consider grants, public funding opportunities, or leveraging funds like a 6th penny tax can help fund efforts. Applications and efforts to acquire funding should be conducted pre-development, to ensure the project is not set back.



BEGIN CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

With all the steps above completed, the site is ready for construction. At this stage, ensuring the vision is clear, with local support and funding is important. If this is the case, the project is ready to break ground. At this stage it will be important to stick to the plan but also remain flexible as new information surfaces as efforts move forward. Environmental concerns may also play a role at this stage. Making sure all precautions and standards are met will also be important to ensure the process is done efficiently while meeting standards.

APPENDICES

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

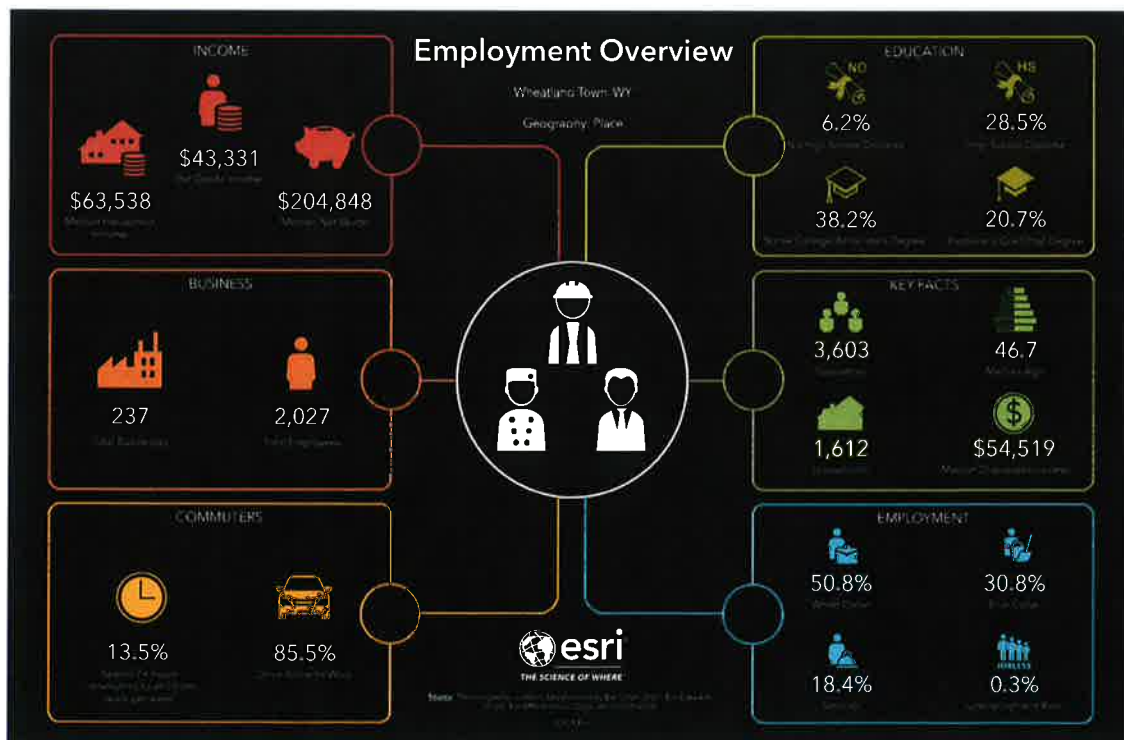
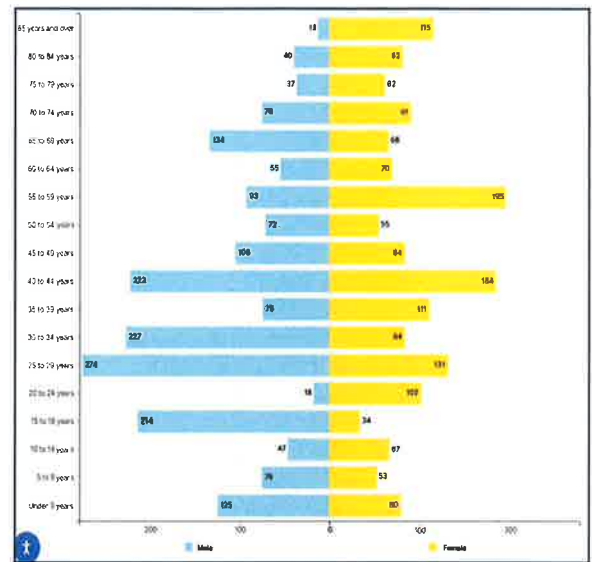
The following section provides a snapshot of Wheatland and various characteristics and trends related to the community. The following analysis uses data from a range of sources, including but not limited to the Census, Data USA, historical records, environmental records, Platte County Assessor data, and other resources. These demographics are important to understand to evaluate potential future uses for the school building.

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN (PYRAMID)

Wheatland has a total population of 3,570 according to the 2023 Census 5-year estimates. This reflects a stable but slightly declining trend compared to earlier years. The population pyramid suggests a contracting shape, with a small base (younger population) and larger middle and upper age cohorts.

- Children under 10 years make up just ~9.3% of the population.
- Adults aged 25 to 64 account for ~ 49.6% of the population.
- Adults over 65 years make up ~20%, signaling an aging community.

This pattern highlights an older demographic with limited youth and young adult growth. Without additional draw factors (e.g., higher education institutions, diverse industries), Wheatland may struggle to retain younger residents. Efforts to provide affordable housing, job training, and educational amenities could reverse these demographic trends.



COMMUNITY SUMMARY

Wheatland Town, WY
Geography: Place

3,603	0.10%	2.18	36.0	46.7	\$63,538	\$234,591	\$204,848	20.2%	53.4%	26.4%
Population Total	Population Growth	Average HH Size	Diversity Index	Median Age	Median HH Income	Median Home Value	Median Net Worth	Age <18	Age 18-64	Age 65+



18.4%
Services

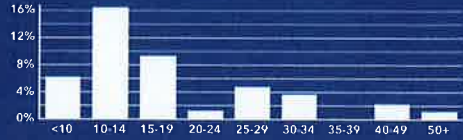


30.8%
Blue Collar

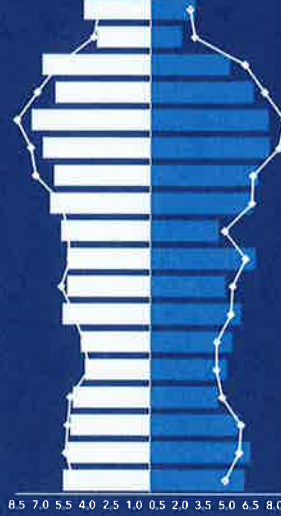


50.8%
White Collar

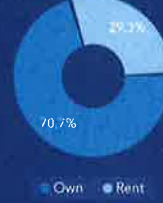
Mortgage as Percent of Salary



Age Profile: 5 Year Increments



Home Ownership



Housing: Year Built



Home Value



Household Income



Educational Attainment



Commute Time: Minutes



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri (2024); ACS (2010-2022).

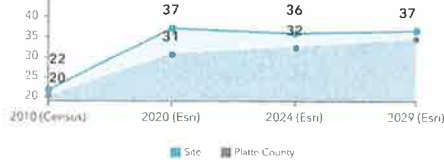
© 2025 Esri

Community Change Snapshot

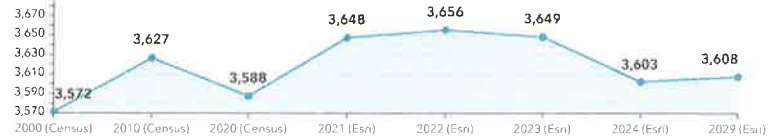
Wheatland Town, WY
Geography: Place



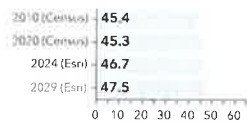
Diversity Index



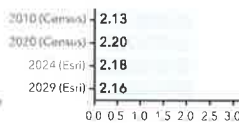
Total Population



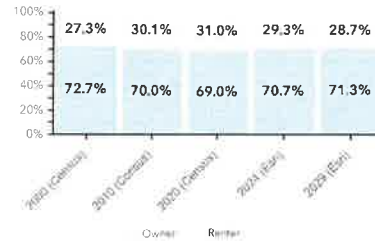
Median Age



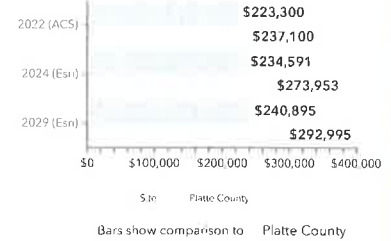
Average Household Size



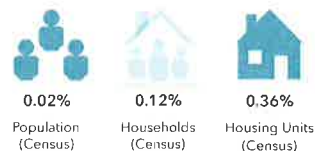
Owner vs Renter Occupied Units



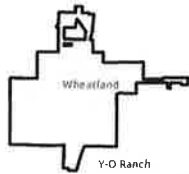
Median Home Value



2000-2020 Compound Annual Growth Rate



Total Housing Units: Past, Present, Future



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020), Esri (2024, 2029), ACS (2018-2022). © 2025 Esri

CASE STUDIES

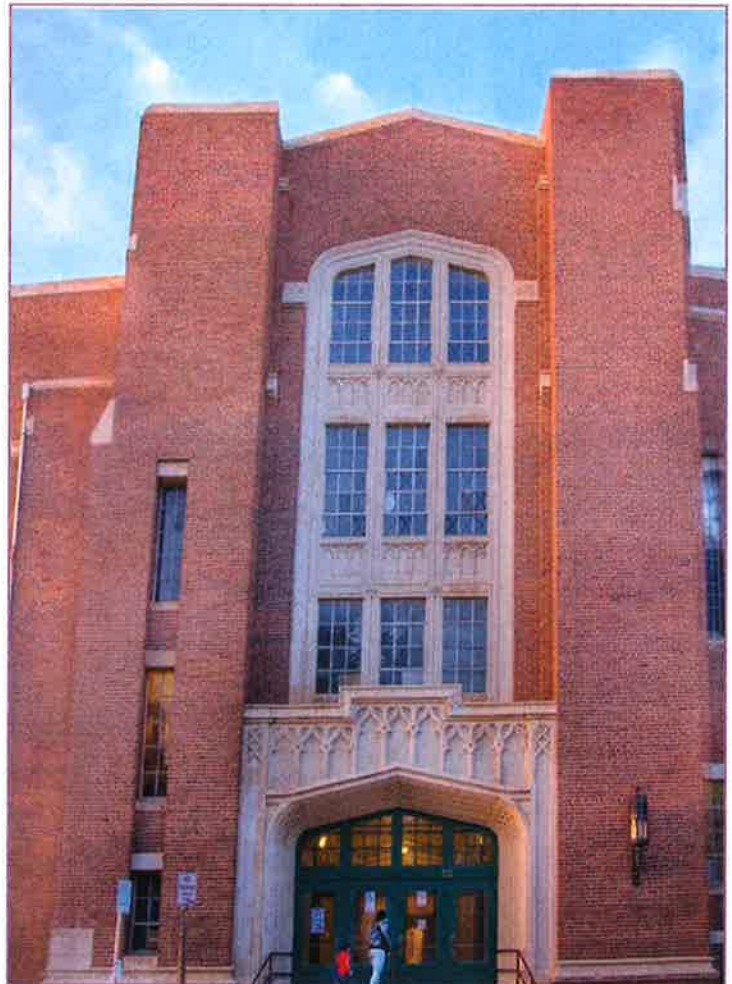
The following section breaks down several case study examples, which provide creative opportunities and ideas for the Wheatland School site as options are explored for demolition and redevelopment. The ideas below serve as inspiration for projects that share similarities to the school site and could be adopted during future efforts for the location.

LARAMIE CIVIC CENTER

The Laramie Civic Center is a site located in Laramie Wyoming, which has existed for more than 150 years and serves as a community gathering place. Today, it provides a space that meets the needs of many different residents, such as event spaces, artist studios, commercial rentals, theatres, public shared places, and more. The school takes up an entire city block and previously faced challenges when it came to maintenance and areas becoming dilapidated. While efforts still continue for the property, it is currently a highly used space that has many similarities to the Wheatland Junior High School, making it a great case study example.

Not only is the case study a historically significant place, but it also had the same past uses as the Wheatland site as a school. While the Civic Center still provides students with a space for sports like the gymnasiums, other sections of the school have been updated and redeveloped to meet different needs. The school offers rentable office spaces which businesses have taken up residency; other portions of the school have been reused for community spaces such as public art spaces for workshops. The theatre still provides a space for students to perform and also provides the general public with a space where music artists such as bands perform in addition to theatre performances outside of school-based programs.

The site is a great example of a space previously focused on education that experienced a second life, providing essential needs for the community and introducing new ones to the general public. It also provides a great reference to better understand how economic development can be incentivized in a community by giving businesses a place to establish and grow. Given the nature of the space and its public uses, businesses also benefit from the added foot-traffic of the space given its various uses. The Wheatland School site can draw inspiration from this study to better understand the unique opportunities that come with the site in its current state.



IVYWILD SCHOOL - COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

Ivywild Elementary School was built originally in 1969 and closed in 2009. Instead of seeing demolition, the building was redeveloped into a community marketplace. The previously used school now functions as a multiuse space which houses a brewery, bakery, coffee shop, distillery, and space for events. The redevelopment has promoted the reuse of the property, preserved local character, while bringing modern amenities to the neighborhood and community.

As the project relates to the Wheatland School site, it is a good example of a site with historic value that had relatable structural and functional challenges. The redevelopment allowed the site to continue bringing value into the community while avoiding full demolition. The new site has become a cornerstone for neighborhood revitalization and a strong model in blending preservation with economic development.

COLORADO EARLY COLLEGES (CEC) - STATEWIDE CO

The Colorado Early Colleges (AKA CEC) is a network of charter schools which have partnered with The Neenan Company to promote adaptive reuse efforts. These efforts resulted in the development of schools from spaces that previously had warehousing-based efforts. Schools that were developed saw efforts take place throughout Colorado in communities such as but not limited to Fort Collins, Windsor, Aurora, and other locations.

While the Wheatland Junior School is already an existing educational space, lessons can be taken from this case study to look towards innovative ways to reuse large spaces. Looking at the different locations from this example, innovative ways to transform spaces with previous uses can help to strategize redevelopment opportunities.



SANDERS GYMNASIUM & COMMUNITY HALL – SANDERS, MT

The Sanders Gymnasium and Community Hall in Montana was originally built in 1910 as a wood log structure and was added to the National Register in 1997. The building quickly became a local place for gathering in Sanders and was valued as a place which residents all chipped in to support through funding or building efforts. By the 1930s, the site was in disrepair and remained largely vacant for several years.

The property was purchased and redeveloped in the 1940s by the Sanders School District to have the property double as a gym and community space. By 1948 the site was closed again as the local population saw declines, however it quickly saw renewed interest and use as ownership was transferred. Local residents have once again come together to refurbish, update, and renovate the location.

As the case study relates to the Wheatland Junior School, it can serve as an example of reuse efforts and the value which generational spaces bring to communities. The Wheatland School site has existed within the community since the 1920s, providing the community with a place for families to grow and youth to learn. Despite its current condition, the site sees uses like the Sanders case study, which also saw community use despite structural challenges. What can be learned from this case study is the level of community input which drove its long-term use and maintenance. Understanding what residents value most is essential in identifying the right opportunities for a site of this size and significance.

**EMERGENT CAMPUS MODEL – FORMER SCHOOL CAMPUSES IN FLORENCE & TRINIDAD, CO**

The transformation of the former Florence and Trinidad school campuses into innovation hubs under the Emergent Campus model provides a framework for the redevelopment potential of the partially vacant Wheatland Junior High School site. Like Florence, Wheatland's school structure is a large, historically significant facility that has remained underutilized, yet houses essential infrastructure and services to the community, making it a strong candidate for creative reuse opportunities. The success of Emergent Campus in attracting tech-based businesses, remote workers, and education-industry partnerships demonstrates how similar sites can be redeveloped to inspire economic growth within the community.

By partially or completely redeveloping the school site as a tech and workforce development center, Wheatland as well as Platte County could incentivize a range of benefits. This includes but is not limited to youth access to career pathways in technology and skilled trades, creating new business opportunities, and supporting remote work infrastructure. Like the Florence and Trinidad campuses, the Wheatland site could also house a blend of "tech-adjacent" services, such as behavioral health providers or creative media spaces enhancing local employment diversity. With the proposed opportunity, the Wheatland School site could become a model for economic growth and adaptive reuse within the region.

TIVOLI BUILDING – CHEYENNE, WY

While it is not a school site, the Tivoli Building in Cheyenne Wyoming represents an example of redevelopment efforts of longstanding buildings. The case study building was constructed in 1892 and was a gathering place for residents during community events like Cheyenne Frontier Days. Several decades later in the early 1900s the building was purchased and turned into a clothing store, however later when Prohibition had ended it became a popular beer garden. By the 1960s its last drinking establishment had moved out, remaining vacant until the early 1980s. In the 2000s the building was purchased, when it was partially redeveloped and still provided a brewery along with residential uses as well.

This case study serves as another great example of how historic or older sites can grow over time to meet community's changing needs. As the site relates to the Wheatland School site, exploring how successful case studies have balanced modernizing previous uses and providing new uses to historic spaces is beneficial. The Wheatland site still provides essential services to the community through the daycare, theatre space, and gymnasium which would benefit from improvements and updates. There is also an opportunity to explore how new spaces can emerge and evolve from ones that are no longer needed by the community for the site. The case study can serve as an example of spaces which have found a healthy balance between past and present uses and how they complement one another.



FUNDING RESOURCES & STRATEGIES

Wyoming Facilities Commission - The State Construction Department

The Wheatland school was awarded \$1,319,839 for the demolition of the Wheatland School site through the Wyoming Facilities Commission. School facilities are able to request funding from the Commission for various projects across the state of Wyoming such as capital construction, major maintenance, modifications, new or replacement facilities, and component projects. Requests are sent to the Select Committee on School Facilities and the governor for approval, which the Wheatland school site appeared to be.

At this time, additional information is needed to better understand the scope of the approved funding request, and the parameters of what the funding could be used for. Presently, it is the understanding that the allocated funding may at least be used for demolition, whether that funding can also be used for abatement efforts or redevelopment is to be determined.

Wyoming Business Council – Community Facility Rehabilitation (CFR) Grant Program

The Wheatland Junior High School, largely vacant and deteriorating, aligns closely with the intent of the CFR Grant Program, which was created to preserve former school facilities as community centers. The Town of Wheatland's previous collaboration with WBC on technical assistance may help qualify it. Redevelopment plans for the site—such as converting it into a civic center or multi-use community hub—would be strengthened by the economic data, engagement input, and conceptual designs already compiled in this roadmap. A focused application outlining high-priority improvements like multipurpose rooms, business incubator space, or childcare services could be highly competitive.

- Potential Use: Funding for renovation of core spaces like the gymnasium or classrooms into flexible public-use areas.

USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

This program offers affordable funding to support the development of vital community facilities in rural areas. These facilities must provide essential services that contribute to the orderly growth and well-being of the local community. The program specifically excludes private, commercial, or business ventures. In addition to community facilities, funding opportunities also extend to energy initiatives, electric infrastructure, and broader business and community development programs.

- Potential use: Funding from the program could be used for redevelopment of locations throughout the site and improve utililities.

State Historic Preservation Office – Certified Local Government (CLG) Grants

If Wheatland is a Certified Local Government (CLG) or can partner with a CLG entity, it could apply for SHPO CLG grants. These funds are well-suited for preservation and rehabilitation of historic features, which may include portions of the original 1927 school structure. Given the building's age and architectural value, portions of the site may be eligible for a National Register nomination, which would strengthen grant applications.

- Potential use: Architectural assessments, façade restoration, preservation planning, and community engagement efforts related to historic reuse.
- Matching requirement: 40% match (cash or in-kind).

Save America's Treasures (SAT) Grants

If the Wheatland Junior High School is eligible for listing—or already listed—on the National Register of Historic Places, the site could qualify for the Save America's Treasures grant. These federal funds can cover significant preservation work on structural elements, windows, roofs, and more. Given the school's prominent community role and historic architecture, this grant could support large-scale rehabilitation.

- Potential use: Roof and envelope repairs, historic classroom restoration, ADA upgrades.

Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program

This federal grant supports rural historic preservation through subgrants administered by a regional entity. The Town of Wheatland could collaborate with a state-level partner (like the Wyoming Main Street program or a regional nonprofit) to secure funding. The school's historic character and rural location make it a prime candidate.

- Potential use: Interior rehabilitation of classrooms into coworking or entrepreneurial spaces; exterior stabilization.
- Award range: \$200,000–\$750,000 (no match required).

Business Ready Community (BRC) Grant & Loan Program

The BRC program can be leveraged for infrastructure improvements that make the school site viable for economic redevelopment. For example, if redevelopment plans include a workforce training center, business incubator, or shared workspace, the Town could apply for BRC funding to update water, sewer, or IT infrastructure. Pairing this with the CFR or historic preservation grants could make the project more comprehensive and fundable.

- Potential use: Utility upgrades, HVAC replacements, broadband infrastructure to support a business/education hub.



**WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
BROWNFIELDS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Nothing connects Wyoming people more than the place we spend our time. From our historic Main Streets, rail yards, and factories to the majestic mountains and plains, these places form the backdrop of our lives, connecting us to one another. Pulling from our cowboy roots, SPURR seeks to kick economic investment into high gear and drive cleanup of our neglected properties.

Wyoming DEQ is proud to present the SPURR initiative - a technical assistance toolkit calibrated to kickstart investment in our downtown buildings, underutilized rural areas, and other neglected properties. SPURR is a Wyoming Brownfields Initiative: State Partnership for Urban and Rural Redevelopment. With tools ranging from environmental assessments to redevelopment planning, our goal is simple: dig in our heels to increase economic vitality of our communities by enhancing environmental quality.

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