

February 7, 2011

To: Mayor Alan Hanks, Rapid City Common Council

From: Vision 2020 Strategic Goal 2 Committee

RE: Executive Summary of Strategic Goal 2 Program

On September 22, 2010, the Vision 2020 Strategic Goal 2 Committee was formed in an effort to develop strategies for achieving the following Goal:

Goal 2: By 2020 Rapid City will develop and implement a beautification program beginning with the appearance of its entrances and expanding to the overall community that embodies a consistent theme that is welcoming, aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly.

Over the past six months the Committee has evaluated various strategies that would serve to achieve this goal. The following five priorities, in highest ranking order, were deemed most critical to successfully meeting this goal.

1. Construct welcome signs at major entrances to Rapid City
2. Bury overhead utility lines
3. Remove or reduce billboards
4. Perform more active code enforcement
5. Construct/repair sidewalks, bike lanes and bike trails connecting the City

Below each priority is discussed in more detail with specific recommendations for program implementation.

Priority 1: Construct Welcome Signs at Major Entrances to Rapid City

This priority includes constructing new welcome signs at level 1 entrances. Level 1 entrances include Highway 44, I-90, I-190, Hwy 79 and Hwy 16. Once completed Level 2 entrances should receive similar treatment. Level 2 entrances include Sheridan Lake Road, West Chicago, Nemo Road, Haines Avenue, Sturgis Road and Deadwood Avenue. Exhibit A shows recommended locations for these welcome signs.

The welcome signs should have a centralized theme that is uniform and visually pleasing. Recognizing that some entrances into Rapid City have unique characteristics that could be individually highlighted, it may be suitable to slightly modify the welcome sign theme to emphasize those attributes. For example, Hwy 44 follows Rapid Creek

and as such the welcome signs, while still adhering to a centralized theme, could incorporate some homage to the waterway.

The welcome signs should also attempt to incorporate sustainable features such as porous concrete, solar lighting, rain barrels, rain gardens, use of local materials, use of recycled materials and other environmentally conscious elements.

Priority 2: Bury Overhead Utility Lines

This priority would include burying overhead utility lines in order to reduce visual clutter. When the opportunity arises all level 1 and level 2 corridors should be considered for overhead utility line removal. Level 1 corridors include Highway 44, I-90, I-190, Hwy 79 and Hwy 16. Level 2 corridors include Sheridan Lake Road, West Chicago, Nemo Road, Haines Avenue, Lacrosse Street, Mall Drive, E. North Street, Cambell Street, Catron Boulevard, Sturgis Road and Deadwood Avenue. Exhibit A demonstrates level 1 and level 2 corridors.

It is further recommended that a City Ordinance be drafted concerning the burying of overhead utilities when City or State construction projects allow for the opportunity. It should also discourage the installation of new overhead utilities. As this priority has a significant cost associated with it there should be considerable discussion with the PUC, utility companies and City to determine the financial impact and possible funding sources.

Priority 3: Remove or Reduce Billboards

This priority would include reducing the size and number of billboards currently located in and around Rapid City. The focus should first be on level 1 and level 2 corridors.

Priority 4: More Active Code Enforcement

This priority would call for actively seeking out code infractions with a goal of improving the appearance of our level 1 and level 2 corridors first. As there are a significant number of codes to enforce, this committee would recommend focusing efforts on those that impact visual appearance. Examples would include tall grass/weeds, broken sidewalks, recreational vehicles parked in the right-of-way, vehicles parked in yards, vehicles parked on unpaved areas of the boulevard, tree limbs impairing pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle movements, excessive signs and banners on property, etc.

The committee also recommends exploring ways to incorporate active code enforcement with Rapid City's annual Clean-Up-Day event. Other communities have enlisted programs where a neighborhood sees a canvassing by code enforcement officers followed up with a community cleanup effort and then a re-canvassing of the

same neighborhood one year later to ensure compliance. Other potential programs could include “adopt a highway”.

Priority 5: Construct/Repair Sidewalks, Bike Lanes and Bike Trails Connecting the City

This priority would give greater consideration to connecting the city through multimodal transportation opportunities. Specifically, this priority would encompass providing greater access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Like the other priorities, the recommendation would be to concentrate on level 1 and level 2 corridors.

Attention should be centered on repairing existing sidewalk and bike trails where their condition has failed, and also on installing new sidewalk, bike trails and bike lanes where they currently do not exist. In an effort to ensure sidewalks and bike trails remain in good condition, the City should inspect them on a frequent basis and take necessary action to keep them passable.