



CITY OF RAPID CITY
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Historic Preservation Commission
Historic Sign Review Board
Legal Finance Committee
Public Works Committee

FROM: Sarah Hanzel, Long Range Planner I

DATE: October 10, 2014

RE: Lehe Planning's Analysis of Rapid City's Historic Preservation Program

The final report and associated appendices prepared by Lehe Planning is enclosed. As a supplement to the full report, staff has prepared this summary of the major findings related strictly to issues and specific recommendations. Please refer to the full study for more details including a description of the consultant's evaluation process, his observations on both positive and negative aspects of the program, and a variety of supporting documents.

Issue: Historic preservation policies and procedures are not incorporated into the City's municipal code. Review of commercial property interiors is unnecessary.

Recommendations:

- Terminate the Memorandum of Joint Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office and follow the 11.1 review process as identified in the state statutes. Discontinue review of interior projects in commercial properties.
- Codify historic preservation processes and criteria by adopting the recommended model ordinance which creates zoning overlay districts for Downtown and West Boulevard.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Issue: There are distinct differences between the residential and commercial historic districts. The needs of various stakeholders are not adequately served by the existing structure of the Historic Preservation Commission. Recommendations:

- Reorganize the Historic Preservation Commission into two boards – one to serve residential properties and one to serve commercial properties. Each review board will review signs in their district.
- Prepare and adopt sub-area plans for the Downtown and West Boulevard Historic Districts.
- Establish a set of design criteria beyond that of historic preservation for the downtown area.

Issue: The evaluation criteria and review processes for historic preservation are perceived as arbitrary, complex, and lengthy. A lack of local design guidelines creates vague standards to guide project planning and review. Disinvestment and demolition by neglect are evident. Recommendations:

- Develop and adopt local design guidelines for both historic districts based on the Department of the Interior's Standards to improve customer service and encourage rehabilitation.
- Allow for administrative approval of certain projects which meet the adopted guidelines and provide staff with professional-level continuing education in historic preservation.

Issue: Rapid City lacks local historic preservation financial incentives that are found in other South Dakota communities. Recommendations:

- Establish a Main Street Program in partnership with Destination Rapid City and the Rapid City Downtown Association.
- Create façade easements and competitive façade improvement grants to encourage rehabilitation of historic property.

Issue: A majority of volunteer and staff time is spent on 11.1 reviews. Recommendations:

- Develop a comprehensive historic preservation public education and awards program.
- Provide ongoing training sessions for Historic Preservation Commission members on both review boards.