



# Comprehensive Plan

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# Contents

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<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
Background	1
Plan Development	5
Using the Plan	7
<b>2. COMMUNITY VISION &amp; CORE VALUES</b>	<b>9</b>
Our Vision: Seven Core Values	11
<b>3. A BALANCED PATTERN OF GROWTH</b>	<b>13</b>
Overview	15
Principles, Goals, and Policies (BPG)	16
<b>4. A VIBRANT LIVABLE COMMUNITY</b>	<b>21</b>
Overview	23
Principles, Goals, and Policies (LC)	24
<b>5. A SAFE, HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE &amp; SKILLED COMMUNITY</b>	<b>35</b>
Overview	37
Principles, Goals, and Policies (SHIS)	38
<b>6. EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS</b>	<b>45</b>
Overview	47
Principles, Goals, and Policies (TI)	48
<b>7. ECONOMIC STABILITY &amp; GROWTH</b>	<b>55</b>
Overview	57
Principles, Goals, and Policies (EC)	59
<b>8. OUTSTANDING RECREATIONAL &amp; CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>63</b>
Overview	65
Principles, Goals, and Policies (RC)	66
Parks and Recreational Facilities	70
<b>9. RESPONSIVE, ACCESSIBLE &amp; EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>77</b>
Overview	79
Principles, Goals, and Policies (GOV)	80
<b>10. GROWTH &amp; REINVESTMENT FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>85</b>
Overview	87
Future Land Use Plan	87
Design Principles	88
Major Street Plan	91
Neighborhoods	92
Mixed-Use Activity Centers, Corridors, and Opportunity Areas	97
Employment Areas	103
Gateways and Entrance Corridors	108
Parks and Recreation Opportunities	111
Land Conservation and Reserve	113
Public/Institutional and Other Land Uses	117
<b>11. NEIGHBORHOOD AREA POLICIES</b>	<b>119</b>
Overview	121
Airport Neighborhood Area (AP-NA)	123
Black Hawk Neighborhood Area (BH-NA)	127

Deadwood Avenue Neighborhood Area (DA-NA) .....	129
Downtown/ Skyline Drive Neighborhood Area (DSD-NA).....	133
Elk Vale Neighborhood Area (EV-NA) .....	137
Ellsworth Neighborhood Area (EW-NA) .....	141
Nemo Road Neighborhood Area (NRD-NA) .....	143
North Rapid Neighborhood Area (NR-NA) .....	145
Northeast Neighborhood Area (NE-NA).....	149
Piedmont Valley Neighborhood Area (PV-NA) .....	153
Sheridan Lake Road Neighborhood Area (SLR-NA) .....	155
South Robbinsdale Neighborhood Area (SR-NA).....	159
Southeast Connector Neighborhood Area (SEC-NA).....	163
Spring Creek Neighborhood Area (SC-NA).....	167
US Highway 16 Neighborhood Area (US16-NA) .....	171
West Rapid Neighborhood Area (WR-NA) .....	175
<b>12. IMPLEMENTATION.....</b>	<b>179</b>
Overview .....	181
Priority Initiatives.....	181
Action Plan .....	183
Monitoring & Reporting .....	213
Plan Updates & Amendments.....	213
Implementation Toolbox .....	215
<b>13. APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>221</b>
Overview .....	223
Appendix A. Community Profile.....	225
Appendix B. Technical Memorandums .....	227
Appendix C. Zoning Diagnosis .....	229
Appendix D. Authentic Youth Engagement Strategic Plan .....	231
Appendix E. Public Participation Summaries .....	233

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Introduction

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## BACKGROUND

### RAPID CITY OVERVIEW

Known as the Star of the West, and the City of Presidents, Rapid City is a diverse and vibrant community that is experiencing tremendous growth and change. The region offers unparalleled amenities that attract new residents and businesses and make existing residents proud to call the area home. Rapid City is the second largest municipality in the state of South Dakota, and is the largest community in its region.

The City is located on the eastern edge of the Black Hills range and was originally inhabited by the Sioux Nation (Lakota tribe). The discovery of gold in the Black Hills in the 1870s led to the settlement of the area and in 1876, the town was officially laid out as a square mile with a six-block business center area and was named after the creek at the heart of it all, Rapid Creek. Originally called Hay Camp, Rapid City incorporated in

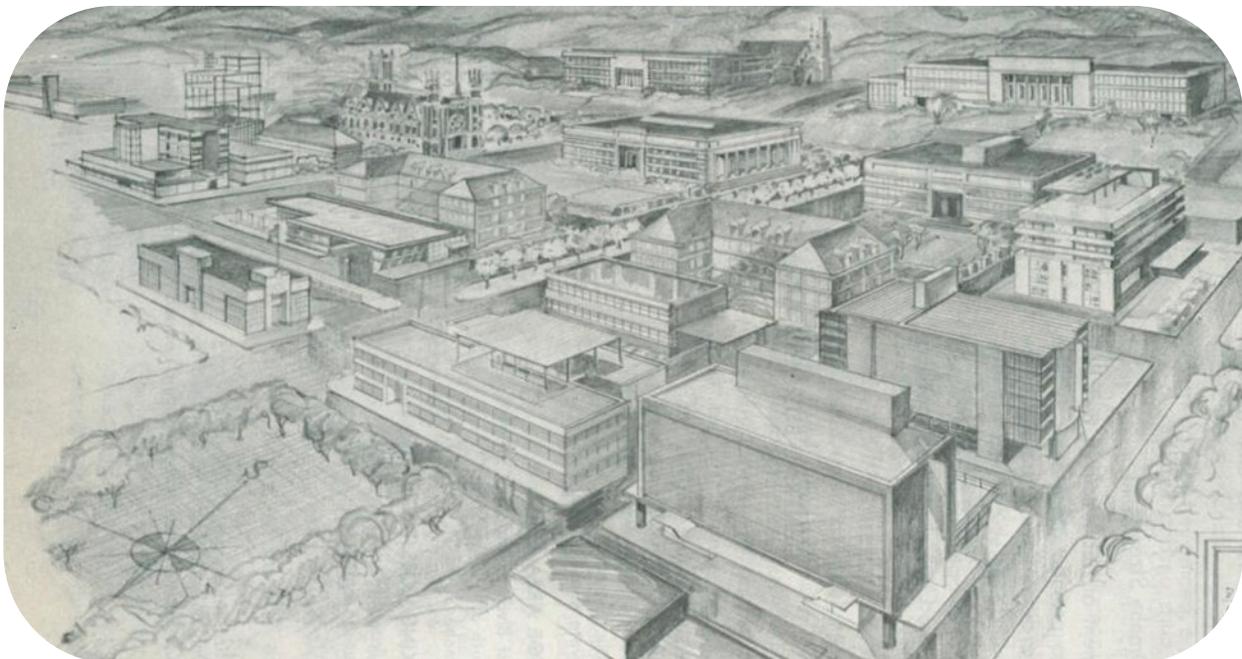
1882 as a town before it was a township.

Throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rapid City benefitted from Black Hills tourism, especially with the construction of nearby Mount Rushmore, which started in 1927 and was finally completed in 1941. That same year, Rapid City Army Base (now Ellsworth Air Force Base) was established just east of Rapid City, which brought significant population and employment growth to the community. Rapid City also received notoriety when it was selected as a finalist for the United Nations Headquarters in 1945.

Growth and construction continued to boom throughout the mid-part of the century, but extensive flooding of Rapid Creek in 1972 caused widespread destruction, including the loss of 238 lives and extensive property damage. The aftermath of the flood resulted in another building boom to replace many of the buildings that were damaged, and

resulted in some major public improvements including parkland along Rapid Creek and the construction of the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center and Central High School.

Tourism and recreation continue to be major factors in Rapid City's evolution and economy as the community progresses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Other growing sectors of the community and economy include higher education, medical care, manufacturing, finance, and energy – this diversification has helped insulate the community against the recent economic downturn. Opportunities associated with these industries, and the area's high quality of life continue to attract and appeal to many. This sustained growth presents many opportunities for the community, as well as challenges—such as the need to preserve the community's rich history— that must be considered and addressed in order to keep Rapid City a desirable and vibrant community as it grows.



**Illustrative Concept: Future Public Buildings and Civic Center, 1949 City Plan**

## **MAJOR TRENDS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES INFLUENCING THE PLAN UPDATE**

In the early stages of the planning process, interviews were conducted with a diverse group of community stakeholders, elected and appointed officials, and City staff that focused on the identification of planning-related issues, opportunities, and challenges facing the community. In addition, an in-depth analysis of trends and existing conditions was prepared to help inform the planning process. The results of this technical analysis and input received as part of the stakeholder interviews were combined into the Community Profile document contained in Appendix A. This document was used throughout the planning process to help inform the development of this Comprehensive Plan. A brief overview of major trends, issues, and opportunities is provided below.

### **Growth and Development**

In 2010, Rapid City's population was 67,956. The City's population is forecasted to reach between 85,000 and 97,000 by 2035. Coordination with adjacent counties, municipalities, and utility and service providers will be important as the City continues to grow. Balancing opportunities for inward versus outward growth will be a key consideration.

While some amount of greenfield development is anticipated to occur, opportunities for infill and revitalization of underutilized commercial corridors and activity

centers and reinvestment in established neighborhoods must also be considered.

### **Changing Demographics**

Rapid City's population is becoming increasingly diverse ethnically as the American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, and international student segment of the population grows. The community is also economically diverse, with a range of income levels and household types, such as single-person and single parent households. Another growing component of the population is seniors. Existing residents are aging and more and more people are moving to the community as a retirement destination. Additionally, many young people in the community leave Rapid City following graduation to pursue other opportunities. Meeting the varied needs of these diverse groups and increasing numbers of young people who want to return to Rapid City to raise their families are key considerations with respect to housing and economic diversity.

### **Housing and Neighborhoods**

While multi-family housing options have increased in recent years, the majority of housing units in Rapid City are single-family detached homes. As the City becomes increasingly diverse in terms of its household composition and age, a wider array of housing options—in terms of price, configuration, and location—will be needed. In addition, aging housing stock in core areas of the community will also need continued maintenance and investment.

### **Economic Vitality**

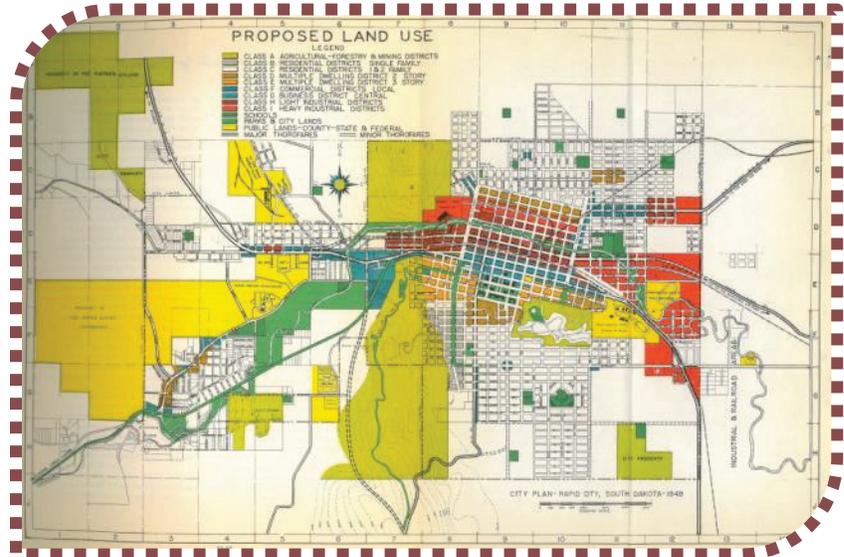
Rapid City is a regional hub for economic activity in a 200-mile area. Currently, Rapid City's economy has been heavily weighted towards tourism, health care, retail, and the military. Diversifying the economic base to help offset potential fluctuations in public sector jobs, such as those supported by Ellsworth Air Force Base, and attracting new industries that offer higher paying jobs have been a key focus of regional economic development initiatives in recent years. In addition, exploring new fiscal, economic, and community development tools, continuing Downtown revitalization, and addressing housing quality, affordability, and diversity are all key factors in supporting the economic vitality of the community.

### **Community Appearance and Amenities**

The character of Rapid City is enhanced by the area's unique natural features, parks, and other community amenities. Protecting the character of these features as the community grows will be an important consideration. In addition, opportunities to strengthen the community's image through the revitalization of established areas, emphasis on community gateways, and consideration of tools to enhance the character and quality of future development will need to be explored.

## Transportation and Utility Infrastructure

Funding new roadways and infrastructure, while also addressing maintenance and deficiencies of existing infrastructure is an ongoing challenge for the community. In addition, continuing to expand multi-modal transportation options such as transit, walking, and bicycling and improving connectivity are key considerations as the community continues to grow. Exploring new tools to support short-term and long-term needs will be essential to support future growth and revitalization.



Proposed Land Use Plan, 1949 City Plan

## Communication and Coordination

The Comprehensive Plan builds upon recent community planning efforts to help set a clear vision for the community with a realistic implementation roadmap. The Community Profile document contained in Appendix A identifies related efforts, organizations, and studies by topic. The goals and policies contained in this Plan build on these related efforts.

## ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool for ensuring orderly, efficient, and resourceful growth and development in the community. It establishes the long-term vision for Rapid City and provides guidance for decision making to support and advance the vision.

Rapid City adopted its first City Comprehensive Plan in 1949, shortly after the annexation of the

Canyon Lake neighborhood. The Comprehensive Plan was updated in 1964, and most recently in 1981 – more than 30 years ago. However, since that time, the City separately updated numerous elements of the Comprehensive Plan and associated plans, including but not limited to a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Utility Master Plan, Drainage Basin Plans, the Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Senior Need Assessment, Fire Department Long Range Deployment Plan, and numerous Neighborhood Area Future Land Use Plans.

Beyond these separate pieces, one unified plan is necessary to address future opportunities, mobilization of assets, and challenges in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. This Comprehensive Plan weaves together many of the previous planning efforts, and also addresses emerging trends and



## 1. Introduction

new ideas to encourage community involvement to shape a positive future for the community.

### PREVIOUS AND RELATED EFFORTS

In addition to the 1949 City Plan, the 1964 update, and the 1981 update, the City has led and participated in many planning and other related efforts that address growth, development, and the long-term vision. A short description of some of these related efforts are provided in the following sections.

#### Rapid City Area 2008 Future Land Use Plan and Neighborhood Plans

The Future Land Use Plan was a compilation of 16 neighborhood plans that cover the City limits, the City's three mile platting jurisdiction, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area. A set of common goals unites the plan for all separate neighborhood areas. Many of the ideas and land use concepts established in these neighborhood areas are carried forward and reflected in this Comprehensive Plan.

#### County Comprehensive Plans

In addition to providing guidance for incorporated areas of Rapid City, this Comprehensive Plan draws on plans developed by Pennington and Meade Counties to help inform future land uses and policies in unincorporated portions of the City's planning area. Pennington County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2003 and Meade County's

Comprehensive Plan was revised and adopted in 2010.

#### 2020 Strategic Plan

The 2020 Strategic Plan establishes a vision for the City and helps guide City government in preparing for the future. The Plan includes five strategic goals, as follows:

*By 2020 Rapid City will...*

- *Be recognized as a leader in attracting, expanding, and retaining diverse businesses that offer higher skilled positions and higher total compensation employment opportunities.*
- *Develop and implement a beautification program beginning with the appearance of its entrances and expanding to the overall community that embodies a consistent theme which is welcoming, aesthetically pleasing, and pedestrian friendly.*
- *Be nationally recognized by industry trade measures as a premier regional hub for healthcare, education, entertainment, tourism, retirement, business, technology, agriculture, and transportation.*
- *Develop an interconnected parks, arts, and recreation system that provides diverse opportunities for enjoyment and adds to our family friendly quality of life.*
- *Have in place an accessible, affordable, convenient, and safe transportation system that addresses community needs.*

Initial work focused on implementing goals one and two. Next steps include creating strategies to implement the remaining goals. This Comprehensive Plan draws extensively on the goals and strategies established in this Strategic Plan, and helps provide more detail for implementation, linking them to the many growth-related opportunities and challenges facing Rapid City.

#### Budgeting for Outcomes

Rapid City's 2013 outcome-based budget marked a new process and framework for City budgeting that focuses on the value of services, encourages new ideas, innovations, cooperation, and improvement to achieve the best results to match community priorities.

*The Rapid City 2013 Budget identified the following priorities:*

- **Good Government:** *Rapid City will have a government that is fiscally responsible, accessible and responsive to its residents and businesses.*
- **Safety:** *Rapid City will provide a safe place to live, learn, work and play.*
- **Infrastructure and Transportation:** *Rapid City will have a well maintained city whose infrastructure keeps pace with growth and offers transportation systems that address community needs.*
- **Economic Stability and Growth:** *Rapid City will be recognized as a leader in attracting, expanding and retaining diverse businesses and services.*

- **Strong and Vibrant Community:** *Rapid City will be a strong, vibrant and culturally diverse community that encourages a sense of health and wellness. This 2013 budget will be a collaborative effort between citizens, mayor's office, council members, and city staff.*

As with the 2020 Strategic Plan Goals, the City's budgeting goals are strongly linked to the vision and framework of this Comprehensive Plan. Moving forward, it is intended for the City's budgeting process to closely align with the Comprehensive Plan to improve consistency and continuity between the community's vision and priorities and City budgeting, spending, and decision-making.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### COMPLIANCE WITH STATE STATUTES

The Rapid City Comprehensive Plan was prepared in compliance with the South Dakota Codified Laws (SDCL 11-6) which guide comprehensive city planning. Per 11-6-15, the Plan was made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality, which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

In addition, the Plan was prepared in conformance with the guidance for the preparation and contents of a comprehensive plan for municipal development (11-6-14 through 16). The public hearing and adoption requirements (11-6-17 through 18) govern the public hearings, adoption, and filing of this Plan.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring fair and equal representation of a diverse community and providing adequate opportunities for public involvement are important to the success of a Plan. Public officials, Rapid City staff, the consultant team, and community members collaborated for nine months to develop *Plan Rapid City*. Project information was available in a variety of formats for the public to review and participate at each stage of the planning process. Over the course of the project, four rounds of community outreach events were conducted in July, September, and November 2013, as well as in January 2014. A more detailed summary of community input can be found in the appendix.

The following types of activities and engagement tools were conducted during the community outreach series:

#### Stakeholder Interviews and Group Meetings

Early in the process, members of the planning team conducted dozens of stakeholder interviews with representatives from a variety of sectors to help identify key issues and opportunities to be addressed by the Plan.

### Community Input Events

Numerous public events were held to inform and gather feedback from the community at large during the different phases of the planning process. Input events included community workshops, a photovoice booth at the Movies under the Stars event, a senior citizen update, and forums with community thought-leaders.

### Youth Engagement

Two teen events were also held at key points in the process, in collaboration with Lifeways, Inc. and the Rapid City School Foundation. Participants included teens who are engaged in volunteerism, and group and community leadership. Rapid City recognizes that its young people are one of the community's greatest resources—the end user of many city projects and services, as well as future taxpayers and City leaders. Over 60 teens participated in the two events.



## 1. Introduction

### Advisory Committee Meetings

The Advisory Committee was comprised of a diverse group of community leaders who provided strategic direction and leadership to the planning process. The Committee reviewed draft work products and provided comments and insight to the planning team. One Advisory Committee meeting was held during each community outreach series.

### Joint Leadership Worksessions

Updates with City Council, Planning Commission, Department Directors, and key staff members were held during each outreach series to provide progress updates, present preliminary findings and alternative solutions, and receive policy direction.

### Project Website

A project website, [www.planrapidcity.com](http://www.planrapidcity.com), served as the main hub for information about Rapid City's efforts to update the Comprehensive Plan. The website included an overview of the planning process, contact information, draft work products for review, and links to project surveys. The City's Twitter account was also used to connect followers to the project website and to announce public events and project news.

### Online Surveys

Online surveys were used as another opportunity for community feedback. Four online surveys were posted online throughout the planning process to garner additional feedback regarding topics like the vision, community preferences, Future Land Use Plan map, goals and policies, and the Draft Comprehensive Plan. Over fifty people participated in the surveys.



## USING THE PLAN

### ORGANIZATION

This Comprehensive Plan is organized in a unique way that reflects the vision for Rapid City’s future and will align with the City’s new or proposed priority-driven budgeting process. This organization adds consistency between City goals, policies, decision-making, and budgeting. This Plan includes the following chapters:

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	Chapter 1 provides a summary of planning issues and opportunities and addresses the purpose, planning process, and use of the Comprehensive Plan.
<b>COMMUNITY VISION</b>	Chapter 2 defines the Community Vision, which is comprised of seven “Core Values” that also serve as key chapters of the Plan.
<b>PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT THE CORE VALUES</b>	Chapters 3 to 9 establish the Principles, Goals, and Policies to achieve each Core Value.
<b>GROWTH AND REINVESTMENT FRAMEWORK</b>	Chapter 10 includes the Future Land Use Plan map, descriptions and policies for each of the map components, and design principles to guide the character and form of future development.
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD AREA POLICIES</b>	Chapter 11 contains principles, goals, and policies specific to different neighborhood areas, as well as Future Land Use Plan maps for each neighborhood area.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Chapter 12 details the actions required to implement the Plan, establishes the procedures for monitoring and amending the Plan, and provides a toolbox of potential strategies to support specific initiatives.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Five appendices are provided for reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Community Profile</li> <li>B. Technical Memorandums</li> <li>C. Zoning Diagnosis</li> <li>D. Authentic Youth Civic Engagement Strategic Plan</li> <li>E. Public Participation Summaries</li> </ul>

## ABOUT PRINCIPLES, GOALS & POLICIES

The Comprehensive Plan establishes a hierarchy of information to guide the long-term vision and decision-making. At the top of this structure are general statements about the community's long-term vision, supported by more detailed principles and goals, followed by specific policy directions. Together these components help support and inform decision-making at all levels, linking broad ideas and concepts to recommended positions and detailed actions including budgeting. The components of the Plan's hierarchy include the following:

**Vision** – describes the kind of place that residents, community leaders, and business owners want Rapid City to become in the future. The vision is presented as a series of seven “Core Values” which also serve as the Plan’s main chapters.

- **Principles** – describe the community’s long-term aspirations to support the Community Vision.
- **Goals** – provide general direction and targets to guide the community.
- **Policies** – provide specific guidance and positions for daily decision-making.
- **Actions** – establish specific strategies (e.g., programs, funding mechanisms, regulatory tools) to advance the Vision.

