

Final Report

Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force on Green Cities

"If there is to be an ecologically sound society, it will have to come from the grass roots up, not from the top down." - Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce*

> February 1, 2011 Rapid City, South Dakota

To Mayor Alan Hanks & City Council:

The Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force on Green-Sustainable Cities was formed to provide ideas on how Rapid City can thrive in a world of increasing costs and diminishing resources—both natural and fiscal. Creation of the task force recognized the importance of Rapid City's natural setting, access to outdoor recreation, and relatively undisturbed environment as important assets and drawing cards for residents, visitors and businesses. We are pleased to submit a final report on our work, which we believe aligns well with the City's 2020 Strategic Plan.

The full report consists of the following, some appended and some available on website:

- <u>A-V presentation</u> on Task Force activities
- Findings and Recommendations
- List of Proposed Pilot Projects
- List of Policy Recommendations
- <u>Support materials</u> and background leading to proposals
- List of partners, participants and experts who collaborated and contributed

We recommend, among other policy matters, that the Mayor and City Council create a citizen committee on sustainability, comparable to other citizen committees and boards, and that members of that committee sit as liaisons on existing advisory boards and committees that discuss topics related to sustainability.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this effort.

Suzanne Iudicello Martley & Eirik Heikes, Co-chairs

Background

Attendance at a national green cities conference in Portland, Oregon by Rapid City council members, city officials and local business leaders provided an impetus for a community conversation about a green and sustainable Rapid City. Interest from the council and a public event at the Journey featuring a panel discussion by those who went to Portland led to support for follow-up action. The council recommended a process by which citizens, business and government could explore and plan, independently and cooperatively, to create a roadmap for a greener and more sustainable Rapid City. The task force was appointed in September and had its first meeting in October, 2009.

From the outset, the task force put its emphasis on finding ideas and proposing actions that would not rely solely on government, but could be taken by organizations, businesses, and individuals. The group agreed that "sustainable" meant not only ecologically, but socially and economically sustainable actions and ideas.

We also recognized that while our focus was on Rapid City, our natural, economic and social environment are part of the larger, regional setting. Indeed many of the natural assets that make our community an attractive place to live and visit are governed by county, state, and federal policies, driven by regional economic forces, and affected by natural systems that recognize no jurisdictional boundaries. Though focusing on actions within Rapid City, we acknowledged the need to connect with county, state, and federal resource managers and experts.

The task force and public participants proposed and discussed a mission statement over several meetings, and in January 2010 adopted the following:

Facilitate creation of a community-authored roadmap for fostering stewardship of the environment of Rapid City. Therefore, we will:

- celebrate our quality of life
- educate ourselves and our community on sustainable practice
- formulate environmental stewardship
- implement economically sound measures
- evaluate socially viable solutions.

Based on interest of citizen participants and key issues of sustainability, the group organized its work into eight subcommittees: Education, Energy, Land Use Planning, Local Foods, Natural Assets, Recycling, Transportation, Water. Each one of these committees met not only with the task force, but on their own. They developed exhibits for public display, they attended numerous events, they volunteered, they conducted research, and they wrote summaries and proposals. The documentation of their work is

included as an appendix to this report. These citizens brought expertise as educators, engineers, architects, lawyers, builders, administrators, gardeners, business owners, naturalists, planners and facilitators. Had these volunteers been paid as consultants their contribution would have been worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. As willing, engaged and passionate citizens, their contribution to the future of Rapid City is priceless.

The task force met with city officials to learn what Rapid City was already doing, went to the community in a series of public events to learn about citizen priorities, talked to experts here and in other cities, reviewed articles, documents, websites and reports, and over the past year came up with ideas that could work here.

After much discussion—and some struggle—participants tried to answer questions about various proposals, including how the action was related to sustainability, whether the proponents had demonstrated a need and the means to evaluate success, whether anyone was doing the activity already, who would be asked to do the job, would they have authority, how much would it cost and how would it be paid for, when would it occur (short or long term), and what education or awareness activities would be needed.

Library Knowledge Network Partnership

In its work, the task force discovered a multitude of resources, ideas, plans, reports and guidance on how to strive toward a green and sustainable community. Much of this information comes from communities in our region that are comparable to Rapid City: Fort Collins, Billings, Jackson, Colorado Springs, Lincoln, and others. A lot of the information came from our members, who are well versed, widely read, and deeply experienced in strategies for sustainable communities, smart growth, corporate social responsibility, green technology, and environmental conservation.

In our effort to streamline this report, we did not want to incorporate every piece of information acquired, nor did we want to have our information become dated and stale. We have found a means to capture, update and provide the information to ourselves and the public.

We are pleased to report an exciting partnership with the Rapid City Public Library, where the body of work of the task force and the research of its committees will be housed on the Black Hills Knowledge Network. We are working together to create a portal on the library's state of the art search engine for an archive of sustainability information. Weblinks, resources, connections to people, places, information and action will be available to the community, to decision makers, and to whatever entity succeeds the task force to carry on this work. The structure of the Knowledge Network enables us to freshen and update our ideas and information about sustainable practice, to highlight the progress of our pilot projects, inform interested citizens of related public policy and private initiative, and share the documentation of our year's work.

Pilot Projects

In July, the task force reached a consensus that even if it proposed a road map for this community, such a "plan" could become outdated in a short time. The suggestion of a

rain garden at Trinity Lutheran Church spurred the idea of "pilot projects" that would demonstrate—not describe—sustainability on the ground, in action. The Mayor approved the notion of creating pilots, rather than a road map, and encouraged the task force to propose three to four tangible, demonstration projects.

The "rain garden" idea of collecting, using and saving storm water, was the catalyst for development of a list of additional pilot projects that could be done solely by private organizations, citizens groups, schools, individuals, or businesses or in partnership with the city. In November, the task force set priorities on its list of proposed pilot projects. Some are underway, others require more thought and planning. Most of them can be done with or without action by the city, but the task force is seeking endorsement from the Mayor and Council as an indication of leadership and commitment to sustainable practice. Full descriptions of these four projects are included as an appendix to this report. The entire list of proposed pilot projects is available through the library portal.

The task force recommends that these four projects be given early recognition and support:

Project	Partners	Time/Scale	Support
Downtown Recycling	Destination Rapid City, Red River Sanitation, MRF	Short term	DRC, potential for state grant, other private support
Sustainability Awards Recognition for Business	Ad Hoc Task Force, TSP, Four Front, SD-USGBC	Medium term	City to present awards, Task force successor to develop point system
Trinity Lutheran Sustainable Water Garden	Ad Hoc Task Force, Trinity Lutheran Foundation	Medium term	Trinity Lutheran Foundation, volunteers, technical support from city public works
North Rapid Neighborhood Plan	Residents of neighborhood, local architects, City Growth Management Department	Medium to long-term	Planning & architectural firms, private residents, guidance and technical support from city.

Policy Recommendations

The task force took very seriously its direction from the Mayor and Council to understand what citizens of Rapid City want and what actions they would support to make our community more green and sustainable. The diverse perspectives of citizens, appointees and subcommittee members covered a range of views: from those who support private action and a very limited role for government, to those who want to see more mandates.

We were aided not only by our own efforts to elicit citizen views at public events, but by the city's survey and compilation of five goals framed as the 2020 Strategic Plan.

Based on what we learned, heard, discussed, documented and evaluated in the past year, the Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force on Green Cities recommends these actions be taken by the city council:

- Create Sustainability Committee to succeed Ad Hoc Task Force
- Implement recommendations from 2010 solid waste management plan
- Create city-wide recycling advocate position
- Adopt a policy to mitigate loss of floodway land with comparable replacement open space
- Complete pedestrian and bicycle master plan and implementation
- Integrate pedestrian and bicycle paths in new developments and in reconstruction, redevelopment of existing corridors such as Jackson Boulevard and Mount Rushmore Road
- Implement recommendations from city beautification committee as proposed for Vision 2012, "West Memorial Park."
- Feature local food in tourist promotions & route city buses to farmers markets

The documentation and subcommittee reports considered in the development and approval of these recommendations can be accessed on the Library Knowledge Network.

Sustainable Rapid City Committee: continued celebration, education, formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Rapid City has an extensive structure for citizen participation in its committees, advisory boards and commissions. Many of these groups are engaged in discussion and policy recommendations directly related to sustainability, whether they use that term or not. We urge the Mayor and Council to create a "sustainability" seat on these committees¹, in order to integrate sustainability considerations across many topics. In addition to using the current process for soliciting and appointing interested citizens to those posts, we recommend creation of a separate committee made up of sustainability appointees to meet quarterly to discuss Rapid City's sustainable future. This group would not replace, but enhance, the work of existing bodies such as Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Beautification Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, and others. A Sustainable Rapid City Committee would succeed the Ad Hoc Task Force to provide a forum for liaison with existing city advisory bodies, to foster work on pilot projects and other initiatives, to serve as a clearing house for recognitions and awards, and to maintain green/sustainable content on the Library Knowledge Network.

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¹ Air Quality, Beautification, Drinking Water, Future Land Use, Hazardous Waste, Historic Preservation, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Public Works, Recycling/Solid Waste, Planning Commission, Urban Forestry Board.

Appendices

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

A. Pilot project descriptions



Recommendation: Downtown Rapid City Provides Public and Private Recycling

To what issues, challenges, or problems does this recommendation relate? This effects both perception of our City by Visitors and Shoppers as well as business owners and residents. There are not currently and recycling receptacles for downtown businesses or public facilities with exception of CSAC and Dahl. Waste providers empty dumpsters of garbage but do not empty recycling or transport it to City Waste Facility. Users often request these facilities and are told it is not feasible.

What stakeholders would be interested in/affected by this recommendation? City of Rapid City, Business Owners, Parks Department, Dahl, Destination Rapid City, Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, Downtown Residents, City Waste Management, others.

Whom are you recommending should take the action? Combination of Business owners demanding the service, City subsidizing the service, Businesses offsetting costs via contributions, Waste Carriers saving costs for less garbage hauling demands.

Does the acting organization have the authority to undertake the recommendation? Destination Rapid City, Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, Main Street Square, and other Grass Roots efforts could recognize those businesses who recycle via recognition. City of Rapid City could require Carriers to transport and provide larger "recycling dumpsters" or micro locations in alleyways.

If not, who can authorize the action? Mayor. City Council via ordinance. At small cost.

Timing: Short term and ongoing. Very good media opportunity.

What education and awareness activities would be needed to support the activity?

Simple press release, testimonials by businesses, cost savings of less hauling of garbage. Huge opportunity for Visitors Bureau to get attention.

How much is it going to cost to do the action and do you have recommendations for funding sources? Would have to determine with Waste Haulers.

What steps are necessary to take this action? Action has already begun with cooperation between Destination Rapid City, waste haulers and Solid Waste Division. Project expected to be underway by Summer 2011.

Trinity Lutheran Water Garden

The goal of the Trinity Lutheran Church Endowment Foundation is to create a peaceful, natural place downtown that will make use of plants, grasses and trees that are native to the western South Dakota prairie and Black Hills. Although the park will be owned by the Foundation, it will be open to the public in addition to being available for the use of Trinity Lutheran Church members and programs. It will be a place for people to stroll, sit, or meditate. There will also be a large open space for outdoor gatherings.

The Foundation aims to follow sustainable landscape design principles as outlined by the Council of Educators of Landscape Architecture. Sustainable design goals include: planning in harmony with the natural environment, working to avoid depleting or damaging other ecosystems, conservation of energy and resources (like soil, water, nutrients), and maintaining or increasing diversity of species.

The park maintenance plan will aim to use less energy, water, fertilizers and herbicides than are routinely used in the upkeep of parks or lawns. Preliminary plans are to make use of rainwater-harvesting and to keep the park "off-the-grid" by making use of solar and/or wind power instead of connecting to local utilities.

The sustainable park plan is in keeping with contemporary Lutheran concern for the planet as well as the long-standing Biblical concept of stewardship of the earth. The Foundation also wants the park to be an educational site that will serve as an example of alternative landscape design, as well as be a botanical preserve that will replicate local biomes.

TRANSITIONAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN ST. JOE AND 4TH STREETS

Since acquiring the property at 4th and St. Joe, the Trinity Lutheran Church Endowment Foundation, a legal entity separate from Trinity Lutheran Church, has taken a wait-and-see approach as to what to do with the land. We obtained the land so that Trinity Lutheran Church would not be boxed in and have options for future growth. It was also our desire for the acquisition to have a minimal financial impact on the Foundation's resources.

It appears at this time that Trinity Lutheran Church is not in a growth mode and that there is not a specific need for the property. Because of the high-visibility downtown location of the lot and lack of clear vision for the property at present, the Foundation seeks a transitional design to:

- 1) improve the visual appearance of the property
- 2) incur minimal preparation expenses
- 3) create limited ongoing maintenance responsibilities

- 4) educate the public about innovative landscaping techniques that model thoughtful stewardship of God's creation
- 5) maintain flexibility for future possible uses

Trinity Lutheran Church Foundation seeks a landscape plan to meet these specific objectives:

- a) an attractively designed, sustainable outdoor space
- b) consideration for ease of maintenance
- c) cost controls to keep project affordable
- d) a desire to capitalize on the property's St. Joe St. exposure and integrate it with the existing building to increase Trinity Lutheran Church's presence (perhaps by giving it a "front campus" feel)
- e) a desire to facilitate placement of a 30-foot by 40-foot tent for outdoor meetings or concerts (two options shown on enclosed illustrations).
- f) a desire to create a natural barrier between the property and Hardee's with the use of berms and/or appropriate plantings.
- g) a desire to develop a sustainable park that will make use of xeriscaping, rainwater harvesting, French drain irrigation and storage reservoirs, and native plants.

The landscape plan will be used to direct the transformation of the vacant lot from an eyesore to a desirable downtown vista. The Foundation will use volunteers and seek donations of materials and services from church members and the community to minimize the cost of the project.

Sustainable Business Awards

Rapid City Sustainability Committee Awards / Recognition Pilot Project

This pilot project would be the initial task of an appointed Standing City Committee of the City of Rapid City.

A point system would be developed that recognizes commitment levels on areas of sustainability and businesses and organizations and even activities or groups could be nominated, reviewed, and essentially awarded. The intent would be to create measurable levels of commitment to sustainability; not as an equivalent to LEED or other programs but as a simple local effort.

This would be similar to Beautification Committee recognition and would be aligned with the Library Portal and various Sustainability Guidelines (Energy Star, LEED, Sustainable Sites, ASHRAE, etc) as well as local / regional levels of participation.

For illustration; the proposed system below is an example of how the award might be set up (notice how the points are harder to achieve as the business progresses.)

Air Quality

1 point- A business or organization has a no smoking policy for facilities or grounds.

- 1 point- A business or organization recognizes carpooling or biking/ transit as part of transportation and incentivizes or otherwise commits to as part of their daily activity.
- 1 point- A business, group, or affiliation is committed to carbon/ dust mitigating efforts such as keeping a portion of their site as greenspace, maintaining forest and forest health, or for events like planting of trees along neighborhoods or vehicle corridors.
- 1 point- A business has a dust/ airborne particle policy in place for construction sites or other endeavors.
- 1 point- A business exceeds ASHRAE standard 62.1 2007.

Water Efficiency

- 1 point- A business or group limits use of water through commitment to practice, agricultural method, maintenance, or reuse.
- 1 point- a business or organization is committed to storm water management quality and quantity per City of Rapid City Public Works.
- 1 point- a business or organization uses recognized efficient faucets, toilets, showers, etc that are water efficient.
- 1 point- a business or company implements "smart technology" to track water usage and adjust seasonally or per demand; such as in the case with landscape irrigation.
- 1 point- A business or group captures water and reuses, uses non potable or untreated water for approved use, or uses waterless methods in place of water wasting.

Energy Saving

- 1 point- A business or company uses energy saving light bulbs in 70% of fixtures.
- 1 point- A business or company uses energy star appliances in 70% of systems.
- 1 point- An organization or group incentivizes transit riding, bicycling, or alternative fuel vehicles.
- 1 point- A home or business reduces its energy consumption by 20% compared to a comparable baseline.
- 1 point- An organization utilizes solar, wind, or alternative energy or commits to lessening demand through sub-metering, net metering, or renewable energy programs.

Land Use

- 1 point- A company is part of a cleanup program and commits time, resources, or people to stewardship of public spaces.
- 1 point- A company or organization commits to community connectivity as part of site selection or location selection utilizing existing infrastructure, services, housing, etc.
- 1 point- A city organization or trust dedicates open space management to a project in the long term.
- 1 point-A company or development increases density to be more efficient than 3 units per acre.
- 1 point- A group plants an orchard, builds a park, revitalizes a greenspace, or administers a garden project for public use.

Recycling/ Materials/ Local Foods

1 point- A business or individual diverts 20 percent of its waste from landfill through reuse or recycling efforts.

- 1 point- A business or individual diverts 40 percent of its waste from landfill through reuse or recycling efforts.
- 1 point- A company or group chooses to manufacture, incentivize, grow, or use byproducts locally without shipping or sourcing materials more than 90 miles from origin.
- 1 point- A company elects to salvage elements from area or revitalize existing elements or use recycled materials rather than use or build using new materials.
- 1 point- An individual or group consumes or provides for consumption 20% of its daily nutrition needs from within 50 miles of its primary residency (sportsmen, gardeners, farmers, producers, etc.)

Note that this is only an example and the first order for the committee would be to establish and update a simple yet ongoing challenging standard.

A business could then be recognized initially for meeting 12 of the 25 points and then recognized for 16 and even 20.

The majority of the judicial portion of this effort would be on a common sense level and an honor system would be a large portion of the effort; however, some levels of documentation would be appropriate on a case by case basis as the points are more challenging.

North Rapid Neighborhood Planning Process

WHAT

Neighborhood planning provides long term benefits to the city and neighborhood and paves the way for less haphazard utilization of land and resources. A more purposeful utilization of land areas addressing present and future needs and concerns provides for smart growth in a neighborhood. Perimeter areas of Rapid City seem to be where most growth occurs and have much to offer citizens of Rapid City. As a pilot project, the task force recommends exploring the potential of the neighborhood north of Interstate 90 by accessing the needs of that area and how it can serve that neighborhood and Rapid City as a whole.

WHY

Rapid City is at the crossroads of many of the problems associated with developing haphazard, inefficient, unsustainable sprawl experienced by many larger cities. However, Rapid City is still at the point where the community can work together to avoid many of the problems that have evolved in larger cities. Rapid City could benefit from looking at strategies that have been successful elsewhere to encourage sustainable land use.

The area north of Interstate 90 has experienced considerable development in the areas of business, residential and industrial and agricultural services. This area is, for many newcomers, the gateway to Rapid City and leaves lasting impressions of what we have to offer as a community. Consolidating old and new development could greatly support present development and identify/create future opportunities. The following strategies would be helpful in the neighborhood planning project:

- assessment of the economic, social and environmental needs for sustainability of the neighborhood community.
- identification and preservation of natural systems.
- · development of a neighborhood with a sense of community.

- viable connection with the agricultural community as part of the neighborhood.
- identification of city/school services desirable for sustainability in the area.

Evaluation of the success of the project can be done through observation of the vitality of the neighborhood and testimonial evidence.

HOW MUCH (\$\$\$\$)

A voluntary North Interstate 90 neighborhood task force could be created to develop a plan for addressing the five recommended strategies. Some of the members of the present Green Cities Task Force would be open to helping. Various businesses in the area could host meetings for the task force. Assessment of the N Interstate I 90 neighborhood interests and recommendations could be acquired through open forums. If the task force wishes to do a computerized neighborhood assessment, there are support services available through government grants using the smart card concept. There are also government grants available for approved projects that provide evidence of future sustainability.

WHO

The city currently has proposals for additional connections of the city with the North I 90 neighborhood. There is current development and interest in greater activity for the area. Residential development is ongoing. The city has worked out a plan for additional water and waste treatment upgrades. Haines Ave. has been paved with a bike/walking path. Pennington County has been supportive of continued development in the area. Considerable business development is in progress. However, the situation seems to be individual developers progressing on their own property without much coordination. This project would pull together people from different entities to develop a consolidated plan. The council and mayor could authorize the task force and ask for volunteers to serve on it. Additional members could be added through authorization with Pennington County. Since the Meade County line is within the area, perhaps they could have a representative(s).

WHEN

The process of creating the task force could occur when the council and Mayor authorize it. The original task force could be given a year to complete the original recommendations. If the North I90 community wishes to continue with the process, it could be developed into a N I90 Neighborhood Association, such as the down town business association or the N Rapid Association. Perceived effectiveness of the project would determine the longevity.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

- 1. Presentation to the Mayor
- 2. Presentation to the interested city departments
- 3. Presentation to N I 90 business and developers
- 4. Forum with neighborhood citizens/ display of possibilities-possibly like the Energy display at the mall
- 5. Presentation to the Planning Committee
- 6. Presentation to the Council

B. Reports & Recommendations of issue committees

(Each of these reports will be available for download on the Library's Black Hills Knowledge Network Portal)

Education Natural Assets

Energy Recycling

Land Use Planning Transportation

Local Foods Water

C. Additional Support Materials

Agendas

Meeting Notes

List of pilot projects/priorities

Documents produced for events

Reports, articles, source materials

D. Events

- 1. March 30, 2010: Partnered with Democracy in Action to organize, exhibit and elicit public comment at *Our Green Future*, Dahl Arts Center.
- 2. March 2010: Presented information at Living Green & Loving It, Rapid City Public Library
- 3. Earth Day 2010: Partnered with Western Dakota Tech to organize and exhibit
- 4. April 22, 2010: Organized and convened first Green/Sustainable Summit
- 5. April 24, 2010: Participated in 40th Annual Rapid City Cleanup Day
- 6. October 2, 2010: Participated in Energy Efficiency Awareness Day,
- 7. November 15, 2010: Partnered with city offices to organize and promote Rapid City Recycles Day
- 8. December 10, 2010: Conducted workshop on sustainability and education with area educators



(John Campbell, left, reviews recycling information at "Our Green Future" at the Dahl, March 2010. Center, Mayor Alan Hanks with Craig Lewis of Habitat for Humanity. Additional photos of task force events will be available for viewing on the Library's Black Hills Knowledge Network Portal)

E. Task Force Members

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F. Partners, Experts, Organizations, Advisors

The Task Force wishes to thank the following individuals, organizations, and city offices for providing their time and expertise to educate our members, and for participating with us in public events, workshops and our Earth Day Symposium. A special thank you to Lon Van Deusen, Gary Garner and the staff of the Parks Division for being such gracious hosts to our task force meetings for a year.

Black Hills Power Pennington County Planning Department

Dakota Local Foods Network Rapid City Community Development Division

Dahl Arts Center Rapid City Growth Management Departmen.

Democracy in Action Rapid City Parks & Recreation Department

Destination Rapid City Rapid City Public Library

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Friends of Rapid City Parks Rapid City Water Division

Barb Garcia Red River Sanitation

GenPro Repower America

Rae Getz Rushmore Civic Center

Habitat for Humanity South Dakota Game Fish & Parks

Roger Hall, Hills Materials South Dakota School of Mines & Technology

Historic Preservation Commission South Dakota U.S. Green Building Council

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