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Outstanding Recreational & Cultural Opportunities



We are proud of our community’s parks and recreation system. Our community will ensure that the legacy of our park facilities, trails, recreation and aquatic centers, and golf courses continues to develop as a system of interconnected amenities that provide diverse opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Additionally, our visual and performing arts and cultural activities have flourished in Rapid City because of our community’s support for a diverse range of cultural events, music and theatre performances, museum and art exhibits, and other events throughout the year. We will continue to support and enhance the presence of these assets in our community and ensure they are accessible to all ages, abilities, and income levels.

OVERVIEW

Recreational and cultural opportunities play an important role in the quality of life for residents, as well as in the City’s ability to attract and retain visitors, employers, and future residents. Rapid City currently has approximately 22 acres of parks, open space, and public grounds per 1,000 people—well exceeding the national standard of 10 acres per 1,000 people. In addition, Rapid City has an extensive trail system of more than 25 miles that connects several regional parks and major cultural facilities throughout the community. While these statistics confirm that Rapid City is well-served today on the whole, some areas of the

community are underserved, particularly with regards to neighborhood parks. Additional parks and recreation facilities will be necessary to address current gaps in the system as well as new demand in emerging growth areas. In addition, certain areas will need enhancement of greenway and trail connections to improve access to these assets.

A five-year Parks and Recreation Plan for the City was prepared in 2007 and consisted of an inventory of existing facilities, issue identification, and recommendations regarding all aspects of parks and recreation in Rapid City. (See Community Profile in the Appendix for a detailed inventory of the City’s parks and recreational facilities.)

Recommendations from the 2007 plan are reflected in the principles, goals, and policies contained in this chapter as well as the Future Land Use Plan contained in Chapter 10.

The 1993 Cultural Plan led to major addition to Rapid City’s arts capital investment, including The Journey, the Rapid City Public Library expansion, the Dahl Arts Center expansion, and the Performing Art Center. In addition to these community assets, Rapid City also features a number of other arts and cultural facilities, events, and attractions that appeal to both residents and visitors including the historic Downtown, Art Alley, and others too numerous to mention. The community’s economy, tourism



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industry, and sense of place are heavily influenced by the quality of these amenities.

For example, the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center annually hosts multiple cultural tourism events including the annual Black Hills Pow Wow, Lakota Nations Invitational Basketball Tournament, and Black Hills Dance Theatre, among others. In addition, up to 60% of events that take place each year at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center are local non-profit events conducted at the facility primarily for fundraising for non-profit charities. As such, those non-profits receive deeply discounted rental rate pricing in an effort to support their organizational initiatives. Continued investment from both the public and private sector in the City's diverse events, facilities, and amenities will be important to continue to enhance the City's appeal and vitality.

In order to support outstanding recreational and cultural opportunities, the principles, goals, and policies in this chapter emphasize:

- Interconnected and accessible parks, trails, and natural systems;
- Expanded recreational offerings to meet community needs; and
- Sustained arts and cultural opportunities.

PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND POLICIES (RC)

Principle RC-1: Providing Safe, Accessible, and Interconnected Parks and Trails

Rapid City will continue to provide a diverse range of park and trail offerings for all ages, abilities, and varying interests. As the City grows, expansion of the parks and trail systems will be considered, particularly in areas where there are current gaps and needs, and where new demand is created due to new development. The natural drainages throughout the community will continue be incorporated as part of a network of protected, interconnected open space and trail corridors that contribute to the character and ecological diversity of the community.

Goal RC 1.1: Align the park system with the community's growth and needs.

RC-1.1A: EXISTING PARK MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Maintain high quality City parks. Pursue opportunities to improve parks that are in need of enhancement and repurpose underutilized facilities as appropriate to adjust to changing demographics and needs.

RC-1.1B: PARKS PLANNING

Provide for the incremental expansion of additional parks, greenways, trails, open space, and recreational facilities to meet the needs of future residents. Seek to anticipate and plan for acquisition of land for future parks where they will be needed. Review and periodically update the City's Parks and Recreation Plan as needed to monitor progress towards the community's goals and identify new priorities.





RC-1.1C: LEVEL OF SERVICE TARGETS

Seek to achieve and/or maintain level of service targets established by this Plan for different types of parks and recreational facilities as growth occurs over time. Support incremental improvements needed to improve levels of service in underserved areas of the community. (See page 70 for discussion of level of service targets by facility types.)

RC-1.1D: DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

Identify opportunities to balance the amount and types of parks or recreational facilities within existing and future neighborhoods by prioritizing new parks in areas that are currently underserved and in new neighborhoods. Proactively identify potential park sites in areas of the City that are anticipated to grow significantly.

RC-1.1E: JOINT-USE FACILITIES

Coordinate with the Rapid City Area School District to co-locate new parks and school facilities where feasible to maximize resources and reduce duplication in the provision of parks.

RC-1.1F: PARKLAND DEDICATION FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Establish parkland dedication requirements for new development to help meet the needs of immediate residents and supplement public investment in the incremental expansion of Rapid City's parks and recreation system. Provide a range of ways in which parkland dedication requirements could be satisfied (e.g., pocket parks, greenway and

natural area conservation, or fee-in-lieu).

RC-1.1F: DEDICATED FUNDING FOR PARKS

Identify and allocate additional funding for acquisition, capital improvements, and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities.

Goal RC-1.2: Expand and enhance greenway, open space, and trail connections.

RC-1.2A: PRIORITIZE IMPROVEMENTS IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

Prioritize improvements and linkages to greenways, open space, and trails in underserved areas, with a particular emphasis on areas where "missing links" can be readily addressed.

RC-1.2B: OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Pursue opportunities to expand or enhance the community's open space network and areas of natural resource conservation like greenways, forested hills, and drainages. Seek opportunities to achieve conservation objectives as development occurs, such as through land set-asides or cluster development.

RC-1.2C: NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

Encourage the protection of unique natural features and the incorporation of linkages to the overall system of trails in the design of new neighborhoods. (See also: Neighborhood Design Principles, page 94.)

RC-1.2D: LIGHTING AND SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

Enhance lighting and safety features along greenways and trails in areas with high pedestrian and bicycle traffic in order to increase user comfort and security and expand usage opportunities beyond daylight hours.

RC-1.2E: COORDINATED IMPROVEMENTS

Coordinate planning and development of greenways and trails with the development of stormwater facilities to identify opportunities to maximize available resources.

Principle RC-2: Enhancing Community and Recreation Facilities

Rapid City will continue to provide a broad range of community and recreational facilities and programming for all ages, abilities, and varying interests. As the City grows, Rapid City will explore enhancements or new additions to its offerings to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Goal RC-2.1: Provide a variety of community and recreational facilities and offerings.



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RC-2.1A: CIVIC CENTER

Support and expand existing programming and move forward with expansion of the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center by means of a new arena, with continued efforts in improving the overall facility and campus, as Rapid City’s primary entertainment, convention, and exhibition complex.

RC-2.1B: MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITIES

Seek opportunities to develop and maintain multi-purpose and/or shared-use facilities (e.g., school recreational facilities, community meeting space, libraries, and museums) in order to efficiently locate community and recreational facilities and programs and leverage available funding.

RC-2.1C: COMMUNITY CENTERS

Support existing public and private community, recreation, and senior centers and facilities and libraries throughout the community. Encourage the establishment of new multi-purpose community centers and libraries in growing or underserved areas.

RC-2.1D: AGE-SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES

Provide community and recreational opportunities for Rapid City residents of all ages, with age-specific opportunities for youth, seniors, or other groups.

Goal RC-2.2: Promote recreational equity at a neighborhood level.

RC-2.2A: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING FACILITIES

Maintain existing recreational facilities and pursue opportunities to improve facilities that are in need of updating or expansion.

RC-2.2B: BALANCE FACILITY DISPARITY

Balance the disparity in recreational facilities to the extent possible, regarding the types and conditions of the facility, their location, and their access from surrounding neighborhoods. Distribute future facilities to provide facilities convenient to all neighborhoods in Rapid City.

Principle RC-3: Expanding Arts and Cultural Opportunities

Rapid City and its residents will continue to support and sustain the presence of visual and performing arts as important elements that connect our residents and cultures, and add vitality to our public spaces, schools, neighborhoods, and the economy.

Goal RC-3.1: Recognize and strengthen the role of arts and culture in contributing to Rapid City’s sense of community.





RC-3.1A: PUBLIC ART AND PUBLIC SPACES

Incorporate art into public projects, such as buildings, parks, recreation facilities, and public works facilities, as well as at bus stops, in parking garages, inside buses, within medians, at City gateways, and at other transportation facilities. Develop incentives that encourage the incorporation of art amenities in private projects and the involvement of artists early in the design process.

RC-3.1B: VARIETY OF ART FORMS

Expand opportunities for a wide range of artists to participate in Rapid City's cultural life, including visual, musical, textile artists, or other types.

RC-3.1C: ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL LITERACY

Enhance and support expanded arts and cultural opportunities throughout Rapid City with facilities and programs available to all residents. Develop knowledge and awareness throughout the community about the important contribution of arts and culture to Rapid City.

RC-3.1D: COLLABORATION

Work with the Rapid City Arts Council, members of area tribes and Indian reservations, schools, libraries, and other multicultural groups and organizations to establish and maintain a diverse range of programs throughout the community in support of both public and private arts and cultural ventures.

RC-3.1E: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Establish creative partnerships to engage youth through school-based art and music education, non-profit arts and cultural organizations, public and private sector collaborations, and Parks and Recreation programs and facilities.

Goal RC-3.2: Promote tourism activities, programs, and amenities that highlight the City's history and culture.

RC-3.2A: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MARKETING

Market and enhance the presence of historic and cultural events, amenities, and activities throughout Rapid City.

RC-3.2B: ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Support public art, music, and cultural displays, activities and events that celebrate the community's varied cultures and history in to draw visitors and provide family-friendly options in locations throughout Rapid City.

RC-3.2C: CULTURAL TOURISM PLAN

Work with the Rapid City Arts Council, the Rapid City Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Rapid City Economic Development Partnership, the Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce, and other public and private entities to develop and implement a long-range plan to promote cultural tourism.





PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Parks and recreational facilities in Rapid City are organized into the following categories: Pocket Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Special Use Areas/Facilities, and Greenways and Open Space. A description of each facility type, typical size, service area, locational criteria, and level of service target is provided in the table below.

The diversity of existing parks and recreational facilities found in Rapid City, along with the community's varied topography and landscapes make the application of a "one-size-fits-all" approach to determining level of service targets challenging. As noted earlier in this chapter, when levels of service are considered at a community-wide level using traditional population-based comparisons, Rapid City's current level of service far exceeds the national average. While this comparison is a helpful reference for larger parks, it does not reflect the fact that the distribution of facilities throughout the community is imbalanced and that many residents must travel a significant distance from their neighborhood to access a park, recreation, or trail facility.

The level of service targets established by this Plan (as supported by the principles, goals, and policies in this chapter) are intended to help establish a more predictable path forward for the maintenance and incremental expansion of parks and recreational facilities in Rapid City over time and for improved access to these facilities. In addition, these targets may be more easily monitored by staff over time. The table below is intended to be used in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Map on page 75.



Facility Type/Description	Typical Size	Service Area	Locational Criteria	Level of Service Target
POCKET PARK				
Design and programming varies greatly by location, ranging from active “tot lots” or dog parks to more passive gathering spaces, such as a community garden or an urban plaza with seating, landscaping, and other features. Pocket parks are typically privately-owned and maintained by a homeowners or business association; however, some publicly-owned pocket parks do exist.	Typically less than 1 acre; however some may be as large as 4 acres.	Intended to serve a concentrated population within walking distance (¼ mile radius)	Pocket parks should be located within neighborhoods, activity centers (e.g., Downtown) or employment centers where they are readily accessible to concentrated populations on foot.	Most residents shall be located within one-quarter mile of either a public park (pocket park or greater in size), elementary school, or a privately owned park or central gathering place.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK				
An area for recreational activities such as field games, court games, playgrounds, skating, picnicking, wading pools, ball fields, adult areas with benches, shelters, and game tables. Neighborhood parks vary in character from manicured fields to naturalized areas distinguished by mature trees and native vegetation.	1 to 10 acres	¼ to ½ mile radius	Centrally located within neighborhoods with safe pedestrian and bicycle access. May be developed in conjunction with schools as a joint-use facility.	Most residents shall be located within one-half mile of either a public park (neighborhood park or greater in size) or a privately owned park or central gathering place.
COMMUNITY PARK				
A community park may include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes and large swimming pools. They may also include opportunities for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, and picnicking. A community park may be any combination of the above, depending on the site and needs of the community.	Typically 10 or more acres with 15 to 40 acres being most common.	1 to 2 miles radius; accessible to several neighborhoods via bicycle and pedestrian routes/trails	Should be located on or near major thoroughfares to accommodate higher traffic volumes generated by group activities; but also be served by bicycle and pedestrian routes/trails. May be developed in conjunction with schools as a joint-use facility.	At least 5 acres of community parks for every 1,000 residents.



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Facility Type/Description	Typical Size	Service Area	Locational Criteria	Level of Service Target
SPECIAL USE AREAS/FACILITIES				
Special use areas/facilities include single-purpose recreational activities such as golf courses, nature centers, zoos, conservatories, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, or areas that preserve, maintain, and interpret buildings, sites, and objects of archeological significance.	Varies	Serves entire community, and in some cases the broader region	Varies	None
GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL AREAS				
Greenways and natural areas preserve the special natural and environmental character of a particular location. These are typically important habitat conservation areas, environmentally sensitive areas, or historical areas. Passive recreational uses such as walking, bird watching, interpretive educational programs and signage, and non-motorized trail systems are appropriate in these locations.	Varies	Serve entire community and in some cases the broader region	Areas of preservation include floodplains along Rapid Creek and Box Elder Creek, riparian and upland wooded areas, and wildlife corridors.	At least 2 acres of greenways, open space or natural areas for every 1,000 residents.



PARKS AND RECREATION MAP

The Parks and Recreation Map provides an inventory of existing parks, recreation, and bicycle facilities, and it also identifies future alignments of planned bicycle routes. The Parks and Recreation Map also highlights potential opportunities for future community parks, greenway conservation, and bicycle facilities.

Buffers are shown around existing public parks to help inform future park planning and decision-making. The smaller quarter-mile buffer represents a typical 5 minute-walk and it is ideal for most households to have at least a pocket park within such a distance. Elementary schools are also included in this quarter-mile buffer due to the fact that many elementary schools function as central gathering spaces in neighborhoods and feature play areas that can be used by neighborhood residents during off-hours. The larger half-mile buffer represents a typical 10-minute walk, and it is ideal for most households to be within that distance of a larger neighborhood park.

Overall accessibility to parks recreation facilities of various neighborhoods and segments of the community is evident by examining all of the quarter and half-mile buffers of existing public parks. This map shows that most neighborhoods near the central core of the community have abundant access to existing parks facilities; however, many of the neighborhoods in the eastern, southwestern, and northwestern portions of the City lack convenient access to nearby parks.

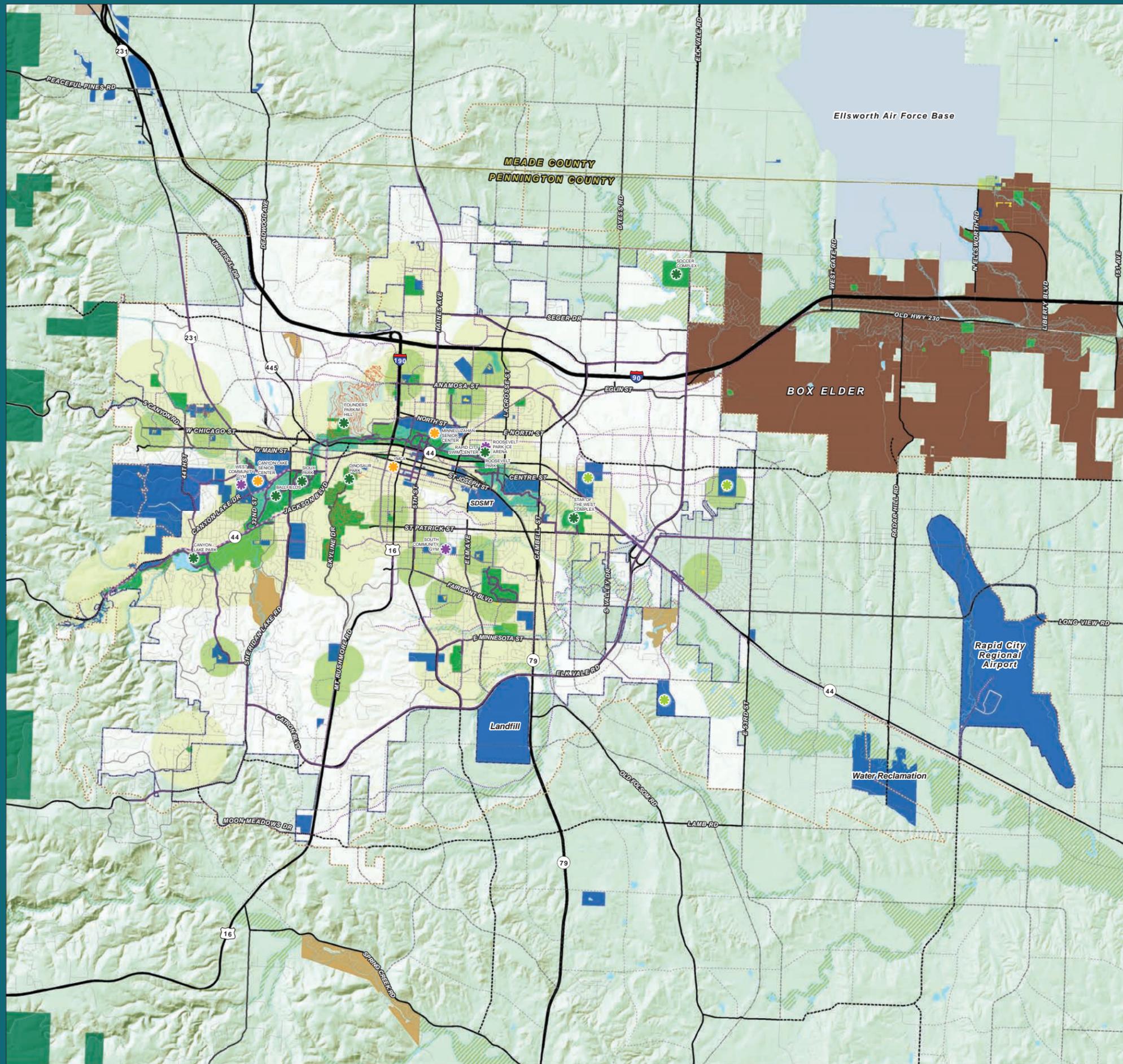
As development and redevelopment continue in these currently underserved areas, it will be important to work with developers to reserve opportunities and to provide various levels of park facilities to serve these neighborhoods. Topography, access, and other constraints will ultimately help shape where future parks may be developed, but increasing park access for underserved areas is a primary objective.

In addition to showing gaps in park accessibility, the Parks and Recreation Map identifies several major Regional Recreation Destinations, as well as some potential opportunities for Community Park sites. The Regional Recreation Destinations are major public parks or recreation facilities that draw visitors from across the community and region. Potential Community Park Opportunity areas are located in areas lacking access to parks, and are co-located with existing or planned public schools. Collaboration with the school district on the development and maintenance of parks on adjacent or shared school grounds could help maximize resources and amenities.

Greenway preservation is another major focus of the Parks and Recreation Map. Much of the floodplain in the core of the community is already conserved as public greenway space. All remaining floodplain areas are shown as opportunities for Future Greenway Conservation. Because of the threat of potential flooding in these areas, minimal new development should occur. As development occurs adjacent to these areas, the City should collaborate with developers to conserve floodplain areas as public greenways, and to extend trails and passive recreation opportunities in these areas.



Parks and Recreation



- Rapid City Limits
 - County Boundary
 - Urban Services Boundary
 - Box Elder City Limits
 - Summerset City Limits
 - Water Bodies
 - Flood Hazard Overlay
 - Elementary School
 - Regional Recreation Destination
 - Potential Community Park Opportunity
 - Public Recreation Facility
 - Private Recreation Facility
 - Existing Greenway
 - Existing Park
 - Public Access
 - Existing Public Golf Course
 - Existing Private Golf Course
 - Public/Quasi-Public
 - National Forest
 - Existing Parks & Elementary Schools Quarter Mile Buffer
 - Existing Parks Half Mile Buffer
 - Future Greenway Conservation
- Bicycle Facilities**
- Existing
 - Planned
 - Potential (exact alignment TBD)
 - Mountain Bike Trail
- Major Street Plan Classification**
- Interstate
 - Highway/Principal Arterial
 - Proposed Principal Arterial
 - Minor Arterial
 - Proposed Minor Arterial
 - Collector
 - Proposed Collector (exact alignment TBD)



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