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# 2025 Rapid City COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Updated September 30, 2025

# A Acknowledgements

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# Table of Contents

- Chapter 1: Plan Overview..... 6**
- Chapter 2: Vision & Values..... 14**
- Chapter 3: Balanced Growth & Land Use..... 22**
- Chapter 4: Housing..... 52**
- Chapter 5: Economy ..... 66**
- Chapter 6: Public Services & Facilities..... 76**
- Chapter 7: Recreation, Open Space & Natural Resources.....90**
- Chapter 8: Transportation ..... 102**
- Chapter 9: Arts and Culture..... 114**
- Chapter 10: Education..... 124**
- Chapter 11: Implementation..... 134**



# CHAPTER 1: PLAN OVERVIEW



## Plan Authority

The 2025 Rapid City Comprehensive Plan (Plan) was prepared in compliance with Chapter 11-6 of the South Dakota Codified Laws (SDCL) which regulates minimum comprehensive planning requirements. Per SDCL 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 as identified in SDCL 11-6-14 through 11-6-16. The public hearing and adoption process follows SDCL 11-6-17 through 11-6-18, ensuring transparency, community input, and formal adoption procedures. This legal foundation establishes the Plan as the official policy document guiding community development in Rapid City and shaping the shared vision for the future of our community.

## Plan Management and Implementation

The Plan is a living document that will evolve over time to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the community. As it is implemented, new challenges and opportunities will inevitably emerge, and updates to the Plan will be necessary while always prioritizing, and remaining rooted in, improving the overall quality of life for the people who call Rapid City home. In addition to annual reviews, the Plan should undergo a comprehensive update every five to ten years. If changing conditions are warranted, the City may initiate updates to priorities or add content through either major or administrative amendments. Major amendments that have a substantive effect on priorities and actions require review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council, in accordance with SDCL 11-6-17 through 11-6-19. Administrative amendments that do not affect the priorities and actions in a substantive way may be completed by City staff without formal action.

Due to the wide scope of the Plan, implementation will require continued coordination with local, regional, state, and federal partners. Specific guidance on implementation, including use of financial tools and key partnerships, is provided in Chapter 11.



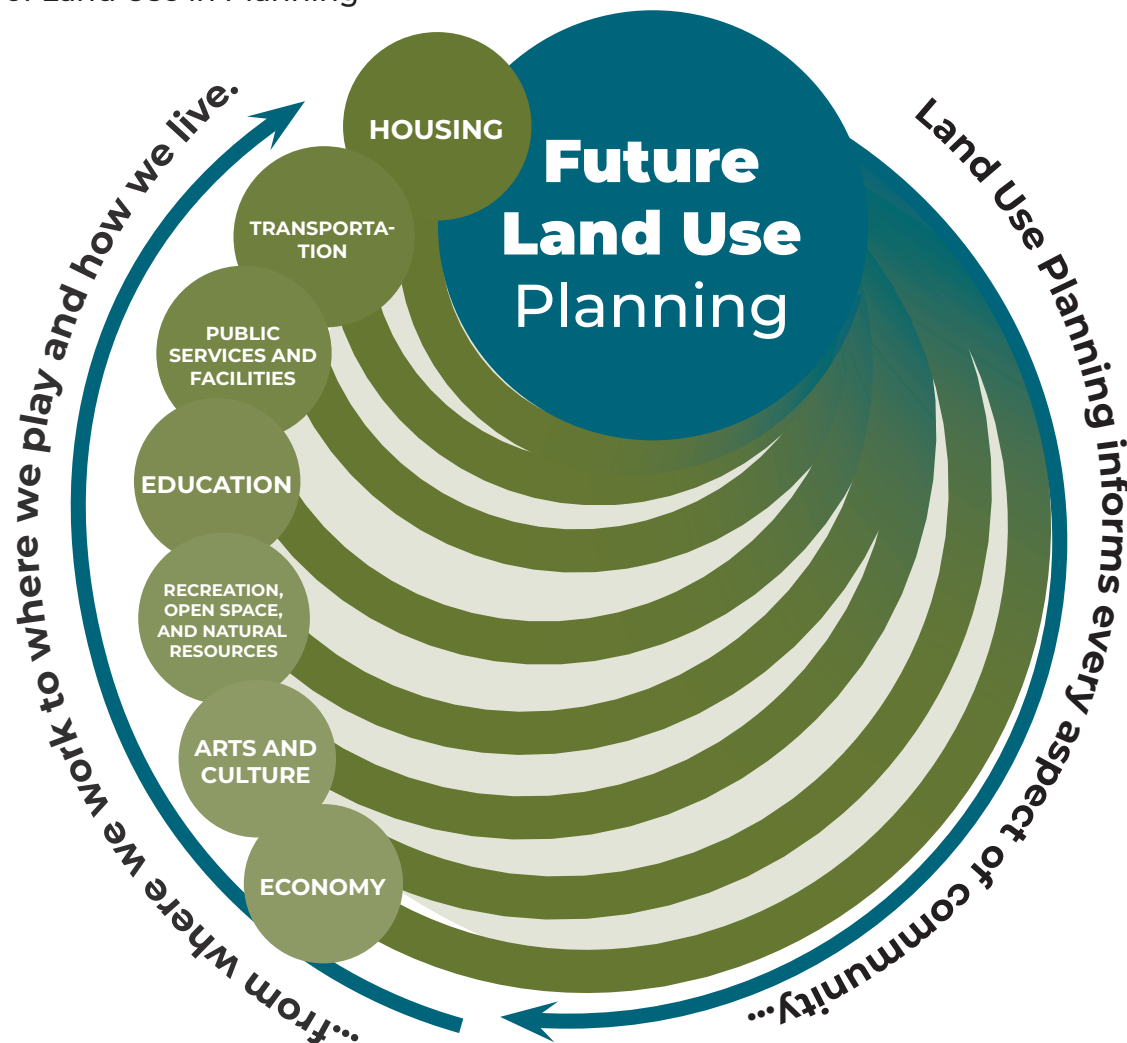
## A Framework for a Thriving Future

Rapid City is a resilient community rooted in its distinct cultural history, stunning natural landscape, and most importantly, its people. Home to nearly 85,000 people today, Rapid City has seen a 20% increase in population since the adoption of the 2014 Rapid City Comprehensive Plan. Current projections indicate that the population could continue to grow an additional 18.3% by 2030 and be home to just over 100,000 residents by 2040. Throughout the last decade, this growth has spurred new economic opportunities, diversified community amenities, and enriched cultural vibrancy in Rapid City.

However, this growth has also presented new challenges related to infrastructure capacity and condition, housing affordability, transportation efficiency and accessibility, equitable distribution of open space, and the provision of public services.

The Plan will serve as the primary decision-making tool over the next ten years to proactively respond to the challenges. The Plan builds upon the many things that are working well in our community today and identifies opportunities to correct course in areas where we are falling short. This ensures we grow as a culturally vibrant, affordable, and accessible community that provides opportunity for people of all ages and abilities for generations to come.

Figure 1. Role of Land Use in Planning



**The Plan is comprised of 11 chapters, each reflective of the interconnected factors shaping quality of life in our community.**

Together, they deliver a framework of goals, policies, and actions that provide a strategic roadmap for implementation of Rapid City's shared community vision for the future. This is described below and further exemplified in Figure 2.

**Chapters:** Key factors contributing to overall quality of life in Rapid City.

**Goals:** Broad objectives that establish priorities for growth and development. Goals provide long-term direction and reflect the City's overarching vision.

**Policies:** Specific guidelines that inform decision-making that align with community priorities and regulatory requirements.

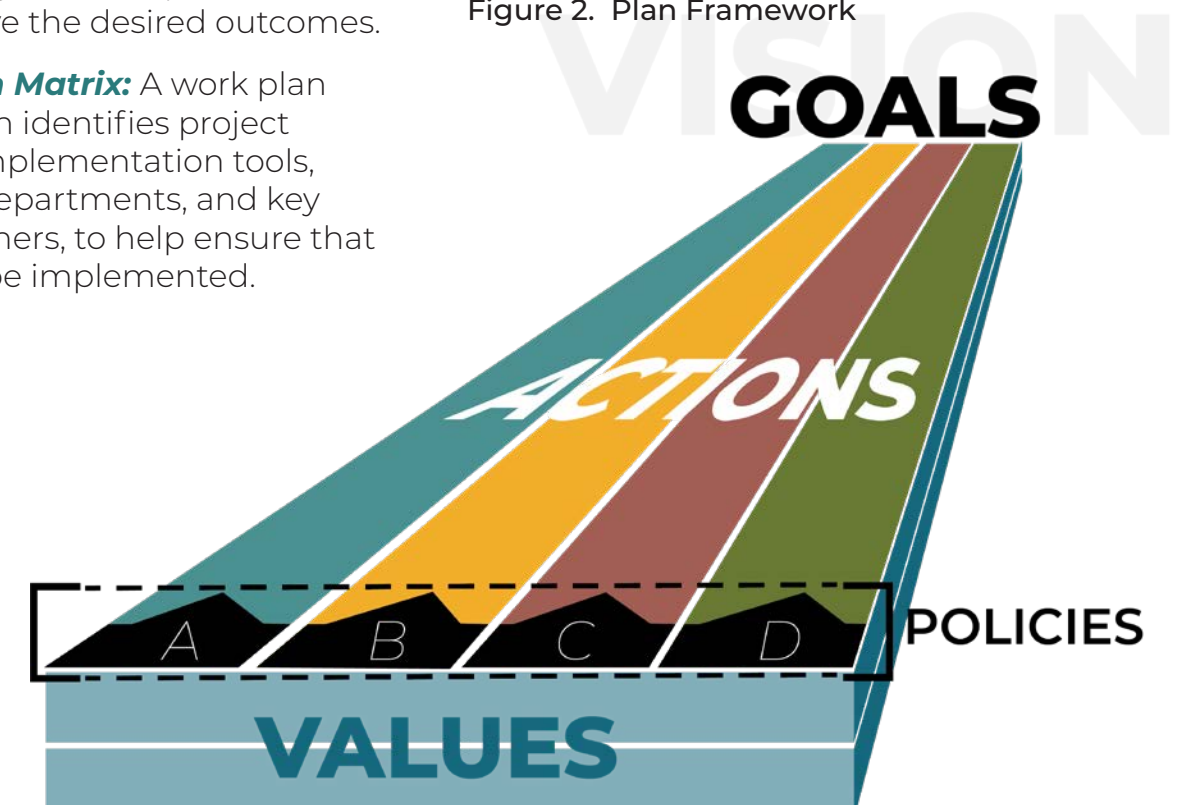
**Actions:** Concrete strategies, such as programs, funding mechanisms, and regulations, designed to implement the vision and achieve the desired outcomes.

**Implementation Matrix:** A work plan for the City, which identifies project classifications, implementation tools, applicable City departments, and key community partners, to help ensure that the actions can be implemented.

By recognizing that decisions related to specific topic areas are not isolated but rather interconnected, the Plan will facilitate informed decision-making that optimizes resources, promotes community resilience, and leverages local and regional partnerships to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for the Rapid City community and greater Black Hills region. Figure 1 illustrates the central role that balanced growth and land use plays in shaping the outcomes of each of the other topic areas of the Plan. Each chapter includes a section that describes the relationship between individual topic areas and land use.

**Updating the City's Future Land Use Plan and related ordinances will be essential to achieve the goals included throughout the Plan.**

Figure 2. Plan Framework



# PLAN OVERVIEW



## Key Trends and Opportunities

*The Rapid City community has a clear vision for its future rooted in its people.*

Shaped by thousands of community voices, alongside elected and appointed officials and City staff, the goals below reflect the key trends and opportunities identified throughout the public engagement process. Additional discussion and analysis of these goals are reflected in the Key Trends and Opportunities section of each chapter accompanied by specific policies and actions that support the implementation of the community's vision of an affordable, accessible future.



Figure 3. Key Trends and Opportunities by Chapter

### BALANCED GROWTH & LAND USE



**Balance Growth Strategically and Collaboratively:** Rapid City will manage growth through a strategic and collaborative approach that supports mixed-use development, focuses growth inward, and promotes the creation of complete neighborhoods where residents have access to essential daily needs such as housing, jobs, food, and services. Growth will be planned to protect public resources, address infrastructure concerns, and support a high quality of life for all community members.

### HOUSING



**Increase Housing Affordability, Accessibility, and Availability:** Rapid City will promote housing that is affordable, accessible, and available across the socioeconomic spectrum. This includes encouraging a wider variety of housing types, ensuring homes are distributed across the community, and protecting vulnerable residents from housing insecurity. By working with partners and updating land use policies, the City will support a more inclusive and resilient housing system that meets the needs of current and future residents.

### RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, & NATURAL RESOURCES



**Enhance Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources:** Rapid City will protect natural areas, improve the accessibility of parks and trails, and invest in high-quality recreational facilities. This includes preserving scenic landscapes and wildlife habitats, expanding green space in underserved neighborhoods, and upgrading existing amenities to better serve all residents. These efforts will support community health, environmental quality, and overall quality of life.

### TRANSPORTATION



**Develop a Safe and Connected Transportation Network:** Rapid City will prioritize improving multimodal transportation options, increasing safety and accessibility for all roadway users, and align transportation infrastructure investments with future land use priorities. This includes investing in public transit, non-motorized transportation improvements, and improving transportation connectivity and efficiency both locally and regionally.

### ECONOMY



**Build Economic Resilience:** Rapid City will work with local partners to strengthen existing industries, expand economic opportunity, and support workforce needs. Through collaboration with businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations, efforts will focus on attracting new jobs and talent, supporting affordable housing and childcare, and creating a strong foundation for long-term economic stability and growth.

### PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES



**Provide High-Quality Public Services and Facilities:** Rapid City will provide high-quality services by leveraging existing infrastructure, improving how City operations are managed, and expanding access to emergency and supportive services. These efforts will help ensure that growth is supported in a way that protects public health and safety.

### ARTS AND CULTURE



**Foster a Vibrant and Inclusive Arts and Cultural Scene:** Rapid City will strengthen its arts and culture by activating Downtown, supporting local artists, and building partnerships with Indigenous communities and cultural organizations. These efforts will celebrate the City's diversity, preserve its history, and create more opportunities for creative expression and community connection.

### EDUCATION



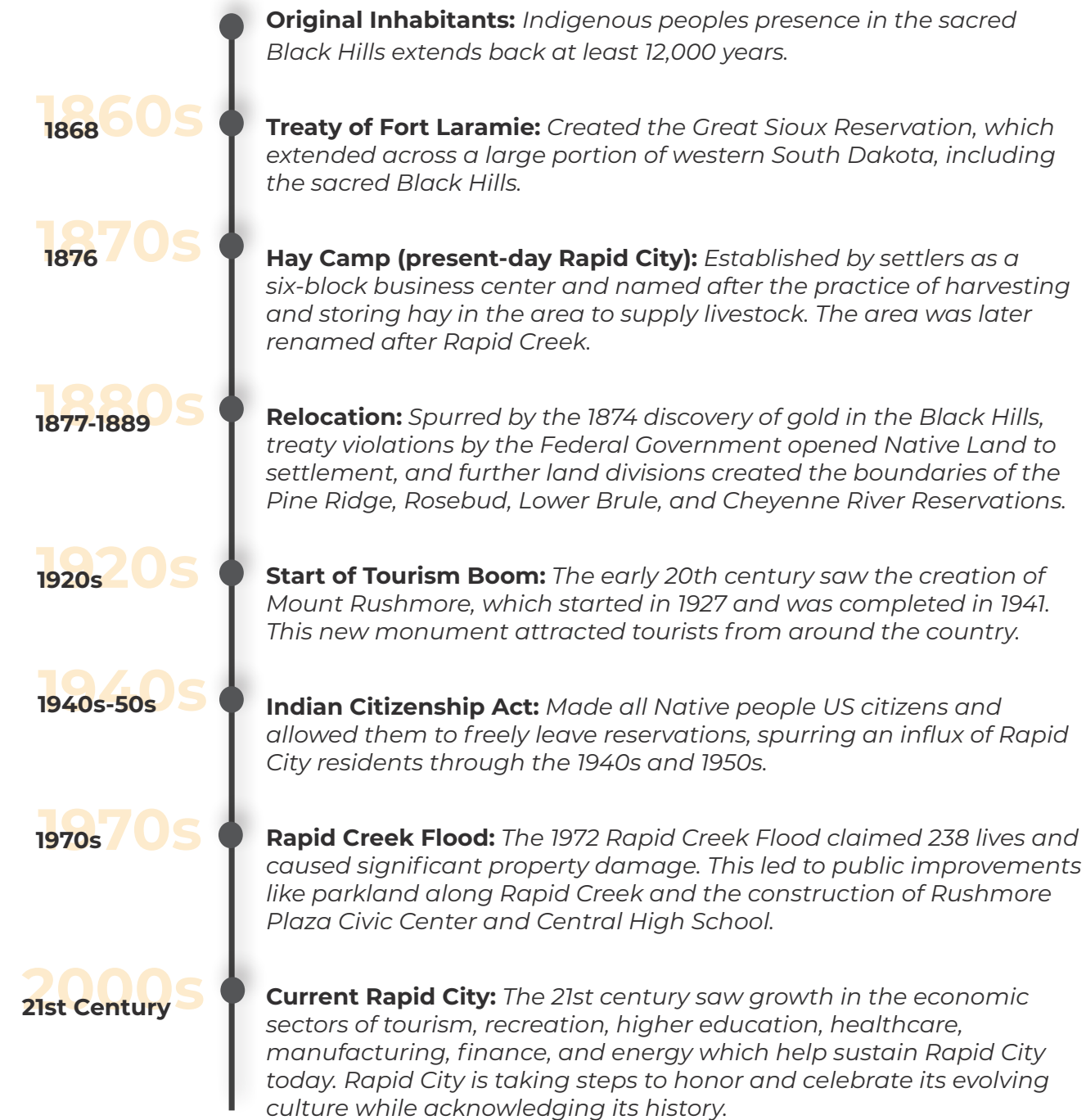
**Promote Access to High-Quality Education:** Rapid City will support access to high-quality educational opportunities by collaboratively planning for future school sites, improving connections between schools and neighborhoods, and investing in facilities that serve both students and the broader community. The City will also support the work of partners to retain educators and graduates, expand career-focused programs, and strengthen the link between education and workforce development.



## Background and History

As we look to the future, it is essential that we understand our past. The Black Hills are a deeply sacred place to the Indigenous peoples of the Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota Tribes of the Oceti Sakowin, as well as the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Arikara, and Mandan peoples who moved through and cared for this land for generations. Figure 4 below provides historic context essential for planning a future that provides opportunity and improves the quality of life for everyone who calls Rapid City home today and into the future.

Figure 4. Rapid City Historic Timeline



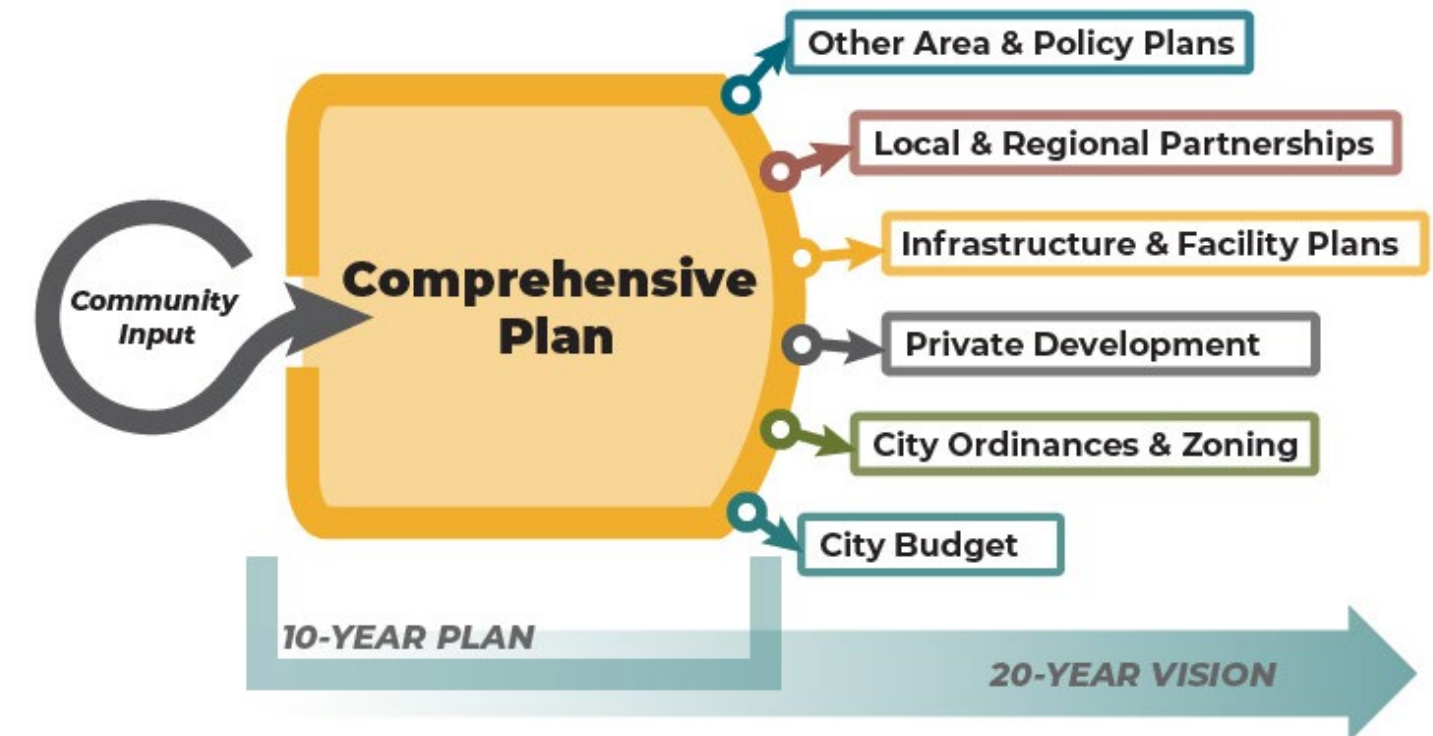
## PLANNING AREA

The Plan will guide future growth and development decisions primarily within the City's municipal boundary; however, the Plan also provides guidance to balance growth where jurisdictional boundaries overlap within the Rapid City Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary, three-mile platting jurisdiction, and municipal services boundary.

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

While the Plan provides the overarching vision for future growth in Rapid City, it alone cannot provide the level of detail and analysis required to fully realize that vision. It is designed to work in alignment with and inform other topic-specific strategic and Master Plans focused on housing, transportation, infrastructure, and parks and recreation. Figure 5 visualizes the role this Plan plays in guiding investment, policy, and decision-making across the City.

Figure 5. Role of the Comprehensive Plan





# CHAPTER 2: VISION & VALUES



## Vision

Throughout the 2025 Rapid City Comprehensive Plan process, community members provided their feedback and input on what they wanted to see for the future. That input helped define our community vision that serves as the foundation for the Plan.

Rapid City is building a strong and healthy community rooted in its people.

This vision sets the tone for where our community wants to go in the future and provides a unifying direction for growth and development. This Plan will help guide today's decisions to support a robust and resilient tomorrow.

*“Rapid City is defined by the incredible people who call it home. Our community embodies hard work, determination, and a strong sense of togetherness.”*





## Core Values

At the heart of this vision are six core values as illustrated below. Each chapter of the Plan considers how these core values contribute to quality of life in Rapid City and identifies how we can achieve the community's vision together. These values define what our community seeks to protect, refine, and build upon as Rapid City evolves.

Figure 6. Core Values Guiding the Plan



## Public Engagement

### By the Numbers



**2,000+** Drop-In Attendees  
**10** Drop-In Events

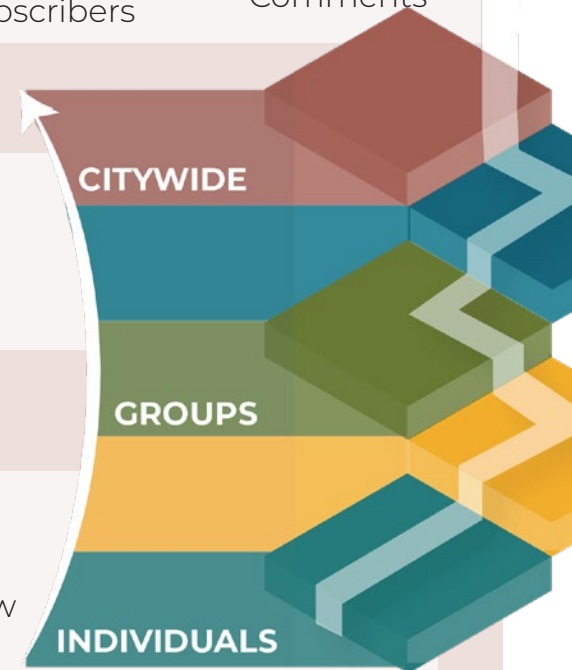
**973** Public Questionnaire Respondents  
**450+** Open House Attendees

**20,000+** Total Website Views

**1077** Website Comments  
**264** Email Subscribers  
**106** Interactive Map Comments

**6** Advisory Team Meetings

**43** One-on-One Interview Participants





## PLAN PROCESS BY PHASE

Ensuring broad community participation and meaningful public input was essential to the success of this Plan. Elected and appointed officials, City staff, partner agencies, community organizations, and community members worked together to shape this Plan through interactive workshops, questionnaires, online activities, and more. Project input was made available through both in-person and online formats, allowing community members to review and engage at every stage of the process. The following describes each of the community outreach series:

## PHASE 1: COMMUNITY-GENERATED IDEAS

The Plan's engagement process began with a robust effort to gather perspectives on key trends and opportunities within the community to help establish a shared vision for Rapid City. One-on-one interviews with business owners, planning commissioners, nonprofit organizations, and stakeholders, among others, provided in-depth feedback that helped set the foundation for this Plan.

A dedicated Study Advisory Team (SAT) consisted of over 30 representatives from various local organizations and departments. The SAT met regularly throughout the process to guide the Plan's development. These meetings focused on establishing community goals, reviewing public feedback, identifying various participation methods, and refining Rapid City's future vision. To reach residents in

familiar settings, ten drop-in events were hosted at popular community gatherings like food truck nights, concerts, and local festivals, including the Pumpkin Festival. These events offered opportunities to familiarize the public with the comprehensive planning process, ask high-level questions to start the conversation, and make participation in the process more accessible to community members.

Comprehensive marketing efforts also supported these early engagement activities. The use of tools including social media, a dedicated project website, newspaper advertisements, and physical outreach materials promoted widespread community awareness. Community liaisons and local news reporting further amplified these efforts, keeping residents informed and engaged throughout the process.



## PHASE 2: VISION AND VALUES

Phase 2 of the process focused on confirming initial community findings and translating it into a clearly defined vision. This phase engaged residents through an online and in-person questionnaire, online mapping tool, website comment boards, and an in-person Vision and Values Showcase event during the Rapid City Root Beer Social. This event provided a fun and interactive opportunity for participants to identify key issues and share perspectives on what they valued most in the community.

Community members provided input through a variety of engagement tools, including a voting exercise in which participants indicated priority areas for improvement in categories such as housing, infrastructure, economy, education, public services, and recreation.

In addition, residents participated in a values station, where they provided direct feedback on how the City should uphold its six core values. Feedback highlighted priorities such as maintaining transparency in decision-making, improving access to housing and job opportunities, and investing in infrastructure.

**Participation in the City's Pumpkin Festival was integral to the process and included direct questions on where the strengths and weaknesses lie in Rapid City. 182 community members gave feedback on housing, childcare, educational opportunities, recreation, employment, infrastructure, arts and culture, and community safety, ranking different aspects of each as either a great strength, a strength, a weakness, or a great weakness. This questionnaire in conjunction with the collective input gathered in Phase 2 directly shaped the development of the Plan's goals, policies, and actions, ensuring that community priorities were reflected in the City's long-term strategy for growth and development.**





## PHASE 3: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICES

Phase 3 focused on refining anticipated goals, policies, and actions through targeted engagement methods. City department heads and City Council members completed questionnaires to prioritize projects and initiatives, directly informing actions and aligning both departmental and citywide goals.

A third questionnaire allowed community members to rank key priorities identified in earlier phases, and provide additional suggestions, directly tying public feedback to potential actions.

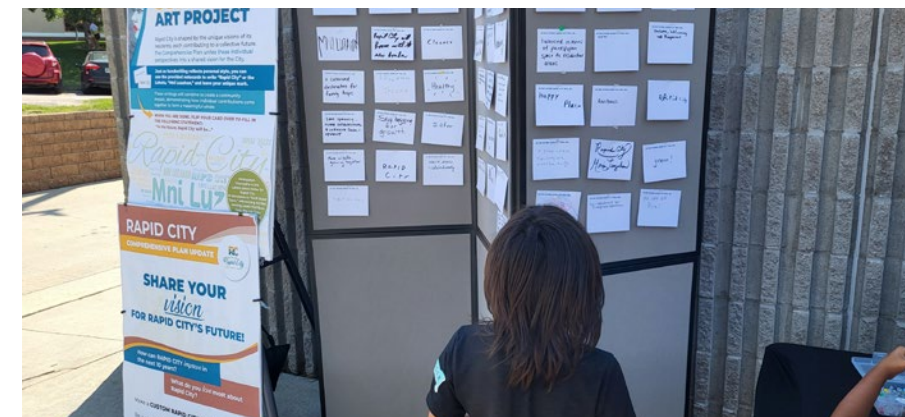
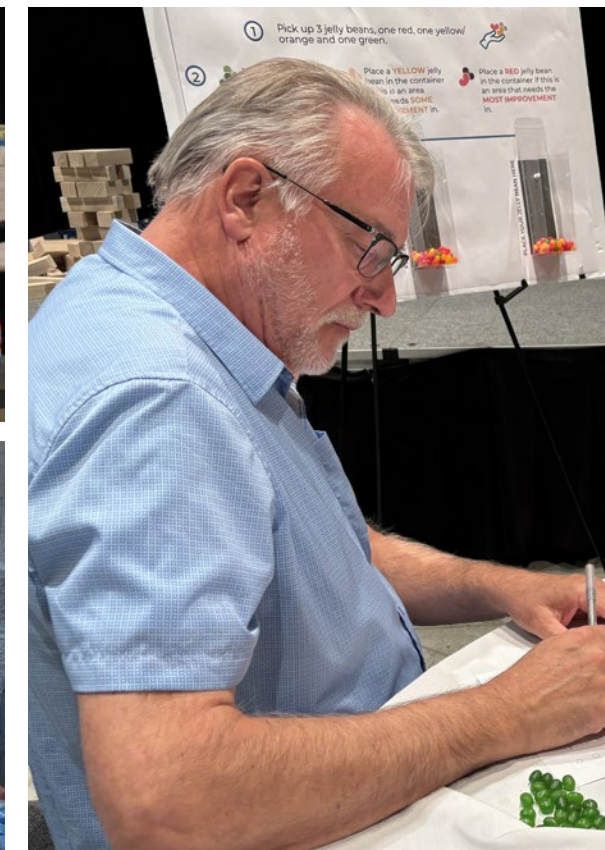
This phase of engagement culminated in the Speaker Panel and Open House, bringing together local experts, community members, and organizations to share successful projects and real-life experiences that have and will continue to shape Rapid City. This dynamic event inspired creative thinking about future development while offering multiple participation opportunities including priority voting, comment submission, questionnaire completion, and direct discussions with the planning team. This comprehensive approach empowered both City leaders and residents to collaboratively define Rapid City's future through structured feedback and interactive engagement. The feedback from this phase helped further develop the goals, policies, and actions set forth in this Plan.

## PHASE 4: DRAFT PLAN REVIEW

Phase 4 of engagement focused on public review of the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan was provided to key stakeholders to review and comment ahead of the public release and open house event. The open house highlighted the goals, policies, and actions in the Draft Plan and engagement focused on prioritizing the policies and actions within each chapter. Results found that there is support for all policies and actions, with emphasis on growing inward, housing diversity, multi-modal transportation investment, protection of natural and open spaces, and strengthening of local and regional partnerships. Public comment was used to guide final edits to strengthen the Draft Plan, which was considered by the Planning Commission, Public Works Committee, and Legal and Finance Committee before being submitted to City Council for final action.

## COMMUNITY QUOTES

*See community quotes from the public engagement process in callouts throughout the Plan!*



# CHAPTER 3: BALANCED GROWTH & LAND USE



## Relationship to Community Values

*Rapid City's approach to land use and development is guided by core values that promote responsible growth for the entire community. These values are reflected in the goals, policies, and actions of this chapter, shaping how the City plans and manages development patterns to support livability, economic opportunity, and a high quality of life for all residents.*

### Accountability

Rapid City's Future Land Use Plan provides a roadmap for accountable decision-making for development and the infrastructure and services necessary to support growth based on community priorities.

### Creativity

By encouraging creative, place-based amenities through innovative design, public art, and adaptive reuse of buildings, Rapid City will remain responsive to change and foster a strong, inspiring sense of identity.

### Opportunity

Flexibility in land use and strategic infill provides opportunities for mixed-use centers, walkability, balancing housing and economic opportunities, and neighborhood revitalization.

### Stewardship

Balancing growth with conservation protects natural landscapes, supports efficient infrastructure use, and encourages development that aligns with community values.

### Service

Consideration for public services is integral to developing complete neighborhoods that meet the needs of current and future residents.

### Livability

Livability in Rapid City relies on land use patterns that co-locate housing, jobs, schools, parks, and services connected by safe, multimodal infrastructure, so that residents benefit from greater convenience, healthier lifestyles, and stronger community ties.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## Introduction

How land is used and the spatial relationships between different land uses profoundly shape the quality of our lives on a day-to-day basis. Land use patterns influence the efficiency of our transportation systems that provide access to economic opportunities, impact the functionality and long-term costs of maintaining our infrastructure systems, and determine the proximity of essential community amenities including parks, schools, and grocery stores to the places we live.

Future land use planning opportunities identified within this chapter were developed in response to existing conditions analysis, public feedback, and future population growth projections. The goals, policies, and actions included at the end of the chapter provide a framework for implementing the opportunities and will serve as a primary tool for reviewing and approving future development applications.

## Community Snapshot

### POPULATION

Home to nearly 85,000 residents today, Rapid City has experienced a 20% increase in population since the adoption of the last comprehensive plan in 2013. According to the 2023 Rapid City Housing Study, the population is projected to increase an additional 35.3% to just over 100,000 residents by 2040. Integrated future land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning within the City's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), urban services, and municipal boundaries will play a central role in determining how and where we welcome new residents and connect them to opportunities in the Rapid City area.

## EXISTING LAND USE

Today, residential uses make up nearly half of the land area in Rapid City, with housing ranging from tightly knit, walkable neighborhoods to low-density residential enclaves far from centralized services. Roughly a third of the land use designations in the City support mixed-use, employment, and industrial uses essential to economic development. However, these areas are often located at the edges of the City, further complicating the task of delivering utilities and transportation access. The remaining land is preserved for parks, conservation areas, and buffers between incompatible uses, offering essential community benefits. The percentage of land area covered by each land use category is further identified in Figure 7.



Figure 7. By The Numbers: Land Use within Rapid City Limits

Future Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage of Total Land Area
Low Density Neighborhood	10,254	28.50%
Urban Neighborhood	5,881	16.35%
Mixed-Use Commercial	4,240	11.79%
Light Industrial	3,913	10.88%
Public/Quasi Public	3,709	10.31%
Forest Conservation	2,287	6.36%
Parks and Greenway	2,049	5.70%
Mining and Extraction	1,216	3.38%
Employment	1,171	3.26%
Heavy Industrial	693	1.93%
Downtown Mixed-Use	220	0.61%
Rural Residential	212	0.59%
Agriculture	129	0.36%

\*Note: Remainder of land area comprised of Right of Way



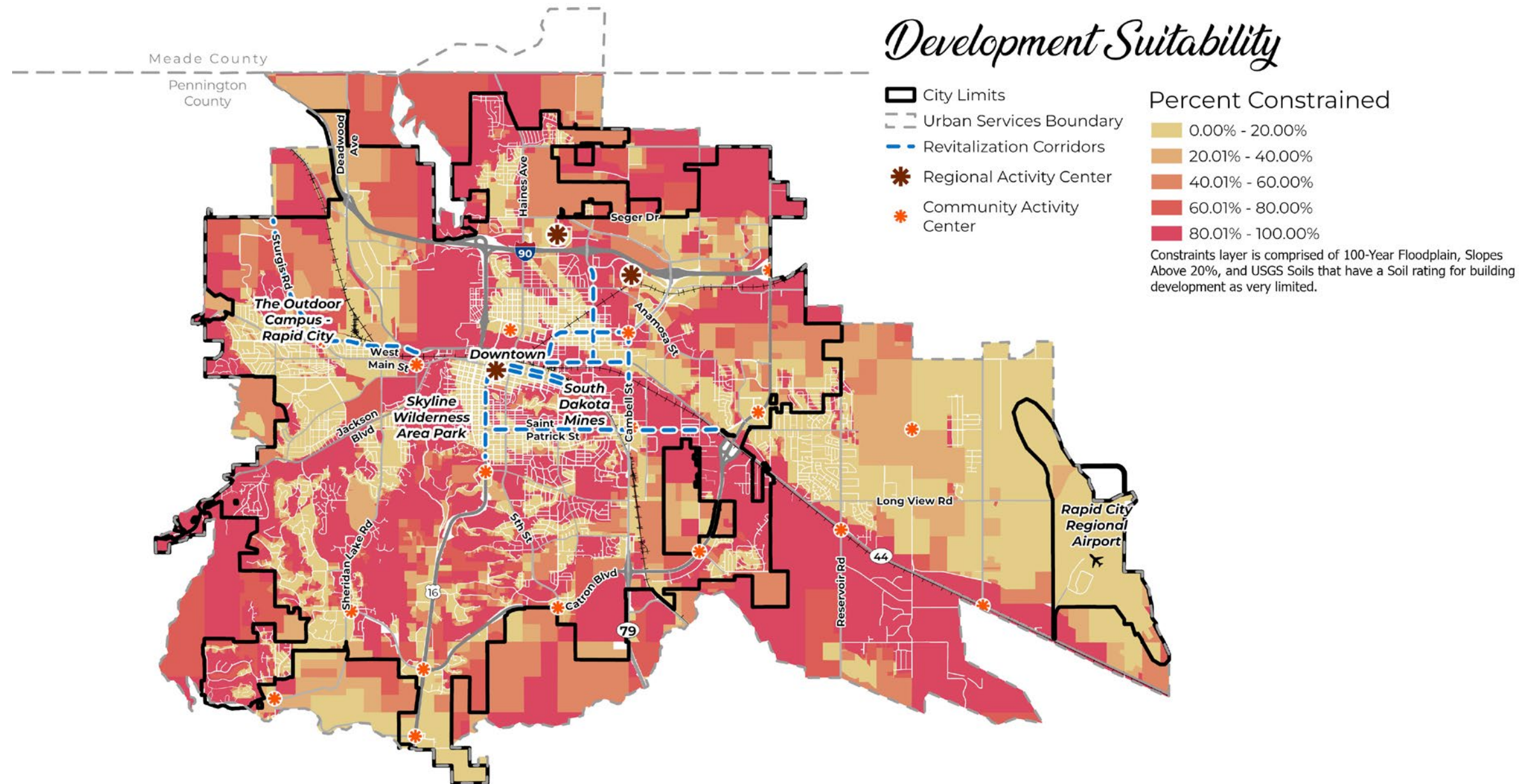
## Factors Shaping Development Patterns

### NATURAL FEATURES

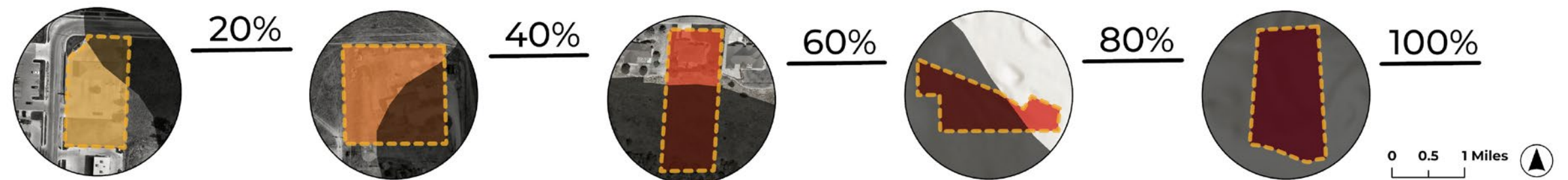
Development patterns in Rapid City are shaped in large part by natural constraints including steep topographies, challenging soil conditions, and flood-prone areas along streams and creeks. These areas limit opportunities to provide essential infrastructure and transportation connections within the city limits and inside the urban services boundary. Although no land is completely without constraints, development suitability based on natural forces and associated infrastructure capacities is illustrated in Figure 8. Lighter colors represent areas with fewer natural constraints while darker red areas represent properties that are more constrained.

Due in part to these natural constraints, Rapid City's growth has begun to sprawl outward from the City's center. While this growth has enabled new commercial and residential development necessary to support a growing population, it has also placed strains on the capacity of our infrastructure and transportation systems, and spread financial resources thin as we work to maintain the outward expansion of these systems.

Figure 8. Development Suitability Map



### Percent Constrained Examples: 1 Acre Parcels



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## REGULATORY FACTORS

Regulatory tools including the future land use map and associated land use designations, zoning code, and subdivision standards further shape development patterns in areas where development is feasible. These regulatory tools collaboratively guide development in a way that protects public health by ensuring appropriate buffers exist between incompatible uses and ensuring development is supported by essential infrastructure and transportation services.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In addition to natural features and regulatory factors, development patterns are also influenced by availability of financial resources. When new development occurs, developers are generally required to pay for the infrastructure systems and transportation improvements required to support them. Once those improvements have been made, the City takes on the long-term financial responsibility of maintaining the improvements.

The City has a variety of financial tools that can help offset the costs of constructing new infrastructure and transportation improvements including:

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - used to fund public improvements associated with new development in a specific geographic area known as a TIF District (TIFD). It works by capturing the increased tax revenue within the TIFD that results from private investment stimulated by the public improvements.
- **Vision Funds** – a portion of sales tax revenue preserved to support public projects, capital improvements, economic development initiatives, and civic improvements.
- **Strategic Growth Revolving Fund** – a portion of Vision Fund dollars set aside for investment in infrastructure in strategic areas to spur economic development.

These financial tools have been used to support the development of housing and to attract new businesses. How and where these tools are used in the future should be strategically aligned to address community needs identified in this Plan.

***Vision Funds should be strategically awarded to projects that further the goals, policies, and actions included within this Plan.***



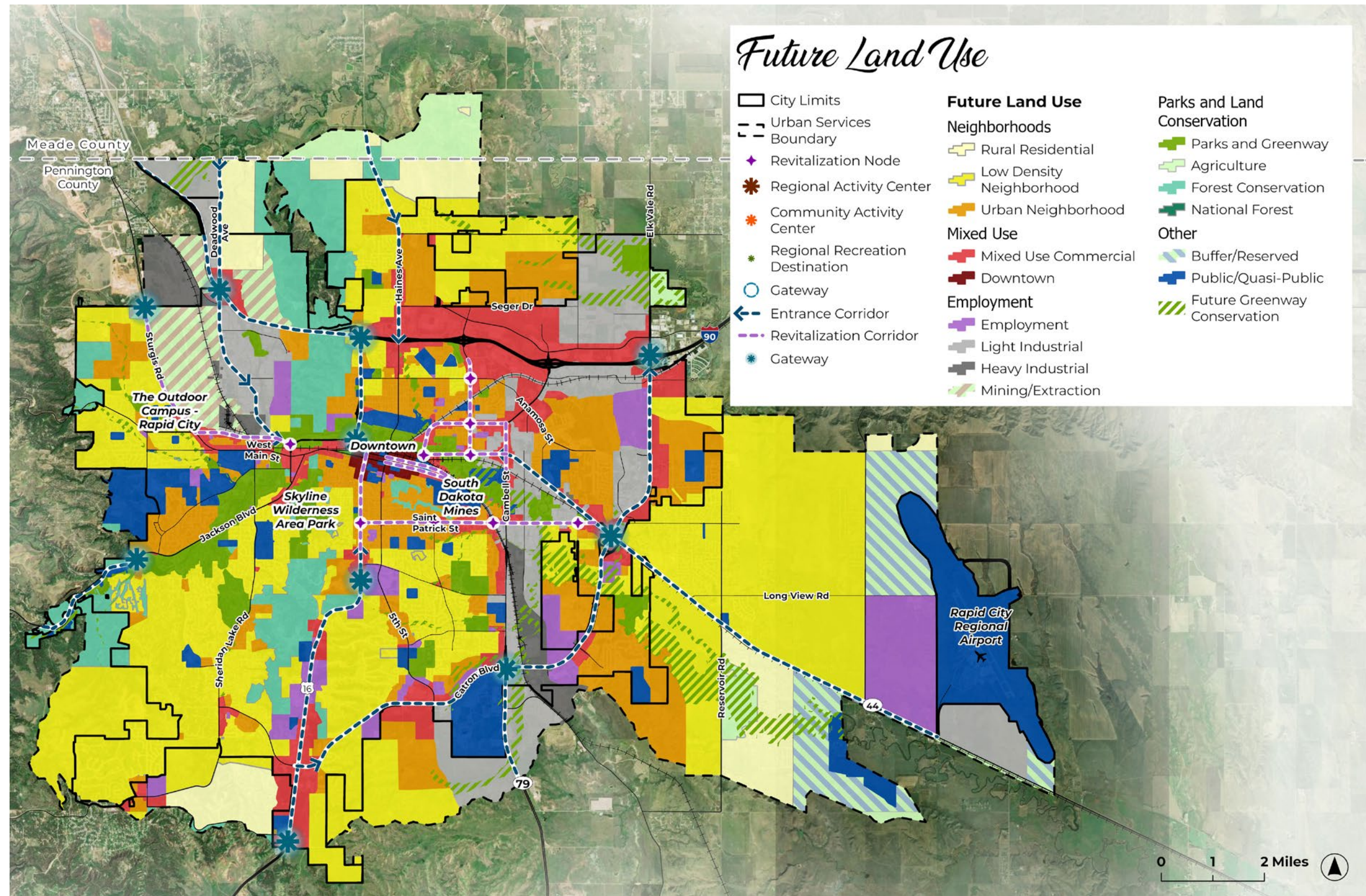


## Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is comprised of two key elements: the Future Land Use Map and associated Future Land Use Designations. These tools work together in conjunction with the City's Infrastructure Master Plans, Major Street Plan (see Transportation chapter), and associated City ordinances to identify how and where different types of growth will occur. Development applications including rezones, subdivisions, annexations, conditional use permits, planned developments, tax increment financing, and variances are reviewed and supported based on their alignment with the Future Land Use Plan.

While the Future Land Use Map and associated Future Land Use Designations were not revised as part of the 2025 Rapid City Comprehensive Plan update, extensive analysis of these elements was conducted to identify how they can be updated in the future to better respond to current challenges and are included in the Key Trends and Opportunities section of this chapter. Following adoption of this Plan, Community Development staff will host community meetings to present the new Plan and refine the Future Land Use Plan in a way that meets community needs at the neighborhood level with neighborhood participation. Incremental updates to the Future Land Use Map may be considered in the meantime when proposed developments would further the goals, actions, and policies identified within this Plan.

Figure 9. Future Land Use Map





# FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>RURAL RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS (RR)</b>				
Lot sizes vary, but typically range from 3-5 acres per dwelling unit; however, significantly larger lots exist in some locations.	<p><b>Primary:</b> Large-lot single-family residences.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Accessory farm structures, animal keeping.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lot size and layout varies.</li> <li>Typically, not served by urban utilities but may be depending on location.</li> <li>May serve as a transition between open space or public lands and higher intensity neighborhoods.</li> <li>Clustering is encouraged to conserve natural features, shared open space, and make efficient use of infrastructure.</li> </ul>	Typically found in rural settings on the urban fringe, primarily in agricultural or open range areas.	<p><b>Primary:</b></p> <p>County GAD</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b></p> <p>Public</p>
<b>LOW-DENSITY NEIGHBORHOOD (LDN)</b>				
1 to 8 dwelling units per acre	<p><b>Primary:</b> Single-family residences and two-family residences.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Complementary uses include schools, parks, recreation, and religious uses in a planned neighborhood setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of low intensity housing types in a neighborhood setting.</li> <li>Secondary uses should be as integrated into the overall design of the neighborhood.</li> <li>Conservation of major drainages, wooded areas, and other natural site features are encouraged as part of the overall neighborhood design.</li> </ul>	Established single-family neighborhoods outside of the core area as well as future growth areas to the east and north.	<p><b>Primary:</b></p> <p>LDR-1, LDR-2 MHR</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b></p> <p>Public</p>

Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD (UN)</b>				
<p><b>Residential:</b> Typically, greater than 8 dwelling units per acre; with higher densities in some locations.</p> <p><b>Non-residential:</b> Typical floor area ratios (FARs) of between 0.5 and 1.0.</p>	<p><b>Primary:</b> A range of medium to high-density housing types, such as townhomes, apartments, small lot single-family, duplexes, patio homes, assisted living centers, and live-work units.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Neighborhood-serving retail and services such as small markets, restaurants, drugstores, smaller specialty shops, health services, professional offices, and civic uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designed to create opportunities for a mix of housing options and densities.</li> <li>Intended to promote self-supporting neighborhoods which predominantly contain housing (with a mix of types and intensities), but also include parks, recreation facilities, schools, and/or community gathering places.</li> </ul>	Characteristic of many of the City's core area neighborhoods. Appropriate where infill and redevelopment is encouraged, as well as on larger vacant parcels within the urbanized area where larger scale planning is possible.	<p><b>Primary:</b></p> <p>MHR, LDR-1, LDR-2, MDR, HDR</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b></p> <p>OC, SC-1, NC, Public</p>
<b>DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE (DT)</b>				
Typical floor area ratios (FARs) of between 0.5 and 3.0; however, may be higher in some parts of Downtown.	<p><b>Primary:</b> Variety of civic, cultural, retail, commercial, restaurant, business, lodging, professional offices, and financial institutions.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Variety of medium/high density housing types; plazas, squares, and pocket parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional Downtown urban fabric with a compact, pedestrian-friendly scale.</li> <li>Intended to allow for and encourage a broader mix of uses than exist today, including high-density residential.</li> <li>District has significant historic character and importance to the broader community and region.</li> </ul>	Downtown Core	<p><b>Primary:</b></p> <p>CB UC</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b></p> <p>Public</p>

# FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL (MUC)</b>				
Typical floor area ratios (FARs) of between 0.5 and 2.0, although they may be significantly higher within designated activity centers, or along major gateway corridors	<p><b>Primary:</b> Supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, smaller specialty shops, retail and health services, and business and professional offices.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Higher density residential, including senior housing, is encouraged, including live-work units. Pocket parks, plazas, schools, civic uses, and other supporting uses are also appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended to provide a range of services to meet the daily needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and larger community.</li> <li>To allow for vertical or horizontal mix of uses on sites, including some higher-density residential.</li> <li>Will vary in scale and character. Smaller, limited use centers may be fully integrated into the surrounding neighborhood and be accessed primarily by pedestrian or bicycle. Larger centers will function more independently, providing ample parking and numerous stores.</li> </ul>	<p>Generally located along major gateway corridors, within designated activity centers, and along collector or arterial streets.</p> <p>It should be located where it may be readily served by existing or future transit and should be designed with clear pedestrian connections to transit stops and surrounding development.</p>	<p><b>Primary:</b> NC, GC, HM, SC-1, SC-2</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> OC, Public, UC</p>

Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>EMPLOYMENT (E)</b>				
Varies	<p><b>Primary:</b> Office buildings, medical facilities and clinics, research and development, educational campuses, flex space, and indoor storage.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Supporting commercial/retail uses are encouraged. Airport supportive uses, institutional uses, open space, parks, schools, public uses, and assisted living facilities are also appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended to provide concentrated areas of employment, combined with a mix of complementary commercial uses.</li> <li>May be stand-alone buildings or incorporated into a master planned campus. Buffering and screening are important when facilities abut residential uses.</li> </ul>	Opportunity areas include emerging employment campuses west of Elk Vale Road (north of 44), along Mt. Rushmore Road and future opportunity areas west of Rapid City Regional Airport and along Elk Vale Road (south of 44 and east of Old Folsom Road)	<p><b>Primary:</b> OC, BP</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> NC, Public</p>
<b>LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (LI)</b>				
Varies	<p><b>Primary:</b> Light manufacturing, processing, wholesaling, warehousing, and distribution, indoor and screened outdoor storage, and a wide range of other industrial services and operations.</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Airport supportive uses and commercial uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operations are conducted so that noise, odor, dust, and glare are completely confined within an enclosed building.</li> <li>Screening and buffering of industrial uses are important when abutting or near non-industrial uses.</li> </ul>	Major opportunity areas include Highway 79 corridor adjacent to and surrounding the Landfill; north of I-90 between Dyess and Elk Vale Roads; and south of I-90 along Eglin Street. Other pockets exist along Centre Street south of Highway 44 and along Deadwood Avenue.	<p><b>Primary:</b> LI</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> Public</p>

# FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>HEAVY INDUSTRIAL (HI)</b>				
Varies	Heavy manufacturing, fabricating, warehousing and distribution, outdoor storage, and a wide range of other industrial services and operations as well as mining and resource extraction where permitted by underlying zoning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses typically involve more intensive work processes and do not depend on frequent visits of customers or clients.</li> <li>Typically located in areas with direct access to major transportation routes (rail and roadway).</li> <li>Screening and buffering of industrial uses are important when abutting or near non-industrial uses.</li> </ul>	Southeast of downtown, adjacent to Old Folsom Road and rail corridor. While pockets of heavy industry exist in other parts of Rapid City, the transition of these sites to less impactful uses over time is desirable. New industry should be concentrated in locations described above and specified on the Future Land Use Map.	<b>Primary:</b> HI, ME  <b>Secondary:</b> Public
<b>MINING AND EXTRACTION (ME)</b>				
Varies	Active and current agricultural properties with future mining and extraction uses, processing facilities, and related storage areas and structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future reclamation will return land to agriculture/ conservation uses after mining/ extraction operations are complete.</li> <li>Conversion to uses other than agriculture will require a Future Land Use Map amendment.</li> <li>Uses other than mining and extraction on properties zoned Mining and Extraction are subject to state law.</li> </ul>	Primarily along the Sturgis Road corridor and south of I-90 northwest of Rapid City.	<b>Primary:</b> ME  <b>Secondary:</b> Public

Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>PARKS AND GREENWAY (PG)</b>				
Varies, ranging from less than 1 acre to 100+ acres for regional facilities.	<b>Primary:</b> Parks, greenway trail system, and recreational facilities.  <b>Secondary:</b> Drainageways and utilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended to provide for the active and passive parks and recreational needs of the community.</li> <li>Generally, public parks and recreational opportunities, however, privately operated facilities which also serve recreational needs, such as golf courses, are also included.</li> </ul>	Varies	<b>Primary:</b> Varies  <b>Secondary:</b> Public
<b>AGRICULTURE (AG)</b>				
Minimum of 3 acres per dwelling unit.	<b>Primary:</b> Working ranch, graining, or agricultural lands and associated agricultural structures and equipment.  <b>Secondary:</b> Large-lot single-family residences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserved for agricultural production and ranching/ grazing purposes.</li> <li>May include single-family homes and agricultural buildings such as barns.</li> <li>Typically, not served by urban utilities, but some existing development may be served, depending on location.</li> </ul>	Primarily to the north, east, and south of Rapid City, outside of the Urban Services Boundary. However, active agricultural lands may continue to exist within the Urban Services Boundary indefinitely.	<b>Primary:</b> County Ag Zone, GAD  <b>Secondary:</b> Public, PF

# FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>BUFFER/RESERVE (BR)</b>				
N/A	<b>Primary:</b> Existing agriculture, residential, and public uses. Other land uses to be considered on a case-by-case basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes a land buffer around major public facilities (e.g., airport, and water reclamation plant) that present significant impacts (e.g., noise and odors).</li> <li>It could potentially serve as future expansion areas for these public facilities.</li> <li>Existing land uses remain. Additional/other future land uses may be considered (pursuant to a map amendment) on a case-by-case basis if such use would not cause detriment to future expansion plans or would not be significantly impacted by the existing facility.</li> </ul>	Varies	<b>Primary:</b> Varies
<b>FLOOD HAZARD OVERLAY (FH)</b>				
N/A	Limited uses and facilities with low flood damage potential and that will not obstruct flood flows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overlay of the 100-year floodplain on public and privately owned properties, as identified by official Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapping and per the Final Report of the Flood Plain Policy Committee (2008).</li> </ul>	Primarily concentrated along Rapid Creek as well as along the many tributary streams and drainages within the planning area.	<b>Primary:</b> FH

Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>FOREST CONSERVATION (FC)</b>				
Minimum of 3 acres per dwelling unit.	<b>Primary:</b> Open lands preserved by the City or other government agencies, or as part of a private development (e.g., planned unit development) for conservation resource protection, recreational, or utility use.  <b>Secondary:</b> Large-lot single-family residences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on conservation for natural beauty, open character, and recreational access.</li> <li>May be publicly or privately owned.</li> <li>Public access may be provided with designated trails or bicycle facilities however, in other areas lands may be left intact as visual buffers or to protect significant ridgelines visible from various areas of the community.</li> <li>Single-family homes on large lots in a forested or mountainous rural setting.</li> <li>Clustering is encouraged to conserve natural features and make efficient use of infrastructure. Smaller lots may be provided when development is clustered.</li> <li>Typically, not served by urban utilities, but some existing development may be served, depending on location.</li> </ul>	Primarily in rugged forested areas to the west of Rapid City limits; as well as central locations along Skyline Drive and north of M Hill.	<b>Primary:</b> Varies  <b>Secondary:</b> PF

# FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>FUTURE GREENWAY CONSERVATION (FG)</b>				
N/A	Parks, recreation, open space, and other limited uses and facilities with low flood damage potential and that will not obstruct flood flows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies areas within the 100-year floodplain (as identified by official FEMA mapping) that are not currently reserved as public greenway but are good candidates for future public or private greenway conservation.</li> </ul>	Primarily concentrated along Rapid Creek as well as along the many tributary streams and drainages within the planning area	<b>Primary:</b> FH
<b>PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC (P/QP)</b>				
N/A	Schools, government offices, airport, community/senior centers, fire stations, libraries, hospitals, cemeteries, and places of worship. Also includes facilities needed for essential public services such as electrical substations, water and wastewater facilities, and other similar uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided by the City, special districts, or by a quasi-public organization.</li> <li>Places of worship are also an acceptable use in residential and some commercial areas and may not be designated as Public/Quasi-Public.</li> </ul>	Varies	<b>Primary:</b> P, CC, Airport

Range of Density/Size	Uses	Characteristics	Location	Zone Districts
<b>NATIONAL FOREST (NF)</b>				
N/A	Publicly owned and accessible lands preserved by the U.S. Forest Service for conservation, resource protection, or recreational use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides wildlife habitat, resource conservation, and recreational opportunities.</li> <li>Proposed land use changes occurring adjacent to National Forest properties will require coordination with a designated planning representative.</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A



## Activity Centers

Existing Characteristics	Desired Characteristics/ Opportunities	Examples
<b>REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS</b>		
<p>Serve Rapid City residents as well as residents of the surrounding region.</p> <p>Each regional center is unique in its age, scale, intensity, and mix of uses.</p> <p>Typically include large scale retail uses, supported by other service and employment uses.</p> <p>Typically, low intensity development with large surface parking lots.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinvestment likely needed in older centers to remain competitive with newer activity centers.</li> <li>Targeted infill development and/or redevelopment may help enhance the mix of uses and take advantage of underutilized areas such as large surface parking lots.</li> <li>Integration of other uses and multi-family housing may be appropriate over time to take advantage of existing infrastructure investments and increase housing options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downtown</li> <li>Rushmore Mall/Uptown Rapid City</li> <li>Rushmore Crossing</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS</b>		
<p>Intended to meet the shopping and gathering needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and the entire community.</p> <p>Each activity center is unique in its age, scale, intensity and mix of uses.</p> <p>Typically include anchors such as major grocery stores, plus a mix of other uses, typically in a low intensity setting.</p> <p>May currently contain a somewhat homogenous mix of uses (retail, restaurant, and lodging).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May start to incorporate a broader mix of uses including service, office, and other employment and civic uses to remain economically resilient.</li> <li>Reinvestment needed in older centers to remain competitive with newer activity centers.</li> <li>Targeted infill development and/or redevelopment within portions of these areas may help enhance the mix of uses and take advantage of underutilized areas such as large surface parking lots.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Super Wal-Mart Center</li> <li>Baken Park</li> <li>Cambell and St. Patrick Streets</li> </ul>

## Gateways, Corridors, and Nodes

Existing Characteristics	Examples
<b>GATEWAYS</b>	
<p>Marks the entry or passage into the City.</p> <p>Usually corresponds with a major interchange or community point of interest (landmark).</p> <p>Potential to incorporate unique and attractive design elements, landscaping, and signage to enhance the sense of arrival and project a positive and welcoming community image.</p>	<p><b>Interchanges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Highway 44 at North Elk Vale Road (corresponds with primary route from the Rapid City Airport into Downtown)</li> <li>Interstate 90 at North Elk Vale Road</li> <li>Interstate 90 at North Deadwood Avenue</li> <li>Highway 79 (Cambell Street) at Elk Vale Road</li> <li>Interstate 90 at Interstate 190</li> <li>Interstate 190 at Omaha Street</li> </ul> <p><b>Landmarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mount Rushmore Road at Tower Road (near Regional Health Center).</li> <li>US Highway 16 at the City's southern limits (near Fort Hayes Drive).</li> <li>Jackson Boulevard at Canyon Lake Park (near Chapel Lane).</li> <li>Sturgis Road at the City's northern limits (north of Hidden Valley Road).</li> </ul>



Existing Characteristics	Examples
<b>ENTRANCE CORRIDORS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A primary route into the City, usually corresponding with a gateway.</li> <li>• Typically extend beyond the City limits, but the appearance of these corridors creates an impression about the City.</li> <li>• Coordination with adjacent counties and communities, and the South Dakota Department of Transportation necessary to create welcoming, attractive corridors that elevate the area's appeal as a regional destination.</li> <li>• Potential to incorporate landscaping, coordinated signage and lighting, and other design elements to enhance positive impressions.</li> <li>• Focus should be protection of scenic views, landscaping, and natural character rather than intense development along some entrance corridors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elk Vale Road traversing the southeastern section of the community from Interstate 90 to the north and to Mount Rushmore Road to the south.</li> <li>• Haines Avenue stretching north from Interstate 90 to beyond the County line.</li> <li>• East Highway 44 extending from the City's core near East Omaha Street east to the Rapid City Regional Airport.</li> <li>• Highway 79 extending south of Elk Vale Road.</li> <li>• Interstate 190 stretching from Interstate 90 to the north to Omaha Street to the south.</li> <li>• Interstate 90 including the segments west of Interstate 190 and east of North Elk Vale Road.</li> <li>• Jackson Boulevard (Highway 44) extending west of Canyon Lake.</li> <li>• Sturgis Road stretching north of the Rapid City limits.</li> <li>• US Highway 16 extending south from the Rapid City limits.</li> </ul>

Existing Characteristics	Examples
<b>REVITALIZATION CORRIDORS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant vehicular corridor within the community.</li> <li>• Includes both the streets themselves, plus the first tier of parcels fronting these roadways.</li> <li>• Historical focus has been on the movement of vehicles; increasing focus on balancing the needs of motorists and pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and freight traffic.</li> </ul> <p><b>Desired Future Characteristics/Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contain a diverse mix of uses and types of structures, some of which need reinvestment and revitalization.</li> <li>• Need to balance retaining historic character and the need for targeted redevelopment in some areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Boulevard/East North Street from East Omaha Street to North Cambell Street.</li> <li>• East Saint Patrick Street (mostly aging residential on west half, strip commercial on eastern half).</li> </ul>
<b>REGIONAL RECREATION DESTINATION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A major public park or recreation facility that draws visitors from across the community and region.</li> <li>• Includes existing facilities and planned future improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soccer Complex</li> <li>• Canyon Lake Park</li> <li>• Dinosaur Park</li> <li>• Founders Park/M Hill</li> <li>• Rapid City Swim Center</li> <li>• Star of the West Complex</li> <li>• Sioux Park and Fields</li> </ul>

# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key growth and land use trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## BALANCE GROWTH STRATEGICALLY AND COLLABORATIVELY.

### SUPPORT A MIX OF USES

Community members identified encouragement of mixed-use development as the top priority for improving community character in Rapid City. Examples of mixed-use developments in Rapid City today include the Downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods such as the West Boulevard Historic District where denser development patterns support ease of access to everyday needs without having to rely on a personal automobile. Encouraging future mixed-use development in new areas will increase ease of access to economic opportunities, reduce the need for additional infrastructure, enhance public safety through more eyes on the street, provide a wider variety of housing options, and allow more area to be preserved for open space and other public amenities.

Rapid City's Future Land Use Map identifies both community and regional centers which are strategically located to accommodate higher density growth near existing major roads and utilities, reducing reliance on cars, and promoting pedestrian access to nearby neighborhoods. These centers are designed to accommodate a variety of land uses and foster a stronger mix of housing types near jobs and services similar to the function of the Downtown Activity Center.

### FOCUS GROWTH INWARD

Outward sprawl was one of the primary concerns identified through community engagement. While outward growth

once seemed essential, the City's future now depends on a shift in strategy. With developable land constrained by natural, regulatory, and financial limitations, infill and redevelopment opportunities within the existing urban footprint offer a more fiscally responsible and sustainable approach to growth. Targeting underutilized sites and investing in core neighborhoods can help accommodate growth while being mindful of overburdening the City's infrastructure.

### BUFFER INCOMPATIBLE USES

To maintain a high quality of life and ensure public safety, Rapid City aims to reduce conflicts between incompatible land uses, such as industrial facilities near residential neighborhoods, by implementing thoughtful transitions and buffers. These buffers can take the form of physical separation, landscaping, design elements, or zoning strategies that soften the impact of differing land uses.

### ENSURE GROWTH IS FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

Community feedback highlighted growing concerns about the City's ability to maintain infrastructure as the urbanized area expands. The City of Rapid City has made an important investment in protecting the City's long-term financial health of the community by partnering with a consulting firm known as Urban3 to conduct a wholistic economic analysis of the community taking into account existing development patterns, property and sales

tax analysis, and infrastructure maintenance costs. Once completed, this analysis will provide important guidance to shape financially sustainable growth.

### FOSTER COMPLETE AND ACCESSIBLE NEIGHBORHOODS

As the community has developed over time, regulatory and natural forces have resulted in many neighborhoods lacking equitable access to essential amenities including open space, grocery stores, economic opportunity, and educational resources. Future land use planning and zoning code amendments will prioritize the creation of complete neighborhoods that provide essential daily needs and connect community members to opportunity. Complete neighborhoods should consist of complete streets, a mix of housing options, and open space, and support access to food, childcare, jobs, and schools via a network of complete streets and transportation options.

### STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the factors shaping a high quality of life for those who live and work in Rapid City today are the result of decades of strong intergovernmental collaboration at the local, state, and federal level. Coordinated transportation and land use planning within the MPO's boundary has resulted from continued collaboration with adjacent cities and counties. Additionally, Rapid City has worked with state and federal partners to secure grant funding that has allowed Rapid City to plan for growth and helped offset costs associated with infrastructure improvements. As the community continues to grow, improving these relationships and practices will ensure we are preparing for growth that is mutually beneficial across jurisdictional boundaries.







## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the goals, policies, and actions included below will foster balanced, strategic, and collaborative growth that enhances Rapid City's long-term fiscal health, preserves its unique character, strengthens quality of life for all residents, and connects the community to essential resources through a safe and accessible transportation network.*

### **GOAL 1. Balance Growth Strategically and Collaboratively.**

**Policy 1.1. Support a Mix of Uses - Create and maintain a Future Land Use Plan, developed incrementally and holistically, that actively promotes a mix of uses throughout the City.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Integrate the Future Land Use Map and Future Land Use Designations and associated zoning designations to support a mix of compatible uses throughout the community.

**Action 1.1.2.** Prioritize higher-density, mixed-use development within designated regional and activity centers, and areas surrounding the downtown core to create vibrant, accessible, and transit-oriented districts that serve as focal points for community life and economic opportunity.

**Policy 1.2. Develop Complete and Accessible Neighborhoods - Foster development of complete neighborhoods where residents have safe and convenient access to essential goods, services, and public amenities.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Focus community engagement efforts in areas of incomplete, single-use residential developments to identify what individual neighborhoods are currently lacking and to create land use and zoning strategies to provide desired amenities.

**Action 1.2.3.** Revise the Future Land Use Plan and zoning code to support the integration of small-scale neighborhood commercial uses such as grocery stores, childcare services, and restaurants.

**Action 1.2.2.** Prioritize accessible sidewalk, bicycle, and transit investments that improve connectivity for all ages and abilities within and between neighborhoods.

**Action 1.2.4.** Create a regulatory mechanism that requires provision of useable open space in new development.

**Policy 1.3. Focus Growth Inward - Prioritize infill and redevelopment within the City's existing urban footprint to maximize efficient use of infrastructure, revitalize underutilized areas, and create new housing and economic opportunities accessible to all.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Identify priority areas for infill and redevelopment based on factors such as infrastructure capacity, proximity to amenities, and existing and projected market demand.

**Action 1.3.2.** Incentivize infill and redevelopment in infrastructure ready areas through the use of financial tools and density bonuses.

**Policy 1.4. Buffer Incompatible Uses - Ensure appropriate buffering and transitions between incompatible land uses to minimize negative impacts and promote public safety.**

**Action 1.4.1.** Review and update the Future Land Use Plan, zoning code, and subdivision regulations to ensure incompatible land uses are appropriately buffered.

**Policy 1.5. Ensure Growth is Financially Sustainable - Ensure growth and development contributes to the long-term fiscal health of the community.**

**Action 1.5.1.** Adjust and monitor development application and permit fees to ensure taxpayers are not subsidizing the developer's responsible cost.

**Action 1.5.3.** Incorporate findings from the Urban3 Economic Analysis into the development review process.

**Action 1.5.2.** Preserve the use of financial tools to support development that addresses community needs in infrastructure-ready areas and improves the community's long-term fiscal health.

*"We need more mixed-use walkable developments"*

# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS



**Policy 1.6. Strengthen Partnerships** - Strengthen relationships and collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions, state agencies, and federal partners to ensure coordinated and efficient planning for growth and infrastructure investments.

**Action 1.6.1.** Establish regular communication channels and working groups with adjacent counties, cities, the MPO, and other governing bodies to discuss shared challenges and opportunities.

**Action 1.6.2.** Participate in regional planning efforts related to housing, transportation, economic development, and natural resource management.

**Action 1.6.3.** Pursue joint funding opportunities with partner agencies to support regional projects and initiatives.

**Action 1.6.4.** Explore the benefits of establishing a joint jurisdictional review board to consider development requests that cross interjurisdictional boundaries and ensure mutually beneficial growth outcomes.

*"Offering complete neighborhoods is a great idea! Encouraging "smaller" neighborhoods with walkable amenities like grocery stores, school, parks, etc."*





# CHAPTER 4: HOUSING



## Relationship to Community Values

*The approach to addressing housing issues that Rapid City will implement is guided by the following community-defined core values. These values will help shape how the City facilitates housing as a foundation of a healthy, thriving community and are embraced within the goals, policies, and actions of this chapter.*

### Accountability

Clear housing policies that reflect community values provide the framework for new development to support affordability, variety in housing type, walkability, and neighborhood character.

### Opportunity

Expanding access to a diverse range of housing options throughout the community and near services creates meaningful opportunities for residents to live, work, and thrive in Rapid City.

### Service

Strategies such as supportive housing for people experiencing housing insecurity, rental assistance, and access to key amenities and infrastructure reinforce the City's commitment to a healthy, inclusive, and vibrant community.

### Creativity

Rapid City's diverse landscape and development patterns necessitate creative strategies to help meet evolving needs, enhance neighborhood vitality, and create a more responsive housing environment that better serves the community.

### Stewardship

The City prioritizes the responsible management of housing resources by promoting cost-effective development, historic preservation, and strategic land use that support the protection of natural resources, open space, and community character.

### Livability

The City's housing policies aim to uphold a high quality of life and foster a strong sense of place by promoting housing types that support all life stages in neighborhoods with strong connectivity, accessible amenities, and thoughtful design.





## Introduction

The ability to find and afford quality, stable housing affects nearly every aspect of life, from economic resiliency to family stability and neighborhood connection. Like many growing cities across the country, Rapid City is navigating a dynamic shift in housing market conditions characterized by swift increases in median home values that have outpaced household income growth. As Rapid City looks ahead, creating more housing options will be essential in improving quality of life and increasing access to economic opportunity for all members of the community.

Housing opportunities identified within this chapter were developed in response to the existing conditions analysis, public feedback, and population growth projections. The goals, policies, and actions included at the end of the chapter provide a framework for implementing the opportunities and will serve as a primary tool for meeting future housing needs in Rapid City.

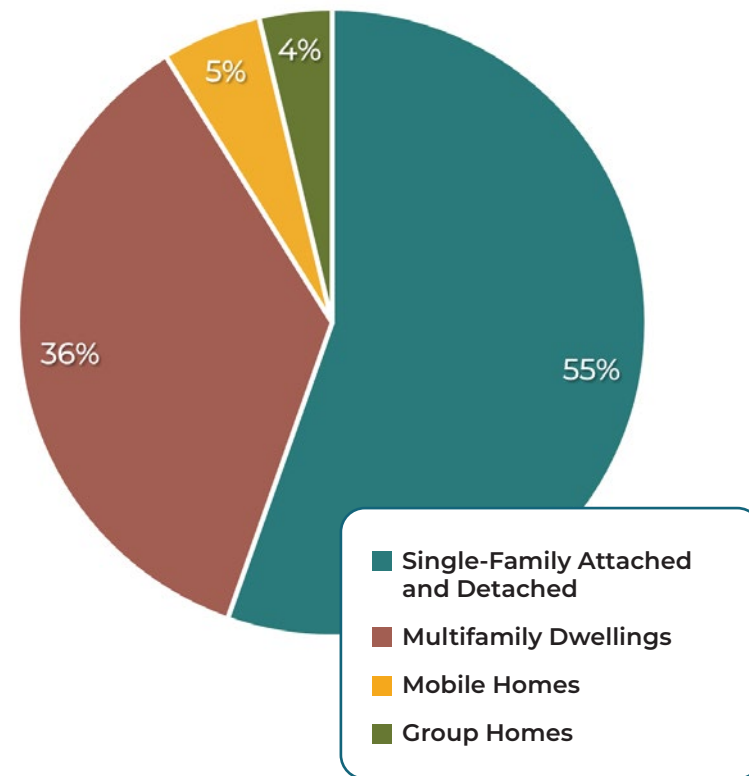
*"Take pride in creating communities, not just houses."*

## Community Snapshot

### EXISTING SUPPLY

There are approximately 38,500 total housing units in Rapid City today. Single-family attached and detached units, including manufactured and mobile homes, are the predominant housing type making up roughly 60% of the existing supply in Rapid City. The remaining 40% is comprised of a mix of higher density apartment complexes and group home structures, along with other medium-density twin homes, duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes options. These proportions are further illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Housing Supply



Source: City of Rapid City

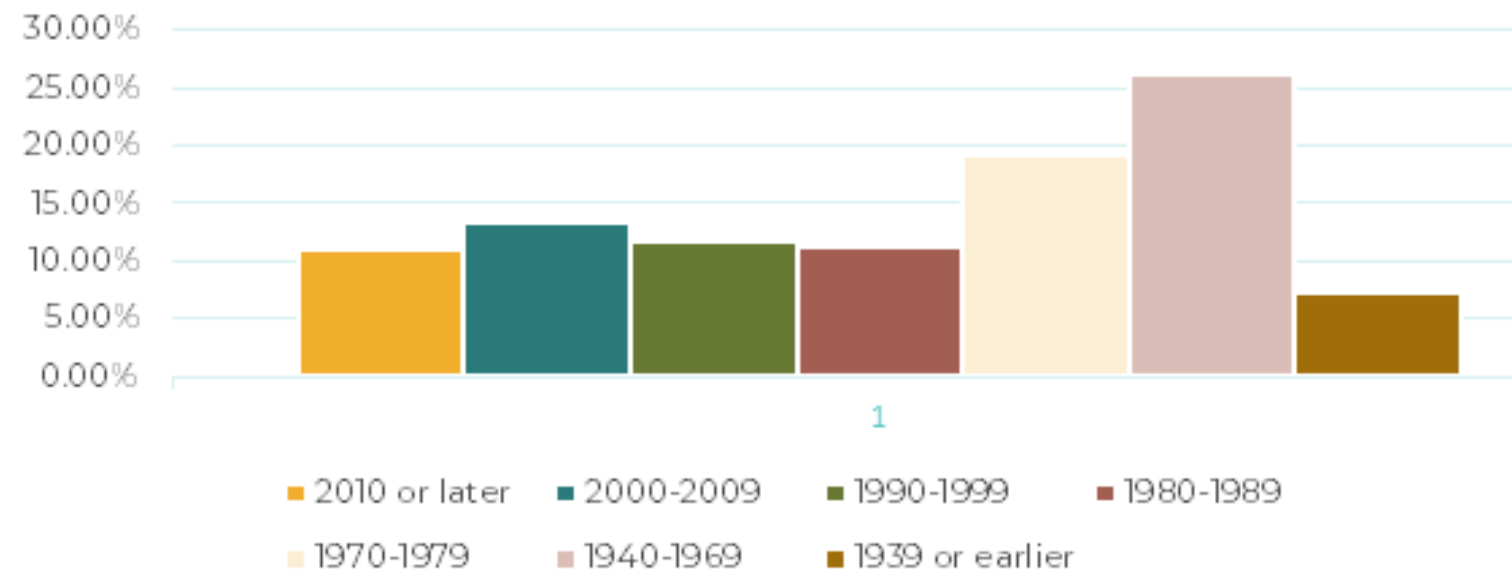
The current proportions are reflective of a period of significant housing production that occurred in response to a housing shortage experienced during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2020 and 2023, nearly 3,400 new multi-family units and 965 single-family units were constructed which has since resulted in improvements to vacancy and occupancy rates across the ownership and rental markets, though the market remains tight.

While the supply of new construction has increased rapidly, nearly one-third of the existing housing supply in Rapid City was constructed prior to 1969. As our housing supply continues to grow, it will be important to preserve the quality of older structures as they will continue to provide more naturally affordable rental and ownership opportunities. Age distribution of existing housing stock is further illustrated in Figure 11.

## AFFORDABILITY

To be considered affordable, housing costs (including utilities), should amount to no more than 30% of a household's income. This means someone earning the area median income of \$65,712 in Rapid City should be spending no more than \$1,643 per month on their housing costs. Generally, the Area Median Income (AMI), which can be defined as the middle income for households in a specific geography, has improved since 2020 for the Black Hills region, however, the cost of housing has risen in tandem with the AMI. Based on 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, roughly 30% of homeowners and 45% of renters in Rapid City are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their household income on housing.

Figure 11. Housing Age Distribution



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



Federal and state programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding serve as essential tools to bridge the affordability gap. However, they are typically targeted at households earning below 80% AMI. Many households earning just above this threshold still struggle to find appropriate housing options and present even greater adversities for those who are currently unhoused or experiencing housing insecurity.

Meeting housing needs across the income spectrum in Rapid City will require a combination of monetary and non-monetary strategies including land banking, limited equity cooperatives, increased density allowances, and use of the Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund. This work must be done in partnership with local and regional housing advocates, essential service providers, and affordable housing partners such as John T. Vucurevich Foundation, Black Hills Area Community Foundation, Strategic Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board, Pennington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Habitat for Humanity, and NeighborWorks.

## PROJECTED DEMAND

With an estimated current population of 84,930 residents and projected growth rate of 20%, Rapid City could see roughly 17,000 new residents by 2040. To meet the housing needs of a growing community, we must first understand the anticipated demographic shifts that will influence housing demand.

Key 2030 population projection trends, provided by Elevate Rapid City, indicate that the highest growth is projected to occur among the following age cohorts: 15 to 21, 35 to 54, and 65 to 84. Growth among these groups will provide support for a strong workforce and require rental and ownership housing options that are physically and financially accessible across the income spectrum. Additionally, the need for additional assisted living and nursing care facilities should be anticipated.

Based on these projected demographic shifts and accounting for units currently under construction, Elevate Rapid City's projections indicate the need for an additional 1,976 housing units by 2030 to maintain healthy vacancy rates as the number of households increases. Of these units, it is estimated that roughly 75% should provide ownership opportunities and must include options beyond single-family detached units. This provides important guidance for future land use planning, infrastructure, and housing policy decisions. These projections are further expanded upon in Figure 12.

Continued collaboration between the City and local experts from the housing, banking, real estate, and construction industries will be essential in monitoring and meeting projected housing needs.

Figure 12. Elevate Rapid City Housing Projections

Rapid City Demand	Number	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter
<b>Net additional householder under 55 (age)</b>	3,226	54%	46%	1,742	1,484
<b>Net additional households 55-74</b>	(1,235)	72%	28%	(889)	(346)
<b>Net additional households 75+</b>	1,941	63%	37%	1,223	718
<b>Additional Units to Provide Vacancy</b>		1.5% Target	6% Target	31	111
<b>Subtotal Demand from Household Growth</b>	<b>4,075</b>			<b>2,107</b>	<b>1,968</b>
<b>2023 ACS 5-Year Households</b>	31,961	19,689	12,272		
<b>2023 ACS 5-Year Vacancy Rates</b>		0.8%	4.5%		
<b>Difference to Restore Target Vacancy</b>		0.7%	1.5%	15	30
<b>Subtotal Number of Units</b>	<b>4,119</b>			<b>2,122</b>	<b>1,997</b>
<b>Permitted 2023</b>	(1,237)			(267)	(970)
<b>Permitted 2024</b>	(906)			(186)	(720)
<b>Subtotal Permitted</b>	(2,143)			(453)	(1,690)
<b>Additional Units by 2030</b>	<b>1,976</b>			<b>1,669</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>Annual Units</b>	<b>494</b>			<b>417</b>	<b>77</b>

Source: Elevate Rapid City

Acronyms: ACS - American Community Survey



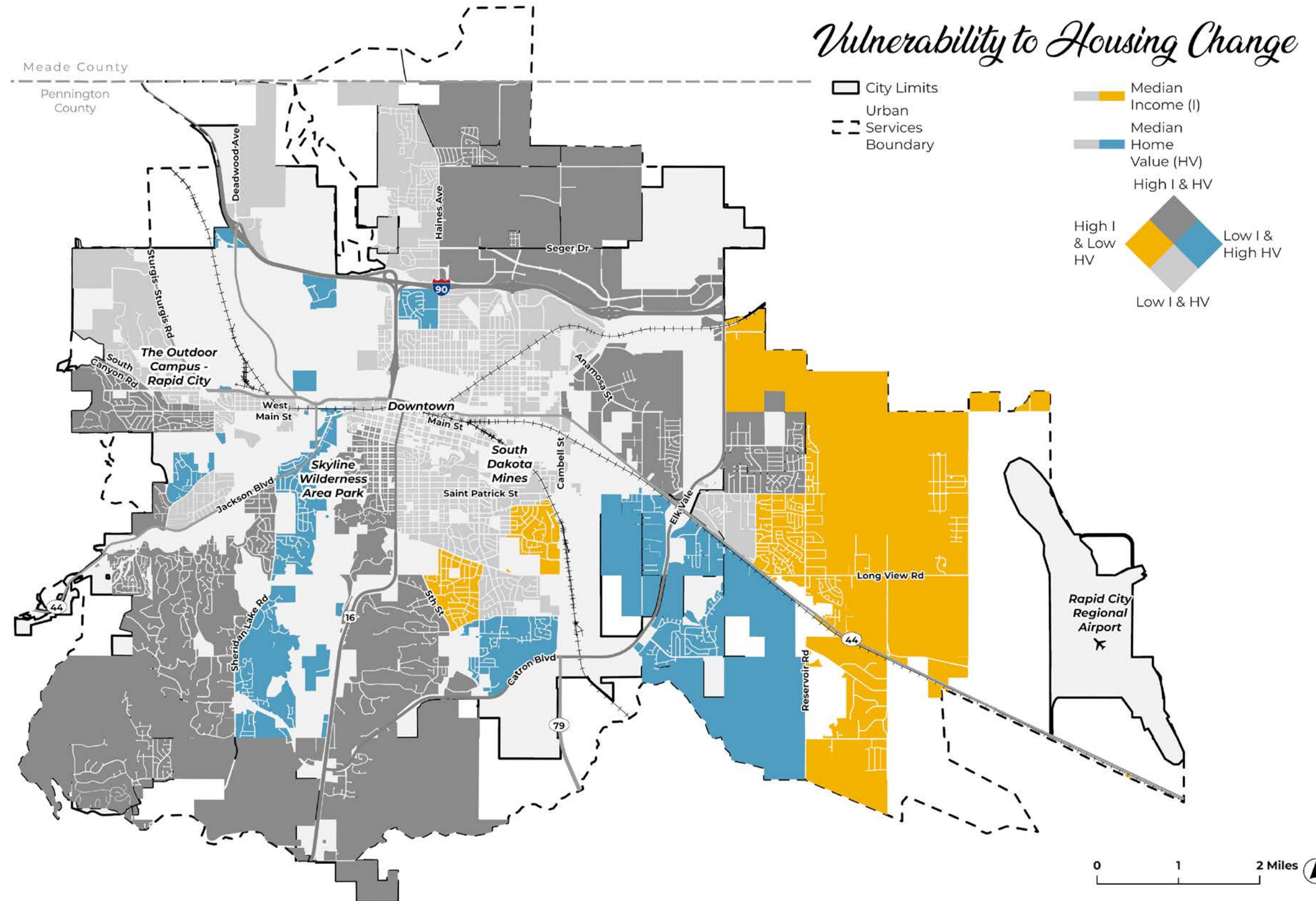
## Housing Insecurity

According to the Point in Time Survey, which counts the number of people living on the streets, in camps, or in their cars, there are an estimated 422 unhoused people living in Rapid City in 2025. As we collaboratively work to meet projected housing demands, we must recognize the importance of potential impacts on vulnerable populations and those currently experiencing housing insecurity.

Figure 13 shows areas of Rapid City where strategies to prevent displacement will need to be proactively developed through strategic partnerships and collaboration as changes in median home value and neighborhood income occur.

- **Dark Grey Areas:** Show high home value and high income. These are the areas that are likely to see little change in the next 10 to 20 years.
- **Orange Areas:** Show areas of high income but relatively low home value. These are areas that may see change in the next 10 years as investment in the area increases from community members with more disposable income.
- **Blue Areas:** Show areas of low-income populations but high home values, indicating vulnerability to gentrification and/or displacement as those properties may transition to higher-income populations as properties are bought and sold.
- **Light Grey Areas:** Show areas of current affordability where home values are lower and they are occupied by lower-income community members. However, these areas may need to see additional investment to protect from future gentrification due to the lower disposable income in the area.

Figure 13. Vulnerability to Housing Change





## Relationship to Land Use

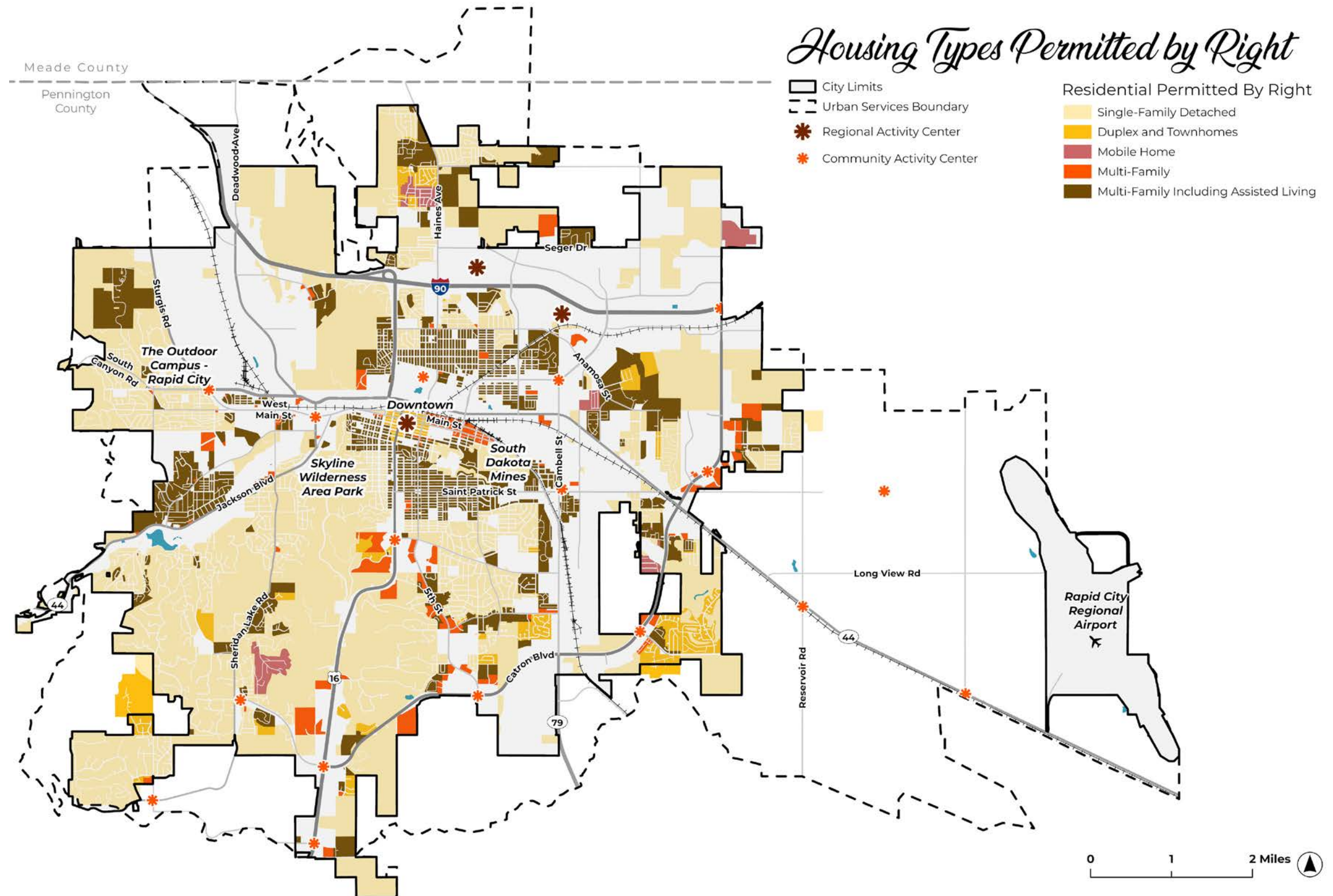
### FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING

Zoning and future land use will play a central role in determining how we meet projected housing demand. Figure 14 illustrates where various housing types are currently permitted by right across the existing residential zoning districts in Rapid City today. More than 70% of land in Rapid City today permits traditional stick-built detached single-family housing by right. While conditional use permits may provide pathways for medium- and higher-density housing types to exist in zones where they are not permitted by right, developers tend to avoid having to go through this process due to higher costs, longer review timelines, public hearing requirements, and increased risk associated with the uncertainty of approval.

This has contributed to new medium- and higher-density housing developments being concentrated at the edges of the municipal boundary, disconnected from essential daily needs and economic opportunities in the city's central core and activity centers.

By recognizing the gaps that currently exist in our zoning landscape, there are clear opportunities to integrate future land use, subdivision, and zoning code updates that will meet the projected housing needs across the income and age spectrum.

Figure 14. Housing Types Permitted by Right



# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key housing trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted several things that are working well today in Rapid City and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## **INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND AVAILABILITY**

### **EMBRACE HOUSING DIVERSITY**

Throughout the community engagement process, diversity of existing housing stock was identified as one of the primary opportunities for improvement in Rapid City. A diverse housing supply consists of a variety of structure types and sizes designed to accommodate the needs of a wide range of individuals and families across different income levels, life stages, and preferences. As the community continues to grow, housing needs and preferences will change. Rapid City will need to partner with housing sector experts to monitor housing needs and respond accordingly with integrated future land use plan and zoning code amendments to support development of housing types where anticipated gaps in supply are projected.

### **PRIORITIZE BALANCED DISTRIBUTION**

Community input highlighted a pressing need for better distribution of a mix of housing options throughout the community. Healthy communities are defined by complete neighborhoods that consist of a mix of compatible uses, housing types, and amenities. Updates to the Future Land Use Plan and zoning code should support the distribution and range of housing types available across the community. This can be achieved by utilizing financial tools to promote careful mixed-use infill development in infrastructure ready areas.

### **ADDRESS VULNERABILITY**

As Rapid City works to address housing availability and affordability needs throughout the community, it is crucial to recognize the growing gap between income and cost of living in the community. This creates challenges for all community members, but especially among those who are already experiencing housing insecurity. Many organizations are working diligently to address these challenges, however, there are opportunities to support better collaboration among these groups. Rapid City will work to protect our existing aging housing stock, anticipate impacts of development in areas vulnerable to change, and partner with organizations that work to provide affordable housing options that bridge the affordability gap, ensuring that housing that remains affordable to low-income community members and those experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness.



Tallgrass Apartments – 2126 E Philadelphia Street



# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS



## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the goals, policies, and actions included below will increase housing affordability and availability across the community to ensure residents have a safe and comfortable place to call home.*

### **GOAL 1. Increase Housing Affordability, Accessibility, and Availability.**

**Policy 1.1. Embrace Housing Diversity - Actively support a diverse housing supply physically and financially accessible to individuals and families across the age, ability, and income spectrum.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Amend the Future Land Use Plan and zoning code to allow for a wider mix of housing types to be permitted by right throughout the community.

**Action 1.1.2.** Partner with local housing sector experts to continually monitor and meet housing needs based on projected demographic factors including age, income, and household size.

**Action 1.1.3.** Promote mixed-income housing developments by offering incentives such as density bonuses, expedited permitting, or reduced fees for projects that include a range of accessible income-restricted and market-rate units within the same development or area.

**Action 1.1.4.** Explore strategies that would make the development of accessory dwelling units more feasible.

**Action 1.1.5.** Preserve the use of financial tools for developments that address existing and projected gaps in housing accessibility, supply, and diversity.

**Policy 1.2. Prioritize Balanced Distribution - Strategically distribute housing opportunities throughout the community in areas with existing and planned access to jobs, services, and public amenities.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Support the incorporation of higher-density housing types within and proximate to schools, major employment and activity centers, and along complete accessible transportation corridors to promote equitable access to economic opportunity and essential daily resources.

**Action 1.2.2.** Incorporate a mix of medium-density housing types through infill and redevelopment in existing lower-density neighborhoods throughout the community where housing options are currently limited.

**Action 1.2.3.** Leverage public-private partnerships with major employers and educational institutions to provide appropriate mix of physically and financially accessible housing in locations that will meet workforce and student needs.

**Action 1.2.4.** Support the co-location of senior living facilities and medical services to prepare for projected growth among older age cohorts.

**Policy 1.3. Address Vulnerability - Support vulnerable populations by protecting naturally occurring affordable housing stock, preventing displacement, expanding access to support services, and providing accessible and affordable housing options.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Evaluate the feasibility of a Proactive Rental Inspection Program to identify substandard residential structures for public health, code enforcement, and safety violations in accordance with the International Property Maintenance Code. Support compliance and, if needed, enforce fines for landlords that do not maintain these standards for rental properties.

**Action 1.3.2.** Coordinate with local housing partners to develop and maintain a resource list of existing programs and sources of funds for rehabilitation of owner-occupied units and training programs for rental management to preserve the existing stock of naturally occurring affordable housing units.

**Action 1.3.3.** Implement development review procedures that assess potential impacts on low-income residents, especially in areas most vulnerable to change identified in Figure 13. Develop strategies to protect more naturally occurring affordable housing and develop anti-displacement strategies before development occurs in these areas.

**Action 1.3.4.** Work with local housing partners to track affordability term lengths for housing funded through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and other deed-restricted units. Partner with property owners and affordable housing providers to preserve the affordability of these units beyond the required affordability time horizons.

**Action 1.3.5.** Partner with local housing experts to provide additional pathways to homeownership and lower rental costs through creative models including land banking and limited equity cooperatives.

**Action 1.3.6.** Support ongoing collaboration among local housing partners and social service providers working to create transitional housing options that offer shared amenities to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

**Action 1.3.7.** Identify strategies to incentivize and improve energy efficiency of housing to reduce energy and utility costs for homeowners and renters.



# CHAPTER 5: ECONOMY



## Relationship to Community Values

*Rapid City's economic policies and decisions are guided by core values that ensure development serves the entire community. These values are embedded in the goals, policies, and actions of this chapter, and shape how Rapid City approaches economic growth to enhance the quality of life for all residents.*

### Accountability

Balancing economic benefits of new development with broader impacts and community needs through transparent and clear review processes preserves community assets while creating lasting value.

### Opportunity

A strong and diverse economy depends on access to commercial services and employment across the City. Supporting neighborhood-serving business districts and investing in workforce development programs helps create meaningful job opportunities close to home.

### Service

Developments that include public spaces, mixed uses, and amenities beyond traditional business hours help create vibrant areas that serve the community, offer long-term benefits, and enhance the overall experience of a place.

### Creativity

Exploration of new economic opportunities that are uniquely suited to Rapid City's location, climate, workforce, and cultural assets leverages the City's distinct qualities to attract businesses, support local entrepreneurs, and develop specialized niches that diversify the local economy.

### Stewardship

Protecting and enhancing the economic value of community and natural assets is vital to long-term success. Parks, landmarks, and public spaces serve both residents and visitors while contributing to the local economy.

### Livability

Economic growth and quality of life are closely connected. By supporting projects that enhance both the economy and everyday life, Rapid City fosters livability alongside long-term prosperity.



## Introduction

The health and resilience of the local economy is intricately linked to the health of the community. A diverse economy is essential for building community resilience and ensuring that growth benefits all residents. It provides the stability needed to withstand market fluctuations and creates opportunities for long-term prosperity. Rapid City's economy is largely service-driven, supported by key industries including agriculture, retail, healthcare, government, and education. Tourism, in particular, is a cornerstone of the local economy driven by unique outdoor recreational amenities, vibrant arts and cultural scenes, along with a downtown featuring local restaurants, retail, and creative spaces. There is also emerging growth and innovation occurring in the technology sector through research taking place at South Dakota Mines and Western Dakota Technical College.

Despite these strengths, many members of our community face significant barriers to economic opportunity, highlighting a need to implement policies that leverage the interconnection between land use, economy, and transportation and increase access to economic opportunity equitably. The goals, policies, and actions included at the end of this chapter provide a framework for implementing these opportunities and reinforce economic and community resilience over time.

## Community Snapshot

### EMPLOYMENT

According to data provided by Elevate Rapid City, employment in the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is strong with a workforce of over 80,000 and an unemployment rate hovering between 1.6% and 2.0% between May 2024 and May 2025. Rapid City is expected to sustain a strong workforce based on projected growth among working age cohorts and due to its proximity to the I-90 corridor which provides convenient access to employment opportunities for residents in surrounding communities. Employment is projected to grow 8.4% by 2030, led by professional/technical services (+17%), healthcare (+14%), and food and beverage services (+10%), offering opportunities for workforce development and targeted industry support.

### INCOME

The estimated area median income in Rapid City is \$65,712, which trails slightly behind the national median of \$74,755. According to an MIT living wage calculation that considers the amount of money full-time workers need to cover the cost of basic needs for their family, the living wage for a family of three including two adults and one child in Rapid City requires an annual household income of \$83,664 before taxes (MIT, 2025). Over 13% of the population is experiencing poverty, which is 1% higher than the national average. That number increases to almost 20% for children under 18 years of age, reflecting a concentrated poverty rate among families and young people. This highlights the need to increase equitable access to education, quality jobs, and living wages for all residents in Rapid City.

### CHILDCARE

Childcare is an essential service for working families and contributes to the overall strength of the local economy. Without affordable, quality childcare, many parents cannot fully participate in the local workforce. This challenge is especially pronounced in Rapid City. A 2024 community survey conducted by Elevate Rapid City found that 30% of respondents had left the workforce due to lack of childcare, and 70% of those respondents indicated that they would return if affordable, reliable childcare were available. In response, local leaders and organizations including the John T. Vucurevich Foundation and Elevate Rapid City are developing funding and policy solutions such as shared-cost and grant programs to meet this need. Continuing to address childcare access and affordability through innovative solutions will be critical to maintaining a healthy local economy as Rapid City continues to grow.

### INDUSTRY

With an estimated Gross Domestic Product of \$8.5 billion, Rapid City's economy has demonstrated strong resilience and consistent growth, often surpassing the state average. The economy is supported by a diverse mix of larger private sector employers including Monument Health, Black Hills Corporation, Walmart, Daktronics, and Sanford Health. Additionally, the area is home to several major public sector employers including South Dakota Mines, Western Dakota Technical College, Ellsworth Air Force Base, Rapid City Area Schools, Black Hills Works, City of Rapid City, Pennington County, and the State of South Dakota. These are just a few of the major employers providing thousands of jobs vital to Rapid City's economic stability.

Equally important to Rapid City's economy are the smaller local businesses that provide thousands of additional jobs, foster a close-knit community, and provide essential community services. Business owners benefit from an absence of corporate and personal income tax, personal property tax, and business inventory tax. These conditions position Rapid City for continued economic growth and diversification in years ahead.

### TOURISM

The cultural and scenic attractions of the Black Hills region support a thriving tourism industry. According to a report by Tourism Economics, in 2024, 3.9 million people travelled to Rapid City, resulting in \$504 million in visitor spending. Visitor volumes have continued to increase since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with spending over 25% (\$90 million) higher than pre-pandemic years.

While this growth in tourism has significantly benefited the local economy, especially small businesses, it has also impacted the housing and hospitality markets. Since 2019, second homeownership has increased by 127%. Many of these second homes have been converted into short-term rentals, which decreases the availability of housing for the local workforce and increased regulatory disparities that exist for larger hospitality providers such as hotels. The close relationship between housing availability and economic health underscores the need for strategic policies that balance workforce housing needs with the growth of short-term rentals and hospitality services. Exploring opportunities to regulate short-term rentals can help ensure sustainable growth and equity in housing and tourism development.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## Relationship to Land Use

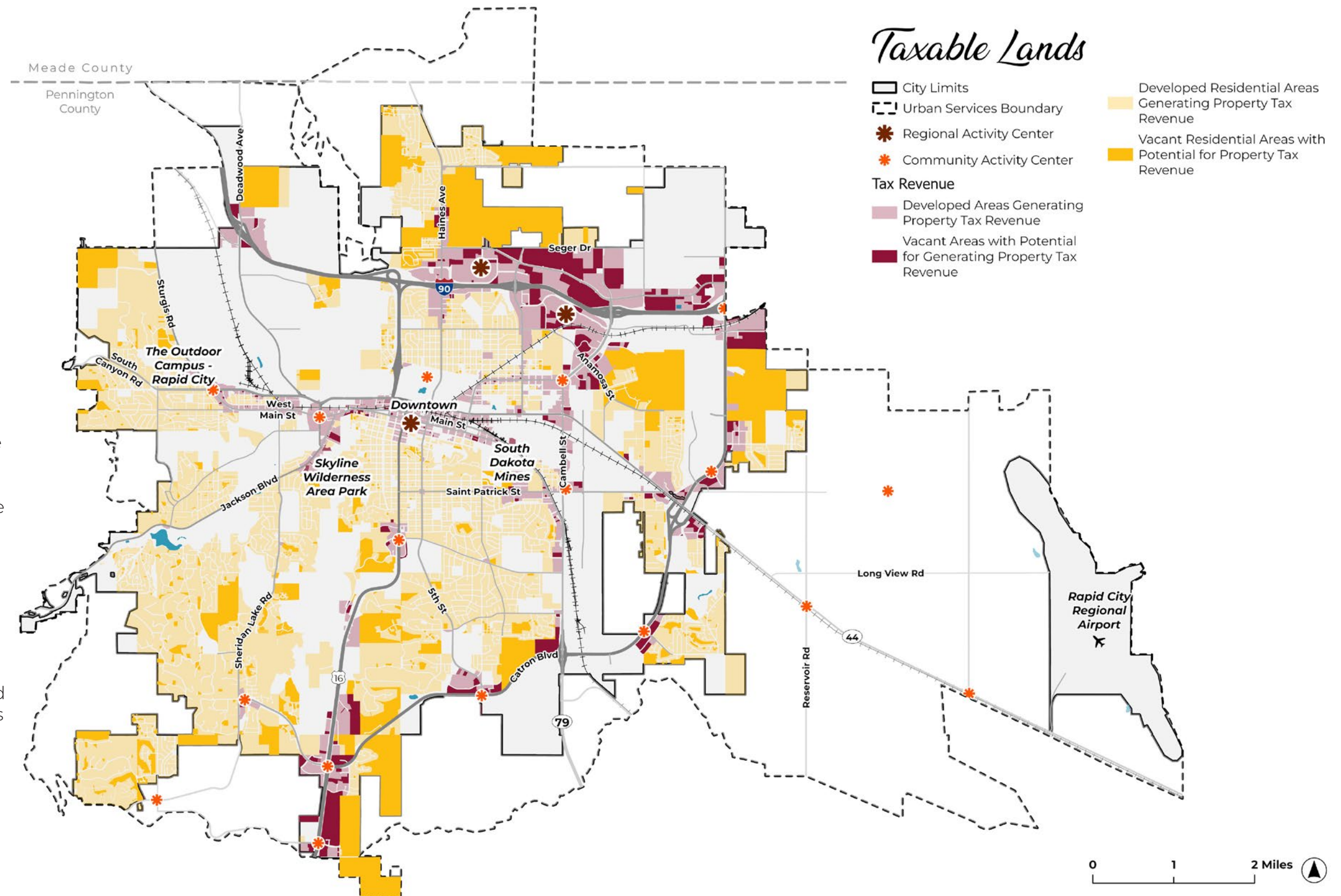
Since South Dakota does not have a state income tax, local governments rely heavily on property and sales taxes as a significant revenue source. Therefore, the percentage of taxable land directly affects Rapid City's ability to generate revenue to fund local services and infrastructure. This includes investments in roads, utilities, parks, transit, and other essential services that contribute to the quality of life for residents.

The following map illustrates areas that are currently designated to support commercial land uses that generate sales tax revenue. Current zoning and future land use designations limit the geographic distribution of commercial uses in Rapid City. By encouraging mixed-use infill development in areas already served by infrastructure, Rapid City can introduce employment and business opportunities in areas where they do not currently exist while also providing additional housing to support workforce and business needs. Ultimately, this will increase the rate of return on taxable land through increased sales and property tax revenue and provide additional funding for infrastructure maintenance and other public services.

**Dark Red Areas:** Show parcels whose 2014 future land use designations allow for commercial uses (Downtown and Mixed-Use Commercial) and are currently utilized for commercial purposes, generating sales tax revenue for the City.

**Red Areas:** Show parcels whose 2014 future land use designations allow for commercial uses (Downtown and Mixed-Use Commercial) but are currently vacant and therefore underutilized.

Figure 15. Taxable Lands



# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key economic trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## BUILD ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

### STRENGTHEN EXISTING INDUSTRY

Local businesses were identified as one of the strengths that community members love most about living in Rapid City. Prioritizing investment in new and existing art, cultural, and outdoor recreational amenities that improve quality of life for residents and draw visitors to Rapid City will be essential in providing continued support for local businesses. This will also continue to shape the unique identity of Rapid City that sets it apart from surrounding communities, adding to the attractiveness of our community for new businesses. Continued investment in the Rapid City Regional Airport will be essential in driving economic development, increasing tourism, and supporting local business in the future.

### EXPAND OPPORTUNITY

Attracting new skilled workers, creating higher-wage jobs, and expanding walkable neighborhoods were identified as top community priorities related to economic development. Revisions to the Future Land Use Plan and zoning code should prioritize expanding the area within city limits where mixed-use commercial development is supported. Allowing for neighborhood commercial nodes will create new spaces for small local businesses to serve residential areas. Increasing the mix and density of uses near activity centers and along transit corridors will increase access to economic opportunity and promote walkable neighborhoods. Partnerships between the City, Elevate Rapid City, and major medical and higher-education

institutions will support innovation in these industries, create new higher paying jobs, attract new high-skilled workers, and create opportunities for new graduates to stay and grow their careers locally.

### SUPPORT WORKFORCE NEEDS

Supporting the local workforce will be an essential strategy in maintaining a healthy and resilient economy. Increasing gaps between income and cost of living will require strategic investment in affordable workforce housing, and creation of quality childcare options. This will be achieved by creating new affordable housing units through partnerships with local affordable housing providers, protecting existing affordable housing, and supporting the continued efforts of John T. Vucurevich Foundation and Elevate Rapid City to address childcare needs.

*"More affordable childcare."*



David Lust Accelerator Building – 18 E Main Street

# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS



## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the goals, policies, and actions included below will build economic resilience by strengthening existing industries, expanding economic opportunity, and supporting the needs of a diverse workforce.*

### GOAL 1. Build Economic Resilience.

**Policy 1.1. Strengthen Existing Industry - Support local businesses and improve quality of life for local residents by investing in arts, cultural, and outdoor recreational amenities that promote and strengthen tourism.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Invest in aesthetic improvements, local art installations, and high-quality visitor services that create a positive first impression of the community.

**Action 1.1.2.** Leverage Rapid City's unique outdoor amenities and recreation as a tool for economic development and diversification.

**Action 1.1.3.** Develop design guidelines that facilitate use of commercial areas as community gathering places.

**Action 1.1.4.** Invest in airport development projects that improve accessibility, accommodate larger aircraft, attract new airline services, and increase the economic impact of the Rapid City Regional Airport for residents and tourists.

**Action 1.1.5.** Partner with regional service providers to expand access to high-quality broadband to support local businesses.

**Action 1.1.6.** Work with state representatives to identify and promote policies that benefit Rapid City's economic growth.

**Policy 1.2. Expand Opportunity - Expand economic opportunity through accessible mixed-use development to promote innovation, attract and retain a skilled workforce, and create higher-paying jobs.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Revise the Future Land Use Plan and zoning designations to support neighborhood commercial uses to create new opportunities for local businesses and support a wider mix and density of uses near activity centers and along multimodal corridors to create new spaces for larger employers to locate.

**Action 1.2.2.** Partner with Elevate Rapid City to monitor emerging sectors and identify strategies to make Rapid City more competitive in key markets and attract higher paying jobs.

**Action 1.2.3.** Work with local schools and colleges to create career pathway programs in emerging sectors to attract and retain local talent.

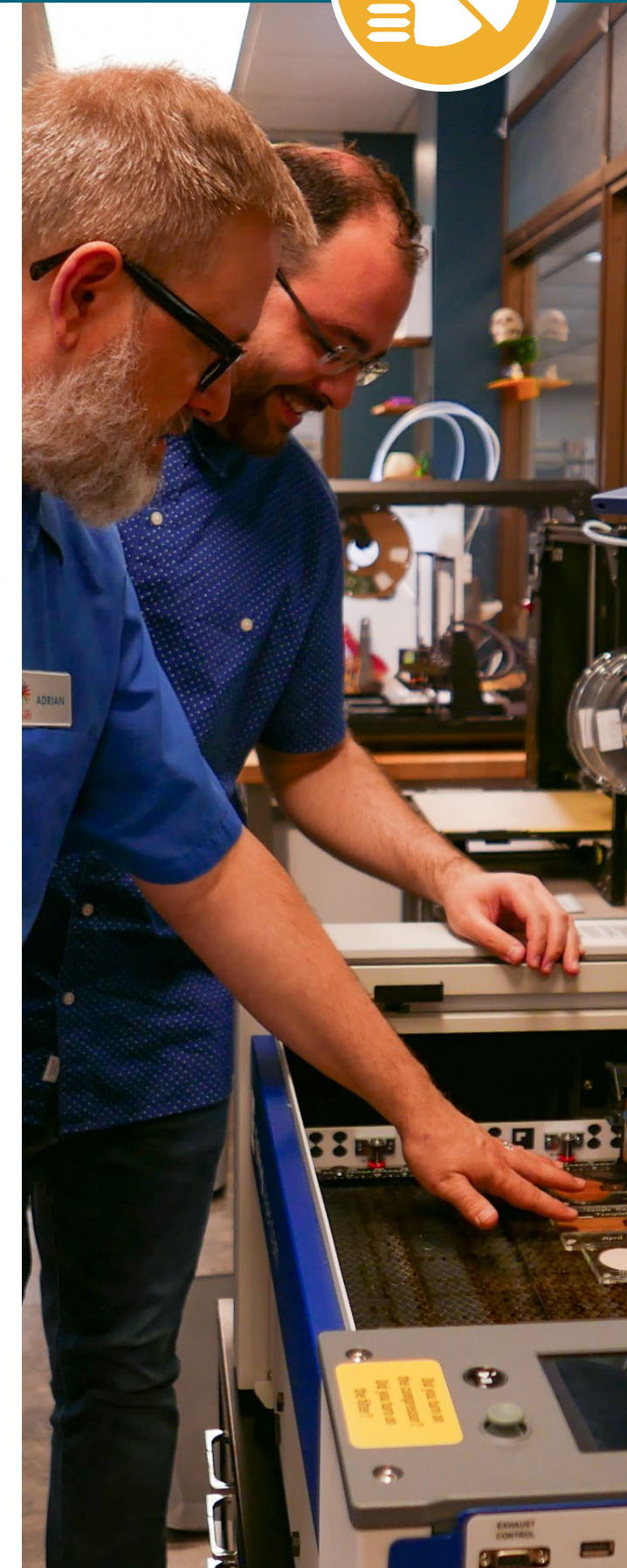
**Policy 1.3. Support Workforce Needs - Support the local workforce by providing affordable housing options and ensuring access to quality childcare.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Revise the zoning code and Future Land Use Plan to make development of new affordable housing and childcare centers more feasible.

**Action 1.3.2.** Utilize financial tools to incentivize development that incorporates a mix of housing accessible to lower-income workers and includes childcare facilities.

**Action 1.3.3.** Partner with and support organizations who are addressing childcare needs within the community.

**Action 1.3.4.** Explore zoning code amendments that balance the regulatory requirements between hospitality industries including hotels and short-term rentals and protect existing workforce housing stock.





# CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES



## Relationship to Community Values



*Rapid City's commitment to high-quality public services and facilities is led by the following community-defined core values which guide infrastructure, emergency response, waste management, and other essential service decisions to meet the needs of a growing and evolving community. These values help shape how the City plans for and delivers services that improve safety, efficiency, and overall quality of life.*

### Accountability

From rapid emergency response times to managing and maintaining quality and functional infrastructure, responsible service provision and data-driven decision making are essential to reliable services and facilities.

### Opportunity

Reliable water and wastewater infrastructure, emergency services, and public facilities support economic growth, public health, and overall community wellbeing, making Rapid City a healthy, desirable place to live and work.

### Service

Serving the community is at the forefront of public services and infrastructure to keep the community safe and enrich residents' daily lives. Using technology, the City can expand capacity to provide efficient and accessible public services and improve asset management.

### Creativity

Innovation in public service delivery allows the City to address challenges in new and effective ways, adapt to changing needs, improve efficiency, and provide cost-effective solutions for residents.

### Stewardship

Responsible management of public resources is key to long-term fiscal, operational, and environmental sustainability as the City prioritizes stewardship to protect public assets and natural resources for future generations.

### Livability

High-quality public services directly shape the day-to-day experience of residents. When infrastructure is reliable, emergency response is quick, and facilities are well maintained, people feel safer and more connected to their community regardless of location or income.



## Introduction

The overall safety, accessibility, health, and wellbeing of the Rapid City community is directly dependent upon the quality of the infrastructure and public services provided by the City. Rapid City provides streets, water, wastewater, landfill, and stormwater infrastructure in addition to emergency and library services. Transportation and Parks and Recreation services also fall under this umbrella but are covered separately in Chapters 7 and 8.

As the community continues to grow, additional demand for these essential services will require proactive and strategic planning to ensure that growth enhances quality of life and benefits the City's long-term fiscal health. It is essential that the Future Land Use Plan be updated and implemented interdepartmentally to ensure that the density and timing of new development aligns with the existing and projected capacity of our public services and utilities. The goals, policies, and actions included at the end of this chapter provide a framework for strategic decision making, reflective of existing conditions, public feedback, and anticipated impacts of growth on essential public services.

## Community Snapshot

### LANDFILL

The Solid Waste Division manages the Rapid City Regional Landfill and provides residential curbside collection of garbage, recyclables, and yard waste to residents within City limits. On an annual basis, the landfill takes in approximately 130,000 tons of waste per year. Interviews with Solid Waste Division staff highlighted that the landfill's current capacity is being stretched thin due to increases in waste production as

the population has grown and is projected to reach full capacity within the next 15-20 years. The Solid Waste Division is assessing its operations to incorporate more waste reduction strategies and made a recent \$9 million investment to create a new garbage storage cell prolonging the lifespan of the existing landfill by roughly five years; however, a longer-term waste management solution is still needed.

### WATER

The Rapid City Water Division treats and delivers nearly 3.6 billion gallons of clean drinking water each year. Drinking water is treated at the City's two existing water treatment plants and delivered to customers through a network of roughly 500 miles of distribution mains which is a considerable system for the size of Rapid City.

The City maintains a diverse and resilient water rights portfolio composed of groundwater, surface water, and stored surface water sources. Approximately 17% of the City's total water rights are sourced from groundwater, specifically the Minnelusa and Madison Aquifers, while the remaining 83% are attributed to surface water and storage rights in the Pactola and Deerfield Reservoirs. This balanced mix provides the City with the flexibility to continue delivering reliable water service, even during periods of severe drought, when paired with responsible water use and watering restrictions. As part of the recent Water Utility System Master Plan Update, the City evaluated projected population growth and service area expansion through the year 2115. The analysis concluded that our existing water rights portfolio will be sufficient to meet future demand.

To strengthen long-term resilience, the City continues to actively pursue the acquisition of senior surface water rights. Looking further ahead, a potential project to bring water from the Missouri River would allow the City to access its 28,880 acre-feet of future-use water rights, providing another layer of reliability for the system.

The City of Rapid City remains committed to proactive planning and sustainable water management to ensure long-term water security for our growing community. Communication between the Public Works and Community Development Departments will be essential to ensure alignment between future land use planning, water master plans, and capital improvement priorities.

### WASTEWATER

Wastewater quality in Rapid City is highly dependent on the work the Rapid City Water Reclamation Division does to collect and treat wastewater before it makes its way back to surrounding surface and groundwater resources. The Water Reclamation Facility treats roughly 3.5 billion gallons of sewage annually through a centralized system of nearly 370 miles of sanitary sewer lines. The City of Rapid City is proactively investing in upgrades to the Water Reclamation Facility to meet future wastewater treatment needs as identified in the Wastewater Utility System Master Plan.. This project will further protect Rapid Creek and other surface water resources by implementing reliable and efficient wastewater treatment processes that safeguard downstream habitats. Continued collaboration and communication between the Rapid City Community Development and Public Works Departments will be essential to ensure that growth occurs in alignment with current and future wastewater treatment capacity needs.

### STORMWATER

The quantity and quality of stormwater runoff is managed through an interconnected system of roughly 170 miles of stormwater pipe and detention ponds strategically located throughout the 21 major drainage basins in the urbanized area. This system mitigates impacts to water quality by removing harmful pollutants that accumulate as stormwater runoff makes its way across impervious surfaces within the urban environment. As impervious surfaces have expanded with urban growth and higher intensity rain events have increased, management of stormwater has become more challenging. Addressing these challenges will require proactive investment and innovative solutions from the City and developers in combination with creative land use, open space, and natural resource management strategies presented throughout this Plan.

### STREETS

The Rapid City Streets Division operates and maintains over 400 miles of roadway infrastructure which equates to roughly 3,000 linear feet of lane miles. This division is responsible for performing winter snow removal, year-round repair of potholes, crack sealing, striping, paving, and street sweeping activities that remove more than 3,800 tons of dust, dirt, and debris from our roadway system. This work contributes to improved air and water quality conditions that further improve the overall health and safety of our community. As the number of street miles has increased with new development and existing roadway infrastructure has aged, this division has been faced with difficulties in balancing growing repair and operational needs with increasing costs.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## MAINTENANCE

Essential infrastructure system functionality is reliant upon continued investment and maintenance of these assets. Currently, many of our city vehicles and maintenance equipment sit outside year-round due to the lack of sufficient storage facilities. This decreases the long-term lifespan of these investments and increases the frequency of needed repairs which the City currently relies on outside maintenance and repair companies to perform much of this work. Over time, this has reduced efficiency and increased overall infrastructure maintenance costs. The City is exploring opportunities to address this issue by creating centralized service and repair of all City vehicles and equipment in lieu of relying on outside repair and maintenance companies in a new centralized fleet and equipment maintenance facility. While this will require significant initial capital investment, it creates an opportunity to save costs, increase efficiency, and protect our essential infrastructure systems in the long run. The City should also continue to explore opportunities to address challenges associated with outdoor storage of vehicles and maintenance equipment.

## LIBRARY

As one of the most frequently used public facilities in the community, the Rapid City Public Library plays a central role in supporting education, connection, and opportunity. According to the Library's 2024 annual report there was a 60% increase in event attendance from the previous year, and digital checkouts rose by 54%, reflecting a growing need for flexible, around-the-clock access to learning and resources.

The Library serves as a central hub for community connection and lifelong learning, offering services that benefit

residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities. It supports workforce development and digital literacy through free public Wi-Fi, computer access, mobile printing, laptop lending, and a state-of-the-art Makerspace. This space includes tools such as 3D printers, a laser engraver, and large-format printers that provide residents with hands-on opportunities for innovation and skill-building. As such, the Library directly supports the economic goals outlined in the previous chapter by offering critical infrastructure for job readiness and creative development.

For families and children, the Library offers a wide range of free and low-cost programming. Weekly storytimes, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and craft activities, tutoring resources, family learning programs, and community book clubs help foster early literacy, curiosity, and social connection. Additionally, public meeting rooms and study spaces are available for reservation, and special events that provide opportunities for civic dialogue and cultural enrichment.

To expand access to these essential services, the Library introduced a Bookmobile in 2024 that reached an estimated 11,000 residents in its first year. In addition, home delivery services ensure that individuals with mobility challenges can continue to access books, media, and other resources from home.

The Library also plays a vital role in preserving the City's collective memory. Its historical collections include archives, oral histories, photographs, and materials documenting key moments in Rapid City's history, including the 1972 flood. This function not only honors the community's past but provides valuable context for

planning its future. As the community continues to grow, funding of the Library should be prioritized to ensure access to this essential resource.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) each play a distinct role in Rapid City's public safety network. Community safety was identified as an existing strength throughout the community engagement process, however, as rapid growth has occurred over the last decade, calls-for-service have increased. This has placed additional pressures and responsibilities upon emergency service providers and has stretched public safety resources thin. Despite these challenges, Rapid City emergency service and public safety teams have continued to prioritize the community's safety and wellbeing. As a result of strategic use of financial resources and proactive partnerships and outreach, Rapid City experienced a five-year low in violent crimes and has continued to improve emergency response times.

The public safety and emergency response teams remain committed to leveraging community partnerships to prevent crime, improve responsiveness, and connect individuals to local services that address underlying quality-of-life issues. However, it is essential to highlight the fact that these teams cannot be expected to shoulder this responsibility alone. As Rapid City continues to grow, the City has an opportunity to support our emergency service teams by implementing integrated land use, zoning, housing, transportation, and urban design strategies that have been proven to proactively enhance public safety and increase quality of life throughout the community.





## RELATIONSHIP TO LAND USE

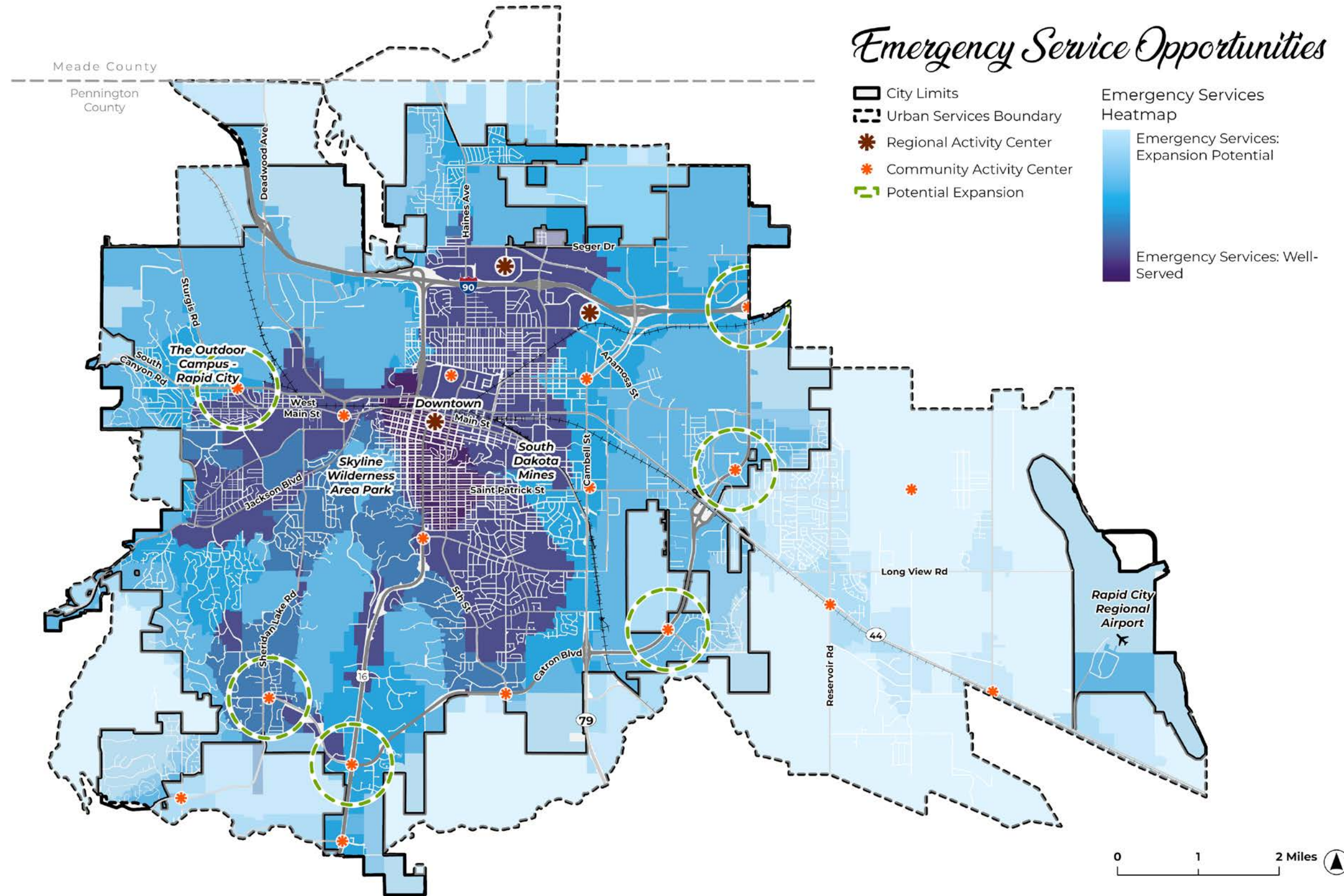
As Rapid City's municipal boundary has expanded over the past 10 years, shifts in land area and development patterns have created new challenges for delivering essential emergency services. Ensuring access to emergency services such as police, fire, and EMS requires a more balanced geographic distribution of emergency service stations and healthcare facilities to maintain fast and reliable response times to growing areas.

As the City works to update the Future Land Use Plan and zoning code, there is significant opportunity to improve public safety by prioritizing the location of additional emergency service infrastructure where the density and mixes of uses will be highest to ensure emergency services keep pace with growth and are located in close proximity to emergency medical care facilities. It is also essential to consider challenges posed by development in hazard prone areas when evaluating the location of emergency service infrastructure and its impact on responsiveness.

Figure 16 illustrates current emergency service coverage and identifies areas where service coverage improvements are needed.

- Dark Blue Areas: Represent parts of the City that are well-served, with average emergency response times of four minutes or less.
- Lighter Blue Areas: Indicate locations where longer travel times create service gaps, highlighting a need for improved coverage.
- Green Circles: Mark future activity centers as identified in the Future Land Use Map.

Figure 16. Emergency Service Opportunities



# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key infrastructure and public service trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### LEVERAGE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintaining and improving the quality of our existing infrastructure systems was identified as one of the areas where Rapid City has the most room for improvement. Rapid City invests millions of dollars to maintain our existing infrastructure systems on an annual basis, however, as these systems age, maintaining quality across the hundreds of miles of streets, sewer, water, and stormwater lines has proven difficult. As the community continues to grow, land use policies that prioritize infill development will increase property and sales tax revenue that can be used to improve and prolong the lifespan of our existing infrastructure systems.

It is essential that the Future Land Use Plan be updated and implemented interdepartmentally to ensure that the density and timing of new development aligns with existing and projected capacities identified within our infrastructure master plans. Maintenance of our existing infrastructure systems should take priority over extension of new services. Results from the Urban3 Economic Analysis will be used to help further guide strategies to get the highest rate of return on our existing infrastructure systems.

### IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

As the demands on our infrastructure systems continue to grow, Rapid City will need to increase the efficiency of its day-to-day operations through use of new technology and centralization of services. Incorporation of new technologies such as online permitting services will provide easier interdepartmental collaboration when reviewing new development requests and can also support strategic capital improvement investments that will increase efficiency and prolong the lifespan of essential infrastructure systems. Investments in centralized services can create opportunities to reduce inefficiencies, decrease long-term spending, and better protect the City's essential infrastructure maintenance equipment. Additionally, as remote work and online education become more common, closing service gaps and improving broadband infrastructure will be vital to supporting the community, especially in City-owned buildings and facilities such as City Hall and the Library. Improving fiber optic connectivity among City buildings highlights an opportunity to improve overall operational efficiency and reliability of City services.

### EXPAND EMERGENCY SERVICES

While community safety was identified as an existing strength in Rapid City, emergency services have struggled to keep pace with the rate of outward expansion of the City's urban footprint. Rapid City has an opportunity to address quality of

services challenges by strategically investing in emergency service infrastructure in areas where emergency responsiveness is currently constrained as identified in Figure 16. Additionally, Rapid City should ensure development does not occur in hazard prone areas that create safety concerns and undermine the effectiveness of our emergency services.

### INCREASE ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Community engagement identified increased access to supportive services and healthcare resources as a top priority. While the City does not directly provide many of these services, there is an opportunity to support access to these essential services through development of a coordinated, citywide strategy that engages all relevant city departments, local supportive service and healthcare providers, and housing experts. This will need to be coupled with continued community outreach and integration of urban design strategies that proactively address the underlying causes of these challenges and increase access to supportive services.

*“Encouraging unity and common ground makes for a more positive future.”*





## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the following goals, policies, and actions will enable Rapid City to provide high quality infrastructure, efficient city services, and improve public health and safety of residents as the community continues to grow.*

### **GOAL 1. Provide High-Quality Public Services and Facilities.**

---

**Policy 1.1. Leverage Existing Infrastructure - Improve the financial efficiency and prolong the lifespan of infrastructure investments by prioritizing investment in and leverage the use of existing infrastructure systems.**

---

**Action 1.1.1.** Increase the rate of return on existing infrastructure systems by prioritizing new infill development.

**Action 1.1.2.** Ensure adequate infrastructure and emergency services funding exists when new development occurs.

**Action 1.1.3.** Revise the Future Land Use Plan to support existing and projected infrastructure capacities identified in long-range infrastructure master plans.

---

**Policy 1.2. Improve Operational Efficiency - Provide accessible and high-quality services to the general public through general governmental processes.**

---

**Action 1.2.1.** Invest in modern software and automation tools to streamline city processes to ensure that information is more accessible to the general public.

**Action 1.2.2.** Regularly assess staffing levels and technology investments to ensure the City can provide reliable, timely, and efficient services considering population growth and development patterns across the City.

**Action 1.1.4.** Work with local water and sewer districts to consolidate services where feasible to improve operational efficiency and consistency in service delivery.

**Action 1.1.5.** Explore opportunities to extend the lifespan of the landfill through investments in sustainable waste management technologies and implementation of collaborative community waste reduction strategies.

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**Action 1.2.3.** Invest in a comprehensive fleet maintenance facility that centralizes repairs and indoor storage space of infrastructure maintenance equipment.

**Action 1.2.4.** Develop a centralized purchasing system that ensures equitable distribution of new vehicles across city departments.

**Action 1.2.5.** Expand digital payment options for customer transactions within city departments to increase efficiency of services.

**Action 1.2.6.** Improve the efficiency of capital improvement planning by aligning infrastructure investment priorities with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Action 1.2.7.** Leverage the City's energy tracking software to identify energy efficiency improvements that increase cost-savings at City-owned facilities.

---

**Policy 1.3. Enhance Emergency Services - Prioritize the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency services through strategic location of emergency infrastructure, proactive community outreach, and urban design strategies that enhance community safety.**

---

**Action 1.3.1.** Utilize financial tools to develop new public safety infrastructure in areas where the density and mixes of uses will be highest to ensure emergency services keep pace with growth and are located in close proximity to emergency medical care facilities. Priority should be given to areas where quality of service is lowest as identified in Figure 16.

**Action 1.3.2.** Avoid new development in hazard prone areas that undermines the effectiveness of emergency services.

**Action 1.3.3.** Complete an all-hazards threat and risk assessment to identify gaps in emergency preparedness and guide investments in specialized personnel, training, and equipment.

**Action 1.2.8.** Continue to maintain existing Infrastructure Master Plans and develop new plans where needed to ensure efficient management and planning of infrastructure systems.

**Action 1.2.9.** Integrate updates to the Infrastructure Design Criteria Manual that increase the lifespan of the City's infrastructure systems.

**Action 1.2.10.** Invest in fiber optic connectivity among all City buildings to improve reliability of City services.

---

**Action 1.3.4.** Support ongoing community education, training, and preparedness for different types of emergencies including natural and human-caused disasters. This includes community-wide drills and emergency management plans, as well as individual preparedness plans and emergency supplies.

**Action 1.3.5.** Prioritize proactive community outreach to prevent crime and connect individuals to local services that address underlying quality-of-life issues.

**Action 1.3.6.** Research and implement urban design standards that proactively enhance community safety.

# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS



**Policy 1.4. Increase Access to Supportive Services - Improve community health outcomes by increasing access to supportive services through strategic partnerships and investments.**

**Action 1.4.1.** Develop initiatives that expand access to essential services, housing, food security, healthcare, and childcare through shared funding, facilities, and outreach.

**Action 1.4.2.** Leverage partnerships to develop a coordinated, citywide strategy that engages all relevant city departments, local supportive service providers, and healthcare experts to address the underlying causes of persistent community quality-of-life and safety issues.

**Action 1.4.3.** Prioritize Rapid City Public Library investments that expand accessibility to essential resources and build awareness of programming.



# CHAPTER 7:

## RECREATION, OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES



### Relationship to Community Values

*The connection between parks, natural environment, and quality of life is not incidental; it is essential. This brings into focus the relationship between these assets and the core values that define Rapid City's identity.*

#### Accountability

The Parks and Recreation Department is an essential service provider facilitating open space experiences and programs that are crucial for establishing and maintaining public trust, accountability for high quality services, and building a positive relationship with the residents and visitors.

#### Opportunity

An interconnected network of parks, open space, and trails is a powerful tool for generating economic opportunity and a strong catalyst for stimulating private investment and outdoor recreation-centered tourism while providing first time employment opportunities for youth and young adults.

#### Service

Rapid City's parks, recreation, open space, and trails are provided in service to the community to improve quality of life, social cohesion, economic vitality, and landscape protection.

#### Creativity

Parks, open space, and recreation programming nurture a sense of discovery and creativity through the provision of nature exploration, summer camps, and recreation classes. Increasing access to recreation enhances opportunities for creative expression and reflection, and public spaces allow residents and visitors to share a collective experience.

#### Stewardship

Open space and trail corridors present opportunities for managing stormwater, improving water quality, enhancing wildlife habitat, and inhibiting the spread of fires, as well as environmental restoration such as stream restoration, wetland stabilization, flood mitigation, and landscape conservation.

#### Livability

Parks, trails, and open spaces are vital to a city's livability. They offer places for residents to relax, connect, and be active. Well-designed and accessible recreation areas make neighborhoods more vibrant and support a high quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.



## Introduction

Parks, recreation, open space, and natural resources are central to Rapid City's identity and future. Framed by the Black Hills, Rapid Creek, and the rolling prairie, the City offers unique access to landscapes that support wellness, exploration, and economic vitality. This connection to nature has deep roots. Following the devastating 1972 flood, the community chose to preserve the Rapid Creek corridor, transforming tragedy into a long-term vision for resilience, safety, and shared public space.

Today, that legacy continues through sustained investment in parks and greenways. While Rapid City manages a significant amount of parkland throughout the city, nearly half of its neighborhoods lack access to a park within a 20-minute walk. Expanding access is not just a planning goal, it is an opportunity to strengthen communities, promote active lifestyles, and enhance livability for all residents. The goals, policies, and actions included at the end of this chapter are reflective of existing conditions analysis and community feedback and provide a framework for improving access to parks and protecting our natural environment as the community grows for future generations.

## Community Snapshot

### EXISTING AMENITIES

Within city limits, the Parks and Recreation Department maintains 1,650 acres of parkland, ranging from small neighborhood parks such as Scott Mallow Park (1.5 acres) to large regional spaces such as Sioux Park (230 acres). Much of this infrastructure is concentrated in the central core and along the Rapid Creek corridor, where the City's visionary response to the 1972

flood transformed flood-prone areas into a greenway system. This includes a 10-mile bike path that not only supports recreation but also enhances stormwater management and environmental resilience. Additionally, the City operates and maintains the Roosevelt Swim Center, Roosevelt Park Ice Arena, Mountain View Cemetery, two golf courses, sports fields, play equipment, and other recreational amenities located within parks throughout the community.

Despite these strengths, access to parks and natural spaces remains unevenly distributed. Nearly half of Rapid City's neighborhoods lack a park within a 20-minute walk, with limited recreational infrastructure in the northern, eastern, and southern extents of the City as illustrated in Figure 17. This disparity is compounded by the absence of regulatory tools that require open space dedication in new development, making policy and zoning updates essential to closing access gaps.

Natural resource management also reflects a mix of progress and challenges. Rapid City has met federal air quality standards since 2006, despite issues related to dust and temperature inversions. However, the City's Air Quality Code is outdated and warrants revision to address emerging environmental and health concerns. Similarly, while floodplain management has improved water resources health and public safety, urban expansion has increased stormwater runoff, posing risks to water quality. These challenges present opportunities for innovative solutions that slow, filter, and absorb runoff through green infrastructure and thoughtful land use planning.



Dinosaur Park

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## Relationship to Land Use

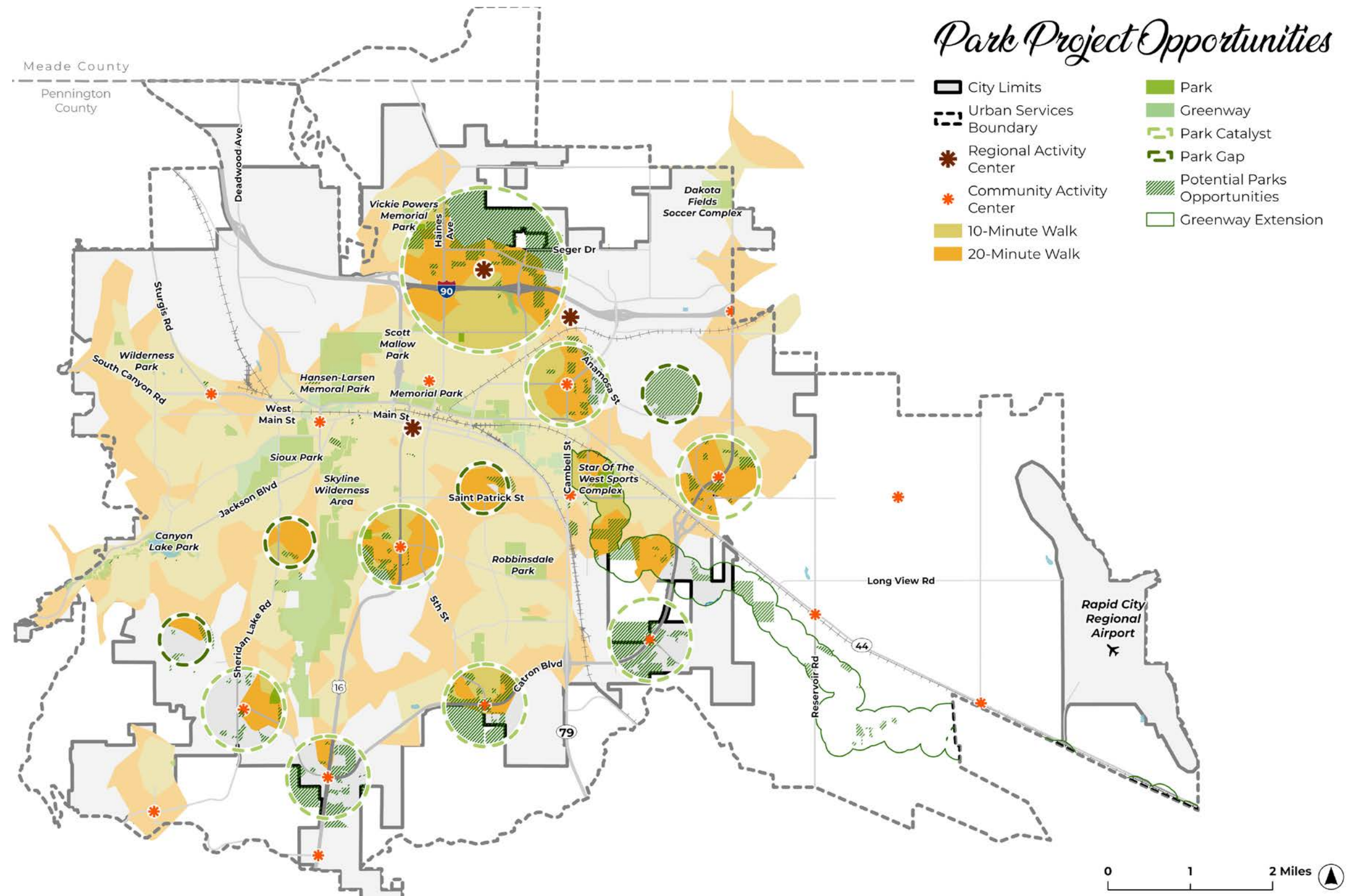
Rapid City's park system is strongest in the central core and along Rapid Creek, but significant gaps remain in other areas, particularly in the northeast and southwest neighborhoods. Nearly half of residential areas within the City lack a park within a 20-minute walk, underscoring the need for targeted investment, updated land use policies, and zoning strategies that activate areas around existing parks.

The accompanying map highlights priority areas for expansion: dark green circles identify established neighborhoods in need of park access, while light green circles identify future activity centers, where new parks can support walkable, mixed-use development. Opportunities also exist to extend the Rapid Creek greenway, building on its success as a recreational and ecological corridor.

Improving park access is part of a broader strategy to enhance environmental resilience and protect natural resources. Coordinated efforts to expand green infrastructure, modernize environmental codes, and secure open space through development are essential steps towards a healthier, more livable Rapid City.

Updates to the Future Land Use Plan should include land use strategies that prioritize livability, environmental resilience, and equitable access to parks and natural resources. As the City grows, integrating green space and updating policies to protect air and water quality are essential to maintaining a high quality of life. The Rapid City Parks and Recreation Department is currently developing a new master plan which will serve as an important tool to provide additional guidance on specific parks and recreation improvements and should be used to guide park development opportunities identified within this Plan.

Figure 17. Park Project Opportunities





# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key recreation, open space, and natural resource trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## ENHANCE RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

### PROTECT NATURAL AND OPEN SPACE

Natural resource protection and open space conservation emerged as a top priority throughout the public engagement process. Residents consistently emphasized the importance of preserving Rapid City's scenic landscapes, protecting wildlife habitats, and ensuring that future development respects and enhances the city's natural character. Community members expressed strong support for sustainable land management practices, including the use of native vegetation, climate-resilient landscaping, and strategies that improve air and water quality. There was also widespread interest in maintaining access to natural areas for passive recreation, safeguarding floodplains, and expanding green infrastructure to support long-term environmental health and resilience.

### IMPROVE PARK ACCESSIBILITY AND FUNCTIONALITY

Equitable access to parks and recreation was a central theme throughout the public engagement process. Residents across Rapid City expressed concern about the uneven distribution of parks and trails, particularly in neighborhoods that lack walkable access to green space. Participants emphasized the need for more inclusive planning that ensures all residents can enjoy the benefits of nature and recreation. Suggestions included acquiring land in underserved areas, integrating parks into new developments, and improving trail

connectivity. Community members also supported creative approaches such as using city-owned utility corridors and drainage areas for pocket parks and trail extensions, as well as expanding programs like community gardens to promote wellness and food access.

### IMPROVE EXISTING FACILITIES

Improving the quality and inclusivity of existing parks and recreation facilities was consistently identified as a top priority during public outreach. Residents voiced strong support for maintaining and upgrading current amenities to better serve the needs of a growing and diverse population. Key themes included enhancing safety features, ensuring accessibility for people of all abilities, and offering programming that reflects the interests and cultures of the community. Participants also highlighted the importance of partnerships—with schools, local organizations, and regional entities—to expand services and share resources. There was a clear call for thoughtful investment in facilities and programs that promote health, inclusion, and community connection, while ensuring that parks remain welcoming and adaptable spaces for all.



Canyon Lake Park



Memorial Park

Photos by: Visit Rapid City



## Implementation

*Decision-making in alignment with the following goals, actions, and policies will ensure that Rapid City protects its natural resources, expands equitable access to parks and recreation, and improves existing facilities in ways that reflect the top priorities of the community and support a healthier, more resilient, and inclusive future.*

### **GOAL 1. Enhance Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources.**

**Policy 1.1. Protect Natural and Open Spaces - Conserve and restore Rapid City's natural areas by managing open space, enhancing habitat, and integrating sustainable practices across all park lands.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Protect, maintain, and restore natural habitats across City-managed lands including parks, open space, recreation areas, golf courses, and other properties.

**Action 1.1.2.** Promote naturally resilient landscapes and prioritize native, drought-resistant plant species through updates to the City's landscaping code.

**Action 1.1.3.** Incentivize increased tree canopy to provide shade and improve air quality across parks and City properties.

**Action 1.1.4.** Encourage low-impact development practices that reduce water and energy use, protect air and water quality, and minimize impacts on natural features and wildlife.

**Action 1.1.5.** Minimize impervious surfaces to reduce runoff and increase water infiltration.

**Action 1.1.6.** Preserve and enhance wetlands and riparian zones to mitigate flood impacts.

**Action 1.1.7.** Continue acquiring park and open space land along Rapid Creek to prevent development, improve water access, and enhance floodplain function.

**Action 1.1.8.** Develop a comprehensive management strategy to improve the health of Rapid Creek.

**Action 1.1.9.** Partner with Indigenous communities and Tribal governments to co-manage City-owned open space and park land in a way that supports cultural and ecological stewardship.

**Policy 1.2. Improve Park Accessibility and Functionality - Expand access to parks, trails, and recreation in underserved and growing neighborhoods by prioritizing land acquisition, integrating green space into new developments, and leveraging public-private partnerships. Ensure all residents live within walking distance of nature and recreation opportunities.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Revise the City's Future Land Use Plan, zoning, and subdivision regulations to support mixed-use development, higher residential density, and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

**Action 1.2.2.** Prioritize parkland acquisition and new amenities in areas that are more than a 20-minute walk to these amenities.

**Action 1.2.3.** Require green space and neighborhood parks in new developments or provide payment in lieu.

**Action 1.2.4.** Leverage City lands managed by other departments (e.g., utility easements, drainage areas) to create access to nature and pocket parks.

**Action 1.2.5.** Prioritize connections to greenways, open space, and trails in underserved areas, especially where "missing links" can be addressed.

**Action 1.2.6.** Coordinate greenway and trail development with stormwater infrastructure planning.

**Action 1.2.7.** Expand the City's community garden program and explore use of the City's greenhouse facility to provide access to fresh produce and healthy foods in partnership with community agriculture programs.

*"It's crucial that we have green space in all parts of our City."*

# GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS



**Policy 1.3. Improve Existing Facilities - Invest in the maintenance, safety, accessibility, and programming of existing parks and recreation facilities to meet evolving community needs and promote health and inclusion.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Maintain and reinvest in the existing park, recreation, and trail system, guided by an asset management plan to track lifecycle replacement needs.

**Action 1.3.2.** Enhance safety in underserved neighborhoods with features like heat protection, lighting, and inclusive infrastructure.

**Action 1.3.3.** Promote safety and trail etiquette through multimedia outreach campaigns and coordination with law enforcement and public safety partners.

**Action 1.3.4.** Construct new facilities and amenities based on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and align investments with neighborhood preferences through partnerships with local recreation groups.

**Action 1.3.5.** Continue or initiate partnerships with schools, private, and regional partners to share or develop facilities.

**Action 1.3.6.** Align recreation programs with community needs, especially for residents with disabilities and lower-income communities.

**Action 1.3.7.** Activate parks with flexible programming that reflects community diversity.

**Action 1.3.8.** Expand adaptive and therapeutic recreation programs and renovate playgrounds for ADA compliance and universal design.

**Action 1.3.9.** Ensure all new paved trails are accessible using inclusive design standards.

*"I want to see more parks with rec programs and swim lessons."*





# CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION



## Relationship to Community Values

Rapid City’s transportation investments are shaped by community-defined values that guide decisions to support a safe, connected, and inclusive transportation system for the community’s growing population. These values are reflected in the goals, policies, and actions of this chapter.

### Accountability

Transparent decision making, grounded in public input and data (such as crash rates and congestion) is essential to building trust and ensuring transportation improvements meet community needs.

### Creativity

As travel behaviors evolve, innovative design, technology, and service delivery is essential to maintaining a safe, reliable, adaptable, and user-friendly transportation system.

### Opportunity

A well-connected transportation system expands access to jobs, education, healthcare, and recreation. Strategic partnerships and incentives can reduce vehicle dependence, while parking reforms and investments in transit and active transportation can unlock developable land and support vibrant, walkable areas. The Strategic Revolving Growth Fund presents a key opportunity to expand the transportation network and activate economic development in emerging development areas.

### Stewardship

Sustained maintenance of the City’s transportation system ensures long-term reliability and safety, supporting current and future transportation users.

### Livability

High-quality transportation infrastructure contributes to a high quality of life. Well-designed, ADA-accessible transportation networks enhance community vibrancy by connecting spaces where people want to be.

### Service

Reliable, well-maintained transportation infrastructure is a core public service that keeps people and goods moving safely and efficiently every day.





## Introduction

Transportation is the backbone of an accessible, connected, and economically vibrant Rapid City. Whether traveling by car, bike, mobility device, foot, or bus, residents and visitors rely on a transportation network that supports daily mobility and access to jobs, services, and recreation.

As Rapid City continues to grow, thoughtful planning is essential to ensure that transportation infrastructure keeps pace with development and remains safe, accessible, and responsive to community needs. Like many peer communities in the region, Rapid City faces the dual challenge of maintaining aging infrastructure while preparing for future demand. Growth at the city limits has increased vehicle travel, while many established neighborhoods still lack safe, connected multimodal networks, limiting access for those who rely on mobility devices, transit, or non-motorized forms of transportation.

Transportation planning opportunities identified in this chapter were shaped by existing conditions, public input, and the need for a safe, efficient, and accessible multimodal transportation system. The goals, policies, and actions at the end of the chapter provide a framework for improving connectivity, enhancing safety, and guiding future investments in Rapid City's transportation network.

## Community Snapshot

### NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

According to the 2020 Rapid City Metropolitan Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update, there are over 75 miles of bicycle facilities and over 120 miles of sidewalks within the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundaries. The Leonard "Swanny" Swanson Memorial Pathway spans approximately six miles along Rapid Creek, linking neighborhoods and key destinations between the fish hatchery on Jackson Boulevard to the Pennington County Fairgrounds. While this pathway supports active transportation Downtown, infrastructure becomes less connected farther from the city center.

The 2020 citywide bicycle and pedestrian demand and level of service analysis found that most major roads scored poorly (i.e., these roads scored a 3 or 4 using the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress methodology), indicating a low level of comfort for pedestrian and cyclist use. West Rapid City, specifically the area surrounding Sioux San Drive, showed high demand but limited service for active transportation (i.e., "human-powered" transportation such as walking and cycling), suggesting a priority area for investment.

## TRANSIT

Transit service in Rapid City is provided by Rapid Transit who operates six fixed-routes and a door-to-door Dial-A-Ride service for people with disabilities Monday through Saturday. The six fixed routes run on a synchronized one-hour "pulse" system to and from the Milo Barber Transportation Center. Ridership grew over 25% from 2014 to 2019, with the Borglum and Roosevelt routes seeing the highest daily use.

The 2022 Transit Development Plan found that the current transportation network generally serves high-density and transit-supportive populations (such as zero-vehicle households, those with disabilities, low-income households, seniors, youth, and single-parent households) well, however, a notable service gap was identified along the Highway 16 corridor.

## ROADWAY PERFORMANCE

Roadway performance is measured by Level of Service (LOS) and travel reliability. LOS is assigned using a letter grade system, with lower grades indicating greater congestion. Roads at LOS D, E, and F are generally considered congested. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) indicates that most roads within the City operate at LOS B or better, with congestion concentrated in northeast Rapid City and west of Downtown. Travel reliability is high across the Black Hills region, with an analysis conducted for the MTP indicating that 80 to 100% of personal miles traveled on non-Interstate National Highway System routes deemed reliable. Interstate travel was found nearly always reliable, with seasonal fluctuations due to weather, construction, and crashes.

## ROADWAY SAFETY

The City experiences over 400 severe crashes annually. While crash rates had been consistently declining prior to 2020, they rose by over 20% between 2020 and 2021. High-risk areas include major intersections along arterial corridors, where conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and those using mobility devices are most common.

## COMMUTER TRENDS

Rapid City has strong commuter inflow and outflows. As of 2021, approximately 24,500 people work in the City but live elsewhere, while approximately 8,100 people live in the City but work elsewhere. Most workers and residents are concentrated in Rapid City, Rapid Valley, Box Elder, and Black Hawk.

*"Make downtown more bike friendly with dedicated bike lanes."*

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

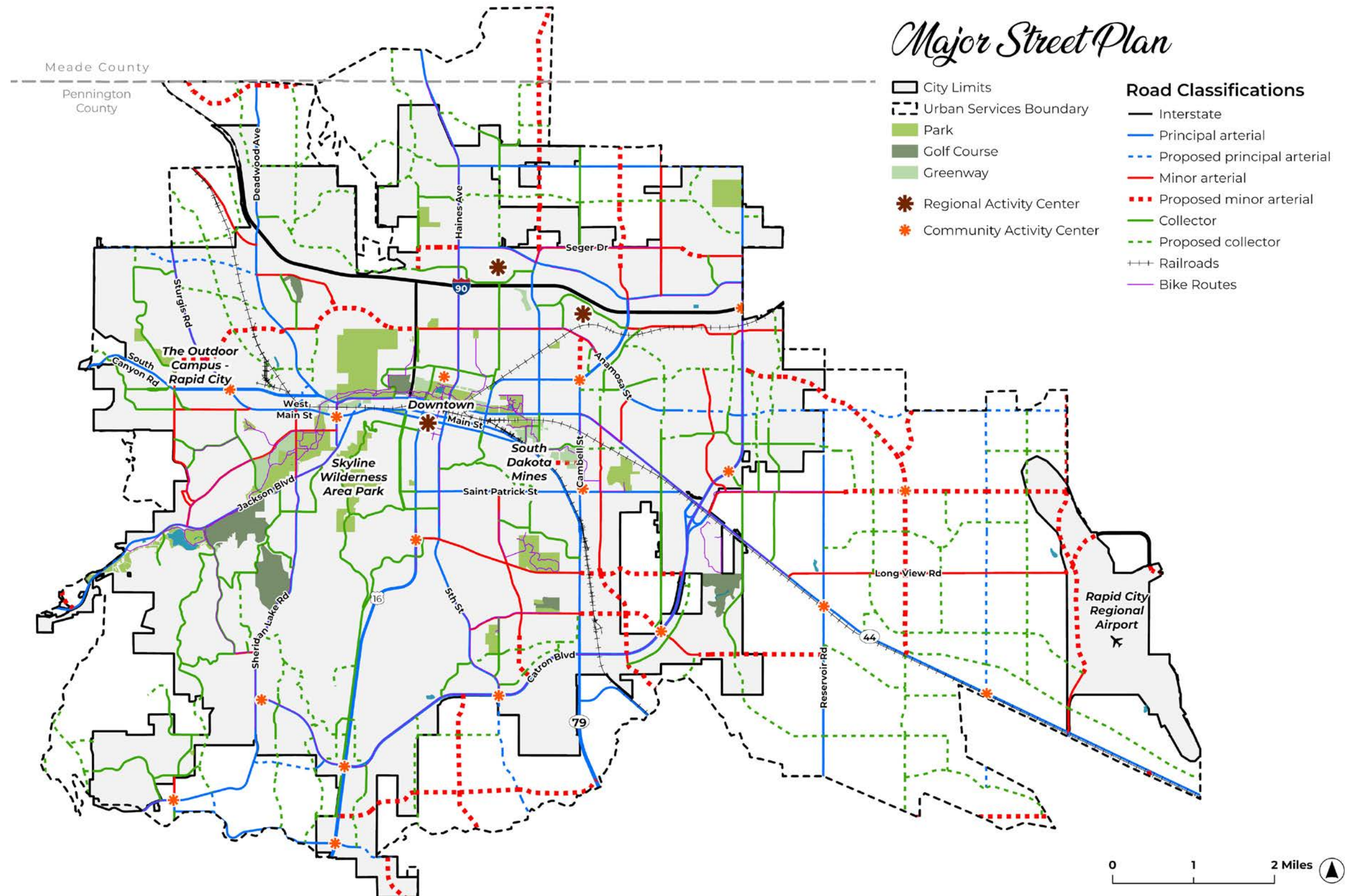


## MAJOR STREET PLAN

Rapid City has a robust transportation network that connects neighborhoods, local destinations, and the broader Black Hills region. Its roadways, trails, transit, and regional airport systems support the movement of people and goods, driving both economic activity and community well-being. While vehicular travel needs are well served in Rapid City today, alternative forms of transportation including transit and non-motorized transportation modes require additional investment and attention.

Rapid City's Major Street Plan (MSP) classifications and existing and proposed transportation connections are illustrated in the map on the right. Rapid City recently updated its MSP to include essential connections along East Anamosa Street and Healing Way which are currently disconnected and place additional strain upon the surrounding street network. The City should explore use of the Strategic Growth Revolving Funds to construct these connections in a more timely manner to open new economic opportunity along these corridors and address safety concerns caused by additional strain on the surrounding street network.

Figure 18. Major Street Plan




# EXISTING CONDITIONS




## Relationship to Land Use

Rapid City has invested significantly in multimodal transportation, especially in areas near the city core, but gaps remain in accessible, safe, and convenient travel across the community for all users. Additionally, overreliance on personal automobiles has placed additional demand for parking facilities which takes up valuable developable land throughout the City. By prioritizing investment in a multimodal transportation network, the City has an opportunity to improve roadway safety for all roadway users, decrease the amount of land necessary for parking, and increase the efficiency of the existing transportation system. The map on this page highlights priority areas for multimodal infrastructure improvement.

 Orange Hatching: Indicates where expanded transit, bike lanes, or shared use paths could have high impact.

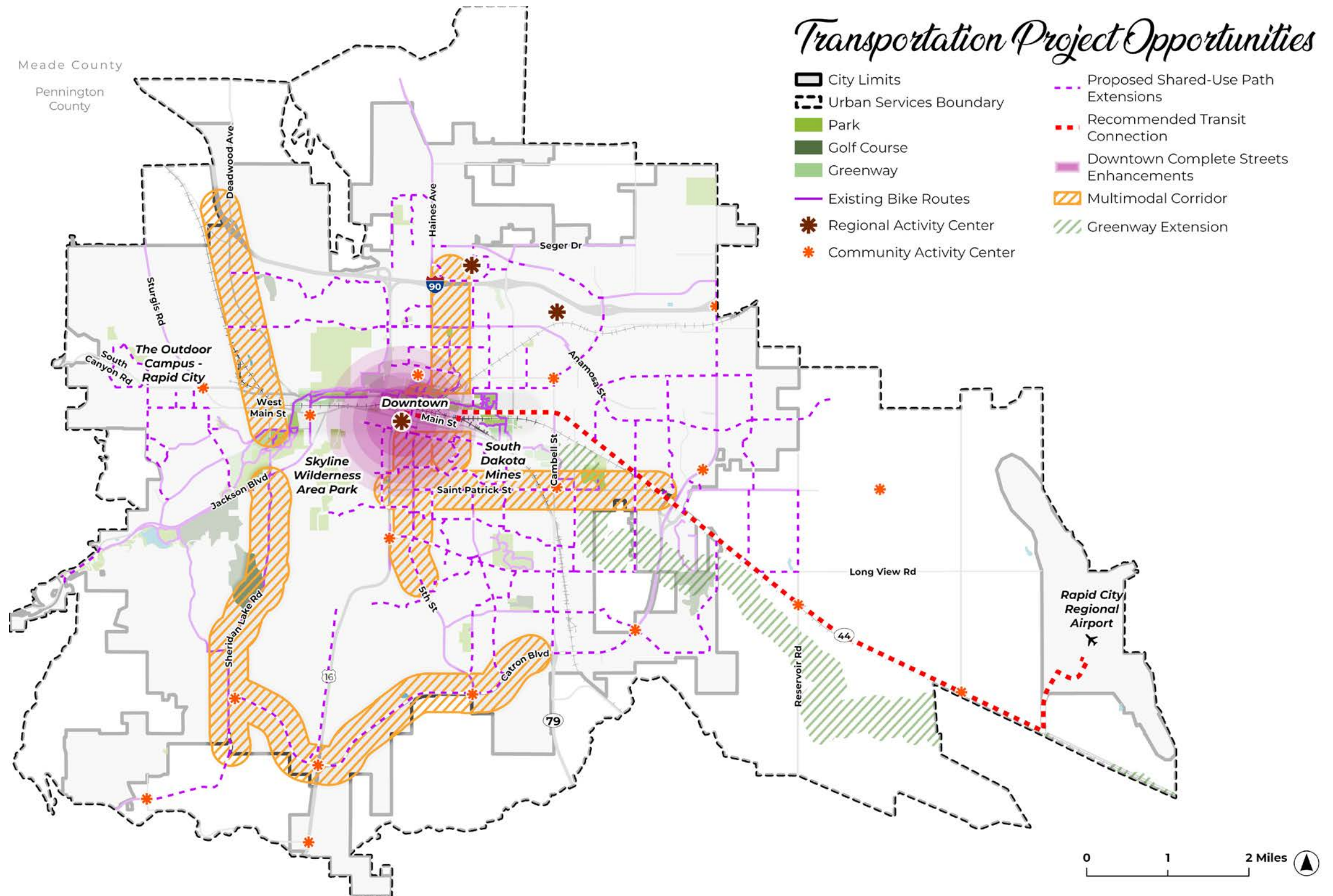
 The Pink Area: Shows where multimodal enhancements could support local businesses and improve livability.

 Green Hatching: Marks opportunities to extend the Leonard "Swanny" Swanson Memorial Pathway east and west, better connecting neighborhoods on either side of downtown.

 Purple Hatching: Identifies proposed shared-use path extensions aimed at improving walkability and bikeability between neighborhoods, parks, activity centers, and the broader trail network.

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the SS4A Action Plan offer detailed recommendations to improve the City's multimodal transportation network and implementing these recommendations in key areas shown on the map included in this section offer an opportunity to strengthen Rapid City's transportation network.

Figure 19. Transportation Project Opportunities



# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key transportation trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## **DEVELOP A SAFE AND CONNECTED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK.**

### **PRIORITIZE MULTIMODAL INVESTMENTS**

Expanding transportation options beyond personal vehicles was one of the most frequently cited priorities during public engagement. Residents highlighted the need for better public transit, safer walking and biking infrastructure, and improved connections between neighborhoods and key destinations. These investments are especially critical for individuals who do not drive, including youth, seniors, and those with limited income. A multimodal approach also helps reduce traffic congestion, lower infrastructure maintenance costs, and support a more sustainable and resilient transportation system. Community members also encouraged regional coordination and partnerships to improve transit access for those commuting into Rapid City for work or services.

### **UTILIZE TRANSPORTATION AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL**

Transportation infrastructure plays a vital role in shaping economic opportunity and land use patterns. Community feedback emphasized the importance of aligning transportation investments with future growth areas, employment centers, and mixed-use development. Strategic improvements such as new roadway connections, enhanced transit

access, and reduced reliance on parking can unlock development potential in underutilized areas and support more vibrant, walkable neighborhoods. Residents also supported efforts to improve access to major destinations like the airport, medical facilities, and retail centers, recognizing that transportation is a key driver of economic inclusion and regional competitiveness.

### **IMPROVE ROADWAY SAFETY FOR ALL USERS**

Safety concerns were consistently raised throughout the public engagement process, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists, and individuals with disabilities. Residents called for street designs that slow traffic, improve visibility, and create safer crossings. There was strong support for complete streets principles, including narrower lanes, street trees, ADA-compliant sidewalks, and dedicated bike infrastructure. Participants also emphasized the need for proactive planning and annual collaboration with accessibility advocates to ensure that investments reflect current needs and emerging safety priorities. A safer transportation system benefits everyone and is essential to building a more inclusive and livable city.







## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the following goals, policies, and actions will create a safer, more connected, and inclusive transportation system that reflects community priorities, supports economic growth, and expands mobility options for all residents.*

### GOAL 1. Develop a Safe and Connected Multimodal Transportation Network.

**Policy 1.1. Prioritize Multimodal Investments - Expand and improve multimodal transportation options to ensure safe, reliable, and equitable access for all users.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Pursue federal, state, and regional grants and public-private partnerships to fund multimodal improvements and transit expansion.

**Action 1.1.2.** Implement route modifications, service hour extensions, and system expansion as recommended in the Transit Development Plan.

**Action 1.1.3.** Maintain and upgrade the public transit fleet, stops, and facilities, prioritizing safety and accessibility for elderly and disabled users.

**Action 1.1.4.** Conduct a system-wide inventory of transit infrastructure to identify and prioritize needed improvements.

**Action 1.1.5.** Improve first-mile and last-mile connections by integrating transit with sidewalks, trails, and park-and-ride facilities.

**Action 1.1.6.** Develop corridor plans with detailed multimodal enhancements beyond the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

**Action 1.1.7.** Coordinate with regional transit providers to improve transit connectivity and align with the South Dakota Department of Transportation's (SDDOT) Coordinated Transit Plan.

**Policy 1.2. Utilize Transportation as an Economic Development Tool - Leverage transportation investments to support economic growth, reduce land used for parking, and improve access to key destinations.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Study transit options connecting downtown, the airport, and major employment/activity centers.

**Action 1.2.2.** Promote multimodal travel through tourism campaigns and community events.

**Action 1.2.3.** Create an annual review and rating system for the City Council to identify the use of the Strategic Growth Revolving Funds to build key roadway connections such as Healing Way and East Anamosa Street.

**Action 1.2.4.** Integrate land use and transportation planning to reduce parking demand and support infill development.

**Action 1.2.5.** Partner with major employers to incentivize transit use and co-invest in transportation improvements.

**Action 1.2.6.** Protect and support the operation of freight infrastructure including rail, truck routes, and the airport.

**Policy 1.3. Improve Roadway Safety for all Users - Design and maintain streets that prioritize safety, accessibility, and comfort for all users, regardless of age or ability.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Update roadway design standards to reflect Safe Streets for All recommendations and complete streets principles.

**Action 1.3.2.** Revise the ADA Transition Plan and annually collaborate with the Disability Awareness and Accessibility Committee to prioritize improvements.

**Action 1.3.3.** Implement access management and corridor plans to reduce crash risks, especially on arterial roads.

**Action 1.3.4.** Allow street trees in roadway design to provide shade and improve comfort for non-motorized users.

**Action 1.3.5.** Explore grade-separated crossings of highways and rail lines to improve safety and connectivity.

**Action 1.3.6.** Develop a Bicycle Wayfinding Plan to improve navigation and integration of on- and off-street bike networks.

**Action 1.3.7.** Coordinate with other cities and counties in the region to implement projects identified in the SDDOT's Active Transportation Plan, once adopted.

*"The bike path is so great! I would love to see off shoots that make it more accessible to/from neighborhoods, grocery stores, downtown."*



# CHAPTER 9: ARTS AND CULTURE



## Relationship to Community Values

Rapid City's dedication to arts and culture is guided by the following community-defined core values. These values reinforce the connection between arts, culture, and the community's identity, enriching the quality of life for future generations.

### Accountability

Public support and investment in arts and cultural programming that reflects the region's collective history, from Indigenous heritage to later settlement, can amplify local voices and connect people to our community.

### Opportunity

Arts and culture drive economic growth, personal expression, and recognition of Rapid City's rich heritage. A thriving creative economy supports local artists, attracts creative professionals and tourists, and expands entertainment and economic opportunities.

### Service

Cultural programming, public art, and historic preservation foster the community's sense of place and well-being, helping residents and visitors connect with the area's history, traditions, and creative talent.

### Creativity

Creative expression enriches the built environment and energizes the cultural scene. Public art, performance spaces, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings reflect and strengthen community identity and engagement.

### Stewardship

Long-term investments in arts infrastructure, historic sites, and cultural institutions ensure that future generations can experience and learn from the region's artistic and cultural heritage.

### Livability

Arts and culture enhance Rapid City's livability by strengthening community identity, encouraging civic participation, and supporting economic vitality. Cultural initiatives build on social connection, celebrate heritage, and create engaging public spaces.





## Introduction

Arts and culture are vital threads in the fabric of community life. They shape how people understand their history, connect across generations, and imagine a shared future. From murals and music to festivals and public art, cultural expression in Rapid City reflects a deep sense of place and belonging. As Rapid City grows, investing in arts and cultural infrastructure supports more than economic development, it strengthens community well-being. Public art, performance venues, and cultural events foster community pride, creative expression, and deeper engagement with Rapid City's evolving story.

Arts and culture planning opportunities identified in this chapter were developed in response to existing conditions, public input, and the demonstrated economic and social value of the arts sector. The goals, policies, and actions at the end of the chapter provide a framework for strengthening Rapid City's arts and cultural landscape and will guide future investments, programming, and development decisions.



## Community Snapshot

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Rapid City is home to two designated historic districts, West Boulevard and Downtown, along with numerous individually listed sites outside these districts that contribute to the City's cultural character and sense of place. These historic districts not only reflect the City's architectural and historical legacy but also support cultural tourism and community pride. Historic preservation plays a key role in the broader arts and culture economy, which generated \$204 million in economic activity in 2022, and supported roughly 3,296 full-time equivalent jobs across cultural institutions, hospitality, and retail sectors. As Rapid City continues to grow and change, protecting these historic resources is essential to preserving the community's unique identity. Rapid City should pursue opportunities to develop new historic districts and work with property owners to individually list properties that lie outside of these districts.

## ARTS AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS

A few of the key arts and cultural destinations located in Rapid City limits are included below.

- **Dinosaur Park:** One of Rapid City's oldest tourist attractions, dating back to the 1930s.
- **The Journey Museum and Learning Center:** Offers immersive exhibits on the region's unique geologic, Indigenous, and settler histories.
- **The Dahl Arts Center:** A hub for local artists inclusive of visual arts exhibits, arts education classes, and community events.
- **The Monument:** A large multi-purpose arena and event center that hosts concerts, performances, and exhibitions reflective of national and regional culture.
- **The Remembering the Children Memorial:** Located near the former Rapid City Indian Boarding School, the memorial honors Indigenous children who were forcibly sent to the school between 1898 and 1933, many of whom never returned home. Created through collaboration with Indigenous leaders, local government, and community advocates, it serves as a place of healing and remembrance, and a call to elevate Indigenous voices in shaping Rapid City's future.
- **Main Street Square:** Downtown Rapid City public space featuring live concerts, family-friendly festivals, winter activities, and more.

These destinations, along with public art installations, historic buildings and districts, and performance spaces, provide the foundation of Rapid City's unique arts and cultural landscape. However, their concentration in the City's central core highlights a geographic imbalance in access to these key quality of life amenities. Additionally, the community engagement process highlighted the need to better represent Indigenous history and identities in the local community. As the community grows, Rapid City has an opportunity to expand access to arts and culture beyond Downtown, improve relationships with Indigenous communities, reflect diverse stories through public art, and build a more equitable and community-rooted arts and cultural ecosystem.



Photo by: Rapid City Journal



## Relationship to Land Use

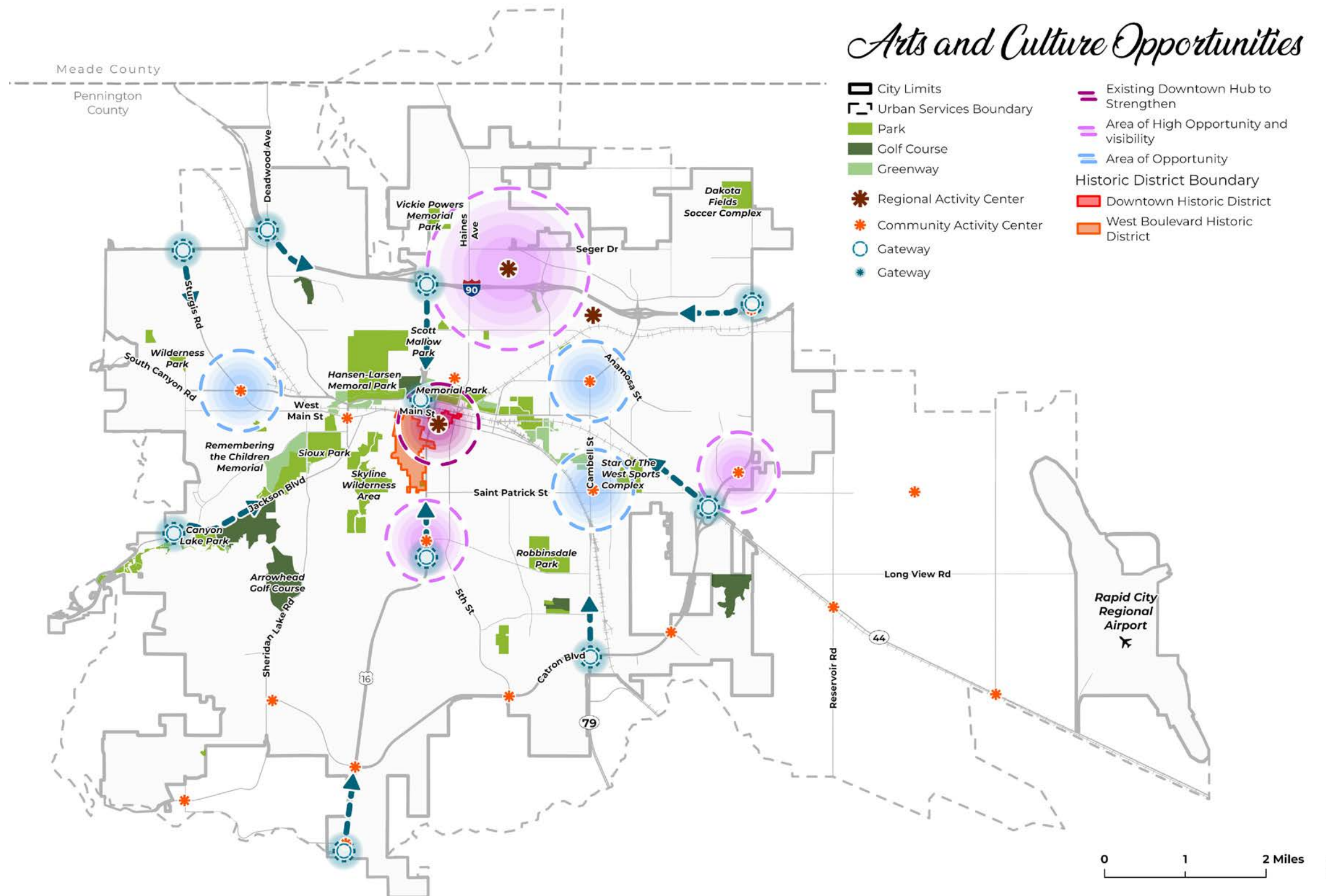
Land use plays a key role in preserving existing arts and cultural sites, shaping access to them, and identifying areas where cultural identity and representation can be improved. While Rapid City benefits from a concentration of cultural amenities in the central core, there are opportunities to expand arts and cultural infrastructure to city gateways, parks, and emerging mixed-use centers.

The map on this page highlights areas with strong potential for cultural investment.

- Dark Pink: Shows Downtown, which serves as a cultural anchor where additional investment can build upon existing assets.
- Lavender Circle: Identify high-visibility, mixed-use areas near city gateways, ideal for larger-scale cultural features.
- Light Blue Circles: Identify community and mixed-use centers well suited for smaller-scale cultural enhancements like murals, placemaking elements, and cultural programming. Integrating public art (such as sculptures, murals, artist-designed amenities, and wayfinding elements) throughout parks, gateways, and other public spaces can foster identity and connection, and a welcoming sense of place.

Strategic updates to land use and zoning codes can help distribute arts and cultural amenities more equitably across the City. One opportunity includes integrating public art into landscape requirements, allowing artistic elements to enhance streetscapes, parks, and public spaces.

Figure 20. Arts and Cultural Opportunities



# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key arts and culture trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

## FOSTER A VIBRANT, INCLUSIVE, AND RESILIENT ARTS AND CULTURAL SCENE.

### ACTIVATE ARTS AND CULTURE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

Community members consistently identified Downtown as the heart of Rapid City's cultural and creative energy and highlighted the importance of improving arts and culture throughout the community. Public engagement revealed strong support for investing in public art, cultural events, and placemaking strategies that bring vibrancy to the area and support local businesses. Residents emphasized the importance of making Downtown a destination for entertainment, heritage, and community gathering, with a mix of artistic experiences and economic activity. There was also clear interest in preserving historic districts and structures that contribute to the City's identity, and in using development incentives to integrate art into new development projects.

### STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY AND INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the engagement process, residents expressed a desire for deeper collaboration with Indigenous communities, schools, libraries, and local organizations. To ensure that Rapid City's arts and culture ecosystem reflects the full diversity of its people, participants highlighted the importance of honoring Indigenous history and culture through public art and programming, while also expanding arts education and access for youth. Community members supported efforts to protect cultural assets, strengthen museum

programming, and create inclusive events that bring people together across generations and backgrounds.

### SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISTS AND CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Public input emphasized the need to create more opportunities for local artists to showcase their work and contribute to the design of public spaces. Residents called for reducing barriers to public art, updating zoning regulations to support creative uses, and encouraging collaboration between artists, businesses, and cultural institutions. There was strong support for integrating artistic elements into parks, streetscapes, and public facilities, and for expanding funding sources through partnerships and grants. These efforts reflect a shared community vision for a more visible, accessible, and collaborative arts environment.

*"The downtown arts culture and historic feel is one of my favorite things about Rapid City. The many things to do as a family that are low to no cost is also appealing."*





## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the following goals, policies, and actions will cultivate a thriving arts and culture ecosystem that reflects community values, celebrates local heritage, supports creative expression, and expands access to inclusive cultural experiences across Rapid City.*

### **GOAL 1. Foster a Vibrant, Inclusive, and Resilient Arts and Cultural Scene.**

**Policy 1.1. Activate Arts and Culture Throughout the Community - Support public art, events, and creative placemaking to energize Rapid City and strengthen its role as a cultural and economic center.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Invest in public art, streetscape enhancements, and cultural events in Downtown and priority mixed-use areas throughout the community..

**Action 1.1.2.** Establish Downtown as the City's primary entertainment district by supporting arts, entertainment, and hospitality uses.

**Action 1.1.3.** Support and expand programming at The Monument to attract diverse audiences.

**Action 1.1.4.** Partner with local businesses and cultural organizations to promote Rapid City's arts scene.

**Action 1.1.5.** Promote historic and cultural events, amenities, and activities through coordinated marketing efforts.

**Action 1.1.6.** Support Elevate Rapid City in continuing the Downtown Façade Loan Program.

**Action 1.1.7.** Use planned development agreements to encourage integration of public art in new projects.

**Action 1.1.8.** Create a comprehensive guide for developers on public art commissioning and funding.

**Action 1.1.9.** Incorporate incentives into the zoning code to encourage inclusion of public art in private development.

**Action 1.1.10.** Protect existing historic districts and structures and explore opportunities to create new districts that preserve important aspects of the community's history and culture.

**Policy 1.2. Strengthen Community and Indigenous Partnerships - Build lasting partnerships with Indigenous communities, schools, and local organizations to expand access to arts and cultural programming.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Strengthen relationships with local Tribes and support opportunities to showcase Indigenous history, art, and culture.

**Action 1.2.2.** Co-develop public art and cultural programming with Indigenous communities.

**Action 1.2.3.** Establish creative partnerships with schools to engage youth in arts education.

**Action 1.2.4.** Coordinate with area Tribes and reservations to retain and protect cultural assets.

**Action 1.2.5.** Support museums in expanding exposure to the community's multicultural roots.

**Action 1.2.6.** Collaborate with organizations like the Journey Museum and Dahl Arts Center to deliver community arts services.

**Action 1.2.7.** Expand access to arts and culture through free public events and inclusive programming.

**Policy 1.3. Support Local Artists and Creative Collaboration - Create more opportunities for local artists to showcase their work, contribute to public spaces, and collaborate with the broader community.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Collaborate with artists to design functional public amenities such as benches, lighting, and signage.

**Action 1.3.2.** Invite artists to create site-specific works in public spaces, parks, and gateways.

**Action 1.3.3.** Encourage partnerships between artists, local businesses, and cultural institutions.

**Action 1.3.4.** Reduce regulatory barriers to installing public art on city-owned and private property.

**Action 1.3.5.** Update zoning regulations to allow greater flexibility for artistic use in various districts.

**Action 1.3.6.** Integrate artistic elements into parks, streetscapes, and public facilities.

**Action 1.3.7.** Work with partners to update the 2016 Rapid City Cultural Plan.

**Action 1.3.8.** Explore public-private partnerships, grants, and philanthropic contributions to support arts funding



# CHAPTER 10: EDUCATION



## Relationship to Community Values

*Rapid City's education policies and decisions are guided by core values that ensure accessible educational opportunities. These values are embedded in the goals, policies, and actions of this chapter, and shape how Rapid City approaches partnerships with the education sector to enhance the quality of life for all residents.*

### Accountability

In education, accountability involves upholding fairness and transparency in how learning environments are developed and maintained, ensuring intentional distribution of facilities throughout the City.

### Opportunity

The education system's investment in lifelong learning, diverse academic and vocational pathways, and preparation for meaningful participation in the workforce and civic life provides opportunity for individual and community stability and advancement.

### Service

Schools serve as community anchors and contribute to broader community well-being by acting as welcoming, multifunctional spaces that support families and neighborhoods within and beyond the traditional school day.

### Creativity

Educational spaces have the potential to inspire and connect as flexible, community-centered places that can support cultural events, artistic expression, and shared experiences, enriching the social and cultural fabric of the City.

### Stewardship

Working together with Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) and their existing planning efforts to maintain high-quality facilities, support educators and promote teacher retention, protects investments and fosters healthy, productive learning environments.

### Livability

Schools add to neighborhood livability through walkability, safety, and community connection. When located within neighborhoods, schools encourage safer streets and active transportation. Shared use of school facilities, like playgrounds and gyms, provide residents with accessible recreation and gathering spaces.



## Introduction

Education creates pathways to opportunity for people of all ages. In Rapid City, education takes many forms, including preschool programs, K–12 schools, universities, extension programs, technical colleges, workforce training, adult learning programs, and life-long learning through libraries which are the foundation for quality of life, public safety, and economic competitiveness. With the exception of the Library, the City does not operate educational facilities but plays a role in coordinating land use and infrastructure for existing and future facilities.

Educational infrastructure helps connect and bring vitality to neighborhoods as multi-functional spaces for learning, gathering, and sharing resources. Planning for community enhancements that support students of all ages, meet ADA compliance, and create comfortable learning environments helps ensure that all residents have access to the tools and spaces they need to succeed. The goals, policies, and actions included at the end of this chapter provide a framework for implementing these opportunities and reinforce educational and community resilience over time.

*"I would love some internships with community businesses that would give credits for graduation. Giving students a leg up when they graduate and ready to work."*

## Community Snapshot

### RAPID CITY AREA SCHOOLS

The Rapid City community is served by Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS), the second-largest school district in South Dakota. The district encompasses 15 elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools. Facility conditions and improvement priorities are outlined in the 2025 Rapid City School District Master Plan. The District is currently navigating shifting population trends. From 2014 to 2021, enrollment declined by 8.3%, reflecting broader demographic changes across the region; however, there is an existing need for an increase in capacity and geographic dispersion of school facilities across the district. The City works with RCAS to analyze potential sites to keep up with population concentrations.

### HIGHER EDUCATION

Rapid City also benefits from a strong higher education system and is home to the South Dakota Mines, Black Hills State University, Western Dakota Technical College, and a private college, Oglala Lakota College. South Dakota Mines is one of six accredited universities in the state of South Dakota and is recognized statewide and nationally as a leading institution in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Additionally, NDN Collective is working to develop a 66-acre parcel in north Rapid City with a mix of primary uses and including a K-12 Oceti Sakowin Community Academy, He Sapa Otipi Community Center, and over 200 new residential housing units.







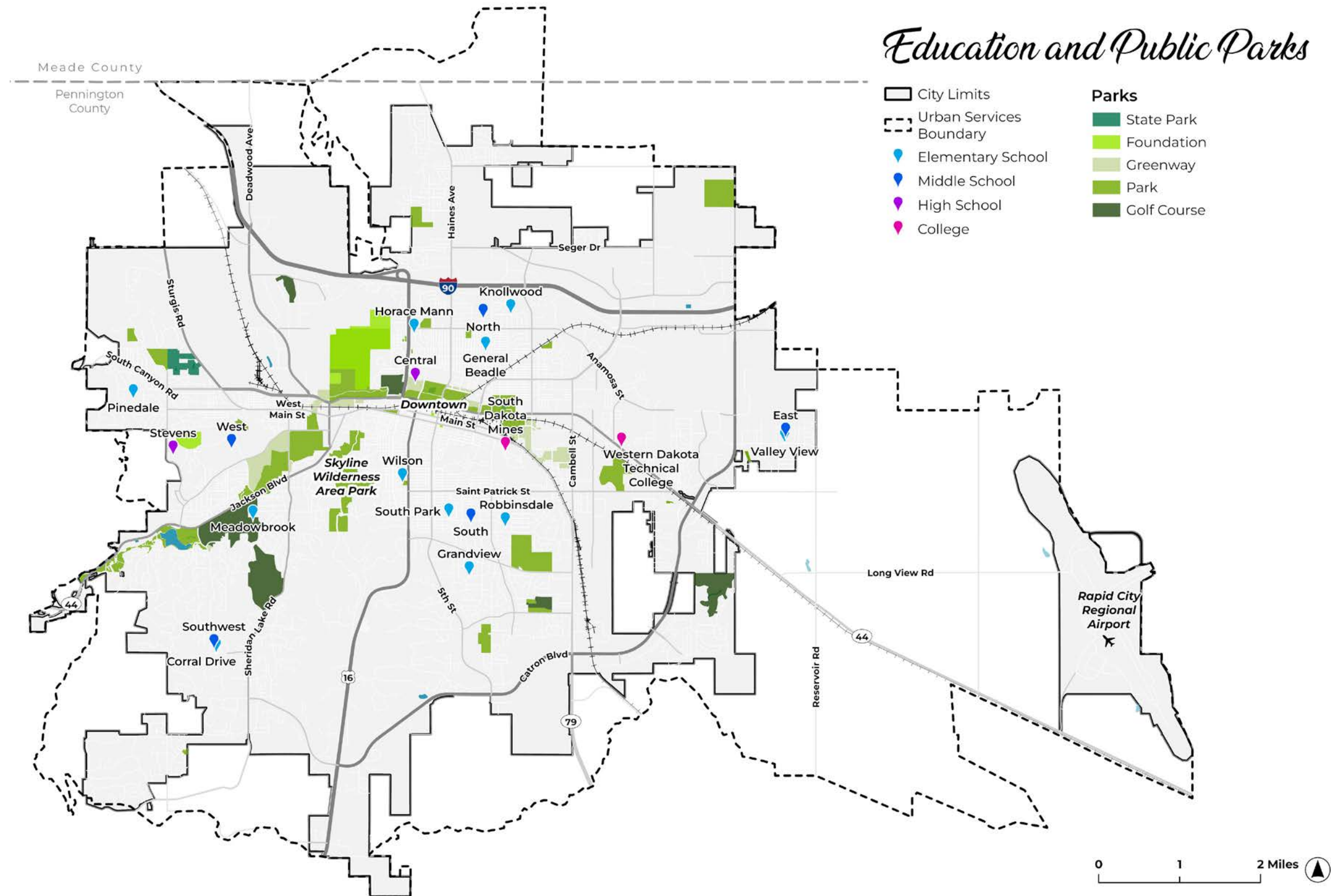
## Relationship to Land Use

Land use patterns and transportation networks play a significant role in the location and success of educational facilities as schools are an integral part of neighborhoods and thrive off of connectivity and complementary uses. Integration of education into broader city planning can help improve accessibility to facilities, create complete neighborhoods to meet resident's daily needs, and foster a vibrant economy.

The map on this page illustrates the locations of public-school facilities and institutes of higher education throughout the city and highlights their proximity to parks, underscoring how schools often function best when paired with nearby recreational spaces. This relationship demonstrates how thoughtful planning supports not only education but also access to open space, creating stronger, healthier neighborhoods.

Coordination between the City and education providers is integral to planning for future development. The City works closely with educational facility planners to review population trends and make adjustments to the Future Land Use Plan as appropriate. As areas are experiencing near-term development, the City proactively provides land use information to help inform facility planning and timing. As future facility needs are identified, the City coordinates closely with providers regarding location, development requirements, and permitting processes.

Figure 21. Education and Public Parks



# KEY TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



*Key education trends identified throughout the community engagement process highlighted what is working well in Rapid City today and identified opportunities for improvement in the future.*

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## PROMOTE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION.

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### SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Public engagement highlighted diverse educational opportunities as a strength in the community but underscored the urgent need for investment in school facilities that are outdated and impacting quality of life. The RCAS Board of Education's 2025 School District Master Plan identifies the need for new elementary schools and upgrades to existing elementary schools. As the Future Land Use Plan is updated, working with education providers to consider future school sites and complementary uses will help guide the development and expansions for all types of school facilities.

### CONNECT SCHOOLS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Ensuring that schools are safely accessible from nearby neighborhoods is essential to support current residents and attract new families to Rapid City. Infrastructure considerations to improve accessibility are necessary to eliminate safety barriers and improve routes for those that walk, bike, or roll to school. Schools play a central role in neighborhood life and have the potential to become shared-use community hubs. When designed for flexibility, school buildings can accommodate a wide range of functions such as after-school care, adult education, and civic uses. Allowing adaptable, multi-purpose facilities can expand community access and strengthen ties between neighborhoods and schools.

### FOSTER RETENTION

Public feedback highlighted strong community support for initiatives that invest in and retain educators as well as recent graduates to support a stable, effective workforce. A healthy and fair economy and attractive neighborhoods that offer high quality of life play significant roles in retention of both educators and graduates. Housing affordability and neighborhood amenities near schools play a role in attracting and retaining quality educators.

Relevant industries and competitive career opportunities are key in retaining recent graduates. Institutions such as Western Dakota Technical College and the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills are expanding access to career-focused programs that respond to workforce needs. These opportunities, ranging from vocational training and apprenticeships to GED preparation and adult education, provide flexible, job-ready options for learners and help align educational outcomes with local industry demands. Their presence strengthens the region's capacity for workforce development and economic resilience.



South Dakota Mines



## Implementation

*Decision making in alignment with the following goals, policies, and actions will strengthen Rapid City's education system by improving school planning and infrastructure, connecting schools to neighborhoods, and expanding access to learning and career pathways that support long-term community success.*

### **GOAL 1. Promote access to high-quality education.**

**Policy 1.1. Support Educational Opportunities - Coordinate land use and infrastructure planning with education providers to support the development and modernization of school facilities across Rapid City.**

**Action 1.1.1.** Collaborate with RCAS and other education providers to integrate school planning with the Future Land Use Plan.

**Action 1.1.2.** Align land use and growth policies with RCAS facility planning by identifying potential future school sites supported by infrastructure, transportation, public safety, and nearby parks and open space.

**Action 1.1.3.** Conduct a Safe Routes to School Study and implement strategic infrastructure investments to remove existing barriers to kids being able to safely walk or bike to school.

**Action 1.1.4.** Identify partnerships and resources for developing a Safe Routes to School program.

**Policy 1.2. Connect Schools and Neighborhoods - Strengthen the relationship between schools and surrounding neighborhoods by improving accessibility, encouraging reinvestment, and supporting shared-use facilities.**

**Action 1.2.1.** Support revitalization and reinvestment in areas surrounding education institutions.

**Action 1.2.2.** Identify opportunities for gateway improvements, research and tech-oriented development, public-private partnerships, and infrastructure upgrades that enhance connectivity, promote economic vitality, and create a strong sense of place at the edge of higher education campuses.

**Action 1.2.3.** Encourage flexible school design that allows facilities to serve as community hubs for after-school care, adult education, and civic uses.

**Policy 1.3. Foster Retention - Expand access to workforce-aligned education and training while supporting efforts to retain educators and graduates through partnerships, housing, and career opportunities.**

**Action 1.3.1.** Strengthen partnerships to expand access to workforce-aligned education and training.

**Action 1.3.2.** Facilitate partnerships between schools, technical colleges, the Library, and businesses to align educational offerings with workforce needs.

**Action 1.3.3.** Support housing affordability and neighborhood amenities near schools to attract and retain quality educators.

**Action 1.3.4.** Promote career pathways and job opportunities that help retain recent graduates and strengthen the local workforce.



Wilson Elementary School



# CHAPTER 11: IMPLEMENTATION



## Achieving the Community Vision Together

Enhancing quality of life in Rapid City depends on coordinated action across public, private, and non-profit sectors, as well as collaboration with surrounding jurisdictions where appropriate. The Implementation Matrix provided in Appendix A provides a roadmap to achieving the goals, policies, and actions included throughout the Plan and identifies important implementation strategies including project classifications and implementation tools. The Matrix also identifies applicable City Departments and key partners to collaborate with to implement actions throughout the Plan. Additional context for each element of the Implementation Matrix is included in the sections below.

Open communication and regular discussions with residents, developers, business owners, community partners, elected officials, Planning Commission, and staff are essential to ensure the Plan's action items, projects, and priorities meet the community's needs. Progress should be celebrated through community updates, events with community partners, and email notifications.

### PROJECT CLASSIFICATIONS

Project classifications are provided to help City staff, elected officials, and community members understand the types of supporting projects necessary to achieve individual actions.

**Regulatory:** Future land use, zoning, and subdivision regulations that will likely require updates to align with the goals, policies, and actions outlined in this Plan.

**Engagement:** Projects that will require strategic community engagement and outreach to achieve specific actions.

**Plans/Studies:** Actions that may need more detailed support and guidance. These include site-specific development guidelines, master and/or subarea plans, and feasibility or funding studies.

**Capital Projects:** Includes infrastructure investments and funding partnerships necessary to achieve specific actions. These projects should be evaluated alongside other capital improvements, policies, and adopted plans to establish priorities, assess project efficiencies, and schedule capital improvement expenditures.



## Implementation Tools

Implementation tools identify specific planning financial resources necessary to achieving specific actions.

**Financial Resources:** Support implementation of specific resources include but are not limited to:

- Municipal Budget
- Tax Increment Financing
- Vision Funds
- Strategic Growth Revolving Funds
- Federal, State, and Local Grants
- Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

**Planning Resources:** Necessary for implementation of specific actions include but are not limited to:

- Future Land Use Plan
- Supporting Plans (e.g., infrastructure master plans, Rapid City Housing Market Analysis, Metropolitan Transportation Plan)
- Rapid City Municipal Code (e.g., zoning, subdivision, infrastructure design requirements)
- Infrastructure Design Criteria Manual
- Advisory Committees

## CITY DEPARTMENTS

Certain actions within the Implementation Matrix will require collaboration between applicable City Departments to be achieved effectively.

City Departments:

- Rapid City Regional Airport
- City Attorney's Office
- The Monument
- Community Development
- Finance Department
- Fire Department
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Library
- Parks and Recreation
- Police Department
- Public Works

## Key Partners

Due to the complex nature of community partnerships, it is not feasible to identify each specific public and private partner necessary to implementing this Plan. Key partners are incorporated into the Implementation Matrix based on specific areas of expertise with examples of organizations that fall within that category. It will be the responsibility of City staff to work together to determine specific public, private, and non-profit organizations necessary to achieving specific actions.

**Government:** Federal, state, tribal and local governments, Black Hills Council of Local Governments

**Housing:** Housing advocates and policy experts, landlords, developers, contractors, Black Hills Area Community Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, John T. Vucurevich Foundation, Pennington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and NeighborWorks.

**Education:** Rapid City Area Schools, South Dakota Mines, Oceti Sakowin Community Academy, Western Dakota Technical College

**Economy:** Elevate Rapid City, Visit Rapid City, local business owners, major employers

**Healthcare:** Monument Health, Oyate Health Center, Urgent Care, senior living providers, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board, Sanford Health

**Support Services:** Care Campus, Journey On, One Heart, Veterans Administration, Cornerstone Rescue Mission, Black Hills Works, childcare providers

**Transportation:** Rapid Transit, South Dakota Department of Transportation, Prairie Hills Community Transit, Disability Awareness and Accessibility Committee, Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Environment:** Forest Service, Sustainability Committee, USGS, Army Corps of Engineers, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks

**Arts and Culture:** Rapid City Arts Council, Historic Preservation Commission, Historic Sign Committee, Journey Museum, Museum of Geology, Dahl Arts Center, Suzie Cappa Art Center



## Plan Management and Update Process

As this Plan is used over the next 10 to 15 years, it must remain flexible. No single document can anticipate all future changes, and the City will need to interpret the Plan when provisions are unclear or appear to conflict. In such cases, decisions should support the overarching vision for Rapid City's future.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure progress toward the Plan's priorities. Tracking the status of actions and outcomes will help assess the effectiveness of public policy, private investment, and physical improvements across the City.

To manage projects effectively, the City should develop an annual Work Plan. This tool will build on the Implementation Matrix (Appendix A) by assigning project leads, estimating more detailed costs, setting budgets, establishing timelines, and defining milestones. City staff, in coordination with the City Council and community partners, should prepare and update the Work Plan as needed.

Each year, City Staff and the City Council should review the Plan and publish a progress report, allowing adjustments to strategies in response to changing conditions and emerging opportunities.

In addition to annual reviews, the Plan should undergo a comprehensive update every five to ten years. If changing conditions warrant, the City may initiate updates to priorities or add content through either major or administrative amendments. Major amendments require review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council, in accordance with SDCL § 11-6-17 through 11-6-19. Administrative amendments may be completed by City staff without formal action.

**Major amendments** have a substantive effect on the priorities and actions in the Plan and warrant public involvement as part of the amendment process. Examples of major amendments are:

- A comprehensive update of the Plan as conducted every five to ten years.
- Updates to the goals, policies, or implementation action items.

**Administrative amendments** do not affect the priorities and actions in a substantive way. Examples of these are:

- Updates to maps to show an updated City boundary or other informational maps (i.e., roads, streetscape improvements, zoning, or historic designations).
- Formatting or graphic updates.
- Incorporation of subarea plans or updated references to supporting plans and/or links.
- Typographical errors and omissions.

Open communication and regular discussions with residents, developers, business owners, community partners, the Council, and staff are essential to ensure the Plan's action items, projects, and priorities meet the community's needs. Progress should be celebrated through community updates, events with community partners, and email notifications.

## Key Projects and Considerations

In order to effectively implement the Plan, key projects will need to be completed to align City operations and development requirements with the goals, policies, and actions. The list of projects and considerations below is not comprehensive, but includes key initiatives for successful implementation.

**Future Land Use Plan:** An update of the Future Land Use Plan is necessary to implement the goals, policies, and actions of the Plan. The update will include an assessment of the Future Land Use categories for consistency with the Plan goals and a neighborhood-level public process to update the Future Land Use Map in accordance with the community's vision. Recognition of other specific plans, such as the Major Street Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan, will need to be integrated into this process.

**Municipal Code:** Subsequent updates to the Subdivision and Zoning Codes will be necessary to align with the updated Future Land Use Plan as well as to implement the goals, policies, and actions of the Plan. Advisory Committees and public engagement will be critical in the update of specific topic areas such as landscaping, open space, and parking requirements. The City will develop an outline of key topic areas to address as ordinance amendments and implement a work plan for these updates.

**Development Review:** The goals, policies, and actions of this Plan as well as consideration for key trends and opportunities must be integrated into development review in order to successfully implement the Plan. Until the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning Code are updated to align with the Plan, focus should be placed on the intent of the Plan framework and direction.

**Housing Task Force:** The key trends and opportunities relating to housing require a holistic approach to analyzing and addressing housing across the community. While the City will update the Zoning Code to address

housing goals related to development and land use, there is a need to work with partners and housing experts to address housing trends and opportunities that go beyond the City's regulatory purview.

**Capital Improvement Plan:** Capital improvements are a key part of implementing this Plan and the goals, policies, and actions should be used to inform decision-making regarding projects and priorities. A checklist outlining consistency with the Plan should be developed and used when identifying projects for the Capital Improvement Plan.

**Facilities and Services Plans:** Updates to public facility and services plans will be a key implementation tool and should serve as greater detail to how the actions of this Plan will be achieved.

**Transportation Plans and Studies:** Continuing work on transportation plans and studies is an important factor in implementing the Plan. This work should be prioritized by and consistent with this Plan.

**Partnerships and Collaboration:** There are actions within this Plan that acknowledge the community's vision for Rapid City but are not within the purview of the City. In these instances, the City will collaborate and support partners in accomplishing these actions.

**Align Use of Vision Fund with the Comprehensive Plan:** Ensure that the use of the Vision Fund is strategically aligned with projects that further the goals, policies, and actions included within this Plan.