



**RAPID  
CITY** SD  
USA

**Summer  
Newsletter  
2021**

# Community Development

## Responding to Rapid City's Housing Needs: An Introduction to the Strategic Housing Plan

*by Sarah Hanzel*

Like towns and cities across the nation, the Rapid City community lacks housing that is affordable for a great number of its individuals and families. Data from 2016 revealed that more than 25% of Rapid City households are housing cost burdened, meaning they pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing. (In 2021 – the number of housing cost burden households is likely greater).



**Black Hills Habitat for Humanity project located on North 7th St**

The toll which housing cost burden takes on our community manifests in visible and invisible ways. Individuals and families who are housing cost burdened have difficulty meeting other critical needs such as food, transportation, childcare, healthcare, and education. When people are barely getting by, they can't get

ahead. One financial setback such as a medical bill or a vehicle repair can be detrimental. Housing affordability is not isolated to low income households. In fact, Rapid City's Housing market lacks units in every sector of the market, with the most needs for low to middle income households.

- **Low and very low income:** These units often require capital and operation subsidies from the State and Federal government, which are extremely limited compared to the need. There are also relatively few developers who focus on this sector of the market. Rapid City is starting to see more, however, and the City is eager to grow partnerships with the private and non-profit developers who focus on these needs.
- **Middle income:** The median household income in Rapid City is about \$50,000/year. There is immense competition for the housing that is affordable to those at this income level. The intense competition drives up the price, making it especially unattainable for those at the lower-income end of this spectrum. This sector of housing is often called workforce housing, and is in high demand from those employed as teachers, administrative support, police officers, construction workers, hair stylists, etc.
- **High income:** Large companies and professional industries have indicated that shortages of housing in this sector make recruitment of professional candidates such as corporate executives and specialty surgeons a challenge.

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## Introduction to the Strategic Housing Plan

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Several factors affect the cost of housing. In the Rapid City area, these factors include relatively low wages, slow wage growth, high material costs, and topographic constraints. More recently the rapid influx of out of state buyers, and investors who can pay cash for properties, is driving up prices further.

In April, the Rapid City Council reviewed the Draft Strategic Housing Plan. This Plan identifies strategies to be implemented by the City which can result in the creation and preservation of quality-built housing units in diverse formats, and that is available and accessible along the entire spectrum of income levels for Rapid City residents.

One key goal of the Strategic Housing Plan is to encourage further leveraging of financial tools such as Tax Increment Financing, grant funds available through the South Dakota Housing Development Authority, and support of the Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund. Another important goal is to reduce barriers and create new opportunities for



*Four-plex in an existing Rapid City neighborhood*

housing types through revisions to land use regulations. As one example, the City will be bringing forward an ordinance that specializes in small home neighborhoods. Other strategies could include reduced parking requirements, and making it easier to develop diverse styles of housing such as small apartment buildings with 3 – 12 units.

Housing is critical community infrastructure – it is as important as streets, water mains, and sanitation services. Planning for and promoting the availability of housing that is affordable along a community's entire income spectrum is a top priority for the Community Development Department as we respond the growth of our community and the changing conditions of the world around us.

Learn more about the Strategic Housing Plan by visiting [bit.ly/housingrc](https://bit.ly/housingrc).



*Rendering of the new mixed-used development in downtown Rapid City*

## PLATTING

In the first half of 2021, the City approved 14 Final Plat applications, which created 154 residential lots and 9 commercial and/or industrial lots. The largest of these is the Scotland Hills Subdivision, which consists of 35 residential lots on 105.2 acres.

## CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS AND OTHER PROPOSALS

The City approved 10 Conditional Use Permits in the first half of 2021. These include a wide range of uses such as garages over 1,500 square feet, on-sale liquor, car washes, and group homes. Perhaps the most interesting proposal, though, was a request to allow an indoor dog park with on-sale liquor inside the Rushmore Mall.

## ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

The Current Planning Division continues to promote the City's Comprehensive Plan goal of improving and streamlining development review processes to provide greater efficiency. In the first half of 2021, the following Ordinance Amendments were approved:

- Medium Density Residential District: To create a requirement that lots abut a public street for a minimum distance of 25 feet
- Creation of a platting process to facilitate the transfer of unplatted property less than 40 acres.

**The Department is currently working on creating medical cannabis regulations. More to come on this topic in a future edition of the Newsletter!**

**REZONES:** In the first half of 2021, the City approved 23 Rezoning requests, resulting in the following:

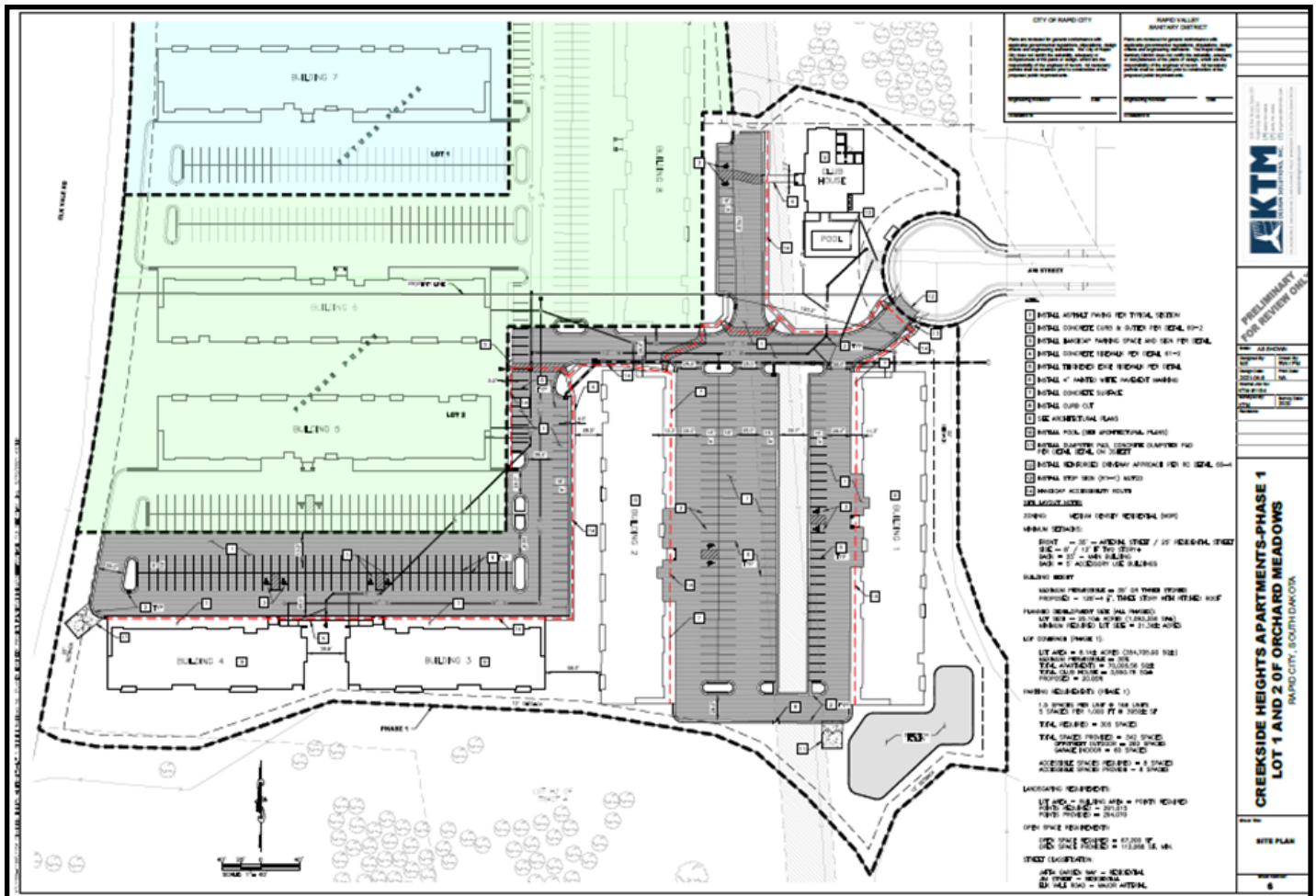
Zoning District	Acres Lost	Acres Gained	Total Change
GA	124.73	0	-124.73
LI	62.24	21.43	-40.81
OC	9.28	2.69	-6.59
P	2.88	0	-2.88
LDR1	9	12.98	3.98
GC	8.47	53.91	45.44
LDR2	1.09	53.62	52.35
MDR	0	73.06	73.06

## PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

Rapid City is continuing to build on the high number of multi-family residential developments approved last year. In the first half of 2021, the City has approved ten applications for apartment complexes with a combined total of 1,137 dwelling units. The following are the largest developments:

- Altitude Villas – a Final Planned Development Overlay to allow an apartment complex with 14 two-story apartment buildings containing 308 units, a community building, 12 garage structures, and an outdoor swimming pool.
- Creekside Apartments – a Final Planned Development Overlay to allow an apartment complex with four three-story apartment buildings containing 182 units, a clubhouse, and a swimming pool. This is the first phase of a four-phase project, and the entire complex is planned to have a total of 659 total units.
- Johnson Ranch Apartments - a Final Planned Development Overlay to allow an apartment complex with 10 three-story apartment buildings containing 150 units and 10 garage structures.
- Sedona Flats - a Final Planned Development Overlay to allow an apartment complex with seven two-story buildings containing 148 units, a clubhouse, swimming pool, playground, and dog walking area.

### Altitude Villas Site Plan





*Flower bed in commercial development*

## LANDSCAPING ORDINANCE

It was a “lilac year” in Rapid City. For a couple weeks this spring, so many of us appreciated the abundant blossoms and perfumed air from lilac bushes in neighborhoods all across the community. Landscaping of all types - trees, shrubs, grasses, decorative plantings, and groundcover are an essential component of Rapid City’s character. These natural features not only help our community look good, but can help us to feel good in our built environments. Landscape features provide many community benefits such as beautification, storm water management, reducing heat and glare, and screening adjacent land uses. The use of native vegetation in our man-made environments provides even greater outcomes by supporting pollinator populations, and helping to conserve water.

The regulations for when and how much landscaping must be designed and built as part of commercial and industrial development is codified in the Rapid City Municipal Code. The existing landscape regulations are based on a point system, where different amounts of

points are available for different types of vegetation. For example, a medium sized tree is worth 1,000 points and a shrub is worth 250 points. The number of points a development needs depends on the size of the lot and the size of the building.

In the coming months, the Community Development Department will be reviewing the existing standards to identify opportunities to improve the landscaping regulations. Community Development will be working with the Parks and Recreation Department, with input from the Sustainability Committee and the Beautification Committee on developing revisions to the landscaping ordinance. There will also be opportunities for general community input as the proposal is created and presented to the Planning Commission and City Council. Please contact the Planning Projects Division at 605.394.4120 for more information.

*Trees along pedestrian corridor at Rushmore Crossing*



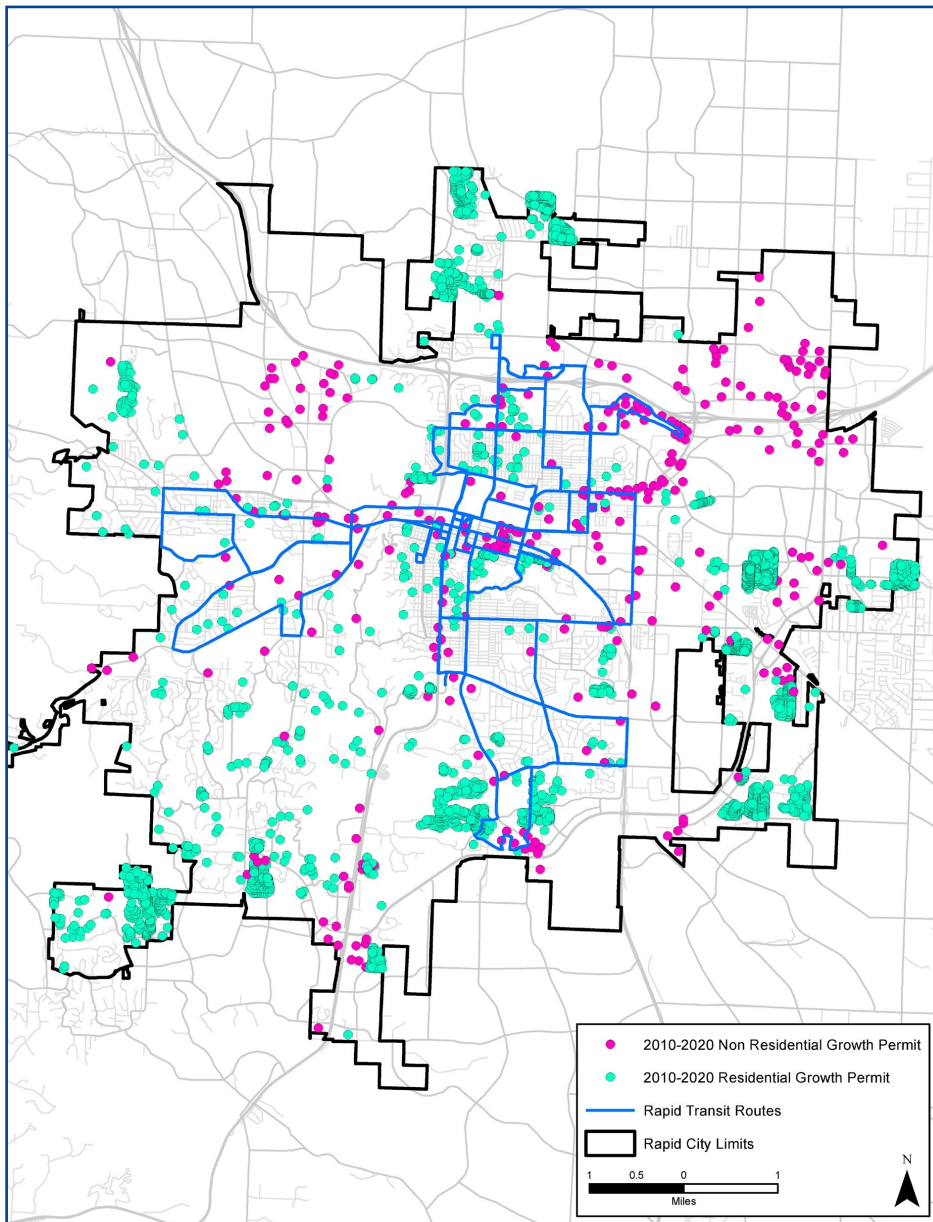
*New street trees along East Boulevard*



## TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Rapid City Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is working with the Rapid City Transit System (RTS) to develop the Rapid Transit Development Plan. The document will provide a vision for transit in the region over the next five to 10 years with an emphasis on future needs and sustainable growth. The Rapid Transit Development Plan will report on existing conditions, public feedback, community needs and recommendations for how RTS should align services to meet the needs of a growing region.

### 2010 to 2021 Growth Areas



### From the Rapid City Transit System Transit Development Plan

In the 10-plus years since the transit plan was last updated, Rapid City has expanded outward from the core. Many of these areas reflect a development density and make up supportive of transit, while others do not. Through the transit plan, the feasibility of providing service in expansion areas will be evaluated. Areas developed in the last 10 years are displayed in the attached figure. Data points displayed in the figure represent locations where a building permit for a significant commercial expansion or a new residential or commercial building permit has been issued in the period from 2010 to 2020.

For more information, contact

Bill Troe with SRF Consulting at 402-513-2158,  
Megan Gould, RTS Division Manager at 394-6631

Kelly Brennan at 394-4120.

Or

Visit the Transit Plan website

[www.RTStransitplan.com](http://www.RTStransitplan.com)

**Year-End 2020 Rapid City population estimate is 78,369**

- Up 1.53% from 2019 estimate of 77,185

## **2021 has been a great year for development!**

Despite issues with material shortages and costs, there are a high number of building permits, permit valuations and processing of development applications. Highlights include:

- 182 Permits for single family homes & townhouses with a total building valuation of \$44,425,778
- 115 Single Family Dwelling Units
- 194 Multi-Family Dwelling Units



Residential Construction site in Rapid City

## **Top Permits issued so far in 2021:**

1. **\$14,914,636** - SD Multi-Agency at 221 Mall Drive
2. **\$14,780,000** - The Elements at 100 St Joseph Street
3. **\$12,854,321** - Security First Bank at 1919 Hope Court
4. **\$4,664,879** - Jaffa Garden Way Apartments at 3200 Jaffa Garden Way
5. **\$4,601,695** - Circle K Holiday Gas Station at 2460 W Chicago Street
6. **\$4,431,672** - Heartland Apartments at 427 Degeest Drive
7. **\$1,123,213** - Dollar General at 3402 Haines Avenue

### **Other construction:**

- Boulder Creek Apartments - 1330 E Minnesota Street
- Red Rock Apartments - 7175 Dunsmore Road
- Tall Grass Apartments - E Philadelphia Street
- The Vue Apartments - Catron Blvd
- Kansas City Street Plaza - 18 E Kansas City Street
- Discovery Village - 1075 Anamosa Street

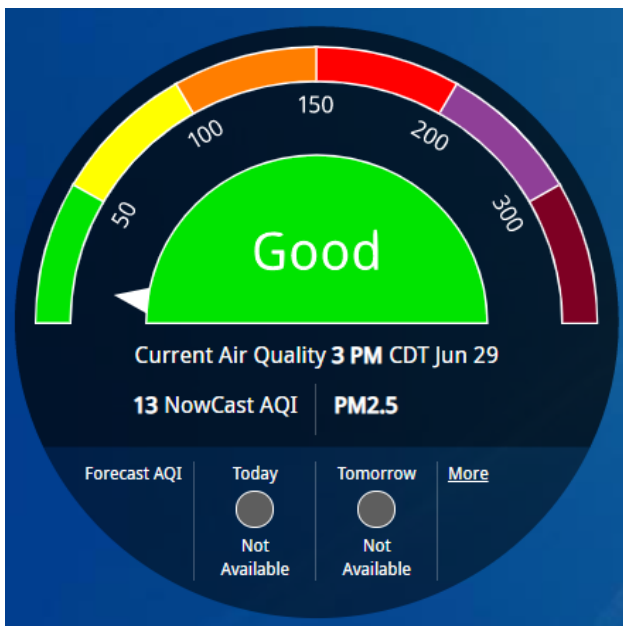


Boulder Creek Apartments 1330 E Minnesota Street

See also the  
Community Development  
RAP Sheet at [www.rcgov.org](http://www.rcgov.org)

The goals of the Rapid City Area Air Quality program are to maintain compliance status with the United States Environmental Protection Agency's National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and to prevent adverse health and environmental effects that result from fugitive dust emissions and smoke from wood burning in the Air Quality Zone. The [ordinance](#) requires fugitive dust and smoke emissions to be under 20% opacity, for which staff obtains Visual Emission Evaluation Certification every 6 months. ***The ordinance DOES NOT regulate or enforce odors, INDOOR air quality, burning devices such as wood stoves, fireplaces, fire pits, or open burning. Brush pile burn permits are obtained through the local and volunteer fire departments or forest service.***

To see the current Air Quality Index for your zip code with color-coded categories and statements for each category, which groups of people may be affected, and steps you can take to reduce your exposure to air pollution, visit the EPA's website or app called [AirNow](#).



Disturbing an acre or more of soil in the EPA-designated Air Quality Zone, encompassing city boundaries and extending into Pennington County, triggers one of three types of air quality permits:

1. Construction permit (1-5 acres fee is \$150, 5+ acres disturbed is a \$200 fee) which is valid for one year and must be renewed if necessary. Construction permit sites are inspected at least once (generally it's much more often!) and upon any complaints.
2. Unpaved Parking/Storage permit (\$100 fee) is valid for 3 years before renewal is required. These permitted sites are only inspected incidentally or upon complaint.
3. Compliance Plan permit (\$150 fee) is valid for 3 years before renewal is required. These permitted sites are unpaved and continuously operated with the potential for fugitive dust and are inspected annually and upon complaint.

***Industrial sites are not permitted by the City, but by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.***

For more history and information on the air quality program, there's plenty of reading material on the website: <https://www.rcgov.org/departments/community-planning-development/air-quality.html>

## Pandemic Response

The final tranche of CDBG CARES Act funding was awarded to the following agencies for programs and projects preventing, preparing for, or responding to the Coronavirus pandemic.

### Final Tranche – \$354,000 Awarded

- \$25,000 — Grab and go meal/activity packs for senior citizens provided by the Minneluzahan Senior Center
- \$200,000 — Mortgage/Rent assistance program through Pennington County Health and Human Services
- \$25,000 — Reimbursement for COVID-related expenses for Wellfully
- \$65,000 — Reimbursement for COVID-related expenses for the YMCA of Rapid City's OneHeart childcare center
- \$39,000 — Reimbursement for COVID-related expenses for Youth & Family Services

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### PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

Abbott House's newest therapeutic foster house is now home to several young people in Rapid City through its Bridges Independent Living program. Attached to the main home, two double-occupancy apartments serve as supportive housing for youth who age out of foster care. The young people who live in these apartments sign a lease yet continue to receive support from the Abbott House staff for an enhanced transitional experience into adulthood.

The Mitchell-based non-profit recently expanded into the Black Hills area supporting youth and young adults. The project was made possible by a variety of collaborations and funding sources, including CDBG.





## Code Enforcement has a few different topics of focus this time of year.

- We continue to be seasonal and take complaints regarding tall weeds and grass. The proactive approach to tall grass and weeds focuses on the main corridors and the outlying neighborhoods.
- Another topic we are focusing on is dead tree removal. This time of year it is more obvious which trees are alive and which are dead / dying / or diseased, making it easier to determine when we send removal notices.
- We are working hand in hand with the solid waste department to clear overgrown alleys that obstruct the path of garbage and recycle trucks.
- Obstructed sight triangles are also an issue this time of year. They mostly involve overgrown foliage, but they can sometimes involve fences or other structures.
- Debris build-up also seems to be a hot topic during this time of year as people spend more time outside in their neighborhoods.

