Rapid City should come up with a plan for future downtown revitalization before the start of a multimillion dollar project to re-construct Main and St. Joseph streets, says Patricia Dole, a board member of the Downtown Development Corp. "I think we need to know what is necessary downtown before we start designing or building something without a plan of attack. I don't think you would decide to have a dinner party without deciding what the major ingredients of the dinner will be." Assistant City Planning Director Rick Miller said studies had been done in the past on downtown parking, but a master plan would look at future parking needs and more. Especially critical is recognition of future needs for utilities, he said. "Let's say there's a plan for an activity that requires the use of downtown," Miller said. "We want to be sure we have utility lines for a public restroom. We want to make sure that the property lines are completed so we don't have to go in and rip up the new street later. The plan also might be able to identify street crossings, overhand power lines could be moved from alleys to underground conduits, which could allow for better use of space. A master plan could identify what downtown business operators want in the way of parking, bathrooms, pedestrian access and ways to link downtown with the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

The Rapid City Common Council's Public Works Committee on Tuesday gave the city planning department the go-ahead to prepare a special downtown master plan, and to ask architects to submit proposals to prepare the plan. The cost of the plan is currently unknown until the city is authorized to pay for a master plan. Miller said reconstruction of Main and St. Joseph streets began in August 1992. The total project would involve re- construction of 94 miles of city streets presently maintained by the state. The streets in question are the downtown streets between East and West boulevards. Much of the project will be paid by the state. State officials have agreed that a master plan is needed, he said. The downtown master plan should be completed by June 1, 1990. Miller said the planning department now is preparing an outline of the work necessary for the city to get the state's approval, but he has not estimated how much the master plan will cost. The master plan will cover a 40- block area from East Boulevard to West Boulevard, and from Kansas City Street to Omaha Street. Thurstorne Miller, the former Downtown Development Corp. wanted to play "a major role" in deciding what was included in the master plan. "The city's idea of what's as far as I'm concerned, that has a paid consultant who is actively working in expanding the growth. What role should be frequently listened to," he said.