

Envision 2020

State of the
Community
Report

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June 2015

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About this Report

This report was compiled, written, archived and released by Greater Mankato Growth, a division of Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. in June 2015. Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. includes Greater Mankato Growth, Visit Mankato and the City Center Partnership.

Information in this report was provided by Key Performance Area (KPA) chairs throughout the revisioning process in fall of 2014 to spring of 2015.

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Overview of Envision 2020

Envision 2020 is a steering organization that has been leading a community-based visioning process since 2005. During Phase I, Envision 2020 sought to achieve the following outcomes:

- Consensus on a community-wide vision that was reflective of the region;
- Utilization of current assessments of community strengths and opportunities, and conducting additional assessments to establish a map of “current condition”;
- Identification of community priorities and key action areas;
- A strategic plan to impact the key action areas;
- Formation of an entity that will be responsible for implementation oversight; and
- A final report that effectively communicates that vision and strategies to the Greater Mankato Area.

Each of the proposed outcomes were accomplished during Phase I. In 2014, a desire to ensure that Envision 2020 was still mirroring the values of the community stakeholders in the Greater Mankato Area prompted Phase II of the community based visioning process.

To begin Phase II, a large community gathering was hosted at the Verizon Wireless Center in October 2014. At this meeting; accomplishments from each key performance area were shared, small groups discussions were held to help identify areas where the Greater Mankato Area could improve and an explanation of the next steps in the re-evaluation process were discussed. In

conjunction with the meeting, a community survey was conducted. The results from the survey identified goals and priorities that were most important to community stakeholders. It also encouraged individuals to contribute their efforts and expertise to Envision 2020 in a variety of ways; including: joining one or more key performance areas, attending focus groups or by volunteering their time.

Since that time each key performance area has analyzed the survey results and created specific questions for their focus groups which were held in early February. The feedback received from these focus groups has played an integral part in shaping each key performance area and Envision 2020 as a whole moving forward.

Throughout the month of March, each key performance area hosted meetings with community stakeholders to make final revisions to the plan. These revisions include: a new mini-vision for each Key Performance Area (KPA), mapping out goals to accomplish by the year 2020 and the rationale for setting each goal.

The work done in Phase II has played an integral role in establishing and defining the desired state of the community for the year 2020. Envision 2020 is using the information and insight gained from Phase II to communicate the community's will. This State of the Community Report will highlight each Key Performance Area's mini-vision, goals and the rationale for each goal.

Community Planning

Mini-vision:

Our Community will encourage planning which promotes preservation, redevelopment, livability and future development opportunities while demonstrating values of balance, integration, sustainability, collaboration and public engagement.

Values

The following values were taken into consideration while crafting the three goals for the Community Planning KPA. Each of the following values is a theme that has been incorporated into all aspects of Community Planning.

1. Balance and integration – This value focuses on systems thinking and how land uses impact one another throughout the community. Balance and integration is necessary when mixing a variety of land uses and determining the intensity of the built environment (example of intensity: multifamily housing units vs. single family dwelling units).
2. Sustainability – This value encourages development and redevelopment

practices that do not exploit natural resources, the environment or urban design.

3. Collaboration and cooperation – This value supports partnerships between local government, non-profits, and the private sector in order to leverage resources, strengths and roles.
4. Public involvement and engagement – This value plays an integral role in the future success of the Greater Mankato Area. Public involvement and engagement assists in the development of the region by providing input on a variety of projects, issues or planning process itself.

Goal 1: Land Use – The planning of future development, redevelopment and preservation of existing uses.

Rationale:

This goal pursues comprehensive balance throughout the community in types and intensities of uses.

Goal 2: Community Design – Community projects that improve accessibility, provide alternative forms of transportation, increase housing variety and affordability, and benefit youth, younger adults and working families, immigrants and older adults alike.

Rationale:

This goal focuses on a comprehensive approach to having a community which is inviting to all residents and visitors.

Goal 3: Downtown Renaissance and Historical Preservation – Continuation of recent successes from Phase I of Envision 2020.

Rationale:

This goal prioritizes the need to redevelop, preserve and develop the unique aspects of a downtown district.

Economic Development

Mini-vision:

In 2020 we will have an innovative, growing, vibrant, diverse regional economy that responsibly leverages the resources, talent and ideas of South Central Minnesota while promoting business development and a high ranking livability.

Values:

Underpinning all three goals within the Economic Development KPA are five key attributes (i.e., filters) intended to be considered with each strategy and their accompanying action steps:

1. Economic Diversity
2. Planned Growth
3. Regional
4. Livable Wages
5. Population Demographics

Goal 1: Workforce Talent Development

Rationale:

Focusing on developing, retaining and attracting workforce talent will offer the region a comprehensive approach to meeting existing and future workforce talent needs.

Goal 2: Business Development

Rationale:

We will optimize our already diversified economic portfolio by helping our existing businesses thrive, innovate and grow; targeting our business attraction on our distinctive assets and offering a culture in which entrepreneurialism and emerging business opportunities benefit.

Goal 3: Regional Presence

Rationale:

We must continue to raise the visibility of the regional marketplace, enhance all of our first impressions (e.g.; physical, virtual, experiential), build and establish the associated political power akin to regional centers, and work to “identify” the region based on our unparalleled economic diversity.

Education

Mini-vision:

Within our life-long learning community, all people are provided the opportunity to possess the skills, knowledge and ability to achieve their potential in an ever-changing world.

Goal 1: To promote a lifelong learning community

Rationale:

Even in the year 2020, it will still take a “village to raise a child.” As a result of the continual need to raise the academic achievement of all learners to compete in a global economy, powerful coalitions of community members will be necessary to efficiently and effectively use limited resources. In addition, the educational achievement of all learners will be closely aligned to the strength and well-being of the community.

Goal 2: To build global awareness into education and promote diversity acceptance in our community.

Rationale:

Once far away parts of the world are now related to our own community in multiple ways. Accordingly, we need to have an understanding of how we are interdependent with others in the world – culturally, economically, and ecologically. By being able to understand and communicate with others, we will be better able to respect other people around the world and in our own community to cope with increasingly global problems.

Goal 3: Retain and attract an educated workforce.

Rationale:

In order to retain and attract future leaders, entrepreneurs, and citizens, we need to assist young people and encourage them to invest in our community through leadership and problem-solving training, thus ensuring the community will flourish in a complex world.

Goal 4: Make learning accessible to all residents.

Rationale:

Our area has a growing diverse population with diverse needs

Health and Wellness

Mini-vision:

This is a community that is dedicated to prevention and as a result, wellness exists and changes outcomes and provides for a higher level of well-being.

Goal 1: Provide all people the opportunity to connect, participate and thrive.

Rationale:

This goal encompasses the need for inclusive information sharing, accessible, actionable involvement and the opportunity to enhance the overall wellness of the region.

Goal 2: Ensure all people have accessible health care and human services.

Rationale:

This goal seeks inclusivity in terms of programs, facilities, affordability and access via transportation and infrastructure.

Goal 3: Ensure all people have availability and access to transportation.

Rationale:

This goal addresses a fundamental need that pertains not only to health care services and human services, but overall livability.

Goal 4: Ensure all people have affordable and accessible quality housing.

Rationale:

This goal speaks to a fundamental need for people to be truly “well”.

Goal 5: Prepare for a changing population.

Rationale:

This goal reflects the reality of dynamics in our community including but not limited to age and diversity.

Livability

Mini-vision:

Being a vibrant regional center, Greater Mankato is an attractive and livable community, incorporating facilities and programs that provide opportunities for residents of all ages, economic levels and cultural backgrounds to enjoy affordable, accessible, and high quality arts and culture, recreation, sports and entertainment.

Many of these opportunities are found in community center(s) that attract visitors, spur economic growth and encourage cross-generational experiences while enriching the lives of all residents. The community of Greater Mankato also honors and celebrates its diverse thinking and artistic expression. In addition, the Greater Mankato community supports and nurtures its spiritual and non-profit organizations.

Greater Mankato emphasizes the importance of natural environments, historic preservation, communication networks, and affordable housing; and dedicates resources to develop and maintain green ways, parks, ravines, aesthetically beautiful buildings and opportunities for home ownership.

Goal 1: To advocate for creative options to supply affordable housing to young professionals, elderly citizens, new United States Citizens and all those with limited incomes.

Rationale:

Affordable housing is a key factor in attracting and retaining citizens in our community.

Goal 2: To keep and enhance our community's beauty. Encourage neighborhoods to help by going green and engage in environmentally friendly strategies to keep our residents and community healthy.

Rationale:

A beautiful, environmentally friendly community attracts people to the community and provides a positive environment for citizens to enjoy.

Goal 3: To collaboratively plan and acquire funding to build or restore community facilities. This group of community leaders will consider options, develop funding strategies and plan collaboratively.

Rationale:

There is a need to focus discussion around facilities that would enhance community life. These spaces include but are not limited to: a community center, youth center, sports facilities and a performing arts center.

Goal 4: Increase and raise awareness of diversity in the community

Rationale:

Inclusivity creates a friendly and safe community and celebration of diversity adds to the richness of our lives.

Goal 5: To sustain Mankato's art and culture, to invest in attracting, supporting and retaining artists and preservationists, to support diversity of cultures through art, to engage all citizens in arts and cultural events and to extend arts and culture throughout the community and into all aspects of community life, especially our schools.

Rationale:

The arts both enrich our lives and drive economic growth, thereby adding to the livability of our community.

Transportation

Mini-vision:

The area will cooperatively work with all citizens to advance the current transportation system. The development of this system will enhance our community and environment while transforming our community into an exemplary multi-modal transportation portal. By the year 2020 we will have a system that provides accessible, efficient, cost effective and safe movement of goods and people within the community, region and beyond.

Goal 1: (*INTRACITY*) – Develop an accessible, efficient, cost effective and cooperative mass transit system.

Rationale:

In order to maximize energy resources; provide transportation options for both the needy and the aging; and enhance economic development.

Goal 2: (*INTRACITY*) – Develop a comprehensive non-motorized transportation system that is accessible, safe and region-wide.

Rationale:

In order to enhance the health and well-being of all citizens, build community and conserve energy.

Goal 3: (INTRACITY) – Maintain, improve and coordinate an efficient and safe system of streets, roads and trails (infrastructure) throughout the Greater Mankato Area.

Rationale:

An efficient and safe infrastructure system is required in order to support a cohesive and comprehensive transport system.

Goal 4: (REGIONAL/INTER-REGIONAL) – Enhance and develop a multi-modal transportation system that serves pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles, transit, rail and air.

Rationale:

In order to increase the number and frequency of commuters to, within, and from the region; increase commerce transaction to, within, and from the region; increase tourism to, within, and from the region; improve the quality of life for citizens living in the region.

Conclusion

The purpose and desire for the community report is to invigorate community stakeholders and encourage all members of the community to work towards a stronger and more vibrant region. Envision 2020 believes that the insights provided in this report should be utilized by organizations and individuals to drive change in the community. This can be done by actively incorporating the aforementioned goals into their strategic plans. If community stakeholders collectively push to reach these goals by the year 2020, the Greater Mankato Area will flourish for generations to come.

