COMMUNITY PLANNING AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LIVABILITY
TRANSPORTATION

ENVISION 2020

FINAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2006
Robert Kennedy once said, “Some people make things happen, some watch things happen, while others wonder what happened.” The people of the Greater Mankato/North Mankato area have a long history of making things happen. Some twenty years ago, visionary leaders from our community made things happen when they initiated a community based strategic planning process called “Act 2000”. A very important and valuable effort, the Act 2000 strategic plan conceived major objectives and strategies that have helped guide our community’s successful development for the past two decades.

Today, 20+ years after Act 2000, community leaders have once again “made things happen” by initiating a new strategic planning process, Envision 2020. Envision 2020 had an important goal; to create an updated vision and plan for our community and region that would successfully guide us to the future. This process began in the early planning stages nearly two years ago with a group of concerned constituencies representing citizens, businesses, government, and non-profit agencies who wanted to make sure that our community would always be a caring, inclusive, safe, progressive, self-sustaining and beautiful area that provides opportunities and resources for each person’s fulfillment.

Many months later, this document, the final Envision 2020 report, is the result of that strategic planning process and is an attempt to creatively picture what our ideal community should look like 15-20 years from now, and then determine how to make that happen. The Envision 2020 process has required many months of commitment, numerous meetings, countless hours of discussion, and collaboration and consensus among hundreds of individuals representing the broadest cross section of our community and region. In that process all of us involved have learned more about their community, region and each other.

Although many individuals and groups have contributed to the success of Envision 2020, no one person or group is responsible for what you read here. More importantly, no one individual or group is responsible for the implementation of this action plan. Our work is certainly not done – this document represents only a “picture” of our potential future. Now we all need to make it happen. Success of Envision 2020 depends on the volunteer energy of many, many people from all segments of our community, continuing to work together to push the Greater Mankato/North Mankato area to an even better future.

We are honored and privileged to have served as the Co-Chairs of Envision 2020 and to have had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful individuals from our community, as well as Derek Okubo of the National Civic League and Trisha Rosenfeld of the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce who did such a outstanding job of facilitating the process. We thank each and every one of you who have participated in Envision 2020.

Tami Paulsen
Envision 2020 Co-Chair

Dr. William Rupp
Envision 2020 Co-Chair
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BACKGROUND

The region of Mankato and North Mankato has a history of successful community-based planning. Over the years, the leadership has recognized that thriving communities were those that took the time and effort to design the future they desired rather than allowing the future to simply happen. Two previous efforts, most recently the ACT 2000 planning process, provided the region with a clear sense of direction and produced tangible results such as the Midwest Wireless Center and downtown redevelopment. In 2005, Citizens Voices, the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce and Greater Mankato Economic Development (GMED) were each exploring the possibilities for a community-based strategic planning effort. The leaders of Citizen Voices convened a meeting with the Chamber and GMED to discuss the possibility of collaborating on a shared community strategic planning process. These key organizations agreed to work together on the process and with the inclusion of key governmental perspectives, Envision 2020 was born.

The leadership saw that the region continued to possess a wealth of resources, experience, and vision with its greatest asset, its own residents, to assist in this process. The participants sought a process to convene area residents to engage the community in a new visioning and strategic planning process that looked to the future of the region. The challenge is to seek involvement in a regional manner to sustain an inclusive process with tangible outcomes, action plans and an implementation strategy.

Recognizing that the region had transformed since ACT 2000, the conveners realized that outside assistance would be helpful for the project. In the summer of 2005, the conveners selected the National Civic League to facilitate the process. The National Civic League, the nation’s oldest good government organization, pioneered community-based strategic planning processes in numerous communities of all sizes around the nation. NCL’s nationally recognized collaborative, participatory and cross-sector approach was what the conveners sought for the strategic planning project.

The convening group also recognized that dynamic and credible leadership would be required to pull project off. They wisely chose Tami Paulson and Dr. Bill Rupp, two highly respected and accomplished leaders in the region, to act as co-chairs of this process. Their willingness to step forward to lead, build and sustain relationships and participation were crucial elements of the project. They were supported by an enthusiastic band of participants that made up the Steering Committee, who helped ensure the process ran smoothly and effectively.

Project coordination and logistics were crucial to this project’s success. To ensure the project was well attended to, the Initiating Committee (which later became the Steering Committee) hired Trisha Rosenfeld, a graduate student at Minnesota State University, as the lead staff person. Trisha effectively coordinated the project out of the office of the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce.

In undertaking this process, the Greater Mankato region 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 conditions”;

• 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 the vision and strategies to the Greater Mankato community.

In addition, conveners looked for additional "soft" outcomes for this community-based project in Greater Mankato:

• Engagement of community members representing diverse interests and viewpoints;
• Enhanced trust, understanding and improved communication among participants;
• Consensus on the community’s direction and priorities for the future;
• Cultivation of new leadership within the community;
• Community pride; and
• Community-wide ownership of the vision and action plans.

For this project to function at its optimal level, the stakeholders were asked to step forward and produce. They did with fervor. Over 10 meetings held every three weeks, the process yielded from the National Civic League’s extensive experience, unparalleled participation from residents throughout the region and outlying areas. The process began with well over 200 attendees and the attendance at subsequent meetings usually had well over 120 participants. The stakeholders represented a wide range of viewpoints and interests. They debated, disagreed and agreed, but ultimately listened to one another and worked toward common shared goals. Doing so meant that some stakeholders had to set their own parochial interests aside for the betterment of the broader good. Doing so represented fortitude and character that represents the region. The process began with a clean slate and the stakeholders demonstrated remarkable commitment in staying involved in the process and developing all aspects of the strategic plan that is reflected in this document.

This document is a testament to that commitment and effort in working together to design the future of the region.
THE PROCESS

The strategic planning approach chosen for Envision 2020 had two stages: pre-planning and planning. A third stage is focused on action or implementation of the plan itself. The Initiating Stage, or pre-planning stage, focused on project logistics, design of the actual community planning process and identification of stakeholders. The Stakeholder Planning Stage, involved activation of the community-planning process and the development of the community action plan by the stakeholders of the region.

Community outreach was an important feature of this project, the purpose to inform and receive input from residents not participating in the regular stakeholder meetings. To oversee the outreach efforts, the chairs appointed Maureen Gustafson to lead a committee comprised of media and marketing experts and hard working stakeholders willing to give extra time. They developed the project logo and developed effective mechanisms to inform the public through the print media, radio and television throughout the entire process.

The Initiating Process identified over 400 potential stakeholders for this process. Through recruitment strategies implemented by the committee, over 200 committed to participate in the process. Other passionate residents also stepped forward and the project leadership welcomed their participation. Where the pre-planning focused solely on the process and logistics of Envision 2020, the stakeholder planning process focused on the content. In doing so, the stakeholders created the following elements of the strategic plan:

- **A Vision of the Desired Future for the Mankato/North Mankato Region** – The vision statement illustrates the desired future for the region. The vision reflects the common values of the diverse stakeholders, each sector and the whole region. Creating the vision statement was an important step by allowing people holding different perspectives to openly discuss their commonalities and to acknowledge their differences, while realizing that despite their differences, they still share a common vision of the community. The vision statement provides the community with a target to aim for as it develops its action plans.

  The stakeholders developed vision themes during the kick-off meeting and a drafting committee, made up stakeholders, took those themes and developed a vision statement that was adopted by the broader stakeholder group in a subsequent meeting.

- **Civic Index** - The Civic Index is a self-evaluation tool developed by NCL for communities. The Civic Index focuses on the Civic Infrastructure of a community. Just as a physical infrastructure of telephone lines, sewer systems, bridges and streets are needed for a community or town to function, the Civic Infrastructure comprises the abilities, tools and skills a community needs in order to solve problems effectively.
The Civic Index results revealed that the civic infrastructure of the region was an area of strength for the community. The National Civic League has utilized the Civic Index in hundreds of communities around the nation and the globe. While there were areas identified for improvement, staff of the National Civic League found that the results were far more positive in comparison with other communities who used the tool.

- **Community Scan and Trends** - The research committee, made up of Minnesota State University graduate students (an assignment given to them by steering committee member and Professor Tony Flipovitch) provided the stakeholders with information to use as a tool to determine current assets, challenges and trends facing the region. The stakeholders used this as a basis for understanding the current state of the region and helped lead them toward the identification of the key areas on which the planning was focused.

- **Selection of Key Performance Areas (KPAs) and Action Planning** – The assessments and the community vision provided the stakeholders with an understanding of where participants felt the group in identifying areas of focus called Key Performance Areas. When addressed, these areas would "bend the trend" from the region’s likely future (the result of no intervention and allowing the future to simply happen) to the desired future articulated in the vision statement. Using the vision statement and the information produced by the assessments, stakeholders selected six Key Performance Areas that were key to pushing them toward the desired future:
  - Community Planning and Regional Governance
  - Economic Development
  - Education
  - Health and Human Services
  - Livability
  - Transportation

At this point, the larger stakeholder group broke into task forces by individual interest for each priority area. The project chairs and steering committee members chose chairpersons for each task force. The chairpersons not only put in extra hours toward this project, they lent their process skills and leadership to help ensure that the assignments were met in a timely and complete manner. The task forces recruited additional expertise to participate in their groups. Each task force devoted countless hours in between the larger stakeholder meetings to complete a number of tasks in developing their strategic plans.

Throughout the planning stage, each task force presented its progress to the broader stakeholder group. These presentations provided an opportunity for feedback and buy-in in the direction each task force was taking and agreement on the final plans.

The Community Vision and Strategic Plan that follows is the culmination of hundreds of hours of volunteer hours by the region’s most valuable asset, its residents.
VISION STATEMENT

The Mankato/North Mankato region is the vital heart of the river valley and the prairies and woods that flow from it. Its main artery, the Minnesota River, nourishes and sustains natural, cultural and spiritual resources. Throughout history, rivers, people and ideas have converged here. The enhancement of human potential, nurtured by the arts and sciences, is a core principle. Multicultural, intergenerational villages and neighborhoods are woven in a rich tapestry of social vibrancy, while a collaborative spirit sparks conversation, creativity, involvement and innovation. Fulfilling work generates prosperity and global capabilities and connections, creating solutions for our region, the nation, future generations and the world.
ACTIONS PLAN

1. Community Planning and Regional Governance
2. Economic Development
3. Education
4. Health and Human Services
5. Livability
6. Transportation
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Chairs:
Tom Hagen
Bryan Paulsen

Task Force Members:
Heather Abraham
Marian Anderson
Jo Guck Bailey
Bill Bernhagen
John Brady
Lisa Chesley
Jack Considine
Kathie Davis
Cathi Fouchi
Tony Frentz
John Fritz
Anne Ganey
Peg Ganey
Linda Hachfield
Pat Hentges
Charlie Hurd
Christine Kile
Jim Kirschbaum
Greg Lessard
Brian Malm
Tom McLaughlin
Nick Meyer
Wendy Meyer
Lindsay Mollberg
Jon Noerenberg
Diane Norland
Dave Pfeffer
Jerry Pietz
Bob Podhradsky
Leigh Pomeroy
Jessica Potter
Kent Reeves
Wendell Sande
Bryan Schneider
H. Roger Smith
Maureen Sop
Steve Vatndal
Andy Willaert
Erinn Wilson
Avis Woehrle
Katy Wortel
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Mini-vision:
The Greater Mankato and North Mankato region should continue to develop naturally vegetated corridors connecting to a network of green space, havens, creeks and rivers. Woven within this network of green spaces would be the development of walkable urban villages and the revitalization and redefinitions of our historic downtowns, thus creating a cultural, civic, governmental, residential and entertainment heartbeat for these communities. We should embrace the knowledge of our citizens for their understanding of the many relationships between our natural resources, social needs and economic growth. It is vitally important to plan for and manage green infrastructure in our built environments. This can be accomplished through intergovernmental cooperation and sharing of our collective resources.

Community Planning and Regional Governance Sub-Category:
Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure Mini-Vision:
The Mankato/North Mankato area is a vibrant region with numerous naturally vegetated corridors connecting a network of green, open spaces (includes parks of various sizes and types, environmentally sensitive areas, recreational trails, natural water courses, rain gardens, farm land, natural areas, etc.) which are planned and managed for their natural ecosystem values and functions and for the benefits they confers to human populations. The citizens of the region understand the many relationships between natural resources, social needs and economic growth and that it is as vitally important to plan for and manage green infrastructure as for our built (grey) infrastructure.

Goal 1:
Protect, preserve and revitalize green spaces sufficient to support long term social, economic, and environmental vitality.

Rationale:
Protecting, preserving and revitalizing green spaces improves property values of adjacent lands and increases the desirability of the area for businesses to locate, people to live and raise families. Protection of scenic areas encourages tourism. Green space improves the health of residents and provides for wildlife habitat. It maintains adequate prime farmland and keeps a rural landscape feel even as growth occurs. Protecting environmentally sensitive areas helps improve water and air quality and minimizes storm water runoff. Management of native and invasive species populations within city limits will help sustain the green spaces over time. The green spaces will serve as meeting and gathering places for community groups and activities and as retreat opportunities for refuge and spiritual renewal.

Strategy 1:
Build a broad based coalition of stakeholders to plan for a regional green infrastructure network.

Action Steps:
1. Set up a regular structure (broad-based regional coalition) for research, education and action that will carry out the subsequent action steps of this goal.
Responsible Parties: Green Infrastructure Sub-Committee starts the process; Minnesota State University – Mankato (MSU), local government units (LGU’s), extension, RC &D, Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance, MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR, conservation groups, local environmental assessment and engineering firms, developers, interested citizens, other KPA’s, other state agencies

Timeline: Operational by July 1, 2007

Resource Needs/Options: From cooperating groups Legislative and Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources grant, MN Department of Natural Resources – Conservation Partner Grants, DNR data deli

2. Establish a set of principles which are part of the Green Infrastructure development framework that guides the work of coalition.

Responsible Parties: Minnesota State University - Mankato, local government units (LGU’s), extension, RC &D, Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance, MN Department of Natural Resources, conservation groups, local environmental assessment and engineering firms, developers, interested citizens, other KPA’s, other state agencies

Timeline: Immediate; this is first piece of business upon formation of the coalition

Resource Needs/Options: Other Green Infrastructure plans from around the country, green infrastructure websites, metro greenways publications from the Twin Cities

3. Map and inventory green infrastructure – natural areas and environmental corridors.

Responsible Parties: Local government units such as counties governments, watershed districts, Mankato, North Mankato, New Ulm, Fairmont and Waseca; state agencies: MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Department of Agriculture, MN Department of Health, MN Board of Soil and Water Resources; and volunteers such as college students in the appropriate fields of study

Timeline: Complete by July 1, 2008 (20-24 months)

Resource Needs/Options: Other Green Infrastructure plans from around the country, green infrastructure websites, metro greenways publications from the Twin Cities

4. Ensure that future acquisitions and zoning by Local Government Unit’s move toward the goal of maintaining and supporting Green Infrastructure plan.

Responsible Parties: City, county, and township: which cities, counties and which townships will be included will depend on the region of coverage for the plan that is determined by the coalition

Timeline: Immediate

Resources: None

5. Build a wildlife species protection and control plan into Green Infrastructure plan

Responsible Parties: Green Infrastructure sub committee will find persons within local government to lead; Cities of Mankato and North Mankato, county, state, residents, Master Gardeners, local conservation groups

Timeline: Immediate

Resource Needs/Options: State grants, publications and data deli

Measures of Success:
Broad-based coalition built and operational; Set of principles established for green infrastructure planning; Resource Inventory completed for region; Green Infrastructure Plan established by 2010.
**Strategy 2:**
Enlist public support through education and action plans.

**Action Steps:**

1. Define “Green Infrastructure” and what it brings to our communities
   a. Develop a presentation that helps explain what natural resource based (green infrastructure) planning is and how it benefits local citizens and governing units.
   b. Involve Envision 2020 Implementation Committee to view and comment
   c. Give presentations to civic, youth, conservation and business groups.

   **Responsible Parties:** Green Infrastructure Sub-Committee, Implementation Committee, interested Envision 2020 members, Coalition members from Strategy 1  
   **Timeline:** August 2007  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Organizations and websites

2. Encourage broad-based participation through a public input and analysis process to strengthen the public understanding of and support for green infrastructure planning.

   **Responsible Parties:** Coalition, Citizens of the Region, Chamber of Commerce  
   **Timeline:** July 2008  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** County, city and state planners, MSU staff and students

3. Create a Media Plan (such as GIFT= Green Infrastructure For Tomorrow).

   **Responsible Parties:** Initiated by the KPA sub committee and available coalition members, print, radio, television and Internet.  
   **Timeline:** Complete by January 2007  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** MSU, radio stations, CCTV, Papers, call-in programs

4. Foster the appreciation of nature by families and neighborhoods and in the process, promote community pride.

   **Responsible Parties:** Community Education - Sponsored through the Mankato School District; MSU Urban Planning, experiential education departments, school children  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** County, city and state planners; MSU staff and students

**Measures of Success:**
PowerPoint presentation created and presented to 40 civic and conservation groups; Public input process implemented; Media plan drafted.

**Strategy 3:**
Recommend that regional and city part set-asides be increased 5% to 10%.

**Action Steps:**

1. Contact city and county park offices to discuss this process.

   **Responsible Parties:** Community Planning KPA members  
   **Timeline:** Complete by December 2006  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** None
2. Build local support for this concept thru public information and education.

   Responsible Parties: KPA Sub-Committee Members, interested citizens and non-profits
   Timeline: Complete by July 2007
   Resource Needs/Options: Media, non-profits, DNR

Measures of Success:
Park set aside is increased to at least 10% of city and county area by July 2007.

Strategy 4:
Re-tree areas of the community.

Action Steps:

1. Determine areas to be re-treed and the ownership of the land. Contact the owners and discuss project.

   Responsible Parties: Department of Transportation (DOT), city, and county, civic and youth groups, KPA members
   Timeline: Start January 2007 and continue each year there after
   Resource Needs/Options: MN Department Of Transportation, Blue Earth & Nicollet Counties, volunteers and civic organizations

1. Promote to neighborhood groups the ideas of beautifying and keeping neighborhoods clean and attractive. Enlist them as volunteers to plant and maintain plantings.¹

   Responsible Parties: Local government units, neighborhood groups, Livability KPA
   Timeline: Start Spring 2007 and continue each year there after
   Resource Needs/Options: Livability KPA

Measures of Success:
A pilot project area is planted in Spring 2007; At least one additional area is planted each year for 10 years.

Strategy 5:
Protect natural scenic values of River valley bluffs and rural landscape.

Action Steps:

1. Recommend that ordinances be developed that limit the height of building / towers in the valley with the purpose of maintaining the beauty of the valley.

   Responsible Parties: Cities: Mankato & North Mankato Planning & Zoning, Counties: Blue Earth, Nicollet, townships adjacent to the river
   Timeline: Immediate
   Resource Needs/Options: Sample ordinances

¹ Overlap and Coordination with Livability Key Performance Area
2. Work with Local Governmental units, landowners and others to reduce the negative impacts of signage on the natural scenic values of rural areas.

**Responsible Parties:** Cities: Mankato & North Mankato Planning & Zoning, Counties: Blue Earth, Nicollet, townships adjacent to the river; landowners

**Timeline:** Immediate

**Resource Needs/Options:** Sample ordinances

**Measures of Success:**
Cities and Counties adopt measures that protect the scenic value of the River Bluff and rural landscape; future signage blends into the landscape.

**Goal 2:**
Optimize the availability and accessibility of a variety of recreational resources (land and water) in our area for recreational and community uses.

**Rationale:**
By optimizing the availability and accessibility of a variety of recreational resources, community visitors and residents will have access to a variety of quality open spaces for multiple experiences. Open spaces promote cultural understanding and identify community’s values. Well-designed and planned open spaces showcase the community’s commitment to environmental, historical, and cultural ideals; and foster community pride.

**Strategy 1:**
Increase access points to water and other recreational resources

**Action Steps:**

1. Create a Regional Recreation Plan (possible region - Brown County to west, Iowa border, Nicollet County on North and Waseca County on East)

   **Responsible Parties:** Local government units, citizens, MN Department of Natural Resources, non-profit organizations

   **Timeline:** November 2006 – July 2008

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Office of Tourism, Tatonka Bluffs group in Redwood and Renville counties, DNR grants, local businesses

2. Ensure open park development along the Minnesota River

   **Responsible Parties:** County/ city/ state planning staff, park professionals, community organizers, public officials

   **Timeline:** Ongoing

   **Resource Needs/Options:** City and county parks offices, planning and zoning offices

3. Increase walking and biking paths

   **Responsible Parties:** City and County Departments of Health, local health firms, County Public Health

   **Timeline:** Ongoing

   **Resource Needs/Options:** November 2006 - February 2007
4. Study Greenways Open Space Programs in Metro area to use as potential model in our area.

   **Responsible Parties:** Green Infrastructure Task Force Members, interested citizens, local government units, non-profits
   **Timeline:** Ongoing
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Grants thru state, local revenues

5. Encourage the Education for Health program.

   **Responsible Parties:** Department of Health, local health firms, County Public Health
   **Timeline:** Ongoing
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Insurance companies

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**Community Planning and Regional Governance Sub-Category:**
Downtown Renaissance and Historic Preservation

**Mini-Vision:**
Redefine and revitalize the downtowns of Mankato and lower North Mankato as the Valley, a center for the region that is the cultural, civic, governmental, residential, entertainment heartbeat of the area. The new Valley would extend from Madison Avenue to West Mankato East and West in Mankato and from 6th Street in Mankato through lower North Mankato, North to South.

**Goal 1:**
Redefine and revitalize the city center by creating a cohesive identity.

**Rationale:**
Revitalizing helps to define the city center, a community needs to have an identity to become a “destination”.

**Strategy 1:**
Ask local government entities to form the following community committees using the Mankato City Center Task Force as the umbrella organization in collaboration with a newly created Downtown Business Association.

**Action Steps:**

1. Form a City Center Task Force that represents the revitalization and redevelopment interests of downtown businesses, design standards, historic preservation, housing and old town.

   **Responsible Parties:** Mankato and North Mankato city governments; Chamber of Commerce; Potential participants from: local government entities, artisan community, Old Town Association, North Mankato Commerce Club, architects, downtown business owners, residents in the area, Blue Earth County and Nicollet County Historical Societies, Minnesota River interest groups and citizen volunteers.
   **Timeline:** 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020. Continue on an ongoing basis.
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Grants, GMED, Downtown business owners/Downtown Business Association, other communities with strong downtowns, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, Minnesota Historical Society

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2 The purpose of these committees is to provide a formalized setting for local governments to engage each other and volunteer citizens in dialogue, and to develop plans and opportunities, to implement the goals of this KPA.
2. Form the following committees to work with local government on revitalization and redevelopment efforts in the city center: Downtown Business Association, Design Review Committee, Historic Preservation Committee, and the “Hot Spot” Committee.³

   **Responsible Parties:** City Center Task Force
   **Timeline:** Committees in place within 6 months after the formation of the City Center Task Force
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Grants, GMED, Downtown business owners/Downtown Business Association, other communities with strong downtowns, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, Minnesota Historical Society

**Goal 2:**
Encourage public, private and non-profit investment and/or reinvestment into the city center and establish economic incentives for projects.

**Rationale:**
Investment and reinvestment will keep the city center viable for businesses and future development and thus, keeps revenue within the area.

**Strategy 1:**
Educate and communicate with downtown business owners about incentives, area projects and opportunities to discourage absentee landlords in the city center.

**Action Steps:**

1. Encourage more local investment of developers, and business and property owner in the city center to keep the area active and viable. In turn, the DBA could also establish incentives to city center businesses.

   **Responsible Parties:** City Center Task Force, Partnering with other local, regional, and national government entities to secure and implement economic incentives. Such programs include the Incubator Space Agreements through GMED, Design Review Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, Downtown Business Association and North Mankato Commerce Club, area developers, downtown business owners
   **Timeline:** Committees should be in place 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020.
   **Resource Needs/Options:** City Center Task Force; local government entities, granting agencies, DBA and NMCC membership, GMED and citizen volunteers.

2. Extend and increase City investment and interaction with qualified private entities through programs such as Tax Increment Financing, Revolving Loan Funds, and Downtown Redevelopment Grants.

   **Responsible Parties:** City Center Task Force, Partnering with other local, regional, and national government entities to secure and implement economic incentives. Such programs include the Incubator Space Agreements through GMED, Design Review Committee, Historic Preservation Commission

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³ The **Downtown Business Association** is a non-profit with membership in Mankato and North Mankato business owners. They would also have liaison memberships with the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The **Design Review Committee** would review the aesthetics planning for the city center and serve an advisory role on city center issues for planning commissions and the city councils of Mankato and North Mankato. The **Historic Preservation Commission** would oversee and monitor the revitalization efforts of historic structures in the downtowns. The **Hot Spot Committee** would identify and solve problems on troubled or threatened areas for revitalization and preservation.

Potential topics to be addressed include: **Gateways and Streetscapes** – Creating gateways to city center via signage, unique lighting and plantings, etc.; **Housing** – Encouraging affordable modern housing options in the defined city center such as housing on upper floors of downtown businesses; and **Old Town Revitalization** – entryways, pedestrian friendly environment, accessible parking and making Old Town a destination.
Commission, Downtown Business Association and North Mankato Commerce Club, area developers, downtown business owners

**Timeline:** Committees should be in place 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020.

**Resource Needs/Options:** City Center Task Force; Local government entities, granting agencies, DBA and NMCC membership, GMED and citizen volunteers.

3. Establish a fund, organization or source for purchasing, remodeling and/or restoring property in the city center to keep area active.

**Responsible Parties:** City Center Task Force, Partnering with other local, regional, and national government entities to secure and implement economic incentives. Such programs include the Incubator Space Agreements through GMED. Design Review Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, Downtown Business Association and North Mankato Commerce Club, area developers, downtown business owners

**Timeline:** Committees should be in place 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020.

**Resource Needs/Options:** City Center Task Force; local government entities, granting agencies, DBA and NMCC membership, GMED and citizen volunteers.

**Goal 3:**
Create a gathering space within the city center with pedestrian friendly amenities such as walkways, green space, fountains, etc.

**Rationale:**
Having such amenities would attract people to the city center and help the area thrive.

**Strategy 1:**
Promote the gathering space through a demonstration project by local artists by asking for artist renderings of gateways, murals, fountains, etc. The purpose would be to create a brand for the city center by using living treasures in the arts and cultural community.

**Action Steps:**

1. Encourage fairs and/or festivals in the city center with proceeds going toward the preservation of the city center, Old Town and the new Riverside Park.4

   **Responsible Parties:** City Center Task Force; local government entities, Downtown Business Association, North Mankato Commerce Club, Old Town Association, Twin Rivers Center for the Arts, Blue Earth and Nicollet County Historical Societies, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau

   **Timeline:** Committees should be in place 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020. Continue on an ongoing basis ensure future growth in the city centers.

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Local government entities, granting agencies, National Endowment for the Arts, local art community "living treasurers like Marian Anderson and Tom Miller, TRCA, downtown business owners, citizen volunteers.

2. Create a space for the arts community by developing a program to encourage living treasures in community and utilize public arts in the city center.

   **Responsible Parties:** City Center Task Force; local government entities, Downtown Business Association, North Mankato Commerce Club, Old Town Association, Twin Rivers Center for the Arts,

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4 Example: Old Town Festival, RibFest, Brew Fest, Winter carnival etc.
Blue Earth and Nicollet County Historical Societies, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Timeline: Committees should be in place 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020. Continue on an ongoing basis to ensure future growth in the city centers.

Resource Needs/Options: Local government entities, granting agencies, National Endowment for the Arts, local art community “living treasures like Marian Anderson and Tom Miller, TRCA, downtown business owners, citizen volunteers.

3. Create an outdoor space for the music community by coordinating with the Riverside Park and an amphitheater or band shell.

Responsible Parties: City Center Task Force; local government entities, Downtown Business Association, North Mankato Commerce Club, Old Town Association, Twin Rivers Center for the Arts, Blue Earth and Nicollet County Historical Societies, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Timeline: Committees should be in place 6 months – 1 year after Envision 2020. Continue on an ongoing basis to ensure future growth in the city centers.

Resource Needs/Options: Local government entities, granting agencies, National Endowment for the Arts, local art community “living treasures like Marian Anderson and Tom Miller, TRCA, downtown business owners, citizen volunteers.

Community Planning and Regional Governance Sub-Category:
Regional Governance

Goal 1:
Develop an emergency management system for the region.

Rationale:
A need exists for sharing among local units of government all existing and developing emergency management plans to ensure coordinated efforts in times of crisis.

Strategy:
Develop a regional emergency management plan.

Action Steps:

1. Convene a meeting of local government representatives to create the framework for the sharing process.

Responsible Parties: Local units of government of cities and counties
Timeline: 24 months for entire process

Resource Needs/Options: Time of participants; Communication costs from annual budgets of local governments; capital improvements required will come from long term capital improvement plans of local governments and may required increased tax levels; additional resource needs and options will emerge within the process
2. Develop a joint communication plan to ensure that all members of the public have the opportunity to become aware of any and all emergency planning efforts.

**Responsible Parties:** Local units of government  
**Timeline:** 24 months for entire process  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants, additional resource needs and options will emerge within the process

3. Develop and share area-wide evacuation plans for natural and manmade disasters.

**Responsible Parties:** Local units of government  
**Timeline:** 24 months for entire process  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants, additional resource needs and options will emerge within the process

4. Create a public education campaign to ensure that area property owners know and understand the rules governing property insurance for the restoration of their property after catastrophic events.

**Responsible Parties:** Local units of government  
**Timeline:** 24 months for entire process  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants, additional resource needs and options will emerge within the process

5. Identify public and private facilities that have standby electric generation capability for use in emergency situations. Secondarily, identify public facilities where it would be advisable to add standby generation in the future.

**Responsible Parties:** Local units of government  
**Timeline:** 24 months for entire process  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants, additional resource needs and options will emerge within the process

**Goal 2:**
Address regional energy needs.

**Rationale:**
Energy needs is one of many issues that cross municipal boundaries. Regional collaboration on the issue would benefit every locale and save resources for every participant.

**Strategy:**
Collaboratively address the energy needs of the region through the development and implementation of innovative strategies.

**Action Steps:**

1. Convene a stakeholders meeting to discuss regional energy needs for the future.

   **Responsible Parties:** Economic Development KPA, utilities, regulators, legislators, media  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing through 2020  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants
2. Identify key stakeholders including public and private utilities, legislative representatives and state and federal regulators involved in the energy policy decision-making process.
   **Responsible Parties:** Economic Development KPA, utilities, regulators, legislators, media
   **Timeline:** Ongoing through 2020
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants;

3. Inform the public of projected energy needs and availability for the future and the importance of major project development and siting as needed to provide basic energy supplies.

   **Responsible Parties:** Economic Development KPA, utilities, regulators, legislators, media
   **Timeline:** Ongoing through 2020
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants

**Goal 3:**
Develop a regional identity.

**Rationale:**
There is currently a need for a regional identity. Developing an identity for the region will articulate the unique qualities and environment that will assist the region in marketing itself to those outside the area.

**Strategy:**
Develop a shared regional identity of the Mankato/North Mankato region.

**Action Step:**
1. Convene a stakeholders meeting to develop a regional identity that appropriately recognizes all of the entities involved. Seek the involvement of the arts community in identifying design and development.

   **Responsible Parties:** Cities, counties, and Chamber of Commerce, media
   **Timeline:** 24 months
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants

**Goal 4:**
Develop region-wide resource sharing.

**Rationale:**
Sharing resources will provide opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness of local governments region-wide.

**Action Step:**
1. Research and implement opportunities for increased shared services, process efficiencies and economies of scale.

   **Responsible Parties:** Cities and counties, intergovernmental committees
   **Timeline:** Ongoing
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of participants
Community Planning and Regional Planning Sub-Category:
Urban Planning/Urban Villages

Mini-vision:
Mixed use, walkable and bikeable neighborhoods or villages are common with businesses, services, cultural amenities and green space existing in close proximity and reducing the need to drive. This concept applies to new and existing neighborhoods.

Goal 1:
Encourage the development/redevelopment of urban villages

Rationale:
The development/redevelopment of urban villages promotes livability, reduces energy consumption and sprawl and saves agricultural and environmentally sensitive land.

Strategy 1:
Encourage mixed-use zoning.

Action Steps:

1. Review and amend existing land use plans and policies.

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group
   Timeline: 6 months – 1 year
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of city budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning.

Strategy 2:
Increase allowable housing densities.

Action Steps:

1. Review and amend existing land use plans and policies

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group
   Timeline: 6 months to 1 year
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of city budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning.

2. Identify neighborhoods where mixed use would be beneficial

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group, developers
   Timeline: Immediate to ongoing
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of city budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning.
Strategy 3:
Provide incentives to developers for urban villages.

Action Step:
1. Study incentives in other cities and develop incentives for new and existing neighborhoods

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group, developers
   Timeline: Immediate to ongoing
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of City budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning. Enlist assistance from appropriate departments, students, and faculty at MSU.

Strategy 4:
Promote neighborhood identity.

Action Steps:
1. Delineate neighborhoods based on commonalities

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group, developers
   Timeline: Immediate; ongoing for new developments, 2 years for existing neighborhoods
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of City budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning. Enlist assistance from appropriate departments, students, and faculty at MSU.

2. Develop neighborhood organizations.

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group, developers
   Timeline: Immediate to ongoing
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of city budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning.

3. Identify neighborhoods where mixed use would be beneficial.

   Responsible Parties: Cities, townships, counties, neighborhood groups, regional affordable housing group, developers
   Timeline: Immediate to ongoing
   Resource Needs/Options: Consider reallocation of a portion of city budget or grants to neighborhood organizations for organizing and planning.

Measures of Success:
Number of urban villages (new or redevelopments) that have been developed.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chairs:
David Wittenberg
Tom Johnson

Task Force Members:
Jerry Bamberry
Bruce Birkmeyer
Beth Colway
Ted Downey
Brian Duehring
Barb Embacher
Joe Farnham
John Frey
Wade Hensel
Roger Hoechst
David Johnson
Ron Kibble
Bob Kitchenmaster
Elaine Lilly
Gregg Marg
Jack May
John Mayberry
Nancy Pehling
Sarah Person
Tom Riley
Leah Rogne
Sam Roy
Dawn Schaefer
Fred Schumacher
Louis Schwartzkopf
Todd Snell
Donn Vetter
Dan Zielske
Jonathan Zierdt
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mini-vision:
In 2020 we will have a growing, vibrant, diverse regional economy that responsibly leverages the resources specific to South Central Minnesota while promoting Business Development and a high quality of life.

Goal 1:
Energy Diversification

Rationale for Addressing Energy Diversification:
It's the right thing to do. We are exhausting our resources and we need to become regionally self-reliant for our energy. We need to act as stewards of the Earth, and leave the world a better place than we found it.

Strategy 1:
Foster awareness that change is imminent. Define the problem and present solutions. Get the community to buy in and keep them updated of changes.

Action Steps:

1. Establish a unified vision about energy and environment.
   
   Responsible Parties: Energy diversification subcommittee (Convener); regional experts
   Timeline: 1-2 Months
   Resource Needs/Options: Time of the parties involved

2. Gain buy-in from community leaders and citizens
   
   Responsible Parties: City Councils; County Commissions; The Chamber of Commerce; The Regional Development Council; key farm organizations; leaders in higher education, school districts, hospitals, and non-profits; service clubs
   Timeline: 3 months maximum
   Resource Needs/Options: One unified presentation produced by Parties involved; Media Specialist; 8-10 Presenters; Media liaisons

3. Market and deliver the message to the public.
   
   Responsible Parties: Energy Diversification Sub-Committee; local media; a speakers bureau; Individuals to prepare the marketing materials
   Timeline: 3 months
   Resource Needs/Options: Media specialist; 8-10 presenters; media liaisons
4. Find funding mechanisms to support the vision.

**Responsible Parties:** Media via sub-committee talking points; Go forward commitment by MSU-Center for Excellence (lead); organizations willing to give money to spread the vision; auto dealerships, ethanol plants, utilities, service clubs, MSU Mass Communications Department (in-kind donations).

**Timeline:** 3 months

**Resource Needs/Options:** Media specialist; 8-10 presenters; media liaisons

**Measures of Success:**
Endorsement by the community of the creation of, and funding for, an Energy Innovation Center (see Strategy 3).

**Strategy 2:**
Inventory our assets, both human and physical.

**Action Steps:**

1. Identify key businesses and business clusters, including bio-businesses.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED with collaborative support from MSU; Graduate Student or Technical Assistant

   **Timeline:** 1 month

   **Resource Needs/Options:** A good source of the technical assistance would be the MSU Geography Department. Funding of the graduate students, and the time requirements of the mentors of the graduate students, are crucial to the success of these action steps.

2. Identify key agricultural associations and business associations.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED; collaborative support from MSU; Graduate Student or Technical Assistant

   **Timeline:** 1 month

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Funding and time of MSU Graduate Students

3. Identify physical assets by tapping into existing databases and making them accessible (physical assets include our geography, climate, soils, water, and infrastructure).

   **Responsible Parties:** Two Graduate Students or Technical Assistants; experts in the field; GMED; Rural Advantage; collaborative support from MSU

   **Timeline:** 6 months

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Funding and time of graduate students

**Measures of Success:**
The inventory lists are generated.
Strategy 3:
Work toward an emissions neutral/sustainable local economy by conserving energy, increasing energy efficiency and developing renewable energy industries that are versatile and embrace new solutions.

Action Steps:

1. Create a Center of Energy Innovation (CEI) that nurtures businesses to attain our vision.
   
   **Responsible Parties:** Collaborative partnership between MSU and GMED (Primary Champions); the MSU President; the Director of the Greater Mankato Economic Development Corporation; key business leaders; funders
   **Timeline:** 2 – 3 years for creation
   **Resource Needs/Options:** The center would require an executive director and a budget. It would apply for grants to the Department of Energy and to energy supporters’ foundations. It would facilitate Research & Development and be a clearinghouse of information, and provide information on protection of intellectual property. It would provide information on applying for grants to innovators, and would provide some start-up funds. The center could look to Minnesota Technology Inc., for guidance. Competitions and encouragement of best practices would be done under its auspices. A quasi-permanent income source would be essential for its success.

2. Sponsor competitions to encourage innovation and emergency planning
   
   **Responsible Parties:** Collaborative partnership between MSU and GMED; standards setting groups (Building codes, ASHRAE, MPCA, etc.); local institutions, business and governmental; Local citizens
   **Timeline:** A major competition within a year; two or more competitions a year after that (one or more of which may be in elementary schools).
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staffing, program budget

3. Encourage best energy and environmental practices (LEED standards, EPA standards, geothermal, energy audits, etc.)
   
   **Responsible Parties:** Collaborative partnership between MSU and GMED; Energy Industry: Excel, Minnesasco, Calpine, Waste Management
   **Timeline:** Ongoing
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staffing; Funding for the program budget

4. Set CO₂ emission reduction targets for the region, then monitor and publicize progress towards a carbon-neutral economy.
   
   **Responsible Parties:** Local experts, to set and monitor targets; city councils, county commissions; local newspapers, TV and radio stations
   **Timeline:** 6 months to establish targets, then ongoing
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of local experts; cost of monitoring; outreach to media

5. Develop a regional emergency plan for energy shortfalls
   
   **Responsible Parties:** Local experts, to develop the plan; Xcel, Benco Electric, CenterPoint Energy, city councils and county boards
   **Timeline:** 6 months
   **Resource Needs/Options:** The Tompkins County Relocalization Plan (available on the internet) is an example of such a plan.
Measures of Success:
The establishment and financial support of the center for energy innovation (CEI); the development of CO$_2$ emission reduction targets; and the development of a regional energy shortfall emergency plan.

Goal 2:
Optimize our existing resources/businesses to support a livable, sustainable, and regional economy that supports controlled growth.

Rationale for Optimizing Existing Resources:
Optimize our role and resource as a wholesale distribution, industrial, retail, and service-providing center that best serves our region and ultimately results in economic growth in our region.

Strategy 1:
Optimize our role and resources pertaining to distribution outlets and services.

Action Steps:

1. Inventory and measure economic impact of what we distribute.

   Responsible Parties: GMED with additional support by representatives of cities and counties in the region (primary champions); Chamber of Commerce, MSU/SCC/Bethany/Rasmussen/Gustavus, Mary Lou Kudela, Diversity Council, Old Towne Association/City of Mankato, Region 9, City of Mankato, Planning & Zoning, North Mankato, Port Authority, other city economic development personnel in the region
   Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month); Inventory (2 months)
   Resource Needs/Options: Region 9 Reports

2. Identify gaps and conduct needs analysis by:
   - Performing a supply chain analysis
   - Assessing space availability
   - Identifying appropriate projects to fill gaps & fulfill needs
   - Identifying resources to implement strategies
   - Prioritizing strategies
   - Facilitating an initial kick off
   - Developing a report of findings and strategies

   Responsible Parties: Primary champions - GMED with additional support from cities and counties in the region
   Timeline: Gap Analysis (3 months); Test ENS Tool (4 months); Report & Recommendations (5 months)
   Resource Needs/Options: ENS Tool

3. Use gaps and needs analysis to determine real estate Renovation-Reuse-Remodel possibilities by:
   - Conducting an inventory
   - Assessing current uses
   - Providing incentives to businesses for renovations

   Responsible Parties: Primary champions - GMED with additional support from cities and counties in the region; Association of Realtors, developers
   Timeline: Report & Recommendations (5 months) NOTE: Update inventory and gap analysis every 5 years
   Resource Needs/Options: Expertise in land use, property conversions, etc.
Measures of Success:
Specific Actions/Projects are embedded in the cities’ master plans and GMED plans. The region has a Controlled Urban Development Plan.

Strategy 2:
Optimize our role and resources as a health care center.

Action Steps:
1. Inventory regional health related resources by answering the following questions:
   - What do we have?
   - What do we need?
   - What future needs can we predict?
   - What gaps exist with respect to future needs?

   Responsible Parties: Health Care Council (primary champion); ISJ, Mankato Clinic, Outpatient service providers, Open Door Health Center, Third party payers such as BCBSM, YWCA, YMCA, VINE, Social Services, MSU – Center on Aging, ISJ-Mayo Health Systems, Mankato Clinic. Orthopedic and Fracture Clinic, Open Door Clinic, Alternative Options Representatives

   Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month), Inventory (5 months), Assessment (7 months)

   Resource Needs/Options: MSU / SCC / MnSCU HEIP staff; State Dept. of Health; county / regional government; Center for Aging / AgeWell Network; Partners for Livable Communities; health care providers; state and regional agencies

2. Encourage health care providers to create extended regional amenities through the following steps:
   - Develop a report of current and projected resources
   - Promote available resources and increase awareness of the region as a health care center
   - Identify resources and services that may need to be obtained or imported to the community to address needs

   Responsible Parties: Health Care Council (primary champion); ISJ, Mankato Clinic, Outpatient service providers, Open Door Health Center, Third party payers such as BCBSM, YWCA, YMCA, VINE, Social Services, MSU – Center on Aging, ISJ-Mayo Health Systems, Mankato Clinic. Orthopedic and Fracture Clinic, Open Door Clinic, Alternative Options Representatives

   Timeline: Report (10 months)

   Resource Needs/Options: Health care providers; state and regional agencies

3. Identify opportunities to leverage the region’s graduates at all educational levels (high school, college, university) toward health care and related needs.

   Responsible Parties: Health Care Council (primary champion); ISJ, Mankato Clinic, Outpatient service providers, Open Door Health Center, Third party payers such as BCBSM, YWCA, YMCA, VINE, Social Services, MSU – Center on Aging, ISJ-Mayo Health Systems, Mankato Clinic. Orthopedic and Fracture Clinic, Open Door Clinic, Alternative Options Representatives

   Timeline: Ongoing

   Resource Needs/Options: ALL educational institutions, health care employers, related businesses

Measures of Success:
The region enjoys a medical services environment that meets the needs of a diverse and aging population and offers employment opportunities that encourage our graduates to remain in the region to work in health care and related businesses and services.
Strategy 3:
Optimize our region’s human resources.

Action Steps:

1. Utilize our existing and predicted workforce demographic information from the following sources to identify potential available workers by classification:
   - Higher education
   - Technical and other post-secondary schools
   - Elder population
   - Inexperienced workers

   Responsible Parties: Primary Champion: Cities and Colleges Group (Higher Education, GMED, Chamber, Cities/Colleges); MSU, SCC, MNSCU, Gustavus, Bethany, Rasmussen, K-12 schools, Workforce Center, MNRAAA, Chamber
   Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month); Inventory (2-3 months), Develop stakeholders/focus group (2 months)
   Resource Needs/Options: Time of all the parties involved.

2. Strengthen and connect with regional industry.
   - Link businesses
   - Link schools
   - Link business & schools & natural resources
   - Identify opportunities

   Responsible Parties: Cities and Colleges Group; Business Stakeholders (current businesses connected with education)
   Timeline: Research programs and identify new opportunities (180 days)
   Resource Needs/Options: Current Businesses programs with colleges (use as examples to foster more programs)

3. Foster connections between schools and with regional businesses through the completion of the following steps:
   - Inventory programs that link businesses to schools.
   - Establish on-going communication with regional businesses to determine needed skills and match with educational programs

   Responsible Parties: Cities and Colleges Group: Academic Leaders, Strategic Business Associates, Chamber
   Timeline: Ongoing monthly meetings (first year), Quarterly meetings after first year.
   Resource Needs/Options: The Business Portal; Business Accelerator

4. Identify future trends and business needs by:
   - Conducting research on ways to maximize opportunities for older workers and retain/attract a younger workforce.
   - Reporting findings and recommended strategies

Measures of Success:
The region hosts a research park and GMED implements an Executive Education Program. The region implements an Education Plan that considers the needs of a diverse and aging population as well as the region’s employers.
Strategy 4:
Optimize our role and resources pertaining to Natural Resources (e.g., agriculture, food production, mining, soil, wind, water).

Action Steps:

1. Inventory the region’s natural resources by:
   - Determining resource utilization
   - Identifying opportunities for existing resources available
   - Identifying resources available that aren’t being utilized
   - Aligning resources with businesses and/or educational institutions

   Responsible Parties: University of Minnesota Extension Office (primary lead); DNR; Natural Resource Services Providers; Ron Kibble/Agricultural Cooperatives; Quarries (Sand/Gravel, SMC/Unimen); Vetter Stone; Coughlan Companies; New Ulm Quartzite; BEC & Surrounding Counties; MSU Geography Department; Rural Advantage
   Timeline: Create Taskforce Team (1 month); Inventory resources (5 months); Assessment (7 months);
   Resource Needs/Options: City / county documentation of surrounding environment; DNR; Agricultural knowledge (e.g., farmers, cooperatives, agricultural businesses, University of Minnesota Extension); MSU; SCC; Bio-Science Symposium

2. Develop strategy to utilize resources to create an economic impact.

   Responsible Parties: University of Minnesota Extension Office (primary champion); stakeholders from Action Step 1
   Timeline: Report (10 months)
   Resource Needs/Options: Time of stakeholders

3. Align resources in the community, region, and outside the region to promote economic development.

   Responsible Parties: University of Minnesota Extension Office (primary champion); stakeholders from Action Step 1
   Timeline: Review inventory and action plans every 5 years
   Resource Needs/Options: Time of stakeholders

   Measures of Success:
   Master Region AUAR (Alternative Urban Area-Wide Review) is completed,
   Strategy increases economic impact in our community, optimizing available resources while maintaining green space.

Goal 3:
Business Development

Rationale:
If we wish to sustain ourselves as a vibrant community and be a place that people choose to live in, then it is crucial that we focus on development of existing and future business.
**Strategy 1:** Identify existing examples and create additional innovative economic development products and practices.

**Action Steps:**

1. Mobilize the “equity community”. Expand on the inventory list of region-wide assets that has already been created by GMED.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED (champion), attorney, accountant, banker, financial investors. A leader from the group needs to emerge from this group to carry the project beyond GMED.
   **Timeline:** Up to 18 months
   **Resource Options:**

2. Research the Angel Network model, as well as other innovative models.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED can facilitate the research.
   **Timeline:** Up to 18 months
   **Resource Options:**

3. Identify a team of leaders to move the model forward.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED
   **Timeline:** Up to 18 months
   **Resource Options:**

4. Identify what the service area is for the region.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED
   **Timeline:** Up to 18 months
   **Resource Options:**

5. Support, cultivate and nurture regional development efforts by coming together with other communities and develop pro-active steps to collaborate on projects and pooling resources. Explore whether GMED’s Business Accelerator program can be linked with local resources including community development organizations. (Examples of these efforts would be demonstrated in Fairmont and Owatonna.)

   **Responsible Parties:** RCEF, MSU, Region 9 Development Commission, South Central College, SBDC, GMED and various community representatives from non-profit and civic organizations
   **Timeline:** Up to 18 months
   **Resource Options:**

6. Identify business and industries that would best compliment the region’s current portfolio.

   **Responsible Parties:** GMED
   **Timeline:** Up to 18 months
   **Resource Options:**

**Measures of Success:**
A functioning network of resources by the end of 2007.
Strategy 2:
Enhance the ease of doing business in the region.

Action Steps:

   
   **Responsible Parties:** GMED  
   **Timeline:** 60 days from final Envision 2020 session to make contacts and schedule meetings.  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** None required

2. Encourage resource partners in the Business Accelerator to help embed the model into the community by making several presentations, establishing a promotions plan. Possibly co-locate physical space.
   
   **Responsible Parties:** GMED  
   **Timeline:** Working agreement by July 2007  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** None

3. Inventory other resources and more efficiently/effectively make them available for emerging & start-up & entrepreneurial support.
   
   **Responsible Parties:** GMED  
   **Timeline:** August/September 2006  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** GMED time

4. Promote municipal collaboration, same access to this information at all locations.
   
   **Responsible Parties:** GMED  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** GMED time

5. Movement of information - the pipeline for moving data & information (i.e., broadband access, a "portal").
   
   **Responsible Parties:** GMED  
   **Timeline:** The Business Portal is set to launch by September 2006  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** None

Measures of Success:
A better sense of what local municipalities zoning & other regulations issues are as they pertain to doing business; A well-known, well-used model that has ownership by members of the “pipeline”; and A working agreement established and accepted that advances the ACT 2000 model.

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5 Following through with the ACT 2000 Vision for Regional Cooperation.  
6 This issue is also addressed in the Livability KPA
Strategy 3:
Identify what a balanced business portfolio is for this region/area.

Action Steps:

7. Develop an economic profile (trends 10 years +) including the most current demographics on specific communities in our region. Identifying “clusters” to build on.

   Responsible Parties: GMED (champion) and MSU
   Timeline: Up to 18 months
   Resource Needs/Options: Connect with Optimizing Resources task force and collaborate on research.

   Measures of Success:
   A better sense of where we are now, where we are going and how we can get there using these tools. This will provide one more critical tool for the much needed tool box.
EDUCATION

**Chairs:**
Sister Katherine Duval, SSND
Jodi Sapp

**Task Force Members:**
Ron Affolter
Brian Boettcher
Mark Braun
Dan Bruss
Nathan Hanel
Tim Hayes
Steve Jaeger
Aaron Johnson
Mary Lou Kudela
Ben Leonard
Laura Mayberry
April Moen-Johnson
Dhunkal Mohammed
Dana Niu
Brad Radichel
Noell Reed
Will Remmert
Ann Splinter
Stephanie Stoffel
Keith Stover
Lauren Sweers
Bess Tsaouse
Ed Waltman
Corrine Wesley
Ron Yezzi
EDUCATION

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

Goal 1:
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 family unit.

Strategy 1:
Create partnerships to create the lifelong learning environment.

Action Steps:

1. Create “Greater Mankato Area Education Council” in order to raise academic achievement of all learners.
   
   Responsible Parties: P-16 education leaders – including existing Cities/Colleges/University Council, plus business, community, governmental and youth representatives.  
   Timeline: First 6 months: Populate the council through nomination/selection process. Second 6 months: establish governance structure and set initial agenda, ongoing meetings thereafter.  
   Resource Needs/Options: Small budget for printing, mailing, marketing, and funding options: In-kind contributions from participant organizations.

2. Establish “Healthy Family Collaboration” in order to promote the well being of a diverse range of family units.
   
   Responsible Parties: P-16 education leaders, plus government leaders, parent and youth volunteers, Mankato Area Healthy Youth (MAHY), area “family” organizations such as United Way, YMCA/YWCA, Summit Center, ISJ Mayo, Mankato Clinic, Community Assistance for Refugees (CARS), Community Against Domestic Abuse, (CADA). (Future: Community Center and multi-agency early childhood education center).  
   Timeline: First 6 months: Organizational strategies populate the collaboration, set charter. Second 6 months: Establish partnerships, hire staff person, and begin to establish programming.
Resource Needs /Options: Staff and space; Revenue stream to support ongoing programming; Funding options: Bonding / operating referenda (property tax, or tap into additional sales tax); Foundation solicitations and grant writing, contributions from participating organizations, revenue from programming fees.

Measures of Success:
Greater academic achievement for an increasingly diverse population; graduate retention in area workforce; higher graduation rates and greater readiness of high school graduates for post-secondary education; greater % of children ready to learn upon entering kindergarten; strong family health, as measured by education / economic indicators, as well as mental and physical vitality of a community of lifelong learners. Because education professionals largely populate both groups, we are confident that appropriate assessment measurements will be developed to gauge success.

Goal 2:
Assess our current capacity to build global awareness into education.

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 and to cope with increasingly global problems.

Strategy 1:
Conduct a needs assessment to gauge current capacity.

Action Steps:
1. Formulate a Needs Assessment Survey.
   Responsible Parties: A sub-committee formed by the Implementation Committee or possibly an MSU class willing to take on the survey as a semester project
   Timeline: 6-7 months
   Resource Needs/Options: Primarily voluntary contributions and time
2. Distribute survey to educational entities, social organizations, service organizations, business entities, and activity groups. Then analyze results.
   Responsible Parties: Those involved in Step 1 plus all the recipients of the survey
   Timeline: 6-7 months
   Resource Needs/Options: Primarily voluntary contributions and time
3. Form a Global Citizenship Sub council under a Greater Mankato Area Education Council.
   Responsible Parties: Interested community leaders and individuals
   Timeline: 1-2 months
   Resource Needs/Options: Primarily voluntary contributions and time
4. Recommend and implement programs based upon analysis of the Needs Assessment Survey.
   Responsible Parties: Global Citizenship Sub Council
   Timeline: 14 months and ongoing if the project retains value and interest
   Resource Needs/Options: To be determined
Measures of Success:
Completing action steps; raising the level of global citizenship in our community.

Goal 3:
Retain and attract an educated work force.

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

Strategy 1:
Develop seamless leadership and problem-solving skills from grade school through college.

1. Establish an on-going task force that will examine current programs, define outcomes, articulate program content, and study youth involvement.

   Responsible Parties: Ownership for starting the task force will be delegated to the Cities/Colleges/University Advisory Group (in existence)
   Timeline: First six months—Identify collaborative partners
   Resource Needs/Options: No need for special resources at this time.

2. Monitor and cultivate financial support for youth through internships, service learning, grants, and loans to keep young citizens in our community.

   Responsible Parties: Cities/Colleges/University Advisory Group; local government, Public, private educational institutions, K-16; the business community; Non-profit and youth organizations; Directors, coordinators of existing youth leadership programs; Community Services/United Way
   Timeline: Quarterly or bi-annual meetings to examine and chart current programming—completion within two years
   Resource Needs/Options: If needed, develop partnerships with business.

3. Assess public relations needs to ensure that youth learn of the opportunities available in the Mankato area.

   Responsible Parties: Cities/Colleges/University Advisory Group; local government, public, private educational institutions, K-16; the business community; non-profit and youth organizations; directors, coordinators of existing youth leadership programs; Community Services/United Way
   Timeline: On-going; fit organizations into a seamless leadership/ problem-solving curriculum to enhance youth opportunities and encourage youth to stay in the Greater Mankato area.
   Resource Needs/Options: Undetermined at this time.

Goal 4:
Make learning more accessible for all residents in the region.

Rationale:
Our area has a growing diverse population who lack the skills to be effective learners.
**Strategy 1:**
Focus on needs and goals of at-risk students to increase their participation and success in educational programs.

**Action Steps:**

1. Raise by X% our area’s youth and adult participation in P-16 educational offerings by meeting the needs of students with diverse backgrounds and educational goals.

   **Responsible Parties:** P-12 public and private schools; post-secondary institutions; business community; non-profit organizations; Education Council; parents/students
   **Timeline:** From 2007 until 2020
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Operating referendum, state aid allocations, in-kind institutional

2. Work collaboratively to prepare all students to graduate from high school, ready for college.

   **Responsible Parties:** P-12 public and private schools; post-secondary institutions; business community; non-profit organizations; Education Council; parents/students
   **Timeline:** From 2007 until 2020
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Business contributions, P-16 institution contributions

**Strategy 2:**
Provide more diverse staff to meet the needs of students with diverse backgrounds and educational goals.

1. Increase diverse staffing to improve the educational climate for diversity and multiculturalism.

   **Responsible Parties:** Hiring agencies, ensure posting practices include places that provide broader diversity
   **Timeline:** Ongoing; begin as soon as possible
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Education council provides recommended posting locations
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Chairs:
Katie Nerem-Roth
Laura Turk

Task Force Members:
Judy Arzdorf
Bibi Aubakirova
Robert Chesley
Jerry Crest
Pam Determan
Marilyn Frank
Mark Frost
Raymond Ganey
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Jean Holcomb
Sarah Kruse
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Bryan Nermoe
Jennifer Pfeffer
Laura Ribbe
Leah Rogne
Cathy Sandmann
Kathleen Sheran
Ann Splinter
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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 for its citizens.

Health and Human Services Sub-Category:
Prevention and Wellness

Goal 1:
Prevention and Wellness - Enhance prevention activities and produce a mindset of wellness.

Rationale:
The majority of Americans do not follow a healthy lifestyle, causing an increase in obesity, chronic disease and ultimately health care costs. Obesity trends continue upward and diabetes, which has a direct correlation with obesity, is on the rise as well. Through preventative approaches, wellness in the region can be improved and produce rippling results through the community.

Strategy 1:
Improve diet/nutrition and increase physical exercise.

Action Steps:

1. Using the community asset-building approach, convene a community summit bringing together community organizations, businesses, churches, service groups, youth groups, the school system etc., to promote nutritious diets and increased fitness.

   Parties to be Invited to Participate: Convener to be determined; key interests to be invited: health care providers: ISJ/ Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, physical therapists, dietitians, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties; United Way; School District; YMCA; YWCA; Nutrition Educators: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany, U of M extension; Region 9; churches; service groups; businesses (Kato Light)
   Timeline: 6 months
   Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

2. Develop professional resources and corporate sponsors to provide more educational opportunities to consumers regarding healthy choices (e.g. serving sizes, calories, fat content, allergy warnings, etc.

   Responsible Parties: A sub-committee that emerges from the convening; health care providers: ISJ/Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, physical therapists, dietitians, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties; United Way; School District; YMCA; YWCA; Nutrition Educators: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany, U of M Extension; Region 9; churches; service groups; businesses (Kato Light)
   Timeline: 9 months/ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

3. Campaign and network with existing agencies working on incorporating physical activity into daily living.

Responsible Parties: Health care providers: ISJ/Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, physical therapists, dietitians, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties; United Way; School District; YMCA; YWCA; nutrition educators: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany U of M Extension; Region 9; churches; service groups; businesses (Kato Light)
Timeline: 12 months
Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

4. Encourage restaurants to provide better nutritional information about the food they serve (e.g. serving sizes, calories, fat content, allergy warnings).

Responsible Parties: Health care providers: ISJ/Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, physical therapists, dietitians, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties; United Way; School District; YMCA; YWCA; nutrition educators: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany U of M Extension; Region 9; churches; service groups; businesses (Kato Light)
Timeline: 12 months
Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

5. Seek legislative action to increase insurance coverage for nutrition education

Responsible Parties: Health care providers: ISJ/Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, physical therapists, dietitians, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties; United Way; School District; YMCA; YWCA; nutrition educators: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany U of M Extension; Region 9; churches; service groups; businesses (Kato Light)
Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

Goal 2:
Prevention and Wellness Reduce the Number of Greater Mankato Residents who Smoke.

Rationale:
Smoking and the exposure to second hand smoke is a significant health risk.

Strategy:
Use a community asset-building approach to promote smoking prevention throughout the community.

Action Steps:

1. Perform an assessment of legal ramifications for selling cigarettes to minors (both businesses and adults), as well as the legal ramifications for minors who are caught smoking.

Parties to be Invited to Participate: Convener to be identified; Smoke Free Coalition; Health Care providers: ISJ/Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties: schools; law enforcement; city officials; MAHY; faith community; post-secondary education: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany
2. Recognize and support nonsmoking facilities in North Mankato and surrounding areas around the state.

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Smoke Free Coalition; health care providers: ISJ/ Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties: Schools; law enforcement; city officials; MAHY; faith community; post-secondary education: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany
Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Time of participants; Blue Cross/Blue Shield, UCare, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

3. Create, distribute and provide training for an educational toolbox/campaign to be used by a variety of community organizations.

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Smoke Free Coalition; health care providers: ISJ/Mayo Hospital & Clinics, Mankato Clinic System, Public Health – Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties: Schools; law enforcement; city officials; MAHY; faith community; post-secondary education: MSU, SCC, Gustavus, Bethany
Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Time of participants; Blue Cross/Blue Shield, UCare, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

4. Support a legislative agenda to ban smoking in public facilities at the state and local level.

Responsible Parties: City/county officials, state legislators, citizens
Timeline: Immediate
Resource Needs/Options: Citizens; Blue Cross/Blue Shield, UCare, MDH, health care providers, graduate students, private and public grant funding, professional associations

Goal 3:
Prevention and Wellness - Increase activity and meaningful social interaction of individual of all ages.

Rationale:
Social isolation leads to physical and emotional distress, increasing risk for a number of chronic conditions.

Strategy:
Optimize opportunities to increase intergenerational activities.

Action Steps:

1. Promote neighbor block parties and other community building projects (e.g. neighborhood watch, walking school bus).

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Lead to be determined; Chamber of Commerce; city officials; Community Education; individuals; neighbors and neighborhoods; community organizations: YMCA, YWCA, United Way, CAR, La Mano, Open Door, Diversity Council, faith community, students, schools, Mankato Area Healthy Youth
2. Encourage neighborhoods to do their own asset assessment and form neighborhood associations.

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Lead to be determined; Chamber of Commerce; city officials; Community Education; individuals; neighbors and neighborhoods; community organizations: YMCA, YWCA, United Way, CAR, La Mano, Open Door, Diversity Council, faith community, students, schools, Mankato Area Healthy Youth

Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield; United Way; Asset Building Institute

3. Create opportunities for intergenerational projects across the lifespan (mentoring, sharing skills, hobbies, knowledge, labor)

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: city officials; Community Education; individuals; neighbors and neighborhoods; community organizations: YMCA, YWCA, United Way, CAR, La Mano, Open Door, Diversity Council, faith community, students, schools, Mankato Area Healthy Youth

Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Blue Cross/Blue Shield; United Way; Asset Building Institute

Health and Human Services Sub-Category:
Access to Health Care

Goal 1:
Access to Health Care: Ensure access to physical health care for a growing diverse and under-served population.

Rationale:
Since 1900, the percentage of Americans age 65+ has more than tripled from 4.1% of the population to 12.4% of the population in 2000. In 2000 in the U.S. there were 35 million people over the age of 65-representing one in every 8 Americans. As the Baby Boomers age, by 2030, 70 million Americans-twice their number in 2000-will be 65+. At the point, older Americans will comprise 20% of the U.S. population, representing one in every 5 Americans.

The Mankato community is becoming increasingly diverse. An increasing number of residents, region wide, are relying on Open Door Health Center as a means to access health care.

Fewer employers are offering comprehensive health care coverage to employees. The ability to meet co-pays for drugs and preventative health care services is a challenge for many. Funding sources for non-profits is increasingly reduced, jeopardizing services for at-risk populations.

Strategy 1:
Develop a case management system to meet the needs of a growing diverse population.

Action Steps:
1. Create a committee to review what is currently being done to respond to and provide physical health care for an increased diverse population (case management, interpreters, bilingual staff, etc.)
Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Affected governmental agencies: Residency Program/ISJ-Mayo; OFC; Mankato Clinic; Open Door Health Center; Regional Medical Facilities; include leaders from the affected communities

Timeframe: Immediate

Resource Needs/Options: To be determined

2. Identify potential partners to ensure Open Door and ISJ Residency Program can continue to be viable long-term in the Mankato community.

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Residency Program/ISJ-Mayo; OFC; Mankato Clinic; Open Door Health Center; regional medical facilities

Timeframe: Immediate

Resource Needs/Options: To be determined

3. Sustain the mission and vision of Open Door in the Mankato community.

Parties To Be Invited to Participate: Residency Program/ISJ-Mayo; OFC; Mankato Clinic; Open Door Health Center; regional medical facilities

Timeframe: Immediate

Resource Needs/Options: To be determined

Measures of Success:
Greater Mankato residents will have access to health care services.

Goal 2:
Improve access to dental health care.

Rationale:
Dental health care is a crucial part of overall health care. Most dentists do not accept patients on public health care programs or are already at their 20% maximum.

Strategy:
Develop emergency care for uninsured/MA (community-based dental programs) and create legislative action to increase access for MA patients.

Action Steps:

1. Convene a forum to conduct a more in-depth assessment of contributors to dental access issues and provide recommendations.

Parties to be Invited to Participate: Convener to be determined; Open Door Health Center, MSU Dental Program, SCC Dental Program, ISJ-Mayo Health System, Appletree Dental (Madelia), AHAC

Timeline: 2007-2008 (24 months)

Resource Needs/Options: To be determined

2. Leverage support for existing community programs that already meet this need in the community (e.g. Open Door Health Center).

Parties to be Invited to Participate: Open Door Health Center, MSU Dental Program, SCC Dental Program, ISJ-Mayo Health System, Appletree Dental (Madelia), AHAC

Timeline: 2007-2008 (24 months)

Resource Needs/Options: To be determined
3. Explore the idea of bringing U of M Outreach students to Mankato

**Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Open Door Health Center, MSU Dental Program, SCC Dental Program, ISJ-Mayo Health System, Appletree Dental (Madelia), AHAC

**Timeline:** 2007-2008 (24 months)

**Resource Needs/Options:** To be determined

**Goal 3:**
Ensure affordability of local health care.

**Rationale:**
Fewer employers are offering comprehensive health care coverage to employees. The ability to meet co-pays for drugs and preventative health care services is a challenge for many. Funding sources for non-profits is increasingly reduced, jeopardizing services for at-risk populations. Intervention must be taken to change these trends.

**Strategy:**
Ensure a competitive and consumer-driven health care market in Mankato.

**Action Step:**
1. Support processes and public policy that ensure a level playing field and remove development and legislative restrictions.

**Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Mankato Clinic; ISJ-Mayo; OFC; local legislative delegation, government (city and county); third-party payers; South Central Coop

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Resource Needs/Options:** To be determined

**Measure of Success:**
There will be an open and competitive health care market in Mankato.

**Goal 4:**
Improve access to mental health care.

**Rationale:**
Current psychiatrists in the region are becoming older. Payment for psychiatry services is not equitable to primary health care, creating provider shortages. Currently for Psychiatrists per 100,000 people, the National Average is 16. In Minnesota, the average number is 10.

**Strategy:**
Produce legislative action to remove discrepancies in reimbursement to mental health professionals
Action Steps:

1. Invite the appropriate staff member from the Department of Human Services to discuss what the state is doing to facilitate access to mental health services statewide.
   
   **Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Local medical community; Association of MN Counties; MN Medical Assn.; MN Hospital Assn.; county government; South Central Community-based Initiative  
   
   **Timeline:** 2007 (12 months)  
   
   **Resource Needs/Options:** To be determined

2. Pull together stakeholders to determine what a legislative strategy should look like.
   
   **Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Local legislative delegation  
   
   **Timeline:** 2007 (12 months)  
   
   **Resource Needs/Options:** To be determined

3. Leverage existing lobbying machines to focus on this issue.
   
   **Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Local medical community; Association of MN Counties; MN Medical Assn.; MN Hospital Assn.; county government  
   
   **Timeline:** 2007 (12 months)  
   
   **Resource Needs/Options:** To be determined

**Measures of Success:**
Information is provided to legislators, resulting in legislative change.

**Health and Human Services Sub-Category:**
Planning for an Aging Population

**Goal 1:**
Create a community plan for an aging population.

**Rationale:**
Factors such as demographics, health issues, and needs of the aging population are rapidly changing. A vibrant intergenerational community holds in high priority the need to keep the aging population healthy and vibrant.

**Strategy:**
Optimize opportunities for elders in the six areas of wellness: social, intellectual, physical, spiritual, occupational, and emotional (National Wellness Institute).

**Action Steps:**

1. Using the asset-building approach, convene a forum to bring together community organizations to establish a unified vision of lifelong wellness and define goals, objectives, and priorities to fulfill the vision.
   
   **Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Chelsey Breakfast Group (convener); elders & elder-centered organizations; Summit Center; VINE Faith in Action; MNRAAA; AgeWell Network; MAGEC South; MSU: Gerontology, Human Performance, Community Health, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family & Consumer Science, Center on Aging; Recreation; Parks & Leisure, Vital Aging Network;
MSU for Seniors; faith communities; city and county officials; County Public Health and Human Services; health care providers; United Way; YMCA; YWCA; business

**Timeline:** 6 months

**Resource Needs/Options:** Summit presenters: Karl Samp, Partners for Livable Communities, Board on Aging

2. Create strategic partnerships to implement priorities

**Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Chelsey Breakfast Group; elders & elder-centered organizations; Summit Center; VINE Faith in Action; MNRAAA; AgeWell Network; MAGEC South; MSU: Gerontology, Human Performance, Community Health, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family & Consumer Science, Center on Aging; Recreation; Parks & Leisure, Vital Aging Network; MSU for Seniors; faith communities; city and county officials; County Public Health and Human Services; health care providers; United Way; YMCA; YWCA; business

**Timeline:** 3 months

**Resource Needs/Options:** All parties involved to reach out to strategic allies

3. Seek funding to support implementation

**Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Chelsey Breakfast Group; elders & elder-centered organizations; Summit Center; VINE Faith in Action; MNRAAA; AgeWell Network; MAGEC South; MSU: Gerontology, Human Performance, Community Health, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family & Consumer Science, Center on Aging; Recreation; Parks & Leisure, Vital Aging Network; MSU for Seniors; faith communities; city and county officials; County Public Health and Human Services; health care providers; United Way; YMCA; YWCA; business

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Resource Needs/Options:** Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, city and county funding lines, medical community, etc.

**Measures of Success:**
Vision is funded and implemented.

**Strategy 2:**
Undertake long-range planning for state-of-the-art facilities:

**Action Steps:**

1. Work with the KPA implementing the Livability strategy on facilities to ensure that the needs of an aging population are addressed.

**Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Livability Committee; elders & elder-centered organizations; Summit Center; VINE Faith in Action; MNRAAA; AgeWell Network; MAGEC South; MSU: Gerontology, Human Performance, Community Health, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family & Consumer Science, Center on Aging; Recreation; Parks & Leisure, Vital Aging Network; MSU for Seniors; faith communities; city and county officials; County Public Health and Human Services; health care providers; United Way; YMCA; YWCA; business

**Timeline:** Within 6 months upon the completion of Envision 2020

**Resource Needs/Options:** The time and expertise of those who represent the Aging Population subcommittee in this process.
2. Visit several models of successful Senior Centers.

Parties to be Invited to Participate: Livability Committee; elders & elder-centered organizations; Summit Center; VINE Faith in Action; MNRAAA; AgeWell Network; MAGEC South; MSU: Gerontology, Human Performance, Community Health, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Family & Consumer Science, Center on Aging; Recreation; Parks & Leisure, Vital Aging Network; MSU for Seniors; faith communities; city and county officials; County Public Health and Human Services; health care providers; United Way; YMCA; YWCA; business
Timeline: Within 12 months upon the completion of Envision 2020
Resource Needs/Options: Permission to visit senior centers; cost of transportation to model sites.

Measures of Success:
A viable proposal for state of the art facilities to enhance the livability of our community for the aging population is presented to appropriate local government bodies.

Strategy 3:
Optimize appropriate housing options for seniors.

Action Steps:


Parties to be Invited to Participate: City and county officials and agencies (zoning, planning, etc.); developers, architects, mortgage, GMED; Construction Management students; elders and elder centered organizations; State Board on Aging (Healthy Communities Initiative); MNR AAA; Region 9; MSU for Seniors
Timeline: 12 months
Resource Needs/Options: Time and expertise of parties involved, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, graduate student (URSI/Gerontology), Wells Fargo

2. Conduct gaps and needs analysis.

Parties to be Invited to Participate: City and county officials and agencies (zoning, planning, etc.); developers, architects, mortgage, GMED; Construction Management students; elders and elder centered organizations; State Board on Aging (Healthy Communities Initiative); MNR AAA; Region 9; MSU for Seniors
Timeline: 15 months
Resource Needs/Options: Time and expertise of parties involved, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, graduate student (URSI/Gerontology), Wells Fargo

3. Seek partners, developers, and funding support.

Parties to be Invited to Participate: City and county officials and agencies (zoning, planning, etc.); developers, architects, mortgage, GMED; Construction Management students; elders and elder centered organizations; State Board on Aging (Healthy Communities Initiative); MNR AAA; Region 9; MSU for Seniors
Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: Time and expertise of parties involved, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, graduate student (URSI/Gerontology), Wells Fargo
4. Create a demonstration project that optimizes best practices in housing and neighborhood development.

   **Parties to be Invited to Participate:** City and county officials and agencies (zoning, planning, etc.); developers, architects, mortgage, GMED; Construction Management students; elders and elder centered organizations; State Board on Aging (Healthy Communities Initiative); MNR AAA; Region 9; MSU for Seniors
   **Timeline:** To Be Determined
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time and expertise of parties involved, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, graduate student (URSI/Gerontology), Wells Fargo

**Measures of Success:**
A demonstration project is intentionally designed and built to keep the aging population of our intergenerational community healthy and vibrant.

**Strategy 4:**
Maximize opportunities for older adults to enhance the well being of the community through volunteerism and/or paid employment.

**Action Steps:**

1. Collect best practices of communities that have successfully supported the participation of older adults in the areas of Civic Engagement, Arts and Culture, Education, Health and Wellness, and Employment.
   **Responsible Parties:** MSU: Center on Aging, MSU for Seniors and others
   **Timeline:** Within 24 months
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Graduate research assistants, university faculty

2. Conduct an assets analysis in these key areas.
   **Responsible Parties:** Business community, GMED, city & county officials, AgeWell Network, United Way, MNR AAA, Region 9
   **Timeline:** Within 30 months
   **Resouce Needs/Options:** Public agencies, nonprofits, business community

3. Provide technical assistance to businesses and organizations seeking to incorporate best practices in support of older adults.
   **Responsible Parties:** Public, private and nonprofit organizations; city and county officials and agencies
   **Timeline:** 24 months
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time and expertise of professional, business and non-profit organizations and public officials

4. Affirm and acknowledge successes
   **Responsible Parties:** City, county, Chamber of Commerce, nonprofit organizations
   **Timeline:** 24 months
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Awards, Chamber highlights, local press, other media
LIVABILITY

Chairs:
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Kristi Schuck

Task Force Members:
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Julie Storm
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ENVISION 2020 FINAL REPORT  SEPTEMBER 2006
**LIVABILITY**

**Mini-Vision:**
Being a vibrant regional center, Greater Mankato is an attractive & 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 & 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 changing multicultural make-up, while nurturing and advancing 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.

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**Goal 1:**
Enhance Community Aesthetics

**Rationale:**
To ensure that future generations have a sustainable and attractive environment, an important quality of life element.

**Strategy 1:**
Identify actions that each individual or neighborhood can do to beautify, clean, and preserve our community’s natural environment.⁷

**Action Step:**
1. Create a public information campaign to get people involved in neighborhood efforts

   **Responsible Parties:** Park departments & all municipalities and counties in our region; Master Gardeners; garden clubs; schools, colleges, and universities
   **Timeline:** Campaign to start in January/February in order to be ready for spring
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Campaign to start in January/February in order to be ready for spring

**Strategy 2:**
Encourage and motivate each individual to walk, run, or other exercise in the great outdoors – will be measured by usage of trail systems and parks.⁸

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⁷ Overlap/Coordination with Community Planning and Regional Governance
⁸ Overlap/Coordination with priorities of Health & Human Services
Action Steps:

1. Identify all sidewalks or paths in the region (and where they are missing)

   **Responsible Parties:** Mankato/North Mankato City Governments  
   **Timeline:** Completed  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** N/A

2. Conduct a public information campaign on their availability

   **Responsible Parties:** Chamber of Commerce (lead); local government, YMCA, local sports organizations, bicycle clubs, news media, Winter sports clubs  
   **Timeline:** Immediate  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time and resources of parties involved

3. Conduct a public information campaign on the benefits of exercise

   **Responsible Parties:** YMCA  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time and resources of YMCA

**Strategy 3:**
Entice as many people as possible to restore the original wooded environment in all public land locations not otherwise used.  

Action Steps:

1. Identify and contact conservation clubs and others interested in enhancing the environment.

   **Responsible Parties:** Lead Entity To Be Determined; local government, conservation clubs, garden clubs, service clubs, news media, environmental organizations, landscaping companies  
   **Timeline:** Immediate; as soon as resources and volunteers become available for projects identified by local governments  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Trees provided by DNR and local governments, volunteer leaders and workers

**Goal 2:**
Address Affordable Housing and the preservation of housing stock.

**Rationale:**
A key element of livability is the availability and preservation of affordable housing in every part of the region.

**Strategy:**
Form an agency or stakeholder organization focused on housing affordability.

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9Overlap/Coordination with similar ideas in Community Planning
**Action Steps:**

1. Create an agency/organization for the purposes of public buy-in (eventual adoption of standards by local units) and stakeholder buy-in.

   **Responsible Parties:** Lead To Be Determined; Housing Authorities (cities, counties), elected representatives (cities, counties), property managers, homeowners, renters, Partners for Affordable Housing, Mankato Area Foundation, United Way, Southeastern Minnesota Initiative Fund (SMIF), etc., trades/unions, limited rehab specialists, realtors, Habitat for Humanity
   **Timeline:** Two Years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Convener Time; planning resources

2. Develop housing standards for single-family/owner & multi-family/rental and livability/aesthetic quality standards level and type of need to be satisfied (e.g., household size, household income, household expenses—including housing, utilities, transportation [also see Transportation KPA])

   **Responsible Parties:** Housing Authorities, planners, architects, engineers, property managers, owners/renters, MSU, government units who adopt the standards
   **Timeline:** 2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Convener, staff time to write standards

3. Develop neighborhood strategies in the following categories: multi-generational, re-densification (redevelop existing land with new structures at higher densities), urban village (new development) [see Planning KPA] and mixed use (new development & existing redevelopment)

   **Responsible Parties:** Lead organization/agency from Action Step #1, Housing Authorities, planners, architects, engineers, builders, property managers, owners/renters, MSU, strategies adopted by government units
   **Timeline:** Concurrent, 2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Numerous neighborhood/community meetings (convener time and hospitality resources)

4. Determine target properties: inventory existing properties & uses; focus on downtown (older, historic) areas; include selected neighborhood areas

   **Responsible Parties:** Planners, Housing Authorities, Partners for Affordable Housing
   **Timeline:** 5 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Technical Studies

5. Enhance, Develop and Implement assistance programs such as:
   - Loan/grant programs to assist with ownership & rehabilitation
   - Skills banks for craftspeople & contractors with experience in various types of redevelopment & rehabilitation model rental contracts

   **Responsible Parties:** Housing Authorities, Partners for Affordable Housing, elected officials, Foundations/United Way/SMIF/etc., lenders, builders, MSU
   **Timeline:** Concurrent five years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Money for loan/grant programs; money for marketing skills bank (both to craftspeople and to consumers)
Measures of Success:
Agency/organization is created across local government jurisdictions (a regional agency). Common Standards drafted and adopted; Neighborhoods identified; Neighborhood plans developed; Neighborhood plans coordinated with each other; Neighborhood plans adopted by local jurisdictions; Inventory created; Loan/grant program initiated; Skills bank developed and marketed; Model contracts in common use

Goal 3:
Improve information delivery to residents.

Rationale:
It is important to deliver information to our residents about various services and opportunities available in our community, and provide information-givers, residents and others with the ability to access places where services/activities/events, etc., may be coordinated and disseminated.

Strategy:
Create mechanisms to effectively deliver information and for residents to access information.

Action Steps:

1. Gain commitment throughout the region to develop the mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue as a way of getting input and solving problems, and as a tool to articulate the implementation of our envisioning process. Tap into each generation from old to young.

   Parties to be Invited to Participate:
   
   Private Sector: Greater Mankato Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB (Convention and Visitors Bureau), Jonathan Zierdt/GMED (Greater Mankato Economic Development Corporation), Midwest Wireless, Taylor Corporation, Region Nine Development Commission
   
   Public Sector: Public Information Office for the City of Mankato/Mankato Area Public Schools, Blue Earth & Nicollet Counties Public Information Offices, Traverse des Sioux Library System
   
   Non-profits: YWCA, YMCA, SMILES (Center for Independent Living), VINE (Faith in Action), local church coalition group
   
   Education: Lauren Long from MSU SLD/SL (Student Leadership Development & Service Learning)
   
   Radio/Television/Print: KEYC & KTOE: television station manager (Dennis Wahlstrom) & Pete Steiner or Mike Parry, CCTV, Cable Access, Home Magazine, Applauze Magazine, Mankato Free Press and The Land, Static magazine, ConnectBiz magazine
   
   Technology: Dr. Yvonne Cariveau/VoyageurWeb, MSU Information Technology/Brian Schneider, KatoInfo.com; media
   
   Timeline: Immediate; within 18 months
   
   Resource Needs/Options: Expertise of different generations; government agency resources, private corporate sponsors; in-kind services

2. Use technology to connect residents and information providers to coordinate and disseminate information about the community.

   Responsible Parties: Members of the list in Step 1
   
   Timeline: 5 years
   
   Resource Needs/Options: Expertise of different generations; government agency resources, private corporate sponsors; in-kind services
3. Utilize information providers to aid in promotion of delivery system portal by inputting information into system they sponsor/co-sponsor

**Responsible Parties:** Members of the list in Step 1  
**Timeline:** 5 years concurrent  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Expertise of different generations; government agency resources, private corporate sponsors; in-kind services

4. Index services and information providers through computer databases and various community-gathering spots around the Greater Mankato region.

**Responsible Parties:** Members of the list in Step 1  
**Timeline:** 5 years concurrent  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Expertise of different generations; government agency resources, private corporate sponsors; in-kind services

5. Connect various groups via physical & virtual information spots in the community. A possible location for an information hub could be at a future community center.

**Responsible Parties:** Members of the list in Step 1  
**Timeline:** 5 years concurrent  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Expertise of different generations; government agency resources, private corporate sponsors; in-kind services

6. Develop an interactive approach between residents/community leaders/information providers.

**Responsible Parties:** Members of the list in Step 1  
**Timeline:** 5 years concurrent  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Expertise of different generations; government agency resources, private corporate sponsors; in-kind services

**Measures of Success:**
Observe attendance rates, survey's identifying age demographics etc., number of hits on site, number of accessibility ports available to residents throughout region, number of users actually using ports throughout region.

**Goal 4:**
Encourage the development of community center(s).

**Rationale:**
Community centers attract tourists and help spur economic development, provide a place for local residents of all ages to come together, and help create a sense of identity by focusing on our unique assets as a community. With a wide variety of organizations in our community currently seeking space, the need is timely and deserves further examination. The construction of a performing arts center was one of the only goals unfinished from the ACT 2000 community planning process.
**Strategy:**
Assess feasibility of creating a collaborative facility (or facilities) to serve multiple purposes within the community.\(^ {10} \)

**Action Steps:**

1. Form a task force to examine the Community Center issue upon the completion of Envision 2020

   **Parties to be Invited to Participate:** Envision 2020 Implementation Committee; Health and Human Service KPA Volunteers; Cities of Mankato and North Mankato; Open Call to community organizations; architects; developers; Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce; Convention and Visitors Bureau; Greater Mankato Economic Development; Summit Center; Blue Earth Historical Society; Twin Rivers Center for the Arts; YWCA; YMCA; Children’s Museum; District 77; Minnesota State University; Bethany Lutheran College; Salvation Army; Mankato Symphony Orchestra; Carnegie Art Center; ethnic and multicultural Communities

   **Timeline:** Within six months upon the completion of Envision 2020

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020

2. Reevaluate space study from fall 2005 conducted by Paulsen Architects

   **Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1

   **Timeline:** 6-12 months

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020

3. Assess needs of local organizations (to determine the possibilities for collaboration)

   **Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1

   **Timeline:** 6-12 months

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020

4. Determine possibilities for collaboration among groups

   **Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1

   **Timeline:** 6-12 months concurrent

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020

5. Assess available spaces in Greater Mankato – consider existing structures and land for new buildings, work with downtown revitalization efforts

   **Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1; land and property owners

   **Timeline:** 6-12 months concurrent

   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020

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\(^ {10} \) **Additional Rationale for this Community Center(s) Strategy:** Cooperative efforts are more likely to get grant funding, which benefits the individual groups that are part of the collaboration. Sharing of facilities and resources is cost-effective and will benefit smaller organizations. Cooperative efforts help streamline communication and coordinate efforts among organizations. Many opportunities already exist for private/public collaboration, specifically non-profit organizations working with state educational facilities, which could be explored as part of the community center effort.
6. Assess possible funding strategies, public and private – ensure funding sources for maintaining operations after buildings are paid for

**Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1; area state legislators  
**Timeline:** 2 years concurrent  
**Resource Needs/Options:** State bonds, local option sales tax, hospitality tax, implementation of a “Round Up” program on utility bills (similar to “Round up for the Arts” in St. Cloud), foundations, corporate sponsorship, private donations, and capital campaigns

7. Begin implementation and planning of center(s)

**Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1; construction companies  
**Timeline:** 2 years concurrent  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020; State bonds, local option sales tax, hospitality tax, implementation of a “Round Up” program on utility bills (similar to “Round up for the Arts” in St. Cloud), foundations, corporate sponsorship, private donations, capital campaigns

8. Build/renovate center(s)

**Responsible Parties:** List from Action Step 1  
**Timeline:** 4-5 years  
**Resource Needs/Options:** Staff assistance from the Chamber/Envision 2020; State bonds, local option sales tax, hospitality tax, implementation of a “Round Up” program on utility bills (similar to “Round up for the Arts” in St. Cloud), foundations, corporate sponsorship, private donations, capital campaigns

**Goal 5:**  
Increase and raise awareness of diversity in the community.

**Rationale:**  
A more livable community is one that celebrates and respects differences in people.

**Strategy:**  
Develop mechanisms enhance the appreciation, inclusion and participation of the diverse communities in the region.

**Key Players to be invited to participate throughout this initiative:**  
Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council, YWCA, YMCA, Mankato Diversity Kiwanis, MRCI, SMILES-Center for Independent Living, ARC, Harry Meyering, Summit Center, AARP, MSU Seniors, Senior Networkers, MSU Center on Aging, La-Mano, Somali and Sudanese Associations; area churches, Salvation Army, ESL Instructors, Public Safety officers, hospitals, county workers that interact with the public, POW-MIA, VFW, Legion, service clubs, Theresa House, CADA, Citizen’s Voices, school guidance counselors, probation officers/court system, VINE, area higher education schools (MSU, SCC, GAC, BLC), Scholarship America, Meals on Wheels, Echo Food Shelf, MSU Kitchen project

**Action Steps:**

1. Develop a Diversity Leadership Grant that would provide funds for a member of a non-traditional community (immigrant, deaf/blind, physical disability, etc) to participate in recognized leadership training programs.
Responsible Parties: Selected parties from the key players list, YMCA, YWCA, ESL (English as a Second Language) Instructors, GMADC (Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council), Diversity Kiwanis Club
Timeline: Grant established within 5 yrs
Resource Needs/Options: Money, training opportunities, and publicity to get the word out to the communities

2. Increase accessibility and awareness of Diversity Opportunities by creating spaces to meet and places to eat, via Web site, community center bulletin board/newsletter, newspaper, etc.

Responsible Parties: Key players list, groceries and restaurants, area churches, Public Service Announcements (KEYC, radio, Free Press, Home), VoyageurWeb, county social workers.
Timeline: 3 years
Resource Needs/Options: Cooperation from partner organizations, cooperation from community members to share/post events; a part time student internship to go out and gather information and input it

3. Implement a Diversity in Your Workplace Program (similar to what MRCI does for their population available to the immigrant and disabled communities) and provide support for both the employer and the employee, esp. during the initial 3-6 months.

Responsible Parties: Key players list; Chamber, Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council, county, area businesses, MRCI (formerly Mankato Rehabilitation Center, Inc.)
Timeline: 3 years
Resource Needs/Options: Publicity for the program, program development working with MRCI as a resource perhaps with GMADC (Mankato Area Diversity Council) and the Chamber

4. Leverage University Resources by working with MSU faculty, students and student associations to develop programs that bring faculty and staff into the community in places they are not normally visible - nonprofit organization leadership, for profit organizations, speakers for service groups talking about their culture and language.

Responsible Parties: Members from the key players list; Students/Faculty as diversity council facilitators, teaching their first language. Community Education (run classes), MSU student associations, International Student Association, Bethany student/faculty groups, MSU faculty, NAACP - student chapter, SMILES (Center for Independent Living), retired educators, Mankato Diversity Kiwanis, service organizations
Timeline: 4-5 years
Resource Needs/Options: Coordination to find organizations wanting speakers and teachers and match them up with those resources on the various local campuses, $ to pay someone to do this and provide office space (or an organization like GMADC housing this person)

5. Coordinate more Diversity Events throughout the region that are accessible for all people to create enhance an appreciative and welcoming environment

Responsible Parties: Members from the key players list; Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council), Convention and Visitors Bureau, Civic Center, YMCA, YWCA, Summit Center, higher ed schools (Minnesota State University, Mankato, Gustavus Adolphus College and Bethany Lutheran College Performing Arts), School District, entertainment-related businesses, area media, city (send out in water bill)
Timeline: 1 year
Resource Needs/Options: Cooperation of partner organizations, publicity
6. Develop and implement an "Invite a Neighbor Program Invite a Neighbor" program, a city-wide campaign to encourage people to introduce themselves to one neighbor on their block that they don't know and invite their family to join others for a community event (Rockin' in the Quarry, Fireworks at MSU, Solstice festival, etc)

**Responsible Parties:** Members from the key players list; Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Civic Center, YMCA, YWCA, Summit Center, higher ed schools (Minnesota State University, Mankato, Gustavus Adolphus College and Bethany Lutheran College Performing Arts), School District, entertainment-related businesses, area media, city (send out in water bill)

**Timeline:** 1 year

**Resource Needs/Options:** Cooperation of partner organizations, publicity

7. Create safe Spaces by implementing Diversity training for organizations to incorporate culturally sensitive practices into their service delivery.

**Responsible Parties:** Members from the key players list; any area nonprofit organization, GMADC (Greater Mankato Area Diversity Council), AARP (American Association of Retired Persons), Summit Senior Center, Capstone Press (sponsor), United Way (to encourage this in their funding criteria)

**Timeline:** 10 years

**Resource Needs/Options:** Financial resources, larger staff for GMADC, United Way cooperation, 6th grade diversity video and perhaps one produced for adult audience

**Measures of Success:**
Grant exists, a center that is a resource with multiple contacts for each community (speaking different languages), an immigrant on the city council or county board, more diversity in positions of power, a thriving senior center, a vibrant arts center, an active recreation center, more ethnic groceries and restaurants, program existing, more diversity in higher level jobs, support available for diverse people and for employers to ease the initial hire and learning period, more diverse small businesses, events that are done by MSU are done more in the community, so they are accessible, 'What Happens at MSU, Stays at MSU" - stops, GMADC (Mankato Area Diversity Council) with some university people as facilitators and trainers, Bring pan-African, Hispanic night, etc. events off campus, European cultural events - Norwegian, Swedish, Irish, etc. inviting diverse people there also, parades and carnivals that involve a variety of people, that people will know their neighbors, Diversity training for organizations, diversity training will be commonplace for all larger employers, minority being the majority to start in an organization...then integration happens naturally, improvements in lifestyle choices - more opportunities where people feel comfortable, more involvement by immigrant and other communities in traditionally homogeneous situations, a decline in crime and violence incidents, less discrimination happening
TRANSPORTATION

Chairs:
Kathy Brynaert
Joe Duncan

Task Force Members:
Daryl Arzdorf
Lisa Bigham
Mark Dehen
Reggie Edwards
Ryan Granata
Aaron Hager
Mark Halverson
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Georganne Kramer
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Mike Laven
Tim Lidstrom
Marcia Mason
Dennis McCoy
Brent O’Neil
Brad Potter
Richard Reisdorf
Jon Rippke
Chantill Kahler-Royer
Ken Saffert
William Steil
George Sugden
Anna Thill
Al Thompson
TRANSPORTATION

Mini-Vision:
The Mankato/North Mankato 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 region into an exemplary multimodal 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.

Strategy 1:
Work with government entities: supporting, encouraging, and challenges governments to move forward with mass transit (may not be “traditional” vehicles).

Action Steps:

1. Promote contiguous/infill development to support critical mass.
   Responsible Parties: The cities and counties’ planning and zoning departments and assessors could offer planning assistance and/or financial incentives/disincentives in the forms of fees or taxes. Other parties include: city governments, county governments, township governments, Minnesota Department Of Transportation, professional organizations (architects, engineers, developers, consultants)
   Timeline: Immediate and Ongoing
   Resource Needs/Options: Planning staff (city/county/state), user fee(s), state/federal grants, State Aid Funds, special interest groups

2. Create transportation hub that facilitates intra-city and regional transit.
   Responsible Parties: City governments, county governments, township governments, Minnesota Department Of Transportation, professional organizations (architects, engineers, developers, consultants)
   Timeline: Immediate/Ongoing
   Resource Needs/Options: Planning staff (city/county/state), user fee(s), state/federal grants, State Aid Funds, special interest groups
Strategy 2:
Engage/educate a diverse public in the role of mass transit.

Action Steps:

1. Support dialogue among local government, business and the public by addressing:
   - What is available now,
   - What do people want;
   - Use surveys and/or focus groups.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee convenes and forms a sub-group made up of city, county governments, private business and organizations, education community (Independent School District (ISD) 77, Minnesota State University-Mankato (MSU), South Central College (SCC), Bethany Lutheran College (BLC), etc.), media (print, radio, TV, internet), affected populations representatives (persons with disabilities, ethnic, elderly, students, etc.)
   **Timeline:** Immediate and Ongoing
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Higher education institutions, existing promotional campaigns (all levels of government), state/federal Grants, special interest groups, United Way, VINE

2. Develop and roll out an education campaign on the role of mass transit (why the public needs it and should use it, including cost tradeoffs, subsidizing comparison, environmental benefits…)

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Sub-group
   **Timeline:** 1-2 Years for whole process (one year to develop campaign; one year to roll out education materials)
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Higher education institutions, existing promotional campaigns (all levels of government), state/federal grants, special interest groups, United Way, VINE

Strategy 3:
Develop incentive programs for both employers and the public to use mass transit.

Action Steps:

1. Survey cities with success in developing incentive programs

   **Responsible Parties:** Sub-group of Multi-Modal Committee (lead).
   **Timeline:** 1-5 years for whole Goal 1, Strategy 3 process
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Major employer incentive(s), retail business incentive(s), user group incentive(s), state/federal grants, special interest groups, Planning staffs (city/county/state)

2. Work with local governments and business toward a local model.

   **Responsible Parties:** Sub-group of Multi-Modal Committee (lead); Multi-Modal Committee, Minnesota State University-Mankato, South Central College, Bethany Lutheran College – Carless campus (ridership and expertise), City Engineers, Minnesota Department of Transportation, City Directors of Public Works, etc. (regarding funding – what resources are already available to local governments?), Public, Major employers (Immanuel St. Joseph's hospital, Taylor, etc.), assisted living centers, independent living - MRCI, Shuttlers (VINE, Neighbor to Neighbor, Community Assistance for Refugees), Independent School District #77 (currently contract out for their busing – possible collaborations).
   **Timeline:** 1-5 years for whole Goal 1, Strategy 3 process
Resource Needs/Options: Major employer incentive(s), retail business incentive(s), user group incentive(s), state/federal grants, special interest groups, Planning staffs (city/county/state)

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.

Strategy 1:
Promote “Urban Village” concept – Government and developers working together to provide coordinated sidewalks, bike routes, paths, in all areas (both new and existing development).\(^{11}\)

Action Steps:

1. Educate all stakeholders on why the “Urban Village” concept is useful for transportation, environmental, financial, and community-building reasons.

   Responsible Parties: Planning & zoning, city planners, developers, Parks Departments, professional organizations (architects, engineers, other designers, etc.)
   Timeline: 1-2 Years for whole process
   Resource Needs/Options: Health care community, city planning staffs, developer incentives/disincentives

2. Develop incentives to promote desired outcome of more “Urban Village” developments being built in the area, especially in infill areas.

   Responsible Parties: Planning & zoning, city planners, developers, Parks Departments, professional organizations (architects, engineers, other designers, etc.)
   Timeline: 1-2 Years for whole process
   Resource Needs/Options: Health care community, city planning staffs, developer incentives/disincentives

Strategy 2:
Improve bicycling opportunities.

Action Steps:


   Responsible Parties: City and county cartographers, map distributors (phone books, Chamber of Commerce, Southern Minnesota Tourism), city and county governments, Mn/DOT, major businesses, Chamber of Commerce
   Timeline: 1-2 years
   Resource Needs/Options: Special interest groups/organizations, user fee(s), Convention & Visitors Bureau (food & beverage; room tax), health care community

\(^{11}\) Overlap/Coordination with Community Planning and Regional Governance
2. Provide bicycle parking and security.

   **Responsible Parties:** Cities (or require businesses to provide) bike parking, and city police provide security.
   **Timeline:** 1-2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Space for parking, bike racks

3. Participate in bikeway development.

   **Responsible Parties:** City and county governments, Mn/DOT, major businesses, Chamber of Commerce
   **Timeline:** 1-2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Special interest groups/organizations, user fee(s), Convention & Visitors Bureau (food & beverage; room tax), health care community

4. Create an Education Campaign to inform the public and increase use of bike paths. Multi-modal committee sub-group can create the campaign.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Sub-group
   **Timeline:** 1-2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Special interest groups/organizations, user fee(s), Convention & Visitors Bureau (food & beverage; room tax), health care community

**Strategy 3:**
Co-existence education for motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians on safety and responsibilities.

**Action Steps:**

1. Review Davis & Santa Cruz, CA and similar systems as a model to base local plans.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee
   **Timeline:** 1-2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Higher educations institutions, user fee(s), special interest groups, state/federal grants

2. Work with local governments to coordinate (the most appropriate?) approach. Sub-group of the Multi-modal committee will coordinate.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee, MSU, SCC, BLC, ISD 77, Department of Public Safety, Department of Public Works, safety courses (motor vehicle, motorcycle), parents/guardians
   **Timeline:** 1-2 years
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Higher educations institutions, user fee(s), special interest groups, state/federal grants

**Goal 3:**
INTRACITY - Maintain, improve and coordinate an efficient and safe system of streets, roads and trails (infrastructure) throughout the Greater Mankato/North Mankato area.

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

**Strategy 1:**
Coordinate routes for all forms of transportation.

Action Steps:

1. Research current route coordination efforts in order to avoid duplicating efforts.
   
   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee; community groups (bikers, walkers, campers, drivers, etc.), city and county governments, MnDOT, developers  
   **Timeline:** 1-2 Years  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff time of city and county governments

2. Support different levels of government and user groups working together to plan for and provide a cohesive and comprehensive transport system.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee; community groups (bikers, walkers, campers, drivers, etc.), city and county governments, MnDOT, developers  
   **Timeline:** 1-2 Years  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Staff time of city and county governments

Strategy 2:  
Improve traffic safety.

Action Steps:

1. Work with city engineers, law enforcement and business on safety concerns, including traffic lights and signage.

   **Responsible Parties:** Public Safety committee can start discussions between interested parties (including Multi-Modal Committee), and the parties can carry on the cooperative work: city and county Departments of Public Safety, City and County Engineers, city and county elected officials, Chamber of Commerce, Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties Community Health Partners  
   **Timeline:** Immediate  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** City and county staffs, federal grant (safe routes to school), special interest groups

2. Develop education campaign directed to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.\(^{12}\) Multi-modal committee sub-group can create the campaign.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee, city and county Departments of Public Safety, City and County Engineers, city and county elected officials, Chamber of Commerce, Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties Community Health Partners  
   **Timeline:** 1-2 Years (one year to develop educational materials; second year to implement)  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** City and county staffs, federal grant (safe routes to school), special interest groups

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\(^{12}\) See Transportation Goal 2, Strategy 3
3. Develop legislative action to regularize behind-the-wheel exams.

   **Responsible Parties:** Multi-Modal Committee, city and county Departments of Public Safety, City and County Engineers, city and county elected officials  
   **Timeline:** 1-2 Years  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** Time of elected officials

**Goal 4:**  
REGIONAL/INTER-REGIONAL - Enhance and develop a multi-modal transportation system that includes pedestrians, bicycles, motor vehicles, transit rail and air.

**Rationale for Addressing the Issue:**  
In order to increase the number and frequency of commuters to, within, and from the region; increase commerce transactions 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.

**Strategy 1:**  
Conduct two-way conversations and build coalitions among appropriate transportation stakeholders in regard to each of the identified transportation modes.

**Action Steps:**

1. Identify, connect with, and enhance various existing groups working on multi-modal transportation efforts within the region.

   **Responsible Parties:** Region 9 convenes a committee of the interested parties, and then the committee could complete the actions steps 2-5. Other players: Chambers of Commerce, Regional Cities & Counties, Mn/DOT, Mankato Area Transportation Planning Study (MATAPS) Partners, Multi-Modal Committee, Established corridor coalitions (169, 14, MN River Trail, etc.), Airport Commission, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Port Authority, Land to Air Shuttle, elected & appointed officials  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** State/federal grants, special interest groups, city staffs, state program funds, tax increment

2. Identify gaps in areas where such efforts are not being conducted and fill those gaps by replicating successful existing efforts. Replication should be appropriate to the area and not duplicative of other efforts.

   **Responsible Parties:** Sub-committee formed by convened players in Action Step 1  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** State/federal grants, special interest groups, city staffs, state program funds, tax increment

3. Link the various and diverse existing groups working on multi-modal transportation efforts together.

   **Responsible Parties:** Sub-committee formed by convened players in Action Step 1  
   **Timeline:** Ongoing  
   **Resource Needs/Options:** State/federal grants, special interest groups, city staffs, state program funds, tax increment

4. Establish new partnerships when and where needed for developing a multi/intra-modal transportation system without creating unnecessary duplication of existing partnerships.
Responsible Parties: Sub-committee formed by convened players in Action Step 1
Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: State/federal grants, special interest groups, city staffs, state program funds, tax increment

5. Foster and build relationships among communities by bringing them together to learn, share ideas, build synergy and support for a multi-modal transportation system.

Responsible Parties: Sub-committee formed by convened players in Action Step 1
Timeline: Ongoing
Resource Needs/Options: State/federal grants, special interest groups, city staffs, state program funds, tax increment

Strategy 2:
Develop comprehensive action plans for multi-modal transportation system.

Action Steps:

1. Connect communities with transit and trail systems:
   a. New Ulm to Waseca (with hub-type connections).
   b. Le Sueur to Fairmont (with hub-type connections).

   Responsible Parties: Chambers of Commerce, Regional Cities & Counties, Mn/DOT, MATAPS Partners, Multi-Modal Committee, Establish corridor coalitions (169, 14, MN River Trail, etc.), Airport Commission, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Port Authority, Region 9, Union Pacific and Des Moines and Eastern (DM&E), Land to Air Shuttle, elected & appointed officials
   Timeline: 5-15 Years
   Resource Needs/Options: Ecological Analysis Mapping, state/federal grants, tax increment, special taxing district, user fee(s), state aid funds, and state/federal funds

2. Promote passenger and freight rail systems.
   a. Passenger from Mankato/North Mankato to Twin Cities.
   b. Passenger from Mankato/North Mankato to Winona.
   c. Freight through region – North/South and East/West

   Responsible Parties: Chambers of Commerce, Regional Cities & Counties, Mn/DOT, MATAPS Partners, Multi-Modal Committee, Establish corridor coalitions (169, 14, MN River Trail, etc.), Airport Commission, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Port Authority, Region 9, Union Pacific and DM&E, Land to Air Shuttle, elected & appointed officials
   Timeline: 5-15 Years
   Resource Needs/Options: Ecological Analysis Mapping, state/federal grants, tax increment, special taxing district, user fee(s), state aid funds, and state/federal funds

3. Explore commercial air service (access, enhancements).
   a. Passenger air from Mankato to a major hub (Des Moines, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver).

   Responsible Parties: Chambers of Commerce, regional cities & counties, Mn/DOT, MATAPS Partners, Multi-Modal Committee, Establish corridor coalitions (169, 14, MN River Trail, etc.), Airport Commission, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Port Authority, Region 9, Union Pacific and DM&E, Land to Air Shuttle, elected & appointed officials
   Timeline: 5-15 Years
Resource Needs/Options: Ecological Analysis Mapping, state/federal grants, tax increment, special taxing district, user fee(s), state aid funds, and state/federal funds

4. Preserve and enhance the existing roadway system.
   a. Four-lane freeway from Rochester to New Ulm (Trunk Highway (TH) 14).
   b. Four-lane freeway from Sioux City to Twin Cities (TH 60).
   c. Complete four-lane from CSAH 90 to TH 83 (TH 22).
   d. Identified 10-ton routes for cities and counties.
   e. Interchanges key to economic and growth vitality of the community (TH 14/County and State Aid Highway (CSAH) 41 North Mankato; TH 169 at Webster/Lind in Mankato/North Mankato; TH 14/CSAH 12 in Mankato).

   Responsible Parties: Chambers of Commerce, Regional Cities & Counties, Mn/DOT, MATAPS Partners, Multi-Modal Committee, Establish corridor coalitions (169, 14, MN River Trail, etc.), Airport Commission, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Port Authority, Region 9, Union Pacific and DM&E, Land to Air Shuttle, elected & appointed officials

   Timeline: 5-15 Years

   Resource Needs/Options: Ecological Analysis Mapping, state/federal grants, tax increment, special taxing district, user fee(s), state aid funds, and state/federal funds

5. Create transportation hub with connection to intra-city transit.13

   Responsible Parties: Chambers of Commerce, Regional Cities & Counties, Mn/DOT, MATAPS Partners, Multi-Modal Committee, Establish corridor coalitions (169, 14, MN River Trail, etc.), Airport Commission, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Port Authority, Region 9, Union Pacific and DM&E, Land to Air Shuttle, elected & appointed officials

   Timeline: 5-15 Years

   Resource Needs/Options: Ecological Analysis Mapping, state/federal grants, tax increment, special taxing district, user fee(s), state aid funds, and state/federal funds

---

13 Overlap/Coordination with Transportation, Intra-city Goal 1, Strategy 1
NEXT STEPS:
IMPLEMENTATION

A period of transition exists between planning and implementation in visioning projects. It is during this critical period that action plans can thrust themselves forward toward pointed community action and meaningful change and avoid sitting on a shelf.

The steering committee was vigilant in creating mechanisms to ensure that the plan is implemented. Chief among them: forming a committed implementation committee and finding a home for coordinating the ongoing implementation activities.

The steering committee, with the support of the National Civic League, recognized that key principles must be in place to ensure successful implementation. These include:

- Clear and implementable action plans created in the planning process;
- Clarity and agreement on the charge, the expectations, the roles and responsibilities among implementers;
- An effective two-way flow of communication that continues among implementers, the implementation committee, the larger stakeholder group and the community;
- Maintaining the integrity of the stakeholder process through the implementation stages (collaboration, open communication, problem-solving mentality, inclusiveness and belief);
- Maintaining a long-term perspective among all responsible parties;
- Ensuring the implementation mechanisms remain apolitical; and
- Maintaining a mindset of patience and perseverance (i.e., implementation takes time).

The implementation committee will work with the participants from the public, private and non-profit sectors to prioritize the goals and strategies of the Envision 2020 plan and oversee the ongoing implementation of the action plans. They will recruit implementers if no responsible parties stepped forward in the action plan or if an implementer could not uphold his/her role. The committee will address other unforeseen barriers that had arisen during implementation by developing new strategies with reconvened stakeholders. They will provide ongoing support to the implementers and monitor achievement of the benchmarks and deliver progress reports to the community.

While completing the visioning and strategic planning phases are fundamental elements of success, true value of the community effort will be demonstrated by the ongoing implementation of the plans.

It is important to remember that this is a 20-year plan and implementation will require strategic and collaborative efforts on an ongoing basis. The same spirit of the stakeholders to overcome the bumps that emerged in the planning process will continue to be a fundamental part of implementation in the coming years.
## Envision 2020 Mankato/North Mankato Region Civic Index Survey

Please circle the responses below that best reflect your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

### Mankato/North Mankato Regional Community Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Our region has a shared vision of what it wants to become in the future.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Our region has a long-term strategic plan to achieve that vision.</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What happens in the region is largely a matter of chance.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Our region clearly knows what makes itself unique in comparison to other communities.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Citizens in the Mankato/North Mankato Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Citizens feel their participation matters in solving community challenges.</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Most people the region are committed to problem solving to address community issues rather than who is to blame for the problem.</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>It is difficult to get people in the region involved in community activities.</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>It is not difficult to get qualified people to run for office.</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Local Government in the Mankato/North Mankato Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The local governments are accountable to its residents.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Government services in the region are provided equally to all groups and neighborhoods.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Government creates opportunities for citizens to participate in community problem-solving.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Our government shares decision-making power on pressing issues with citizens.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Roles of Non-Profits in the Mankato/North Mankato Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Non-profits collaborate well with each other for available resources.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Non-profits feel it is important to listen to consumers in determining priorities and planning programs.</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Community governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations work together to solve community problems.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Businesses in the Mankato/North Mankato Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The region’s businesses partner with non-profits and schools to improve the community.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Businesses in the region play a philanthropic role in the community.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The region’s businesses encourage community volunteerism among their employees.</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Diversity in the Mankato/North Mankato Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The region recognizes and celebrates the diversity of its citizens (ages, ethnicities, genders, religions, and sexual orientation).</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The region promotes interaction among diverse populations.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Diverse groups (age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation) in the region are involved in community decision-making.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The elected leadership of our community reflects the diversity present in the region.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Information Sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The region is well informed of the plans and goals of its governing body.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The average citizen in the region knows how to access information on public issues.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The media is a credible source of information in the region.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The media regularly focuses on the issues rather than the conflicts that exist.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please circle the responses below that best reflect your agreement or disagreement with each statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaching Consensus</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The region addresses community challenges proactively rather than reactively.</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Though community residents may disagree over ideas, these disagreements do not</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typically lead to a breakdown in progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leaders in the region are able to resolve controversial issues in a win/win</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The region has neutral conveners and forums to resolve pressing community</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflicts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This community is willing to try new ideas to solve community problems.</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crossing Jurisdictional Lines</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The local government in the region works well with neighboring municipalities to address</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>region-wide challenges.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leaders in the region consistently set aside their own interests for the good of the</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broader community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Community agencies and organizations rarely coordinate their activities.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educating Citizens in the Mankato/North Mankato Region</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The region’s residents have ample opportunities to learn about the rights and</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibilities of being a citizen in the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A wide variety of organizations and institutions provide citizen education</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Traditional power leaders support citizen education.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Leadership in the Mankato/North Mankato Region</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The region has programs to develop and encourage emerging leaders.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Our leadership training programs provide avenues for immediate application of</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Our leadership programs develop new leaders that reflect the diversity of our</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing Learning</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Mankato/North Mankato Region rarely repeats the same mistakes over and over</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>again.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Citizens see their community building efforts in the region as on-going and long</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. As a community, the region does a good job of documenting its history.</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The region has a community report card or bench marking system to gauge its</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality of life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IN THE PRESS

Our View -- Envision 2020 needs public input

The Free Press, Published December 18, 2006

It took 25 years, but ACT 2000 has a sequel.

The long-range planning process done 25 years ago helped the area achieve such things as downtown redevelopment and transportation strategy. Now it has a younger sibling. Envision 2020 is today's version of long-term planning for the area.

The new effort deserves community support and needs public input.

The project philosophy is that it takes about 20 years to tackle big projects, and it's entirely up to the community to determine what those goals are.

The Envision 2020 Steering Committee has invited more than 180 people they refer to as “stakeholders” to take part in the process. But that is just a starting point. If you didn't receive an invitation, you are still more than welcome to become involved in the Envision process. The National Civic League, which is facilitating the project, said the stakeholder group needs to be as diverse as possible, representing every major viewpoint, interest and perspective of the community.

There is a schedule of meetings that are open to anyone and everyone. The kick-off meeting is 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Jan. 5 at the Midwest Wireless Civic Center. And beyond the regular stakeholder meetings, sub-committees will address specific interest groups, such as education, economic development and other topics.

The ultimate goal of the Envision 2020 is to figure out a direction and put a plan on paper. The larger group will meet every three weeks for three hours through June. The target is to publish a plan in the early fall.

The group initiated its work when a number of the core group members traveled to Bellingham, Wash., to learn about that community and how it has achieved what it has. Along with getting that information, it is just as important to gather information from within this community to figure out what we already have and where it is we want to go. That can only come from solid, organized planning. And the name for that process in the Mankato region is now Envision 2020.

To become involved in Envision 2020, contact Trisha Rosenfeld at the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce at (507)345-4519 or e-mail her at trosen@greatermankato.com
Selecting goals is often the easy part
Envision 2020 comes up with vision statement

By Dan Linehan
The Free Press, Published February 18, 2006

MANKATO —

Broad agreement and hopeful language prevailed among the crowd of about 150 Envision 2020 participants when they chose a vision statement with flowery, nonspecific language during the most recent meeting, last Thursday.

Communities tend to agree more on where they want to go than on how they want to get there, says Derek Okubo, who is facilitating the process as vice president of the National Civic League.

After all, who can argue that a downtown shouldn't be vital or that the environment isn't worth preserving?

But difficult issues loom on the horizon, and, while Okubo is confident that they can be addressed, the way these issues get resolved will be key to the success of Envision 2020.

Cat herder

Part of Okubo's role is to lead groups of widely diverse people to come together and trust each other. And for that he was given the metaphor of “cat herder” — sort of like a sheep dog, but with animals that would just as soon stare at walls all day as interact with each other.

Humans may be somewhat more sociable than cats, but Okubo says participants in other cities tend to react to adversity by fragmenting and claiming turf.

He expects one of the biggest gains from this project to be the formation of new, stronger relationships. Okubo calls them “soft outcomes” and their goal is to “change the culture of how business is done.”

He’s seen it in all of the roughly 50 cities he’s guided through this community planning process.

Scott Wingerson has seen it, too. He’s the assistant city manager in Gladstone, Mo., a city of about 27,000 that completed Gladstone On the Move about 18 months ago.

“We didn’t anticipate the soft outcomes,” he says, “the positive feelings generated.”

Elephants, gorillas

Wingerson also remembers the “knock-down, drag-out arguments” during which everyone had to air their grievances.

“If it's this big gorilla in the room that nobody talks about, it's hard to get past,” he said.

It’s not yet clear what this area's most contentious issues will be, but the issue of a merger between Mankato and North Mankato arose during the second Envision 2020 meeting, as did the level of cooperation between the two governments.

Tony Filipovitch, an urban studies professor at Minnesota State University, called the merger issue an “elephant in the middle of this region's table” in a Free Press column on Feb. 11.

The key, he said, in resolving this issue and others is to convince everyone that they’ve been heard and that the solutions are agreeable to everyone.

Put another way, it’s about “trying to find what is common that underlies what appear to be our differences,” Filipovitch says. “Some circles you can’t square, but when it comes to that I think you find a way to keep the circle and the square, but most of the time it turns into a polygon.”

So far

Most participants in the first three Envision 2020 have been sincerely participating in the process, said Mary Lou Kudela, who was on the committee that drafted the vision statement. She says there's some skepticism, though, a sense of “who's going to pay for it” and “it's nice for them, but what about me.”
As for that vision statement, Kudela said there was a “fuzzy, but a general sense of where the community should be.” The vision statement was written with the help of about 700 Post-it notes after the first meeting.

Okubo says communities tend to have less trouble at this stage of the process, though that wasn’t the case in Sioux Falls, where participants in Sioux Fall Tomorrow II reported that they never found a consensus on a vision statement.

The stumbling block there was a definition of Sioux Falls: Was it just the city or did it include outlying towns?

But that city, which was undergoing its second planning process with Okubo, said there were very few problems, the vision issue notwithstanding.

“There was very little disagreement when it came to final consensus,” said Candy Hanson, who was on the steering committee for the Sioux Falls effort.

Envision’s future

Divided into three parts, Envision 2020 is about initiation, planning and implementation. The process is now moving into its second stage, when five or six groups will meet, each with a “key performance area.”

It’s not yet clear what the areas will be, though several have emerged as having the most traction among attendees.

They include downtown revitalization, development of an arts center, transportation, government collaboration, economic development, retaining youth and involving seniors.

The project’s progress can be tracked at www.environ­2020.com, where updates are posted, along with presentations and a calendar of events.

**Our View -- Debate creates democracy**

The Free Press, Published April 5, 2006

In another case of positive news, it appears the rest of the country is not following Washington D.C. when it comes to open discussion and debate.

From secret spying by the executive branch to closed-door meetings in Congress, there’s plenty of evidence to suggest we are becoming a society that sees no evil and hears no evil. Washington, it seems, is less willing to discuss the tough issues in open committee hearings.

In a closed door session late last year, lawmakers changed Medicare law to add millions of dollars in cost. And the meetings to discuss the secret spying program, are, ironically enough, mostly secret.

But some local examples suggest the rest of America, or at least Midwesterners, are creating more discussions more debate about the issues of the future.

Mankato’s Envision 2020 process is one of the best examples of how people of differing political stripes are coming together, finding common ground, setting goals and then making a plan to achieve those goals.

The Regional Forum, formerly called Citizens Voices, has restarted its monthly open public policy debates. The group of average citizens usually pick a topic, invite two speakers to discuss both sides of a sometimes controversial topic and then invite the audience to participate.

The Loft and Static magazine are sponsoring a “Speak Out” program at the Coffee Hag to discuss technology and the role it plays in daily life.

Just recently, the Center for Rural Policy and Development received a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation to organize events of civic engagement on rural issues.

The $265,000 will help support the group’s Rural Minnesota Journal, which offers a collection of poignant essays from highly educated individuals on rural issues. The money also will support statewide policy forums and an interactive online atlas of Minnesota.
All of this information, all of this debating not only leads to better solutions to the problems of the day, but it creates cohesiveness in the community. It helps people understand a point of view other than their own.

Debate and discussion are the building blocks of any good public policy in a democracy. It’s good to see those bridges are being built in the heartland, if not in Washington.

Our View -- Envision 2020: Promise and progress

The Free Press, Published April 26, 2006

A group of your neighbors has been meeting about once a month to help plan and decide the future of the place you live.

Their efforts are impressive so far.

The Envision 2020 group was formed to help the Mankato region gather the best ideas from its residents and help map out a plan for the future with the goal of making the Mankato region a prosperous, healthy, aesthetically pleasing place to live.

The group was formed by a handful of community leaders and expanded to include some 150 additional area residents who had an interest in being part of the planning process. The participants represented a good majority of the interest groups and viewpoints in the Mankato region.

The group hired a professional coordinator through the National Civic League who manages the discussion and helps small groups form specific plans. The meetings have been taking place since January and are scheduled to conclude in June with a final report coming out this fall.

Goals will be outlined and strategies developed.

So far, the group has identified Key Performance Areas that include transportation, economic development, livability, health and human services, education and community planning/regional governance.

Committees in each of these areas have defined goals that include, for example, in economic development, attracting industries that match the rather high education level in Mankato. Other goals in that area call for supporting small business and entrepreneurs. In the area of planning, there is a call for the creation of urban villages that encourage pedestrian movement.

Some of the goals call for making Mankato a good place not just for the young, but for the elderly, aiming to create more regionally connected transportation systems and helping plan for the aging of the population with access to health care.

In the area of education, the group has outlined worthy goals of bringing sons and daughters back to Mankato and connecting education with regional job needs.

The livability committee calls for affordable housing, entertainment, diversity, arts and culture and green space.

If even half of the group’s plans are implemented at some point, the Mankato region will be a much better place to live. It's already not a bad place to live, but this planning process could bring the community to the next level.

Envision 2020 is a worthwhile endeavor and a great start to a great future for the region.
Envision 2020 keeps eye on prize
Next meeting will identify responsible parties for each plan

By Dan Linehan
The Free Press, Published May 12, 2006

NORTH MANKATO —
Facilitator Derek Okubo has a word for what happens when a planning process like Envision 2020 gets bogged down in the unknown — or the unknowable — as it looks to nail down ways to accomplish its goals.

He calls it “muck,” and says dozens of Envision participants were busy cleaning it off Thursday night during the latest, and fourth-to-last, meeting.

Some of it came in the transportation subgroup, as planners wondered exactly how far commuters are willing to walk to find a bus stop. Or what, exactly, gets people out of cars and into buses.

They don’t know, but they filled in the spaces with estimates — three blocks sounds reasonable — and agreed to sort out the details once it’s necessary.

Other Envision participants said their planning depends largely on forces they can’t control.

There was talk in the Health and Human Services subgroup that it will take federal action to rein in rising health care costs. And education subgroup co-chair Katherine Duval said it’s “very hard to visualize what education will look like in 2020.”

The location of Blue Earth County’s planned justice center was another murky issue for some. The county prefers a site on Mankato’s edge, while some Envision participants would like to see it downtown.

“What’s Envision 2020 for, if not to make these decisions?” asked Tom Hagen, co-chair of the community planning group.

County officials have made their choice clear, though it illustrates an inevitable clash between Envision and other sources of authority.

Okubo says the remedy for those conflicts is the “safe space” that Envision creates for those authorities to listen, and accept, proposals offered by the group.

It wasn’t all muck, of course, as ideas floated around in that safe space.

Maybe Mankato ought to require that all of its businesses offer health insurance to employees, possibly by buying into a pool. David Johnson, in the economic development subgroup, suggested that someone sponsor demonstrations on converting hybrid vehicles to plug-ins, giving them the ability to use electricity more often.

George Sugden said Mankato ought to require behind-the-wheel driver’s tests every 12 years. Other transportation ideas include bike parking and bus-related focus groups.

Bill Bernhagen suggested that creating urban villages means structuring communities so that “you don’t have to walk far to get everything you want.”

The next Envision meeting, slated for June 1, will focus on identifying responsible parties in each subgroup.

And, if the group’s plans are going anywhere, those responsible parties will need to show up and leave feeling like that have a stake in the outcome.
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