



Hankinson Vision 2019



Planning facilitated by Lake Agassiz Development Group

Contents

The Imperative of Strategic Planning	01
Planning Process	02
Profile of Hankinson	02
SWOT & PEST Analysis	15
Vision Statement	16
Goals and Objectives	17
Plan Maintenance	34



NDSU Institute for Regional Studies

The Imperative of Strategic Planning

Hankinson is not immune from the trends affecting many parts of rural America. Competition with larger cities for jobs, consolidation in agricultural operations, and smaller family sizes among other changes have led to pressures on small communities in maintaining a sustainable population. Fiscal challenges are ever-present. Government budgets often do not have enough for every competing priority, meaning investments must be targeted and have a demonstrable return.

Hankinson is a progressive community with many strong attributes that position it for future success. Periodic evaluations of where the city has been and where it is going allow for a reexamination of its goals and programs. The result of this effort is this strategic plan, the purpose of which is to create a framework from which to evaluate existing and new projects as well as establish consensus so that resources can be better targeted. A strategic plan should build on local assets, shore up local liabilities, and achieve a competitive economic advantage that leads to appreciable and sustainable positive changes. Communities that identify, develop, implement, and evaluate long-term approaches will be the ones that will grow in ways best suited to both their desires and their resources.

Planning Process

The City and CDC initiated the planning process in April 2018 with the convening of a community meeting whereby approximately 50 attendees gathered to discuss their concerns and ideas with fellow residents. Four separate focus groups sessions followed with audiences of younger people, business owners, and commuters. For those unable to attend the community meeting or the focus groups, one-on-one conversations were arranged. Lake Agassiz Development Group staff assisted with the facilitation of these sessions as well as with the collection of the data presented in this report.

A plan was crafted five years prior, therefore an update was deemed necessary. The impetus behind this plan consisted of several issues: the health of the business sector, the condition and availability of housing, and the need to attract and retain younger people. The announcement of Governor Doug Burgum's Main Street Initiative – organized along the pillars of creating healthy and vibrant communities, attracting a 21st century workforce, and building smart and efficient infrastructure - provided additional incentive to reexamine Hankinson's plan.

Profile of Hankinson



A town of almost 1,000 residents, Hankinson is located in southern Richland County 12 miles north of the border with South Dakota and 17 miles west from the Minnesota border.

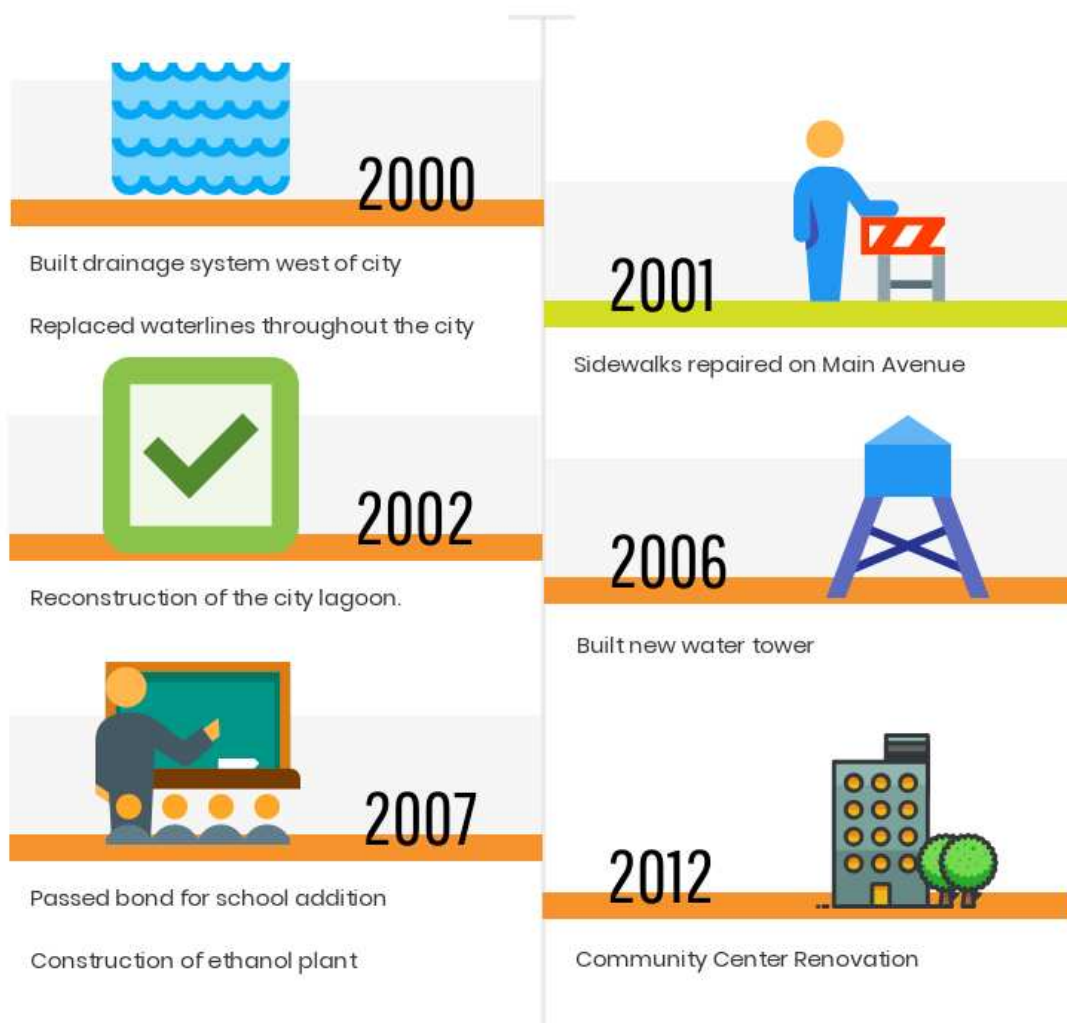
Over the years, the city has developed a reputation of ambition and opportunity that runs counter to the narratives surrounding many rural communities of the struggle to maintain relevance in a rapidly changing world. This does not mean the community's weaknesses and outside threats should be ignored. Instead, examining Hankinson's past and present helps craft the strategies the city will pursue to address those issues.

History

Following the Civil War, the Dakota Territory had the reputation of being a barren unfruitful land with harsh winters and hostile Indians. Stories of successful bonanza farming in the 1870s and 1880s spurred interest among immigrants, mostly of German origin. The railroad built in the 1870s was the chief promoter of the state and its promise for aspiring settlers, who could purchase land through the railroad or obtain it free through the Homestead Act or Timber Culture Act. This marketing in the eastern United States and Europe was successful.

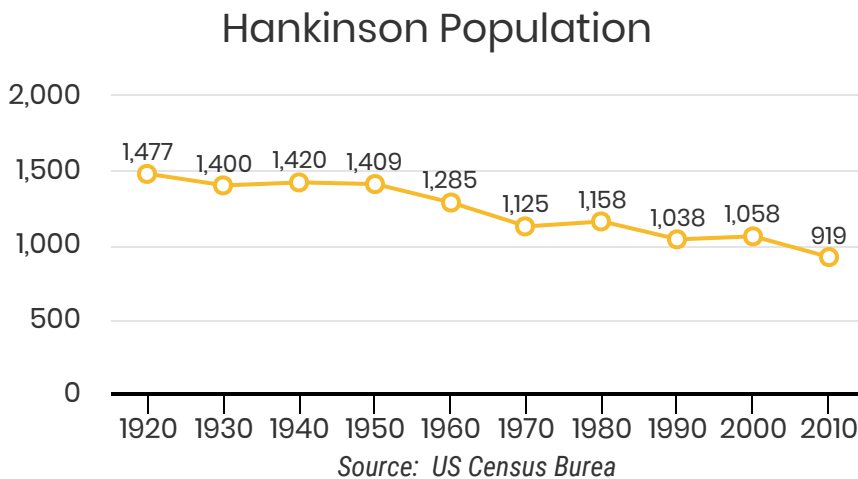
The original settlement was made in 1880 on the homestead claim of Richard H. Hankinson on the shore of Lake Elsie. Col. Hankinson came to the area originally in 1871 after obtaining 2,500 acres upon which he built a mansion that still stands to this day. A post office was established in 1886 and named Kelly but changed within the month to honor Col. Hankinson who was the postmaster at the time and who rendered many services to the nascent community. The railroad, however, found the location of the town too expensive to build a line through and thus decided to construct two miles to the north.

Since the turn of the century, the city has invested in numerous projects aimed at elevating the community and encouraging growth.



Demographics

The adage “demographics is destiny” rings true for many rural small towns as they seek to maintain viability going forward. Concerns about the outmigration of youth, the aging of the remaining population, and the resulting population decline necessitate an informed response. The following graph show the demographic dynamics at play in Hankinson:



The overall decline in population is worrisome in that it becomes more difficult to maintain infrastructure over a smaller tax base, businesses are hurt as the customer base erodes, and the schools face smaller enrollment. If this trend continues, it becomes more difficult to arrest further decline.

However, as seen in this strategic plan, Hankinson has significant assets and advantages that are being utilized which would address this issue.

While population projections are not available at the city-level, the North Dakota Census Office conducted projections by county to the year 2040. Hankinson is in Richland County, the largest city of which is Wahpeton at 7,766 people. Other notable communities include Lidgerwood at 652 and Wyndmere at 429. Under the expected migration scenario, the Census Office predicts the county’s population will inch upwards to 16,723 by 2020, 17,406 by 2030, and 17,968 by 2040. Logically, Wahpeton will absorb most of that growth, but Hankinson is well-suited for an increase in its population itself.

Another concern for many rural communities is the outmigration of young people after their graduation from high school. Career and educational opportunities are more abundant in larger towns, thus presenting a competitive challenge for smaller communities. One way to gauge the extent of outmigration would be to compare the median age with the state and nation. As seen below, Hankinson has an older population overall.

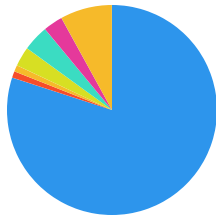
	2000	2010	2016
Hankinson	45.8	48.2	46.6
North Dakota	36.2	37	35.2
United States	35.3	37.2	37.7

Source: US Census Bureau

Households

According to the 2016 American Community Survey, the majority of households in Hankinson are small with slightly over 70% consisting of either one or two people. Approximately 60% are family-based households, meaning those related by blood or marriage live together. This is in line with the state of North Dakota. Several statistics of note are that 19.8% of households are occupied by those 65 years and older living alone while 17.3% are married couples aged 65 and older. Those percentages are almost double the rate for the state as a whole. A quarter of households have related children under 18 years, similar to the rest of the state.

Number of Units in Structure



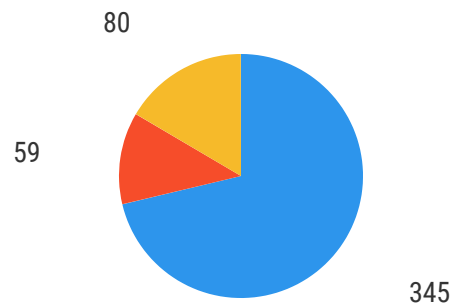
Source: US Census Bureau



Hankinson is primarily a city of owner-occupied housing, although there is a sizable share of units deemed “vacant” per the Census data. Vacancies by their definition include units that are up for sale or rent, those used for seasonal use, those units held empty by the owner’s choice, and those that have been abandoned as the word is commonly used. It is a reasonable assumption that most of the vacant units are in fact owned by “snowbirds”, or those live in town during the summer and who move to southern or western parts of the United States in the winter.

The availability and affordability of housing is an ever-present concern throughout the country since an inadequate supply makes community and economic development more difficult. The housing market in rural communities differ from larger cities, often necessitating extra attention by community leaders. In Hankinson, the vast majority of housing units are single-family detached as seen in the chart to the left.

Housing Tenure

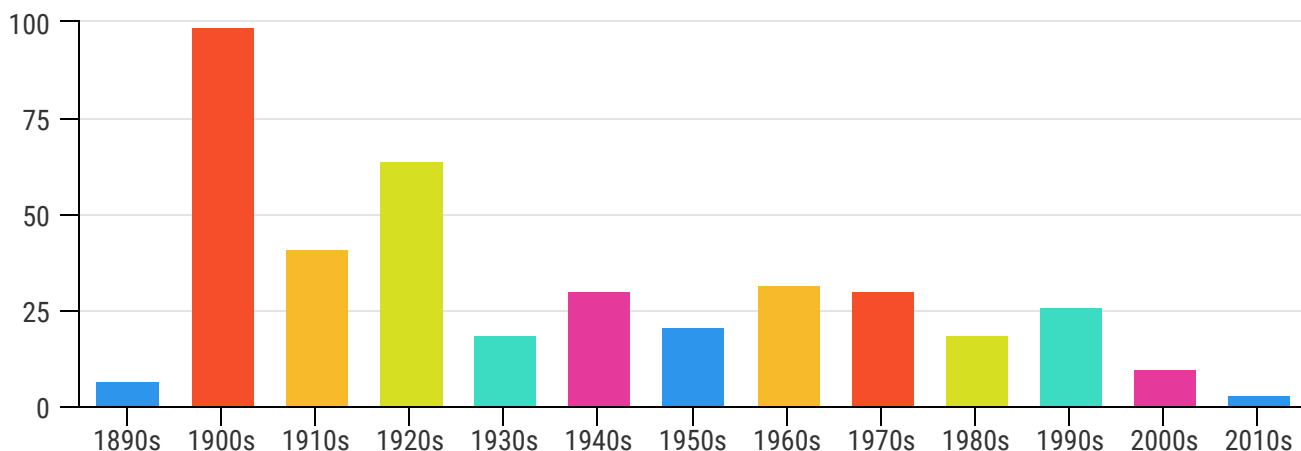


Source: US Census Bureau



A large number of housing units in Hankinson are older, with most being built before 1940 as exemplified in the following chart.

Number of Housing Units by Decade of Construction



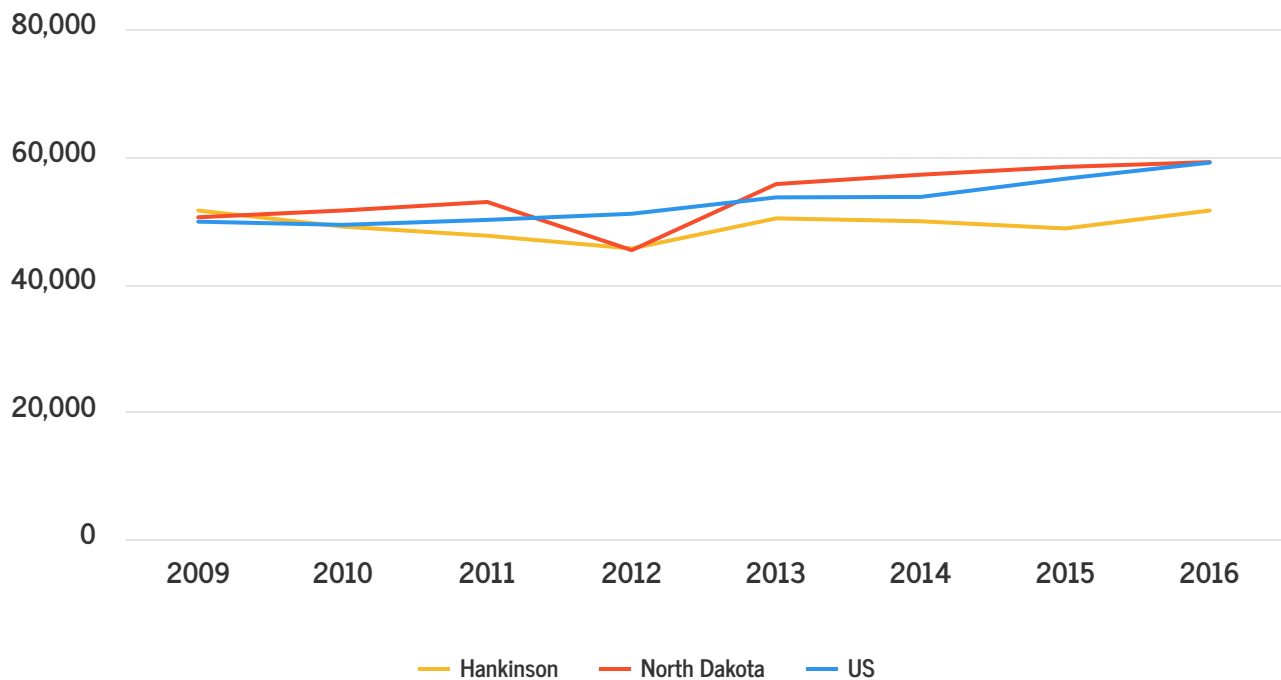
While age should not be considered a good proxy for the condition of the structures, older houses do have the tendency to require more maintenance as well as may not possess the features or space desired by contemporary lifestyles. Additionally, there is a higher probability for those structures to contain the lead-based paint hazards and asbestos that are harmful to human health. The former was banned nation-wide in 1978; the latter was banned in 1973 for fireproofing and insulating purposes.

The affordability of housing is often an equal concern to availability. One measure of whether housing is affordable or not is the standard used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development whereby a household should not spend more than approximately a third of their gross monthly income on rent or mortgage plus utility costs. If those expenditures exceed 30% of monthly income, the household is considered “cost burdened”. Among renters, who again constitute a small share of Hankinson’s residents, the rate is a little over 49%. Among those who own their home, the rate is almost 12%. This disparity is quite common in both rural and urban locations due to the tendency for renters to have lower incomes. The only subsidized affordable housing in Hankinson are the 12-units at Grace Village located at 503 and 507 4th Street NE, which were built with the assistance of HOME funds and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.

Employment & Income

For several years now, North Dakota has had a low unemployment rate and a tight labor market, especially compared to the rest of the nation which has slowly recovered from the Great Recession. As of 2017, Richland County's unemployment rate was 2.4%. This is below what economists would consider full employment. Businesses struggle with finding enough qualified workers, a prospect that is hindering their ability to compete and grow. Adjusted for inflation, median household income in Hankinson has had some fluctuations since 2009, although that could be a statistical artefact due to the smaller sample size associated with the American Community Survey. Nonetheless, Hankinson's median household income is below that of the state of North Dakota's. Poverty is not as acute of an issue compared to the rest of the nation. Richland County's poverty rate was 10.2% in 2016, while the national rate was 12.7%.

Median Household Income

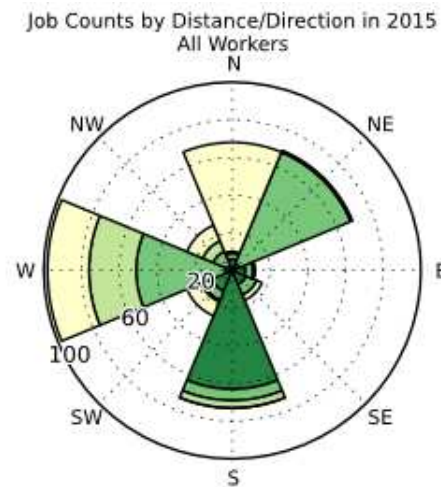
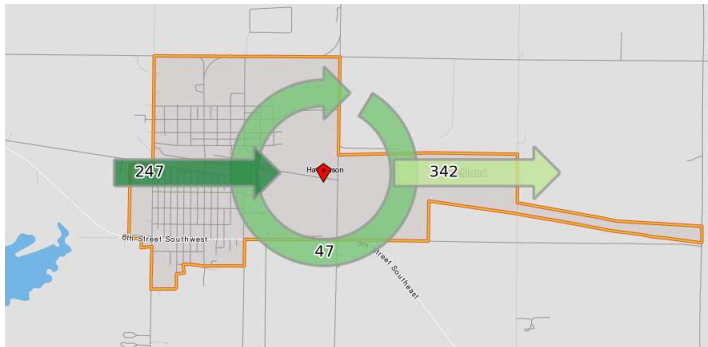


Source: US Census Bureau

For rural towns like Hankinson, the need to create new and retain existing jobs is especially paramount due to the lack of sufficient diversity in the industrial mix. Compared to larger cities, rural communities are often dependent upon a single industry. In eastern North Dakota, that economic sector is typically agriculture.

Commuting Patterns

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, out of the employed residents of Hankinson only 12.1% also work at establishments in the city. The majority are employed elsewhere. There are many, however, who live elsewhere but work in Hankinson. The graphic and chart below breaks down the numbers. This data indicates that the choices of where people live and work is regional in nature.



Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2015		
Employed in the city but living outside the city	247	84.0%
Employed and living in the city	47	16.0%
Total employed in the city	294	100%
Living in the city but employed elsewhere	342	87.9%
Living and employed in the city	47	12.1%
Living in the city	389	100%

Jobs by Distance - Home Census Block to Work Census Block		
	2015	
	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	389	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	107	27.5%
10 to 24 miles	143	36.8%
25 to 50 miles	38	9.8%
Greater than 50 miles	101	26.0%

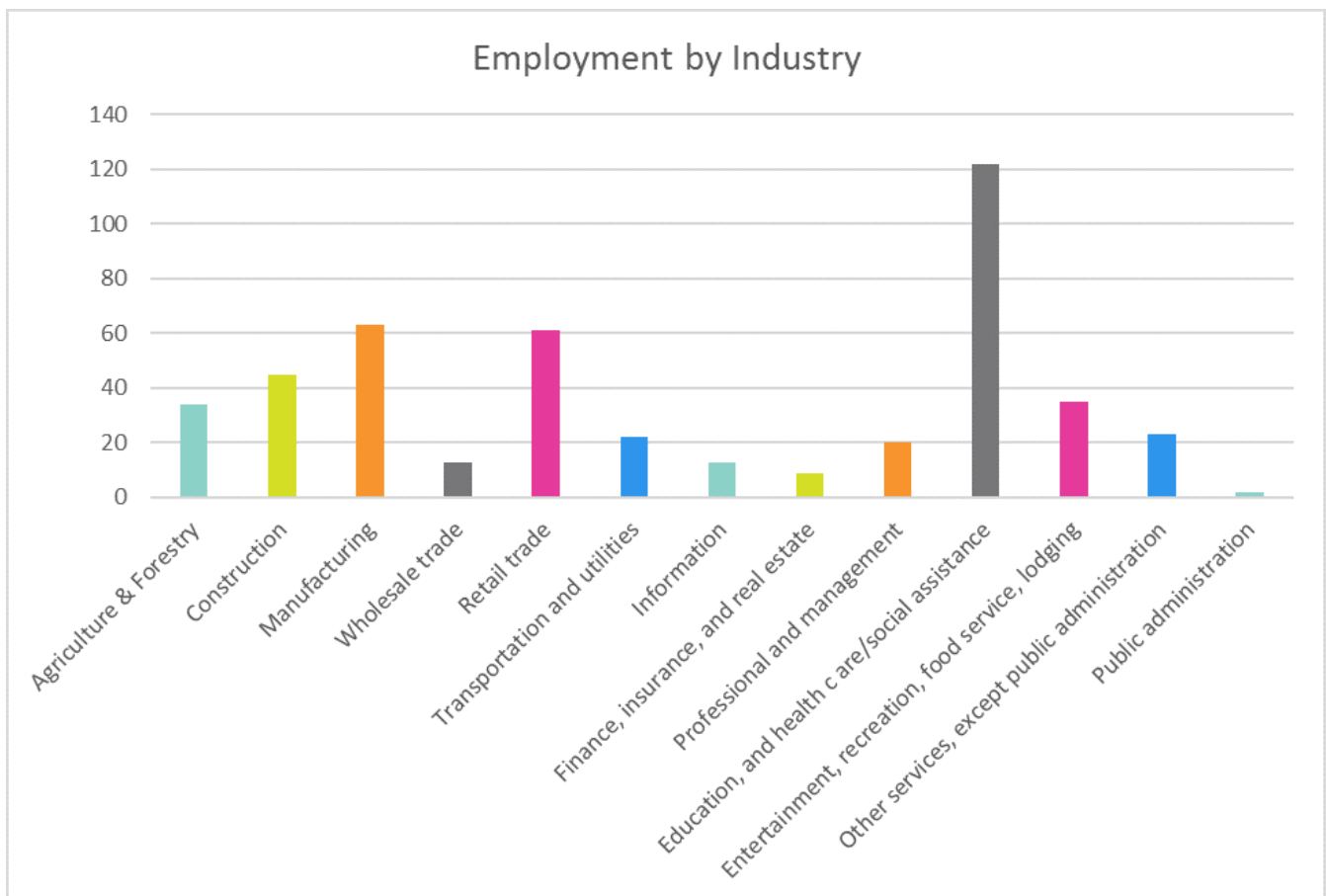
Source: US Census Bureau

Many individuals appear to be employed at Dakota Magic Casino south of the city on Interstate 29; in the City of Wahpeton to the northeast; in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area to the north; and the cities of Lidgerwood, Forman, and Gwinner (highly likely influenced by Bobcat's production plant) to the west.

Retail and service business owners are aware of the general commuting patterns and adjust their hours of operation accordingly. The significant number of residents who commute elsewhere can mean there is an opportunity to tailor those hours to accommodate customers who can only patronize the stores after the end of the traditional 8-5 workday.

Industry Composition

One way of understanding the economic base of a community is to examine the number of people employed per industry. In Hankinson, the two largest industries are educational services, health care, and social assistance and manufacturing. For the former, the prominent employers are St. Gerard's Community of Care with approximately 70 employees and the Hankinson School District. For the latter, the most prominent establishment in that category is Hankinson Renewable Energy's ethanol plant. Education and social services being the largest industry by employment is not uncommon, due to it often being labor-intensive. Manufacturing being second is also not uncommon for rural communities. According to USDA data, compared to urban areas manufacturing represented a larger share of both jobs (14% versus 7%) and earnings (21% versus 11%). This may be the result of proximity to raw materials (particularly for agricultural processing), the competitive wage schedule, and lower property taxes and land costs.



Hankinson has a variety of retail establishments that fulfill the day-to-day basic needs of a household including groceries, hardware, pharmacy, auto-repair shops, and several restaurants. Hankinson also has several businesses, such as the dentist and floral shop for example, that people patronize on a less often basis. The presence of these establishments in a town of Hankinson's size may indicate a customer base that includes those from surrounding communities.

Leadership

The critical ingredient required for a community's vitality is its leadership, both those with formal titles and those without. Inclusive, democratic leadership is necessary to accurately reflect the community's desires and to mobilize resources to carry out development strategies.

Hankinson is governed city council form of government as enabled by N.D.C.C § 40-08. The Mayor serves alongside six council members. The town has several organizations devoted towards advancing the city and encouraging growth. The Hankinson Community Development Corporation (CDC) is the chief economic development entity in the city. Recently, the CDC has established two residential subdivisions in addition to having industrial lots available for potential businesses.

The Housing Authority has or will construct several single-family homes on a speculative basis in the aforementioned subdivisions. The purpose of building speculative homes is to stimulate the local housing market, which has low inventory and little activity. The Hankinson Commercial Club is an organization of local businesses dedicated to promoting a strong business community. The Commercial Club sponsors multiple events that draw in visitors from throughout the region. Oktoberfest and Polka Fest are two of the events that Hankinson is well-known for. Business owners report an uptick in activity during those events. Other active civic groups include the American Legion, Senior Citizens Center, the Park Board, and Cares for Cancer.

An endowment fund for Hankinson has been established with the North Dakota Community Foundation. This is a permanent fund whereby the earnings are made available to support nonprofits. NDCF provides professional management of the fund while a locally-based advisory committee raises funds and selects grant recipients yearly.

Public Safety

Law enforcement is the responsibility of the Richland County Sherriff's Department. Twelve uniformed deputies cover the entire county. One deputy is assigned to the City and lives in Hankinson. The Hankinson Volunteer Fire Department serves the city and surrounding countryside, including the residences on Lake Elsie. Comprised of thirty-five active members, twenty-six are the rank of Certified Firefighter I through the North Dakota Firemen's Association. Mutual aid agreements are in place with Lidgerwood, Great Bend, Mantador, Wahpeton, and Fairmount. The Hankinson Ambulance District also serves the city and surrounding area and is comprised of volunteer members.

Healthcare

Essentia Health has a clinic on Main Avenue that offers lab services and is open four hours a week. The nearest full-service clinics are in Wahpeton and Lidgerwood. Essentia Health evaluates the delivery of services at their clinic locations on a continuous basis. The expansion of services will ultimately depend on the demand from the community and the ability to recruit a provider to the area. Hankinson Dental is a cosmetic dentistry practice located on Main Avenue. This is notable given that towns the size of Hankinson typically do not have their own dentist office.

Education

The Hankinson Public School District is comprised of a highly regarded elementary and high school, under one facility, with a combined enrollment of approximately 250 students. Enrollment has gradually declined since 2010, falling by forty students. The number of graduates each year ranges between seventeen and twenty-one. The small class sizes translates into close-knit cohorts of students. Around 74% of students are enrolled in a career and technical education (CTE) course such as agricultural science, sports marketing, and EMT.

A half-hour drive away is North Dakota State College of Science, a two-year college offering traditional career and technical studies as well as the liberal arts.

Childcare

Finding adequate childcare is a pressing concern for families across the urban to rural spectrum. In Hankinson, there are two home-based childcare operations: Ashley Anderson Daycare and Bonnie Hangaard Daycare. Along with two religious-affiliated childcare centers - Immanuel Child Care Center and St. Gerard's Child Care & Kinder Kollege – Hankinson has several options available. However, data from Child Care Aware of North Dakota finds that less than half of the potential demand in Richland County is being met.

Public Facilities

A town's commitment to establishing a high quality of life can most readily be seen in the investments made in its public facilities. A resident-driven effort to renovate an historic building on Main Avenue created the Hankinson Community Center comprised of separate meeting rooms as well as a fully-equipped licensed kitchen and bar. Numerous events and meetings are held there throughout the year. city hall and library are co-located under one roof, also on Main Avenue.

Recreational opportunities are available at one park in the city and several nearby. Hankinson City Park is centrally-located on eight acres and contains a railroad museum, tennis courts, softball diamonds, playground, basketball courts, and camper hookups. The Park Board offers lessons throughout the summer. Three miles to the northwest within the Sheyenne National Grassland are 15 campsites and 8-mile loop trail. At Lake Elsie is a public access beach and the American Legion Memorial.



Transportation

The automobile is the primary choice for most travelers in and around Hankinson, with almost 95% commuting via private vehicle according to latest Census data. The majority of the city is laid out on the originally platted grid system that is orientated north-south and east-west. State Highway 11 in the southern part of the city runs east to west and offers easy access to Interstate 29.

Since every trip has some segment made by foot, facilities for walking are an important part of the transportation network. According to the American Community Survey, only 4.2% of commuters walked to work while a mere 0.7% biked. This data undercounts the overall demand for walking and biking in that it does not consider children commuting to school and recreational users. Hankinson does not have any dedicated on-street bicycle facilities. However, state law allows bicyclists to use roadways provided that the individual rides as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable.

The low-density in rural parts of North Dakota make the provision of transit services difficult. Valley Senior Services offers rides to Fargo and Wahpeton five days per month for elderly living in Hankinson. Funding for this service comes from Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 formula grants.

The siting of the railroad in the late 1800s was the impetus for the founding and growth of Hankinson. With an economy grounded in agriculture, the efficient moving of goods and crop were vital. Today, Canadian Pacific operates a line from the east and going to the northwest that separates Hankinson, while Dakota Missouri Valley & Western ownership has a connected line that starts at the western edge of the city.

The major customer of rail transportation services is Hankinson Renewable Energy, a corn-based ethanol plant. Deliveries to the plant can lead to trains stopping for a period of time, therefore blocking the three at-grade crossings.



Energy

The city of Hankinson is served by the Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative and Ottertail Power Company. Coal constitutes a large share of the energy source portfolio, providing a consistent generation of affordable electricity. Solar and wind generation capacity has been growing. For example, in 2015 Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative built a 6.56 kW system in conjunction with Northern Plains Electric Cooperative. Ottertail Power Company has been aggressively installing new wind and solar generation capacity over the years.

The availability of uninterrupted natural gas greatly enhances the attractiveness of a town to those manufacturing and industrial users that need it. Hankinson has the Alliance Pipeline nearby and a delivery point that services the ethanol plant. However, there is a need to extend natural gas to south of the railroad tracks. One obstacle in doing so is the need to bore under the rail line, meaning that cooperation from the railroad is required. Anchor tenants will need to indicate they will purchase natural gas, along with residences. The last time this issue came to the public, not enough residents signed on for natural gas service.

Water

The city obtains its water from Southeast Water Users District who source it from the Hankinson Aquifer located in the Sheyenne Grasslands. On a normal day, the treatment plant located in Hankinson treats an average of 600,000 gallons of water which can increase up to 1 million during the summer. Per recent water quality reports, the city of Hankinson receives clean water free from contamination with no recent federal violations. In 2018, the water district took third place in a national competition for best tasting water.

SWOT & PEST Analysis

In order for a community to begin to know where it wants to go, it must assess its current conditions and determine potential futures. The SWOT analysis method is one common way to conduct that assessment. It examines the conditions internal to the community through its strengths and weaknesses plus the external opportunities and threats that exert pressure upon the community but are outside of its control. Additional focus on the external environment is given through the qualification of opportunities and weaknesses as having a political, economic, social, or technological impact.

The planning steering committee conducted a SWOT and PEST analysis at its workshops, and is presented as follows:



P = Political, E = Economic, S = Social, T = Technological

Vision Statement

A community's vision statement summarizes its values that will guide where the community wants to be in the near to mid-term future. The vision statement is a foundational part of the strategic plan that is shared among all stakeholders and community members. It should inspire pride and civic spirit and serve as the benchmark from which to evaluate future actions. The following vision statement characterizes this strategic plan and answers the question, "Where do we aim to be?".

This vision statement was created with input from residents and agreed upon by the plan's steering committee.

"Hankinson will continue to be known for its civically-engaged residents, proactive leadership, great school, and close-knit sense of community. By 2025, it will be known for its range of businesses and services, the selection of quality well-kept homes, and ample opportunities to establish a career. Hankinson will become a community of choice for new and returning residents."

Goals and Objectives

The following statements of goals and objectives are intended to describe the actions the City and its partners can take to directly solve the issues that are holding back Hankinson’s development. Goals are general statements and concepts that reflect the community’s needs. Objectives are specific and measurable ideas that, if implemented, contribute to the completion of the goal. The goals and objectives are listed below in no particular order.

1 Ensure the survival and growth of locally owned businesses

Objective 1.1 - Pilot test a shop local night once per week

Residents indicated an interest in there being one night a week whereby most of the retail stores are open later, in order to accommodate those who commute for work. Currently, many choose to shop where it is convenient where they work. Owners were open to the idea as long as there were enough stores committed and it was promoted. Doing a test run could help to refine the idea before it is implemented on a permanent basis.

Performance Measure	Obtain buy-in from store owners for test run.
Timeframe	Test run will be scheduled for spring 2019
Implementor & Partners	CDC, retail businesses, Commercial Club
Funding	Money for promotional materials



Objective 1.2 - Coordinate a buy local campaign with a loyalty card program.

To encourage people to make more of their purchases in Hankinson, a promotional campaign will be rolled out. This promotion will emphasize the benefits of shopping locally, including the amount of money that recirculates throughout the community. A logo and slogan are to be created which will be added to other handouts, posters, and the city's new website.

A loyalty card is one that customers bring with to each store. If they were to purchase something at a store, their card would be punched. Upon patronizing a certain number of stores, they can enter in a prize drawing. This program can be done during one of Hankinson's community events.

Performance Measure	Design logo and slogan for buy local campaign and order items with logo and slogan to handout (e.g. buttons, t-shirts, posters, etc.) Conduct test run of the loyalty card program. Carry out a loyalty card contest for Polka Fest 2019.
Timeframe	This action can be implemented in conjunction with the rolling out of the evening stores will have extended hours. The test run should be completed by spring 2019.
Implementor & Partners	Commercial Club, retail businesses
Funding	Money for promotional materials



Objective 1.3 - Create a “welcome bag” full of coupons and samples from local businesses

Every new resident who moves into Hankinson shall receive a bag full of coupons and samples from the retail stores in town. The purpose of this is to let the newcomers know that there is a wide range of products already available in Hankinson. It encourages them to go through the doors and check out the shops, in the hopes of creating a long-term customer.

Performance Measure	Obtain participation from retail and service establishments. Order bags and other promotional materials
Timeframe	Spring 2019
Implementor & Partners	Commercial Club
Funding	Money for bags and promotional materials



2

Improve the attractiveness of Hankinson to new and existing employers.

Objective 2.1 - Extend natural gas service to the City of Hankinson.

The lack of natural gas capacity is a major hurdle towards attracting new manufacturing and other industrial businesses. A distribution pipeline is nearby but does not extend into the city or reach the large parcels that the Community Development Corporation owns. Besides cost and figuring out how to pay for it, the chief obstacle to building out a natural gas line is the need to obtain cooperation from the railroad given that the line will go underneath their track.

Objective 2.1 continued

Performance Measure	Work with anchor institutions to get them on-board in signing up for natural gas service. Approach natural gas provider about considering opening up new sign-up period.
Timeframe	Confer with Hankinson’s anchor institutions and businesses by summer of 2019. If there is enough interest, hold discussions with natural gas providers in late 2019 early 2020
Implementor & Partners	Community Development Corporation
Funding	No funding necessary to determine interest.



Objective 2.2 - Promote the high-speed and reliable broadband Internet to potential residents who can work remotely.

One of Hankinson’s assets that can be leveraged for economic development is its high-quality and fast internet service provider. This opens up the opportunity for technology-based businesses, such as e-commerce for example, or for those who can work remotely.

Performance Measure	Consider applying for EPA’s Cool and Connected technical assistance program for better utilization of Hankinson’s internet capabilities. Incorporate the quality internet service into the City’s promotional efforts.
Timeframe	Await EPA’s announcement of Cool and Connected application deadline
Implementor & Partners	City, CDC, Red River Communications
Funding	Local entities may need to allocate a small amount of funds for the EPA-facilitated workshops.



Objective 2.3 - Ensure there are parcels attractive to businesses looking at relocating to Hankinson.

Companies looking to relocate their operations or expand with a new branch take a lot of factors into consideration. Availability of labor, cost of utilities, and access to suppliers and customers are a few of those factors. If Hankinson as a whole meets those conditions, the company will then look for a viable parcel. One method to speed up the site selection process and to improve the chances Hankinson will be chosen is to have parcels that are close to shovel-ready as possible.

Having infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewer, water, electricity, and rail) already constructed on a speculative basis is risky. Instead, Hankinson can pay for engineering or feasibility studies that would provide information on the suitability of parcels for different types and intensities of business or industrial operations. This will save companies time, not to mention making Hankinson be considered in the first place. The reports generated and the data therein will be a valuable tool when attracting new businesses.

Examples of such studies include soil and groundwater investigations, cost estimates for extending utilities and infrastructure, and site-specific design. Two federal programs could defray a part of the cost of hiring professionals to conduct analyses. The first is CDBG, which Hankinson automatically qualifies for given that it meets the low-to-moderate income threshold. The second is through the Economic Development Administration's local technical assistance program.

Performance Measure	Hire engineering firm to conduct soil study on the CDC's 60 acre parcel.
Timeframe	Soil study for 60 acre parcel conducted by end of 2019.
Implementor & Partners	City, Engineer
Funding	The city can have a portion of any studies paid for with either CDBG or EDA funds. EDA can pay for up to 50% of the cost of studies that are part of a strategy leading to job growth.



3

Continue improving the appearance and vibrancy of Main Avenue.

Objective 3.1 - Designate a “slum and blight area” in order to make properties eligible for façade renovation grants.

In 2018, the state of North Dakota added façade renovations as an eligible use of its Community Development Block Grant fund allocation. This was tied to Governor Burgum’s Main Street Initiative priorities. If a property is located within the slum and blight area boundaries, the owner can apply for a grant to pay for repairs and upgrades to the exterior of their structures.

Also within this area, the city can apply for funds to help pay for streetscape improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and parking. Cities can apply for façade renovation grants too for publicly owned buildings.

Performance Measure	Perform slum and blight inventory. Notify property owners of grant availability. Property owners apply for funding with city sponsoring the application
Timeframe	Inventory conducted by April 2019. Property owners can apply in 2019 and subsequent years
Implementor & Partners	City, Lake Agassiz Regional Council
Funding	No expenditures anticipated for "slum and blight area" inventory and designation process.



Objective 3.2 - Establish a small park on Main Avenue

The CDC currently owns a lot between Hankinson Dental and Karizma Salon. Creating a small green area there would enhance the appeal of Main Avenue as well as offering a space for people to rest and recreate. The City will turn to volunteers as much as possible in this effort. A garden club comprised of retired women will more than likely be able to grow and maintain plants for the park.

Performance Measure	Finalize design and do initial plantings by fall 2019. Complete plantings and installation of park features by 2021
Timeframe	1-3 years for completion. Maintenance is ongoing
Implementor & Partners	City and volunteer group
Funding	No funding necessary to determine interest. The cost of the park is to be determined upon the finalization of its design. Volunteer labor will save money and grants can cover a good portion of the costs. Potential grant sources include: AARP's Community Challenge, North Dakota Forest Service's Community Family Forest, National Association of Realtor's Placemaking grant, NTCA's Foundation for Rural Service, US Department of Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund



Objective 3.3 - Install traffic calming measures where permitted and appropriate.

Residents expressed concern about safety hazards resulting from drivers going excessively fast on the state highway as well as Main Avenue. The options for traffic calming on the highway are limited by the North Dakota Department of Transportation and their regulations. A radar speed sign can be allowed, although the cost for its purchase and installation will be borne by the city. More options exist for Main Avenue, which include extending the sidewalk in selective locations (i.e. intersections and at mid-block) out into the street (e.g. bulbs and chicanes), raised medians, tighter corner curbs, and speed bumps or tables. Using temporary and low-cost methods to trial run these changes can help the city determine their effectiveness.

Objective 3.3 continued

Performance Measure	The city's engineer will need to determine the cost and location for the radar speed sign before attempting to obtain permission from the Department of Transportation. The City Council will decide what temporary traffic calming method use and evaluate its results.
Timeframe	Obtain permission from ND Department of Transportation for radar speed sign in 2019. Trial run traffic calming on Main Avenue each spring through fall to find out what configuration works best.
Implementor & Partners	City of Hankinson, city's engineer, ND Department of Transportation
Funding	There are several foundations that offer grant funding for this type of activity such as the following: America Walks' Community Change Grant, State Farm Co. Foundation's Good Neighbor Citizen Company Grants, AARP's Community Challenge



Objective 3.4 - Renovate the second story of the Hankinson Community Center for additional event space and a teen center.

Currently, the second story of the Community Center is vacant and will need to be renovated into usable space. Weddings are a common event held there. Having separate rooms would be beneficial for the wedding party. Also, there is a desire for a year-round center whereby teens can hangout. The remainder of the space can be devoted to that purpose.

One high-cost item in the renovation is the installation of an elevator. CDBG funds can be used for the elevator since it will remove a barrier to those with physical handicaps.

Objective 3.4 continued

Performance Measure	Install an elevator for better access to the second floor. Retrofit the second story, thus reactivating the currently unutilized space
Timeframe	Obtain permission from ND Department of Transportation for radar speed sign in 2019. Trial run traffic calming on Main Avenue each spring through fall to find out what configuration works best.
Implementor & Partners	City, Hankinson Community Center
Funding	As mentioned, CDBG funds can be used towards the installation of the elevator. The cost for retrofitting the second floor space will be borne by the Community Center through cash reserves on hand or loans.



Objective 3.5 - Open a coffee shop and bakery business.

Community members expressed a desire for a bakery to reopen after the closure of Rosie's Bakery. Additionally, the youth who participated in the planning process indicated they wanted to see a coffee shop open up in Hankinson. One stated reason was for there to be a place for them to socialize. Other residents wanted a place where they can hold small meetings for the various organizations in town.

Operating a store of this type is labor-intensive and requires many hours. Therefore, it is imperative to find the right person or group who would be willing to open a coffee shop and bakery. Ideally, that person would be local or would be willing to move to Hankinson. Getting the word out in the area to those with an entrepreneurial disposition would entail showing that there is a high level of demand from the community.

Objective 3.5 continued

Performance Measure	Identify and reach out to community members who may be interested in the idea. Sharing the programs and services available to entrepreneurs will help assuage their concerns and indicate the community backs the idea.
Timeframe	By the end of 2019, an entrepreneur will be found who is on-board with starting a coffee shop and bakery. The following steps is ultimately dependent upon the entrepreneur and his/her timeline.
Implementor & Partners	Community Development Corporation
Funding	In addition to a loan from a bank or credit union, gap financing programs are available which could make the first years of operation easier.



4

Improve the city's housing stock

Objective 4.1 - Continue the building and promotion of speculative homes.

Stimulating the housing market is necessary since the cost of construction is higher compared to urban areas, the demand is not high enough to satisfy private developers, and there is a dearth of comparables from which to gauge the selling price of a house.

The Hankinson Housing Authority has successfully constructed and sold several single-family homes. As of writing, plans were underway to build a new one. These homes are actively marketed to prospective buyers alongside the promotional efforts for the city as a whole. The City should create promotional materials that lay out in an a la carte fashion the range of incentives, the layouts of the speculative homes, and the amenities found in Hankinson. These are an inexpensive and easy way to get the message across at conferences and expos that potential residents attend.

Objective 4.1 continued

Performance Measure	Build one new home Prairie Pines Addition.
Timeframe	Begin marketing home by late 2019 to early 2020.
Implementor & Partners	Housing Authority and Community Development Corporation
Funding	Alongside loans from banks, previous spec homes used gap financing programs such as USDA Rural Development's Intermediary Relending Program. Richland County Job Development Authority could also participate in speculative housing development utilizing their funds from the county mill levy.



Objective 4.2 - Purchase an existing house for rehabilitation and devote the earnings towards a different house.

It may possible to find an existing house in decent shape that can be remodeled and sold, without too much needing to be invested in it. Doing an addition such as adding an amenity like a garage would make the house more marketable. Each prospective house will have to be inspected in order to determine whether it will break even upon its sale. The city may come into possession of houses due to tax forfeiture, but the condition of said houses may be poor enough where renovations are not feasible.

Objective 4.2 continued

Performance Measure	Examine the condition of each house that is listed and those that the city comes into possession of. Upon rehabbing and selling one house, evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy compared to the speculative home construction.
Timeframe	Keeping an eye out for potential rehab-candidates is an ongoing process. The rehab of any number of houses is ultimately dependent on when houses are put up for market or the city acquires them. If this strategy is pursued, the city should have rehabbed at least one house within the next three to five years.
Implementor & Partners	Housing Authority
Funding	The initial funding for this effort can come from funds on-hand used as equity for a loan obtained from a financial institution. The gap financing programs used for the speculative home construction may or may not be used for this purpose. If interested, the City should contact the appropriate agencies regarding program requirements.



Objective 4.3 - Promote the city's Renaissance Zone program as an incentive for those homeowners within the zone.

Property owners can apply for a property tax incentive if they meet the investment thresholds for either new construction or renovations. This incentive program is one valuable tool which encourages infill development, the retrofitting of existing buildings into residential units, and the demolition of dilapidated housing. In the City of Hankinson's Development Plan for the Renaissance Zone, several promotional efforts were laid out. These include inserting a description of the program into residents' utility bills and holding a public meeting that will walk through potential applicants through the process and what benefits they can receive.

Objective 4.3 continued

Performance Measure	Insert in utility bills a description of the program. Hold separate public meetings that allow residents to learn about the program.
Timeframe	Bill inserts should go out near years end when people are more likely to be considering what house projects they will undertake in the coming year. A public meeting should be held in both 2019 and 2021 or as needed.
Implementor & Partners	City of Hankinson and the Division of Community Services within the ND Department of Commerce
Funding	Minimal expenditures are anticipated for these outreach methods.



5

Continue improving Hankinson’s quality of life in order to increase the community’s desirability and to attract and retain new residents, particularly those in the younger generations.

Objective 5.1 - Hold career fairs and job shadowing programs for high school students.

One method of encouraging youth to stay in Hankinson is to expose them to the career opportunities that are present here, whether that be working for an existing company, choosing to establish their own, or eventually taking over a business whose owner is approaching retirement.

As of this writing, efforts towards this objective are underway. The Commercial Club is working on holding a career fair at the school. The Southern Valley Economic Development Authority (SVEDA) will be starting a program whereby students can job shadow and learn about the occupational opportunities in Richland and Wilkin counties.

Objective 5.1 continued

Performance Measure	Hold career fairs with high school students with most in attendance. Enlist three businesses to host students in a job shadowing program.
Timeframe	Career fairs can be done on an annual basis. Roll out job shadowing program for 2019-2020 academic year.
Implementor & Partners	Hankinson Public Schools, Commercial Club, local businesses, SVEDA
Funding	Funds for hosting the career fair would mostly entail materials and supplies.



6

Increase the city's capacity to engage in community and economic development

Objective 6.1 - Hire or contract for a dedicated economic development professional solely for the City of Hankinson.

Currently, a core of dedicated individuals devotes a lot of time and effort towards making Hankinson a better town. Hiring a professional who can shepherd the completion of projects, who can directly assist businesses, and can seek funding will take the burden off of the city's volunteer leadership. That would place the volunteer organizations in Hankinson more into a policy and agenda-setting role.

Objective 6.1 continued

Performance Measure	Determine the tasks the economic developer will be responsible for, craft a job description with salary, and do a cost-benefit analysis of this investment by the city.
Timeframe	Determine the cost of hiring a professional economic developer a month before the next budget will be approved.
Implementor & Partners	City, CDC
Funding	There have been no identified grant programs that would pay for an economic developer. Therefore, the city will have to budget for this position itself.



Objective 6.2 - Expand the number and diversity of those engaged in community leadership through inclusiveness and training opportunities.

Leadership, as practiced in the community setting, often entails an immense dedication and investment of time and other resources from a small core of individuals. These action steps and any new ones in the future may require having new people take point in carrying them out to fruition, perhaps due to the current leaders being “burnt-out” and thus unable to devote any more time or attention to new initiatives.

Expanding the practice of leadership to a wider range of people has several benefits: it assists in the eventual transition from one generation to the next, it brings in new ideas that contribute to the public discourse, and it also engenders a stronger personal attachment to the community. Including youth in leadership may help with eventually retaining them in the community.

Objective 6.2 continued

Performance Measure	Conduct leadership training in the High School. Host leadership training program conducted by NDSU Extension
Timeframe	Implement leadership training program in 2019-2020 school year
Implementor & Partners	Hankinson Public Schools, NDSU Extension, City of Hankinson, Community Development Corporation, Commercial Club
Funding	To be determined. Funds can be allocated to defray the cost for participants.



Objective 6.3 - Engage in economic gardening of businesses already in Hankinson with the assistance of the Edward Lowe Foundation and regional partners.

Economic gardening is a different approach to economic development that focuses on a community's companies that have passed the start-up stage, but have not entered into a stage of expansion. Those so-called second stage companies often do not receive the assistance typically offered to new businesses. It is seen as an alternative to the incentive-heavy approach of attracting in outside companies seeking to relocate.

The Edward Lowe Foundation is non-profit that assists businesses in that stage as well as trains economic developers in the methods of economic gardening. Those businesses that are selected can tap into services in four areas: strategic market research, GIS and ESRI-based analyses, the refining of business models, and access to proprietary databases. Bringing in this outside expertise can help companies identify avenues for growth and perhaps lead to job creation.

Objective 6.3 continued

Hankinson does not have enough of those businesses on its own to make a competitive application to the Edward Lowe Foundation. Partnering with organizations that serve a wider geographic area, such as the Small Business Development Centers or Southern Valley Economic Development Authority for example, is recommended.

Performance Measure	Coordinate with regional partners and commit to applying for ELF grant. Find two or three businesses in Hankinson who would find utility in participating in a regional-led economic gardening initiative. Submit application to ELF and implement program if selected.
Timeframe	In 2019, contact the region's economic development organization or other like organizations to discuss what benefits this endeavor can bring and if it is worth to pursue.
Implementor & Partners	SVEDA, SBDC, Edward Lowe Foundation
Funding	Funding sources are to be determined. Grant funds from USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant could be a possible source.



Plan Maintenance

A community's strategic plan is ideally a living document that is updated and expanded as the city makes progress towards its goals and new opportunities arise. One benefit of formally updating the strategic plan is due to the fact that many funders are now looking for communities to have an up-to-date document that is referred to often. Those entities typically like to see their investments in the community to be a part of a well thought-out strategy which is based on the desires and aspirations of residents. Therefore, the City Council and Community Development Corporation endeavor to review this strategic plan at least on an annual basis. Any updates that are proposed ideally would be brought forward in an inclusive manner to the public for their input and concurrence.

The planning committee will also endeavor to be open to any ideas brought forward by members of the public. This will encourage ambitious citizens to take on a leadership role as they undertake community-building efforts. As the action items are completed and Hankinson makes progress towards its goals, these shall be publicized and celebrated in order to exhibit to the public the positive momentum Hankinson is on.

