



## *Community Development Department*

**DATE:** March 2, 2021

**FROM:** Ben Ehreth, AICP, Community Development Director

**ITEM:** Update on Bismarck's Comprehensive Plan

### **REQUEST**

Receive an update on *Together 2045 – Bismarck's Comprehensive Plan*.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Community Development staff have been anticipating and preparing for an update of the areas Comprehensive Plan titled, *Together 2045 – Bismarck's Comprehensive Plan*. A Comprehensive Plan is commonly used in many jurisdictions across the United States as the guiding document for future growth and development of the physical, social, and economic environment of a community. The North Dakota Century Code requires that zoning regulations for a municipality be in compliance with a Comprehensive Plan. Ultimately, it is anticipated the plan will set forth a variety of goals, policies, and recommendations to guide the present and future development of the community.

Presently, a suite of independently developed plans is collectively serving the intent of a more traditional Comprehensive Plan. Some of these plans include the 2014 Growth Management Plan, the 2014 Fringe Area Road Master Plan, the 2017 Infill and Redevelopment Plan, the 2015 Long Range Transportation Plan, and the 1980 City of Bismarck Policy Plan. Many of these plans are in need of update and it is staff's opinion that combining these independent planning efforts into one document will be more effective as a guiding tool and more user friendly for the public and customers. Additionally, City Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission members, as well as members of the public, have expressed a desire for a unified guiding plan for the community. This plan will provide staff with an understanding of the future policy and regulatory changes needed over the next 25 years to align with community existing and anticipated needs.

The plan will be largely developed by Community Development department staff in collaboration with public entities in the community, such as but not limited to Bismarck Public Schools, Burleigh County; Bismarck Parks and Recreation, and the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber EDC. Staff will begin reaching out to these and many other partners

in the community as we begin the update of the Comprehensive Plan. A robust public involvement campaign is planned and attached for your reference.

The various elements the plan will address include the following:

- Bismarck's Growth History
- Socio-Economic Profile
- Land Use and Urban Form (Future Land Use, Existing Neighborhoods, and Downtown)
- Community Facilities (Schools, Parks, Intergovernmental Cooperation)
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Social (Arts and Culture, Recreation, and Governance and Participation)
- Natural Resources
- Natural Hazards
- Growth Management
- Economy
- Housing
- Health
- Historic Preservation
- Public Safety

The plan will support all Strategic Focus Areas (Signature Spaces, All Ages and All Wages, Social Health, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business Hub, Complete Connectivity, and Government Excellence), as well as a variety of associated specific objectives.

### **RECOMMENDED CITY COMMISSION ACTION**

Receive the presentation on the update of *Together 2045 – Bismarck's Comprehensive Plan*.

### **STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

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# CITY OF BISMARCK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Public Participation Plan

This document outlines the purpose, objectives, and proposed activities for engaging the public in the creation of the Bismarck Comprehensive Plan. The process will be initiated in January of 2021 with a targeted adoption by the end of the 2022 calendar year.

### Purpose:

Engaging the public in the process of creating a comprehensive plan serves many purposes:

1. Gather information from residents and businesses that have direct knowledge of their own neighborhood or specialty.
2. Align the vision of the plan with the aspirations of members of the community.
3. Demonstrate broad community support for the plan to convey to elected officials.
4. Strengthen the legitimacy of the adopted plan as the goals and objectives are implemented.

### Objectives:

Staff will be guided by the following overall objectives in terms of public participation activities:

1. Provide an opportunity for all members of the community to participate. Staff will take intentional steps to ensure a broad cross-section is able to provide input. This includes:
  - a. Residents of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and economic status. Different approaches may be necessary to reach youth and seniors.

- b. Residents within the entire geographic scope of the plan, both the city and the ETA.
  - c. Representatives from the business community, especially development interests, as well as the general public, which includes renters as well as homeowners.
2. Ensure and demonstrate a meaningful connection between the input gathered and the actual content of the plan.
3. Utilize a variety of means for participation, including different media (e.g. online and meetings), locations, and times. To the greatest extent possible, leverage programming and institutional capacity that is already available in the community.
4. Document all activities, comments received, notes from meetings, and other information generated through the process and make available to the public, within the bounds of protecting privacy for commenters and survey-takers.
5. Follow all current public health guidance for in-person gatherings. Remote or online means may take precedence in the early phases of the process, with potential for in-person methods, especially involving larger groups, later in the process as advised.
6. Meet all legal obligations for formal public hearings and notice with governing bodies, as well as open meetings for all committee meetings and public workshops.
7. Complaints, concerns, and comments received during the process related to actions taken by City staff will be forwarded to the appropriate department head.

Activity	Description	Audience	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<b>Planning and Zoning Commission Updates</b>	Brief Commission on the status of the Plan and accept guidance. Information can also be conveyed to the City Commission.	Planning and Zoning Commission	Monthly	The governing body is informed throughout and given the opportunity to provide direction as needed
<b>Policy Steering Committee</b>	Convene committee to review content and provide direction on creation of Plan. Committee members are determined by each group represented	Board representatives from City of Bismarck, Burleigh County, Schools, and Parks, and real estate, land owner, chamber, seniors, homebuilders, and developer	Bi-monthly	A group of community leaders with diverse roles provides consistent direction for the drafting of the Plan
<b>Technical Advisory Committee</b>	Convene committee to advise the steering committee and staff on matters relevant to their expertise	Staff from City of Bismarck and other political subdivisions	Bi-monthly	Staff from various departments and political subdivisions provide
<b>Website</b>	A webpage included within the City of Bismarck website will be updated throughout. Videos will be featured at key junctures in the planning process.	General public	Continuous	A resource exists with meeting information, releases of drafts, basic information regarding the plan and process, and an opportunity to submit comments directly
<b>Emails</b>	Email updates to highlight the information available on the website sent directly by Planning staff	All committee members, additional stakeholders, and sign-ups	Approximately monthly	An alternative communication process exists for Plan engagement
<b>Social Media</b>	Use of existing City of Bismarck accounts to post information about Plan	General public	Approximately monthly	An alternative communication process exists for Plan engagement
<b>Representative Survey</b>	A survey of households on issues related to Plan, to be determined by Steering Committee. Target of 95% confidence in results. A postcard sent to a random sample of residential addresses, including tenants, providing instructions for completing an online survey	Random sample of entire population of households in Bismarck and ETA	April – May 2021	The values of the community are fairly represented and used to inform the content of the Plan

Activity	Description	Audience	Timeframe	Intended Outcome
<b>Preference Survey</b>	Host a survey allowing anyone to register visual preferences for certain designs, as well as provide other relevant information. This could be administered through a meeting using Mentimeter and/or hosted online with SurveyMonkey	General public (not representative)	May – October 2021	The visual preferences of the public are recognized and use to inform any design-related elements of the plan
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	Staff will work with students from the Bismarck Career Academy, who will lead public participation activities with their peers. The methods are to be determined by students. Youth will propose logo design and other graphics for selection by project staff. Presentations at government classes in each High School	Bismarck Career Academy students and peers	TBD by students	Youth are engaged in the planning process and provided opportunities with their own initiative, and the Plan is enriched by their values and goals
<b>Interviews and Focus Groups</b>	Staff will solicit direct feedback on specific topics. A focus group and/or interview will be held for each of the plan elements: future land use, community facilities, transportation, utilities, arts and culture, natural resources, downtown, economic development, housing, public health, historic preservation, and others	Key stakeholders	May – October 2021	More detailed information is obtained from stakeholders related to specific content of the Plan
<b>Presentations at Third-Party Events</b>	Staff will solicit direct feedback from key stakeholders, especially organizations or businesses most impacted by the Plan	Service clubs, social groups, tribal groups, and business organizations	As available	Members of public are informed of the basic content of the Plan and provided an opportunity for further involvement
<b>Public Workshops</b>	A series of interactive workshops/input sessions, including a short presentation, Q&A, and an open house format for informal conversation will be hosted by staff. If possible, workshops will be held in multiple locations around the community. As an alternative, during public health restrictions, asynchronous meetings can be held	General public	Kickoff in Spring 2021, Middle of process in Winter 2021/2022, draft in Summer 2022	The general public is informed, and feedback is solicited at key junctures in the planning process
<b>Formal Public Hearings</b>	Formal legally advertised public hearings for approval of final draft	Planning and Zoning Commission, City Commission, general public	Winter 2022	Legal requirements for plan adoption are met, and the final Plan is presented in it's entirety for adoption