

NORTH DAKOTA
2020
& BEYOND

STATE REPORT • NOVEMBER 2012

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NORTH DAKOTA 2020 & BEYOND

An Open Letter to North Dakota

North Dakota is in a unique place. We are experiencing unprecedented growth, along with a state budget reserve. It is time to take our state to the next level of economic prosperity.

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond is a visionary process initiated in 2012 to gather input from the people of North Dakota to imagine our future. It identifies opportunities that help prepare the state for ongoing economic and community development.

As co-chairs in this important process, we were surprised by the over 1,700 suggestions gathered at town hall meetings and through the online portal at www.ND2020andBeyond.com. These ideas build on North Dakota's economic growth and success by focusing our attention on our people, our quality of place and our diverse opportunities.

North Dakota is being recognized nationally for its prosperity and now is the time to ensure we can continue to bring growth to the state for generations to come. We have based our final recommendations on the year 2020. We are projecting a state population of more than 800,000 with a change in regional demographics, a more diverse workforce and continued job growth.

The keys to our future lie in good analysis, sound ideas and strong leadership so we can all create a bright future for North Dakota.

We would like to thank all who contributed thoughts and ideas to the plan, with special thanks to the advisory group and steering committee who further developed the ideas and formed them into actionable recommendations. Our work does not end here. North Dakota 2020 & Beyond is ongoing. We will continue to gather ideas to move our great state forward and find champions to take action on the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Bill Marcil Jr.
Fargo Forum

Kathy Neset
Neset Consulting

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond Co-Chairs

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond Overview

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond is a joint initiative with Governor Jack Dalrymple, the Greater North Dakota Chamber, the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation and commissioned by the 2011 North Dakota Legislature.

For the past decade, North Dakota has been aggressive in its economic development efforts, with a solid plan centered on job creation and building a positive environment for business development. The state enjoys abundant resources, a budget reserve and a growing economy. This position also allows us the ability to build upon our strengths, discover new opportunities and ensure our future is bright. This is the vision of North Dakota 2020 & Beyond; a vision that focuses on:

- the value of our **PEOPLE**,
- our unique quality of **PLACE** and
- our diverse **OPPORTUNITIES**.

North Dakota must capitalize on the opportunities that have emerged as a result of our state's impressive economic growth. We should continue to work to create, attract and retain quality jobs while strengthening our overall business climate; and, in addition, we must also focus on attracting and training a talented workforce, while still diversifying our economy.

The vision contained here is poised to take North Dakota to the next level of economic prosperity, with an emphasis on enhancing our quality of life and making our communities an obvious choice for those interested in diversified opportunities.

An impressive list of national rankings.

North Dakota was the only state in 2011 to report positive economic growth, with job creation and increased incomes as key indicators. Our unemployment rate is among the lowest in the nation, and North Dakota had the nation's highest gross domestic product in 2010. Our exports have grown 303 percent since 2000. *(Source: Bloomberg Economic Evaluation of States Index, U.S. Department of Commerce, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce).*

This prosperity brings with it opportunity.

Opportunities for future growth.

- From 2008 to 2011, North Dakota experienced over 38,000 new jobs, with 42 percent coming from the construction/extraction and transportation/material moving categories. Our professional, scientific and technology service category grew at only 7 percent.
(Source: EMSI Complete Employment 2011.3)
- Manufacturing makes up 10 percent of North Dakota's gross domestic product, and while the nation has been in recession, we have enjoyed an expansion and still have room for growth.
- Advanced technology growth is in the top quarter of the nation, at 3 percent over last year.
- Population continues to grow, along with the need for trained workforce. North Dakota needs to increase the concentration of young families, in the 35 to 49 age group, to assist in building a strong future.
- North Dakota is first in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) occupation job growth since 2001, but ranks 45th in overall STEM concentration in the U.S.

Continuing and expanding good efforts.

As North Dakota 2020 & Beyond began looking at the concerns and ideas brought forward through the citizen input process, we realized much is already being done to address the challenges identified through current programs and studies in progress. We looked at programs such as:

- Empower ND, which is focused on energy development across all sectors;
- Speed tests for broadband accessibility;
- Housing studies;
- Healthy North Dakota, which is focused on health prevention and wellness;
- Regional Planning Councils, which assist in community planning efforts; and,
- Many others such as: Renaissance Zones, Centers of Research Excellence, student loans and workforce training, to name a few.

These efforts will continue to support work that is already happening and may hold opportunities to address expanded needs identified through the process.

Gathering ideas.

When you generate over 1,700 ideas, many of them are similar, some unattainable and others insightful. All of the ideas were generated under three themes: People, Places and Opportunities. These themes gave participants a focal point for discussion, keeping in mind our most important resource is our people. Below are some of the common ideas that were identified.

People

- Child Care Availability
- Affordable Housing
- Job and Career Development
- Outdoor Recreation
- Education

Places

- High-Speed Internet
- Infrastructure Upgrades
- Rural Health Care Access
- Main Street Revival

Opportunities

- Access to Colleges and Universities
- Capital for Business Start-ups
- Exports
- Sensible and Predictable Regulations for Business
- Fair and Balanced Tax Policy

From the ideas submitted, the committee had the task of reviewing, combining, and prioritizing ideas, along with developing categories to house them. The steering committee met over a two-month period to expand on ideas, and brainstorm their value and potential outcomes. Ideas were advanced and turned into actionable recommendations that addressed citizen's concerns or capitalized on an opportunity for North Dakota.

Big thinking and goal setting.

The steering committee recognized the need to take the ideas identified and state them as a visionary goal for the future. The result can be seen in each category as we present a picture of what the year 2020 and beyond may have in store for North Dakota.

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond • Categories

Arts & Culture

Grow and nurture creativity in North Dakota.

Business

Establish North Dakota's business climate as one of the best in the nation.

Conservation & Environment

Protect North Dakota's valuable resource of land and environment.

Education

Build North Dakota to become the #1 state in education.

Energy & Agriculture

Continue to position North Dakota as an admired energy and agricultural leader.

Health

Keep North Dakota healthy to increase our productivity, slow rising health care costs and ensure a better quality of life.

Housing

Provide access to quality housing for all North Dakotans.

Image

Foster the image that North Dakota is a vibrant, progressive state with a great family and business environment.

Recreation

Establish North Dakota's reputation as an attraction.

Transportation & Safety

Build a statewide transportation system that meets the needs for North Dakota's growing population and industries, and provides a safe place for workforce, families and visitors.

Statewide Planning

Support North Dakota's state, regional and local planning efforts from a reliable state-funded source.

Technology

Grow technology infrastructure to ensure North Dakota is a model for connectivity.

Workforce

Develop North Dakota's workforce to meet the needs of our changing economy.

The conversation continues.

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond will help us continue to capitalize on our future opportunities. As the recommendations in this report move forward, the Greater North Dakota Chamber will continue to listen to ideas and identify champions to determine the best path forward for each of them. In addition, we will create a North Dakota 2020 & Beyond scorecard to track the progress and the impact the ideas generate for our state.

Grow and nurture creativity in North Dakota.

Arts and culture are important to the economy of North Dakota. They provide social and cultural opportunities in our communities, and direct economic benefit by creating jobs, attracting investments, generating tax revenues and stimulating tourism. Opportunities for arts and culture also inspire other industries with creative insight for research, product and services development and entrepreneurship.

North Dakota must work to enhance opportunities for arts and culture throughout our state. In order to move forward, we must work to provide greater opportunity for growth of arts and culture in our communities and build partnerships that will grow this industry.

Opportunities

Arts and culture enhance North Dakota's quality of life and complement community development by expanding amenities and attracting young professionals. We need to create greater opportunities for growth of this important industry to ensure North Dakota is attractive to today's visitors and young workforce.

1. Establish an arts and culture commission to develop and incentivize this industry.

- Create opportunities for private/state partnerships to fund grant programs that require local match dollars for arts and culture expansion.
- Provide opportunities for incorporation of arts and culture into education curriculum.

2. Initiate a focus through the North Dakota Youth Office to enhance communities to more readily attract young workforce.

- Collaborate with the Young Professionals Networks and statewide planning efforts to identify regional opportunities to expand amenities and entertainment opportunities.
- Promote and develop youth entertainment venues based on a regional concept.

Establish North Dakota's business climate as one of the best in the nation.

North Dakota's business climate has gained a reputation for supporting emerging businesses, entrepreneurs and expansions. The state's growing manufacturing, technology-based businesses, agricultural and energy industries, enhanced with numerous incentives, are drawing some of the world's most recognized companies.

Our economic growth is expanding communities, creating new business opportunities, revitalizing our main streets and creating greater demand for services as new families call our state home.

North Dakota's business climate is already nationally recognized and has the potential to attract and grow more companies in our state. In order to move forward, the state needs to address several key areas crucial to our growth which include taxes and regulations, main street growth, childcare availability and linking business with research.

People

Quality of life is important to the development of our state's communities. Local businesses are expanding and need to be heard in our government decision making processes to ensure their long-term success. Our growing businesses also have increasing workforce needs. North Dakota will need to attract new workforce to the state to meet this demand, and as families make North Dakota home, it also increases the need for daycare, especially in rural areas.

1. Assist small and rural business to have a voice in policy development.

- Provide coaching for small business, through the Greater North Dakota Chamber and their network of local chambers, to assist them in influencing policy development and to create more open lines of communication with legislators.

2. Develop a private sector daycare model.

- Review regulations that impact daycare development to encourage fast growth while ensuring quality.
- Consider development of a state-funded reward system for daycares that meet defined quality measures. *(Review the current Quality Rating System being piloted.)*
- Encourage communities to establish private/public partnerships to develop needed daycare in their cities/counties/region.
- Consider the use of approved modular daycare structures to quickly build capacity and ensure safety and regulations are met.

Business

Places

North Dakota needs to enhance main streets and downtowns in communities across the state. These important areas are the center of our state's quality of place as they provide space for important services, shopping and recreation opportunities.

3. Expand the idea of renaissance zone development of main street and downtown to include planning assistance to cities.

- Assistance should include elements of economic restructuring/business improvement, design, organization and promotion as outlined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center.
- Restructure the Renaissance Zone Program managed by the North Dakota Department of Commerce to include planning assistance.
- Consider development of a low-interest loan pool with GAP financing or tax forgiveness similar to the Renaissance Zone Program that requires an investment of capital in property.
- Encourage local chambers to create main street committees to make sound choices for community development.

Opportunities

North Dakota's taxation system should continue to stimulate economic growth, encourage capital investment in the state, promote a business climate that enhances economic vitality and improves the quality of life for our people. North Dakota must create equity among the three major taxes used: personal income, corporate income and property taxes. We must also look for greater opportunities in research and development to continue to diversify our economy. All of these then need the support of good regulations and an ease of business establishment to support our reputation of a good business climate.

4. Establish a group to review the current state tax structure and work with the legislature to identify and implement key changes that would position the state as one of the most business-friendly in the nation.

- Review the tax structure of neighboring states to better understand how competitive North Dakota is as a potential location for business in our region. *(North Dakota is currently ranked 29th according to the 2012 Tax Foundation Report in terms of state business tax climate – Wyoming is ranked 1st; South Dakota 2nd.)*
- Consider adjusting the apportionment formula for North Dakota corporate income tax to better match other states in the region. North Dakota currently uses a weighted factor formula consisting of sales, property and employees. *(Neighboring states are moving to a heavier sales-focused formula.)*

Business

5. Link business with research universities to foster commercialization and economic development.

- Establish and enhance the Research North Dakota Program, managed by the North Dakota Department of Commerce, to include the ability to make investments in equity capital companies that invest in businesses that use or license university research and technologies. Companies commercializing research based on partnerships between the private sector and universities, including, but not limited to, those developed as part of the Centers of Research Excellence Program should be a focus.
- Use state funds and Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) funds to create a \$50 million pool that will invest in a broad range of venture capital firms, equity capital funds and angel capital funds only for companies based in North Dakota.

6. Create and support narrowly-defined business incentives.

- Target incentives to achieve the encouraged activity and show measurable impact in the area of need.

7. Streamline business regulations with input from the business community.

- Review rules and regulations for business to ensure that necessary resources are allocated while creating a business environment that encourages commerce growth.

8. Continue to market the North Dakota Department of Commerce and their role in economic development as the home for statewide business resources.

Protect North Dakota's valuable resource of land and environment.

North Dakota is known for its quality of life and the abundant resources that come from our land. We need to continue to demonstrate that our state understands the balance between industry growth and conservation of our unique environment. It is through balance that we can extend opportunities and conserve resources for our future generations.

Environmental issues continue to rise in importance across the nation. North Dakota must also be aware of these issues and work to protect our quality of place and the many opportunities it provides both citizens and visitors to our state. In order to move forward, the state needs work toward collaborative solutions that provide protection of our natural lands, continue conservation efforts, and limit potential environmental issues in the North Dakota.

Places

North Dakota has experienced unprecedented growth in the past few years. We need to create an environment that fosters business growth and enriches the livability of our communities, conserving our unique lifestyle for future generations.

1. Create conservation efforts to protect our natural lands.

- Develop awareness efforts to educate North Dakotans on the quality, quantity and ample opportunities provided by our natural lands.
- Establish initiatives that support conservation of lands and establishment of green spaces, parks, shelter belts, etc.

2. Grow opportunities statewide for citizens to participate in “green” practices.

- Explore becoming the first state to have a statewide recycling policy.
- Consider incentives or grants for communities to develop recycling opportunities or provide conservation/energy saving education.
- Encourage private sector development of recycling plants.
- Encourage recycling and use of recycled materials in state and local governments.
- Implement a plan for reduction of state fleet fuel consumption.
- Continue to build awareness around energy saving concepts, including green building methods/materials, energy efficiency, etc.
- Increase fines to discourage littering.

Build North Dakota to become the #1 state in education.

North Dakota is growing economically, gaining population and is in need of skilled workforce to support this growth well into the future. Our education system needs to equip our students with the knowledge, skills and creativity needed to fuel future economic and civic success. In our increasingly knowledge-based economy, this will demand education tactics that promote a higher-level skill-set across our entire primary and secondary education system.

We must make improvements in access to early childhood development programs, which nationally have shown significant benefits including: cognition and academic achievement, behavioral and emotional competencies, educational progression and attainment, and labor market success. We must treat our universities and colleges as economic engines, as there is a proven relationship between a state's economic development, the use of science and technology, and its quality of life.

Higher education needs support for research and development and must train workers with science, technology, engineering and math skills to support economic growth. Research by the Milken Institute shows that 75 percent of the variation in a state's per capita income can be accounted for by its ability to convert science and technology assets into economic development.

North Dakota's education system can work toward the ultimate goal of being the #1 state in education. In order to move forward, the state needs to focus on scholarships, school funding, career guidance, and curriculum that develop skill sets that support the outcomes of enhanced research and development efforts and industry growth.

People

North Dakota's education system needs to transform for our next era. We must help students identify the path to future careers, train workers, and prepare people for entrepreneurial pursuits. We need to expand our online and distance learning opportunities. We must ensure that North Dakota does not segment education into primary and secondary, but rather looks at the development of our students from early childhood through technical or higher education, and works to develop them all along their career path.

1. Establish a blue ribbon committee to define the criteria and develop an action plan toward the goal of becoming the #1 state in education.

- Assemble a committee comprised of key stakeholders from business and industry, government, nonprofits and economic development.
- Review the K-12 funding formula to ensure equitable and adequate support.
- Transform K-12 infrastructure to meet future needs and provide access to programs and curricula across the state.
- Develop initiatives that support public/private industries in relation to growth of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) curriculum. Create partnerships and coordination around existing programs such as: INSPIRE K-12, Succeed 2020, Great Plains STEM Education Center, Best Robotics/FIRST and advancement of the arts.
- Expand access to early childhood development programs.

Education

- Explore ways to expand libraries to be thought of as community centers that focus on information literacy and education delivery.
- Work with the Greater North Dakota Chamber to develop education on the impact of our changing and diverse economy and the role of free enterprise in North Dakota.
- Further develop online educational offerings to reach a global student population and improve access and course offerings to rural school populations.
- Provide career path counseling to students with information about high-demand careers in North Dakota.

2. Leverage state dollars to create a tuition scholarship program supported by public/private endowments.

- Issue merit-based scholarships to retain and attract high-caliber students.
- Review the current Bank of North Dakota student loan structure to ensure loan rates and payment schedules are competitive with other states.
- Pursue the idea of tuition discounts for graduates or graduation fellowships in needed fields and require employment in North Dakota post-graduation.

3. Increase educational funding for greater curriculum supporting science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); as well as, those that promote creative thinking, analysis, problem solving and collaboration, which are critical components of innovation.

- Enhance teaching degree programs at our universities and colleges to provide specific training on STEM.
- Create opportunities for students to attend summer-based activities around STEM skills.
- Work with community arts organizations to include not only artistic, but science, technology, engineering and math initiatives.

Places

North Dakota has a well-established education structure in place. It is important that we continue to upgrade our classrooms and learning environments to provide the best possible education for our students. We must also extend our idea for a “place of learning” to include distance and online opportunities.

Education

Opportunities

With North Dakota's growing workforce needs, it is important that we create a partnership between business and education to ensure we create a skilled workforce that meets the demand of our local companies.

4. Create opportunities for business to have a stronger voice in the development of higher education programming that fits needed workforce demands.

- Explore the results and outcomes of the Roundtable on Higher Education.
- Create an advisory group of business leaders for the State Board of Higher Education to better craft curriculum that meets business needs.
- Further develop internships through incentives that benefit employers through Operation Intern and give appropriate credit to students.
- Create a website that would match North Dakota businesses with open internships with interested students.
- Incentivize older-than-average students to return to school.
- Develop opportunities for entrepreneurship activities and incentives around the Research North Dakota Program.

Continue to position North Dakota as an admired energy and agricultural leader.

As the nation continues to grow, North Dakota's fertile landscape has emerged as a leader. Our diverse, multi-resource energy philosophy is helping to meet growing energy demands nationwide. Our agricultural industry continues to make significant strides in crop improvements and value-added agriculture applications. Our diversified economy is what gives our state economic strength and it is fueled by the leading industries of energy, agriculture and tourism.

Through the EmPower North Dakota Commission, leaders from all major energy industries in North Dakota serve as critical thinkers for the development of the state's energy resources. North Dakota is proactive in addressing energy development. It serves as a model in fostering innovative, long-term development to meet our nation's growing energy demand and need for energy security in an environmentally responsible manner.

Agriculture is the dominant sector of our state's economy. Over 31,000 farmers and ranchers lead the nation in the production of more than a dozen important commodities. Livestock production is second only to wheat in North Dakota's agricultural industry.

North Dakota's energy and agricultural future can include development in all sectors, and has the potential to not only grow, but also develop new economies based on secondary, value-added applications related to these resources. In order to move forward, the state needs to address several key areas crucial to the expansion of these industries which will focus around infrastructure, research and development, workforce and regulatory policy.

People

It is important that we capitalize on their strengths and seize opportunities in our growing industries. An integral component will be to ensure our people have the knowledge and skills to grow these industries, while preparing a workforce qualified and ready to take on the opportunities of tomorrow.

1. Provide opportunities for the energy and agricultural industries to grow through collaborative efforts with key partners in workforce development.

- Work with secondary and post-secondary education to enhance core curriculum that creates interest in agriculture and high-demand energy careers.
- Offer students greater access to career and technical education programs related to energy and agriculture, this includes classroom curriculum and distance learning opportunities.

2. Continue to support the NDSU Extension Service, young farmer organizations and other programs which encourage interest in agricultural careers.

- Encourage the development of the next generation of farmers by helping them to understand the key role North Dakota farmers will play in feeding the nation's growing population in the future.
- Grow understanding for the export opportunities North Dakota farmers can capture in the expanding world food market.
- Continue to educate all our citizens on the value of North Dakota's abundant land resources and the value of our agriculture industry.

Energy & Agriculture

Places

Strong communities will be vital to the workers supporting the energy and agricultural industries and therefore a key component in North Dakota's future. The places most important to the growth of these industries lies in our research universities and entrepreneurs, as they develop the new technologies that will keep us competitive into the future.

- 3. Continue investment in the infrastructure of our research and technical institutions to assist in the development of new technologies, value-added applications and opportunities for energy and agriculture.**
- 4. Promote North Dakota's value as a possible location for energy company offices due to our substantial and diverse energy resources.**
- 5. Gain support for a North Dakota heritage-based agricultural display that preserves the role of agriculture in the state's history that can serve as an educational tool.**

Opportunities

Research and development play a critical role in understanding the potential of value-added processing and manufacturing to our energy and agricultural industries. Similar to the tremendous growth witnessed in value-added agriculture, the opportunity exists for North Dakota to become a leader in value-added manufacturing related to both of these abundant resources.

6. Support EmPower ND's goals.

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond supports the goals of this group and recommendations that link directly to EmPower ND are noted. Core goals for EmPower ND are:

- Infrastructure – the foundation for continuing existing development and expansion.
- Research and Development – the bridge for industry to move from ideas to new development.
- Workforce – available workforce to meet the demands.
- Regulatory Environment – support economic growth while ensuring environmentally responsible development of natural resources.

Energy & Agriculture

- 7. Continue to support existing research and development programs which will ensure the discovery and implementation of new technologies to promote new growth for all energy and agricultural resources. (EmPower ND)**

ENERGY

- Coordinate with private industry to identify the steps necessary to create a viable chemical industry related to energy resources. (EmPower ND)
- Fund a study to evaluate value-added market opportunities for energy resources. (EmPower ND)
- Increase funding to the Oil and Gas Research Council by \$1 million to explore opportunities related to value-added processing of natural gas. (EmPower ND)

AGRICULTURE

- Coordinate with private industry to identify the steps necessary to create more value-added applications for agriculture which could include: fuel, medicine, processing, manufacturing, agritourism, etc.
- Support continued agriculture research to build on the efficiencies of North Dakota's key crops, increasing production and food-values for each.
- Expand trade markets.

- 8. Support efforts to double energy production by 2025. (EmPower ND)**

- 9. Continue to support organizations who promote environmental responsibility, safety and sustainability for both energy and agriculture.**

- 10. Support education that develops potential energy industry workforce.**

- Target Bismarck State College and Williston State College for two-year energy programs.
- Form partnerships with four-year schools to deliver agriculture and energy curriculum.
- Create endowments for NDSU and UND for petroleum careers.

Keep North Dakota healthy to increase our productivity, slow rising health care costs and ensure a better quality of life.

North Dakota is one of the healthiest states in the nation with health care costs tracking below the national average. However, North Dakotans have been very clear that health care is becoming unaffordable. We believe North Dakota can impact the future health of our citizens and be proactive in keeping costs down.

North Dakota allocates very little funding towards chronic disease prevention programs, such as obesity or diabetes, either for adults or children. Yet, one-fourth of our youth are considered overweight or obese. We must encourage state efforts to reduce childhood obesity by investing an adequate level of resources for prevention.

Decisions by our federal government will also influence health care delivery in North Dakota. The Affordable Care Act needs to be studied for its impact on North Dakotans in whatever version the federal government brings forward.

We can take a proactive approach to health in North Dakota, one that considers all citizens and has a positive impact on our economy, health and future quality of life. In order to move forward, the state needs to address several key issues such as a rural health care delivery system, wellness opportunities for our citizens, impacts of federal health legislation and affordability of care.

People

It is important that we encourage North Dakotans to live a life of health. By establishing opportunities for youth to be more active, we begin habits that can have lasting impacts on health and health care costs. We must also address hunger and access to care for North Dakotans.

1. Encourage efforts to make North Dakota children the healthiest in the nation.

- Encourage North Dakota to join others in efforts to reduce childhood obesity by investing in resources for prevention and education. (Review Healthy ND's recommendations for childhood obesity.)
 - Review current K-12 school lunch program standards and recommend improvements for North Dakota.
 - Review K-12 exercise requirements to ensure we are promoting activity along with academics.
 - Build awareness and resources around best practices for nutrition and activity and consider incorporating wellness coaching into schools.
- Develop partnerships with parks, health care companies and schools to establish and promote fitness and activity among all age groups
- Increase access to recreation facilities for youth.

2. Create a Hunger Free North Dakota coalition.

- Establish a committee to identify needs and solutions statewide to address hunger concerns for vulnerable populations, such as Native Americans, homeless, etc.

Health

Opportunities

As our population shifts, our health care access and delivery will change. Hospitals are creating new infrastructure to meet demands and our aging population is increasing the need for long-term care and nursing homes. North Dakota has before it many opportunities to build ideas and structure that can help support the long-term health of our citizens. We must study areas where improvements can be made and build greater awareness for personal wellness to temper health care costs.

- 3. Consider a citizen’s advisory group to study and make recommendations on a model health care system for North Dakota.**
 - Consider the impact of federal health care legislation on North Dakota’s citizens and businesses.
 - Explore opportunities to host a model federal project that addresses the reimbursement system and health care reform.
 - Determine measurements to indicate North Dakota is moving toward the goal of being the healthiest state in the nation and assess on a biennial basis.
- 4. Develop a health information center with a governing commission to coordinate programs, publicity and funding.**
 - Leverage the center to promote a health and wellness focus and provide “coaching” for citizens seeking a life of health.
 - Use technology to share information on all North Dakota health care projects and health care records.
- 5. Consider modifying North Dakota pharmacy laws to reflect a free-enterprise system.**

Provide access to quality housing for all North Dakotans.

While the nation continues to struggle with lagging housing markets, North Dakota's market is on the rise and experiencing growth. Demand is currently outpacing supply with the growth in western North Dakota due to the oil boom, which is driving up the price of housing for both renters and owners.

Housing challenges, however, are not confined to western North Dakota. Changing demographics and a job-creating economy are putting strains on the availability of housing across the state. These challenges, however, create business opportunities in real estate, development, engineering, construction, trades and furnishings. Cities can seize opportunities to improve existing neighborhoods or build new ones. In order to move forward, the state needs to address housing for individuals of all income levels and leverage private/public partnerships to grow housing infrastructure.

People

Ensuring our population has safe, affordable housing available to them is key to our state's continued growth. We must support these efforts to get the needed infrastructure in place quickly to attract and retain new families to our state.

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive housing strategy with consideration for all income and family needs.

- Review the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency definition of what "available" and "affordable" housing is to ensure it still meets needs.
- Consider including Equal Housing Opportunity in the strategy.
- Expand the Housing Incentive Fund to enhance quick growth of affordable housing.
- Develop a program targeted at renters as they do not benefit from property tax relief, but still are responsible for increased rent costs.
- Establish statewide non-profit housing development organization to partner with the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency to develop affordable housing.
- Determine the need for infrastructure of long-term care and assisted living facilities in relation to an aging population.
- Continue to use the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency website as an information center/portal on programs available to support housing development.

Housing

Opportunities

The challenges brought on by rapid growth call for more than just state support, but rather we need to engage private investors and ensure that we access federal programs to support citizens.

2. Work to ensure North Dakota state housing programs work to leverage private investment and federal programs to meet supply and affordability issues.

- Use the Energy Impact Grant Fund to extend sewer lines and streets, expand water supply systems and to complete other infrastructure upgrades that directly support greater development of housing projects in oil-impacted counties.
- Promote the Housing Incentive Fund as a loan source for developers who pledge to build affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Access the Bank of North Dakota's Rural Mortgage Loan Program to make residential loans in rural North Dakota.
- Access the Bank of North Dakota's Flex PACE Affordable Housing Program to assist in the financing of affordable multi-family housing units for individuals living in counties affected by oil and gas development.
- Work with the North Dakota HOME Program to provide greater homeowner and rental assistance.

Foster the image that North Dakota is a vibrant, progressive state with a great family and business environment.

The growth and economic success being realized by North Dakota is not having the maximum impact on our state's image. Much of the positive news has been offset by national and local stories focusing on negative issues that accompany fast growth.

North Dakota must be proactive in telling its own success story. We currently spend promotional dollars on tourism, business and workforce attraction. Those messages are targeted to achieve their objectives, but we must also work to deliver a positive "brand" message about North Dakota and our successes.

North Dakota is in the national spotlight and now is the time to ensure we have positive media stories to offset the over 40 percent negative stories we are currently seeing. In order to move forward, North Dakota needs actively work to tell its story and promote our growing state.

Opportunities

We need a stronger state outreach program that will spread positive information about North Dakota and North Dakota 2020 & Beyond initiatives. Our image plays a key role in attracting a quality workforce, encouraging outside investment, building our education system and attracting visitors to our state.

1. Develop the key elements that should be promoted as the North Dakota brand.

- Work with statewide agencies to adopt key messages to promote the North Dakota brand and tell stories from all aspects of the state.

2. Appoint a team to actively promote our story through media as well as other opportunities.

- Create a North Dakota spokesperson roster to be used to promote North Dakota nationally on topics.
- Coordinate North Dakota media outreach to ensure consistency of messaging and positive stories.
- Establish benchmarks for tracking results.
- Provide adequate resources to fund image promotion efforts. Consider a partnership with the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation to support efforts.

Establish North Dakota's reputation as an attraction.

Attracting people to North Dakota, whether they are visitors or families seeking work opportunities, requires us to provide an experience and quality of life that people desire. We need to continue to grow our communities to accommodate our expanding population, and provide opportunities for recreation, culture and adventure to keep them active.

Other states have shown that an investment in the growth of “place” is a key factor in attracting workforce and enhancing tourism opportunities. In order to move forward, North Dakota must expand its recreational opportunities statewide.

Places

North Dakota must provide a variety of social, cultural and recreational opportunities to make our communities enticing as a place to raise a family or take a vacation. We must create experiences that make our residents and visitors talk about what a great place North Dakota is to live, work and play.

- 1. Establish a task force to study barriers to private development of recreational efforts.**
 - Identify needs and opportunities along with barriers such as liability insurance.
 - Offer outcome based development grants to qualified ideas.
- 2. Promote the Theodore Roosevelt National Park and make it a premier North Dakota icon.**
 - Explore taking on more of its promotion and development in partnership with the National Park Service.
- 3. Encourage development of bike and walking path systems within our smaller communities.**
- 4. Evaluate the North Dakota State Park System, its allocation of resources, and possibilities for growth of offerings.**
- 5. Develop and promote an event with national appeal.** *(Marathon across North Dakota)*
- 6. Encourage development and use of North Dakota rivers for recreational activity.**
(River Keeper Concept)

Build a statewide transportation system that meets the needs for North Dakota's growing population and industries, and provides a safe place for workforce, families and visitors.

As North Dakota continues its fast paced growth and shifting industry base, safety issues have moved to the forefront in a state that has not had many concerns in this area. In the past, we have lived with low crime rates, relatively low road and highway incidents and low accident incidents per worker. Our disaster response has been praised by citizens and community leaders. In other words, we have been one of the safest states in the nation to live and work.

Ensuring North Dakota remains one of the safest states is essential to the peace of mind of our citizens and our quality of life. In order to move forward, we must look to enhance our safety through protective services and road and highway improvements.

People

Changes in our state have put pressures on our infrastructure, law enforcement and emergency services personnel. Many projects have been implemented to alleviate issues in the short-term, but steps must be taken to address long-term statewide needs.

1. Determine statewide needs for safety into the future and ensure adequate funding.

- Ensure essential safety services (*law enforcement, fire, ambulance, etc.*) are given priority.
- Consider emergency response teams with possible state or private sponsorship and coordination to reduce volunteer approach.
- Continue community support for disaster relief.
 - Establish a policy safety net for communities in the aftermath of disaster.
 - Fund appropriate equipment and tools to be affective in offering post-disaster assistance.
- Review current road signage statewide to identify areas for improvement and to ensure it is current.
- Consider using the North Dakota Petroleum Council as a potential advisor on road safety issues resulting from oil activity.
- Support the Upper Great Plains Transportation study and urge its implementation.

Support North Dakota's state, regional and local planning efforts from a reliable state-funded source.

North Dakota's communities are expanding and that has brought with it new challenges in local planning. As our cities and counties grow, they need access to tools to ensure good decisions are made for the long-term growth of our state. Ensuring that proper infrastructure such as water, sewer, electricity and broadband access is available, means local governments must be able to project and implement plans for their communities.

North Dakota needs to provide planning assistance to state and local governments to ensure that they have needed information when making decisions. In order to move forward, the state needs to fund assistance for local planning, consider infrastructure needs statewide, and provide appropriate information for good decision making.

Places

Our communities support our quality of life. North Dakota needs to assist our communities with information and resources from a consistent source to enhance their quality of place and aid in making good community planning decisions.

- 1. Create a demographer position in the North Dakota Census Office to support consistent information and resource development in statewide planning.**
 - Conduct a statewide cost-of-living study and its impact on education, workforce, residents and other key factors
 - Educate communities on the cultural expectations and diversity of the state's new workforce.
- 2. Develop a community/county planning assistance initiative.**
 - Create a team for a regional planning and zoning approach. *(Study relationship between eight regional planning councils, Vision West, NDSU Extension Services, North Dakota Census Office and private firms.)*
 - Gather potential resources and make them available to local requests.
- 3. Build statewide infrastructure to meet targeted populations and develop plans based on regional needs.**
 - Develop local aid fund from existing funding streams and allow communities to apply based on need in areas such as schools, infrastructure, transportation and culture.
- 4. Develop a local water management plan in cooperation with the North Dakota Water Commission and the goals of their statewide water plan.**

Grow technology infrastructure to ensure North Dakota is a model for connectivity.

Our increasingly networked society demands access to high-speed broadband service, cellular coverage and 21st century technology. North Dakota must be a leader in this area to create and sustain high-value, job-creating economic opportunities, education growth and an enhanced quality of life.

Technology infrastructure plays a key role in the growth of North Dakota. Today, North Dakota is ranked 41st among the states for the share of households with at least 10 megabits (Mbs) of broadband availability. Yet, network speeds of up to 100 gigabits (Gbps) are now being planned in several statewide and city initiatives, which will give these places astonishing access to health care services, primary and secondary education, potential business growth and a host of other opportunities.

North Dakota must invest as other states have to expand the speed of its broadband network and seek out key technology partners such as Microsoft, Cisco, Google and others. In order to move forward, the state needs to develop a plan to enhance our technology infrastructure to ensure our citizens and businesses have high-speed access.

Opportunities

To stay competitive, North Dakota needs to be a leader in statewide connectivity. Citizens, business and government all benefit from investments that help our state position itself as a leader in this area. We need to develop a statewide plan that will bring connectivity to our communities and enhance access for our businesses to keep us globally competitive.

1. Develop a statewide technology plan that enhances infrastructure and connectivity.

- Position state government and the Greater North Dakota Chamber in a leadership role in developing and rolling-out a plan statewide.
- Seek out partnerships with key stakeholders and technology leaders to develop a vision of connectivity that includes broadband, wi-fi and cellular coverage.
- Create investment and incentive models that could include private, state or tax credit opportunities.

Develop North Dakota's workforce to meet the needs of our changing economy.

North Dakota's population centers are shifting, statewide industry make-up is evolving and the demand for workforce is growing statewide. We must begin to think differently about how we build and train our future workforce as new skill sets for high-demand occupations are identified.

Past workforce efforts created quadrants across the state designed to market and deliver needed training. It is time we re-examine this delivery method and look to offer education that goes beyond typical workforce training to meet new demands. We also need to increase our efforts to educate students on the career opportunities available in North Dakota, especially those occupations that require two-year degrees or certification.

Our cost of living has also made shifts and has put pressure on the need to increase the overall wage base. Many employers have concerns about attracting workers at higher than expected salary levels and retaining current staff. Our system needs to educate and address these issues to assure a quality and abundant workforce.

North Dakota needs to create workforce development and training initiatives that focus on creating world-class talent at every skill level for people at all stages of life. In order to move forward, the state needs to work with industry to develop partnerships to ensure we are generating a workforce that meets the needs of our changing economy.

People

There is considerable evidence that the most effective workforce development and training programs are industry-driven and focused on building partnerships among stakeholders in workforce, education, industry and economic development. North Dakota needs to begin refocusing its efforts to ensure our workforce needs are fostered through our education and training systems, and that our students know of career path opportunities at an earlier age.

1. Establish a workforce training task force to explore long-term transformation of education and training delivery.

- Assist individuals with self employment training.
- Educate counselors on high-demand occupations and two-year technical and certification programs.
- Expand NDSU Extension Services offerings in family business and business succession planning.
- Strengthen the statewide Young Professionals Networks.
- Link the statewide apprentice program into the revamped workforce training model.
- Adjust training offerings at Job Service North Dakota to fit changing workforce needs.

Workforce Development

2. Establish a collaborative program to educate business owners on the changing economy, its impact and how to respond. (See *Statewide Planning – Recommendation #1*)

- Work with established business education programs such as the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), NDSU Extension Service, the energy industry, local chambers, etc.

3. Develop a program to identify and match business transition opportunities.

- Work with the North Dakota Department of Commerce to develop a program and have it administered by local economic development groups.

4. Develop a trailing spouse program.

- Expand the relocation efforts of the North Dakota Department of Commerce to include assistance for trailing spouses and have it administered by local chambers.



About North Dakota 2020 & Beyond.

North Dakota 2020 & Beyond was formed to expand North Dakota’s vision for the future. Governor Jack Dalrymple, the Greater North Dakota Chamber and the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation teamed up to lead the statewide development initiative. A steering committee and an advisory board, comprised of proven business leaders representing the state’s eight regions, guided the process and developed this plan to capture ideas from across the state.

The steering committee delivered this report to the Governor, the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation and the North Dakota legislature in the winter of 2012 outlining its recommendations for furthering North Dakota’s growth and enrichment. The process gathered ideas from citizens across North Dakota through community meetings and an online forum. Over 1,700 ideas were gathered and considered in the development of this report.

The recommendations found here are the collaborative effort of the steering committee’s work to create possibilities from the ideas shared. They cover a variety of categories and will hopefully enhance North Dakota through the value of our people, the unique quality of our place, and the diverse opportunities that lie in our future.

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