

Imagine Bismarck

This report summarizes the activities and findings at the conclusion of Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan Update Project. For the most up to date information on the project, go to:

www.bismarckstrategy.com

Special Thanks to the Strategic Plan Update Project Team

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Phase 1 Conclusion report for the Launch & Learn phase of the City of Bismarck's Strategic Plan Update Project. We have spent the past ninety days introducing the project to the community and gaining a deeper understanding of the people of Bismarck. We've used this knowledge to begin to develop a framework of understanding to prepare a strategy that compliments Bismarck's vision, values, and objectives.

During the Launch & Learn phase, we met with the City Commission twice, hosted six focus group meetings, distributed our Project Launch book, published the online project portal, engaged the public at the Downtowner's StreetFair, selected a project theme and developed a project logo.

To date, we've had over 1,800 interactions with people (2.6% of the Bismarck population) through a variety of methods. We know that there is some double-counting in this total as some people who have visited the website also talked to us at the StreetFair or participated in a Focus Group meeting, for instance. We are steadily marching towards our ultimate goal of engaging at least 3,620 people (5% of the community) throughout the project.

The remainder of this report outlines the activities and progress on the project thus far and identifies the critical next steps towards completion of the project.

PROJECT THEME AND LOGO

Most decisions on the Strategic Plan Update are still months away. However, a couple of consequential decisions concluded during the Launch & Learn phase. Selection of a project theme and project logo was completed with the help of the City Commission, Focus Group members, the general public at the StreetFair. Guided by the leadership of Commissioner Oban and Commissioner Zenker alongside the ten-member Strategic Plan Update Project Team, we have selected **Imagine Bismarck** as the project theme and have incorporated the theme into the project logo design to the right.





Imagine **Bismarck**
S T R A T E G I C P L A N

LAUNCH & LEARN

The first phase of the project has been the Launch & Learn phase, where we introduced the project to the community and began to develop an understanding of Bismarck to gain perspective on the perceptions, needs, and the future strategies for the plan.



There are three primary elements to the Launch & Learn Phase:

- ① PROJECT LAUNCH
- ② COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ③ BEGIN DEFINING VISION AND VALUES

PROJECT LAUNCH

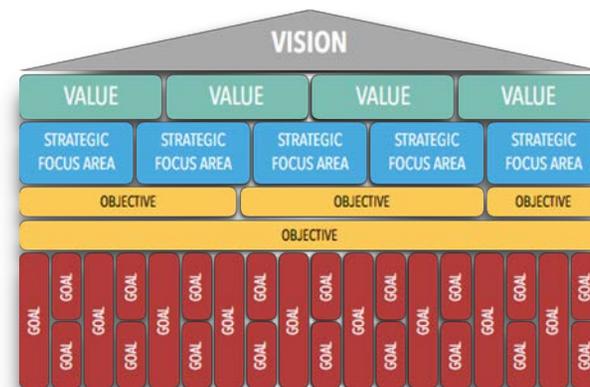
The project formally launched on July 30, 2018, at a City Commission meeting. At this meeting, we introduced the project to the full City Commission, delivered our Project Launch & Stakeholder Guide Books, and outlined the plan to move the Strategic Plan Update project forward through six phases.

All of the documents and presentations from the Project Launch are available through the project portal at:

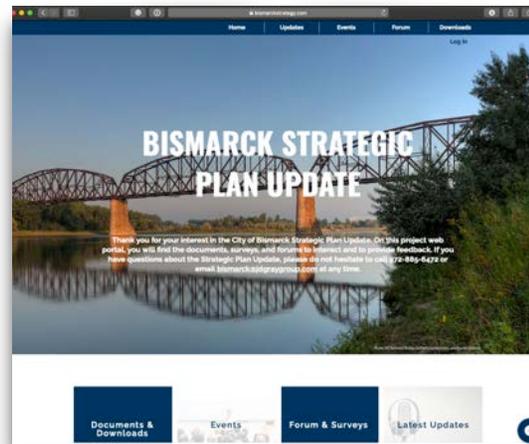
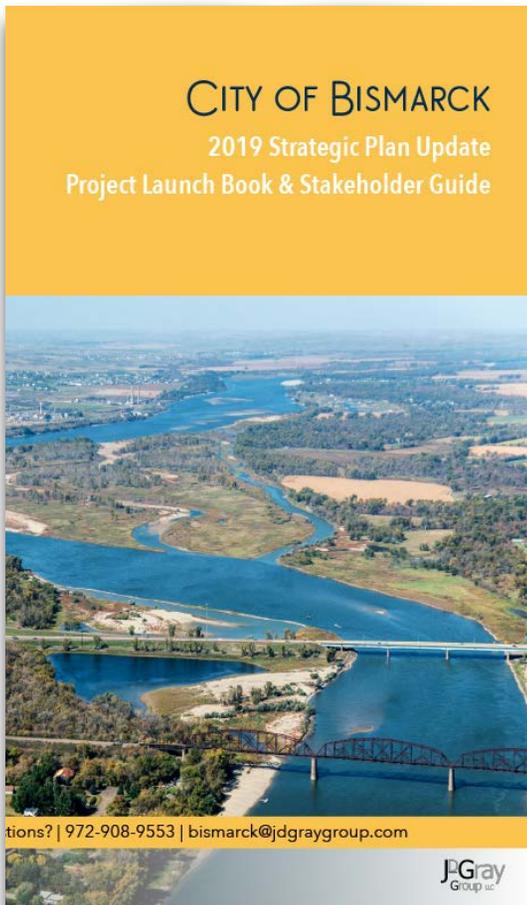
www.bismarckstrategy.com

The Project Launch & Stakeholder Guide Book is intended to outline the process and our basic methodology of strategic planning, define key terms that will be used throughout the project, provide an overview of the methodology and timeline, and remind the community of the existing Vision, Values, and Mission statements.

At the July 30 City Commission meeting, we presented the methodology that we will use and identified **Intentionality** and **Alignment** as the critical driving forces behind any strategic planning effort. In our presentation of the “Strategic House” (see below), we showed how intentionally aligning the actions of the organization (the "goals") with the vision of the community through the strategic objectives, strategic focus areas, and values helps to produce an organization that is exceptionally focused on continually pushing towards the established vision of the community.



PROJECT LAUNCH



Following the City Commission meeting, we did multiple on-camera interviews with local media outlets, further describing the project and encouraging the public to get involved with the strategic plan update.

We have developed an online project portal (www.bismarckstrategy.com) that serves as a source of project information, upcoming events, a forum for ideas and includes links to active surveys and documents. The project portal is highlighted on the City's website and is shared easily via Facebook, Twitter, and other social and traditional media platforms as the best place to go on the web for the latest information on the Strategic Plan Update. To date, over 1,100 people have accessed the web portal.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During our four days onsite in Bismarck for the Project Launch, we also began working with six different focus groups that have been identified as having an important role to play in the development and execution of the strategic plan. Working with City Staff, Commissioner Oban and Commissioner Zenker (who have this project within their portfolio), we specifically invited people from sixty-three different organizations to the focus group meetings held on July 31 and August 1. In addition to specific invitations, we also encouraged anyone with interest in any of the six focus group areas to attend. About sixty people participated in the focus group meetings in all.

At the focus group meetings, we facilitated a group conversation primarily intended to gauge the different groups' sense of the vision and values of Bismarck. Our goal throughout the project will be to discover the themes that we hear the community expressing and to document those themes in a manner that is clear, fair to all perspectives and inclusive.

There are a few themes that these initial focus group meetings have begun to unveil, but we must collect many more perspectives before we are ready to report on the issues that we hear.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We gathered some of these additional perspectives at the 2018 Downtowner's StreetFair where the project was a sponsor and we had an interactive booth. The primary goal of our participation in the StreetFair was to introduce the strategic plan update project to a wide variety of people that may not otherwise get engaged in a project like this. By the end of the two-day event, we handed out over one thousand postcards, got project theme ideas from 250 people, and had **378 people put their mark** on the Community Canvas featured on the cover of this report. Special thanks to the Dakota West Arts Council for providing their time, talents and materials for the canvas.

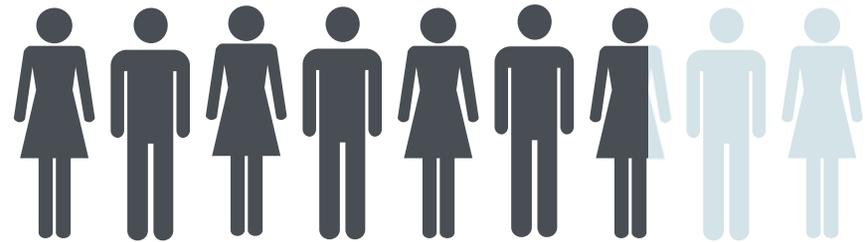


Images from the back of the Community Canvas signed by 378 contributing artists.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While we had begun developing ideas for project themes before the StreetFair, we used it as an opportunity to get direct input from the community to help narrow down the themes. We presented people with fourteen different tagline options. By the end of the StreetFair, we had clarity on the favorites. Over 79% of the people voted for one of four themes shown to the right.

Of the other ten proposed themes, none received more than 5% of the votes. We combined this input with what we heard at the Focus Group meetings, and the City's internal Strategic Plan Update Project Team accepted **Imagine Bismarck** as the tagline and theme for the Strategic Plan Update.



79% CHOSE ONE OF
THE FOLLOWING

- ① IMAGINE BISMARCK (29%)
- ② EXPECT GREAT THINGS (17%)
- ③ BUILDING BISMARCK (17%)
- ④ ON YOUR MARCK... (16%)

DEFINING VISION AND VALUES

At our September 14th City Commission Workshop, we began working through the Vision and Values of the community by introducing a framework for documenting a vision statement for the community. The framework, based on decades of research and work by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras, depends on preserving the core of the community while stimulating progress.

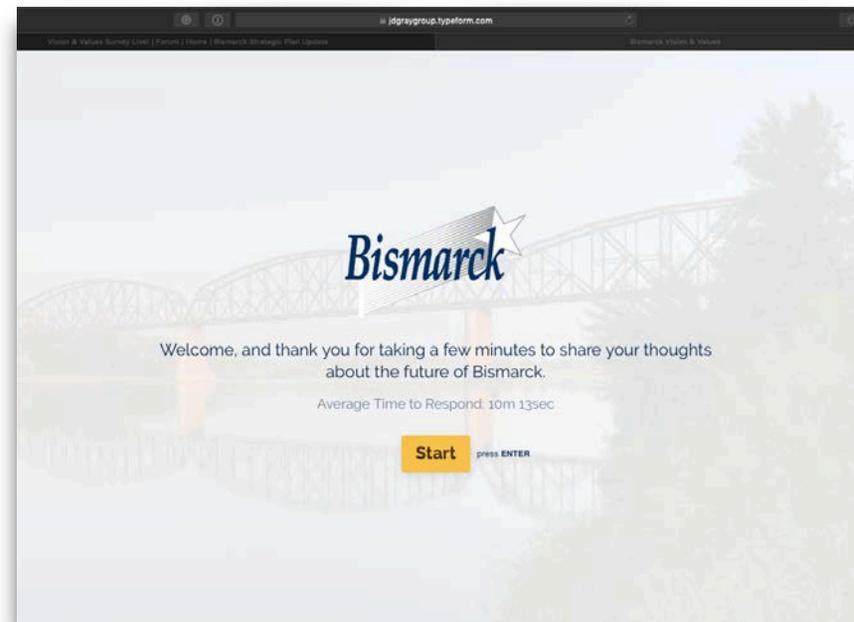
As described in the workshop, the vision framework depends on two primary elements: a Core Ideology and an Envisioned Future with both elements providing a creative and productive tension against one another.



DEFINING VISION AND VALUES

To better understand the Core Ideology and Envisioned Future, we engaged the Commission at the September 14 workshop, have invited each Commissioner for a one-on-one discussion, and are currently administering a Vision and Values survey to the public. The survey will run through the end of October. We recently provided a hardcopy version of the survey for those less comfortable with technology and we are actively encouraging participation in the survey through the City's utility bills, partner groups, and all of the City's normal distribution channels.

While we have already heard a wide variety of ideas and opinions on the Core Values and Core Purpose (which make up the Core Ideology) and some intriguing Big Goals and Vivid Descriptions (which make up the Envisioned Future), we are not ready to report out on the themes of these issues yet. We will be working through the vision framework for a couple more weeks, and plan to have a draft vision statement ready for community review by the first week in November.



NEXT STEPS

While this report formally completes Phase 1, we have already begun Phase 2: Research & Development and Phase 3: Set the Target. We have a number of events happening over the next four months as outlined below.

OCTOBER

- ▶ Phase 1 Report
- ▶ Internal Team Meeting
- ▶ Town Hall Workshop
- ▶ Meeting with Strategy Partners

NOVEMBER

- ▶ City Commission Workshop
- ▶ Meet with students in classrooms
- ▶ Finalize Vision & Values

DECEMBER

- ▶ Internal Team workshop on SWOT analysis
- ▶ Finalize Strategic Focus Areas

JANUARY

- ▶ Develop Strategic Objectives
- ▶ Implement Strategy Management System
- ▶ Meet with Focus Groups



MORE INFORMATION

For the latest information, go to www.bismarckstrategy.com, or feel free to contact us at any time.



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