



**TO:** Mayor Shaun Sipma  
Members of the City Council

**FROM:** Tom Barry, City Manager

**DATE:** January 21, 2020

**SUBJECT: CITY OF MINOT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**I. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

It is recommended the City Council adopt the Community Engagement Strategy.

**II. DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSONS**

Tom Barry, City Manager	857-4750
Derek Hackett, Public Information Officer	857-4750
Kelly Matalaka, City Clerk	857-4750

**III. DESCRIPTION**

A. Background:

At the December 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting, staff presented Council with a draft of the City of Minot Community Engagement Strategy. Council was given time to review the document and provide feedback.

Over the past year or two, several high-profile City projects have garnered criticism regarding the way the City handled community input and engagement. Inconsistencies in approach and by department created confusion and frustration for community members. Recognizing the need to improve the consistency and quality of the City's public engagement for various programs, plans and projects across all Departments, Staff developed a Community Engagement Focus Group to study and improve the City's engagement approach and develop a Strategy for future engagements.

B. Project Description:

Members asked to participate in the Community Engagement Focus Group included:

- Gregory Boster
  - Lorena Starkey
  - Jonah Lantto
  - Mark Lyman
  - Michael Sasser
  - Preston Phillips
  - Shannon Krueger
  - Mark Vollmer
- Staff Members included: Derek Hackett, Janet Anderson, Kelly Matalaka, Tami Stroklund, and Tom Barry. The City Council Liaison was Stephan Podrygula

Focus Group members were asked to characterize various interactions the City had led or participated in over the past few years. A collection of criticisms and ideas resulted. Recommended improvements were incorporated into the final draft of the plan. As part of this work, staff researched, reviewed, and compiled dozens of different community

engagement strategies used across the globe and, together with the Focus Group input, has incorporated many aspects of those documents to craft a strategy that best fits our community. The draft strategy was reviewed by the Focus Group and improvements were incorporated along the way. Additionally, Department Heads were given two opportunities along the way to review and comment on the proposed strategy. The strategy outlines what engagement is, the expectations of staff, and how to develop and manage a community engagement strategy. The Listen. Speak. Act. Community Engagement Strategy is intended to be a guide for City staff to plan and execute engagement activities for City projects going forward. Every project will fall under a different category and will require a different level of engagement. The goal is to inject more community inclusion in the everyday activities that may impact citizens.

C. Consultant Selection:

N/A – this project was administered in-house.

**IV. IMPACT:**

A. Strategic Impact:

The Listen. Speak. Act. Community Engagement Strategy will provide guidance on when, engagement is required, why engagement is important, who to engage and when, and how to develop and execute an engagement plan.

B. Service/Delivery Impact:

Execution of the strategy should help promote citizen involvement, create more community buy-in on projects, reduce conflicts, and ultimately provide the City Council with the proper information and recommendations on final decisions. This should also provide the Council with more confidence when making a final decision.

C. Fiscal Impact:

There are no fiscal impacts in reviewing and adopting this strategy. However, costs will likely be incurred for advertising, promotion, meeting rentals and incidentals, etc. to carry out the tenants of the plan. Those costs will be built into the associated project requiring community engagement.

**V. ALTERNATIVES**

The City Council could provide feedback to modify the document.

**VI. TIME CONSTRAINTS**

Staff hopes the City Council will adopt this as a formal policy in January 2020.

**VII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Listen. Speak. Act. City of Minot Community Engagement Strategy