

# Strategic Plan

*City of*  
**Minden, Nebraska**  
*2014*

**Office Locations**

Kearney  
McCook  
Holdrege  
Grand Island  
Colby, KS

Prepared By:



**Miller & Associates**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.

1111 Central Avenue  
Kearney, NE 68847  
(308) 234-6456

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# Acknowledgments

This Strategic Plan could not have been made possible without the diligent efforts of every City employee and elected and appointed official. This Strategic Plan provides the City with goals and objectives to work towards over the next five years. These goals and objectives focus on improving all aspects of the community in order to create a community ready for growth, capable of change, and will continue to provide residents with a high quality of life. The City's staff and officials have been and continue to be crucial in creating a sustainable community. This process relied heavily on their input for goals based on their visions for the future of the community.

**Consultant & Planner**  
**Miller & Associates**  
**Consulting Engineers, P.C.**  
1111 Central Avenue  
Kearney, Nebraska 68847  
Telephone: 308-234-6456  
Web: [www.miller-engineers.com](http://www.miller-engineers.com)

# Introduction

Minden's Strategic Plan is a road map that helps guide the City through the next five years. The City's Strategic Plan details where the City is going and how it plans to get there. Minden will lead the way in building a solid community through financial health, community involvement, beautification and aesthetic improvements, additional amenities to serve residents of all ages, improved public infrastructure, and upgraded public safety services to ensure Minden is a community ready for growth.

The City of Minden has spent the past couple of years completing multiple planning projects that included opportunities for public input and goal determination. All completed planning projects, including this Strategic Plan, were designed to work together to better prepare City leaders for action strategies and decision-making in order to move forward with the community. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the community's long-range plan providing goals and objectives for the next 10-15 years in Minden. This Strategic Plan document encompasses many of those same goals and objectives; however, this Plan creates shorter-term goals for City leaders to work towards over the next five years. These goals are comprehensive in nature covering many different areas of the community including streets and sidewalks, housing, and recreational amenities. The importance of these goals is their overall opportunities for success, yet they will all require hard work, planning, and budgeting. Many goals include the support of the local community as not all of these objectives can or should be completed by the City.

There are several different topics discussed in this Strategic Plan, and as previously stated, these goals were based on input provided by City Staff, elected and appointed officials, results from the Community Needs Assessment Survey, and discussions held during the public input sessions for the Comprehensive Plan. These goals are based on what residents and City officials conclude as areas in need of improvement. A few other areas that are important to the community but not on the priority list for the next five years include healthcare, communications, and education. These three community areas were not heavily discussed as improvement areas. The Kearney County Health Services campus has gone through several phases of improvements over the past few years and there are several specialized health clinics in Minden including dentists, chiropractors, eye doctors, and a physical therapist that provide residents with a wide range of healthcare needs. Based on results from the Community Needs Assessment Survey, residents are satisfied with the community's healthcare facilities. A 23 million dollar school bond was passed in 2014 to construct a new High School to be connected to the existing Middle School. Residents are pleased with the quality of educational options in Minden for their children and adults were also pleased with their proximity to furthering education classes offered in Kearney. This along with the new facility improvements relieve the City of having to accomplish any education goals within the next five years. Most of the City's residents were pleased with their coverage, reliability, and support for communications and internet capabilities. Because residents are pleased with recent and on-going improvements of their existing healthcare, education, and communications services these were not priority goals for City leaders to improve over the next five years. There are many other projects that became the main focus. City leaders want to improve the areas of the community that residents have voiced their concerns on, such as water and wastewater infrastructure, housing, and recreational amenities.

The City of Minden is committed to ensuring Minden has a healthy future and is able to provide services residents have come to expect. The City will strive to effectively and efficiently develop and strengthen assets that contribute to a City that is a great place to live, work, and play. A community is sustainable if it has the right mix of economic, social, and environmental assets, and leadership. A sustainable community not only survives over time but provides its citizens with a good place to live, work, shop, recreate, worship, and educate children.

Goal setting is an important step for any person, family, business, and even community. City leaders need to have clear long and short term goals, with strategies to reach those goals. However, these goals need to be comprehensive in nature, looking at every aspect of the community, and they must all align with a single vision for the future of the community. Personal and business goal setting is no different, but may be more challenging at a City level because of all the varying aspects and components City leaders must constantly assess and direct in order to grow and change in an organized, efficient, and effective manner. The City of Minden completed their Comprehensive Plan Update in 2012. This Plan allowed residents and community leaders to come together to create long term growth and development goals for the City. The following is a list of the City's long term goals determined by residents and stakeholders:

### **Comprehensive Plan - Long Term Goals**

**Improve Public Infrastructure**

**Create Gateway Entrances**

**Improve Housing**

**Promote Commercial Development**

**Construct New Swimming Pool**

**Become a Leadership Community**

**Support Minden Public School District**

These goals are a combination of information gathered from the public input sessions held during the planning process, research, and data analysis. These goals are realistic in nature, but allow the community to continually have goals to strive towards over the next ten years. Long term goals are important to keep in mind; however, feasible, short-term goals are crucial for stakeholders to accomplish. The City of Minden utilized public input sessions, surveys, and data analysis from the planning process for the Comprehensive Plan as well as a meeting with City Staff to determine feasible five-year goals and lay out a Strategic Plan to follow.

All of the goals laid out in this Strategic Plan are split into two different timelines. The first set of goals are projects City Staff would like to see accomplished within year one or two and the other set of goals are projects City Staff would like to see accomplished within the next three to five years. These projects are separated into four different categories including Infrastructure & Public Services/Amenities, Recreation, Housing, and Economic Development.

# Infrastructure & Amenities

*The City of Minden will improve its public infrastructure through several phases of upgrades and improvements made in the next five years. Public services and infrastructure are vital to the community; Minden wants to ensure its infrastructure and services provide for current residents while having the ability to allow for growth, when needed. The City of Minden will ensure public investment is utilized effectively by promoting balanced public investment and reinvestment opportunities in needed areas including public services and infrastructure that warrant a high quality of life for all residents. There are specific projects the City would like to accomplish over the next five years in several phases from paving, to water and recreational amenities, to technological infrastructure needs.*



**Provide quality public services/amenities and infrastructure for current residents with the ability to expand when needed due to growth in the community.**

Below is a list of goals concerning infrastructure improvements the City will accomplish within the next five years:

- Annual Maintenance Fee Budget Development;
- Water Distribution Improvements;
- Sanitary Sewer Improvements;
- Paving/Stormwater Drainage Improvements;
- Sidewalk/ADA Compliance Upgrades; and
- Recreational Amenity Improvements and Additions.

The City understands the improvement of public infrastructure is an on-going process; however, this plan limits its examination to the next five years.



### **Budget annual maintenance fees for streets, water, and sanitary sewer;**

All of the projects outlined in this section of the Strategic Plan are to be accounted for in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Because these public service and infrastructure needs are costly to the community, it is important that the City includes general maintenance and up-keep needs in the annual budget to avoid unnecessary surcharges for dilapidated infrastructure. An example of this preventative maintenance and up-keep is the City's plan to annually jet portions of the City's sanitary sewer mains.

### **Water distribution improvements;**

The municipal water system in Minden is supplied by four wells, which have an average depth of 190 feet. The system, serving a majority of the City's population, has a combined pumping capacity of 3,400 gallons per minute and an overhead storage capacity of 750,000 gallons. The City also has a 1.3 million gallon underground storage tank at the City's Water Treatment Facility. The average daily demand is 639,400 gallons, and the historic peak daily demand is 1,850,000 gallons. The system has a maximum capacity of 5,646,000 gallons per day. The static pressure is 45 pounds per square inch. The City's wells provide an average of 750 gallons of water per minute. The filtration water treatment plant has a capacity of 2,880,000 gallons. Revenue bonds in 1999, also helped pay for the renovation of the water plant and for a new trunk line to the water tower erected in 2000. The new tower provides better fire protection and water pressure to the west part of the City.

In 2014, a water study was completed evaluating Minden's water distribution system. The study concluded the need for replacement of 4-inch water mains, as well as a few 6- and 8-inch water mains, and several hydrants; improvements made to the wells; and replacement of the media at the City's Water Treatment Plant. This is a multiphase project that will stretch over several years; however, in the fall of 2014 a one-percent sales tax increase was passed by residents in order to pay for the first phase of water improvements. The City will complete Phase I of the needed improvements within the next two years.



### **Sanitary sewer collection system improvements;**

Minden has a municipal sanitary sewer system. The activated sludge treatment plant has a daily capacity of 1,600,000 gallons, an average daily flow of 250,000 gallons, and a historic peak daily discharge of 500,000 gallons. Revenue bonds in 1999, helped to pay for the renovation of the sewer treatment plant.

The City is currently working and will continue to complete jetting and a closed circuit television inspection of all sanitary sewer lines. This project will be completed over the next two to three years. Over the next five years, the City will also complete rehabilitation of five to ten manholes within the corporate limits. The City will complete two sewer line extensions including a sewer line to serve the new Runza in Spring of 2015 and an extension project on County Club Lane in the next few years. The City will also rebuild lift station #4 within the next year. Other sanitary sewer improvements include cleaning the City's lagoons within the next three to five years and completing GIS mapping for all sanitary sewer components.

### **Paving/stormwater drainage improvements;**

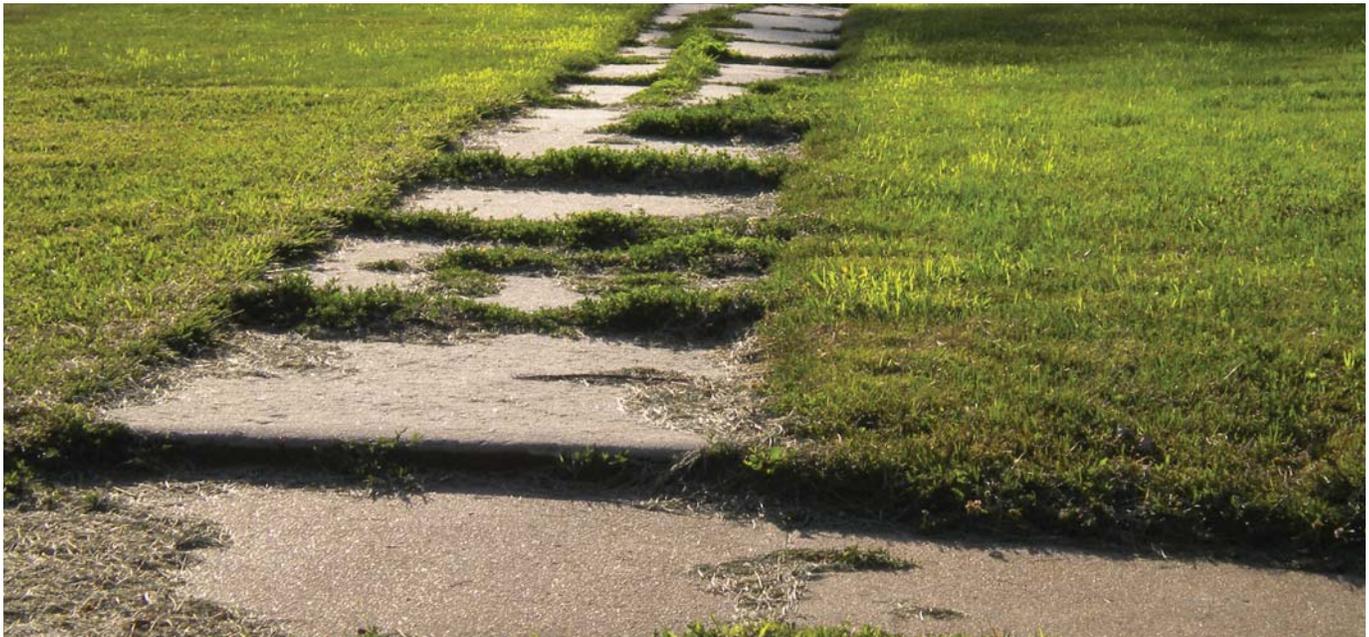
The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) annually reports surface aggregates for all of the roads in Minden. The 2012 Lane-Mile Report for Minden detailed the following figures, 9.95 miles of concrete, 17.86 miles of asphalt, 0.89 miles of bituminous surfacing, 0.12 miles of brick roads, and 5.59 miles of gravel in Minden. Although concrete is not the only street surfacing option, it has the longest life-span and needs less maintenance in comparison to other road surfacing types; therefore, concrete roads are a valuable investment for the future of the community.

Minden also completed its 1 & 6 Year Road Plan in January of 2015. This plan is in place to help guide achievable transportation development for the first year and development goals for the remaining five years. There was one project listed in the one year plan, and 16 projects listed in the City's six year plan. It is important that the City continues to think progressively when preparing the annual 1 & 6 Year Road Plan in order to budget appropriately and prepare for potential business and residential growth. It was a goal of the City's to continue to follow their annual 1 & 6 Year Road Plan very closely; therefore, City officials will make it a point to keep this plan progressing by completing the necessary projects and improvements. The City will also budget approximately \$70,000 annually to maintain the existing roads in order to avoid and minimize future replacement needs.

The main area of concern for stormwater drainage is near the underpass on Garber Avenue. The City will work over the next several years to first develop and plan and second put the plan into action to mitigate the flooding and drainage concerns in this area. Although there are no major existing issues with the stormwater drainage, there are a few areas throughout the community in need of improvements. Over the next several years, the City is committed to developing and implementing a plan to mitigate the flooding and drainage concerns in this area.

### **Sidewalk/ADA compliance upgrades; and**

Although sidewalks are an essential amenity in communities, they are also another form of public infrastructure that requires maintenance, ADA compliance updates, and sometimes complete replacement. Areas of broken or cracked sidewalks coupled with incomplete connections make sidewalks challenging to use. Completing a sidewalk inventory and conditions analysis including ADA-compliance review would assist City leaders with planning for sidewalk improvements. Improving existing sidewalks is important as the City moves forward, but it is also important for decision-makers to determine if new sidewalks need to be constructed in order to close some of the existing gaps to improve pedestrian transportation, safety, and connectivity.



The most recent ADA design guidelines should be followed when any new sidewalk project is undertaken. The City will complete a sidewalk inventory map depicting where sidewalks exist and do not exist, if sidewalks are in poor condition and need repaired, and whether or not there are existing ADA ramps. This inventory map will be an important visual tool for the City to utilize when determining improvement needs. The map may also help stakeholders visualize specific areas in need, as well as determine practical pedestrian traffic patterns and decide if sidewalks need to be constructed to better serve the community. It is the City's goal to first target high pedestrian areas to improve safety and access. In the City's 3-5 year plan, they will construct a sidewalk from Highway 6/34 north to the Fairgrounds. Another project to improve pedestrian access is to construct pedestrian crosswalks with the possibility of adding crosswalk lights, to help pedestrians safely cross Highway 6/34 and to cross Brown Avenue (Highway) at 5th Street.

### **Recreational amenity improvements & additions.**

A full list of desired recreational improvements can be found in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The list of goals was determined to show the priority goals for the community's recreational amenities. It has been determined that the City will construct a new swimming pool, but the details have not been decided upon. Within the next one or two years, the City will complete a site selection process and determine the programming needs for the new municipal swimming pool. After the site for the new municipal swimming pool is determined, the City will create a "task force" to develop a marketing campaign and fundraise for the construction costs of the new facility. The City will not be able to construct the new facility until the funds have been secured; however, their goal is to have the pool completed within the next five years.

Other recreational amenity goals the City will complete in the next couple of years include rehabilitating the bandshell and installing underground sprinklers at Chautauqua Park, resurfacing the tennis courts at the Swimming Pool Park, and adding a sidewalk and accessible swing that meets ADA regulations at one of the parks within the community.



The City will improve the restroom facilities at all of the parks throughout the community in order to update the facilities and comply with ADA design guidelines. City stakeholders also discussed their desire to add additional playground equipment or to further develop the "neighborhood" park in the Minden West Estates subdivision in order to provide a recreational amenity in close proximity to residents in the western portion of the community. Another recreational amenity residents and City leaders would like to add is a dog park for Minden's four-legged residents. The City will construct the dog park within the next three to five years, but have not determined an official location. One area that would be feasible for the new amenity is the location of the existing swimming pool. Most residents have voiced their support for a new municipal swimming pool location (which will be determined through a site selection process) because they would like the pool to be located further away from the railroad. Residents and City stakeholders alike have discussed potential uses for the existing swimming pool site, once the new facility is open for use, and a dog park is a positive option for this area.



# Housing



*Housing is a crucial piece to the prosperity of Minden. Whether it is identifying needs for new market-rate housing or ways to encourage development of affordable housing options, Minden must work to constantly assess and improve its housing market. In order to attract more people to the community, there has to be a supply of well-maintained, available, affordable, and safe housing. Addressing the issues of old housing stock that does not meet the needs of today's renters and buyers is also another challenge that faces City leaders. Community growth and revitalization can be made possible through the identification of housing needs in Minden. The City understands the importance of housing to the community and its ability to grow; therefore, leaders have prioritized housing-related goals to be started and some of them accomplished within the next two years.*

**Improve the existing housing market because of its direct correlation to the success of the community by increasing stock, decreasing the amount of vacant dilapidated structures, and improving the existing stock to meet the needs of today's renters and buyers.**

The following is a list of the housing improvements the City plans to make over the next five years:

- Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Grant Application;
- Minden West Estates Expansion;
- Developer Attraction;
- Housing Beautification and Nuisance Abatement; and
- Vacant, Dilapidated Structure Demolition.

**Apply for Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation grant through NDED;**

In the next couple of years, the City will complete an application to be submitted to the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) for an Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation grant. This grant would provide the City with funds to loan/grant to eligible homeowners for repairing, rehabilitating, or reconstructing owner-occupied units.

**Expand duplexes at Minden West Estates;**

There is a need for additional homes in Minden and the existing duplexes at Minden West Estates have been full, with a waiting list, since completion. The duplexes fill a housing need in the community and have provided some much needed relief to the tight housing market in Minden. Additional duplexes will be developed by the same company who developed the original set of 16 duplex units (8 structures). The City and the CRA will work with the developer, assisting in any way possible, to get the additional duplex units constructed. These units will be very beneficial to the City of Minden and will provide much needed housing for the community. The CRA is a very active committee in Minden and they are constantly looking for ways to improve the City.



**Market Minden to attract potential developers;**

The City has demonstrated a need for housing and will use online and conventional marketing pieces and resources to market the community and its housing needs to potential developers. These potential developers may already live within the community or may live elsewhere. Marketing the amenities Minden can offer to residents confirms a high quality of life is provided for all citizens. The marketing will take place in a variety of different avenues including, but not limited to, the City's website, social media sites, conferences/conventions, and flyers/posters to be handed out. Marketing will take place over a period of several months, possibly years, because attracting a developer will not happen overnight.



**Encourage housing beautification and enforce nuisance abatement; and**

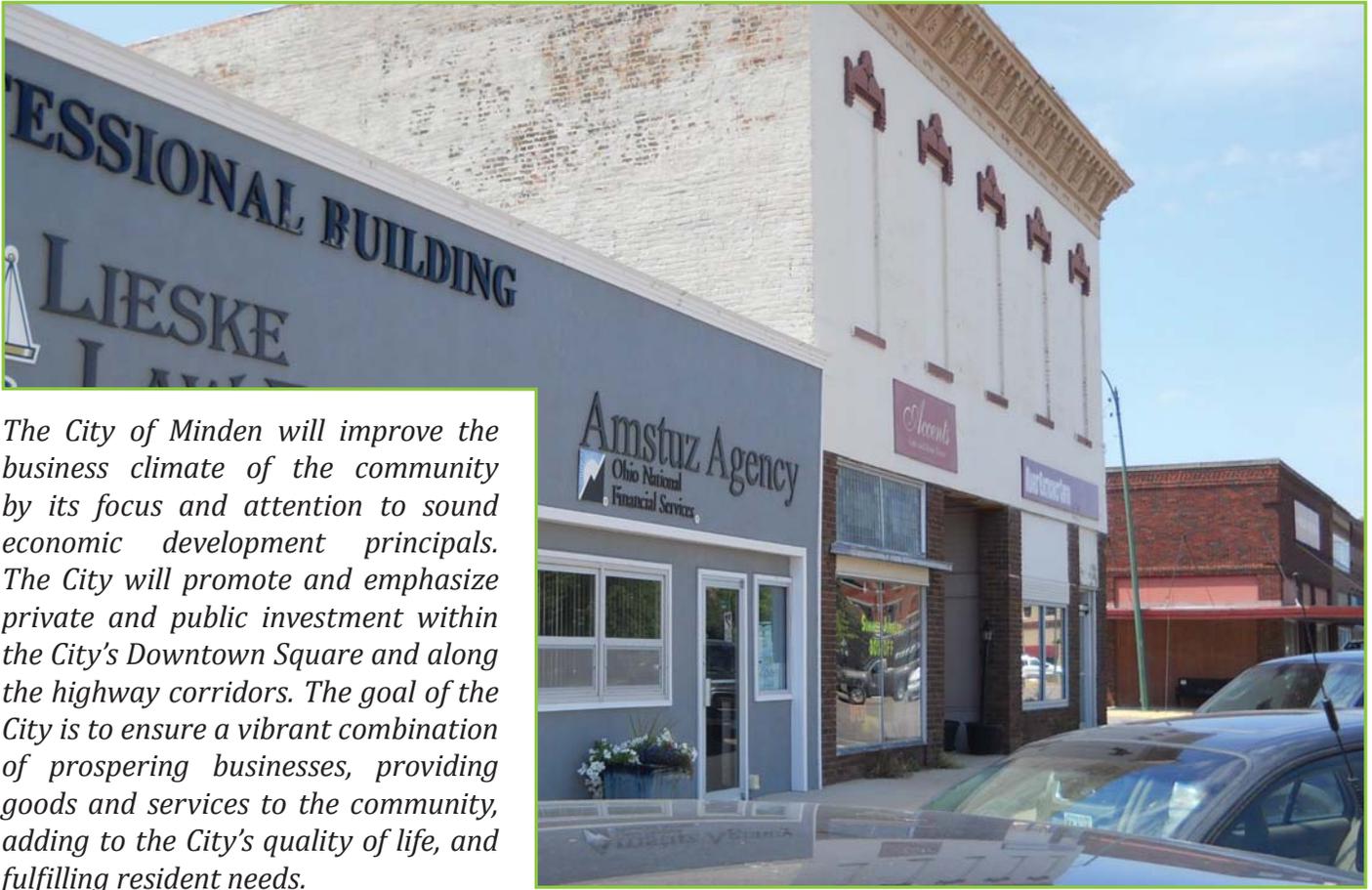
The citizens of Minden have voiced their desire for some type of housing beautification effort. The City will look to develop a housing beautification program whether it be a beautification incentive or coordinating volunteer efforts as well as continuing to enforce nuisance abatement throughout the community as a means to clean-up properties.

**Demolish vacant, dilapidated structures.**

All vacant lots and vacant, uninhabitable homes are properties that could be utilized for infill residential development. The City should access different avenues available to them to assist with the clean-up of vacant lots and uninhabitable properties. There are minimal lots available for infill development; therefore, efforts should be made to create more availability. Also, by cleaning up vacant lots and uninhabitable homes the City will be able to rid the community of unnecessary eye sores, and safety and health hazards. There are a few ways to raze vacant, dilapidated properties including Tax Increment Financing funds, City-funds through acquirement of the property, or encouragement to the property owner through nuisance abatement. The City could create a housing committee to take the lead of this process. One idea would be to budget a set dollar amount each year to go towards the acquisition and/or demolition of these vacant, derelict homes.



# Economic Development



*The City of Minden will improve the business climate of the community by its focus and attention to sound economic development principals. The City will promote and emphasize private and public investment within the City's Downtown Square and along the highway corridors. The goal of the City is to ensure a vibrant combination of prospering businesses, providing goods and services to the community, adding to the City's quality of life, and fulfilling resident needs.*

**Provide solutions and opportunities to showcase, enhance, energize, and grow the business community.**

Below is a list of goals to improve the Economic Development for the City of Minden over the next five years:

- Youth Retention;
- Downtown Revitalization Program;
- Marketing Minden;
- Partnership Development and Incentive Alignment;
- Business Retention and Expansion Program; and
- New Business Attraction.

### **Focus on youth retention;**

Attracting and retaining youth in Minden is crucial to the future of the community. For this reason the City, with the help of other groups/organizations including Minden Public Schools, must work closely together to ensure that Minden's youth feel at home. It is necessary to provide many opportunities in Minden for those wanting to stay in the community or return after furthering their education. The different City organizations must determine who will be the responsible lead for youth retention programs. A business tour to Juniors and Seniors would showcase the local businesses and potential career opportunities to students. Retaining the youth or encouraging the "legacy migration" back to Minden is critical to the sustainability of the community; therefore, stakeholders cannot miss these opportunities to engage the youth while they are present in Minden.

### **Complete the Downtown Revitalization program;**

A thriving and active Main Street has long been a signal of a prosperous community. Some of the properties in Minden's Downtown Square have suffered from years of neglect. Therefore, the City is encouraged to work on downtown revitalization efforts. The goal for the City is to apply for Downtown Revitalization Phase I grant funds to develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan. A Plan will help the City understand the opportunities for growth, change, and improvements. Once the Plan has been created the City can work, in phases, to implement the Plan. In the next year the City will apply for Downtown Revitalization Phase I grant funds through NDED, will procure for a planning consultant, and will work with the consultant to develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Plan will focus on improvement goals and feasible phases necessary to reach the City's goals.



### **Market Minden;**

The City must market Minden to current and future residents through the use of several resources including online and traditional marketing sources. Creating a community brand and marketing that brand to existing and potential residents and visitors is important when trying to develop an image and use that image to enhance a marketing campaign for the City. With all that Minden has to offer its residents, from amenities to local retail businesses, the community truly is a destination place and does attract visitors. However, the City still needs to develop a marketing campaign to promote existing businesses as well as capitalize on its ability to grow.

The City and/or other local organizations should also focus on marketing to its own residents. A “shop local” campaign could involve many different marketing strategies to reach various community members. Marketing the City to existing residents is sometimes just as important as marketing to potential visitors. A “shop local” campaign could consist of yard signs, placement reminders at restaurants, or participation in “Thankful Thursdays” when residents are encouraged to show their support and thanks to local businesses.

Social media marketing is one way to share information with existing residents while also marketing the community to potential residents and visitors. Online marketing is a quick and almost instant way to share information; it is also accessible almost anywhere for most people. In today’s society, people want instant information and one way to provide it is to have a strong web presence promoting the City and all that it has to offer including both public places and private businesses. Marketing the City should be an on-going effort made in part by the City of Minden as well as other local organizations with the assistance of local businesses.

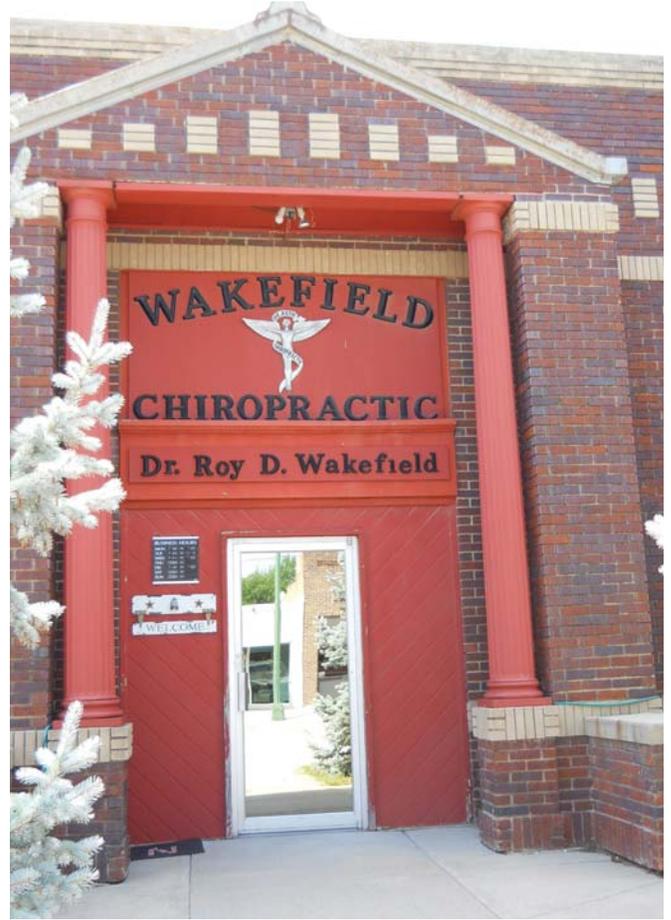


**Develop strong partnerships/align incentives;**

The City has been working to establish quality partnerships with State and Regional offices/ organizations that can provide support to Minden and vice versa. It is crucial for the creation of a strong relationship between different tiers and groups in order for those groups to utilize each other's services when needed and grow together when possible. Aligning development incentives for all sources including local, regional, and state could help attract a potential business to locate in Minden. When marketing any real estate, the City should also show what development incentives are offered in the area. When developers are looking to locate a new commercial business venture they also consider how development incentives can entice them to select a certain location. Having all development incentives labeled easily and readily available for businesses to analyze and utilize will be beneficial when encouraging development in Minden.

**Continue effective Business Retention & Expansion Program; and**

An effective way to retain existing businesses is to focus efforts on an on-going Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. This will help to maintain relationships with business owners, develop open lines of communication between the City and businesses, and help the City determine the needs of employers. Minden's City Administrator, with the assistance of the NDED regional staff, has been completing the BR&E visits and will continue to focus on meeting with all business owners on an annual basis. Each of these 'interviews' or conversations should be recorded and formatted so the City can keep a database. This helps ensure the City's knowledge of business owners' needs, can help recruit employees when needed, can help with any expansion needs, can help examine possible grant funding or other development resources, and can assist with succession planning. The City will continue to complete the BR&E program on an annual basis with each business in the community; therefore, this is an on-going goal.



**Attract new businesses.**

The City of Minden will work to attract new businesses to the community through many different strategies including marketing Minden, updating information on the City's Location One Information Systems (LOIS), and assisting potential business owners in the development process. The City will also put forth the following efforts:

- Focus on Attracting New Businesses;
- Encourage the Growth and Support of Existing Businesses;
- Continue "Passive Attraction" through an up-to-date website;
- Create an Entrepreneur Friendly Environment to Develop New Businesses; and
- Develop/Offer Incentives for New Business Development.



Project Matrix					
Project	1-2 Years	3-5 Years	Status	Potential Funding Source(s)	
Phase I: Replacement of Hydrants, Valves, & 4" Main	X			SRF/WWAC/Bond	
Phase II: Main, Wells, & Media Replacement	X			SRF/WWAC	
Well #5 Clay Valve Replacement		X		SRF/WWAC	
GIS Mapping of Water Distribution Center	X				
Sewer - Jetting/CCTV Lines	X				
Rebuild Lift Station #4	X				
Extend Country Club Lane Sewer Line	X				
Extend Runza Sewer Line	X				
Clean Lagoons		X			
GIS Mapping of Sanitary Sewer Collection System		X			
Maintain & Follow 1 & 6 Year Road Plan	X	X			
Sidewalk/ADA Compliance Improvements	X	X			
Create Sidewalk Inventory Map	X				
GIS Mapping of Stormwater Drainage Infrastructure		X			
Site Determination/Fundraising for New Pool	X				
New Pool Construction		X		CCCCFF/LWCF	
Chattauqua Park Bandshell & Sprinklers	X			LWCF	
Tennis Court Resurfacing	X			LWCF	
ADA Swing & Sidewalk at Park	X				
Restroom Facility Improvements at All Parks		X			
New Dog Park		X			
New Park at Minden West Estates		X		LWCF	
Expand Duplexes at Minden West Estates	X				
Nuisance Abatement	X				
Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation (OOR) Grant Application	X			NDED-OOR	
Market to Private Developers	X	X			
Energy Audits to Improve Efficiency in Homes	X				



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