

Fairmont

STRATEGIC PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

To paraphrase Lewis Carroll in Through the Looking Glass:

If you don't know where you're going, then it doesn't matter which way you go!

The purpose of a strategic plan is to help organizations and communities determine where they want to go, what they want to be, and how to get where they want to go; or in other words, how to achieve their vision for the future. For a strategic plan to be more than an academic exercise that results in an impressive, but dreary document gathering dust on a shelf, it must be developed by people who are passionate about a community's potential and its future.

Strategic planning is one of the most important responsibilities of the leadership of any community. It is the activity that establishes a clear vision for the community and sets appropriate strategic objectives to guide fulfillment of the vision. It also aligns appropriate resources and deployment decisions to achieve the strategic objectives and establishes measures that ensure attainment of those objectives within specified time frames.

Like all communities, the Village of Fairmont, Nebraska is continually faced with a myriad of challenges and opportunities. The demands on budgets, public infrastructure, and staffing underscore the need for a comprehensive and clear strategic plan. In an era of limited resources (human and financial), it is critical that citizens, leaders, and staff are focused in the same direction. The role of this strategic plan, therefore, is to provide that focus, facilitate the successful growth of Fairmont, and provide a platform to purposefully advance the village as a community.

As a comprehensive plan prepares a community for future growth and development; a community's strategic plan helps identify and prioritize the specific projects that will assist the village to reach its ultimate destination. These projects do not happen overnight, nor are they accomplished by one person. Careful planning and consideration should be given to each. The village should rely on staff, appointed officials, elected officials, community groups, and other organizations to help achieve these identified projects planned for the benefit of the entire community. The projects may include those necessary to maintain status quo, while others will be necessary or desired for continued community growth. The Fairmont Strategic Plan will identify the top eight (8) goals of the community and list individual concerns, objectives, actions, timelines, responsible groups/agencies, potential resources, and measurable outputs for each goal. The intent of the projects or goals is to enhance the high-quality of life for the residents of Fairmont and its economic vitality.



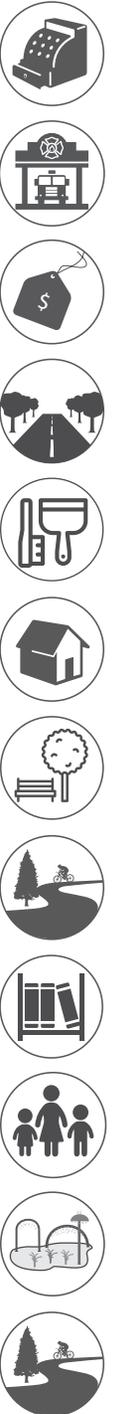


A high-quality of life, in general, tops the list of attributes a community must strive for in an effort to both survive and prosper. The availability of quality housing, education, parks facilities, recreation programs, and commerce must be in place to keep current residents from relocating and to entice new families into the community. For existing residents of Fairmont, the decision to stay or move is largely based on the satisfaction and connection they have with the community. While residents may deliberate leaving the village for educational or economic reasons, other factors do play a role in helping them to decide. If another community (or region) offers the quality of life they desire, then residents may show an interest in making plans to relocate. However, community satisfaction and attachment could overrule that decision to relocate.

Studies show that existing residents are less likely to move from their place of residence if they feel a sense of satisfaction or connection with that community. That's because people support what they help create. As feelings of connection grow between person and place, sentiments associated with that place increase as well. For this reason, public engagement in shaping the community's future is crucial and transformative because it empowers residents to define what's important to their community and enables decision-makers to formulate strategies and target limited local resources (both human and financial) to address these community priorities. This sense of community ownership (connection and attachment) can play an impactful role in retaining existing residents and improve the village's local economic standing.

Studies have also shown a strong link between quality of life amenities and economic development. In today's competitive economic development climate, businesses and industries make relocation and expansion decisions partly on quality of life amenities that can be offered to their employees. Most business prospects will not even consider an area that does not offer modern quality of life amenities. Employee recruitment and retention all depend on how happy workers are where they live and work. Workforce talent (both individuals and families) prefer livable communities with easy access to large open parks, walking paths, hike-and-bike trails, recreational opportunities, performing and visual arts centers, museums, playgrounds, gardens and similar facilities where they can spend their leisure time.

Although quality of life amenities are costly to own, operate, and maintain, the payoff in terms of community pride and marketing can be of almost immeasurable value. They reveal the values and underpinnings of the local community and serve as a measure of civic health and vitality. New residents are attracted to communities that exude a strong feeling of hope and optimism about the future. They want some assurance that the community is a quality place to live, work, recreate, and invest.



Purpose

The purpose of the Fairmont Strategic Planning Process is to identify and prioritize the physical needs of the community. The goal is to establish community consensus on future capital improvements, so local decision-makers can begin targeting limited local resources for priority initiatives to keep Fairmont moving in the right direction.

The Fairmont Strategic Plan will serve as the community development plan for the Village. It is a practical and usable, yet visionary road map to communicate the Village's intentions to the residents of Fairmont, focus the direction of public and private investments, and ensure that top tier consensus priorities are met in a timeframe established by the community.

The Plan will define specific goals that are to be achieved, a course of action for achieving those priorities, and detail measurements to ensure the outcomes of those results. Additionally, it will ensure that the most important Village priorities are identified, communicated, and achieved with direction and effective planning so that all may know what is expected and how to achieve success. The Village will be diligent in focusing its efforts on strategic objectives that it can control and influence within the scope of its mission and vision. The implementation of this plan and the decision making around it will align with the Village's values.

Planning Process:

On July 18, 2018 members of the Fairmont Village Board, Village Staff, Fillmore Central Public Schools, Fillmore County Economic Development, Rural Fire District, civic organizations, business-owners, and concerned residents of the community held a strategic planning workshop to discuss and prioritize various projects in and around Fairmont. A total of 64 stakeholders participated in the workshop.

JEO Consulting Group, Inc. (JEO) was hired to facilitate the workshop.

The goal of the strategic planning workshop was to establish consensus on civic betterment initiatives, so the Village could formulate strategies and target local resources (both human and financial) to accomplish the goals. It was agreed that a formal plan of action was needed to keep Fairmont moving forward and to provide efficiency in its resources, regardless of personnel changes.

Because the Fairmont Strategic Plan is a living document, it should be updated regularly to reflect new accomplishments and changing priorities. As updates are needed, the Village should continue to engage the community in the planning process. Through ongoing communication and collaboration, the village can ensure that the strategic plan reflects not only the priorities of local decision-makers, but also the priorities of the local citizenry.

Planning Workshop

The purpose of the strategic planning workshop was to inform, educate, and build consensus among committee members so local decision-makers could formulate strategies and target local resources (both human and financial) to accomplish these civic priorities.

At the onset of the July 18, 2018 Fairmont Strategic Planning Workshop, the Committee reviewed the results of online community needs assessment survey that was conducted in early-July 2018. Hard copies of the survey were also available for residents that did not have access to a computer or preferred to complete the survey by hand.

The 17-question survey asked residents to rate the importance of the following aspects of the community, using a scale of “Not at all important,” “Low importance,” “Neutral,” Very Important,” to “Extremely Important.”

Survey participants expressed their opinions on the importance of having:

- a Trails Master Plan
- a variety of housing options
- access to quality, affordable childcare
- economic development incentives
- a splash pad
- ADA accessible sidewalks and/or park equipment
- well-maintained sports practice fields
- a skate park
- court markings on the basketball/tennis courts
- road improvements
- sidewalks
- an enhanced fire station
- a new Public Library with a community room

Members unanimously agreed with the importance of these 13 strategic issues, but in the end, the committee combined four similar issues, bringing the total strategic issues to ten (10). They included:

- Economic Development
- Fire Station
- Street Conditions
- Housing Choices
- Park Improvements
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Public Library
- Child Care Facilities
- Splash Pad
- Trails Development

Committee members were then asked to further define these ten (10) strategic issues by identifying all known issues and concerns surrounding these items. This exercise offered committee members a deeper understanding of strategic issues, their importance to the long-term well-being of the community, and to facilitate the ranking process for issue prioritization.



Prioritization Process

The next step was to identify any current issues and projects facing the Village. Participants identified two new strategic issues that were deemed as possible goals for Fairmont, based upon recent developments and discussions. These issues included the enactment of a Local Option Sales Tax and Nuisance Abatement. These new issues were discussed in detail, so committee members could understand all associated issues, concerns, opportunities and constraints surrounding these possible civic goals.

Using their understanding, insight, and professional expertise, committee members were asked to consider and rank their top tier priorities using a dot exercise. Each of the 46 committee members still in attendance were given a total of four (4) sticker dots, or votes, to help rank the strategic issues of most importance to them. The results of this first round of voting showed a clear consensus on four (4) priority issues for Fairmont in 2018:

Tier I Priorities

- Promote economic development within the Village of Fairmont. (36 Tier I votes)
- Construct an energy-efficient, scale appropriate, and aesthetically-pleasing Fire Hall for the Fairmont Rural Fire District (RFD). (29 Tier I votes)
- Enact a Local Option Sales (LOST) Tax within the Village of Fairmont. (28 Tier I votes)
- Improve housing options in the Village of Fairmont. (23 Tier I votes)

These strategic issues were referred to as “Tier I Priorities” - or of highest importance to the community - since they received a majority of first round votes from of committee members present.

Tier I Priorities were taken down from the wall and decision-makers were then asked to rank the remaining strategic issues. Each member was then given three (3) additional sticker dots and instructed to vote on “Tier II Priorities” of the village. Again, the strategic issue had to receive a consensus of second round votes to be considered Tier II Priorities. Tier II Priorities for Fairmont in 2018 include:

Tier II Priorities

- Improve the municipal park system within the Village of Fairmont. (6 Tier I votes and 44 Tier II votes)
- Improve sidewalk conditions throughout the village of Fairmont. (7 Tier I votes and 32 Tier II votes)
- Construct a safe, aesthetically-pleasing, scale-appropriate, energy-efficient, fully accessible Public Library/Recreation Center. (12 Tier I votes and 30 Tier II votes)
- Expand the availability of high-quality childcare within the Village of Fairmont. (2 Tier I votes and 22 Tier II votes)

Strategic issues that received at least one vote during the first or second round were placed into a Tier III Priority category. Although there was not a clear consensus on these priorities during the voting process, Tier III Priorities were still identified as important issues for the community. The Tier III Priority for the Village of Fairmont in 2018 are shown below in no particular order.

Tier III Priorities

- Construct a Splash Pad for the Village of Fairmont. (4 Tier I votes and 8 Tier II votes)

The following strategic issue did not receive a single priority vote during the ranking process and placed into a Tier IV Priority Category. Although this strategic issue did not receive any votes, it was still identified as important project for the village and should be reconsidered the next time the village updates its strategic plan.

Tier IV Priorities

- Develop a network of off-street trails within the Village of Fairmont to encourage public health and safety. (0 Tier I votes and 0 Tier II votes).

Timeframe for Implementation

The final activity of the goal setting process was to recommend a timeframe for implementation for each of the priorities. Four timeframes were used: Short-Term – defined as priorities to be accomplished over the next three (3) years, Mid-Term – priorities to be accomplished within 4-8 years, Long Term – priorities to be accomplished within 8-10 years, ongoing priorities, or institutionalized priorities, as defined above.

It is important to note that an individual priority can be assigned multiple timeframes for implementation. Certain action steps, such as a study, need to take place in the short-term so the priority can secure the needed funding or permits to be implemented in the Mid- or Long-Term.

The results of this exercise are shown below:

Short-Term Goals

- Construct an energy-efficient, scale appropriate, and aesthetically-pleasing Fire Hall for the Fairmont Rural Fire District (RFD).
- Enact a Local Option Sales (LOST) Tax within the Village of Fairmont.
- Improve the physical appearance of Fairmont by continuing the Nuisance Abatement Program.
- Construct a safe, aesthetically-pleasing, scale-appropriate, energy-efficient, fully accessible Public Library/Recreation Center
- Expand the availability of high-quality childcare within the Village of Fairmont.

Short-Term and Ongoing Goals

- Promote economic development within the Village of Fairmont.
- Improve housing options in the Village of Fairmont.

Mid-Term Goals

- Improve the municipal park system within the Village of Fairmont.

Long-Term and Ongoing Goals

- Improve sidewalk conditions throughout the village of Fairmont.

Ongoing Goals

- Improve street conditions throughout the Village of Fairmont.



Priorities for 2018

The priorities for Fairmont in 2018 are listed below in order of their highest ranking, their recommended timeframe for completion, and their associated concerns and/or needs. Although the following goals are numbered, this priority setting process shall not limit the village from addressing unforeseen issues or taking advantage of any opportunities to complete such priorities regardless of their order.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PRIORITY #1:

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Short-term and Ongoing Goal.

Priority: 36 Tier I votes

Concerns/Issues

- Need a grocery store. Closed in 2017. Closed three times in past 15-years)
- Need café or restaurant. Closed several years ago.
- There are empty storefronts in the downtown area for new businesses
- Many storefronts need improvements (facades, roof, windows, etc.)
- Low profit-margins make reinvestment cost-prohibitive
- Need a fitness center/recreation center
- Something for youth to do
- Need a new community center with 400±-person capacity to encourage wedding receptions, anniversaries, family reunions, etc.
- Need plumber/HVAC
- Tire repair shop



Objective: #1

To examine the economic profile of the Village of Fairmont.

Action Step #1: Examine the strengths and barriers to local economic development.

Action Step #2: Hold a focus group session to discuss trends in the Fairmont business community (business startups, failures, expansions or relocations).

Action Step #3: Review economic indicators (housing starts, employment, unemployment, per capita income, net taxable sales, existing business make-up).

Action Step #4: Survey the Fairmont business community to gather information on product/service, number of employees, expansion plans, and strengths/barriers to economic development within the village.

Action Step #5: Survey residents of Fairmont to gather information on pertinent demographics, income, commuting patterns, purchasing characteristics, and community economic development needs.

Action Step #6: Contact current business-owners in Fairmont to determine the need for Business Success Planning.

Timeline: 2019

Objective: #2

To evaluate exogenous influences that may influence future economic development efforts.

Action Step #1: Examine the strengths and barriers to local economic development.

Action Step #2: Examine the characteristics of the local economy.

Action Step #3: Consider the economic composition of the Village of Fairmont to determine its susceptibility to business cycles, comparative advantages, potential value-added business prospects, economic clusters, and other factors that will lead to economic sustainability.

Action Step #4: Review existing engineering reports to consider the capacity of existing public infrastructure/utilities to support future economic development efforts.

Action Step #5: Consider the capacity of public safety (fire protection, law enforcement) to support further economic development efforts.

Action Step #6: Analyze the existing housing situation in Fairmont.

Action Step #7: Review the Village's Land Use Plan/Zoning Ordinance to ensure adequate/appropriate space for commercial expansion/recruitment.

Action Step #8: Inventory available business space within the existing downtown area.

Action Step #9: Consider the opportunities and constraints associated with economic development within Fairmont.

- Action Step #10:** Consider the opportunities and constraints of a “commuter” population base.
- Action Step #11:** Review the opportunities and threats of new economic expansion within the immediate area, especially throughout Fillmore County and the Fairmont area.
- Action Step #12:** Consider the economic leakages of Fairmont. Develop strategies to reduce that leakage.
- Action Step #13:** Consider the availability of labor in and around the community.
- Action Step #14:** Consider the availability of “site ready” sites within Fairmont and its extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- Timeline:** 2019-2020.

Objective: #3
To quantify and qualify the economic potential of Fairmont, Nebraska.

- Action Step #1:** Define and articulate the Economic Development Vision for the Village of Fairmont.
- Action Step #2:** Establish clear public policy as it relates to dedicating resources for economic development activities.
- Action Step #3:** Establish economic development goals, objectives, action steps, and timelines.
- Timeline:** 2020.

Objective: #4
To develop strategies for promoting/fostering economic development in Fairmont.

- Action Step #1:** Develop strategies to promote the success of existing Fairmont businesses.
- Action Step #2:** Identify businesses that have enormous growth potential within the local economy including new businesses, value-added businesses, and new opportunities that slow economic leakages.
- Action Step #3:** Outline intervention strategies that respond to specific barriers and opportunities that face Fairmont businesses (job training, workforce availability, housing, labor market skills, new marketing strategies, public infrastructure, and economic development resources).
- Action Step #4:** Identify growth areas within the community which are suitable for commercial development.
- Action Step #5:** Identify partners for economic development, including financial assistance partners, technical, educational and job training partners, improve communication among business and government leaders, and foster cooperation among industry coalitions and residents.



- Action Step #6:** Review activities/opportunities can and do draw visitors to Fairmont.
- Action Step #7:** Actively encourage businesses that provide ongoing support to these visitors.
- Action Step #8:** Work with existing business-owners to develop a mentoring program with area students to raise awareness of business transfer opportunities.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Objective: #5
To provide support for small business development and entrepreneurial training.

- Action Step #1:** Survey Fairmont residents to determine economic leakages and consumer demand.
- Action Step #2:** Tabulate and analyze survey results.
- Action Step #3:** Consider the feasibility/possibility of addressing the concerns of potential small businesses.
- Action Step #4:** Offer ongoing training and education to small businesses and entrepreneurs about accessing capital, preparing business plans, effectuate niche markets, expanding market share, foster economic clusters, or develop effective marketing strategies.
- Action Step #5:** Incentivize small business development efforts.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Responsible Group/Agency
Fairmont Village Board, Fillmore County Planning Commission, Fillmore County Economic Development Corporation, Fillmore Central Public Schools, Future Business Leader Association, Fairmont business-owners, and Fairmont residents.

Potential Resources
Local Funds, Tax Increment Financing, Local Option Sales Tax, U.S.D.A. Rural Development Programs, Utility Providers, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority Programs, Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED), and Nebraska Department of Transportation.

Measure Output
Community and government leaders across the country have come to the realization that they not only can but must initiate programs to enhance their local economy. Communities throughout Nebraska have sometimes provided enormous subsidies to try to entice large businesses to build manufacturing plants within their communities; while others have started small loan funds to encourage “micro-enterprise” businesses or created “incubators” that provide office space and services to a variety of small businesses. Even with a booming economy and one of the lowest unemployment rates in modern history - on a national level, the long-term economic development goal of job creation and business retention remains at the forefront for the Village of Fairmont.

- **Business Succession Planning**

Sustaining established family-owned businesses into the next generation is an important issue for rural southeast Nebraska. Many businesses throughout Nebraska are family-owned, but statistics clearly show that few survive beyond the retirement of the current owner. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, only 30% of all family businesses succeed into the second generation, and of these, only 15% survive into the third generation. These alarming facts, combined with the realization that many new businesses fail within the first five years, demonstrate that losing established small businesses can severely impact economic stability.

No one plans to fail, they just fail to plan. Even though this adage of yesteryear attests to the importance of thinking ahead, national statistics indicate that a significant number of small business owners are aging and do not have an exit strategy in place. For some, the thought of giving up ownership and control of a business they have built over many years of hard work is too difficult to contemplate. Others are under the misconception that someone will appear at the door ready, willing and able to offer a fair price for the company when they want and/or need to sell their business. There are still others who are forced into selling/transferring their family-owned business because of circumstances beyond their control (e.g., health issues, age, death, bankruptcy). In any one of these situation, transition will come.

One common thread of any successful business transition plan is that it requires time - oftentimes as much as two decades. During this transition period, the existing small business-owner must plan their estate, identify a successor(s), and allow the new buyer time to learn the business, build the equity needed to secure the financing, and perhaps create new economic enterprises within the business. Without this advance time, heirs and business successors may be vulnerable to considerable estate taxes and management upheaval; further contributing to the failure rate of generational business transfer.

Business succession planning is important because it helps retain businesses that, by default, may have otherwise closed due to retirement, or possibly be sold and relocated to another community. According to business succession planning experts, the ramifications of a poorly planned sale of a business can be multi-faceted and detrimental. In the event the business transition is not well managed, it can fail due to change in ownership or leadership. Purchase arrangements can create a large tax burden for the buyer, seller, or both; and if done poorly, the impact on the entire community can be emotionally and economically catastrophic. National statistics show that once an existing business closes, it is very difficult to reopen.

- **Entrepreneurial Development**

Entrepreneurship is the starting point, the foundation and the backbone of economies at every level. In fact, the origins of most large companies can be traced, directly or indirectly, to one or more entrepreneurial founders.

Promoting entrepreneurial development however, is a relatively new and increasingly popular approach to economic development for rural communities. The approach has gained favor because it builds on the skills and talent already existing within the community.

Entrepreneurs are at the heart of the American economy because they drive innovation. Small businesses are established on the premise that they can do a better



job of creating new products and services, change the competitiveness of the market, institute new and dynamic ways of doing business, reduce economic leakages within the local economy and connect the community to the larger global market. Creating value through innovation is a common theme that penetrates nearly every accepted definition of entrepreneurship.

The value of American entrepreneurship cannot be overstated. According to the Office of Advocacy, Small Business Administration, entrepreneurial businesses:

- are typically owned and operated by individuals with higher education levels. Over two-third of all present-day college students intend to become entrepreneurs at some point in their career.
- represent 99.7% of all employers;
- employ half of all private sector employees;
- pay 44.3% of the total U.S. private payroll;
- generate 70% of net new jobs annually over the last decade;
- create more than 50% of non-farm private gross domestic product (GDP);
- produce 13 to 14 times more patents per employee than large patenting firms.
- are employers of 39% of high tech workers (such as scientists, engineers, and computer workers);
- are 53% home-based and 3% franchises; and
- make up 97% of all identified exporters and produced 29% of known export value.

These staggering statistics prove that entrepreneurial development can serve as a powerful engine for economic development in rural areas. Besides the tangible benefits, small business is known to be more environmentally-friendly than large employers, have the unique ability to blend into the existing business climate, and radiate a quaint charm that attracts people to a community's Main Street.

Effective entrepreneurial development requires a thorough understanding of obstacles faced by rural entrepreneurs. With the odds stacked squarely against them, small business concerns need cooperation from public and private stakeholders in devising intervention strategies that will enhance their chances of success. Common barriers faced by rural entrepreneurs include:

- isolation from markets, service providers and other entrepreneurs.
- limited opportunities for mentoring and networking.
- absence of clusters to support networking.
- lack of capital and other support infrastructure.
- local culture that does not support entrepreneurship.

Creating support strategies that intentionally focus on the needs of rural entrepreneurs can provide small businesses and would be entrepreneurs with the intellectual resources essential to starting a business on solid footing, thereby maximize their chances for greater success.

Improving the Fairmont economy is an ongoing goal of the village.



FIRE STATION

PRIORITY #2

CONSTRUCT AN ENERGY-EFFICIENT, SCALE APPROPRIATE, AND AESTHETICALLY-PLEASING FIRE HALL FOR THE FAIRMONT RURAL FIRE DISTRICT (RFD).

Timeframe: Short-term

Priority: 29 Tier I votes

Concerns/Issues

- Fairmont RFD serves a 45±-mile radius
- The department currently uses two separate buildings, one owed by the village, the other owned by the RFD.
- The building owned by the RFD houses the Ambulance, one fire truck, and equipment
- The building owned by the village houses four fire trucks and equipment
- The RFD has outgrown its current space
- Need to consolidate Ambulance, fire trucks and equipment into one facility
- There is no room for building expansion at either site
- No new site has been identified
- Should consider a site in town but near the Highway
- The new facility should consider size of new trucks, equipment, and storage needs
- Need a meeting room
- Could consider being part of a multi-purpose building to share meeting room/fitness center



Objective: #1

To determine the physical and spatial needs of Fairmont RFD.

- Action Step #1:** Procure the services of a licensed, professional architectural firm to analyze the physical condition and capacity of the existing Fire Station/Rescue building.
- Action Step #2:** Hold an informational meeting between Architect and RFD stakeholders to evaluate the needs and expectations for new facility.
- Action Step #3:** Inventory the assets of the Fairmont Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)/RFD to assess the physical and spatial needs of the new facility.
- Action Step #4:** Discuss future equipment purchases, including fire trucks, rescue squads, equipment.
- Action Step #5:** Discuss the future training needs of firefighters/EMTs to determine required training space.
- Action Step #6:** Discuss the technology needs of the fire/rescue facility for training, dispatching volunteers, and security.
- Timeline:** 2018.

Objective: #2

To conceptually design a facility that will accommodate the physical and spatial needs of the Fairmont VFR/RFD.

- Action Step #1:** Calculate the spatial requirements of the new facility.
- Action Step #2:** Consider the availability of land for expansion at the current site.
- Action Step #3:** Consider the feasibility of creating a multipurpose space that includes the Fire Station, Public Library, Community Center, and Recreational Center.
- Action Step #4:** Consider the availability of land for the construction of a new Fire Station and multipurpose facility.
- Action Step #5:** Examine ease of access, impact to surrounding land uses, and availability of public infrastructure systems to support the new development.
- Action Step #6:** Meet with the property-owner of the proposed site to gauge interest in selling the parcel to the VFD/RFD.
- Action Step #7:** Develop a conceptual design for expanded/new facility for review and selection by the VFD/RFD stakeholders.
- Action Step #8:** Develop and present opinion of cost for an expanded and new facility.
- Action Step #9:** Determine the most cost-effective solution to the needs of the Fairmont VFD/RFD.
- Action Step #10:** Present a Final Plan to the residents of Fairmont, the VFD, and the RFD Board.

Action Step #11: Execute a Purchase Option with the property-owner for the land to build the future Fire Station.

Timeline: 2018-2019.

Objective: #3

To determine the VFD/RFD’s ability to finance the expansion or construction of a new Fire Station and need for outside resources.

Action Step #1: Meet with the VFD/RFD’s fiscal agent to determine the long-term debt capacity of the VFD/RFD. Consider the entity best suited to finance the project.

Action Step #2: Identify local, regional, state and federal resources for the construction of a new Fire Station.

Action Step #3: Maximum project impact by leverage local funds with “outside” resources.

Action Step #4: Hold fundraising events to solicit donations for the construction of the new Fire Station.

Action Step #5: Package all financial resources for maximum public benefit.

Timeline: 2019.

Objective: #4

To expand or construct a new Fairmont Fire Station.

Action Step #1: Purchase the property for the new Fire Station.

Action Step #2: Prepare plans and specifications for the expansion or construction of the fire station.

Action Step #3: Bid phase to include advertising, letting and contract award to lowest responsible/responsive bidder.

Action Step #4: Undertake construction related activities.

Timeline: 2017-2018.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont RFD, Fairmont VFD, Fairmont Village Board, and residents of Fairmont.

Potential Resources

RFD Property Tax Base, Local Option Sales Tax, General Purpose Bonds, RFD General Fund, U.S.D.A. Rural Development Community Facility Loan Program, local donations, Joint Public Agency Act, and fundraising events.

Measure Output

Volunteer fire fighters and members of volunteer rescue squads are the first line of defense in coping with fires and other emergencies in rural communities. These volunteers - who literally risk personal safety for the public good - are on call 24-hours a day, and as a part of a



mutual aid agreement with neighboring Districts, also respond to calls in other portions of the region.

Most communities are served by volunteer fire departments. In fact, more than one-half of all volunteer fire departments nationwide extend their services to a community of fewer than 2,500 people. As one might expect, volunteer fire departments of that size have a great deal of difficulty in acquiring - through local resources exclusively - sufficient funds to undertake large-scale capital improvements to meet their ongoing operation and storage needs.

The Fairmont fire hall has served the community well, however, structural deficiencies, energy inefficiencies, and physical size has rendered the facility obsolete. To address this concern, the Fairmont RFD should procure the services of a professional architectural firm to examine the long-term operational needs of the District. Through this process, the Professional Architect will be able to gain insight and understanding of the District's spatial and physical needs, ensuring that the new facility is not over/under built and designed for a particular budget in mind.

The Fairmont Strategic Planning Committee has made this a short-term priority of the Fairmont community.

Business Succession Planning

Sustaining established family-owned businesses into the next generation is an important issue for rural southeast Nebraska. Many businesses throughout Nebraska are family-owned, but statistics clearly show that few survive beyond the retirement of the current owner. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, only 30% of all family businesses succeed into the second generation, and of these, only 15% survive into the third generation. These alarming facts, combined with the realization that many new businesses fail within the first five years, demonstrate that losing established small businesses can severely impact economic stability.



LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX

PRIORITY #3

ENACT A LOCAL OPTION SALES (LOST) TAX WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Short-term

Priority: 28 Tier I votes

Concerns/Issues

- Fairmont does not currently have a Local Option Sales Tax (LOST)
- The 2017 net taxable sales for the Fairmont zip code was \$3.14 million
- Enactment of a LOST requires voter approval
- Voters can enact a 0.5¢, 1.0¢, or 1.5¢ LOST on all taxable good and services
- May enact an additional 0.25¢ or 0.5¢ LOST if certain conditions are met
- Sales tax applies to point of purchase or point of delivery
- LOST is in addition to the state of Nebraska sales tax rate of 5.5¢
- Each 0.5¢ sales tax rate will generate approximately \$15,000 per year
- These sales tax proceeds can be used for community betterment, economic development, or property tax reduction
- LOST proceeds can be used to repay a bond
- There are concerns that a LOST will impact local businesses
- Most communities surrounding Fairmont currently have a LOST



Objective: #1

To consider public interest in enacting a LOST.

Action Step #1: Provide factual information to the residents of Fairmont regarding the LOST. Discuss goods and services that are subject to the LOST, current State sales tax rate, geographic boundary for the LOST, point of sale vs. point of delivery, and projected proceeds/borrowing capacity resulting from a voter-approved LOST.

Action Step #2: Explain how proceeds from the local option sales will be used.

Action Step #3: Survey Fairmont residents to determine public interest in a 0.5¢, 1¢, or 1.5¢ local option sales tax.

Timeline: 2018.

Objective: #2

To hold an election on the local option sales tax pursuant to Nebraska State Statutes.

Action Step #1: Tabulate and present survey results to the residents of Fairmont.

Action Step #2: Decide whether there is public support for a local option sales tax.

Action Step #3: If favorable, decide which sales tax rate (0.5¢, 1¢, or 1.5¢) will have the best likelihood of being enacted by voters.

Action Step #4: Establish a date for the election. The election may be held as a part of any village, county, or state general, primary, or special election held within the village.

Action Step #5: Contact the Fillmore County Election Commission to determine timelines for placing the local option sales tax “question” on the ballot.

Action Step #6: Draft question authorizing adoption of a local option sales tax using the verbiage found in state statutes.

Action Step #7: The Fairmont Village Board must authorize the sales tax question to be placed on the ballot.

Action Step #8: Place the question on the ballot.

Action Step #9: Conduct a robust, grassroots public education campaign for the passage of the sales tax.

Timeline: 2019.

Objective: #3

To impose the local option sales tax.

- Action Step #1:** Hold the election and certify the results of the election.
- Action Step #2:** If the question is approved by a majority of votes cast at the election, the Fairmont Village Board must adopt an ordinance stating the operative date of the sales tax. This date must be the first day of a calendar quarter.
- Action Step #3:** Furnish the Nebraska Department of Revenue with a certified copy of the ordinance imposing the sales tax and a certified map of the village clearly showing its boundaries.
- Action Step #4:** Fillmore County Election Commissioner must furnish the Nebraska Department of Revenue a certified copy of the election results to the question submitted to the electors and a certified statement that the question of imposing the tax has not failed in the previous 23 months.
- Action Step #5:** Impose the sales tax on all retail sales sources within the village.
- Timeline:** 2019-ongoing.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Fairmont Residents, Fairmont Village Attorney, Civic Organizations, Religious Groups, Fairmont Business-Owners, and the Fillmore County Election Commissioner.

Potential Resources

Private donations, In-Kind, and Civic Volunteers.

Measure Output

Any Nebraska county or incorporated municipality may impose a local option sales and use tax upon approval by a majority of their voters in a regular election. The local tax applies to the identical transactions subject to the state sales and use tax, except for direct-to-home satellite programming. Local option taxes of 0.5¢, 1¢, and 1.5¢ may be approved by village or county voters. The tax is collected and remitted to the state and is then allocated back to the municipalities after deducting the amount of refunds made and a three percent administrative fee.

Effective July 19, 2012 and pursuant to LB357, municipalities may, with voter approval enact a sales and use tax equal to 1.75¢ to 2.0¢. The proceeds from the rate in excess of 1.5¢ shall be used for public infrastructure projects or voter-approved infrastructure related to an economic development program as defined in section 18-2705. Public infrastructure project means and includes, but is not limited to, any of the following projects, or any combination thereof: public highways and bridges and municipal roads, streets, bridges, and sidewalks; solid waste management facilities; wastewater, storm water, and water treatment works and systems, water distribution facilities, and water resources projects, including, but not limited to, pumping stations, transmission lines, and mains and their appurtenances; hazardous waste disposal systems; resource recovery systems; airports; port facilities; buildings and capital equipment used in the operation of municipal government; convention and tourism facilities; redevelopment projects as defined in section 18-2103; mass transit and other transportation



LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX

systems, including parking facilities; and equipment necessary for the provision of municipal services.

No municipal sales and use tax shall be imposed at a rate greater than one and one-half percent or increased to a rate greater than one and one-half percent, unless the municipality is a party to an interlocal agreement, pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act or Joint Public Agency Act. This newly created entity will be responsible for overseeing the public infrastructure project.

Fairmont currently does not have a voter enacted local option sales tax. But according to data generated by the Nebraska Department of Revenue, the net taxable sales for Fairmont zip code over the past ten years were:

Year	Net Taxable Sales
2008	\$3,042,096
2009	\$2,599,111
2010	\$2,076,198
2011	\$2,431,882
2012	\$3,033,912
2013	\$2,747,432
2014	\$2,979,046
2015	\$3,240,051
2016	\$3,371,574
2017	\$3,147,187
Ten-Year Average	\$2,866,850

Sales Tax Rate	Estimated Annual Proceeds ¹	Estimated Borrowing Capacity ²
0.5¢	\$14,334	\$162,200
1.0¢	\$28,668	\$324,400
1.5¢	\$43,002	\$486,600

¹Based on ten year average.

²Assumes 3.75% interest rate for 15 years.

Enacting a local option sales tax is a short-term goal of the Village of Fairmont.



STREET IMPROVEMENTS

PRIORITY #4

IMPROVE STREET CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Short-term

Priority: 25 Tier I votes

Concerns/Issues

- Gravel streets need to be better maintained (wash-boarding)
- Need to improve surface drainage throughout the community
- Better maintenance of streets that lead to Care Center, School, and Swimming Pool
- The cost to pave streets should be shared by property-owner and village
- Corner lot property-owners may be doubly impacted by paving assessments
- Village currently has \$2.62 million in outstanding street paving bonds
- Recent street improvement projects have helped with surface drainage and property maintenance (mowing)



Objective: #1

To evaluate street conditions throughout the village of Fairmont.

- Action Step #1:** Engage the services of a Professional Engineer to conduct a block-by-block investigation of street conditions throughout Fairmont.
- Action Step #2:** Evaluate the underlying cause of existing pavement failure and surface drainage issues.
- Action Step #3:** Meet with major employers in and around Fairmont to determine traffic patterns of semi-trucks.
- Action Step #4:** Provide recommendations for long-term street/surface drainage improvements.
- Action Step #6:** Provide opinion of cost for recommended long-term street/surface drainage improvements per block.
- Action Step #7:** Recommend proven maintenance strategies to preserve the life expectancy/physical condition of local streets.

Timeline: 2019-2020.

Objective: #2

Prioritize streets, which if reconstructed, would provide maximize public benefit to Fairmont residents.

- Action Step #1:** Hold a Town Hall meeting to review the results of the Fairmont Street Condition Evaluation.
- Action Step #2:** Gather public input on the Evaluation.
- Action Step #3:** Consult the village’s One- and Six-Year Road Plan.
- Action Step #4:** Provide a framework (i.e., phasing plan) to ensure that long-term street/surface drainage improvements can be identified, prioritized and implemented with maximum public benefit.
- Action Step #5:** Map priorities to ensure proper phasing of street/surface drainage improvements.
- Action Step #6:** Incorporate priority street/surface drainage improvement projects into the village’s One- and Six-Year Road Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.

Timeline: 2020-2022.

Objective: #3

Determine the village's ability to finance priority street/surface drainage improvements.

- Action Step #1:** Evaluate the street budget and effectiveness of local maintenance expenditures.
 - Action Step #2:** Ensure a proper balance between street construction and street maintenance.
 - Action Step #3:** Meet with the village's fiscal agent to determine its debt capacity.
 - Action Step #4:** Identify local, regional, state and federal resources for street improvements.
 - Action Step #5:** Maximize project impact by leveraging local funds with outside resources.
- Timeline:** Ongoing.

Objective: #4

Undertake long-term, priority street/surface drainage improvements, as funds permit.

- Action Step #1:** Cause to have prepared plans and specifications for long-term street/drainage improvements.
 - Action Step #2:** Conduct necessary engineering services to prepare bid documents.
 - Action Step #3:** Bid phase to include advertising, letting and contract award to the lowest responsible/responsive bidder.
 - Action Step #4:** Undertake construction-related activities in a planned systematic manner.
- Timeline:** Ongoing.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Fairmont residents, Professional Engineer, and Fiscal Agent.

Potential Resources

Fairmont General Street Fund, Highway Allocation Funds, General Obligation Bond, Local Option Sales Tax, Special Assessment Districts, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

Measure Output

Streets might be thought of as the skeleton of the community. They form the dynamic framework for movement, social communication and orderly relationships among buildings and properties. Their importance can be seen in the fact that about one-fifth of the total area of the average American community is used for streets. Furthermore, a large part of the average village budget is likely to go into upkeep and building of streets.



Streets exist for the interaction and movement of people, but they serve other functions as well. The physical condition of local streets serves as a measure of civic health and vitality. A well-maintained street network can enhance community pride, increase property values, provide safer, more attractive neighborhoods and even encourage residents to become vigilant in routine property-upkeep. They may also relay an image to visitors and tourists that the community is a sound place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Clearly, land development - especially residential and commercial - is most desirable when it occurs along a “hard surface” road. For that reason, an improved roadway is not only aesthetically beneficial, but it serves a functional role in promoting economic development, particularly with recruiting small/medium-sized business concerns that rely on walk-in customers or require truck service. Conversely, deferred or patchwork maintenance can have negative economic impacts on the local community. Poorly maintained streets can restrict the ability of residents and visitors to conduct commerce, as well as personal business and recreation activities.

Despite the importance of streets, the necessity of maintaining and upgrading street conditions within a community remains a mammoth commitment and economic challenge for the Village of Fairmont. Most officials realize that a period of consistent policy, planning and action will be required to make progress towards addressing the condition of local streets in their community. However, a village can achieve maximum public benefit, with limited local resources, by making street improvements in a planned, comprehensive and systematic manner. This can only be realized though, if there is first, an effective, “holistic” and professional evaluation of the entire street system, in terms of condition, capacity and recommended upgrades.

A Street Improvements Study and Report will evaluate street conditions throughout the village – in terms of physical condition and capacity – and provide comprehensive recommendations for necessary upgrades and future needs. This comprehensive planning approach will allow the Professional Engineer to accurately describe each individual street surface; the type and causes of existing street failure; a street condition rating based on a predefined street rating system (e.g., new, good, fair poor, rock, etc.); recommendation for long-term improvements (including surface drainage); cost estimates for recommended improvements, including but not limited to, estimated cost for recommended street improvements, surface drainage facilities, contingencies, legal, administrative, financing, and engineering fees.

From this “holistic” analysis, the Professional Engineer will submit recommendations to the village of Fairmont can targeted certain street improvement projects and a specific course of action over the next five (5) to ten (10) years. Suggested improvements will be prioritized and each phase will include an opinion of cost so the village can follow a planned schedule of capital expenditures, rather than suddenly calling upon taxpayers to finance large-scale street/surface drainage upgrades all at once. Once complete, future street/surface drainage improvements in Fairmont will be made in accordance with the findings and recommendations found within the Fairmont Street Improvements Study and Report. This period of consistent policy, planning and action will enable the Village Board to make progress towards addressing the street condition needs of the community, while remaining fiscally responsible to the taxpayers of Fairmont.

Improving street conditions throughout Fairmont is an ongoing goal of the community.



NUISANCE ABATEMENT

PRIORITY #5

IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF FAIRMONT BY CONTINUING THE NUISANCE ABATEMENT PROGRAM.

Timeframe: Short-term

Priority: 23 Tier I votes

Concerns/Issues

- There are 20± dilapidated houses/buildings within the community
- Both occupied and unoccupied houses/buildings
- The village has an active Nuisance Abatement Program (NAP)
- Approximately ten properties have been addressed by the NAP
- The appearance of certain lots need to be addressed (ongoing maintenance)
- Residents want stronger enforcement of NAP
- Compliance with the NAP can be an issue for lower-income and/or elderly residents



Objective: #1

To improve the physical condition of substandard properties/structures/buildings in Fairmont.

- Action Step #1:** Hold a town hall meeting to discuss the long-term goals of the Fairmont Nuisance Abatement Program.
 - Action Step #2:** Request a voluntary participation of property-owners to improve substandard lots.
 - Action Step #3:** Conduct a physical inventory of all substandard properties within the community, both public and private.
 - Action Step #4:** Send a notification letter to substandard property-owners requesting voluntary compliance with correcting deficient conditions. Request feedback.
 - Action Step #5:** Discuss the needs (both human and financial) of those property-owners with substandard properties.
 - Action Step #6:** Identify individuals/civic organizations that are willing to donate time, labor and equipment to assist willing property-owners in the clean-up process.
 - Action Step #7:** Continue the Fairmont Community Club Clean-Up Day where property-owners are encouraged to discard unwanted appliances, inoperable automobiles, machinery, hazardous materials, and unsightly debris from their properties.
 - Action Step #9:** Upgrade maintenance on all Village property.
 - Action Step #10:** Consider legal options available to the Fairmont Village Board to deal with non-responsive property-owners.
 - Action Step #11:** Request voluntary donation of substandard property to the Village.
 - Action Step #12:** Consult the Village Attorney as to possible enforcement of Nebraska Nuisance Statutes.
 - Action Step #13:** Utilize the court system to gain compliance from homeowners to upgrade substandard properties.
 - Action Step #14:** Review the Fairmont Housing Rehabilitation Guidelines to make sure that all assisted property-owners are required to keep their property free and clear of debris for the duration of the compliance period.
- Timeline:** Ongoing.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Village Attorney, resident, business-owners, Fillmore County Economic Development, Southeast Nebraska Development District, Blue Valley Community Action Agency, and Civic Organizations.

Potential Resources

Local funds, private donations, Local Option Sales Tax, Tax Increment Financing, Special Assessment Districts, Private Foundations, Blue Valley Community Action Agency, Community Development Assistance Act, Community Development Block Grant – Housing Rehabilitation Program, Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and USDA Rural Development – Housing Programs.

Measure Output

The Village of Fairmont believes that civic pride is instrumental in portraying a positive “first impression” that Fairmont is an inviting place to visit, work, invest and live. Towards this end, the Village has taken a proactive approach at improving substandard properties by establishing two separate, yet interrelated programs: the Fairmont Housing Rehabilitation Program and the Fairmont Nuisance Abatement Program.

Community clean-up events, proper landscaping, voluntary participation, and enforcement of available state statutes are appropriate methods to improve the overall appearance of the community.

The Village of Fairmont should conduct an inventory of all public and private property to identify sites which pose a public health and safety concern. Every effort should be made to encourage voluntary compliance with community clean-up goals, but the Village Board should realize that there are legal means to gain compliance from negligent property-owners in the removal of junk cars, inoperable appliances, tires, hazardous materials, and dilapidated housing units.

Civic organization are invaluable resources that may help seniors and lower-income property-owners with clean-up of their properties. Civic organizations should obtain permission from property owners before accessing private properties.

Improving the appearance of Fairmont is a short-term goal of the community.





HOUSING

PRIORITY #6

IMPROVE HOUSING OPTIONS IN THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Short-Term and Ongoing

Priority: 23 Tier I votes

Concerns/Issues

- Fairmont participated in the 2016 Fillmore County Housing Study.
- There are no rental units available
- Landlords have a waiting list for their rental units
- Two new housing units are currently being built in Fairmont. First privately built housing units in over 20-years.
- Village built a spec home
- Need for senior (townhomes) and Assisted Living housing
- Need workforce housing in Fairmont
- Demand for new affordable/traditional 1,200-1,500 square foot, three-bedroom, two-bathroom, two car garage houses. Cost range: \$150,000-\$225,000.
- Few existing housing units for sale within Fairmont
- Village is currently underway with its third owner-occupied, single family housing rehabilitation program.
- Once complete, 25-28 lower-income homeowners will have been provided assisted to make substantial rehabilitation to their home.



Objective: #1

To review the Fillmore County Housing Assessment Study and quantify and qualify the future housing needs of Fairmont.

Action Step #1: Review the results of the 2016 Housing Study prepared for Fillmore County.

Action Step #2: Discuss housing needs of Fairmont by tenure (rentals vs. for-sale), price point, bedroom type and market segment (e.g. families, seniors, disabled, young professionals, etc.), and need for ongoing rehabilitate efforts.

Timeline: 2018-2019.

Objective: #2

To create an environment that encourages and promotes residential development within Fairmont.

Action Step #1: Hold a Housing Developers Summit to discuss housing demand and local policies.

Action Step #2: Make the study available on the village's website and disseminate it to housing developers.

Action Step #3: Review the Comprehensive Development Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Subdivision Regulations to ensure that it promotes housing development. As needed, update the village's future land use plan/ zoning ordinance to determine the most appropriate/feasible location for future housing development.

Action Step #4: Cooperate with Fillmore County to ensure appropriate development at the outer fringe of the village's zoning jurisdiction.

Action Step #5: Encourage property-owners to raze vacant/uninhabitable housing units, thereby increasing the supply of available "in-fill" lots and providing cost effective housing development sites.

Action Step #6: Identify areas for possible annexation. Negotiate a written option on the property to facilitate development.

Action Step #7: Create public/private partnerships, where necessary, to facilitate new housing development/subdivision development.

Action Step #8: Where feasible and as funds permit, extend public infrastructure to promote and encourage housing development.

Timeline: 2017-2022.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont village board; Fillmore County Planning Commission, Fairmont residents, Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND), Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council, Inc. (SENAHC), private developers, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Fannie Mae, and U.S.D.A. Rural Development.

Potential Resources

Local monies, NIFA Housing Programs, U.S.D.A. Rural Development Programs, Tax Increment Financing, special assessments, municipal bonds, SENAHC Programs, private funds, Fannie Mae Programs and local lending institutions.

Measure Output

The Village of Fairmont will continue to provide an environment that encourages and promotes residential development within the community. The village should encourage and support the Fillmore County Housing Market Study currently underway, to quantify and qualify the specific housing needs of Fairmont and Fillmore County as a whole. The Plan will outline approaches to tangible objectives and enable the community/county to measure its progress towards achieving those annual goals.

In order to expedite housing development and encourage effective use of existing public infrastructure, the Village of Fairmont should encourage the use of “infill-lots” to more efficaciously utilize existing public infrastructure and improve the physical condition of existing neighborhoods. These efforts will improve the appearance of established neighborhoods and free up much needed lots for development.

The Fairmont village board has indicated that property-owners are buying dilapidated housing units adjacent to their lot, razing all structures, and retaining the lot for gardens, buildings, and additional space.

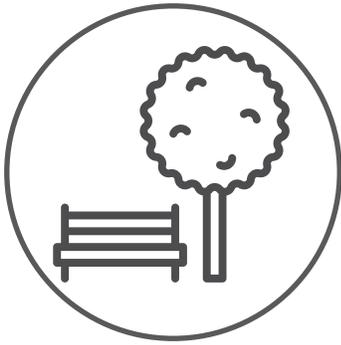
In addition to utilizing “in-fill” lots, the Fillmore County Planning Commission should review the future land use plan of the Comprehensive Development Plan/Zoning Ordinance to determine the most cost-effective direction for residential development. Consideration should include the actual demand for housing development, housing density, cost of public infrastructure extensions, surrounding land uses, and the landowner’s willingness to sell their property.

To support the provision of diverse housing choice, the village should review its development regulations to ensure that they encourage housing development. Development policies should emphasize the need to provide multiple housing choices or location opportunities for potential residents and businesses. However, development policy should balance the need for choice with the need for orderly development and infrastructure extensions.

Local housing stakeholders should host a Summit with local housing developers to discuss economic and environmental barriers of developing housing in Fairmont. From this discussion, the village should consider needed public/private partnerships to facilitate housing development activities. This partnership may include, but are not limited to: public infrastructure extension, financial incentives, and land assembly for residential development.

Developing new residential housing units in Fairmont is a mid- and ongoing goal of the village.





PARKS

PRIORITY #7

IMPROVE THE MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEM WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Mid-Term

Priority: 6 Tier I votes
44 Tier II votes

Concerns/Issues

- City Park is not ADA accessible
- New public restrooms will be constructed in Pool Park this fall (2018)
- Consider the development of a new dog park
- Build a new putting green
- Develop four covered Horseshoe pits
- Improved maintenance of ballfields
- May serve as a home field for area select baseball teams
- Need a batting cage
- Practice times in neighboring communities are difficult to schedule.
- Fairmont’s ballfields could draw teams to Fairmont for baseball/softball practice
- Basketball court/tennis court needs to be painted, re-striped and better maintained



Objective: #1

To evaluate the recreational needs of Fairmont families and residents.

- Action Step #1:** Establish a Fairmont Park and Recreational Committee.
- Action Step #2:** Outline current programs/facilities that are offered in Fairmont, whether publicly- or privately-sponsored.
- Action Step #3:** Determine the programs/facilities overall strengths and weaknesses.
- Action Step #4:** Identify potential opportunities and threats to the long-term sustainability of those current programs/facilities.
- Action Step #5:** Survey the residents of Fairmont to identify new programs/facilities demanded by local residents.
- Action Step #6:** Identify park facilities and recreation programs that are not ADA compliant.
- Action Step #7:** Summaries the findings and publicize the results.
- Timeline:** 2019.

Objective: #2

To establish a cooperative relationship with local businesses, students, Village Board, civic organizations and Fairmont families to evaluate and implement long-term, cost-effectiveness of programs/facilities demanded by outdoor recreational enthusiasts.

- Action Step #1:** Outline and prioritize the programs/facilities demanded by local residents.
- Action Step #2:** Analyze the cost of providing said programs/facilities.
- Timeline:** 2019-2020.

Objective: #3

To develop a long-term Park and Recreation Plan for the Fairmont Municipal Park System.

- Action Step #1:** Hold a town hall meeting to discuss how residents plan to use the municipal park system.
- Action Step #2:** Identify and prioritize park amenities that will encourage maximum usage for civic, social and family, and general affairs.
- Action Step #3:** Outline architectural barriers that prohibit full enjoyment of park facilities by people with physical mobility issues.
- Action Step #4:** Develop a park schematic showing location of various amenities and their relationship to one another.
- Action Step #5:** Consider measures to integrate recreational opportunities via walking/biking trails.

Action Step #6: Identify the appropriate public agencies and/or civic organizations that will be responsible for the ongoing organization and oversight of programs.

Action Step #7: Prepare cost estimates for long-term park improvements.

Timeline: 2021.

Objective: #4

Package the financial resources necessary to implement priority facilities/ programs outlined in the Park and Recreation Programming Plan.

Action Step #1: Consider the most appropriate resource (human and financial) to purchase, operate and/or maintain prioritized programs/facilities.

Action Step #2: Conduct local fund-raising activities.

Action Step #3: Pursue public/private monies to offset the construction cost of the project.

Timeline: 2021-2024.

Objective: #5

Implement priority and cost-effective park improvements/programs.

Action Step #1: Consider the feasibility of implementing the Fairmont Park and Recreation Plan in Phases.

Action Step #2: Implement feasible/viable programs/facilities demanded by park and recreation stakeholders.

Action Step #3: Develop and support programs which encourage activities where parents can be participants with their children.

Timeline: Ongoing.



Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Fairmont Park and Recreation Committee, Fairmont parents, Fillmore Central Public Schools, civic organizations, local businesses, and outdoor recreational enthusiasts.

Potential Resources

Fairmont Park and Recreation budget, Local Option Sales Tax, private donations, private foundations, volunteer efforts, fee for use, concession stand proceeds, Community Development Assistance Act (CDAA), Nebraska Recreational Trails Program, and Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Measure Output

It is clear that a high-quality of life, in general, tops the list of attributes communities must strive for, in their efforts to both survive and prosper. The availability of quality housing, education and commerce must be in place to keep current residents from relocating, and to entice new families into a community. Parks and recreational amenities are no less important in satisfying a stable and growing population.

In an era where municipal budgets leave little room for non-essential services/facilities/ programs, it is vital that local residents outline their recreational priorities to provide direct guidance to local decision- makers. These efforts will ensure that limited local resources are supporting only those programs/ amenities that are demanded by residents.

A professional planning firm can assist the Village in soliciting public input on asset identification/ prioritization (i.e., playground equipment, picnic shelters, picnic tables, barbeque grills, open space, tennis/basketball courts, etc.), park layout, ADA compliance, and cost opinions. This professional consultation will ensure that the outdoor recreational interests of today's generations are met, so that the park will provide long-term service to the community.



SIDEWALK

PRIORITY #8

IMPROVE SIDEWALK CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Long-Term and Ongoing

Priority: 7 Tier I votes
32 Tier II votes

Concerns/Issues

- Village needs more sidewalks
- Consider installing sidewalks a whole block at a time
- Sidewalks are in poor physical condition. Tree roots have cause sidewalks to heave.
- Little connectivity (gaps in sidewalks)
- Easier to walk in the street than on sidewalks
- Ditches are a concern, particularly at intersections
- Most sidewalks are not ADA accessible
- Consider a cost-sharing program to incentivize property-owners to construct/replace sidewalks



Objective: #1

To determine the need for sidewalks improvements and connectivity within the village.

- Action Step #1:** Create a map that depicts civic amenities within the communities that are accessed regularly by resident. Amenities include: school, parks, churches, senior center, village hall, downtown, public library, post office, etc.
- Action Step #2:** Identify the location and physical condition of existing sidewalks within the community.
- Action Step #3:** Identify key gaps in sidewalk availability/conditions that may impede pedestrian movement within Fairmont.
- Action Step #4:** Review pedestrian movement patterns within the community and among these civic amenities.
- Timeline:** 2019-2020.

Objective: #2

To prioritize sidewalks that need to be constructed/replaced to promote pedestrian safety and connectivity within Fairmont.

- Action Step #1:** Identify physical barriers to fill gaps in the village’s sidewalk network (drainage ditches, trees, ADA concerns, lack of right of way, etc.)
- Action Step #2:** Develop a rating system to prioritize sidewalks which, if constructed/ replaced, will provide maximum public benefit.
- Action Step #3:** Create a map that depicts priority sidewalks to be constructed/ replaced.
- Action Step #4:** Develop cost opinions for prioritized sidewalks.
- Action Step #5:** Identify a timeframe for constructing/replacing prioritized sidewalks.
- Timeline:** 2021-2022.

Objective: #3

To develop public support for sidewalk construction/replacement program.

- Action Step #1:** Review or create local design standards for sidewalk construction. Consider width, thickness, and maximum incline.
- Action Step #2:** Review and revise (as needed) local ordinance to require sidewalk development with any new residential/commercial construction.
- Action Step #3:** Hold an informational meeting with Fairmont property-owners to gather public input on prioritized sidewalks.
- Action Step #4:** Discuss public/private incentives (financial, materials, and in-kind services) to improve prioritized sidewalks. Consider property assessments, cost-sharing improvements between village and property-owner, donation of materials/labor/equipment.

Action Step #5: Create a Fairmont Sidewalk Improvement Program that outlines program requirements, such as prioritized sidewalks, property-owner responsibilities, design standards, and incentives.

Timeline: 2023-2025.

Objective: #4

To implement the Fairmont Sidewalk Improvement Program.

Action Step #1: Continue ongoing political/public support for the Fairmont Sidewalk Improvement Program.

Action Step #2: Program public funds to incentivize property-owners to construct/replace prioritized sidewalks.

Action Step #3: Develop a list of contractors for sidewalk improvements.

Action Step #4: Create an application process for participation in the Sidewalk Improvement Program.

Action Step #5: Advertise the availability/requirements of the Program.

Action Step #6: Construct prioritized sidewalks.

Timeline: 2016-Ongoing.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Fairmont property-owners, and civic organizations.

Potential Resources

Local Fund, Local Option Sales Tax, Special Assessments, local volunteers, in-kind services, public/private partnerships.

Measure Output

Sidewalks play a vital role in city life. As conduits for pedestrian movement and access, they enhance connectivity and promote walking. As public spaces, sidewalks serve as the front steps to the community, activating streets socially and economically. Safe, accessible, and well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental and necessary investment for communities and have been found to enhance public health and maximize social capital.

Despite their importance, the necessity of constructing and replacing sidewalks remains a mammoth commitment and economic challenge for local governments. In an era where tight municipal budgets leave little room for non-essential services, facilities, and programs, most elected officials recognize that a period of consistent policy, planning, and action is required to make progress towards upgrading the physical condition of sidewalks in their community.

The Village of Fairmont should develop a Sidewalk Improvement Prioritization Plan to identify and prioritize sidewalk, that if improved, will ensure public safety by providing off-street pedestrian access to civic amenities. Through such a process, residents of Fairmont can identify sidewalks that are in poor physical condition or missing, so local decision-makers can formulate strategies on how best to target limited local resources (both human and financial) to address those priority needs.



Adapting this public feedback will help the Fairmont Village Board create a long-range Sidewalk Improvement Program for the community which ties together ideas and concepts that garnered public support from local stakeholders and property-owners. These individuals will ultimately be asked to help implement this Program through taxes, fees, assessments, compliance, and in-kind services.

The Village of Fairmont should investigate other Sidewalk Improvement Program being carried out by other local governments throughout the United States. This research will provide insight into criteria for sidewalk prioritization, design criteria for sidewalk construction/replacement, incentives being offered to property-owners for encouraging sidewalk construction/replacement. From this, the decision-makers can create a Sidewalk Improvement Program that is best tailored to Fairmont, Nebraska.

Improving sidewalk conditions throughout the community is a long-term and ongoing goal of the village.



LIBRARY

PRIORITY #9

CONSTRUCT A SAFE, AESTHETICALLY-PLEASING, SCALE-APPROPRIATE, ENERGY-EFFICIENT, FULLY ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC LIBRARY/RECREATION CENTER

Timeframe: Short-Term

Priority: 12 Tier I votes
30 Tier II votes

Concerns/Issues

- Public Library is out of space
- Need bigger rooms
- Large activity room for summer library programs
- Need a multi-media room
- Building is not ADA accessible
- The Library could repurpose the fire station
- Consider making the public library part of a new multi-purpose building (Community Center/Recreation Center)



Objective: #1

To determine the physical and spatial needs of the new Public Library/Recreation Center.

- Action Step #1:** Form an Fairmont Public Library/Recreation Center Steering Committee to explore all options for the development of a future multipurpose facility.
- Action Step #2:** Identify the future usage of the proposed facility, including special demands and needs for physical amenities.
- Action Step #3:** Inventory similar Libraries/Recreation Centers built in the region during the past ten years.
- Action Step #4:** Visit with local officials to determine their likes, dislikes and regrets with their new facility.
- Action Step #5:** Present the physical needs and expectations of the planned facility to the residents of Fairmont and to the local decision-makers.
- Timeline:** 2018-2019.

Objective: #2

To design a structure which will accommodate the physical and spatial needs of the Fairmont Public Library/Recreational Center.

- Action Step #1:** Procure the services of a licensed, professional architectural/engineering firm to assist in assessing all potential options for the new facility.
- Action Step #2:** Inventory vacant and structurally sound buildings/vacant lots within the community that meet the spatial requirements for such a facility.
- Action Step #3:** Hold an informational meeting of local stakeholders (business community, school district, Fairmont residents) to solicit expectations for the new facility.
- Action Step #4:** Review with the consultants the list of available vacant structures/lots that are suitable for the future multipurpose venue. Consider the pros and cons of each site, including access, parking, utilities, traffic and price.
- Action Step #5:** Prepare professional schematics and opinion of costs for renovating existing structures, or for the construction of a new facility, emphasizing energy-efficiency and accessibility.
- Action Step #6:** Present the draft results of the schematics/opinion of costs to the local stakeholders for their review and consideration. Incorporate any revisions into the final draft.
- Action Step #7:** Present the final design schematic/opinion of cost to the Fairmont public for their review/consideration/comments. Revisit and modify design schematics/cost estimates, as necessary, to reflect the comments of local stakeholders.
- Action Step #8:** Select the most cost-effective future location for the Fairmont Public Library/Recreation Center.

Action Step #9: Hold a town hall meeting to discuss and solicit public input on the multipurpose facility, as proposed.

Timeline: 2019.

Objective: #3

To determine the long-term ownership and operational structure of the new Fairmont Public Library/Recreation Center.

Action Step #1: Based upon the programming of the Fairmont Public Library/ Recreation Center, hold a meeting of local stakeholders and the village to determine the most appropriate entity to eventually own and operate the new facility, once constructed.

Action Step #2: Identify the organizational/operational structure for the future facility and use.

Action Step #3: Identify financial means for the ongoing operation/maintenance of the multipurpose facility.

Timeline: 2019.

Objective: #4

To identify potential resources (both human and financial) for the construction of the new multipurpose facility.

Action Step #1: Meet with the Fiscal Agent for the Village of Fairmont to determine the long-term debt capacity of the community.

Action Step #2: Identify local, regional, state, federal, in-kind, and statutorily authorized programs for construction of the new facility.

Action Step #3: Commence fundraising efforts to solicit public and private contributions for the construction of the new Public Library/ Recreation Center.

Action Step #4: Achieve maximum project impact by leveraging local funds with "outside" resources.

Action Step #5: Package all financial resources for the construction of the new venue.

Timeline: 2019.



Objective: #5**To construct a new multipurpose facility.**

- Action Step #1:** Conduct an environmental review process, as required by the project's public funding agencies.
- Action Step #2:** Enter into a professional services contract with a professional architectural/engineering firm to develop plans and specifications for the project, as well as for construction observation/management services.
- Action Step #3:** Develop plans and specifications for the future facility, pursuant to the responses offered by regulatory agencies and the requirements of public funding sources.
- Action Step #4:** Submit plans and specifications to the public agencies (as appropriate) for their review/approval.
- Action Step #5:** Secure necessary permits/approvals from public agencies.
- Action Step #6:** Bid phase to include advertising, letting and contract award to lowest responsible/responsive bidder.
- Action Step #7:** Construction related activities.

Timeline: 2020-2021.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Village staff, Fairmont residents, Fillmore Central Public School System, and local business-owners.

Potential Resources

General Obligation Bonds, Local Option Sales Tax, private donations, Capital Campaign, private foundations, USDA Rural Development Community Facility Loan Program, Community Development Assistance Act, Lease Purchase Agreement, Municipal Borrowing, Civic and Community Center Financing Fund, and USDA Rural Development Program.

Measure Output

Public Library/Recreation Centers is a public location where members of a community may gather for group activities, social support, public information, civic engagement, recreational activities, and other purposes. It is more than a building, however. It is a multipurpose facility that offers unmatched value in personal enrichment and community connection through life-long-learning, citizen interaction, special community events, outreach activities, and facility rentals.

The Village of Fairmont is considering the construction of a new Public Library with a Recreation Center to replace its existing Public Library facility which lacks space and modern conveniences to host even modest civic functions and summer programs. Furthermore, the existing building is not ADA compliant, making it difficult to maneuver, particularly for people with mobility limitations.

High priority items identified and discussed at great length throughout the planning process was a desire to construct a new, Public Library/Recreation Center facility that will:

- provide a safe, accessible community space for activities and programs that meet community needs,
- strengthen and unite the community by bringing together its diverse elements,
- offering a wide variety of programs that reflect the village’s interests and needs,
- promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and intellectual freedom,
- serving as a champion for youth,
- providing the technological infrastructure necessary to support quality library services,
- fostering interaction among diverse groups by serving as a focal point for civic activities,
- promoting public health through indoor recreation and physical activity, and
- advance the full inclusion of all persons in the community.

Due to the complexity of funding, siting and spatial layout of a new Public Library/Recreation Center, an Architectural Program Plan is one of the most important investments a village can make. The Plan will serve as a basis for the future development of the facility, including: public input and expectations, spatial analysis, supporting amenities, spatial requirements, site layout, floor plan layout, facility design, opinion of costs and projected operating costs.

An Fairmont Public Library/Recreation Center Steering Committee, comprised of younger families, seniors, youth, public school administrators, business-owners and civic organizations, should be organized to select a professional consultant to lead the planning process, make critical recommendations about the facility, review projected operating costs and revenues, and investigate viable funding options that would offset the cost of construction of the center. The committee should conduct public meetings and town hall sessions to disseminate information and garner public support for the project.

Once constructed, the new Fairmont Public Library/Recreation Center will restore a positive community atmosphere and offer Fairmont residents a safe, aesthetically-pleasing, scale-appropriate, energy-efficient, fully accessible facility to provide public service programming, promote literacy, encourage the use of technology, offer indoor recreational activities, and serve as a focal point for civic engagement.

Development of a new Public Library/Recreation Center is a short-term goal of the community.





CHILDCARE

PRIORITY #10

EXPAND THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY CHILDCARE WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Timeframe: Short-Term

Priority: 2 Tier I votes
22 Tier II votes

Concerns/Issues

- Fairmont has one private in-home childcare provider
- Village-owned nursing home has a childcare facility. This center has serves 35 children.
- This facility well-managed, has a waiting list and oftentimes has to turn families away
- Cost for childcare is reasonable
- Need additional space and childcare workers
- Need additional in-house day care



Objective: #1

To determine the current and future needs childcare needs of Fairmont.

- Action Step #1:** Consider creating a Fairmont Child Care Committee to oversee the current and future childcare needs of Fairmont.
- Action Step #2:** Identify existing state-licensed childcare facilities within the Village of Fairmont, both public and private.
- Action Step #3:** Interview these childcare providers about openings, waiting lists, and opportunities/barriers to expanding their operations in Fairmont.
- Action Step #4:** Conduct a community-wide survey to solicit public feedback on the availability/adequacy of local childcare.
- Action Step #5:** Tabulate the findings of the interview process and the results of the childcare survey.

Timeline: 2018-2019.

Objective: #2

To determine strategies for expanding childcare availability in Fairmont.

- Action Step #1:** Convene the Fairmont Child Care Committee to discuss the findings of the interview process and the results of the childcare survey.
- Action Step #2:** Determine potential opportunities/barriers to expanding childcare services in Fairmont, whether public or private providers.
- Action Step #3:** Create public-private partnerships to expand the availability of high-quality childcare in Fairmont.
- Action Step #4:** Formulate intervention strategies (both human and financial) to address opportunities/barriers for expanding childcare services.

Timeline: 2019-2022.

Responsible Group/Agency

Fairmont Village Board, Village staff, Fairmont residents, Fillmore Central Public Schools, Fillmore County Economic Development Corporation, and local businesses.

Potential Resources

General Obligation Bonds, Local Option Sales Tax, Capital Campaign, Lease Purchase Agreement, Municipal Borrowing, Community Development Block Grant Public Works Category, Small Business Administration Programs, and USDA Rural Development Programs.

Measure Output

Increasingly common, early childhood care plays an important role in children's development and provides a valuable support to families with young children. It is therefore important to understand the impact of these services and to ensure their quality and accessibility.

High quality childcare can have a positive influence on children's development and school readiness by providing valuable educational and social experiences. High quality childcare is characterized as:

- Having well-qualified, well-paid, stable staff, low child-adult ratios, and efficient management.
- Offering a program that covers all aspects of child development (physical, motor, emotional, social, language and cognitive development).

Local elected and public officials are often held responsible for conditions and circumstances over which they have limited control. This is particularly true of high-quality childcare. Although most of childcare is privately-owned, local officials have recognized the need to create public-private partnerships to address the shortage of high-quality childcare services in rural communities, like Fairmont. The lack of high-quality childcare can hinder a community's ability to promote economic development.

Studies have shown a strong link between childcare and economic development. In today's competitive economic development environment, businesses and industries make relocation and expansion decisions partly on quality of life amenities/services (childcare) that can be offered to their employees. Most business prospects will not even consider an area that does not offer such amenities/services. That is because employee recruitment and retention all depend on how happy workers are where they live and work. Workforce talent (both individuals and families) prefers livable communities with easy access to housing options, high-quality childcare services and education, recreational facilities, and economic opportunities.

Fairmont can capitalize on this economic development trend by identifying opportunities/barriers to expanding childcare availability within the community and generating public-private intervention strategies (both human and financial) to address this shortage. A clear understanding of these opportunities/barriers is a critical first-step in formulating intervention strategies.





SPLASH PAD

PRIORITY #11

CONSTRUCT A SPLASH PAD FOR THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT.

Priority: 4 Tier I votes
8 Tier II votes

Concerns/Issues

- The village's swimming pool has a kiddie pool
- The existing swimming pool is not ADA accessible and needs substantial rehabilitation
- Invest resources into a new splash pad or improvements to swimming pool
- A splash pad is fun for little children, not for teenagers
- Village needs to take a more holistic approach when considering a splash pad or swimming pool improvements
- Need support businesses for splash pad/swimming pool patrons (i.e., ice cream shop, restaurant, etc.)





TRAILS

PRIORITY #12

DEVELOP A NETWORK OF OFF-STREET TRAILS WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Priority: 0 Tier I votes
0 Tier II votes

Concerns/Issues

- Not sure trails are needed in Fairmont
- Residents walk on roads/streets
- There are no nearby regional trails to connect
- Trails are expensive to own and maintain



APPENDIX

RESOLUTION #2018-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE OF FAIRMONT, FILLMORE COUNTY, NEBRASKA APPROVING
THE 2018 FAIRMONT STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

WHEREAS, the Village of Fairmont commissioned its first Strategic Plan to identify and prioritize the physical needs of the community and establish community consensus on future capital improvements so local decision-makers could target limited local resources for priority initiatives to keep Fairmont moving in the right direction; and,

WHEREAS, the Village staff, appointed officials, elected officials, residents, and other civic organizations were called upon to help identify create a practical and usable, yet visionary plan to communicate the Village's intentions to the residents of Fairmont, focus the direction of public and private investments, and ensure that top tier consensus priorities are met in a timeframe established by residents; and,

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan will define specific goals that are to be achieve, a course of action for achieving those priorities, and detail measurements to ensure the outcomes of those results; and,

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan of the municipality identifies the top ten (10) projects or goals of the community and lists individuals concerns/issues, objectives, action steps, timelines, responsible groups/agencies, potential resources and measurable for each identified goal; and,

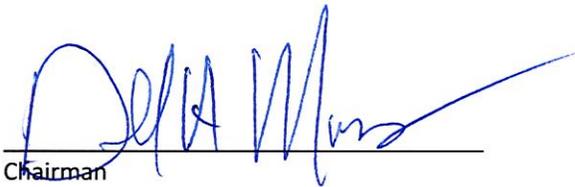
WHEREAS, based upon workshop discussion and the prioritization process, the priorities of the Village of Fairmont include: (1) Promote economic development within the Village of Fairmont; (2) Construct an energy-efficient, scale appropriate, and aesthetically-pleasing Fire Hall for the Fairmont Rural Fire District (RFD); (3) Enact a local option sales tax; (4) Improve street conditions throughout the Village of Fairmont; (5) Improve the physical appearance of Fairmont by continuing the Nuisance Abatement Program. (6) Improve housing options in the Village of Fairmont; (7) Improve the municipal park system within the Village of Fairmont; and (8) Improve sidewalk conditions throughout the Village of Fairmont; (9) Construct a safe, aesthetically-pleasing, scale-appropriate, energy-efficient, fully accessible Public Library/Recreation Center; and (10) Expand the availability of high-quality child care within the Village of Fairmont; and,

WHEREAS, based upon strategic issues, the priority setting matrix, and the identified timelines, the Fairmont Strategic Planning Group developed the following community action plan to strengthen the Fairmont community and improve the quality of life for its citizenry. This plan is designated to empower residents and businesses to look toward the future with confidence and resolve and boldly commit to undertaking the identified issues; and,

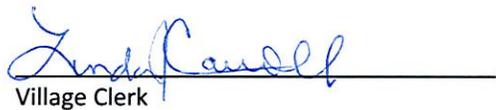
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Chairman and the Village Board of Fairmont, Nebraska, that the Fairmont Strategic Plan is hereby adopted and placed on file for reference for this and future Village Boards, Chairpersons, and leaders in the Village of Fairmont. It is not intended as an ordinance nor is it ever intended not to be changed. The plan is a guideline for growth and identifies projects that citizens of Fairmont deem the most important goal for the community. The goals are intended to guide decision-makers within the community and empower them to look toward the future with confidence to achieve future growth and development.

Passed and Approved this 13th day of November 2018.

Approved:


Chairman

Attest:


Village Clerk

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
FAIRMONT, NEBRASKA
JULY 18, 2018

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FAIRMONT, NEBRASKA
JULY 18, 2018

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