

FORWARD 2040

COMMUNITY VISION AND STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
FOR MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA, USA

November 2019



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This report presents the vision and strategic action plan developed for the Mitchell community throughout the months of February-November 2019. The community engagement process included a project Launch, Think-Tank workshop, Think-Tank survey, engagement sessions, Think-Tank Reconvene, five focus group sessions, a Joint Board Planning Session, a Community Vision survey, and a community Forward 2040 Launch Party. This engagement process was designed to provide an open, inclusive and transparent platform for community stakeholders to help create a shared vision and action plan for their community.

This report represents Future iQ's analysis of the engagement outcomes, and how this data has informed the identification of a preferred future and strategic actions. As the project consultant, Future iQ was given the responsibility to develop a data-driven process, which has informed this report. The analysis in this report builds on the preceding project reports and engagement analysis. The recommended Key Strategic Action Areas have been drawn from the community input gathered during the visioning process. The concepts and actions presented were discussed at some point during the engagement process. These actions have been structured into a proposed roadmap, drawing heavily from the prioritization conducted at the reconvening of the Think-Tank and Focus Group sessions in September 2019.

November 2019

These reports and the data visualization are available on the project portal:

<https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/>

Prepared By:

future→iQ



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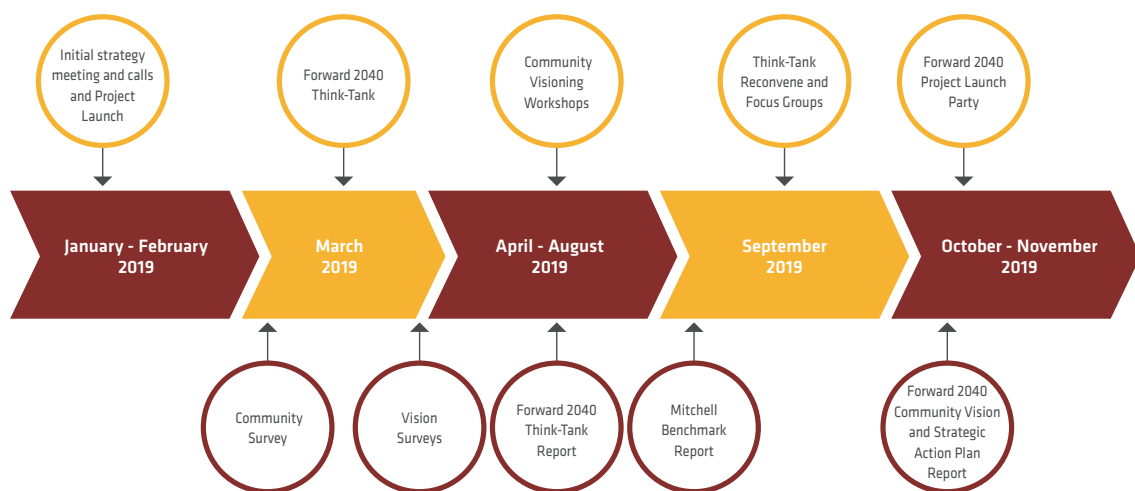
The Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Planning process brought the community of Mitchell together within a large-scale visioning process to meet the future challenges facing the community looking out to 2040.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan represents the final element in the ten-month vision and strategic planning process. The analysis in this report builds on preceding project reports and represents Future iQ's analysis of the engagement outcomes and how this data has informed the identification of a preferred future and strategic actions. The vision and strategic planning process was undertaken by Future iQ to reflect the community's desire to develop a long-range community vision through a transparent and inclusive community engagement process. The aim of the process was to build on the successes of Focus 2020 and look out to 2040 and to create a roadmap to the preferred future.

The Forward 2040 visioning and strategic planning process produced extensive community input and transparent, inclusive engagement that was central to the process. The comprehensive engagement and data-driven process progressively focused the discussion on emerging key themes and community aspirations for the future. The purpose of the process was to arrive at a 'point of consensus' that represented the shared vision for the future.

This report examines the identification of the preferred future for the Mitchell community, while discussing the stages of the overall visioning process. The key themes and aspirations that emerged from the engagement analysis are included within the strategic action pillars and further explored in the key strategic action areas and steps. The key strategic action areas outlined in this report are contained in the roadmap to the future.



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- The planning process ran from February to November 2019 and included a number of key points for community engagement.
- The project produced a series of reports and all data collected has been summarized and presented on the project portal (<https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/>)



2.0 SNAPSHOT OF KEY ISSUES SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MITCHELL

The following section explores a number of Key Issues that are shaping the future of the Mitchell community. These issues were identified in the background research and are also documented in the Community Profile and Benchmark Analysis, May 2019, produced as part of the project (see <https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/>).

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Mitchell is situated in Davison County and is the principal city of the Mitchell Micropolitan Statistical Area, which includes all of Davison and Hanson counties. The City is a growing Midwestern community that is home to more than 15,566 residents (2017 est.). Mitchell is located along U.S. I-90 which is home to some of the most prominent manufacturing, distribution and service businesses in the nation. Industrial and business park sites are situated next to the interstate, and conveniently located adjacent to rail and the airport. This geographic location is a key opportunity for the community to grow its current capacity as a centralized 'hub' for interstate commerce and services.

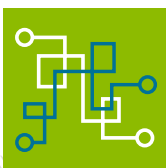
Mitchell is a growing Midwestern community conveniently located on I-90 in South Central South Dakota. Its geographic location will play an important part in the trajectory of development for the community and its surrounding communities.

State Map of South Dakota



“One of the biggest opportunities for Mitchell over the next 10 years is to embrace our location on the interstate and history with tourists to create more of a destination for the thousands that are looking for something unique during their travels through our state.”

- Community
Survey Respondent



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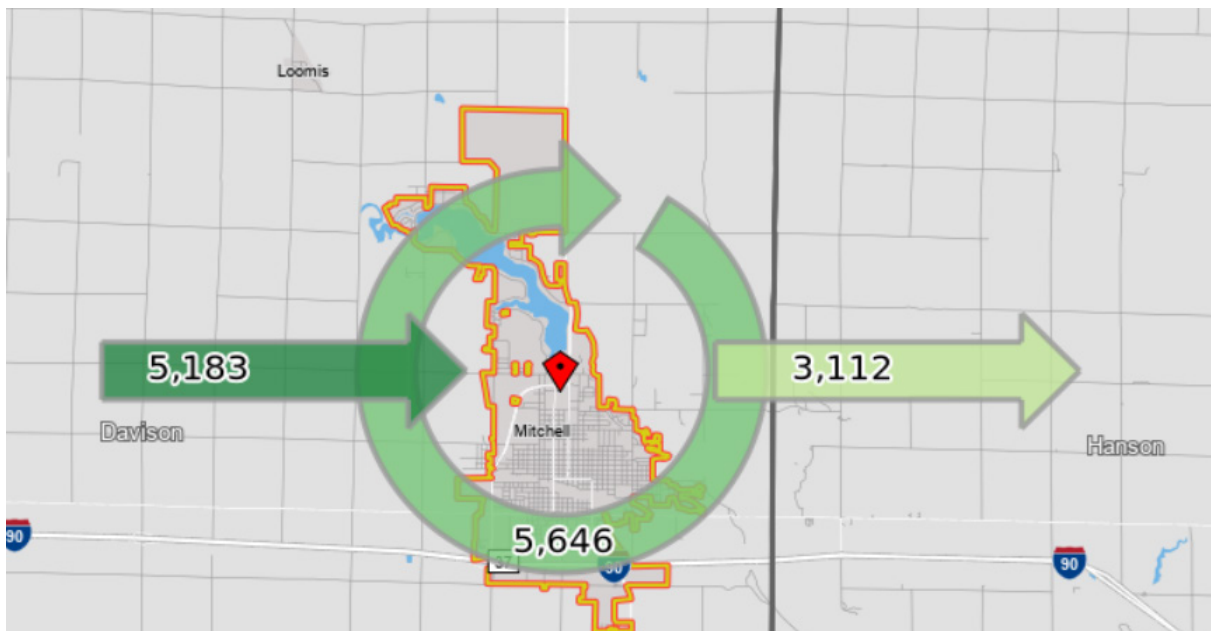
FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Autonomous vehicles will have a significant impact on travel patterns and interstate commerce. How the community develops the area around I-90 will be critical to future revenue generated from interstate travel.
- One of the dangers of locating an interstate close to small towns is that it has a tendency to pull commerce away from traditional downtown areas. The strategic planning process has identified this tendency and plans for coordinated efforts to connect the two areas of the community.

2.2 REGIONAL INFLUENCE AND COMMUTING PATTERNS

As identified in the Community Profile and Benchmark Analysis, May 2019, the Mitchell community has sizeable inbound and outbound workforce populations every day. As an educational hub, its higher educational institutions draw in population from regional small towns. This suggests there might be opportunity, over time, to create more local business, and live and work opportunities in the community. The chart below provides insight on two populations; those who are employed in Mitchell and those who are living in Mitchell. Understanding the inflow and outflow of commuters, helps us understand how the local economy interfaces with the local population. The inflow and outflow data are from 2015, and Mitchell has seen both population and workforce growth in that time. This commuter data shows the underlying pattern, which is likely to be similar in 2019.

Increased employment opportunities within the Mitchell community would provide added live/work opportunities and attract millennials and young professionals who tend to seek that type of work arrangement.



Source: 2015 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics: <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- 8,758 employed people live in the Mitchell community and of this, 3,112 (35.5%) commute outside of the City to their workplace while 5,646 (64.5%) commute within Mitchell to their workplace.
- The majority of employees in Mitchell are community stakeholders that do not live in Mitchell. This may change significantly as the positive impacts of implementing the strategic action plan occur.

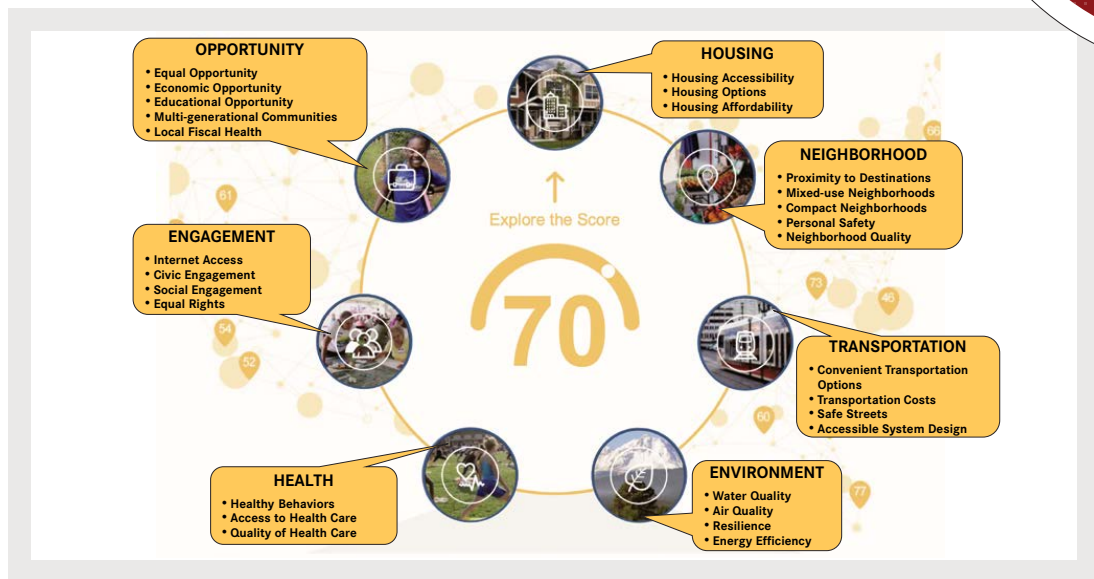


2.3 CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND LIVABILITY

As the 6th largest city in South Dakota, the Mitchell's current population of 15,566 (est. 2017) reflects demographic changes occurring in communities across the U.S. The community has experienced consistent population growth since the 1990's and has significant millennial and aging cohorts as well as school aged families. Cities like Mitchell increasingly face the challenges of providing programs and services that make the community 'livable' for residents of all ages. Mitchell's commitment to transition the community to a 'Future Shared' is a significant step in that direction.

The changing demographics of Mitchell provide a unique opportunity for the City to revitalize the community by purposefully designing and developing areas of the city in ways that incorporate emerging demographic values and needs.

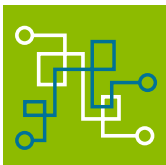
Seven Categories of Livability and the Attributes Associated with Each



Source: Jana Lynott, Rodney Harrell, Shannon Guzman and Brad Gudzin. *The Livability Index 2018: Transforming Communities for All Ages*, AARP Public Policy Institute, June 2018.

“We all love our community! It’s a great place to live and raise a family.”

- Community survey respondent



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The importance of the millennial and baby-boomers age cohorts cannot be underestimated. Where many interests and needs diverge, both groups value connectivity and mobility, and are moving to cities that cater to this value.
- The Mitchell community has a significant college-aged population that is not necessarily reflected in U.S. Census data depending on where they hold residency. The impacts of their presence should be taken into account for future planning purposes.

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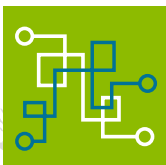
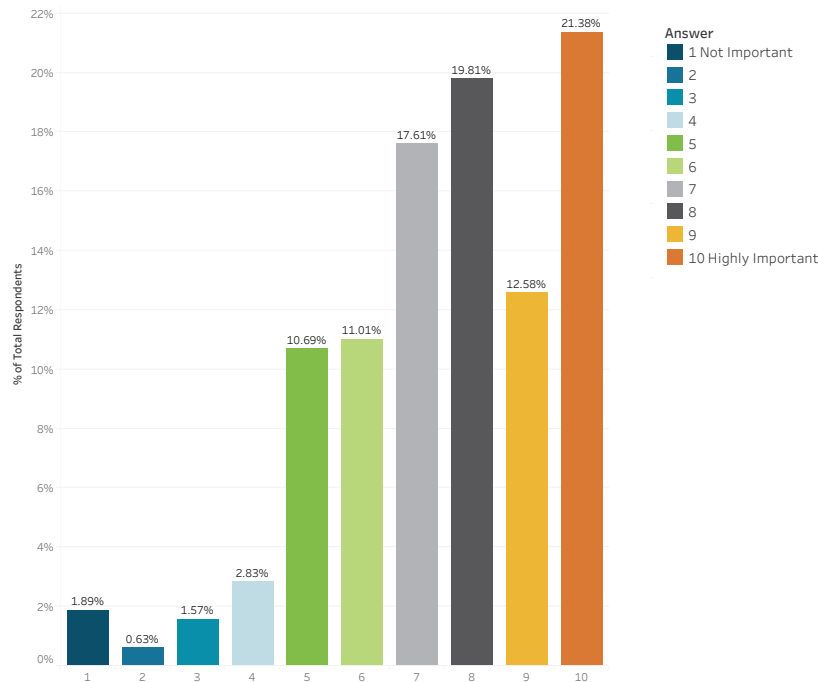
3.0 IMPORTANCE OF VISIONING

The Forward 2040 visioning process looked at how the community has evolved, and what are the new trends and factors that are shaping the community's future. The visioning process was largely viewed as an opportunity to come together and shape the future trajectory of the community. Everyone who participated in the Think-Tank or a visioning workshop was given a Vision survey to complete. The following chart reflects the sentiments from the 344 survey respondents who completed the Vision survey, which launched the process. In the survey, respondents were asked how important they thought it is to have a shared vision for the future of the community. Over 80% of respondents considered having a shared vision important.

The Community Vision provides community leaders a framework to guide all actions by requiring reflection on whether the community's goals and objectives are being met in ways that match the vision and its priorities.

How important do you think it is to have a SHARED VISION for the future of Mitchell?

1 = Not important; 10 = Highly important (n = 330)

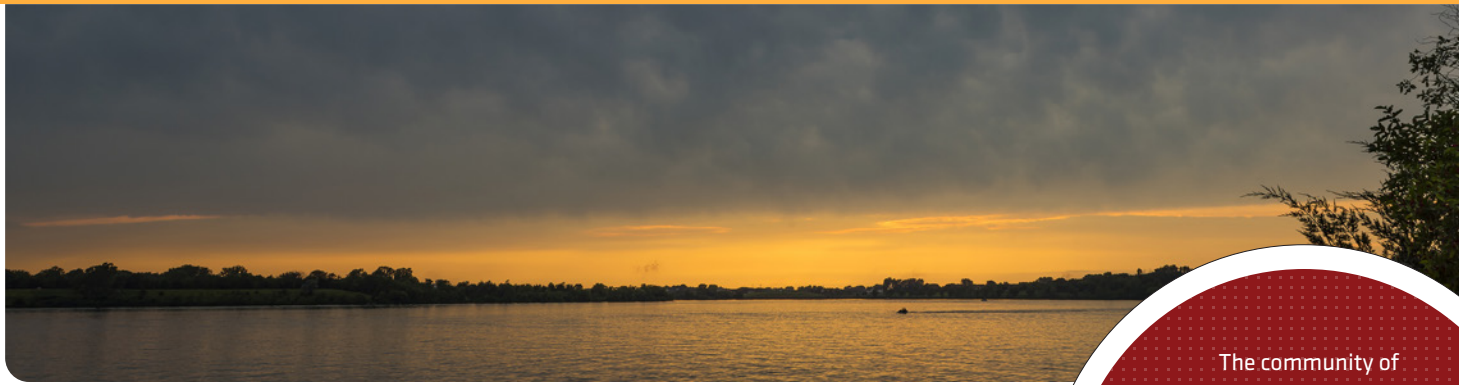


FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Within the 20-year time-frame to 2040, significant change will occur in a number of areas that will impact the Mitchell community. Having a vision and a roadmap will help steer the community as it navigates future change.

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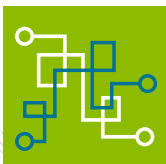
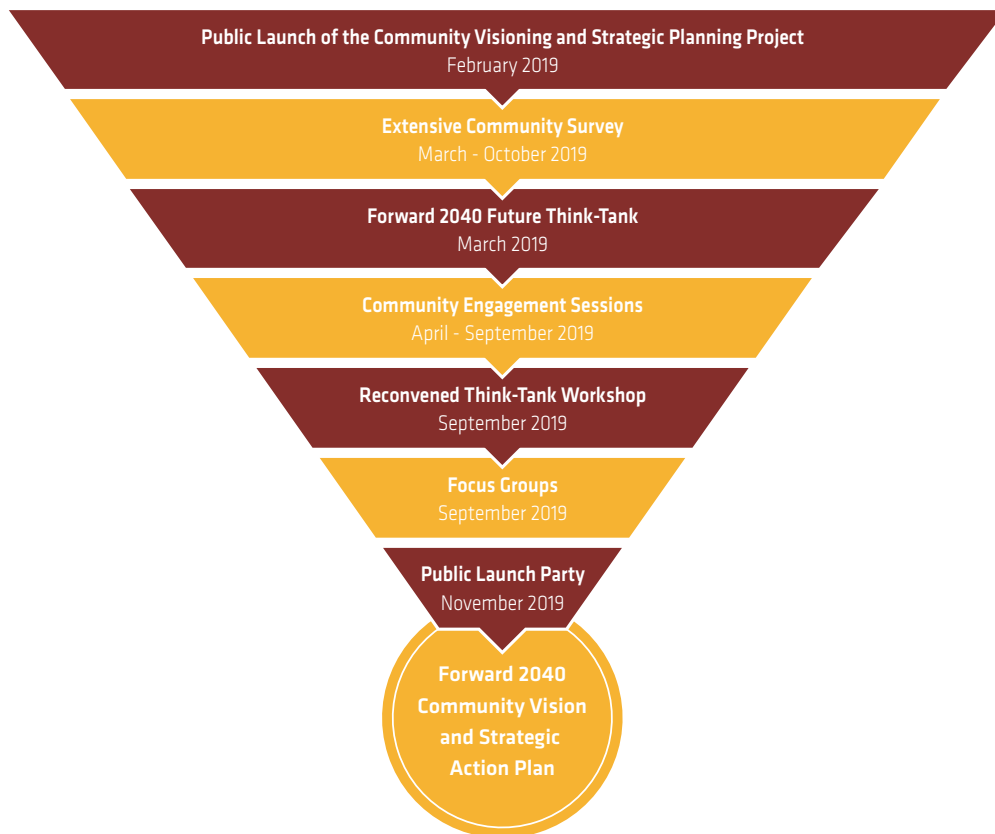
- Given the accelerating speed of change occurring at all levels, regular check-in points on the Community Vision should be established (at least every 5 years) to stay on top of emerging trends and adjust as needed.



4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

A key feature of the Forward 2040 process was the focus on community engagement. The engagement was conducted through April-September 2019, and attracted over 2,000 significant inputs (survey responses, workshops, focus groups). The data-driven visioning process helped the Mitchell community discover clear ‘points-of-consensus’ regarding their future vision. The focus groups and reconvene of the Think-Tank helped drill down to more direct actions and ideas for implementation.

The community of Mitchell enthusiastically embraced the visioning and strategic planning process. This momentum will be carried forward by the strategic pillar task forces that will work with the community to guide implementation of the plan.



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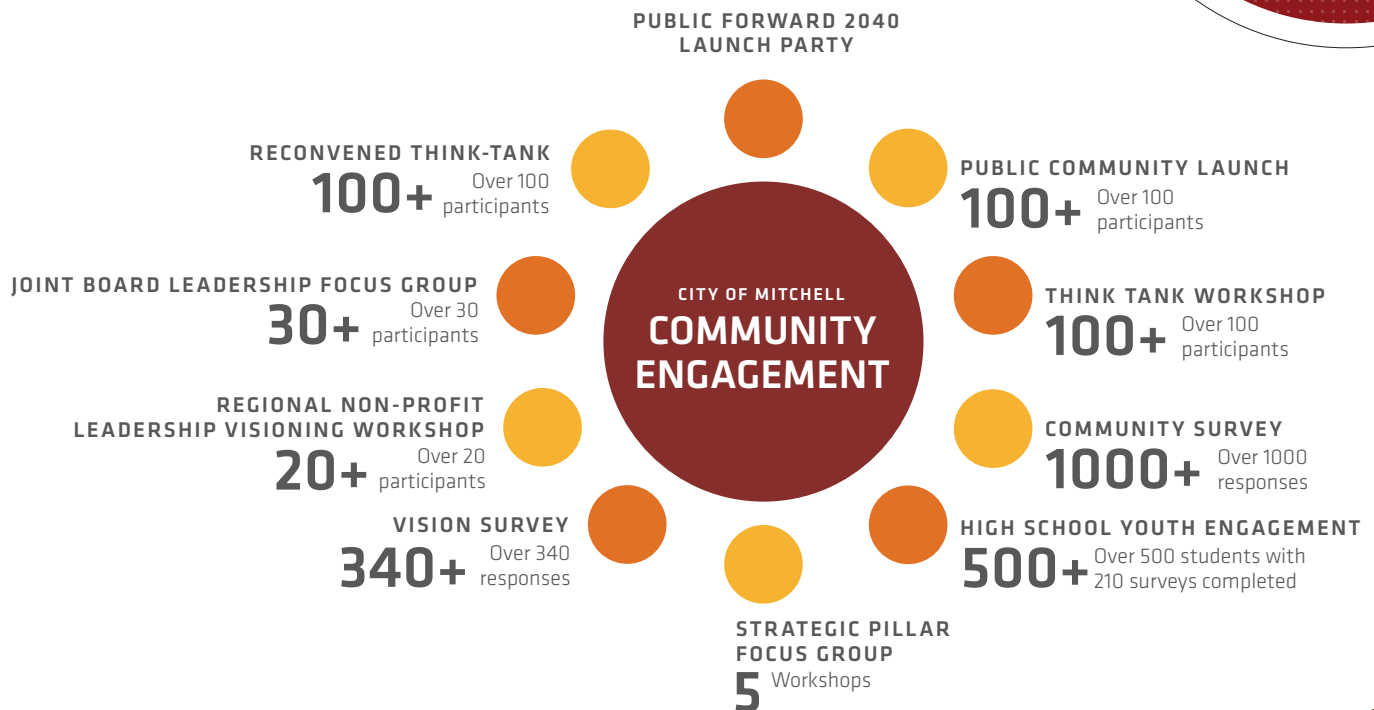
FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The detailed community stakeholder engagement process produced strong consensus around the desire to build a pathway to the preferred future scenario, ‘Future Shared’.
- The young professional voice in Mitchell emerged as a strong leadership component of the community engagement. Maintaining and empowering this engagement will be an important part of ensuring validity and authenticity of the plan’s implementation.

4.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METRICS

Community engagement was a key feature of this project. Efforts were made to ensure it was as easy as possible for community residents to participate and provide meaningful input. The engagement was offered via online surveys, workshops, focus groups and two public launches. These were held on different days of the week, times of the day, and over several months. City, Chamber of Commerce, and Mitchell Area Development Corporation staff put substantial effort into engaging the community in the visioning process. Social Media was used to highlight each stage of the process and the project portal provided regular update information. Invitations were distributed for key events, and people were individually invited to many sessions by staff and elevated officials.

The level of engagement in this community was significant, with over 10% of the community having some direct input in the process.



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHTS:

- A stand-out feature of the community engagement work was the over 500 high school students who participated in a visioning session, with 210 surveys collected.
- In total, the engagement process involved good representation from various interest groups and community cohorts. The depth and quality of the community stakeholder input helped ensure the robust and reflective outcome.

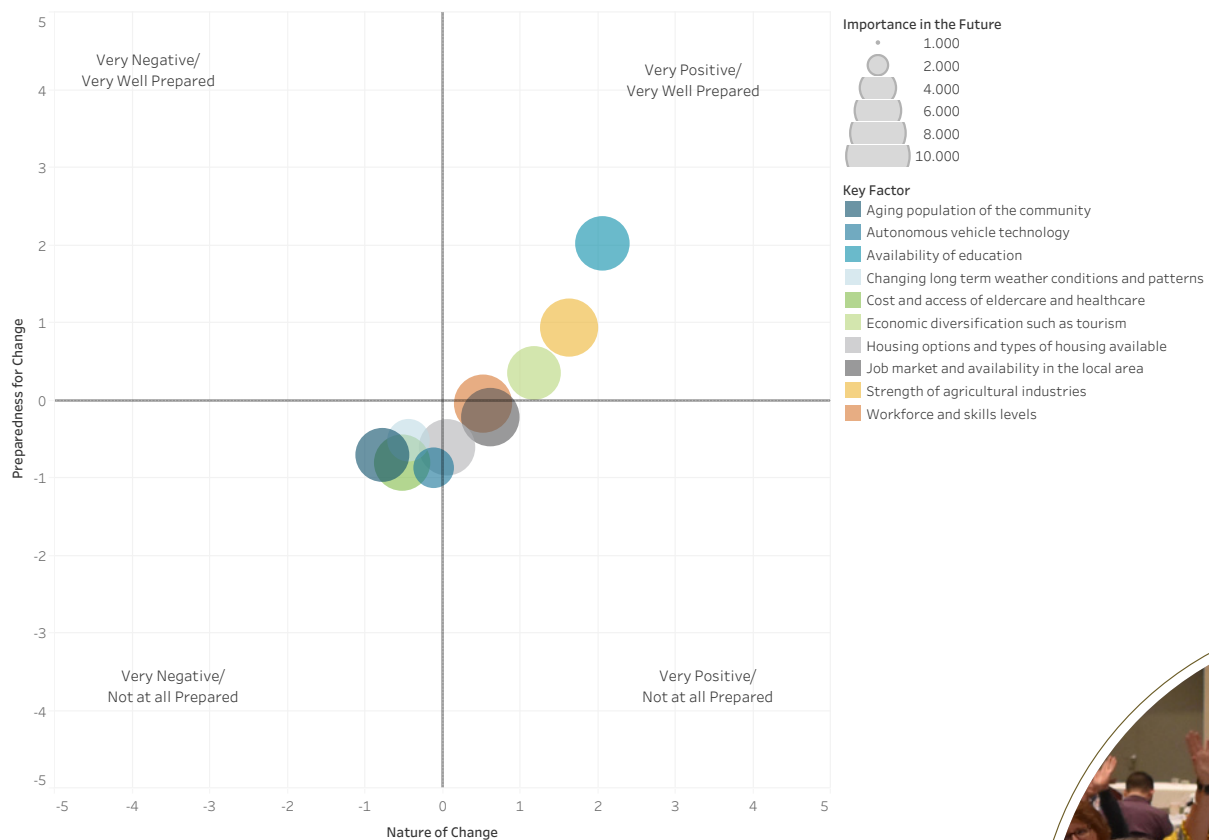


4.3 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The online Community Survey ran from March through mid-October 2019 and collected 1,001 responses from community stakeholders. The chart below combines responses to two questions to create an interactive scatterplot. The visualization shows response data as it relates to the 10 key factors listed and presents the average results based on all responses. The X-axis represents the responses to the 'nature of change' question, 'Do you think expected changes in each of these factors will be positive or negative for Mitchell?' The Y-axis represents the responses to the 'preparedness for change' question, 'How well prepared is Mitchell to adapt to changes in these issues?' Overall, survey respondents indicated that most of the key topics would ultimately be positive for Mitchell, but the community needed to be better prepared.

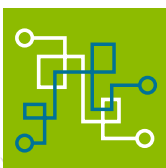
The availability of education was considered by far the most significant factor that the community was best 'prepared for' and 'would have a positive impact on the future'. Dakota Wesleyan University and Mitchell Technical Institute will continue to play outsized roles in positioning the community as it plans for the future.

Community Preparedness



All data from the Mitchell Community Survey may be seen at:

<https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/community-survey/about-the-survey/>



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Survey respondents considered 'Availability of education', 'Strength of agricultural industries' and 'Economic diversification such as tourism' as the most important drivers of change in shaping the future of the Mitchell community.
- Significantly, an aging population and the cost and access of eldercare and healthcare were seen as areas that the community is not well prepared for, looking out to 2040.

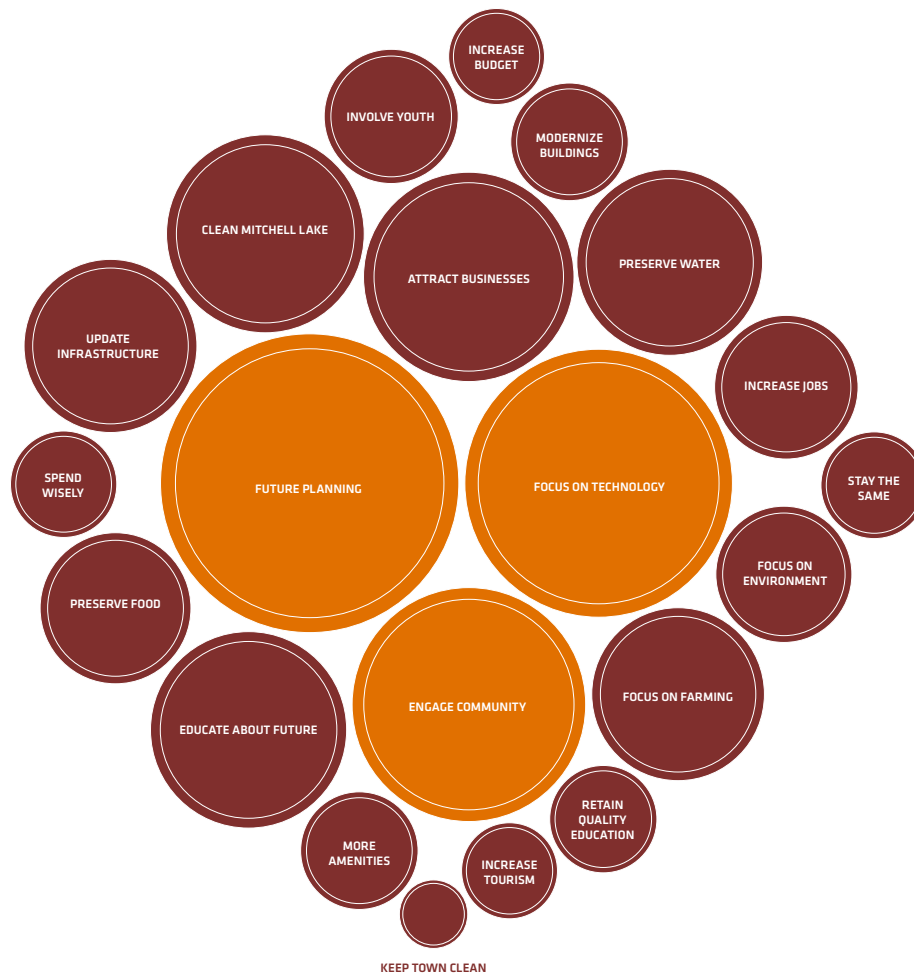


4.4 YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

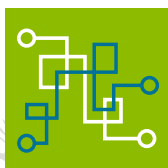
As part of the strategic planning process, Future iQ facilitated a school-wide visioning session with over 500 Mitchell High School students. Following the session, students returned to their classrooms to complete a visioning survey geared for the students. 210 students in grades 9-12 completed the survey. Below is an image that represents a word cloud containing categorized responses to the question asking what the community needs to be doing now to be better prepared for the future. The larger the circle, the more frequent the use of the word in the bubble. The orange circles were seen as the most important topics.

Mitchell high school students highlighted the need to focus on future planning, technology use and engaging the community to be better prepared for the future.

What do you think Mitchell needs to be doing now in order to be better prepared for the future?



To see complete results of the youth survey, please see: <https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/youth-survey/about-the-survey/>



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The narrative results from the youth survey showed a keen interest in becoming more earth-friendly, especially in the reduction of plastics in the environment. The most frequent recommendations involved cleaning Lake Mitchell and tidying up the City.
- Students also focused on the use and incorporation of technology to pivot to a more futuristic approach to community development.

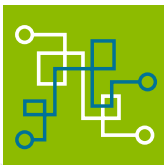
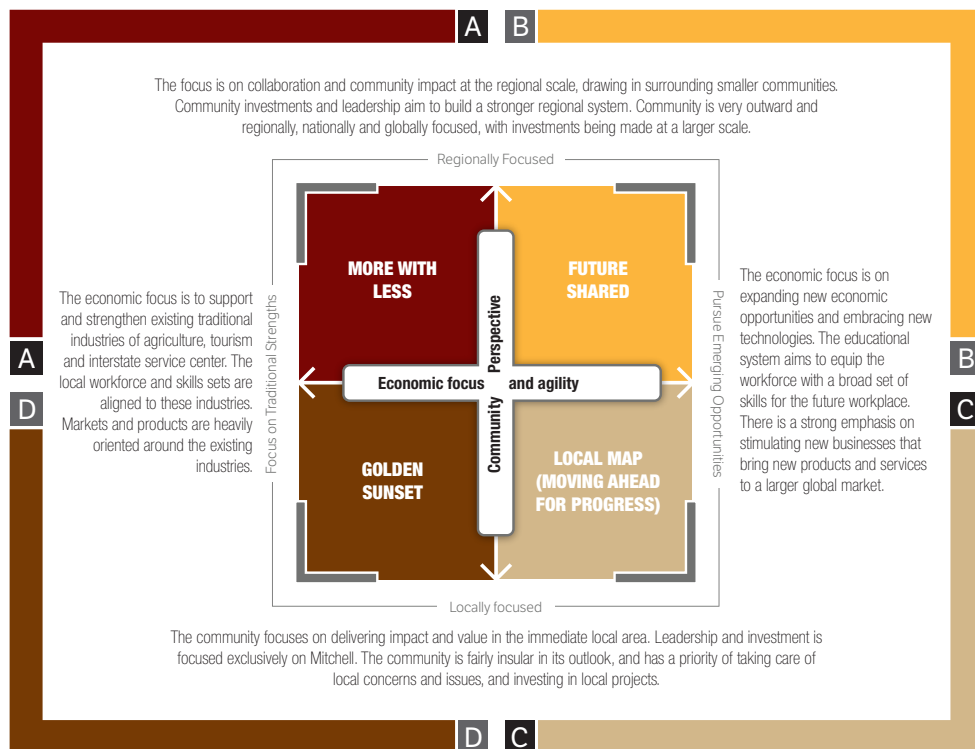




5.0 CREATING SHARED VISION AND DIRECTION

5.1 SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE – FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORATION

The following diagram was developed with Mitchell community stakeholders at the March 2019 Forward 2040 Future Think-Tank Workshop. The scenario planning process creates four plausible versions of the future, built around the main themes of ‘Community Perspective’ and ‘Economic Focus and Agility’. The process allows community stakeholders to think about the future in a multidimensional manner. More detail on the process is available in the Forward 2040 Future Think-Tank Workshop Report. (For more information, visit <https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/>)



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The strategic planning process uses a scenario planning methodology to explore future directions and implications. This approach helps community stakeholders understand the full range of impacts and consequences of various decisions as they seek a preferred future.

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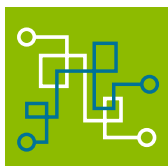
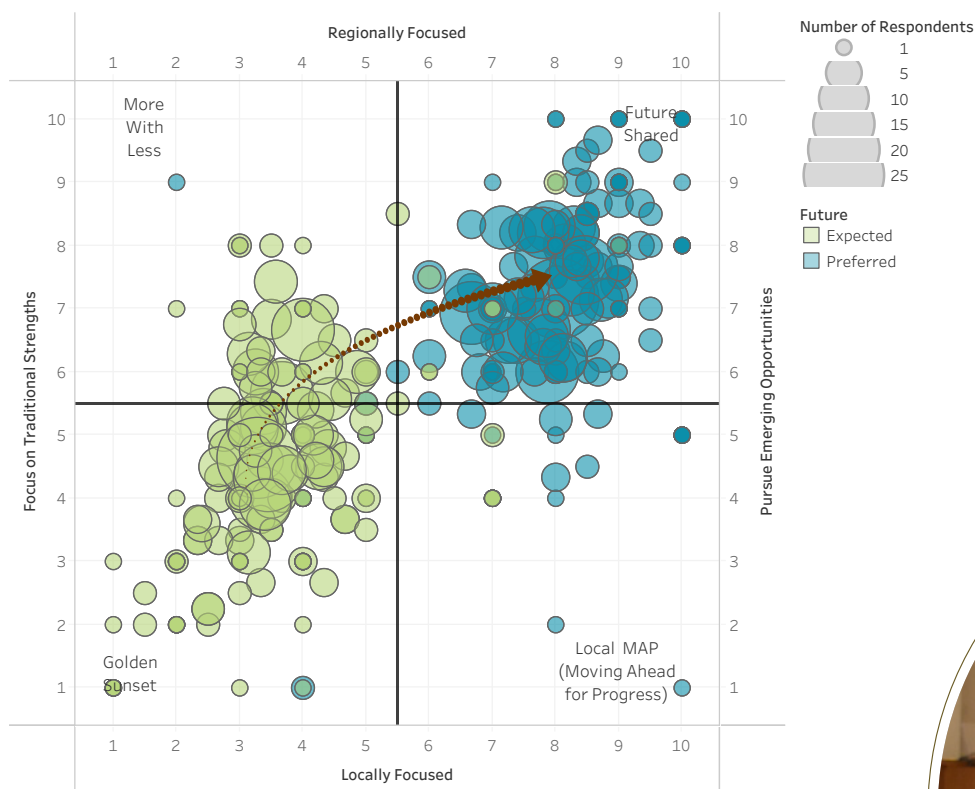
- The process allows participants to think deeply about how to best design and plan their community to suit current and future needs. It allows some anticipation and projection of future trends and explores how the community needs to evolve to meet future needs.

5.2 IDENTIFYING THE PREFERRED FUTURE

The Vision Survey ran from March to mid-September 2019 and was distributed to all participants of the Think-Tank and community engagement workshops. The chart below represents 344 completed heatmaps. The data illustrates all cohort responses with the size of the circle representing the number of responses in that particular square. The two axes, 'Community Perspective' and 'Economic Focus and Agility' were presented as continuums, so people could select locations for their preferred future with a degree of understanding about the implications and what it represented. The development of Expected and Preferred heatmaps is a key part of discovering the shared vision for the community. The Expected future, 'Golden Sunset' is where people believe the community will end up if there is no change in what the community is currently doing. The preferred future, 'Future Shared' is what people have identified as the most desired future for the community. The arrow represents the path that the community must take to get from the expected to the preferred future.

The preferred future 'Future Shared' outlines the basis of a shared vision for the community and gives direction to the action items needed for this vision to become a reality through the community's new Strategic Action Plan.

Expected and Preferred Cohort Data



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FUTURE INSIGHTS:

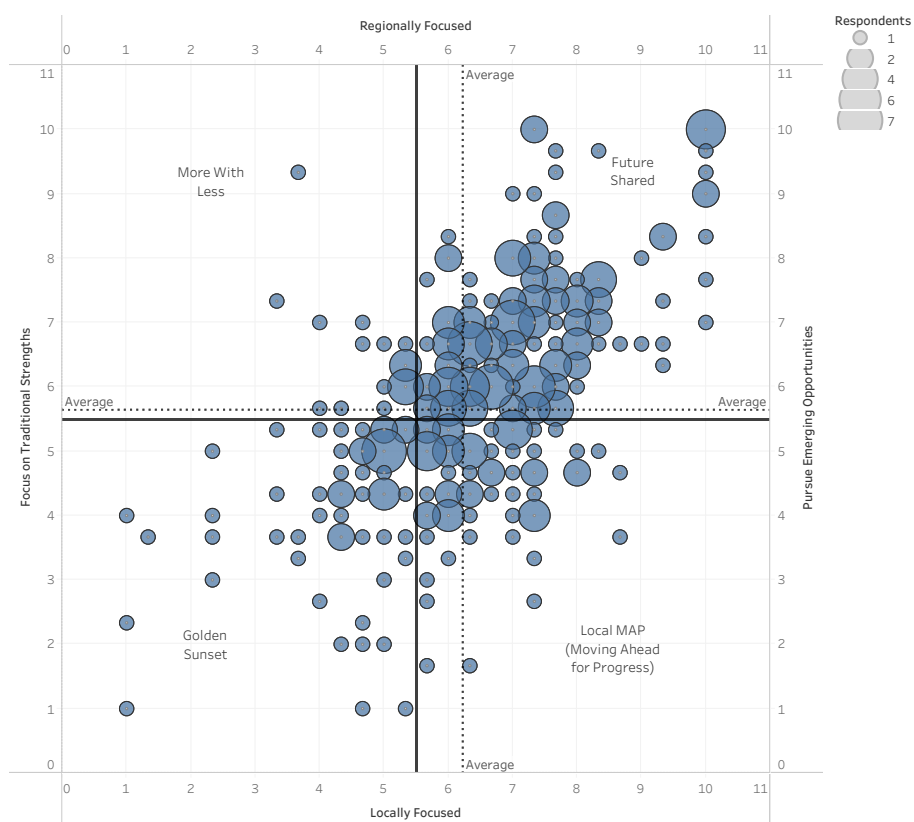
- The preferred future indicates a definite shift to a broader world view along the 'Community Perspective' axis. At the same time, community members emphasized their love of Mitchell's small-town feel. This combination will provide for a unique smaller community that has strong connections to the outside world.
- The economic focus and agility axis suggested the community desires to be more regionally focused, opening up to national and global markets that encourage innovation and technology.



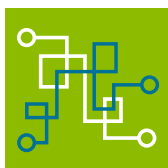
5.3 SCENARIO VALIDATION MATRIX

This chart provides a method to validate the preferred future created via heat maps. This 'Scenario Matrix Validation Chart' is created by building a preferred future from the answers to the 'Important Themes' questions. These 'Important Themes' questions are subsets of the scenario axes, and by recombining each person's answers we create a unique X, Y average. This approach generates a notional Preferred Future, but one based on likely responses to issues and expected behavior in real-life. This provides a validation of the Preferred Future response based on the heat map diagram.

Scenario Validation Matrix – Forward 2040



The scenario validation matrix highlights the concentration of responses in the community and validates the perceived desire for change. These results suggest a strong mandate for continued change in the community.



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FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The dotted line on the matrix represents the average X, Y point of all responses. The size of the circle in the chart represents the number of responses in that specific location. The average response is in the upper right scenario quadrant, although not as pronounced as in the 'preferred future' responses.
- It was noted during the strategic planning process that it will be important for the community to move forward in a cohesive manner. This may not be as quickly as some would like but will be important to show a balanced approach to change.





The Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan presents a series of strategic actions that can be achieved in the short to medium-term that will produce long-term results.

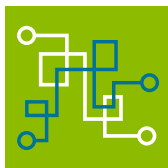
6.0 COMMUNITY VISION - 2040

The 2040 community vision for Mitchell was developed following extensive community engagement throughout 2019. This process allowed the community to explore future evolution around the two main themes of 'Community Perspective' and 'Economic Focus and Agility'. These themes allowed the community to wrestle with the implications and responses to changing demographic makeup and needs of the community, and the emerging impact that agriculture, technology and development is having on multiple aspects of the community.

The preferred future identified by the community is called 'Future Shared'. This is a scenario that represents the vision for the future of Mitchell, and is described as:

FORWARD 2040 VISION - 'FUTURE SHARED'

This scenario forecasts a future where an emphasis on collaboration, new technologies and global opportunities propel Mitchell into becoming an efficient hub for the region. Connectivity is highlighted as Mitchell pivots from an economy based on traditional industry to new businesses and products. Education follows with an expanded array of programming opportunities for skillsets at all levels and ages. This new openness attracts and retains a diverse, younger, progressive and more inclusive workforce. Graduating students from area universities stay to work and live in the community. New technologies expand opportunities in the areas of energy and agriculture, and new investments in local industries increase with regional support. Water treatment is improved with new technologies and Lake Mitchell becomes a regional draw for recreational tourism. Surrounding communities consolidate as Mitchell becomes a center for services throughout the region.



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The action areas of the Strategic Action Plan are intended to produce systemic and catalytic shifts that will drive the future economic growth and vitality of the Mitchell community and attract new residents and investments.
- The strategic pillars provide areas for significant innovation in the community over the coming years. Each of these topics will require careful research and planning.

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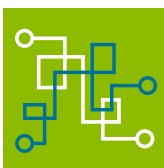
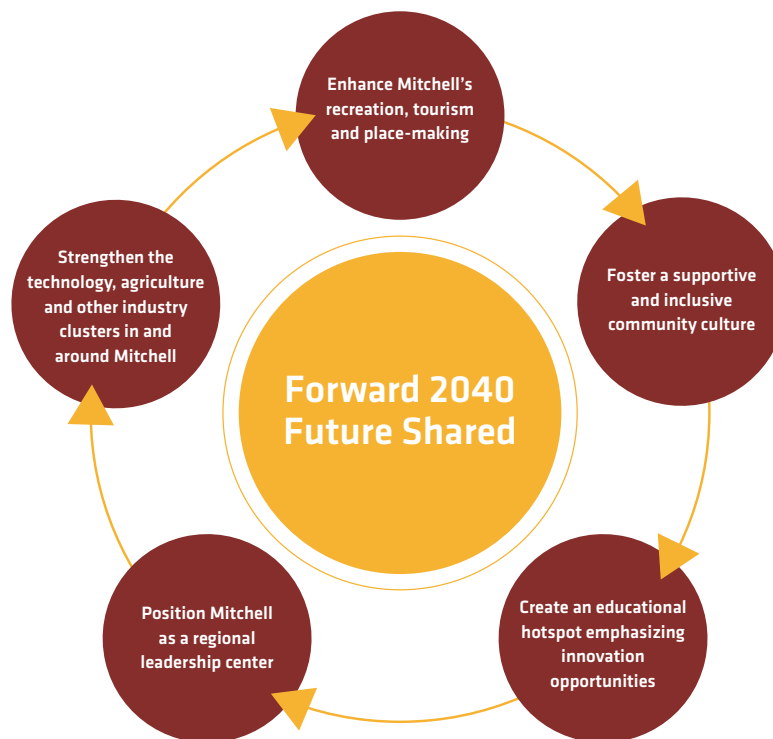




The strategic pillars help organize future actions into key focus areas. These are intended to be the foundational building blocks that support and guide the community towards its preferred future, 'Future Shared'.

7.0 STRATEGIC PILLARS FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Pillars were developed at the Reconvening of the Forward 2040 Think-Tank in September 2019. The pillars represent the major theme or topic areas that underpin the aggregated preferred future, called 'Future Shared'. They have been drawn directly from the scenario planning and community engagement process. The strategic action plan areas are structured around these five key strategic pillars. These are the fundamental building blocks for the future actions that support the vision.



FutureInsight

FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The Strategic Pillars draw together the elements identified by the community as being the highest importance in terms of the future.
- Community members recognize that the community is in transition. The supporting data from the planning process surveys and engagement participation give community leadership the mandate for change to shift thinking going forward.

7.1 CREATE A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY CULTURE

7.1.1 IMPORTANCE OF A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY CULTURE

“Today the world is becoming more knowledgeable about and accepting of individuals with unique abilities, which is generating an ecosystem of inclusiveness.” (Forbes, 9 May 2018)

Inclusiveness is especially important in the workplace as a growing number of millennials will displace Babyboomers. When asked to prioritize the strategic pillars of the new Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan, creating a supportive and inclusive community culture was identified by Think-Tank Reconvene participants as the most important to the community’s success. Focus group participants as well as survey respondents emphasized the importance of changing community culture away from ‘the way things have always been done’ to a more open and inclusive approach to community building. It was suggested that just as the community goes above and beyond with services for visitors, so should the community be with its residents.

Recognition that the Mitchell community needs to become more supportive and inclusive is the first step in creating an environment that is welcoming and open to all.

The science of inclusion: Deloitte’s inclusion model



Fairness and respect



Valued and belonging



Safe and open



Empowered and growing

Sources: Bersin by Deloitte, *High-impact diversity and inclusion: The new maturity model*, 2017; Juliet Bourke and Bernadette Dillon, *Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance*, Deloitte Australia and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2012.

Source: *Industry 4.0: Are you ready?* Deloitte Review, 2018.

“My perfect dream sequence for Mitchell’s future would be a culturally diverse population where newcomers are welcomed vs. looked at and talked about negatively.”

- Community survey respondent



VALUE TO RESIDENTS:

- The demographic and ethnic make-up of Mitchell is changing. Embracing this change and learning how to use it to enrich the community will make Mitchell a stronger community.
- Breaking down age, physical and cultural barriers will make the community a safer and inclusive community for all residents.



7.1.2 KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. Create a central communications platform for the whole community

One of the most empowering services a community can provide for residents is access to clear, consistent information and communications. During the engagement process, this was identified as a weak area for the community and the strategic action plan includes action steps to improve communications for residents. Establishing a primary community information resource for new and old residents will give residents confidence and security to know there is a place to go to ask questions and find answers about the community.

2. Deliberately remove barriers to inclusion

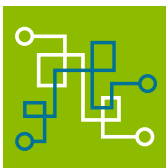
Mitchell has been successful over the past decades in being able to nurture a safe, stable community. Sometimes barriers to inclusion are invisible to those already participating. Undertaking a process to purposely remove barriers is invaluable, as it opens new doors for people. This might include issues of language, location and style of engagements. For example, the Parks and Rec department has built inclusivity into its programs by making changes that create social places where people can improve interactions. Simple steps like this allow people of all ages to connect, share experiences, and feel included.

3. Open the door to new people and ideas

During the Forward 2040 Think-Tank and the subsequent engagement process, people talked about ways to foster inclusion and celebrate diversity. Many ideas were presented with the common goals of being a welcoming community that encourages acceptance and openness in the community. Practical examples include welcoming events for new university students and residents, and translation services for foreign-language speakers.

4. Actively seek youth involvement in the community

A repeated theme throughout the strategic planning process was a call to create more ways for youth to be involved in the community. Survey results show a keen awareness that youth and young professionals are key to the community's long-term viability and success. Initiatives that incorporate university students and young professionals will help to build a future workforce for the community and help the community to pivot to a more inclusive outlook.



FutureInsight

FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Continuing to evolve leadership groups in the community that incorporate diversity will help to ensure the threads of inclusiveness are woven through the community fabric.
- As the trend to increased multiculturalism occurs in all communities, learning how to assimilate people into a community that shares a vision and values will be a key skill required by community leadership. The Forward 2040 visioning process has been a significant building block in this process.

The following bullet-points are ideas and actions that emerged during the community engagement process.

2019

7.1.3 COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

1. Create a central communications platform for the whole community

- Create a Resource Center for new and current residents (establish a one stop-shop for information)
- Explore the creation of a cultural community center
- Expand library hours to provide increased access to information and meeting opportunities
- Provide community information in Spanish and English

2. Deliberately remove barriers to inclusion

- Offer translation services where needed
- Increase multi-generational and communal living spaces
- Continue to incorporate walkability, bike-ability and wheelchair access to provide for greater community connectivity
- Revitalize the Welcome Wagon
- Promote social connectivity in the community through public events and concerts

3. Open the door to new people and ideas

- Develop regular welcoming events for new residents and incoming students
- Foster culturally relevant and intergenerational programs such as 'Arts in the Park'
- Create community liaisons/ambassadors to help connect neighbors, community members, co-workers, church members, etc.
- Expand recreational opportunities that provide accessibility
- Establish park activities that cater to different cultural and generational cohorts

2040

4. Actively seek youth involvement in the community

- Encourage mentorships and internships for students with local businesses
- Provide infrastructural connectivity for DWU and MTI students
- Launch programs that attract and retain youth
- Expand opportunities for youth on organizational boards and city boards and committees



FIRST STEPS

Establish a Task Force responsible for carrying forward the planning and actions for this strategic pillar. Initial actions could include convening on a monthly basis to plan action steps and to report back on progress made.



CURRENT EXAMPLES

- Forward 2040 outlook
- Parks & Rec programs
- Pre-Sturgis party, Rodeo days, Corn Palace festival, First Fridays
- Community's desire for change
- Mitchell community scholarship fund
- Mitchell snack pack program
- Young visionary leaders and new people to the community



USEFUL RESOURCES

- SDSU Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Access <https://www.sdstate.edu/office-diversity-inclusion-equity-access>
- Aberdeen Area Diversity Coalition <http://www.aberdeencoalition.org>
- LEAD South Dakota <https://leadsouthdakota.org/about/>
- Disability Rights South Dakota <https://drsdlaw.org>
- Bridging South Dakota <https://www.endabusepwd.org/community/bridging-south-dakota/>
- Center for Social Inclusion <https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org>



7.2 CREATE AN EDUCATIONAL HOT SPOT EMPHASIZING INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

7.2.1 IMPORTANCE OF AN EDUCATIONAL HOT SPOT EMPHASIZING INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Many rural communities are struggling to grow their populations as younger people flock to larger cities for job opportunities and amenities. During the visioning process, it was evident that the Mitchell community places great emphasis on both its K-12 and higher educational opportunities. There is noted success and pride in these opportunities and a determination to ensure this unique advantage persists. However, this focus seems to diminish at the point of graduation from the local university and technical institute. Young people, and young professionals commented in the workshops that the community did not offer enough opportunities, amenities or much relevance for many young professionals. Older adults also commented that there were few opportunities for life-long learning and retraining in the community. Given these needs and the community's commitment to education, there is unique opportunity for local educational institutions and community education to broaden offerings to include innovative courses that support local industry, community and business needs. This would fit well with the strategic goal to strengthen industry clusters in the community by creating the local educational resources that attract and retain a more agile, resilient workforce base.

Communities that provide evolving educational opportunities to community members at all stages of life are notably more attractive to younger cohorts and successful at retaining skilled workers.



“The educational opportunities are a great asset to the community!”

- Community Survey Respondent



VALUE TO RESIDENTS

- The continued close collaboration between Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU), Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) and Mitchell High School (MHS) will be critical to maintaining cutting edge educational resources that support local industry and business needs.
- Mitchell's high-quality schools attract people to the community and are a significant source of pride for the community. Communicating this reputation more broadly would bring added recognition of Mitchell's significance across the State.



7.2.2 KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. Forge strong partnerships across the entire educational sector

Recently formed partnerships between Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU), Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI), Mitchell High School (MHS) and area industry and businesses are starting to link workforce needs to educational programs. Growing educational programs that emphasize specific industry sectors can serve to make Mitchell an educational hot spot for research and development in these areas (for example Ag and Technology). These relationships should be pursued and developed to encourage innovation and to create a strong pipeline of both workers for area industry and employment opportunities for students.

2. Create a lifelong learning environment in Mitchell

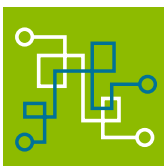
With accelerated change occurring in all areas, the value of life-long learning has become recognized as critical to keeping workforce skillsets agile and resilient. In addition to maintaining relevant skillsets through retraining programs, research has also shown that as communities age, mentally active people enjoy a better quality of life. It was noted in the focus group on education that there is a lack of basic education for personal community growth. Programs that support a lifelong learning environment will deliver benefits at many levels both in the job market and as a quality of life asset to all age groups.

3. Build strong career pathways between students and local industry

The future of education is rapidly evolving as technology offers many more ways to learn. Named in 2015 as one of the country's top 7 'smart cities', the community is well positioned to support exploration of new innovative education models for Mitchell students. For example, with higher education enrollment levels down, DWU is pursuing the concept of 'laddering' as a way to introduce students at all stages of study into its programs. The creation of this type of innovative approach to education is a significant amenity and should be encouraged.

4. Promote Mitchell as a hotbed of educational excellence

Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU) and Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) serve the region as an education 'hub' with high quality reputations. Both institutions currently draw traditional students primarily from populations in South Dakota and the upper Midwest, and DWU has recently begun a concerted effort to attract students from overseas. As part of the strategic action plan, it is recommended that DWU and MTI continue their efforts to expand their outreach to students geographically, and to explore collaborating with larger schools on programs that may bring more regional recognition.



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Although 78% of MHS students already go on to post-secondary education, efforts made to capture the remaining 22% would dramatically help address anticipated workforce shortages as Babyboomers begin to retire in significant numbers.

FutureInsight

- Increasingly, the affordability of higher education is becoming an impediment to obtaining a degree or training. A solution might be for the community to explore creative funding models for area students with significant financial need.

The following bullet-points are ideas and actions that emerged during the community engagement process.

2019

7.2.3 COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

1. Forge strong partnerships across the entire educational sector

- Continue to build connections between educational institutions and businesses (example: industry fairs, internships, mentoring, sponsorships)
- Increase integration of K-12 programs and local institutions
- Build workforce development programs with K-12 and higher education
- Create an Advisory Board with school district and business representation
- Connect renewable energy development in and around Mitchell with skills training programs at Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU) and Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI)

2. Create a lifelong learning environment in Mitchell

- Expand affordable adult education opportunities
- Expand post-secondary educational options to include retraining and community education for older students
- Increase opportunities for online learning with the intention of fostering a learning and innovation culture within the community
- Implement mentoring opportunities for Seniors at local schools

3. Build strong career pathways between students and local industry

- Continue recent successes in reducing Senior Slump by building additional options for transition from high school to tech school, college, or industry
- Coordinate class schedules between Mitchell High School (MHS), DWU and MTI
- Promote degree completion programs for MHS, DWU and MTI students as well as older cohorts
- Expand online offerings to MHS students

4. Promote Mitchell as a hotbed of educational excellence

- Find ways for DWU and MTI to collaborate with bigger schools
- Support DWU's international student recruitment with business community mentorships
- Develop skills training programs that support regional and statewide industries
- Create collaborative workspaces that feature continuing education opportunities sponsored by DWU and MTI

2040



FIRST STEPS

Establish a Task Force responsible for carrying forward the planning and actions for this strategic pillar. Initial actions could include convening on a monthly basis to plan action steps and to report back on progress made.



CURRENT EXAMPLES

- DWU/MTI partnerships
- Higher education and college atmosphere
- Workforce development (more opportunities for graduates)
- DWU growth in admissions



USEFUL RESOURCES

- OECD Education 2030: The Future of Education and Skills project. <http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/>
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. <https://www.usd.edu/usd-community-college-for-sioux-falls/olli>
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. <https://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Registrar/Lifelong-Learning/>

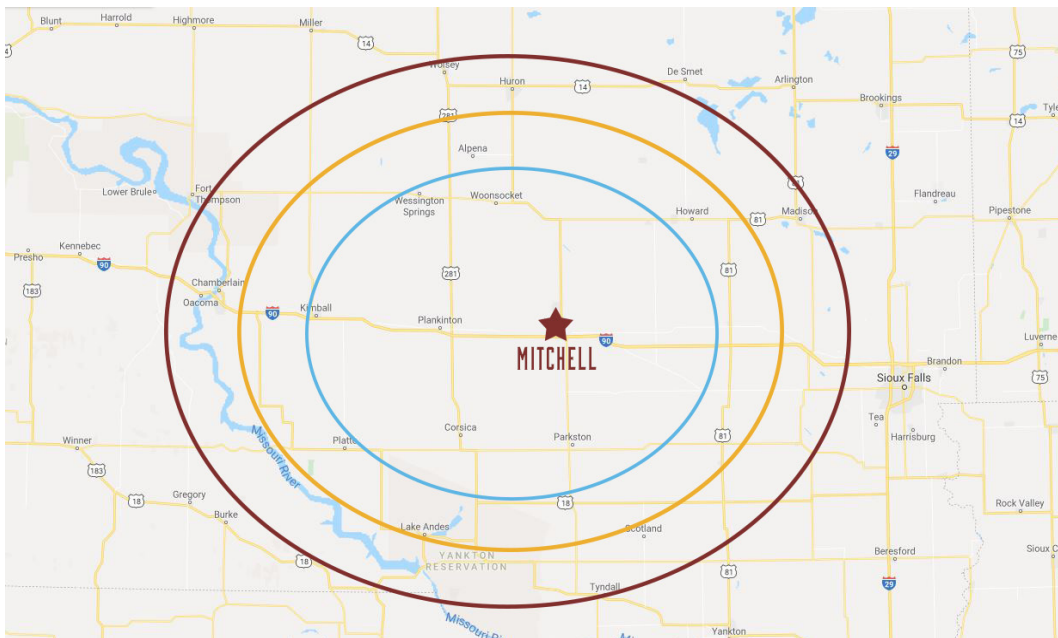


7.3 POSITION MITCHELL AS A REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CENTER

7.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF MITCHELL AS A REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Mitchell community has all the ingredients to position itself as a regional leadership center; in many ways it already has. Community members are enthusiastic about the city's potential and have expressed a keen desire to communicate its successes. Regional leadership will require significant collaboration and communication across the community. During the strategic planning process, a joint Boards meeting of area organizations was held to assess the appetite for collaboration and to plan how the collaboration should look. Participants overwhelmingly supported the idea of establishing an overarching coordinating committee that would shepherd the implementation of the new Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan. The group agreed to meet quarterly to involve the City and to report on progress. It was also recommended that Task Forces be formed for each strategic pillar of the plan.

The community's stated desire to become a regional leadership center will require significant collaborative initiatives by community leadership.



“One of the biggest opportunities Mitchell has in the next 10 years is to grow as a regional hub for industry, entertainment, and resources.”

– Community Survey Respondent



VALUE TO RESIDENTS:

- The community of Mitchell's secret sauce is that it is both small enough and big enough to take advantage of its nimbleness. This ability to act quickly is an asset to the execution of community planning.
- Survey results indicate that community members have a keen desire to expand the community's reach by assuming a more regional leadership position in the State. By taking on this role, the community will make the pivot to establishing itself as a more outward looking community.

7.3.2 KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. Leverage Mitchell's geographic location to become a major 'Destination Location'

Mitchell's centralized and well-connected transportation systems (highway, air and rail) to the State of South Dakota and beyond provides the City with easy accessibility. The community of Mitchell has the opportunity to leverage this accessibility by adopting steps to become a 'Destination Location' by promoting its logistical and hosting capabilities.

2. Aggressively promote Mitchell's unique brand across the State and region

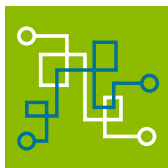
The community of Mitchell has a reputation for providing a high quality of life for its residents. Praise for its value proposition – the unique small-town feel, easy accessibility with quality of life amenities was expressed repeatedly during the engagement process. A key step in becoming a 'Destination Location' is a community's ability to market itself with clear consistent messaging. The community recently underwent a branding initiative and it can now expand that effort to build the its brand, reputation and heft by promoting its strengths at local, regional and State levels.

3. Attract innovative programs, services and funding to Mitchell

Building on the community's educational assets, geographic location and strong technology and agricultural sectors, Mitchell is positioned well to develop programs and services that attract innovation. Incentives can be provided for start-ups and innovators, and support networks can be built through area business leadership.

4. Provide thought-leadership on important regional and State topics

Mitchell has demonstrated its ability to provide significant prominence and leadership as a regional center. The community's current niche is in hosting events like special Olympics and other youth sporting events. Mitchell has a good volunteer support system and has invested in youth sports facilities to support consistent demand. The community should pursue this leadership strength to establish its seat at the table by expanding on this capacity to grow its sporting events into upper regional and statewide events and by focusing on the conference market. With easy accessibility and good hotel capacity, key issues will be marketing the community's amenities and outreach to new statewide organizations..



FutureInsight

FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Mitchell's ability to become a regional leadership center will be dependent on the community's ability to transform itself into an inclusive and welcoming community.
- The trend to online retail has emptied many storefronts. Mitchell can counteract this trend by providing incentives to repurpose buildings into innovation hubs.

The following bullet-points are ideas and actions that emerged during the community engagement process.

2019

7.3.3 COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

1. **Leverage Mitchell's geographic location to become a major 'Destination Location'**
 - Become a logistical hub for industries
 - Build a symbiotic relationship with Sioux Falls
 - Expand niche retail
 - Develop Mitchell as a regional trade center for Ag
2. **Aggressively promote Mitchell's unique brand across the State and region**
 - Leverage the community's technology sector to create statewide connections
 - Build community understanding of Mitchell's strengths
 - Highlight the community's livability, uniqueness and quality of life amenities in external promotional activities
 - Integrate high tech/smart technologies/green building in any redevelopment plans
3. **Attract innovative programs, services and funding to Mitchell**
 - Position the community as a health service center and develop E-Health services
 - Develop the community's Ag research opportunities for local business attraction
 - Establish an economic development subcommittee that plans ways to leverage DakotaFest as an economic development tool for the community
 - Provide incentives to attract start-ups and innovators to Mitchell
 - Promote the community as a 'gig hub' for new businesses
 - Incorporate environmental stewardship into programs and development
4. **Provide thought-leadership on important regional and State topics**
 - Continue to develop and expand Mitchell's hosting of local, regional and statewide activities and conferences
 - Expand on messaging that attracts conferences and events to the community of Mitchell
 - Leverage DakotaFest as a business attraction mechanism

2040



FIRST STEPS

Establish a Task Force responsible for carrying forward the planning and actions for this strategic pillar. Initial actions could include convening on a monthly basis to plan action steps and to report back on progress made.



CURRENT EXAMPLES

- 2015 Top 7 intelligent community designation
- Education K-12 and post-secondary opportunities
- Opening up to new types of sports (esports)



USEFUL RESOURCES

- U.S. Economic Development Association <https://www.eda.gov/oie/>
- USD Discovery District <http://www.usddiscovery.com>

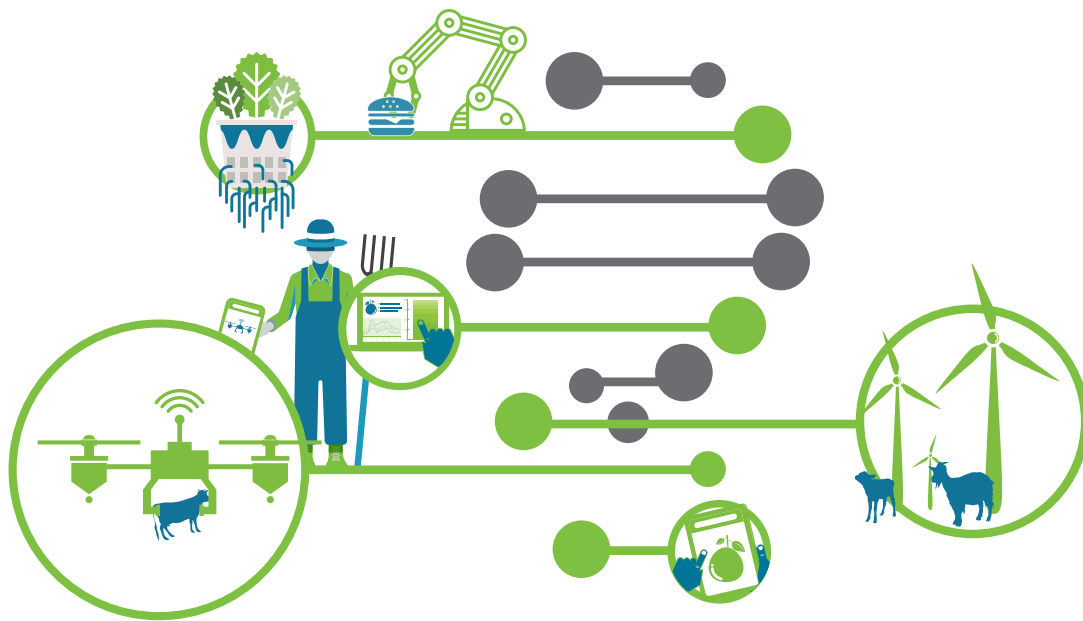


7.4 STRENGTHEN THE TECHNOLOGY, AGRICULTURE AND OTHER INDUSTRY CLUSTERS IN AND AROUND MITCHELL

7.4.1 IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY, AGRICULTURE AND OTHER INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Agriculture has long been a backbone to the Mitchell area economy, and is an industry that contributes to the employment, culture and fabric of the community. Technology has also become a critical economic sector, creating an abundance of well-paid high-skill jobs. As a significant regional service center, Mitchell has been able to draw in population and businesses from surrounding areas, creating a critical mass. Mitchell has also demonstrated the ability to be a competitive location for other industry clusters, including education, manufacturing, construction and recreation. Over the next decade, Mitchell will need to remain adept at applying technological innovation across all industries, to ensure it remains competitive and relevant.

Mitchell has demonstrated an ability to evolve and adapt its economy to changing trends. Technology will evolve rapidly and become more important in society. Mitchell is well placed to capitalize on this evolution.



“I love how we are recognized as an intelligent community and I feel like we have many up and coming technology backed companies that are making a real impact not only in South Dakota but around the country.”

- Community survey respondent



VALUE TO RESIDENTS:

- The technology cluster drives significant employment and economic activity. This important cluster helps in creating high paying jobs and locally owned businesses.
- Mitchell residents enjoy the benefits of an economy and service concentration that is part of being a regional service center. Continuing to invest and grow the local economy provides positive impacts for all aspects of the community.

7.4.2 KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. Diversify and intensify Mitchell's technology and agricultural sectors

The Mitchell economy now supports a critical intensity and cluster of key industries associated with agricultural and technology sectors. This is supported by institutional programs and major industry events. During the visioning process, people expressed a desire to deepen and grow the traditional industries of agriculture, service and tourism, as well as explore new emerging opportunities. Particular focus should be given to deepen and grow innovation around these core agricultural and technology clusters.

2. Build Mitchell's capacity to support emerging industry hubs

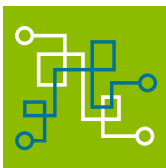
In addition to the established industry clusters, Mitchell also represents an ideal central location for other industry types such as construction, logistics and transport. The location on the interstate, and its geographic position within the state means it is the ideal service center for the eastern half of South Dakota. Economic development should target several high potential additional clusters, including commercial and residential construction and transport industries.

3. Create strong industry ecosystems that drive knowledge-sharing and innovation

The school district, Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU), Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI), the City of Mitchell, Chamber of Commerce and the Mitchell Area Development Corporation represent six of the strongest institutions in the community. Continued collaboration among these institutions will be key in shaping the community and building critical infrastructure. During the engagement phase, a joint meeting of community boards was held to garner support for the strategic action plan. This group of community leaders committed to meeting on a quarterly basis to help implement the strategies and share information on progress. This is an example of new partnerships that can be encouraged.

4. Foster entrepreneurship and start-up businesses

There was a strong focus on emerging opportunities in the visioning process. Mitchell has the potential to create a strong home-grown culture of entrepreneurial business start-ups. There are a number of local innovators who have helped drive the local manufacturing economy. Coupling the educational, college and university students with these innovative businesses and business leaders could help ferment more of the home-grown innovation. This could be developed into a very interesting local entrepreneurial environment, and especially by connecting youth and students with innovative workplaces.



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Mitchell has the potential to be an innovative and robust technology service center for the surrounding agricultural cluster, particularly supporting technology application.
- Mitchell offers a viable alternative to the Sioux Falls location, with a smaller community environment to attract businesses that match the local economy.

FutureInsight

The following bullet-points are ideas and actions that emerged during the community engagement process.

2019

7.4.3 COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

1. Diversify and intensify Mitchell's technology and agricultural sectors

- Build partnerships with Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU)/Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) to increase training programs that supply the Ag and technology area businesses with needed skillsets
- Increase housing options to support industry needs
- Support the expansion of the technology cluster and businesses, and strongly link to educational institutions to ensure continued available skilled workforce.
- Create an Ag group that will meet to address companies needs with respect to visa regulations and assimilation issues of immigrant workers in the community
- Incentivize renewable energy systems and businesses
- Develop agritourism opportunities
- Support MTI's initiative for a new Ag building

2. Build Mitchell's capacity to support emerging industry hubs

- Expand Mitchell's healthcare industry with a focus on building and expanding Mitchell's current E-Medicine programs
- Develop niche retail opportunities in Mitchell
- Initiate industry sector focus groups to foster collaboration and communication and align business, workforce and skillset needs

3. Create strong industry ecosystems that drive knowledge-sharing and innovation

- Formalize the Mitchell board leadership group and facilitate meetings on a quarterly basis
- Build greater connections between the educational institutions and the industry innovators in the Mitchell area.
- Develop and communicate local, regional and global business trends and foresight information – to help identify emerging opportunities.

4. Foster entrepreneurship and start-up businesses

- Repurpose old buildings/mall space to encourage incubator/maker spaces and new businesses
- Provide incentives for start-ups and small businesses to locate downtown
- Create a mentorship program between existing and new businesses to provide support and guidance
- Establish a community garden in downtown Mitchell to encourage 'urban farming'

2040



FIRST STEPS

Establish a Task Force responsible for carrying forward the planning and actions for this strategic pillar. Initial actions could include convening on a monthly basis to plan action steps and to report back on progress made.



CURRENT EXAMPLES

- Ag tech programs at MTI
- Precision Ag
- Telemedicine
- Telcom and technology industries
- Expansion of industrial park



USEFUL RESOURCES

- Restaurant and retail incubator ideas <https://www.trinitygroves.com/about-us-2/>
- US Cluster Mapping http://www.clustermapping.us/region/state/south_dakota/subregions

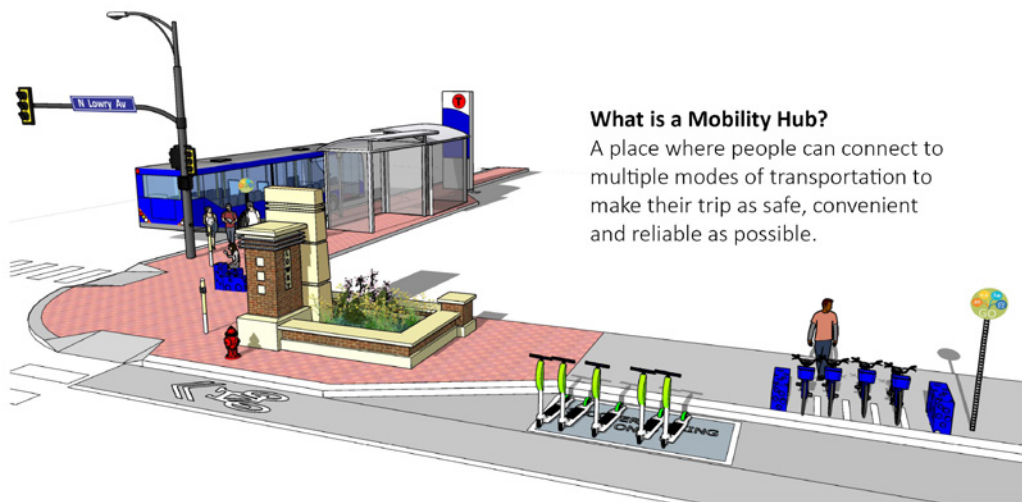


7.5 EVOLVE MITCHELL'S RECREATION, TOURISM AND PLACE-MAKING

7.5.1 IMPORTANCE OF MITCHELL'S RECREATION, TOURISM AND PLACE-MAKING

The emerging trend of urban growth is occurring across the country. This growth is providing a tremendous opportunity for cities to focus on quality of life amenities and to revitalize aging infrastructure by creating new environments that incorporate innovative technologies and practices into their development trajectory. Growing communities like Mitchell are engaging in “Place-making” that focuses on three areas in particular: streets and circulation, open spaces, and buildings and land use. Key place-making characteristics include walkability, connectivity, a multi-layered public realm, diverse mix of choices (especially in the area of recreation), and authenticity. (Saving our Suburbs, Jason Beske, AICP) Much of Mitchell's organic growth is occurring around interstate I-90. City planners understand that it will be important to create a seamless flow from the interstate area to the downtown so that the two areas don't grow apart, and current efforts such as the Burr Street upgrades prove such steps are under way.

New technologies bring the potential for positive transformation, especially in the ability to improve overall health and wellbeing of community members by creating more supportive and connected environments.



What is a Mobility Hub?

A place where people can connect to multiple modes of transportation to make their trip as safe, convenient and reliable as possible.

A rendering of a mobility hub. | Credit: City of Minneapolis

“It's a crucial time for Mitchell to dig deep and embrace what so many of us love about our city. We are a small town, we know and take care of our neighbors. We need to get the lake cleaned, build a new high school, and continue doing projects that make it feel like we care about our city. That's what attracts businesses and employees to those businesses.”

– Community Survey Respondent



VALUE TO RESIDENTS

- One significant emergent trend in many cities is the repurposing of old retail areas as more integrated community hubs, encompassing services such as lifestyle and exercise centers, government services, community libraries and educational facilities.
- Mitchell's current community amenities serve as a solid foundation for future development. As made clear during the planning process, necessary components will be access to information and usability by more diverse users.



7.5.2 KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

1. Build-out multimodal infrastructure across Mitchell

Connectivity of all types brings people together in a community. Current trends show that connectivity around mobility and transportation are highly valued by community members. The community has already begun such initiatives, the most recent being the Parks & Recreation Board approval of a bike trail map connecting Lake Mitchell to downtown to Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU) to the interstate area (awaiting Council approval). Continuing these initiatives will make the community very attractive to all cohort ages.

2. Clean up the Lake, revitalize the downtown and celebrate the Corn Palace

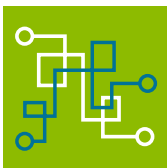
The Corn Palace is a wonderfully renowned resource for the community of Mitchell. As a tourism attraction, the Palace brings thousands of visitors each year to the community and serves as a sports facility, music venue and meeting place. The community is currently undertaking significant efforts to clean the lake and to redevelop the downtown area. Beautification efforts to improve the aesthetic and infrastructural aspects of the downtown and entry corridors will serve to return a sense of vibrancy, activity and connectivity to these areas.

3. Position Mitchell as the premier center-state location for sports and recreation

Mitchell already serves as a significant host for regional sporting events. The purpose of this strategic action step is to build on this strength in the tourism industry, and to position the community as the 'center-State' destination location for State sporting events and recreation. This will involve significant outreach and messaging not only to statewide sporting associations, but also to a variety of entertainment entities.

4. Develop and promote unique and authentic 'Mitchell experiences'

Mitchell is a truly unique community, with some fascinating and even quirky features. The Corn Palace provides the anchor for this reputation, and the central location for unique events and festivals. In addition, the Mitchell area has great recreational opportunities which can also be leveraged. Focus should be given to creating, enhancing and promoting unique and authentic aspects that can't be found anywhere else. This could extend to local food systems, recreation events and celebrations.



Future**Insight**

FUTURE INSIGHTS

- Recent trends have included an increasing desire for nostalgia. Mitchell could capitalize on the gravitational element of the downtown to incorporate this theme, including the history of the Corn Palace.
- Evolving the community's recreation, tourism and place-making will require a delicate balance of community needs. This will require clear and consistent communications from community leadership as the strategic plan is carried out.

2019

The following bullet-points are ideas and actions that emerged during the community engagement process.

7.5.3 COMMUNITY ACTION IDEAS

1. Build-out multimodal infrastructure across Mitchell

- Build on the proposed bike plan to further connect Lake Mitchell to City to Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU)/Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) with bike/E-transportation trails, pathways and transportation hubs
- Increase connections from the interstate to downtown
- Expand installation of bike and hiking maps and informational signs along trails and pathways beyond Lake Mitchell
- Change street directions to improve visitor experience and access to downtown
- Adopt a neighborhood approach to community planning
- Ensure that all areas of the community grow together, not apart (i.e. Interstate and downtown areas)

2. Clean up the Lake, revitalize the downtown and celebrate the Corn Palace

- Continue investment in Main Street beautification and streetscaping beyond the 2021-2022 planning phase
- Repurpose downtown buildings and malls (include service hubs)
- Develop Lake Mitchell
- Establish additional 'entry points' to Mitchell with wayfinding (as in process on Burr Street)
- Build the diversity of 'quality of life' offerings in the community

3. Position Mitchell as the premier 'center-State' destination location for sports and recreation

- Invest in field maintenance and advertise statewide of their availability for use
- Update the Mitchell Recreation Center and expand hours
- Encourage hotel development near or on Main Street with walkability to the downtown
- Diversify entertainment options for all ages

4. Develop and promote unique and authentic 'Mitchell experiences'

- Expand and rethink transportation options including mobility hubs throughout the community
- Explore business opportunities for building telecommuting options for Mitchell residents
- Increase innovative eating establishments building off of the readily available fresh produce in and around Mitchell (farm to table)
- Invest in the Corn Palace's capacity to serve as a library/'living museum' of agricultural history
- Encourage the incorporation of art, modernization and preservation of historical factors when redeveloping spaces

2040



FIRST STEPS

Establish a Task Force responsible for carrying forward the planning and actions for this strategic pillar. Initial actions could include convening on a monthly basis to plan action steps and to report back on progress made.



CURRENT EXAMPLES

- Solid connectivity infrastructure
- Development of quality of life areas – indoor pool
- Cleaning Lake Mitchell
- The Performing Arts Center and Recreation Center
- Burr Street development



USEFUL RESOURCES

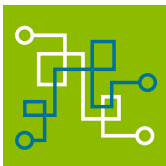
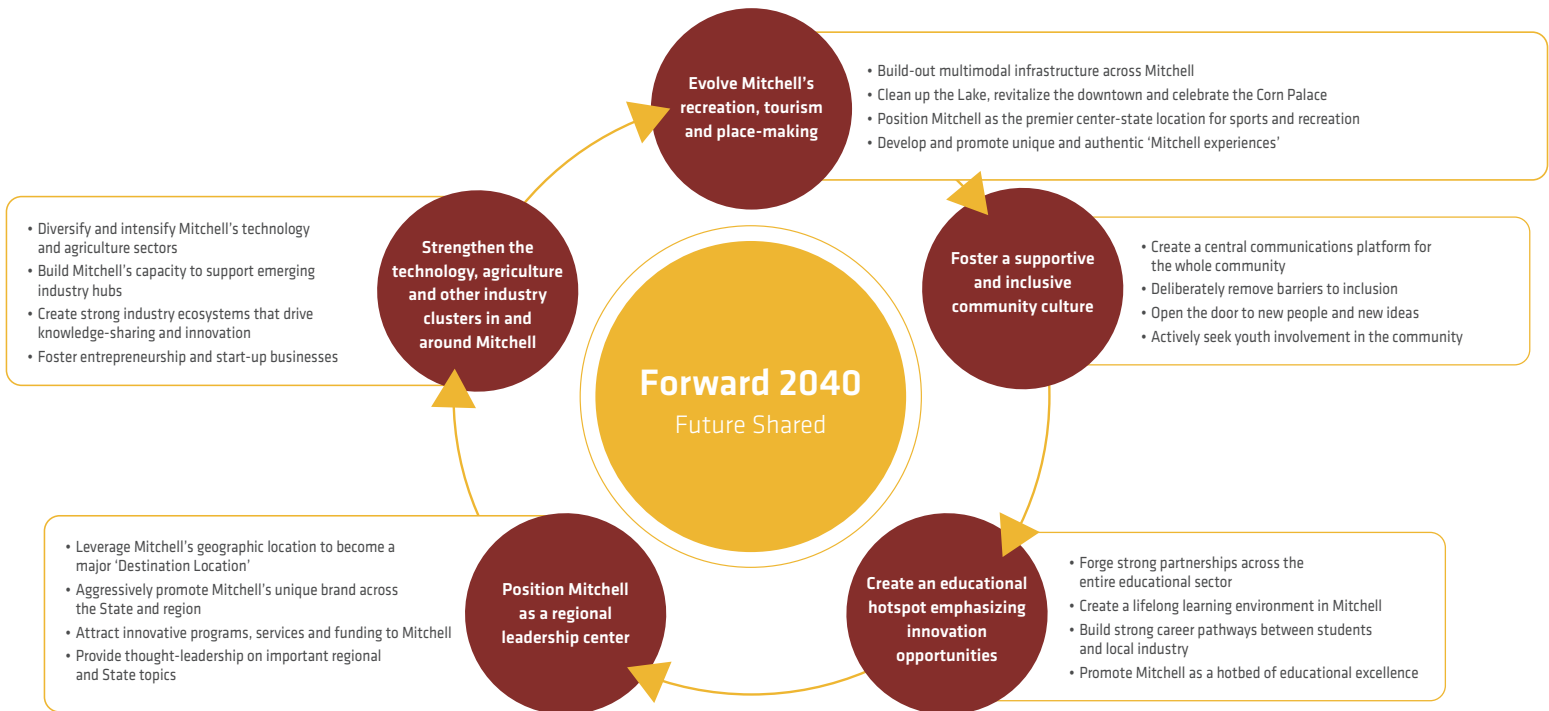
- Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking <https://www.brookings.edu/center/anne-t-and-robert-m-bass-center-for-transformative-placemaking/>
- South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development <https://sdreadytowork.com/build-your-business/transportation-infrastructure/>



Community members have worked hard during the planning process to identify steps needed to remain forward looking and innovative, while not losing touch with the underlying core values that create the unique Mitchell experience that many people treasure.

8.0 COMBINED STRATEGIC ACTION FRAMEWORK

The Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan provides a framework to apply best practice to the key areas of focus in the community. Taken in total, the framework creates a compelling collection of strategic actions broken out into key strategic areas and community action ideas.



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Mitchell has proved to be a unique community that is wrestling with the big questions about its future evolution. Forward 2040 has allowed the community to find the 'sweet spot' of balancing future innovation and protecting traditional strengths and values.

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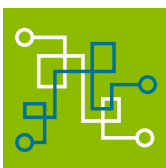
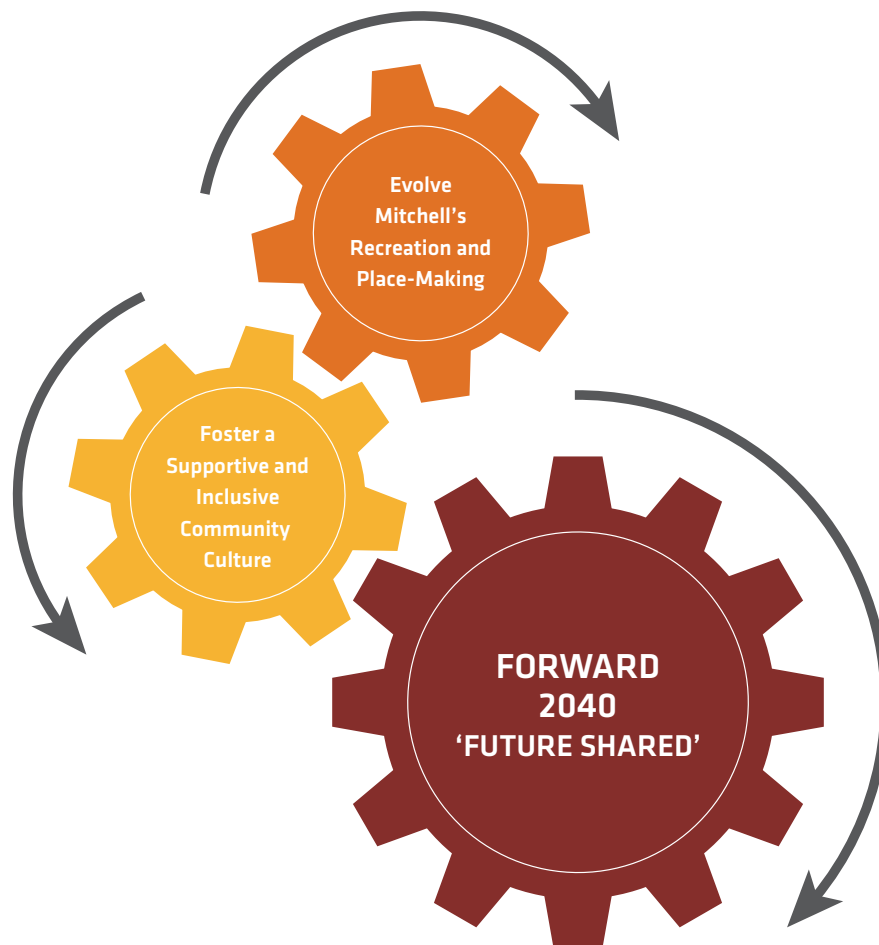
- The community's strategic pillars provide areas for both significant institutional innovation and the deepening of already identified strengths in the areas of education, technology and industry cluster development.

8.1 DYNAMIC SYSTEMS-THINKING APPROACH

The Strategic Pillars Framework lays out the key strategic action areas and specific suggested community action ideas to lead the community to its preferred future scenario, 'Future Shared'. At the same time, it is very potent to think of this in a dynamic systems-thinking approach. Each part of the approach needs to enable and empower the other elements. For example, a focus on fostering a supportive and inclusive community culture will provide a welcoming environment for new people moving to the area, using community facilities to recreate, or investing in new business in the community. New investments in the community will strengthen the development of industry clusters and help to position Mitchell as a regional leadership center for those clusters. In a dynamic systems thinking approach, all of the strategic pillars work together to propel the community in the direction of its preferred future.

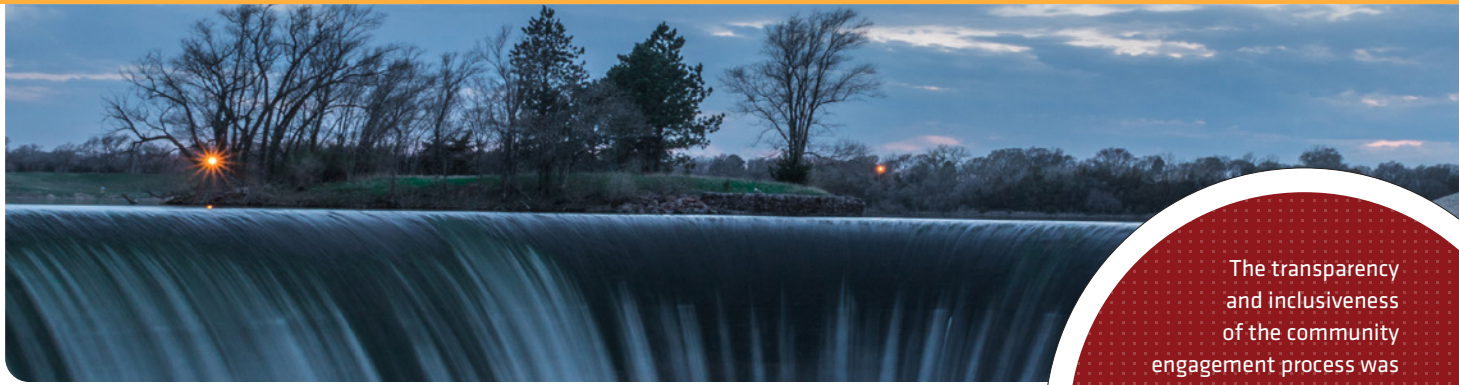
The strategic pillars operate in a dynamic systems thinking approach. Each pillar enables and empowers the other as the community works to attain its preferred future.

GEARING UP FOR 2040



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- It was evident during the planning process, that community members place high value on organizational collaboration within the city. This collaborative instinct will help the community take the actions necessary to implement its strategic action plan.
- The interdependent nature of a strategic action plan's pillars creates a unique dynamic interaction that allows for flexibility and adjustment as the plan is implemented.



The transparency and inclusiveness of the community engagement process was notable. This was seen as an important step towards fostering a supportive and inclusive community culture and should continue to guide city and planning efforts.

9.0 IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

The Forward 2040 visioning and strategic planning process has produced the following outcomes:

- Documented a detailed understanding of the community's views across a range of important topics and future shaping factors.
- Allowed for a detailed examination of plausible future scenarios, explored expected and preferred futures, and built an understanding of the implications of future options.
- Through extensive community engagement, identified and coalesced support around a shared vision for the future.
- Identified key strategic pillars, action areas and community action ideas.
- Begun the process of prioritizing actions and sequencing these into a broadly defined 'roadmap to the future'.

This work has been built on open and transparent public participation and thoughtful and constructive dialogue. The vision looks out to year 2040 and the roadmap lays out a pathway. Now the next phase of work needs to begin. The following institutional next steps are recommended:

- **Consideration and endorsement** of the Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan by the City Council.
- **Consideration and endorsement** of the Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan by the Mitchell Area Development Corporation, Mitchell Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, Mitchell Technical Institute, Dakota Wesleyan University, and Mitchell Main Street and Beyond.
- **Establish an overarching coordinating committee** that would draw in key community organizations to oversee the implementation of the Forward 2040 Community Strategic Action Plan, including the oversight of a Task Force for each strategic pillar.
- Set up a **Task Force for each strategic pillar** to carry forward and recommend implementation steps for the strategic pillar's key strategic action areas.
- **Establish a regular process** to provide quarterly progress updates to the community on the strategic pillars and action.

10.0 DESIGNING A ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

The Forward 2040 visioning process collected many great ideas for action. During the process, community members were asked about their perceived sense of urgency for implementation and priorities. Key points to note include:

- Community members identified the creation of a supportive and inclusive community culture as the number one priority
- There was a preference for a methodical and planned approach. The use of an overarching coordinating committee as well as a Task Force for each strategic pillar was identified as the preferred approach.

The following roadmap lays out a possible high-level sequencing of actions, but this should be further developed by the task force groups.

Suggested roadmap and timeline



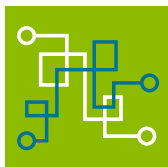
10.1 KEY METRICS TO MEASURE FUTURE SUCCESS

Understanding and measuring progress will be an important part of implementing the Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan. The measures should address the plan's action areas and include leading and lagging indicators. Used correctly, such metrics can provide a powerful feedback loop to understanding the effectiveness of investment in programs and identify emerging gaps. The following metrics can be built around the five key strategic pillars of the plan:

- Increased sense of a supportive and inclusive community environment
- New opportunities for youth and young professionals
- Increase in younger demographic within Mitchell
- Availability of additional housing options appealing to mixed demographics
- Expanded educational opportunities for all ages
- Increased downtown use and business
- Expanded job opportunities for all cohorts
- Increased community communications and awareness programs
- Updated community infrastructure
- Repurposed blighted buildings
- Greater connectivity between the downtown and I-90 areas
- Increased tourist and visitor traffic
- Increased service collaboration among area nonprofit organizations
- Increased entrepreneurial and innovation opportunities for business
- Increased leadership involvement in regional activities

Using transparent metrics to measure progress helps the community understand key goals and objectives. The issue of the need for more communication was highlighted repeatedly during the visioning process.

This does not represent the entire list of recommended metrics but is intended to show the overall framework and concept. In developing and using such metrics, it is important to consider measurements over time. By comparing progress of the action areas at different points in time, the metrics will give an indication of the trajectory of that item. It is important to note that strategic action plans are 'living documents' specific to each community and that this plan requires not only alignment with past planning, but an in-depth look ahead to the continually evolving aspirations of community stakeholders for the future.



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FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Benchmarking Mitchell against its cohort group of communities helps to bring an objective perspective to issues such as housing prices, resource consumption and community success.
- By providing consistent report out on the progress of the community's strategic action plan initiatives, community leadership will instill confidence in the process.



10.2 OPPORTUNITY AND RISK ANALYSIS

Throughout the scenario planning process, participants explored those actions that could potentially drive the community towards or away from the preferred future identified in the visioning process. Although unforeseen events and opportunities may present themselves and cause readjustments along the way, the key to a successful strategic action plan will be avoiding the pitfalls of known steps that will take the city off the path to its preferred future. Combining input from the various engagement activities, below are some markers that may be used as the community follows its roadmap.

Mitchell community leadership has been given a definite mandate to initiate the changes needed to achieve the Preferred Future. Now is the time to build on this momentum and seize opportunities available to the community.

What will drive us TOWARDS the preferred future?

Following through on the community's new strategic action plan in a timely manner

Increased community communications about activities and opportunities for involvement

Building a common understanding of community priorities

New regional connections and collaboration

Education and communication about the shared vision for the community

Addition of events and programs that bring people into downtown Mitchell

Creating a culture of inclusion

Creation of additional jobs in the community

Deliberate initiatives to promote connectivity

Cluster development (Ag, Tech, Tourism)

Enhanced community aesthetics along key corridors and in gathering spaces

What will drive us AWAY from the preferred future?

Inaction; lack of engagement from leadership and community members

Ignore the need to foster a supportive and inclusive community culture

Poor communication by leadership to community members

Leadership pursuing self-interested agendas

Destructive internal competition among community groups

Actions taken without the Mitchell community vision in mind

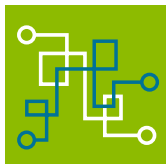
Lack of funding support for plan initiatives

Poor services development

Lack of organizational collaborations

Infrastructure deterioration

Incapacity of older leadership to transition to new leadership over time

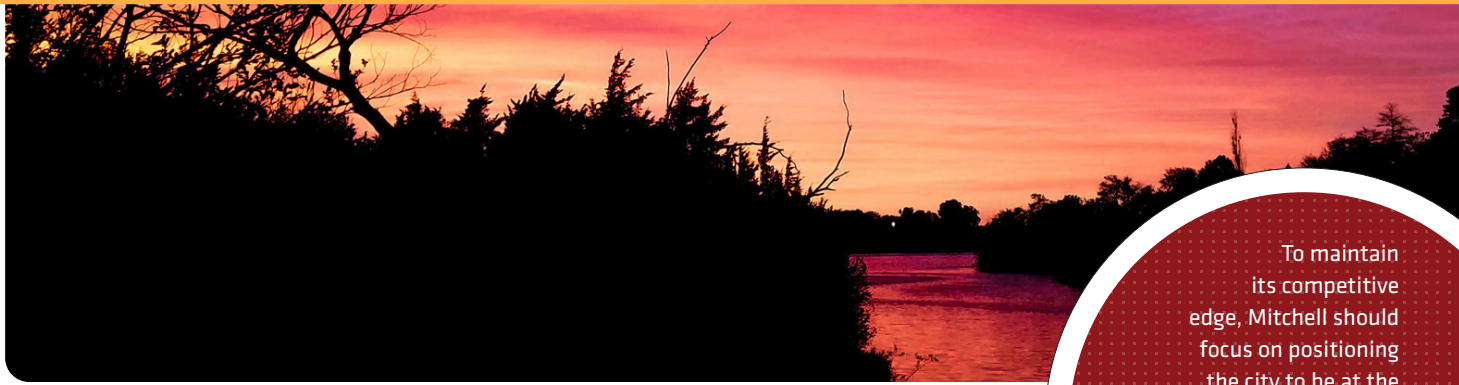


FUTURE INSIGHTS

- Key to success for the Forward 2040 Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan will be the continued collaboration among community leadership groups. The planning process elicited such commitment to collaboration and should be pursued.
- The priority by community members placed on creating a supportive and inclusive community culture cannot be underestimated and will be a critical factor in the community's roadmap to its preferred future.

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To maintain its competitive edge, Mitchell should focus on positioning the city to be at the forefront of technological advancements in the areas of telecommunications, delivery of rural health, transportation systems, and agriculture.

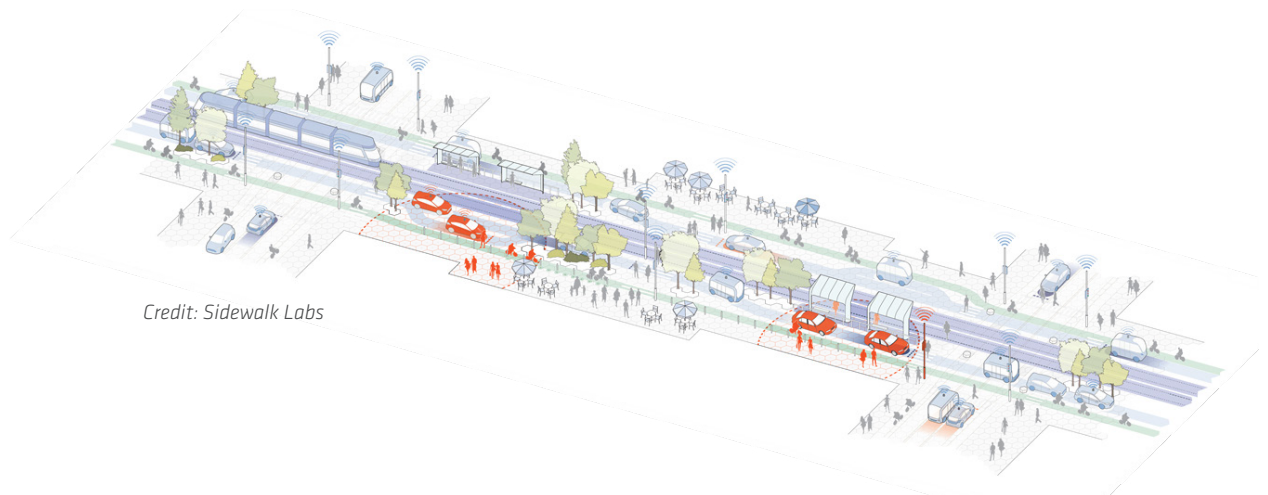
11.0 LOOKING AHEAD: IMPORTANT TOPICS FOR THE FUTURE

The topics and discussion presented in this section are the consultant's perspective and comments on what we believe are some important issues for the community of Mitchell.

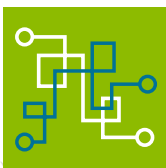
CONSULTANT'S PERSPECTIVE

11.1 THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

One of the defining features of the coming decades will be the accelerating speed of change and the impact of technology. The technological developments being ushered in by the new industrial revolution are predicted to be substantial and are driving many changes. In particular, the advent of technology associated with Smart Cities and place-making are bringing vast new opportunities and challenges. Mitchell's 2015 recognition as one of the 7 top smart cities in the country positions the city to be at the forefront of technological advancements, especially in the areas of transportation systems and farming equipment. From the consultant's perspective, how the community incorporates automation and autonomous vehicles will be critical to its downtown development and its reliance on interstate commerce.



Credit: Sidewalk Labs



FUTURE INSIGHTS

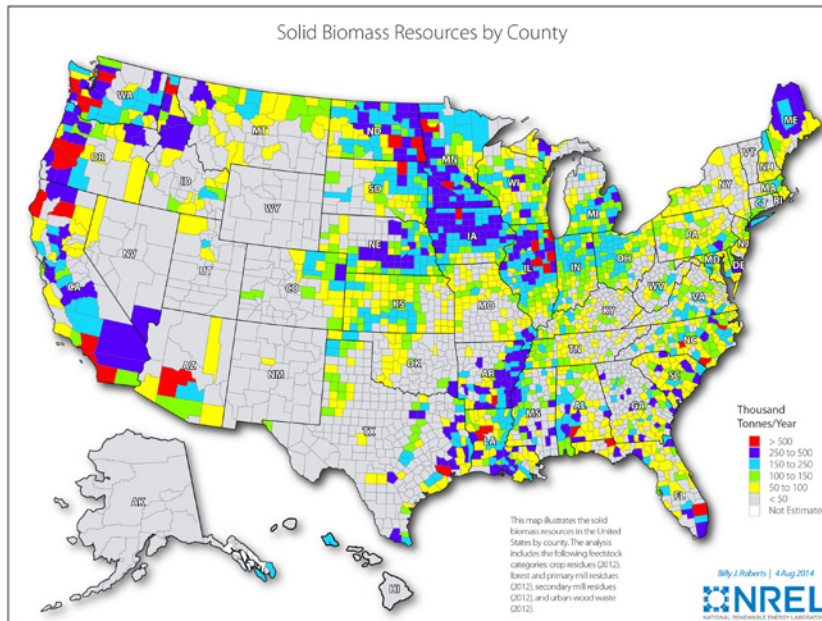
- The period between 2020 and 2040 will likely produce change at a faster rate than the previous 20 years. This speed of change may catch many public institutions and municipalities off guard, unless they develop the capacity for faster and better organized response.
- Mitchell community leadership entities should develop their own capacity for 'future intelligence'. This will help ensure that the community can remain an early adopter of promising trends and educate its community stakeholders about them.

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CONSULTANT'S PERSPECTIVE

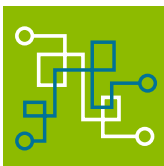
11.2 THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND MITCHELL'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Mitchell's agricultural sector has long been a driver in the community's economy. Our analysis points to enormous potential and change driven by the challenges of evolving consumer demand and for feeding the world. With a growing global population and the draining of many finite resources, the U.S. Midwest is positioned to become one of the leading dynamic areas in the production of food. The map below illustrates solid biomass resources by County in the United States (2014). From the consultant's perspective, these resources, along with the fact that the Midwest holds 20% of the world's freshwater resources, make the regional area an ideal place for the innovative sustainable development of the community's agricultural sector.



To find out more about the future of food, please see:

<http://future-iq.com/project/future-food-2016/>



FUTURE INSIGHTS

- Trends point to the growth and popularity of sustainable local food systems. With its deep roots in agriculture and its advanced technology capabilities, the community has the potential to become a leader in the development of this sector.

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- It is predicted that in the next two decades, global production zones for food will shift due to changing climate patterns. Because of its geographic location, Mitchell's agricultural economy has the potential to benefit greatly from these changes.



Mitchell's agricultural assets are critical to the regional economy. Combined with Mitchell's advanced technology assets and capabilities, the region has the opportunity to become a global leader in food industry innovation and production.

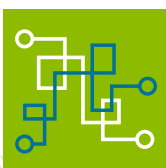
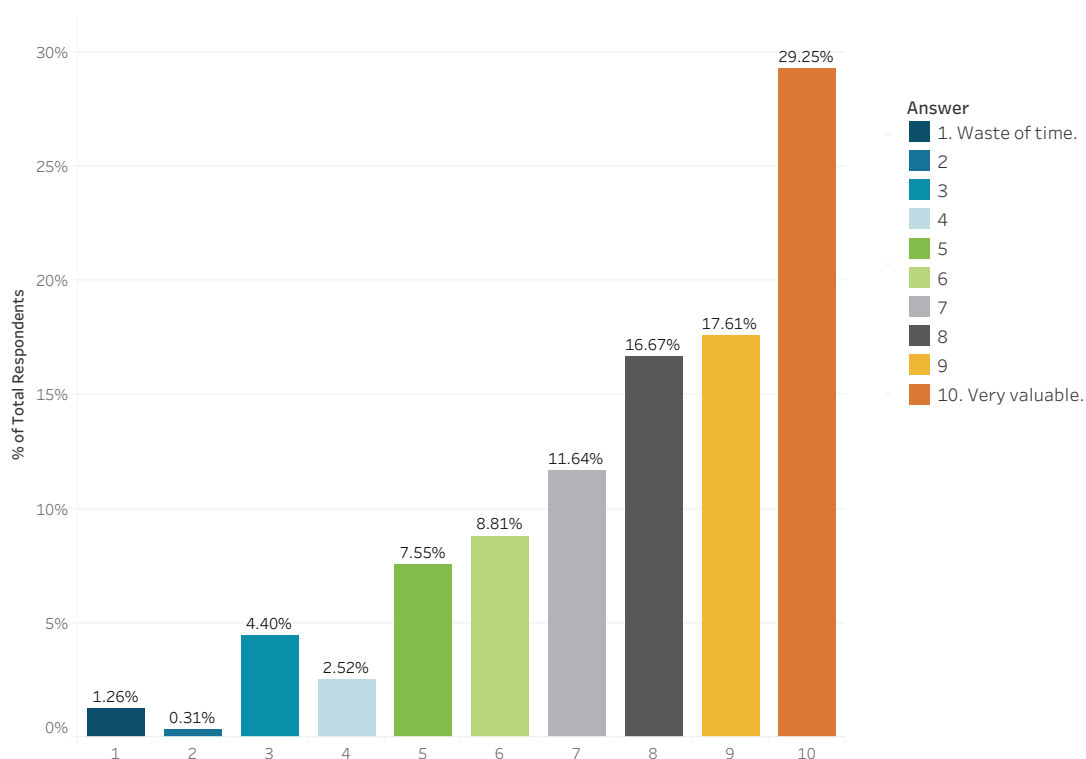


The community of Mitchell saw great value in the visioning process. It was notable that a significant number of people participated in several engagement sessions in order to understand the multiple viewpoints of community members.

12.0 VALUE OF THE VISIONING PROCESS

The Vision Survey and workshop participants were asked for their perspectives about the value of the visioning process. Results indicate there was a strong level of appreciation and perceived value in the visioning process. This matches the interest and enthusiasm shown by people in the various engagement workshops. It is important to understand the perceived value and interest as a reflection of public value in the process. Visioning processes can be time consuming, but a process that produces new insights about the future can be extremely beneficial to long-term planning efforts.

Value of the Visioning Process



FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- A vision frames the community's goals and priorities. It provides a check on strategic actions by providing the opportunity to assess whether the community goals are being met in ways that align with the vision and planning priorities.
- As cities evolve, there are significant 'future-splitting' issues that are yet to fully play out. The community of Mitchell will likely see many significant changes in society over the next 10 years.

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13.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Community stakeholders engaged in the visioning and strategic planning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest ensured the discussions about implementation and action steps were thoughtful, and the outcomes reflective of the community's perspectives. This dedication is reflective of the deep commitment Think-Tank participants have to the future of their community and local industries.

Future iQ would like to acknowledge the substantial time, coordination and direction for the project given by the following entities. Their outstanding support has been greatly appreciated:

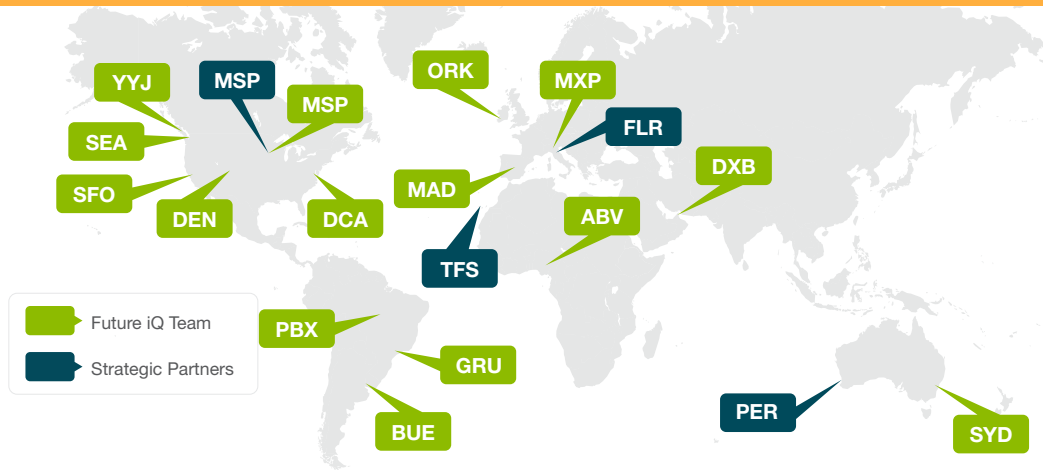
- City of Mitchell
- Mitchell Area Development Corporation
- Mitchell Chamber & Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Mitchell Main Street & Beyond
- Dakota Wesleyan University
- Mitchell School District
- Mitchell Technical Institute

Future iQ would also like to acknowledge the substantial support from Stephanie Ellwein, Sonya Moyer, and Mark Vaux for the significant time, guidance and effort put into the planning and execution of the Forward 2040 planning process. Also, special recognition and appreciation of Council Member Steve Rice's participation in both Think-Tank sessions, multiple engagement sessions and all of the focus group sessions.

Finally, and most importantly, we would like to recognize and thank the people of Mitchell for their commitment, energy and participation in this very valuable process.

The community stakeholders of Mitchell demonstrated exceptional commitment, energy and participation in this very valuable planning process.





14.0 ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist cities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects **visit** www.future-iq.com or by email at info@future-iq.com

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15.0 FOR MORE INFORMATION

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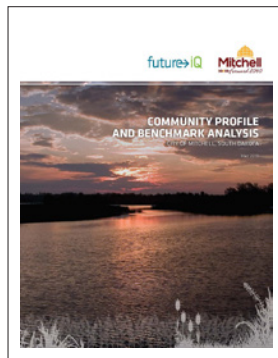
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Forward 2040
Think-Tank Workshop Report
March 2019



Community Profile and
Benchmark Analysis Report
May 2019



Forward 2040 Community
Vision and Strategic Action
Plan Report
November 2019

To access the Benchmark, Think-Tank and Strategic Action Plan reports, please visit:

<https://lab.future-iq.com/mitchell-forward-2040/>

