



CITY OF MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA
FORWARD 2040 THINK-TANK WORKSHOP REPORT

March 25, 2019



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This report summarizes the visioning and planning session held in Mitchell, South Dakota on March 25, 2019. Approximately 100 Mitchell community members and stakeholders participated in the Think-Tank and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of the City of Mitchell community vision and action planning process, which aims to develop a community vision and action plan that will guide City decision-making for the next five to ten years.

Report Prepared by:



Create **Future Intelligence**®

Workshop Hosted by:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Mitchell's Forward 2040 will be built on significant previous community studies and plans. Some highlights of current and recent work that will inform the City's visioning process include:

- Master Plan for Lake Mitchell
- Updated Comprehensive Plan
- Water quality study for Lake Mitchell
- Facility needs assessment for both the Water and Sewer utilities
- Master Plan for the Parks & Recreation Department
- Retail Retention/Expansion Study
- Housing Needs Study
- Community marketing branding studies
- Benchmark study of comparable communities across the United States

This scenario-based Think-Tank report summarizes the City of Mitchell visioning and planning workshop that took place on March 25, 2019. The Think-Tank Workshop was conducted as part of a project to develop a community vision and action plan for Mitchell that will guide City decision-making for the next five to ten years. The components of planning work thus far have included Community surveys, long-term Scenario Planning as part of the strategic visioning workshop, and discussion about preferred and expected futures.

- **Community Surveys** – A survey was sent to invited participants of the Think-Tank before the workshop. This input, along with assistance from Mitchell leadership, helped to create the axes of the scenario matrix and guide the Think-Tank discussions.
- **City of Mitchell Think-Tank** – The scenario-based planning Think-Tank held on March 25, 2019, provided an important opportunity to engage Mitchell community stakeholders in a critical dialogue about the future and impacts of changing dynamics in the City of Mitchell.

The Mitchell Think-Tank was an exciting opportunity for area community stakeholders to take a 'deep-dive' into community visioning through a scenario-planning process.





2.0 FORCES SHAPING THE FUTURE

The Think-Tank provided a forum for participants to explore the forces of change shaping the future of Mitchell. Before the Think-Tank, a community survey was conducted to gather insight into participants' perceptions of trends influencing their future, including the most significant perceived opportunities and threats facing the City.

The emerging macro trends represent both 'headwinds' and 'tailwinds' for the future of Mitchell.

2.1 MACRO TRENDS

Participants at the Think-Tank explored four areas of emerging macro trends and forces of change. Perceptions around the nature of impact of these trends, both in terms of size and timing of impact, were explored to gauge how important participants consider the trends. Participants discussed the emerging trends on global, regional and local scales, and related them directly to Mitchell in terms of how well prepared they considered themselves. Specifically, the trend areas were:

- Demographics, population and mass urbanization
- Changing macro-economics and societal values
- Energy, food, water and changing climate
- Technology, and the next industrial revolution

Of particular relevance to the discussion on trends is the speed and scale of change occurring. Newly developed innovations are being implemented globally and locally at all scales, thereby changing the face of industries and society in a rapid and profound way. Manufacturing is at the forefront of this transformation, but other industries are also quickly developing such as agriculture, health care, biomedical research, infrastructure, energy, transportation and mobility, shipping and logistics, food services, hospitality, financial services, and retail.

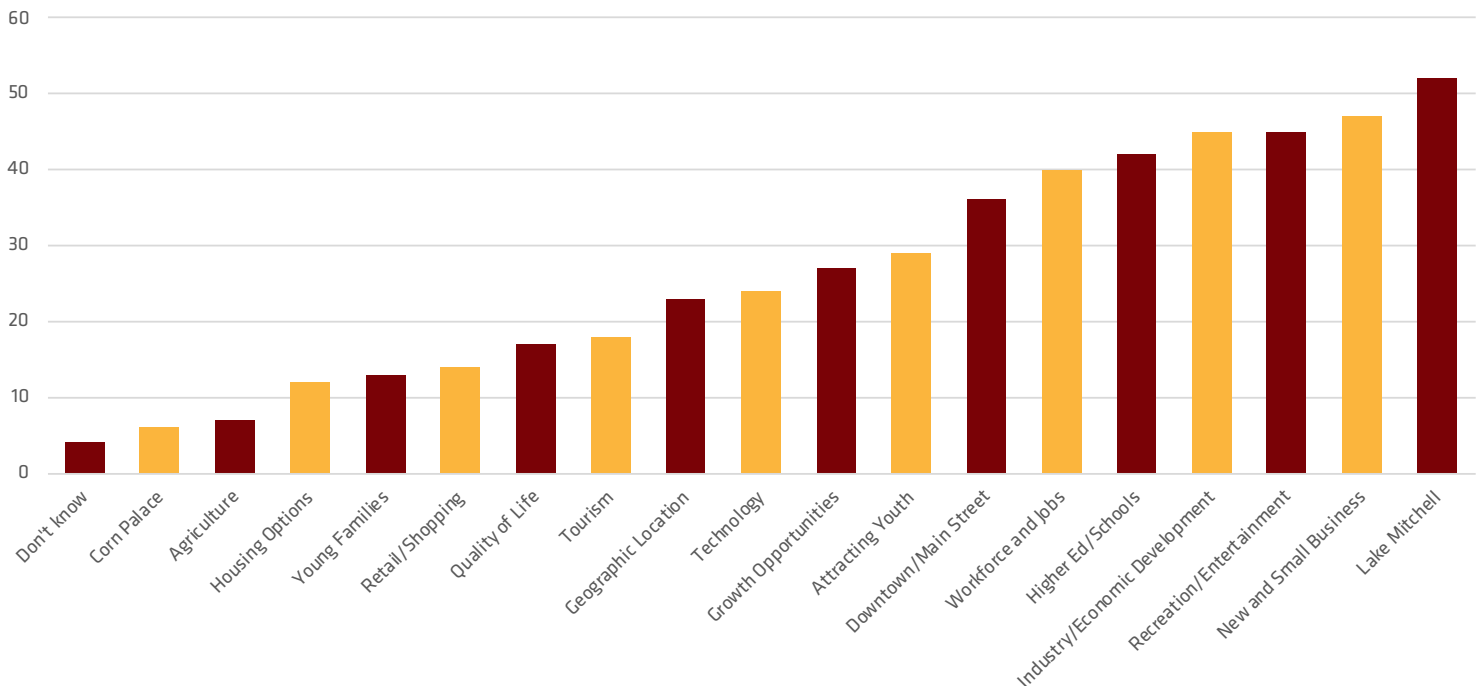


2.2 VIEWS OF THE FUTURE – OPPORTUNITIES FOR MITCHELL

In order to gauge where Mitchell should focus its efforts in leveraging resources, survey respondents were asked to describe in narrative form what they believed are the biggest opportunities for Mitchell over the next 10 years. Lake Mitchell, economic development, business, recreational growth and higher education ranked as the biggest opportunities.

In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to resiliency is the ability to anticipate change and remain agile.

What do you believe are the biggest opportunities for Mitchell over the next 10 years?



The community survey responses below indicate some of the respondents' perspectives on the biggest opportunities for Mitchell:

- *Keeping our graduates and youth here....The same old thing isn't cutting it anymore.*
- *Lots of opportunities for local business upstart and expansion, technological capabilities, multicultural opportunities, and hope of creating a cleaner Lake Mitchell.*
- *Growth and community improvement.*
- *Housing, education and employment competition.*
- *Development out by the lake and cleaning it up to draw in people especially recreational development – walking paths, etc.*



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHT:

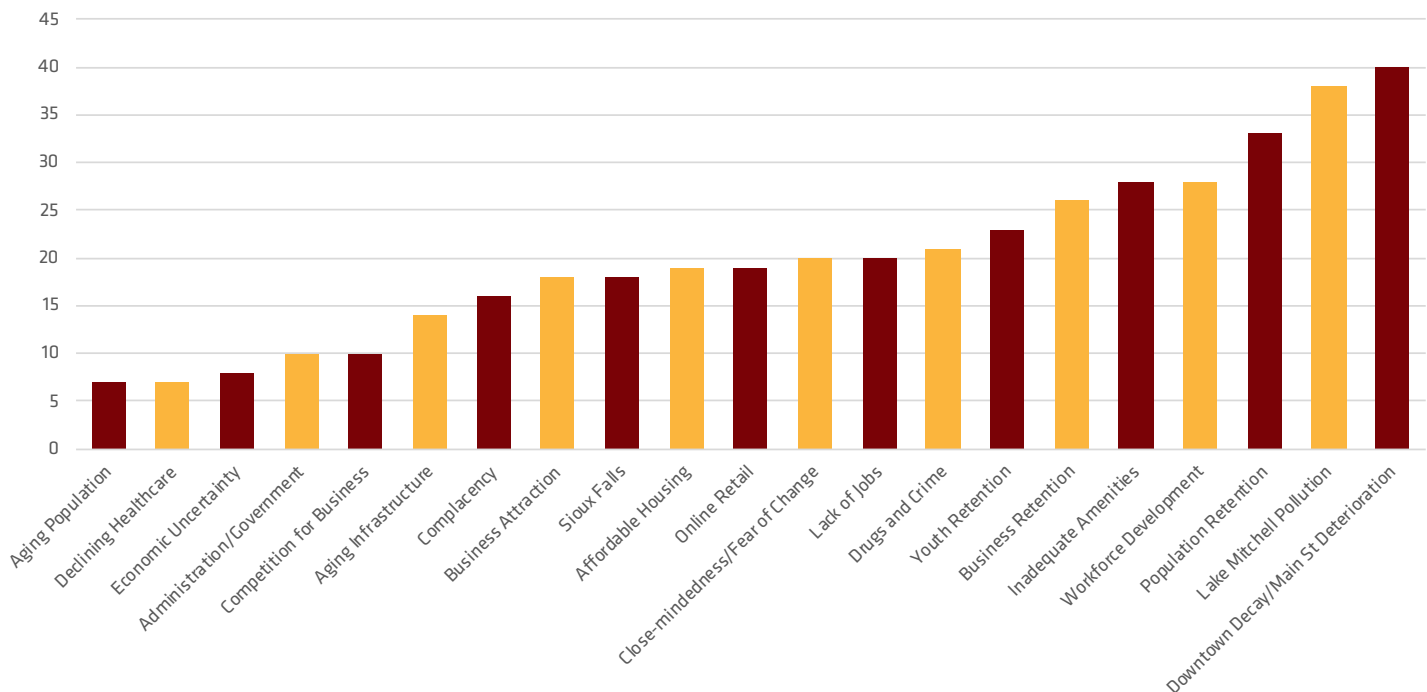
- Lake Mitchell is considered both the best opportunity and one of the biggest threats to the future of Mitchell. How the Lake is dealt with is seen as key to the success of Mitchell in the future.
- Higher education in Mitchell is considered one of the most significant long-term opportunities for the community, especially with its emphasis on life-long learning and support of local workforce needs.

2.3 VIEWS OF THE FUTURE – BIGGEST THREATS TO MITCHELL

As a measure where community members considered themselves unprepared or threatened by future impacts, survey respondents were asked to cite in narrative form, what they believe are the biggest threats facing Mitchell over the next 10 years. Initial results show considerable concern over downtown deterioration, population retention and workforce development, as well as the threat of Lake Mitchell pollution.

Education is often the key to overcoming perceived threats to a community.

What do you believe are the biggest threats for Mitchell over the next 10 years?



The community survey responses below indicate some of the respondents' perspectives on the biggest threats for Mitchell:

- *My biggest fear is that Mitchell will miss opportunities and stay as it is.*
- *Losing more businesses, more downtown buildings eroding.*
- *Wages and affordable housing.*
- *An aging main street and a dirty lake.*
- *Staying as we are. Not adapting to the changing environmental needs and not being inclusive to other regions or people moving to Mitchell from other regions.*



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHT:

- Complacency, close-mindedness and fear of change were cited as primary threats to Mitchell. This perspective was predominantly amongst a younger demographic and will be an issue to address in order to align thinking on progress in the community.
- Countering perceived threats to the community will take significant thought-leadership.



3.0 ASSESSING ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

The following attributes have been developed by Future iQ and adapted from numerous community indicators and workshop exercises.

1. **Evidence of strong community pride and inclusive culture**

Successful communities are often showplaces of care, attention, history and heritage. They celebrate their success and have a strong and positive local attitude and support a culture of risk taking and innovation. Diversity is often celebrated and people are welcomed.

2. **Invest in the future – built to last!**

People believe that something worth doing is worth doing right. In addition to the brick-and-mortar investments, all decisions are made with an outlook on the future. Expenditures are considered investments in the future, including investments in people.

3. **Participatory approach to community decision making**

Even the most powerful of opinion leaders seem to work toward building consensus. The stress is on working together toward a common goal and the focus is on positive results. People collaborate and share resources.

4. **Creatively build new economic opportunities**

Successful communities build on existing economic strengths in a realistic way; and explore new economic opportunities provided by the 'new economy'. They actively seek out new opportunities and ideas for new businesses.

5. **Support local businesses**

Local loyalty is emphasized, but thriving communities know who their competitors are and position themselves accordingly.

6. **Deliberate transition of power to new leaders**

People under 40 regularly hold key positions in civic and business affairs. Women (and people from 'minority groups') often hold positions as elected officials, plant managers, and entrepreneurial developers.

7. **Strong belief in and support for education**

Good schools are the norm and centers of community activity.

8. **Strong presence of traditional institutions that are integral to community life**

Churches, schools and service clubs are strong influences on community development and social activities.

9. **Willingness to seek help from the outside**

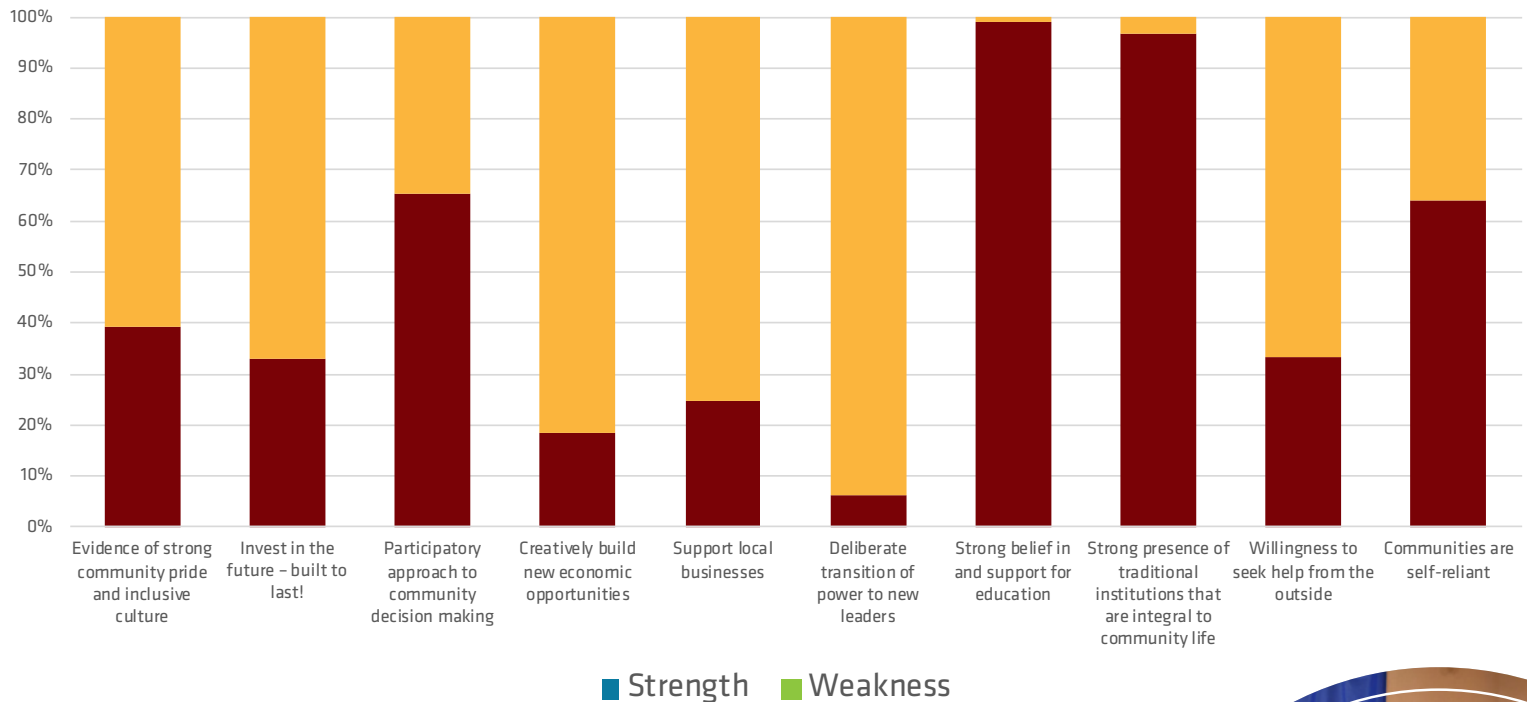
People seek outside help for community needs, and many compete for government grants and contracts for economic and social programs. They seek out the best ideas and new people to help build their community strengths.

10. **Communities are self-reliant**

There is a wide-held conviction that, in the long run, 'You Have to Do It Yourself'. Thriving rural communities believe their destiny is in their own hands. Making their communities good places is a pro-active assignment, and they willingly accept it.

Think-Tank participants discussed the top ten attributes in a large-group discussion. Participants then ranked each attribute as either a strong or weak attribute of Mitchell. This exercise was adapted from “The Heartland Centre for Leadership Development: 20 Clues to Rural Survival,” and was informed by The Arkleton Center for Rural Research through the Dynamics of Rural Areas (DORA).

Attributes of Successful Communities – City of Mitchell – March 2019



DataInsight

DATA INSIGHT:

- The issue of transition of power to new leaders is a key perceived weakness. This needs to be addressed in the planning process. Countering perceived threats to the community will take significant thought-leadership
- A number of the future orientated attributes (such as ‘Invest in the future’ and ‘Creatively build new economic opportunities’ show considerable weakness.



4.0 SCENARIO-BASED THINK-TANK

The City of Mitchell's Forward 2040 Think-Tank was conducted on March 25, 2019, at Dakota Wesleyan University. The workshop explored how the City of Mitchell would change by 2040 and consisted of:

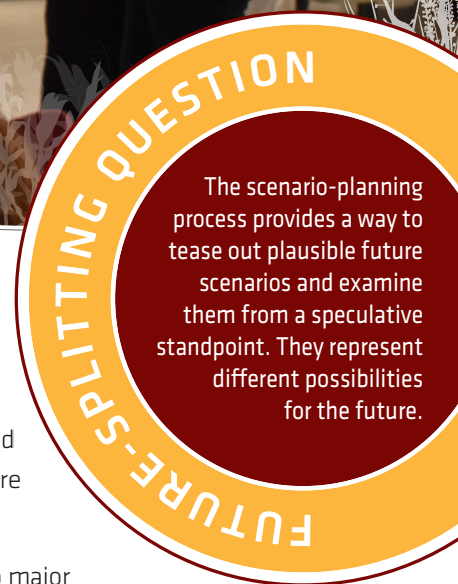
- A review of global trends and the impact of these trends on Mitchell
- Formulation of the different plausible scenario 'spaces' and development of detailed narratives and descriptions of each scenario
- Examination of the impact and consequences of each scenario on various aspects of community and economic development in Mitchell
- Identification of the preferred future and critical action steps to achieve the preferred future

The Think-Tank began with an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions before moving on to conduct scenario planning for the City of Mitchell. Future iQ's scenario planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and takes into consideration the implications of various future scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape the City of Mitchell looking out to 2040
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for the City
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of the community as perceived by the citizens

The scenarios developed during this Scenario Planning process and outlined in this report are important to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for the City of Mitchell. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key actions for the City and how various groups might best contribute to future developments.

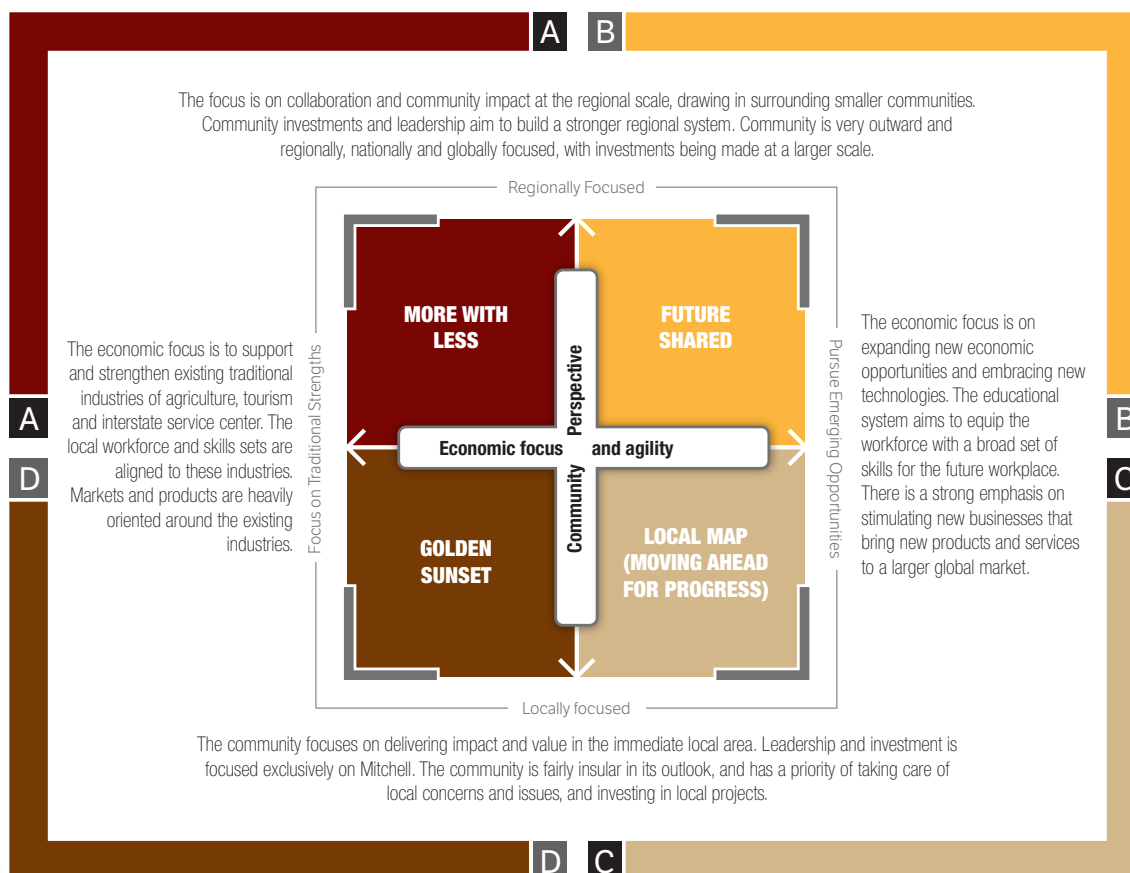




5.0 CREATING THE SCENARIO FRAMEWORK

Based on the preliminary results from the Community Survey, themes were identified to become the basis for two axes on the scenario matrix. The two axes identified were **Economic Focus and Agility** and **Community Perspective**.

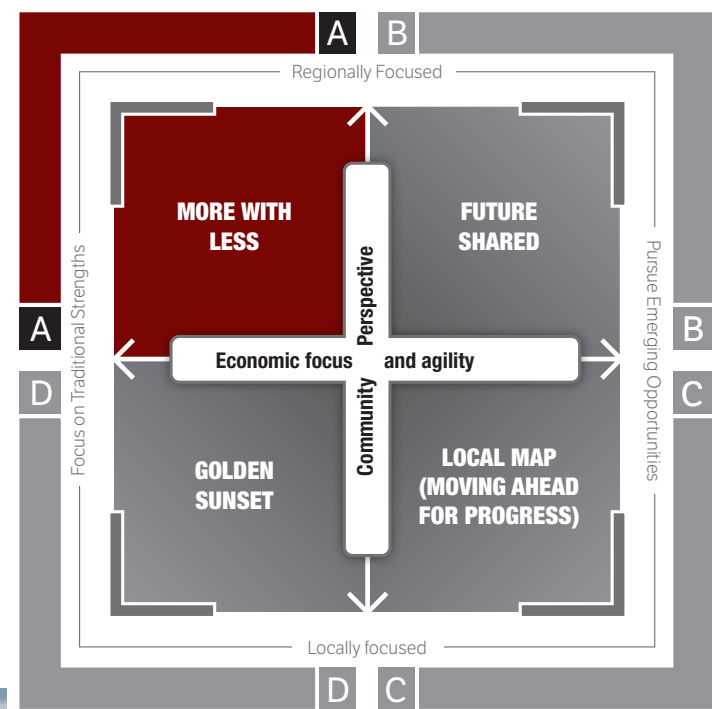
Think-Tank participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by the two major axes of 'Economic Focus and Agility' and 'Community Perspective' (see diagram). Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each driver axis. Participants were divided into four groups to develop a narrative for each scenario. Each group was asked to describe the characteristics of Mitchell in 2040 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given. After the characteristics were established, Think-Tank participants were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2020, 2030, and 2040, and to give their scenario a descriptive name. Narratives and descriptions of each scenario as developed by the workshop participants are included in the following sections.





5.1 SCENARIO A: MORE WITH LESS

This scenario forecasts a future where the traditional local industries of agriculture, tourism and the interstate service center are key pillars of the economy. Regional collaboration and global partnerships increase sales and capacity drawing in surrounding smaller communities and their populations. An increase in global middle-class incomes helps the regional tourism industry. Over time, increased automation in the traditional industries causes a decrease in traditional jobs and a polarization of workforce needs from basic to highly skilled jobs. The emphasis on large corporate farming reduces the numbers of 'family farms' in the area and has negative environmental impacts on water and resources. Lack of clean water affects tourism and water recreation, threatens well water and makes water unaffordable. The lack of economic diversity and the ability to sustain traditional industry makes the City of Mitchell more vulnerable.





POTENTIAL SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2040

Economic Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- The need for increased animal proteins will put Mitchell at an advantage
- Corporate farming will reduce the 'family farm'
- Fiber and 5G preparation will prepare our city to be further ahead than we already are
- Partnerships with SWU/MRI on development of technologies will increase our output
- Develop our transportation technologies and infrastructure to become the hub for the region
- Middle class increase in disposable income will help tourism
- Improve the tourism experience at the Corn Palace, City Parks, etc.; tell the full story of agriculture and Native Americans
- Autonomous vehicles to help tourism
- Lack of economic diversity could make Mitchell more vulnerable

Community and Societal Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Changes in tourism (virtual reality, autonomous vehicles) will reduce tourist traffic
- Negative population impact (industries likely automated; changing experience)
- Population make-up will be characterized by aging
- Workforce will see a declining need for tourism and interstate workers due to automation
- Polarization of skillset needs from basic to highly skilled
- Educational institutions will see an increased focus on creating new skills
- Quality of human life will be affected by environmental impacts

Environmental Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Corporate farming will have environmental impacts
- Possible significant change in the consumer perspective about what we produce regionally; increased pressure to produce
- Net exporter of wind energy; less dependency on others
- Decrease in resources
- Positive impact on economy with hydro opportunities
- Water reduction affects tourism and water recreation; threatens well water and makes water unaffordable
- Creation of new modified commodities which would strengthen our region
- Lengthened growing seasons could lead to repetition
- Mitchell would have greater political power if water, wind, energy are preserved



MORE WITH LESS - HEADLINE NEWS

2020

2030

2040

Economic Impacts

"City Council decides to move forward with green space across from Corn Palace for tourist and community use!"

"Mitchell becomes center for AG technology development / Tornado takes out Corn Palace"

"Mitchell maintains strong medical care and development with AI"

Community and Societal Impacts

"Mitchell sees slight population growth; Regional area continues decline"

"Davison County High School holds Contest to Choose New Mascot"

"You can't get there from here: Fewer vehicles, fewer travelers fuel latest set of road closures"

Environmental Impacts

"Tourism declines by 20% in Mitchell, SD due to poor water conditions"

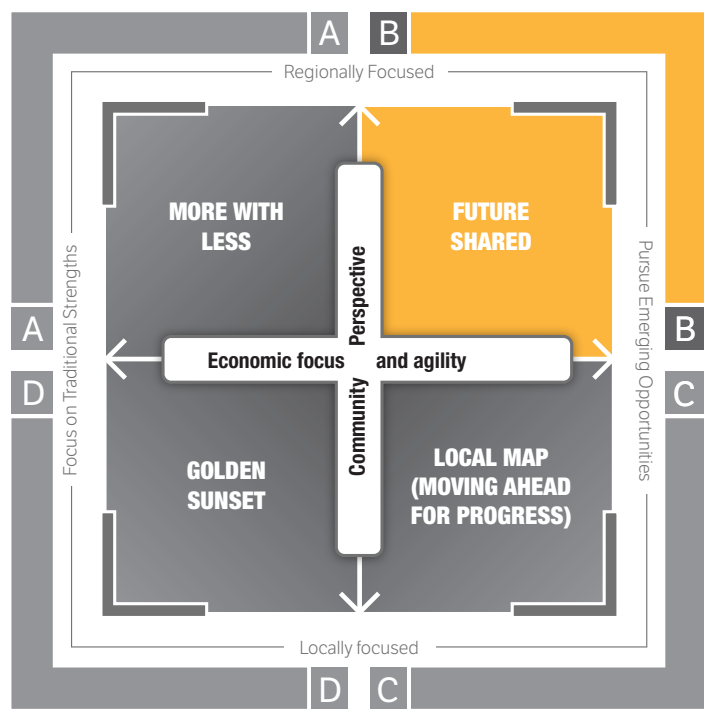
"99 cent gas hits Mitchell / Zero health warnings issued for Lake Mitchell"

"Turkeys return to normal size! / AG production and new technologies minimize chemical and water usage"



5.2 SCENARIO B: 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 Ag, 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.





POTENTIAL SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2040

Economic Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

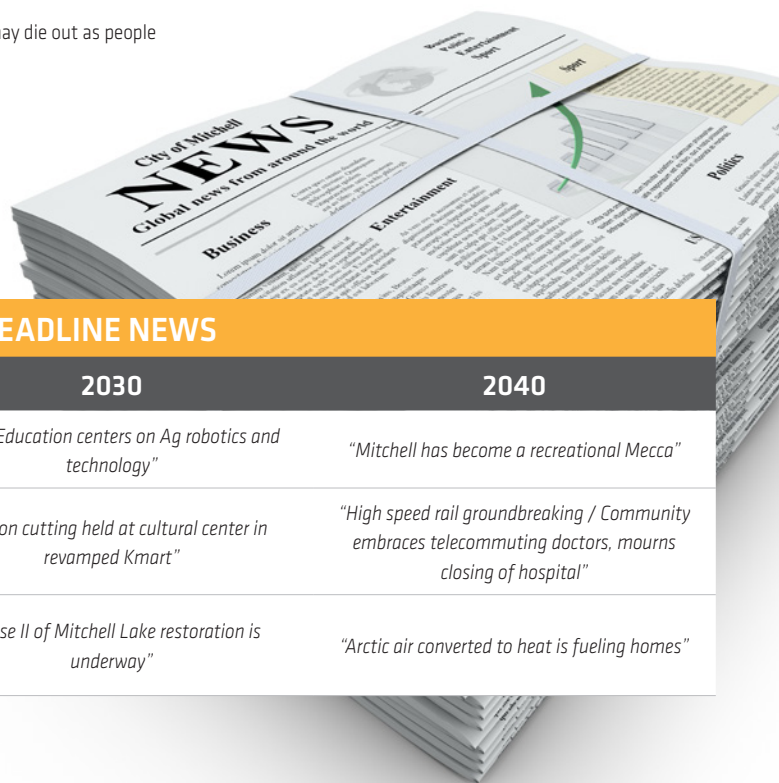
- Originally built on traditional economy, Mitchell will pivot to other economies with a regional/ shared orientation
- Opportunities for growth in access to cheap energy and access to space
- Educational structure to be assessed – standard schedule vs. 12-month schedule
- Educational training will expand training for new energy services; programming of new industries in technology leading to higher paying jobs
- Health care delivery will result in workforce reduction (facilities vs. video visits)
- Energy production through recyclables will increase
- Greater efficiency in transportation with new energy sources in wind/solar/renewables
- Mitchell will become a local center for services

Community and Societal Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Diverse, younger, progressive and inclusive workforce
- Higher education levels, specialized with above average incomes (possible negatives in trying to find job for spouse)
- Improved infrastructure will initially increase job production but fall off over time with respect to blue collar jobs
- Encourages higher education to be on the forefront of trends in software and technology
- Additional availability of affordable, entry-level housing
- Advance planning of entire neighborhoods
- Community resources working together (builders, contractors, financing)
- Surrounding communities may die out as people come to Mitchell

Environmental Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- New buildings need to be LEAD certified; also remodels
- Increased renewable resource use – wind, solar, hydropower
- Farm ground productivity becomes sustainable – land assets increase productivity while sustaining the land
- Reduce costs by reusing what we have before building more (repurposing)
- Benefits from growing organic, non-GMO products
- Diversification of growing (marijuana, plant-based proteins)
- Improved water treatment



FUTURE SHARED - HEADLINE NEWS

2020

2030

2040

Economic Impacts

"Mitchell area invests in renewable energy and training center"

"Local Education centers on Ag robotics and technology"

"Mitchell has become a recreational Mecca"

Community and Societal Impacts

"Midwest values challenges / Mitchell 'Kobb' opens offering shared workspaces"

"Ribbon cutting held at cultural center in revamped Kmart"

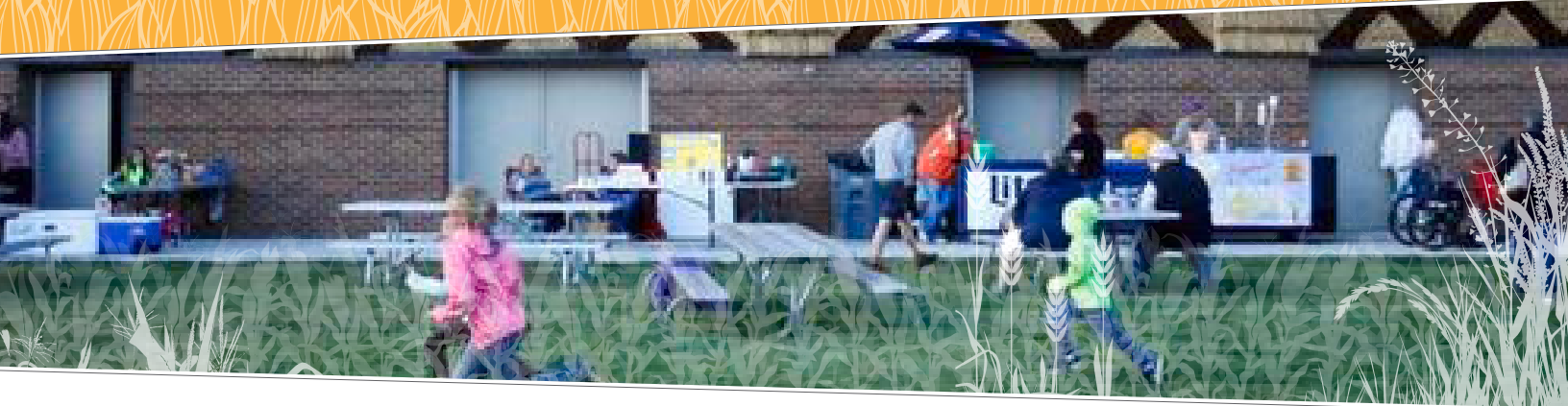
"High speed rail groundbreaking / Community embraces telecommuting doctors, mourns closing of hospital"

Environmental Impacts

"Recycling is now free in Mitchell"

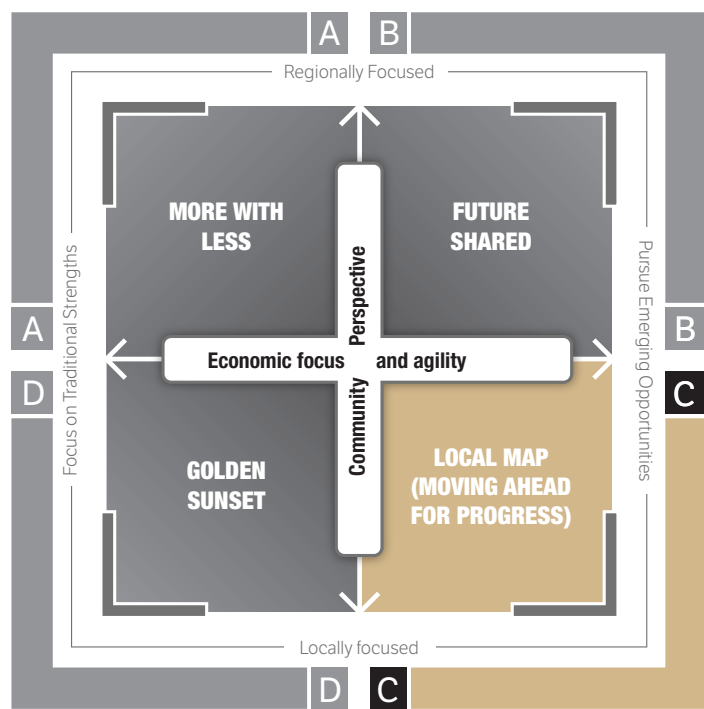
"Phase II of Mitchell Lake restoration is underway"

"Arctic air converted to heat is fueling homes"



5.3 SCENARIO C: LOCAL MAP (MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS)

This scenario forecasts a future where new economic opportunities and technologies are embraced for use on a local level. Investment emphasis supports traditional values and systems that deliver impact to the immediate local area of Mitchell. In the short term, local industries expand rapidly providing an improved quality of life and opportunity for local residents. Educational programs expand to include life-long learning, but businesses have difficulties attracting and retaining new employees to the area because the community remains insular and unwelcoming to new comers. Investment in local infrastructure improves the local assets of the Corn Palace, downtown area and Lake Mitchell. Over time, workforce demands make a local orientation unsustainable as businesses and industry must look elsewhere to support local growth.





POTENTIAL SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2040

Economic Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Better educated population leads to better paying jobs
- High initial costs on technology infrastructure
- Renewable energy is embraced
- Workforce needs will increase, causing raise in pay rates, but will make it difficult for local businesses to keep up
- Will need to look elsewhere for workforce to keep Mitchell viable
- Local orientation will not be sustainable past 2040

Community and Societal Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Educational facilities bring young people to Mitchell; challenge is keeping them here
- City encourages community education and life-long learning (break the stereotype of higher education as only for 18 to 22 year-olds)
- Community needs to adapt what we have to what we will need
- Community has difficulty attracting people to the local area

Environmental Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Focus on local water supply and quality
- Lower carbon emissions standards make the community environmentally healthy
- Partnerships with Agriculture increase
- Focus on electrical infrastructure to expand capacity



LOCAL MAP - HEADLINE NEWS

2020

2030

2040

Economic Impacts

"New infrastructure plan approved"

"Mitchell leads median household income in State"

"Mitchell is home of 12 Asian-based technology companies"

Community and Societal Impacts

"Council plans new Ag distribution center"

"Retirees remain in Mitchell in record numbers; Young people staying"

"Mitchell boasts highest pay, lowest crime rate in Midwest"

Environmental Impacts

"Mitchell pursues clean, efficient energy policy"

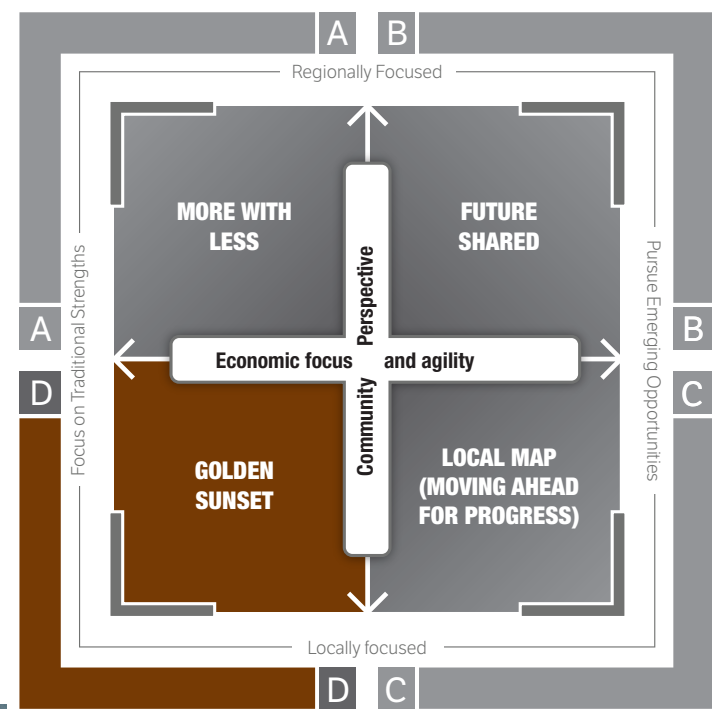
"Mitchell partners with higher education to create an enzyme to reduce phosphorous in Lake Mitchell"

"Healthy lifestyles fuel Mitchell families"



5.4 SCENARIO D: GOLDEN SUNSET

This scenario forecasts a future where the City of Mitchell becomes a place that fades away because it remains ‘stuck in the way that things have always been done’. An economic focus on traditional industry creates an area where large corporate farms dominate the landscape and absentee land-owners are prevalent. Community fabric deteriorates because of the seasonal nature of the Ag and Tourism industries with the community population decreasing and becoming more transient. An aging population places increasing pressure on healthcare facilities and services. Continuation of traditional educational programming creates a lack of new opportunities for businesses in terms of workforce support. National retail companies leave the area. A local focus on economic development projects temporarily improves local assets and services, but the insular quality of the local perspective is discouraging to new residents and they leave for other opportunities and open communities.





POTENTIAL SCENARIO CHARACTERISTICS - 2040

Economic Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Large corporate farming will dominate
- Manufacturing will become more robotic and jobs will be lost
- Technology creates opportunity and job reduction
- Agriculture becomes automated
- Loss of economic impact by absentee owners of Ag land
- Tourism supports local low-paying jobs; remains seasonal and becomes experiential
- Investment in traditional Corn Palace (remodeled) and Main Street

Community and Societal Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Population decreases and becomes more transient
- Bi-lingual schools and services increase due to new workforce populations
- Healthcare is delivered in homes
- Lose youth and increase aged population
- People come to the area, then leave for other opportunities
- Increased social conflict and segregation
- Loss of student population due to online education

Environmental Impacts / Characteristics - 2040

- Lake Mitchell is cleaned
- Focus is on recycling and repurposing structures
- Downtown area improves its image and adds niche shops
- Use of advanced technology in agriculture (precision) improves impacts on environment
- Lack of investment in natural resources



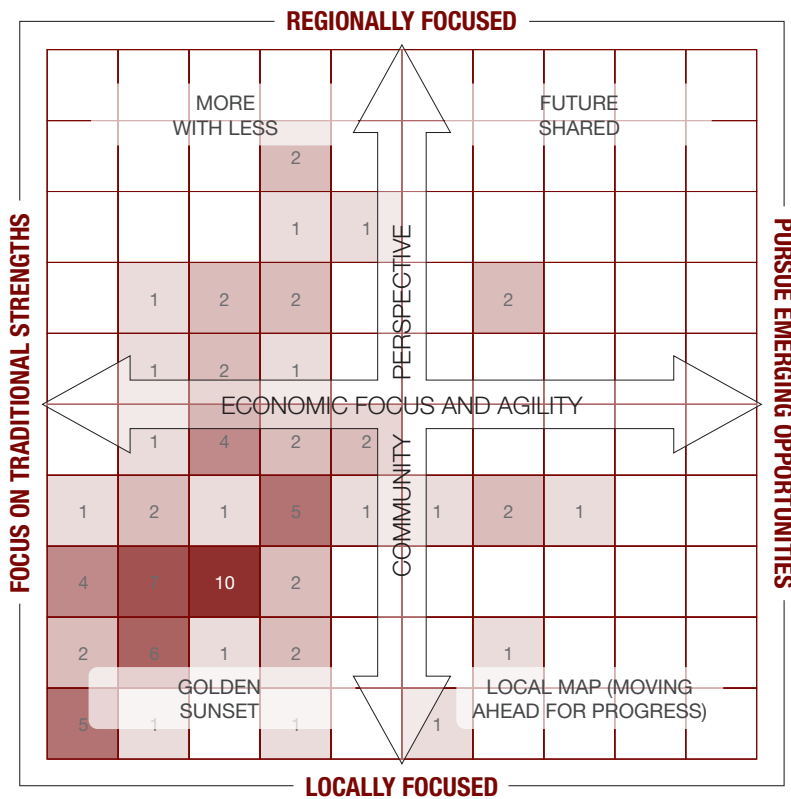
GOLDEN SUNSET - HEADLINE NEWS

	2020	2030	2040
Economic Impacts	"Local retailers shutting doors / Corn Palace implements self-guided tours"	"Agricultural Palace opens / National chains pulling out of Mitchell"	"Walmart closing due to Amazon delivery drones / First MRI happens in home"
Community and Societal Impacts	"Population stagnates / Abbott House purchases KMART"	"Local hospital closes due to telemedicine increase"	"Population decline; Zero diversity / Increased police activity in Mitchell"
Environmental Impacts	"Lake Mitchell has a plan / Electric bike lane introduced"	"Virtual reality exercise from your home!"	"Lake Mitchell voted cleanest lake in America"



6.0 EXPECTED AND PREFERRED FUTURES

6.1 EXPECTED FUTURE: SCENARIO D – GOLDEN SUNSET



Mitchell Think-Tank Workshop – March 25, 2019



DataInsight

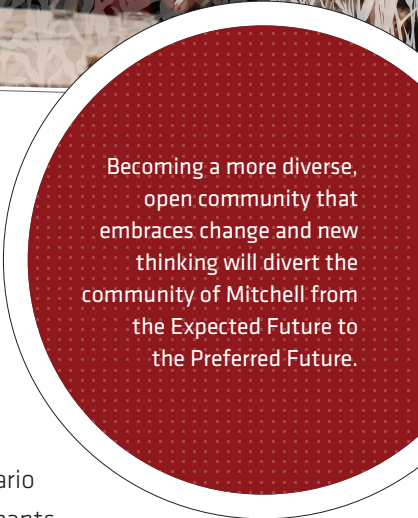
DATA INSIGHTS:

- The expected future may hold short term gains in growth and development of local assets, but this will eventually run out of steam as opportunities dwindle.
- Non-action or not embracing inevitable global trends risks placing the City in an unsustainable position.

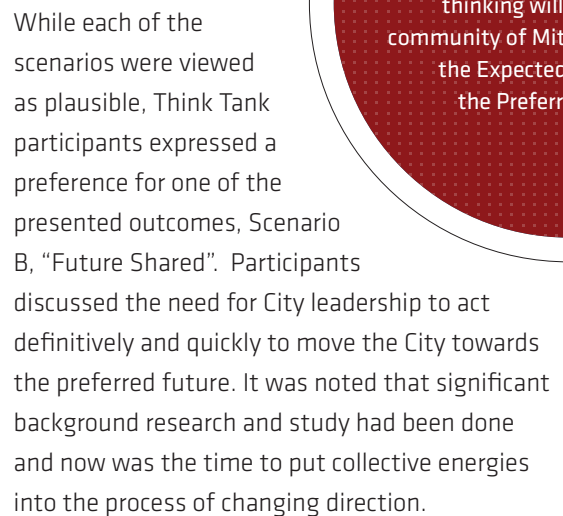
The Expected Future represents the future that is most likely to happen if nothing changes, or the community does not change direction.

The expected future is the one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory of Mitchell. Workshop participants indicated that Scenario D – Golden Sunset - is the scenario they believed most represented the current direction of city development. Think-Tank participants noted that the City was at a critical tipping point with the opportunity to avoid the expected future by making concerted proactive decisions to move forward towards a more global economic orientation that embraces not only new ideas and technology, but new people and cultures as well.





Becoming a more diverse, open community that embraces change and new thinking will divert the community of Mitchell from the Expected Future to the Preferred Future.



Mitchell Think-Tank Workshop – March 25, 2019



DATA INSIGHTS:

- The tight concentration of color in Scenario B, 'Future Shared' indicates a close alignment of thinking among community stakeholders.
- The scenario title of 'Future Shared' was significant to participants in that it intended to be comprehensive and inclusive of all community stakeholders.



8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mitchell community stakeholders engaged in the Think-Tank workshop and discussions with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest ensured the discussions were thoughtful, and the outcomes reflective of the city'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 & CVB
- Mitchell Main Street & Beyond
- Dakota Wesleyan University
- Mitchell School District
- Mitchell Technical Institute

9.0 CONTACT DETAILS

For more information on the City of Mitchell and the Mitchell Think-Tank Workshop, please contact:

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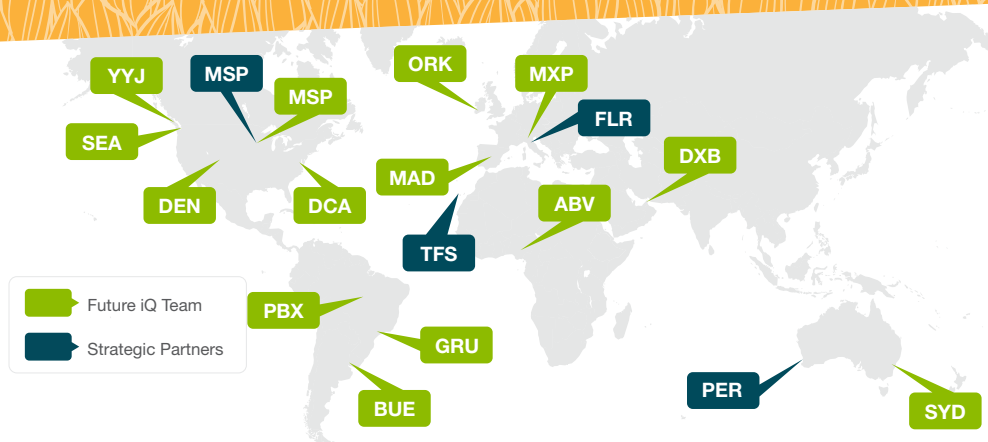
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Email: sellswein@cityofmitchell.org

Website: www.CityOfMitchell.org

The dedication, professionalism and collaboration of Mitchell leadership and stakeholders are big assets to the City.





10.0 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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