

STRATEGIC PLAN



City of
Finley, North Dakota

June 1, 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

for

Finley Strategic Plan

	Page
I. Executive Summary.....	1
II. Organizational Description.....	2
III. Vision, Mission, and Values Statement.....	4
IV. Goals and Strategies	5
V. Recommendations	7
VI. Conclusions	8
VII. Sources.....	10
VIII. Appendices	11

Appendix A: Minutes from May 4, 2005, Finley Strategic Planning Meetings

Appendix B: Results from Why Plan? Questionnaire

Appendix C: Action Planning Worksheets for Finley

Appendix D: Businesses / Service Providers for Finley

I. Executive Summary

The city of Finley has completed a Strategic Plan as preparation for improving the community economy, maintaining its small town lifestyle, and ensuring a thriving future. The Plan identifies a number of areas for action that are being implemented as goals. The goals, both short and long-term, cover a number of areas including:

- Quality Housing,
- Tourism,
- Emergency Medical and Fire Services,
- Retention and Expansion of All Sectors of Business,
- Renaissance Zone Application,
- Relocation and Expansion of Business and Industry,
- Keeping the School,
- Maintaining A Healthy and Safe Environment, and
- Maintaining the City Swimming Pool and Parks.

The goals were selected during the initial strategic planning meeting held on May 4, 2005, in Finley. Meeting participants identified the goals after completing a written questionnaire about community strengths and challenges. The written comments were used to guide a group discussion. Goals were then identified by group consensus. Some of the goals are new initiatives, while others are ongoing priorities the community has been addressing for some time.

In addition to the goals, the meeting process brought to light the community strengths of Finley, as well as a vision for what the community could ideally look like years from now. Finley is known as a community of friendly people where there is a “home town atmosphere” and “you don’t worry about kids when they are outside playing.” There is a “community spirit” and “willingness to try”. The primary qualities appreciated about Finley comprise:

- Friendly Community Attitude,
- Safe and Healthy Environment,
- Education,
- Affordable Housing,
- Attitude of Cooperation and Volunteerism, and
- Support for Businesses in the Community

To maintain the momentum for carrying out the Strategic Plan, the leadership of Finley and dedicated volunteers will work together to accomplish the goals. The plan must be a visible part of community life. The Vision, Mission and Values will be communicated clearly and consistently to promote awareness of the work to be done and maintain a united “community spirit”.

II. Organizational Description

A community meeting of Finley residents was held on May 4, 2005, to review current plans and future projects. The plans and projects are being implemented as goals for the Finley Strategic Plan. The Plan was designed by Finley residents for the benefit of Finley. The community is working to improve its economy and maintain quality of life. With a vision for the future, the community of Finley will be successful in accomplishing its goals. Finley will be in a better position to compete and receive funding for various projects because of its Strategic Plan. (Refer to Appendix A for Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes)

Finley serves as the county seat for Steele County, North Dakota. Located 84 miles northwest of Fargo and 66 miles southwest of Grand Forks, Finley is on State Highway 200. Situated in one of North Dakota's grain growing regions, the economy for Finley is agriculturally based. In the community of 515 people, there are 256 housing units. The median household income is \$32,917 and the median age in Finley is 43 years. Employment is in these major areas:

- Agriculture,
- Construction and Manufacturing,
- Government, and
- Retail and Wholesale Trade.

The Finley Economic Development Corporation encourages economic growth by working with many resource partners to attract and support the business sector. A new 54-acre Industrial Park completed in 2001, is available to accommodate new and existing businesses in Finley.

Community Environment and Infrastructure

- Clean Air and Water
- Virtually Crime Free Community
- Paved Streets
- Main Street and Other Businesses - Food service, sales, manufacturing, banking, insurance, and more are available. For a complete listing, refer to Appendix D.
- Affordable Housing
- Convenient Access to City and County Government Offices
- DSL and broad band wireless internet access
- Electric Services from Ottertail Electric and Nodak Cooperative
- City served by Dakota Water District with one back-up well and two-cell lagoon
- Steele County Sheriff Department
- Finley Fire Department and Fire Protection with county-wide 911 system

Transportation Services

- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Branch Service
- Airport Service – Cooperstown Municipal Airport, Grand Forks International Airport and Fargo International Airport

Education

- Finley-Sharon Public Schools – Grades kindergarten through 12
- Less than 90 minutes from six universities/colleges including University of North Dakota and North Dakota State University

Health Care Services

- Finley Clinic
- Cooperstown Medical Center (19 miles away)
- Mayville Union Hospital (30 miles away)

Manufacturing and Major Employers

- Top Taste, Inc. – bakery wholesale distributor
- Northland Products – wood stakes for survey and construction, saw dust logs
- Town and Country Cooperative
- Finley Farmers Grain and Elevator
- Finley Farmers Oil

Recreation

- Lynch Dam
- Golden Lake Resort
- Red Willow Resort
- Lake Ashtabula
- City Swimming- Pool-Red Cross sanctioned swimming lessons
- Nine-hole Sand Green Golf Course and two grass green 9-hole courses less than 30 minutes away
- City Auditorium Sports Facility
- Paved Running Track
- League Softball and Baseball
- City Parks with miniature golf, picnic shelters, and sports courts
- Finley Days
- Christmas Extravaganza and Craft Show

All of these factors in the areas of community environment, infrastructure, transportation, education, health care, manufacturing, employment, and recreation, are contributing to the vitality of Finley. The future of Finley will be built on the choices the community makes and how well resources are used.

III. Vision, Mission, and Values Statements

The Finley Vision of Success

Maintain a safe community where our citizens can live, work, and play in an environment that will enhance the quality of life and promote economic growth.

The Finley Mission Statement

Work effectively to retain, expand and promote business development and industry, creating employment opportunities, sustaining the tax base and diversifying the agricultural economy in a manner that will improve the quality of life in Finley.

The Values Important to Finley

Building on community strengths and an attitude of friendliness, integrity, and honesty, the Strategic Plan will be carried out with “community spirit” and a “willingness to try”. Finley is committed to providing quality education in a community with an affordable cost of living, where businesses are supported and the environment is clean and safe. To live up to its values, Finley believes “everyone helps everybody else out” because Finley is a community with “people who really care”. These values and quoted comments are based on written statements from the community participants who took part in developing the Finley Strategic Plan.

To maintain community commitment to the Strategic Plan, Finley will:

- Ensure that committee members work together to accomplish the goals and strategies outlined in the Action Planning Worksheets, Appendix C. It is understood that timelines and goals may change as new information is gathered.
- Make decisions based on objective information from the political, economic, social, and technological environment.
- Communicate with the community in a timely and clear manner, keeping everyone informed on the status of the Strategic Plan.

All of these commitments will encourage public input so that the plan is a real reflection of the Vision, Mission, and Values of Finley.

IV. Goals and Strategies

The results from the Finley Strategic Planning Meeting on May 4, 2005, were used to identify immediate and long-term goals. The goals were selected using two forms of feedback from the participants: written statements and group discussion. The minutes from the meeting are found in Appendix A. The written answers to a series of five questions about the community were grouped into categories and are presented in a table and charts in Appendix B. In addition, a description of goals, strategies and committees is presented in the Action Planning Worksheets in Appendix C.

Immediate Goals (3-5 Years)

Since many of the action steps will be completed simultaneously, the goals are not prioritized. Some goals are for projects already underway, while others are new initiatives to be worked on through December 2008.

Quality Housing

This goal calls for a new four-unit apartment complex, senior housing, single-family housing, and a new motel. The formation of a local housing authority will be researched as part of this effort to expand housing availability.

Tourism

This initiative focuses on marketing strategies for Lynch Dam and Golden Lake Resort.

Emergency Medical and Fire Services

This goal will rejuvenate volunteerism for emergency medical and fire services in the community.

Retention and Expansion of All Sectors of Business

In order to make further progress, this goal seeks to develop new and existing businesses and industries. In addition, research will be completed in the areas of technological marketing and the diversification of Main Street retail services.

Renaissance Zone Application

The City Council will prepare an application for Renaissance Zone funding.

Relocation and Expansion of Business and Industry

This is a project currently under development. Details will be released as information becomes available.

Long Term Goals (Beyond 5 Years)

Keep the School

The Finley School Board and other community members will develop a long-term plan for maintaining the school system.

Maintain a Healthy and Safe Community

The purpose of this goal is to continue to provide a safe and healthy living, working and recreational environment, specifically in the areas of air quality, water quality, excessive traffic speeds from motorists off the highway, as well as industrial and traffic noise.

Maintain Swimming Pool and Parks

The Finley Park Board will address this goal by continuing to provide for the maintenance of the City Pool and Parks, especially in the area of funding and volunteer labor.

Retention and Expansion of all Sectors of Business

The community has identified this as both a short and long-term goal. Improvements will be made in the ability of new and existing businesses and industries to grow and prosper. Research will be completed concerning the use of technological marketing for e-commerce. To expand Main Street businesses, Finley will work to diversify the retail services offered, including antique and specialty shops to attract tourists.

V. Recommendations

In using the Strategic Plan as a guide for successful completion of goals and projects, Finley will benefit by focusing on its strengths. The community members participating in the strategic planning process offered a number of perspectives about Finley.

Consistently, the participants identified Finley as a community of friendly people with a hometown atmosphere where “you don’t worry about kids when they are outside playing”. The school provides “excellent education and individual attention” for students. In Finley, there is a “community spirit”, and “willingness to try” and that attitude has attracted new families and businesses to the community. A “crime free” community, “close to outdoor life” with “home-grown values of integrity,” are all part of what people like about Finley.

Specific qualities appreciated about Finley include:

- Friendly Community Attitude,
- Safe and Healthy Environment,
- Education,
- Affordable Housing,
- Attitude of Cooperation and Volunteerism, and
- Support for Businesses in the Community.

To maintain the momentum and interest in the Strategic Plan, the leadership in Finley will work to maintain the plan, and make it a visible part of ongoing community planning efforts. The Vision, Mission and Values Statements are an important tool for communicating the message about what success will look like as Finley moves into the future. Recommendations for methods to promote the Strategic Plan include:

- Post the Vision, Mission, and Values Statements in buildings on bulletin boards and other places in the public eye.
- Give citizens a bookmark, postcard, or other written materials with statements from the plan.
- Publish reports in the newspaper.
- Use the Finley web site and the web site for the Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone to promote and provide information.
- When training city officials and committee members, make the Strategic Plan part of the training information.
- Conduct meetings for regular progress updates about the Strategic Plan.

The community will establish a committee responsible for monitoring and reporting progress and changes. All members of the Finley community are welcome to contribute to the planning process. The plan is a working document for the community.

VI. Conclusion

As Finley looks to the future, community cooperation will make the Strategic Plan a reality. Dedicated community volunteers and leaders with vision and a “willingness to try” will help overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities for sustainability and growth.

As Finley invests in its future through strategic planning, it is interesting to note the vision for Finley offered by members of the community at the initial planning session. Each person was asked to describe what Finley would be like in the Year 2025. The following quotes are provided as the conclusion to the Strategic Plan. Ideally, these visions for the community should serve as fuel for further discussion and planning.

- “Businesses throughout Main Street are filled with customers. New vehicles fill each parking space. New buildings are under construction.”
- “Finley’s population has grown to 1,000 due to several years of sustained economic and agricultural development. . .Parks and recreation programs have been improved and Finley has become known as the “Eden” of eastern North Dakota.”
- “The perfect community in 2025 would be entirely stress-free and healthy...”
- “A stable business community creates jobs with wage levels that provide a comfortable style of living. A strong and stable school system is also present.”
- “Our community boasts the latest in air transportation modules. Citizens come and go at their leisure.”
- “Our clinic is still open---only three or four days a week instead of two.”
- “Residents all have a ‘sense of community’.”
- “Churches for all religions are in town. . .good school system, recreational opportunities close by.”
- “Expansion and growth is happening but small town ethics still prevail.”
- “Hospital, clinic and nursing home facilities are located here.”
- “Main Street businesses along with the Industrial Park are full. Many people are moving back to the area to live.”
- “We have. . .thriving businesses, a movie theater, very little crime, beautiful parks and recreation areas.

- “Positive and motivated people helping and supporting each other...”
- “More Finley kids stayed in Finley and helped make Finley a better place to live.”

For additional information about the Finley Strategic Plan, you are welcome to contact:

Laurie Tuite, City Coordinator
208 West Fourth Street
Finley, ND 58230
Telephone: 701-524-1561 www.finleynd.com

The Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone
P.O. Box 335 Finley, ND 58230
Telephone: 866-852-1135 www.griggs-steeleez.org

VII. SOURCES

Comprehensive Plan 2001, published by the City of Finley, Finley, North Dakota.

Year 2000 Population Data by City, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Prepared in cooperation with the City of Finley
Susan J. Fugere, Business Consultant
sfugere@idctech.net

Appendix A

Minutes from the Finley Strategic Planning Meeting

Minutes from
Finley Strategic Planning Meeting
Wednesday, May 4, 2005
Citizens State Bank

The Strategic Planning Meeting for Finley began at 1 p.m. with introductions by Laurie Tuite, City Coordinator for Finley. Ms. Tuite had contacted citizens from the community and invited them to meet and set priorities for the community strategic plan. Ms. Tuite introduced Susan Fugere and Barb Burgum Lee who are consultants hired by the Empowerment Zone to conduct strategic planning meetings with each community within the Zone. The results of the meetings, along with background information from the City Coordinators, will be used to write a strategic plan for each community. (The 15 people attending this meeting were asked to sign in with their name and address. A list of participants is available from the Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone.)

To provide the participants with a brief review of strategic planning, Susan Fugere discussed the eight steps that typically comprise a strategic planning process. (Handout 1, Eight Steps to Strategic Planning) Ms. Fugere then gave an overview of qualities to be considered when looking at what a community has to offer (Health, Wealth, and Wisdom).

Ms. Fugere also presented a new concept called Appreciative Inquiry. The concept is based on a positive environment for exchange of ideas. She asked the meeting participants to be positive about the projects their community will work toward.

To begin the process of selecting goals for the strategic plan, the program then turned to individual brainstorming. The handout, "Why Plan?", was given to each participant and they wrote answers to five questions in the handout. A second handout, "Developing a Visionary Statement", was also filled out by each participant. All of this information will be used in developing the strategic plan for the community.

After the handouts were gathered, the results were used to open group discussion of short term (3 –5 years) and long term goals (beyond 5 years). Susan Fugere who led the discussion recorded these ideas on a flip chart. The results of the discussion were as follows.

Short Term Goals (3-5 years)

- Quality Housing – single family, apartments, senior housing
- Motel – new
- Marketing for Tourism- Lynch Dam, Golden Lake and Restaurant
- EMT Ambulance Volunteers/Recruits
- Retention and Expansion of All Sectors of Business
- Renaissance Zone Application
- Manufacturing Plant (in process)

Long Term Goals (Beyond 5 Years)

- Keep Our School
- Maintain a Health and Safe Community
- Maintain the Swimming Pool
- Maintain the City Parks
- Retention and Expansion of All Sectors of Business (short and long term goal)

Ms. Fugere asked the participants if they wished to add any other items to the list. The participants agreed that the list of goals was complete. A draft of the strategic plan will be reviewed by this group of participants at a second meeting. Based on input from the community, the plan will be changed if necessary and a final plan put in place. . The written plan will be designed to help position the community for continued economic stability. Ms. Fugere stated that community strategic plans are used for various types of funding applications including Renaissance Zone funding. The meeting concluded at 2:30 p.m.

Recorded by:

Barb Burgum Lee

Strategic Planning Consultant

Appendix B

Results from Why Plan? Questionnaire

Appendix C

Action Planning Worksheets

Appendix D

Business / Service Providers in Finley