



CITY OF BEACH, NORTH DAKOTA

Strategic Plan | 2023 – 2026



City of Beach, North Dakota Proposed Strategic Plan, 2023 – 2026

Table of Contents

Believing in Beach... Building a Better Beach, Together	3
Beach By the Numbers	4
Background and Context	5
Purpose	5
Process	6
Key Research Findings	7
Beach's Blueprint for the Future	10
Our Strategic Framework	12
 Strategic Area of Focus 1: Fostering Growth	15
 Strategic Area of Focus 2: City Revitalization	17
 Strategic Area of Focus 3: A Hometown for All	19
Making This Plan a Reality	22

Believing in Beach...

Building a Better Beach, Together.

This Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the involvement and contributions of our residents who shared their views through our online survey and community forum.

This plan can only be implemented with the active participation and collaboration of residents, business leaders, community organizations, and city leaders. Working together, Beach can leverage the progress made since the last strategic plan and capitalize on its assets to build a prosperous and vibrant future for the community.

Community Strategic Planning Committee – Core Planning Group

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Special Thanks

The Community Strategic Planning Committee wishes to thank the following individuals for their special contributions to the planning process: Mayor Walter Losinski, Public Works Superintendent Randy Dietz, Tyler Benes, Brooke Ford, and Scott Trotter.

Strategic Plan Facilitated by:

JM Strategies, LLC
Jason Matthews, Owner & Consultant
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Beach by the Numbers

- **Population:** 981 (2020 Census)
- **Households:** 436
- **Marital Status:** 61% of residents are married
- **Median Age:** 39.9
- **Age Composition**
 - Under 18: 24%
 - 18 – 64: 58%
 - 65 and Older: 18%
- **Income:**
 - Per Capita Income: \$39,004
 - Median Household Income: \$78,026
- **Gender:**
 - 53% Female
 - 47% Male
- **Race & Ethnicity:**
 - White: 83%
 - Mixed Race: 10%
 - Hispanic: 5%
 - Native American: 2%
- **Education:**
 - Some College: 39%
 - High School: 24%
 - Bachelor's Degree: 22%
 - No Degree: 10%
 - Post-Graduate Degree: 6%
- **Poverty Rate:** 8.8%





Background and Context

Purpose

This three-year plan is an update to the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, *Believe in Beach*, which was the city's first-ever strategic plan.

The City of Beach developed the strategic plan in late 2018 and early 2019. Jason Matthews of JM Strategies LLC was hired to facilitate the planning process. JM Strategies worked closely with a designated project committee composed of city council members and the city auditor. The final plan was the result of a comprehensive months-long planning process which engaged residents, business owners, and city officials.

The City of Beach once again hired JM Strategies to guide the process for this updated plan.

Clear Vision:

The plan expressed the goals and aspirations of residents and business owners. The primary purpose of the three-year plan was to provide guidance for future decision-making and foster greater collaboration among city leaders, residents and business owners in addressing current issues and preparing for anticipated changes in the city and region.

The plan was constructed upon this clear vision: *“To build a better, more prosperous, vibrant, and healthy Beach for ourselves and generations to come.”* To make this vision a reality, a Community Strategic Planning Committee (CSPC) was created to oversee implementation of the plan’s four strategic areas of focus: Community Enhancement, Business Growth, Making Beach a Destination, and Community Engagement & Revitalization.

A vision and aspiration, desired outcomes, goals, and strategic areas of focus were built into each of these four strategic areas of focus. The CSPC engaged residents and reported to the City Council throughout the implementation process. Significant progress was made in implementing goals and strategic objectives related to Community Enhancement and Community Engagement & Revitalization.

Mid-Plan Readjustment:

When it came to Business Growth, goals and strategic objectives were developed based on the existing economic development infrastructure, which is outside of city government. Unfortunately, the hoped-for engagement by, and collaboration with, these outside entities did not come to fruition. As a result, implementation of critical goals and strategic objectives related to Business Growth did not take place. This, in turn, impacted some goals and strategic objectives towards Making Beach a Destination.

For this reason, in the middle of the life of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, the City of Beach engaged JM Strategies again to assess and evaluate economic development. The focus of this 2021 process was to identify approaches and propose recommendations on what the City of Beach can specifically do to foster business growth and community development.

During this process, JM Strategies conducted online community surveys and, together with a city delegation, examined three economic development models from the following comparable communities: City of Cavalier, North Dakota; Chamberlain and Oacoma, South Dakota (Lake Francis Case Development Corporation); and Garrison, North Dakota (Garrison Area Improvement Association). JM Strategies and the city delegation met personally with representatives from these three communities. In-person visits and community tours of Cavalier and Garrison took place in June 2021.

The report resulting from this process outlined recommendations for the City of Beach to take. Some elements from these recommendations, along with input from this recent process, have been incorporated into this updated plan.

Process

The CSPC, in collaboration with JM Strategies, oversaw the development of this strategic plan. The process as proposed by JM Strategies and accepted by the CSPC consisted of the following three phases:

- **Assessment:**

The first phase involved assessing the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. This was achieved through meetings with the CSPC, review of data, consideration of information collected from the 2021 economic development evaluation, and an online community survey.

- **Community Forum:**

The information from the assessment resulted in the identification of themes and topics for a community planning forum, which was held on May 18. Input from this forum allowed the CSPC to both clarify goals and identify areas to address in the strategic objectives. JM Strategies then collected and organized this information into an outline, which was then presented to the CSPC for consideration.

- **Development of the Strategic Plan:**

The outline was then developed in the Strategic Plan, which was reviewed and revised by the CSPC. The Committee approved the plan on July 11 and recommended it for presentation to, and consideration by, the Beach City Council.

Key Research Findings

This updated plan is firmly anchored in the feedback received in the community survey. JM Strategies collaboratively developed 22 survey questions with the CSPC that assessed what residents like most about Beach's quality of life; impressions of the community; assessing the city's performance in meeting expectations in key areas; grading the implementation of initiatives in the 2019-2022 strategic plan; rating the importance of certain key services and wants; and identification of the top three priorities to address in this three-year plan. Additional data regarding demographics and how residents receive local news was also collected for informational purposes.



Response Rate:

The online survey was available on the city’s website from March 13 through March 31, 2023. Eighty-seven residents participated in the survey, which equates to approximately nine percent of Beach’s population. By research standards for projects of this nature, response rates at or above seven percent are deemed excellent.

Who Took the Survey:

- **Residency:**

— 20 or more years:	43
— 11 – 19 years:	19
— 6 – 10 years:	12
— 1 – 5 years:	10
— Less than 12 months:	3

- **Age:**

— 30 to 49:	42
— 50 to 64:	24
— 65 or older:	14
— 18 to 29:	7

- **Gender:**

- Fifty-one respondents identified as female; 25 identified as male; 11 did not identify a gender.

- **Highest Level of Education Attained:**

- Thirty-one respondents attained a bachelor’s degree, 18 have some college education, 14 earned a graduate degree or higher, nine attained a high school diploma or GED, eight earned an associate’s degree, and five hold professional or special certification. Two respondents did not provide an answer.

- **Homeownership:**

- Seventy-eight respondents own their home. Nine respondents identified as renters.

- **Children in Household:**

- Thirty-seven respondents have children 18 years of age or younger in their household. In contrast, 50 respondents do not.

- **Employment:**

- As to respondents’ employment status: 51 work in Beach, 14 work in a neighboring rural community, one works in Dickinson, another works in Glendive, and 10 respondents identified as retired.

- **Business Ownership:**

- Eighteen of the 87 survey respondents own a business in Beach.

Assessments of Living in Beach:

- A majority of survey respondents identified Beach as being a safe and peaceful community. Small town environment, a strong sense of community, affordability, and cost of living were all cited as other qualities respondents most like about living in the community.
- Public safety, affordability and cost of living, and schools were identified as the three most important aspects when it comes to quality of life in Beach.
- When it comes to describing Beach's quality of life in comparison to three years ago, residents were positive in their assessment. A majority of respondents identified quality of life as either good (47) or excellent (2). Another 29 respondents assessed quality of life as either average (20) or fair (9). Five respondents were unsure in their evaluation. Four respondents selected poor for their response.

Meeting Expectations:

- **Positive:**

Respondents gave Beach high marks in either meeting or exceeding their expectations in affordability/cost of living, public schools, health care services, emergency services, utilities, basic city services, and community leadership.

- **Mixed:**

Reviews were mixed when it came to employment opportunities, parks and recreation, local businesses' ability to meet basic needs, activities for all ages (especially youth), arts and culture, entertainment and dining options.

- **Negative:**

The overall appearance of the city, streets and infrastructure, condition of housing inventory, and availability of housing were all ranked low and flagged as areas of concern by respondents.

Looking Back – and Ahead:

Respondents were asked to review and grade the following strategic initiatives from the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan:

- Enhancing the City's Appearance
- Improving Streets and Updating Critical Infrastructure
- Improving Beach's Quality of Life and Place
- Improving Business Development and Growth Efforts
- Branding Beach as a Destination
- Promoting and Supporting Greater Community Involvement

Overall, respondents gave the City of Beach a ‘C’ average for implementing these strategic objectives. They were, however, quite clear in rating of the importance of these initiatives moving forward into the next strategic plan. A majority of respondents scored each initiative as important or very important in the following order:

1. Improving Streets and Updating Critical Infrastructure
(63 respondents rated this as very important)
2. Improving Business Development and Growth Efforts
(48 respondents rated this as very important)
3. Improving Beach’s Quality of Life and Place
4. Enhancing the City’s Appearance
5. Promoting and Supporting Greater Community Involvement
6. Branding Beach as a Destination

Top Three Priorities:

Respondents were emphatic in their answers as to what must be Beach’s top three priorities for the next three years. Their priorities are as follows:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Maintaining and Improving Streets and Critical Infrastructure | 61 respondents |
| 2. Business Growth, Retention, and Economic Development | 52 |
| 3. Community Beautification | 32 |

The other priorities were ranked in the following order:

- | | |
|---|----|
| 4. Community Events | 20 |
| 5. Affordable Housing | 19 |
| 6. Childcare | 19 |
| 7. Parks and Recreation | 17 |
| 8. Making Beach a Destination for Visitors and Tourists | 13 |

Beach’s Blueprint for the Future

The City of Beach is fortunate to have received such clear direction from its residents as to what it should prioritize and do in the future. The survey results were further enhanced by input received during the community forum.

As such, the research process gave the CSPC a blueprint in which to construct the updated plan and allowed the group to identify three new strategic areas of focus, develop concise goals, and set realistic strategic objectives to address residents’ wants and wishes.

These three strategic areas of focus touch on issues as prioritized by residents:

- **Strategic Area of Focus 1: Fostering Growth**
 - Business retention
 - New business attraction
 - Promotion of Beach
- **Strategic Area of Focus 2: City Revitalization**
 - City streets
 - Critical infrastructure
 - Community beautification and clean-up
- **Strategic Area of Focus 3: A Hometown for All**
 - Affordable housing
 - Recreation
 - Arts and culture

These three strategic areas of focus tie in directly with the ongoing work to fulfill the vision: *to build a better, more prosperous, vibrant, and healthy Beach for ourselves and generations to come.*





Our Strategic Framework

Our Vision

To build a better, more prosperous, vibrant, and healthy Beach for ourselves and generations to come.

Our Values

- **Betterment:**

We are committed to building a better Beach for ourselves and future generations.

- **Encouragement:**

We will encourage one another in our work to strengthen our community.

- **Accountability:**

We are all responsible for our community's success.

- **Collaboration:**

We will work collaboratively toward creating a stronger community.

- **Hard Work:**

Like those who built Beach, we will only achieve our goals through hard work.

How to Interpret Our Plan

- **Strategic Area of Focus:**

The overarching priorities that are the foundation of this strategic plan and provide clear direction to the city's work.

- **Goals:**

Defined outcomes that Beach will strive to accomplish and which align with one of the three Strategic Areas of Focus.

- **Strategic Objectives:**

Defined strategies and approaches to make goals a reality.

Plan Summary

Strategic Area of Focus 1: Fostering Growth

- **Vision & Aspiration:**

- Implement practical solutions that will capitalize on available resources and leverage new opportunities to retain current businesses, attract new businesses, recruit workers, and draw visitors to our community.

- **Desired Outcomes:**

- Greater collaboration between the City and business community on economic development
- Understanding and capitalizing on Beach's assets
- Create and promote a unique brand appeal for Beach
- Provide amenities, offerings, and events to draw visitors to Beach
- Allocate a greater portion of sales tax revenue toward community investment

- **Goals:**

- Capitalize on existing resources to retain businesses and attract new businesses
- Pursue strategic investments to create new amenities
- Market and promote Beach

Strategic Area of Focus 2: City Revitalization

- **Vision & Aspiration:**

- Improve the City's appearance in order to enhance the overall quality of place for residents and attract visitors to our community.

- **Desired Outcomes:**

- Improved streets
- Beautify the community
- Promoting a commitment to beautification among residents
- An attractive and inviting downtown business district
- Clean up abandoned lots and properties

- **Goals:**

- Continue to improve city streets
- Enhance the appearance of the Downtown Business District
- Promote city clean-up and beautification

Strategic Area of Focus 3: A Hometown for All

- **Vision & Aspiration:**

Make enhancements that will strengthen Beach's quality of life and address housing needs in order to retain and attract new residents

- **Desired Outcomes:**

- A strategy addressing housing needs
- Meeting the recreational and wellness needs of residents
- Capitalizing on, and strengthening, Beach's arts culture

- **Goals:**

- Develop and implement a housing strategy
- Expand recreational and wellness opportunities for residents
- Build upon Beach's artistic culture





Strategic Area of Focus 1: Fostering Growth

Vision & Aspiration:

- Implement practical solutions that will capitalize on available resources and leverage new opportunities to retain current businesses, attract new businesses, recruit workers, and draw visitors to our community.

Desired Outcomes:

- Greater collaboration between the City and business community on economic development
- Understanding and capitalizing on Beach's assets
- Create and promote a unique brand appeal for Beach
- Provide amenities, offerings, and events to draw visitors to Beach
- Increase sales tax revenue that can be invested into the community

Goal 1.1: Capitalize on existing resources to retain businesses and attract new businesses

Strategic Objectives:

- 1.1.1:** Identify and leverage potential economic opportunities afforded by the Interstate, rail system, and the local arts community.
- 1.1.2:** Prioritize the attraction of new value-added businesses that tie into the region's agriculture industry, energy industry, and raw materials.



- 1.1.3:** Implement clumping approaches that tie businesses with social, artistic, and cultural activities.
- 1.1.4:** Pursue the opening of a local meat processing business to meet the needs of consumers, ranchers, producers, and hunters in the region.
- 1.1.5:** Formalize the City's role in economic development by restructuring current administrative roles or creating a new position for a local economic development director.

Goal 1.2: Pursue strategic investments to create new amenities

Strategic Objectives:

- 1.2.1:** Working with regional partners, actively pursue investment toward the development of a new local hotel that will accommodate motorists and visitors to the region.
- 1.2.2:** Develop a plan for, and secure investment in, creating a new campground and RV park.

Goal 1.3: Market and promote Beach

Strategic Objectives:

- 1.3.1:** Improve signage on the Interstate to attract motorists and visitors.
- 1.3.2:** Construct and place signage at entrances into the city.
- 1.3.3:** Leverage the Visitors Center to promote local businesses and draw visitors into the community.
- 1.3.4:** Enhance and promote the City App to provide information to residents and visitors.
- 1.3.5:** Place a digital billboard in downtown to provide information to residents and visitors.



Strategic Area of Focus 2: City Revitalization

Vision & Aspiration:

Improve the City's appearance in order to enhance the overall quality of place for residents and attract visitors to our community.

Desired Outcomes:

- Improved streets
- Beautify the community
- Promoting a commitment to beautification among residents
- An attractive and inviting downtown business district
- Clean up abandoned lots and properties

Goal 2.1: Continue to improve city streets

Strategic Objectives:

- 2.1.1:** In order to save money, connect street repairs with water and sewer projects.
- 2.1.2:** Repair and/or replace sidewalks and curbs in high traffic intersections and highly visited areas.
- 2.1.3:** Develop and follow a preventative maintenance schedule.
- 2.1.4:** Pursue additional revenue sources to fund replacement and long-term maintenance of city streets.



Goal 2.2: Enhance the appearance of the Downtown Business District

Strategic Objectives:

- 2.2.1: The City will provide loans and incentives for storefront repairs and façade updates.
- 2.2.2: Make aesthetic improvements to Main Street by upgrading light poles, planting flowers, incorporating public art, adding four more murals, and creating at least one pocket park.

Goal 2.3: Promote city cleanup and beautification

Strategic Objectives:

- 2.3.1: City government will educate the public on existing zoning ordinances, enforce compliance, and increase penalties in order to clean up lots.
- 2.3.2: City government will provide stronger enforcement of all dilapidated buildings, especially those that are dangerous or are no longer livable.
- 2.3.3: Provide incentives for lawn watering, lot cleanup, and yard maintenance.
- 2.3.4: Revitalize and use the City Tree Board to develop and implement a city-wide plan for the planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs along public streets, ways, and boulevards.
- 2.3.5: Plant and maintain flowers along main City boulevards.





Strategic Area of Focus 3: A Hometown for All

Vision & Aspiration:

Make enhancements that will strengthen Beach's quality of life and address housing needs in order to retain and attract new residents.

Desired Outcomes:

- A strategy addressing housing needs
- Meeting the recreational and wellness needs of residents
- Capitalizing on, and strengthening, Beach's arts culture

Goal 3.1: Develop and implement a housing strategy

Strategic Objectives:

- 3.1.1:** Conduct an assessment of Golden Valley County's current housing needs and anticipated housing needs by 2030.
- 3.1.2:** Develop an affordable housing coalition that will work with state and federal agencies, nonprofits, and developers on addressing housing needs in Beach.
- 3.1.3:** Incentivize residential construction by offering city-owned lots at a minimal price with the stipulation that construction must occur within two years or the lots revert back to the City.
- 3.1.4:** Facilitate the selling of vacant residences by contacting absentee owners and connecting them with area realtors.
- 3.1.5:** Support Golden Valley Manor in their efforts to remodel and modernize existing living units.



Goal 3.2: Expand recreational and wellness opportunities for residents

Strategic Objectives:

- 3.2.1:** Promote wellness activities already available in the community.
- 3.2.2:** Create partnerships to provide additional activities and programming for youth.
- 3.2.3:** Complete the final phase of the walking trail.
- 3.2.4:** Enhance the municipal golf course by constructing a walking trail around the course, adding frisbee golf, and using the course to support additional youth and community activities.
- 3.2.5:** Improve accessibility to the community fishing bank.
- 3.2.6:** Provide free outdoor activities at Gazebo Park after completion of the pavilion.
- 3.2.7:** Create a community dog park.
- 3.2.8:** Create a community garden.
- 3.2.9:** Make left over bikes from annual Bike Drive available for public use, locate bike racks throughout the City.
- 3.2.10:** Explore options to rehab and revitalize the local bowling alley.
- 3.2.11:** The City, School District, and Park Board will establish a committee to conduct a feasibility study into a possible community recreation and wellness center.





Goal 3.3: Build upon Beach's artistic culture

Strategic Objectives:

- 3.3.1: Promote Prairie Arts Council activities.
- 3.3.2: Develop a stronger partnership with The Lighthouse to help promote their art activities for youth.
- 3.3.3: Add a maker's space/art gallery and display local artwork at the mini-mall.
- 3.3.4: Invite artists and organizations to provide live musical and theater performances within the community.





Making This Plan a Reality

As with the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, the City Council is responsible for the implementation of this plan. The Community Strategic Planning Committee (CSPC) will direct the implementation process.

The CSPC will continue to be composed of City officials, business community representatives, and residents. The Committee may organize into sub-committees and working groups to best manage implementation. When necessary, the City should engage the expertise of the City Engineer and outside experts for further assistance.

Ongoing community engagement should take place on an annual basis. Soliciting residential feedback is essential to ensure this Strategic Plan remains dynamic, relevant, and the primary vehicle for Beach to achieve continued growth and improvement.



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