



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025



OCTOBER 2025



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	iii
Stakeholders	iii
North Dakota Department of Commerce Staff	iii
Purpose	1
Historical Context	1
Plan Initiative and Purpose	2
Plan Utilization	2
Process	3
Department of Commerce Initiative	3
Community Survey	3
Community Stakeholder Workshops	3
Plan Development and Review	3
Community Profile	6
Demographic Characteristics	6
Economic Characteristics.....	8
Quality of Life Indicators	10
Community Assets	12
Essential Services Inventory and Gaps	12
Community Stakeholder Observations	14
NOISE Analysis.....	15
Strategic Direction, Goals, and Tactics.....	16
Housing	17
Infrastructure	19
Business Development.....	20
Community Services	24
Community Culture	27
Activities and Community Facilities.....	28



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

Appendix29

Potential Grant Funding for Strategies.....30

References..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

Acknowledgement

This Plan was completed with the active participation of stakeholders from the Ellendale community and staff members from the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

Stakeholders

- Sherri Riggan, Trinity Bible College (first workshop only for Bryan Jacobson's absence)
- Bryan Jacobson, Chamber President, Trinity Bible College
- Aaron Tshosik, JDA, Starion Bank
- Troy Radermacher, DRN Employee/Resident
- Dee Haugen, Choice Bank
- Jodi Bruns, NDSU Extension
- Walker Bruns, Farmer and Resident
- Naomi Grueneich, Benedictine Living Community
- Laurel Chafey, Park Board
- Grant Crabtree, Arts Council
- Ted Ellsworth, Resident
- Justin Meidinger, Arts Council, City Commission, and OPERA House
- Martin Vega, Applied Digital
- Angela Goehring, Tourism Board
- Marilyn Burrow, Business Owner
- Nicole Kempf, Ellendale Auditor
- Mayor Don Flaherty, Ellendale Mayor

North Dakota Department of Commerce Staff

- Maria Effertz, Director of Community Services
- Anya Hondel, Community Development Coordinator
- Nicolette Blumler, Community Development Grant Administrator

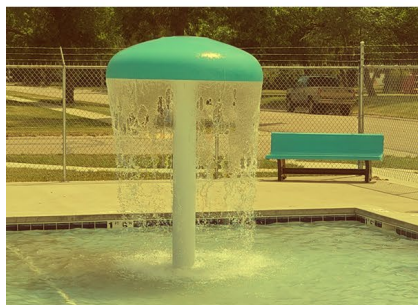


Purpose

Historical Context

Ellendale, ND was founded in 1882 during the early years of North Dakota statehood and grew to a peak population of 1,967 (1980 Census). Current population according to the most recent Census Bureau Population Estimate is 1,139 (2024). The economy of the Ellendale area is supported by a strong agricultural base. The largest economic sectors by number of employees are educational services, healthcare and social assistance followed by arts, entertainment, recreation and accommodation and food service. The nearest regional economic centers are Aberdeen, SD (38 miles) and Jamestown (65 miles). There is a strong pattern of community action and organization as illustrated by multiple community organizations.

In late spring of 2023, an 180-megawatt data center became operational in Ellendale. Construction was completed on a second data center in the fall of 2025. A third data center began construction in the summer of 2025. And a fourth data center is planned for construction to begin in 2026. These three new facilities will have a capacity of 350-megawatts. The development of these data centers,



nearly two miles west of the core of the City of Ellendale are the result of a partnership involving the City of Ellendale, the local Job Development Authority (JDA), the utility provider MDU, North Dakota state agencies, and the developer, Applied Digital. With the potential need for up to 450 employees to operate the data centers, one of the fundamental issues has been housing availability, and the impact of housing demand on existing housing prices. Applied Digital is constructing new homes to help house data center workers at a site that had been previously platted for additional housing growth. However, there are numerous other issues and opportunities associated with the development of the Applied Digital data center. In February 2025, the City of Ellendale annexed the Applied Digital facility and surrounding area.

Plan Initiative and Purpose

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to establish an approach for addressing issues and opportunities facing Ellendale now and in the future. Goals have been identified utilizing community input, via a community survey and a series of key stakeholder workshops. These will enhance quality of life and support the economic resilience of the Ellendale community. North Dakota Department of Commerce's Community Development and Rural Prosperity (CDRP) Office funded this plan as a living case study for empowering communities experiencing major economic shifts due to industry development. Ellendale's plan is an example of Office of CDRP efforts to encourage sustainable growth through planning and grant support.

Plan Utilization

This Plan is a tool to be used by the Ellendale community to provide focus and direction for the community as it adapts to recent changes and opportunities. It is a framework that can be referenced by multiple organizations of the community including the City Council, the Job Development Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, as well as local businesses and other community organizations.

The intent of this plan is to be a living document utilized by key stakeholders serving on the Community Stakeholder Committee

who will continue to advocate for the plan's implementation over the next three to five years.

Process

Department of Commerce Initiative

In November 2024, the North Dakota Department of Commerce released a Request for Proposals for development of a strategic plan for the community of Ellendale that outlines goals for and corresponding action items and associated champions to reach those goals. The Office of CDRP is treating this strategic plan as a living case study for a broad range of initiatives aimed at supporting and empowering North Dakota's communities to plan for sustainable growth before, during, and after major economic shifts. The selected contractor has developed this strategic plan in collaboration with staff from CDRP and key stakeholders from the Ellendale community.

Community Survey

People from the greater Ellendale area were encouraged to participate in the strategic planning process by sharing their thoughts on Ellendale's values, strengths, challenges, and opportunities through a community-wide survey. The survey included questions on quality-of-life improvement needs, availability or adequacy of services, and community assets that make Ellendale a great place to live. Promotional efforts included a newspaper advertisement, social media posts to the community, video on social media, outreach to local schools/colleges, outreach to the senior center, and outreach to churches. The survey was launched in mid-March 2025. The survey closed April 14, 2025, with a total of 267 responses. A summary of the survey responses is provided on pages 4 and 5.

Community Stakeholder Workshops

In addition to the survey, a series of three community stakeholder workshops were held to develop goals and strategies for enhancing quality of life and promoting economic stability and growth. The first workshop was used to review results of the community survey and additional background information on community resources and existing conditions. The second workshop focused on a review of key topics that arose out of the first workshop and the development of these topics into a series of goals. The third workshop was used to confirm and refine draft goals.

Plan Development and Review

The contractor developed a draft strategic plan based on initial data collection, community survey results, and the input received from the community stakeholder workshops. The draft plan was reviewed by the CDRP office and key stakeholders from the City of Ellendale. After final revisions were made, the plan was presented to the City of Ellendale for adoption.

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STRATEGIC PLAN
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SURVEY RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

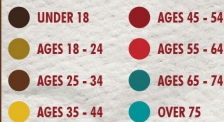
267 RESPONSES
WERE RECORDED



36% of respondents are 2 person households, followed by 18% from 4 person households.

98% RESPONDED
FROM ELLENDALE
OR RESIDED IN DICKEY COUNTY

RESPONSES BY AGE GROUP



COMMUNITY DESIRES

72% OF RESPONDENTS
SAID MORE
RESTAURANTS, COFFEE SHOPS, & BARS
WOULD IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ELLENDALE
Followed by: Entertainment/activity centers, additional medical services, and more public/community events

BUSINESSES WITH THE MOST GROWTH POTENTIAL

- Drinks & Dining Options
- Personal Care Services
- Entertainment Activities
- Construction, Plumbing, Electrical Services
- Retail/Shopping

TOP 5 COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Revitalization of Downtown (Storefronts/Signage),
- Help Entrepreneurs and Expand New and Existing Businesses
- Provide More Entertainment Options
- Provide More Affordable /Workforce Housing
- Provide Better Local Infrastructure

EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

WHAT MAKES ELLENDALE A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE?

Values Small Town Atmosphere Businesses Public School City Great Schools Friendly People
School Everything Opportunities View Town Neighbors Amenities Small Community Trinity Bible College
Friendly Know Neighbors Good Support Quiet Activities People Nice Location Small Town
Community need Safe Place To Raise Family Small Nothing Living Crime Safety Shopping
Family Small Town Feel Great Local Churches Ellendale Low Crime Larger Feel Take Care Close Rural Place To Live

Most people think walking, biking and driving facilities are adequate while public transit services are inadequate.



79%
felt that preserving the
cultural and historical
aspects of the community are
either somewhat important
or very important.

88%
of respondents felt their
residence completely
or mostly meets
their needs.

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2025

SURVEY RESULTS

EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

MOST PEOPLE FEEL
ELLENDALE IS A
GREAT PLACE TO
LIVE BECAUSE OF THE
SMALL TOWN CHARM
AND THE
SAFE COMMUNITY

ADEQUATE SERVICES

PARKS & REC PLACES
INTERNET/TELECOM
GAS STATIONS

TOP 3 COMMUNITY HEALTH CONCERNS



**MENTAL
HEALTH**



**SUBSTANCE
ABUSE**



OBESITY

SERVICES TO IMPROVE

GROCERIES
RESTAURANTS
CHILDCARE SERVICES
HEALTHCARE SERVICES



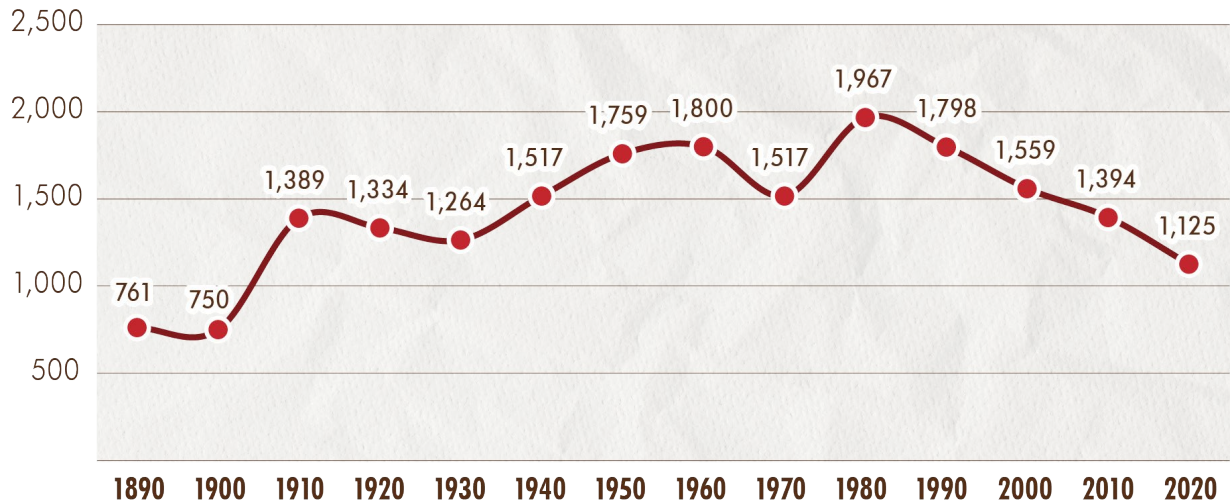
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Community Profile

Demographic Characteristics

Ellendale's population has fluctuated throughout its history reflecting broader economic and demographic shifts. It grew from 761 people in 1880 to a high of 1,967 in 1980. In the decades following this period, population numbers have steadily declined. By 2020, the population had decreased to 1,125, its lowest level in more than a century, suggesting long term out-migration and an aging population. The latest population estimate from the Census Bureau puts the city's 2024 population at 1,139.

CENSUS POPULATION, 1890 – 2020



Most of Ellendale's households are two parent families. The next largest type of households within Ellendale are classified as "other", which describes households that include unrelated individuals living

together such as roommates or shared housing arrangements. The mix highlights a community where traditional family households remain predominant, while alternative living arrangements also play a notable role in the overall housing makeup.

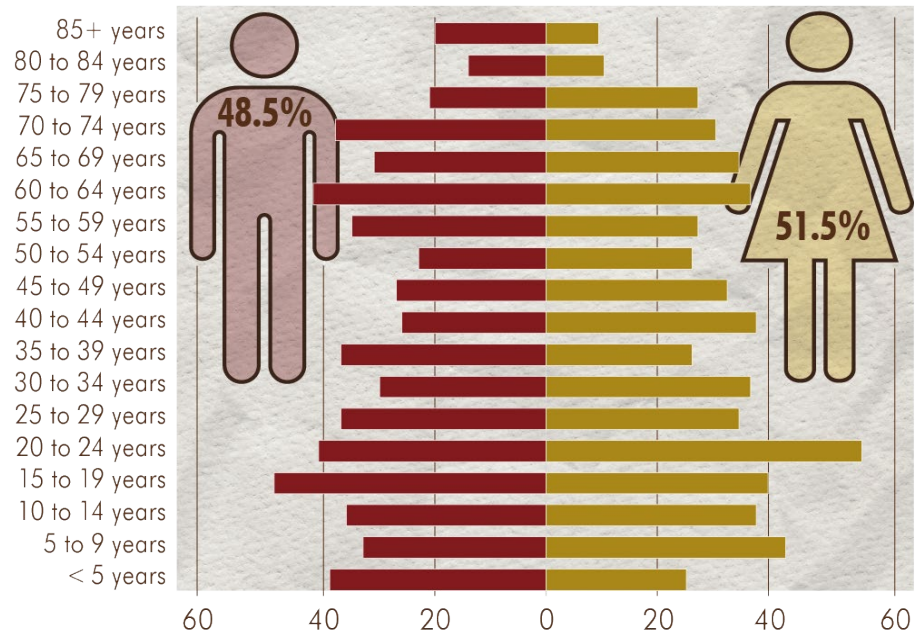
ELLENDALE HOUSEHOLDS, 2020				
2 PARENT FAMILIES	SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES	SINGLE	OTHER	TOTAL
211	29	21	133	394

As Ellendale's population pyramid indicates, there is a relatively balanced distribution between males and females across most age groups. The population under 20 years old is strong, indicating youth make up a large portion of Ellendale's community. The working population ages 25-64 is evenly distributed, with no single age group showing a dominant presence. In the older

age brackets, females often outnumber the males, which reflects longer female life expectancy. Overall, the population pyramid shows a stable community with a gradually aging population and moderate representation across all age groups.

The following table illustrates educational attainment levels in Ellendale and Dickey County. These are strong at the high school level, with 88.8% of Ellendale residents and 92.6% of Dickey County residents age 25 and older holding a high school diploma or higher. College completion rates are lower than the national average. Approximately 28.7% of Ellendale residents and 27.7% of Dickey County residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 50% of adults in the United States in 2021(1).

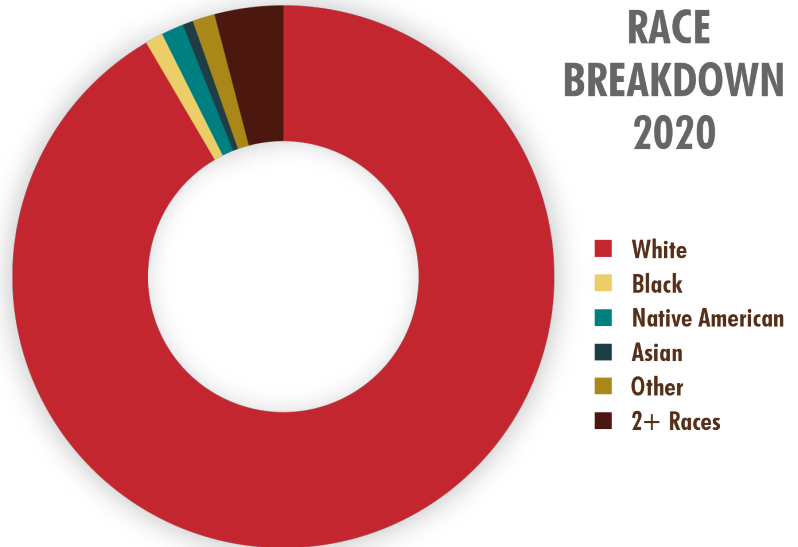
ELLENDALE POPULATION, 2020



BACHLORS DEGREE 25 YEARS AND OVER, 2016-2020				HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR HIGHER, 2016-2020			
DICKEY COUNTY		ELLENDALE		DICKEY COUNTY		ELLENDALE	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
907	27.70%	192	28.70%	3,031	92.60%	593	88.80%

Research on rural education suggests that place-based connections may influence these outcomes. College graduates are more likely to return home if they felt connected to their schools while growing up, or if they came from areas with lower overall college attainment (2). These findings highlight the importance of fostering strong educational and community ties to encourage local retention of college education residents, which may then help Ellendale replenish its population, create jobs, and increase its labor supply of knowledge economy workers, and the corresponding increased demand for goods and services.

The population of Ellendale is predominately white, representing most residents in the community. This reflects a relatively homogenous demographic profile similar to communities throughout the region and state.



Economic Characteristics

Ellendale's household income distribution in 2020 skewed toward lower-to-middle-income ranges compared to both Dickey County and the U.S. overall. The largest share of households (20.8%)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 2020			
INCOME	ELLENDALE	DICKEY COUNTY	USA
Less than \$10,000	11.4%	4.7%	5.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.7%	3.1%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	16.1%	11.6%	8.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	12.5%	8.1%	8.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	20.8%	10.5%	12.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13.5%	18.5%	17.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7.8%	15.1%	12.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7.1%	18.0%	15.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4.7%	4.6%	7.1%
\$200,000 or more	3.3%	5.7%	8.3%

earned between \$15,000 and \$24,999. A higher proportion of Ellendale households fell below \$25,000 (30.2%) compared to county (19.4%) and national (18.4%) levels, indicating a more modest local income base. Conversely, Ellendale has fewer high-income households,

with only 7.1% earning above \$100,000, compared to 22.6% in Dickey County and 31.0% nationally.

Unemployment rates within Dickey County have remained consistently low over the past decade which reflects a stable economy and consistent labor market. The highest unemployment rate increase (in 2020) coincided with the economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the higher rate rebounded back to its previous levels in the subsequent years, indicating continued economic strength within the county.

Between 2020 and 2024, employment across Dickey County showed modest shifts with growth in several sectors. In Dickey County, notable increases occurred in construction (+20 jobs), agriculture (+3), and healthcare (+5), reflecting strength in traditional and service-based industries. Employment remained stable in

manufacturing and educational services, while slight declines were seen in sectors such as transportation and professional services.

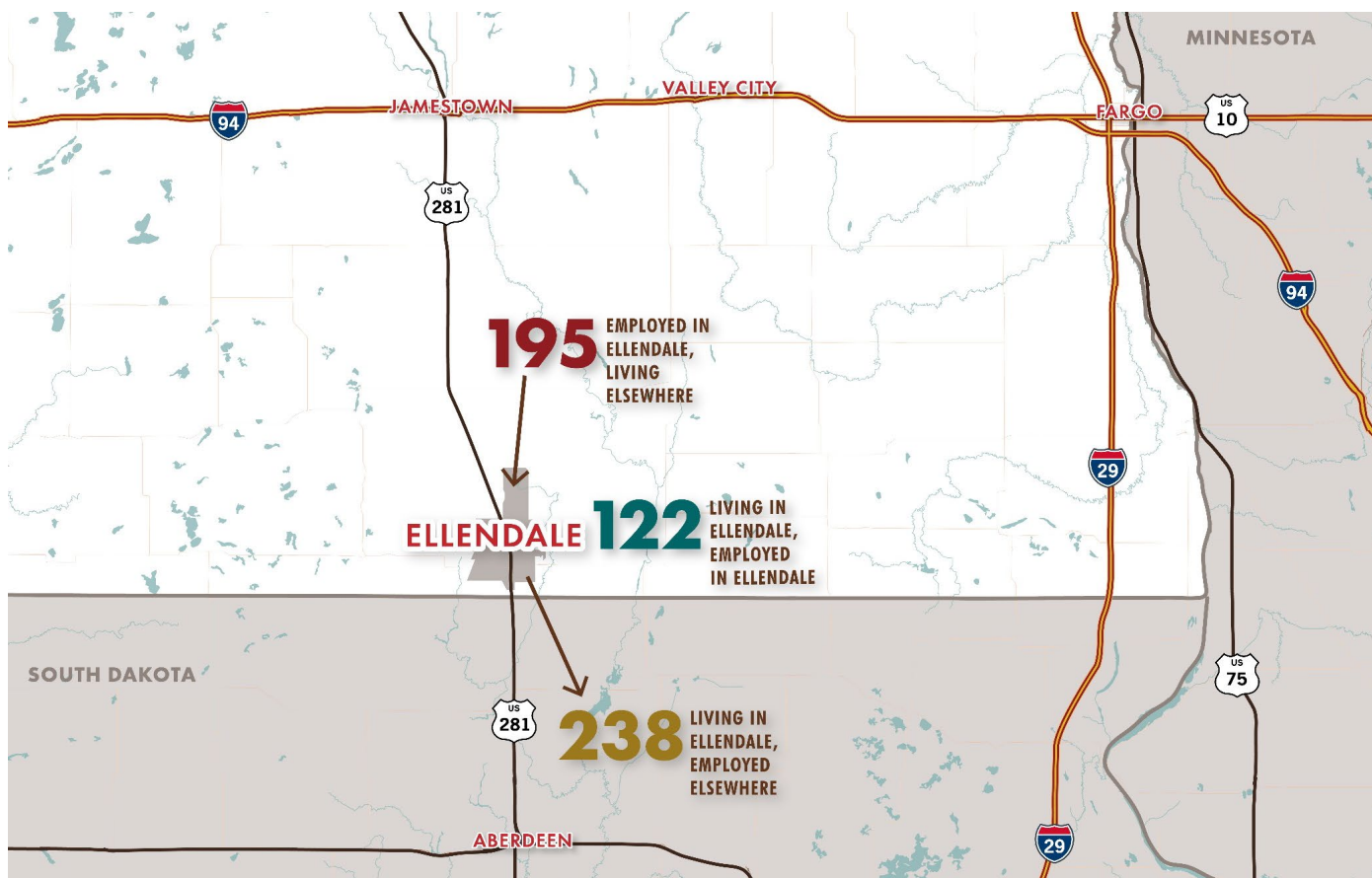
DICKEY COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	
YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
2013	2.3%
2014	2.0%
2015	1.8%
2016	1.9%
2017	1.7%
2018	1.6%
2019	1.7%
2020	3.2%
2021	2.3%
2022	1.7%
2023	1.8%

DICKEY COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY			
INDUSTRY	2020	2024	CHANGE
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	132	140	8
Utilities	***	***	***
Construction	45	287	242
Manufacturing	140	142	2
Wholesale Trade	189	198	9
Retail Trade	245	256	11
Transportation and Warehousing	20	16	-4
Information	***	***	***
Finance and Insurance	42	52	10
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	***	***	***
Professional and Technical Services	27	26	-1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	***	***	***
Administrative and Waste Services	***	***	***
Educational Services	6	39	33
Health Care and Social Assistance	310	271	-39
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	15	21	6
Accommodation and Food Service	97	89	-8
Other Services (except Public Administration)	51	56	5

Within Ellendale, construction saw a significant increase (+242 jobs), indicating major local development. Other areas with moderate gains include retail trade, finance and insurance, and

arts and recreation. Meanwhile, healthcare experienced a decrease (-39 jobs), and accommodation and food services also declined slightly.

As illustrated on the map, commuting data from 2022 shows that Ellendale serves as both a local employment center and a commuter community. A total of 195 people live outside Ellendale but travel in for work, while 122 residents both live and work within Ellendale. Meanwhile, 238 Ellendale residents commute to jobs outside the city. This pattern indicates a net outflow of workers, suggesting Ellendale provides employment opportunities for nearby residents, and many residents also rely on jobs in surrounding communities.

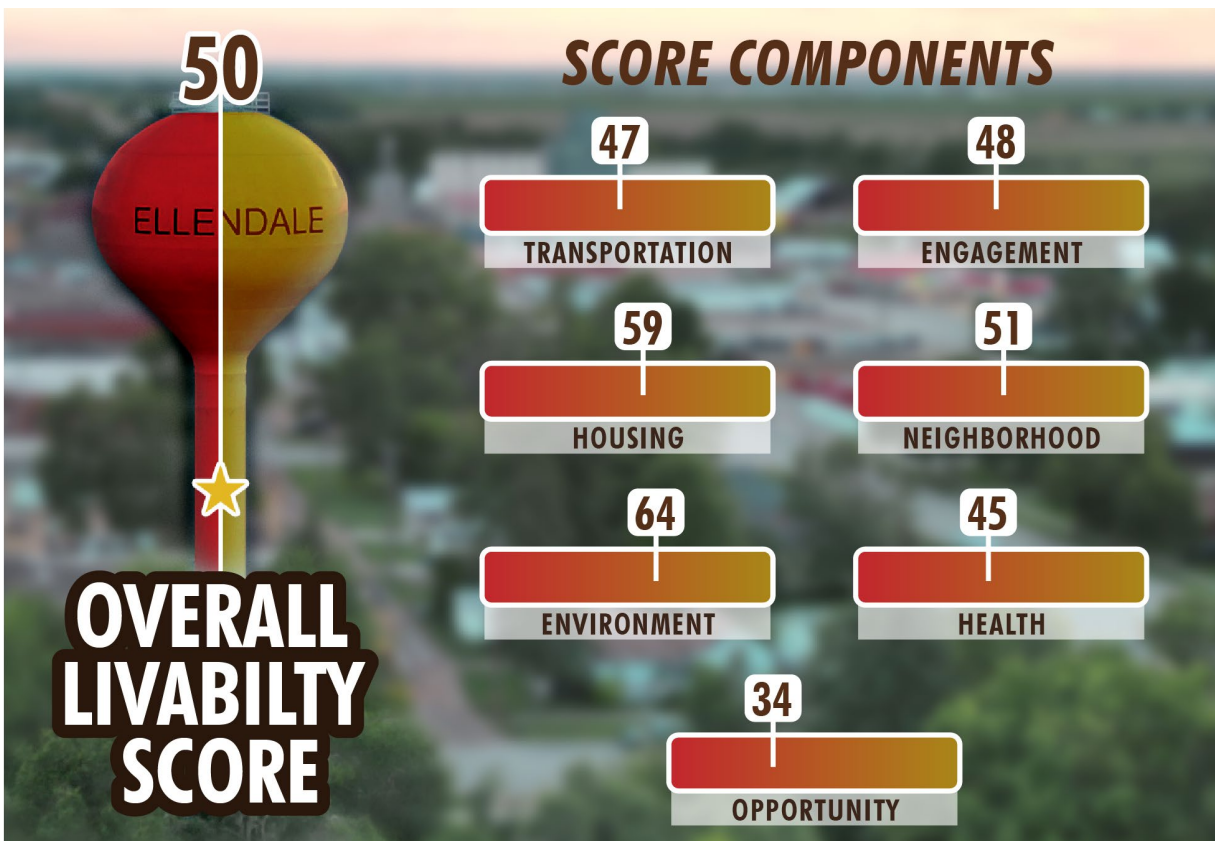


Quality of Life Indicators

A nationally recognized and frequently used measure for quality of life is the Livability Index compiled by the AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons). It measures quality of life across seven aspects of community living:

- ✓ Housing – Affordability and Access
- ✓ Neighborhood – Proximity and Security
- ✓ Transportation – Safety and Convenience
- ✓ Environment – Clean Air and Water
- ✓ Health – Prevention, Access, and Quality
- ✓ Engagement – Civic and Social Involvement
- ✓ Opportunity – Inclusion and Possibilities

When compared across other communities in the United States, Ellendale’s overall livability is squarely in the middle. Its housing score is above average because it scores better on housing cost, multi-family dwelling unit numbers, and the percentage of income spent on housing. In the neighborhood category, it scores slightly above average due primarily to its low crime rate. The transportation score is below average due to limited transit availability. The environmental score is significantly higher than average. The health score is lower than average due to a shortage of



healthcare professionals in the community and perceived limited access to exercise facilities. While Ellendale scores well on social and cultural involvement, its overall score is below average because of perceived lack of broadband services. The opportunity score is below average because of limited job opportunities and a lower-than-average high school graduation attainment for the population.

Responses to community survey questions (see pages 4 and 5) related to quality-of-life indicate overall satisfaction with housing adequacy, community safety, parks and recreation facilities. However, the survey also demonstrated a desire to see improvements in healthcare availability (including mental health services), childcare availability, restaurant options, and grocery product availability.

Community Assets

Using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) an inventory of local goods and services producing employers in Ellendale shows a broad range of employers and goods and services offerings. These include:

COMMUNITY ASSETS, 2024	
NAICS CATEGORY	NUMBER IN ELLENDALE
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	1
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	5
Utilities	0
Construction	3
Manufacturing	1
Wholesale Trade	2
Retail Trade	6
Transportation and Warehousing	2
Information	1
Finance and Insurance	4
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	2
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0
Administrative and Waste Services	0
Educational Services	3
Health Care and Social Assistance	5
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3
Accommodation and Food Service	8
Public Administration	2
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2

Essential Services Inventory and Gaps

While there is no concrete list of essential services for small communities to meet basic needs of its residents, the following chart identifies commonly listed essential services and identifies the number of services in Ellendale fitting each category.

COMMON ESSENTIAL SERVICES & AVAILABILITY, 2024

ESSENTIAL SERVICE CATEGORY	NUMBER IN ELLENDALE
Grocery stores provide access to fresh produce, meat and everyday essentials	1
Cafes, restaurants and coffee shops provide meals and act as a “third place”	5
Health clinics provide primary and preventative medical care	1
Childcare services support workforce participation	2
Convenience stores and filling stations provide local vehicle fueling	2
Automotive repair services provide local vehicle maintenance	3
Plumbing, HVAC, and electrical services provide building maintenance & remodeling	2
Hardware stores provide a variety of homeowner & business supplies & services	2
Pharmacies provide local prescription medicine & other healthcare support	1
Home repair and carpentry services provide building maintenance and remodeling	2
Event centers provide space for local public and private events	3
Churches	9

Given there are no concrete lists of essential services for small communities, especially as this relates to economic stability and attractiveness, several national studies were reviewed to offer insight into best practices for small town economic stability. One study noted factors that tend to make small towns attractive for business development. These factors included:

- A few large employers that allow infrastructure necessary to attract and hold onto new businesses
- Higher concentrations of educated people and higher median household income
- Greater endowments of natural amenities

Two additional studies focused on strategies helpful in sustaining prosperity in small towns. Key strategies included:

- Regional and cross-sector collaboration
- Promotion of local first economies
- Long term strategic planning
- Taking advantage of rural specific loans, grants, and other programs
- Networking to connect to the digital economy
- Supporting scalable tech entrepreneurs through an accelerator program
- Creating a tech talent development program in partnership with different kinds of tech talent content providers, whether locally or nationally, online or in person
- Creating mechanisms for entrepreneurs to network
- Creating or joining a network of communities with similar objectives

Community Stakeholder Observations

Community stakeholder workshops were used to review results from data collection and the community survey responses and identify goals and strategies for enhancing quality of life and promoting economic stability and growth in Ellendale.

During the first workshop, stakeholders discussed a range of opportunities and challenges impacting community growth, housing, education, and the local economy. It was noted that the City faces an aging housing stock, limited available lots, and a need for both affordable and accessible housing to meet demand from new businesses such as Applied Digital. Businesses struggle to compete with nearby larger cities on price and product variety, creating a cycle of low wages, reduced local spending, and limited inventory turnover. Grocery store quality and variety was a noted concern. The school district is valued for its small class sizes, strong arts and STEM programs, but faces behavioral changes in students, and a growing/large homeschooling population. Tourism is led by bird hunting, and there is interest in expanding attractions, such as through the Opera House rehabilitation and utilization. There is also interest in a community center that could provide childcare, recreation, and workforce opportunities. Residents emphasized the need for more activities for youth, mental health services, extended business hours, and developing a strong sense of inclusion for newcomers. The Job Development Authority plays a vital role in supporting business growth, but leadership transitions could impact momentum. Key goals include developing a business incubator space, engaging the younger residents in civic issues and activities, incentivizing local entrepreneurship, and ensuring that essential needs and amenities, from housing to entertainment, can be met within Ellendale.

At the second workshop, stakeholders affirmed that existing community themes remain relevant but emphasized additional priorities, including addressing blighted housing, strengthening the city's welcome culture for newcomers, and improving downtown aesthetics to attract residents, visitors, and students. Housing emerged as the top need, with needs to include options to serve seniors, and workers from Applied Digital. This was juxtaposed with the recognition that high land prices and limited developer interest hinder progress. Participants stressed that daycare must accompany housing development to retain families. A community center was again discussed as a multiuse hub for recreation, childcare, and social connection. Main Street revitalization, through improved lighting, sidewalks, storefront upgrades, and wayfinding, was seen as key to economic vitality, though funding and maintenance capacity remain challenges. Economic development efforts, led by the JDA, have supported recent business openings, but limited commercial space and Sunday business closures restrict growth. Stakeholders voiced interest in market studies, shop local incentives, and more diverse dining and social venues. The meeting reinforced that addressing housing, daycare, indoor recreation, and downtown improvements are felt to be foundational to Ellendale's long-term vibrancy.

NOISE Analysis

A NOISE Analysis is similar to a SWOT Analysis as both are used to evaluate internal and external factors that influence a community's ability to achieve its goals. While SWOT focuses on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, the NOISE framework identifies Needs, Opportunities, Improvements, Strengths, and Exceptions, and takes an action oriented and forward-thinking approach. Rather than emphasizing problems or limitations, NOISE identifies what is required to reach a vision, what opportunities can be leveraged, and what is already working well. This makes it particularly effective for communities like Ellendale that want to build upon existing assets and momentum while addressing challenges collaboratively.

In Ellendale's NOISE Analysis, stakeholders identified several Needs that must be present to achieve the community's perceptions. These include active community involvement, a strong and unified direction, better business and downtown development, increased funding and workforce participation, and expanded community services such as daycare, a grocery store, entertainment options for all age groups, and family orientated gathering spaces. An underlying theme to many of these needs is the importance of local engagement and willingness for residents to invest time, energy, and a positive mindset into shaping Ellendale's future.

The Opportunities reflect external and emerging possibilities that could help Ellendale attain its goals. These included revitalizing the Opera House for arts and entertainment, expanding healthcare and small business support, improving and better utilization of parks, and addressing unmet job openings. A growing openness to change and entrepreneurial spirit were seen as catalysis for progress, which suggests that Ellendale has potential to build on its strengths through innovation and collaboration.

To meet these needs and capitalize on opportunities, stakeholders identified potential Improvements or changes that would help move the community forward. These include developing a clear, actionable plan with community buy-in, being proactive and adaptable to change, enhancing Main Street and community beautification, and strengthening enforcement of property maintenance standards. Increased outreach and civic involvement were also viewed as steps to foster accountability and civic mindedness.

Ellendale's Strengths provide a solid foundation for growth. Residents highlighted the city's strong sense of community, caring for people, quality senior care facilities, churches, an excellent public school system, and community pride. The city's location, small-town atmosphere, and emerging energy and technology presence also contributed to its appeal and resilience.

Finally, the Exceptions represent areas where progress is already underway. These include a variety of youth activities, incentives for local business owners to expand or innovate, effective local leadership, a growing business community, and a collective will to see Ellendale succeed. These present efforts demonstrate that the community has momentum and the capacity to translate ideas into action.

What became abundantly clear through public engagement efforts is that most residents believe Ellendale is a great place to live and the NOISE Analysis offers a roadmap that emphasizes collaboration, adaptability, and positivity. Aligning Ellendale's identified needs and opportunities with its strengths and ongoing success, the city can continue building a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking community.

Strategic Direction, Goals, and Tactics

The Community Stakeholder Workshops identified several themes that form the plan's strategic direction. These themes were:

- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Business Development
- ✓ Community Services
- ✓ Community Culture
- ✓ Activities and Community Facilities

One or more Goals were developed pertaining to each identified theme. Tactics or more specific actions to achieve each goal are embedded within each Goal description. Each Goal description also identifies an organization or "champion" to lead the effort to achieve the goal. Potential timelines for completing each goal and evaluation metrics are also identified. Many of the goals are ambitious and will take time and resources not currently at hand to complete. One approach is for the identified champions to specify the need or gap and ideate programs or initiatives that could be delegated to the right person or entity to lead. It will be incumbent on the organizations and champions to determine the priority of goals and to initiate the development of resources and mechanisms to achieve them.

Housing

Goal 1: Expand affordable and accessible housing options to support community growth, inclusivity, and independence for all residents

Ellendale City Council will work with developers, nonprofits, employers, the Job Development Authority, the Dickey-Sargent County Housing Authority, and county and state agencies to expand affordable housing options for families, seniors, and the low-to-moderate income workforce. Through grants, public-private partnerships, and advocacy for vulnerable renters, the city will promote safe, stable, ADA compliant, and inclusive housing that supports community growth and stability. By encouraging new construction and the adaptation of existing homes using universal design principles and proximity to essential services, Ellendale aims to meet the needs of aging residents and individuals with limited mobility, helping all community members live safely, comfortably, and independently as active members of the community.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Increase in the number of housing units available in Ellendale, measured annually, with a targeted number of new units and rehabbed units for each year set by the City Council.
- ✓ By April 2026, completion of a Housing Study to forecast housing needs and identify strategies to meet forecasted needs and number of blighted properties in the community.
- ✓ Annual count of ADA compliant housing units available in Ellendale.
- ✓ Annual count of number of properties receiving incentives or assistance.

Goal 2: Expand existing incentives, resources, and enforcement policies to address blight and accessibility

Ellendale will refine its approach to address blight and improving accessibility by strengthening existing incentives, expanding available resources, and ensuring consistent enforcement of property maintenance standards. The city will collaborate with property owners, developers, and community organizations to encourage rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and removal of unsafe structures. Accessibility improvements will be integrated into revitalization efforts to make sure that public spaces, housing, and businesses are functional and welcoming for residents and visitors of all abilities. By combining incentives with fair enforcement, Ellendale will promote a cleaner, safer, and more inclusive built environment that reflects community pride. Potential collaborators for this effort include developers, nonprofits, employers, the Job Development Authority, the Dickey-Sargent County Housing Authority, and county and state agencies.

Evaluation Metrics:

- ✓ Reduction in the total number of identified blighted properties.
- ✓ Annual count of ADA compliant housing units available in Ellendale.
- ✓ Annual count of number of properties receiving incentives or assistance.

Champion:
City Council

Timeline:
2026-2030

Infrastructure

Goal 3: Improve sidewalks to make sure children and other residents can travel and recreate safely

Ellendale will invest in improving sidewalks so children, seniors, and all residents can travel and recreate safely through the community. The city will prioritize repairs to damaged sections, fill in gaps in the sidewalk network, and expand routes that connect neighborhoods to each other, schools, parks, and the downtown business district. In order to encourage property improvements throughout the city, Ellendale should lead by example and initiate downtown enhancements. By maintaining safe, accessible walkways, Ellendale will encourage active recreation, support public health, and strengthen neighborhood connectivity. A potential collaborator for this effort is the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT).

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ By March 2026, amend zoning and subdivision regulations to require new sidewalk construction for all new development within the city.
- ✓ Initiate an annual safety audit to take place in May each year that measures hazardous conditions for sidewalks and intersections.
- ✓ By July 2026, complete a capital improvements program element that aims to commit sufficient funding to address the highest priority sidewalk safety need each year.
- ✓ Measurement of ongoing improvement will be based on an increased annual percentage of good quality sidewalks in the city as observed by the annual safety audit.

Champion:
City Council

Timeline:
2026-2030

Business Development

Goal 4: Establish a shared workspace program and business incubator program to support economic development

The Job Development Authority will foster entrepreneurship and local economic growth by establishing a shared workspace program that provides worker stations, a meeting room, office furniture, high-speed internet access, bathroom and kitchen facilities. As a second step, the Job Development Authority will review the workspace utilization and collaborate with the Ellendale City Council in considering the value and feasibility of developing a business incubator program that provides more training and business support through collaboration with other economic development partners. By offering ready access to resources such as mentorship, networking opportunities, and business development support, Ellendale can help aspiring entrepreneurs and small businesses to overcome early challenges and thrive within the community. By cultivating a supportive environment for innovation, Ellendale will encourage local job creation and diversify its economic base. Potential collaborators for this effort include Ellendale City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Trinity Bible College, USDA Rural Development, ND Department of Commerce, South Central Dakota Regional Council, North Dakota Women's Business Center, Jamestown Regional Entrepreneur Center, and Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ By March 2027, establish a shared workspace program.
- ✓ Measurement of utilization of shared workspace may be tracked by number of business entities signed up to use the space and annual number of business days the space is used.
- ✓ By March 2028, consider whether to pursue a business incubator program.
- ✓ If a business incubator program is pursued, measurement of effectiveness should be based on jobs created/supported, number of businesses operating after one year of program utilization, and number of program inquiries made.

Champion:
Job Development
Authority

Timeline:
2026-2030

Goal 5: Address workforce shortages by collaborating with Trinity Bible College, high schools, and employers to attract young workers

The Job Development Authority (JDA) will address workforce shortages by collaborating with Trinity Bible College, local high schools, the Chamber of Commerce, and local employers to attract and retain young workers. The JDA will initiate the development of programs that connect students and recent graduates with local employment opportunities, internships, and training initiatives that align with community and business needs. Fostering pathways from education and employment can strengthen the workforce, support local businesses, and encourage young residents to build careers and lives in the community. Potential collaborators for this effort include Ellendale City Council, Trinity Bible College, Ellendale School District, Oakes School District, Southeast Region Career and Technology Center, Chamber of Commerce, ND Job Service, North Dakota Commerce's Workforce Development, Strengthen ND AmeriCorps Program, and local businesses.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Number of students and young workers placed in local jobs or internships annually.
- ✓ Number of placed students and young workers continuing to work in the community two years after placement.
- ✓ Number of young workers who continue to work in the community after 2 years or return to work in the community.

Champion:
Job Development
Authority

Timeline:
2026-2030

Goal 6: Support local businesses

The JDA will explore strategies such as incentive programs, marketing initiatives, technical assistance, and collaborative events that help businesses grow, attract customers, and remain competitive. By providing resources and programmatic support, the JDA aims to foster a resilient and thriving local business environment that benefits both residents and business owners. Potential collaborators for this effort include North Dakota Small Business Development Center (ND SBDC), North Dakota's Women's Business Center, Jamestown Regional Entrepreneur Center, NDSU Extension, Chamber of Commerce, City Council, and local businesses.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Number of local businesses participating in support programs or initiatives annually.
- ✓ Business growth, either reported by business owners or measured by increased sales tax.
- ✓ Residents should be surveyed periodically to understand business satisfaction after support efforts are initiated.

Champion:
Job Development
Authority

Timeline:
2026-2030

Goal 7: Expand dining and retail/service options with extended hours and targeted business recruitment

The Job Development Authority (JDA) will strengthen the local economy and community quality of life by encouraging the expansion and diversification of dining and retail/service options. Potential mechanisms to accomplish this goal include development of appropriate business spaces, encouraging strategically extended operating hours, and targeted business recruitment. A collaborative effort between the JDA, the Chamber of Commerce, the City Council, local business owners, and potential new enterprises should identify gaps in services and creative business development strategies to meet community needs. By encouraging a vibrant and diversified mix of businesses with enhanced hours of operation, Ellendale will increase local spending, improve quality of life, and create a more attractive environment for residents and visitors. Potential collaborators for this effort include Chamber of Commerce, City Council, and local businesses.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Annually track the number of dining and retail/service businesses able to maintain strategically extended operating hours.
- ✓ Number of new businesses locating in Ellendale on an annual basis.
- ✓ Number of new or retrofitted business spaces available for business development.
- ✓ Annually tracking sales tax revenue.

Champion:
Job Development
Authority

Timeline:
2026-2030

Community Services

Goal 8: Expand access to daycare

Ellendale will expand access to quality daycare to support families, attract new residents, and help parents participate fully in the workforce. The city will collaborate with existing providers, employers, and community organizations to increase availability, affordability, and variety of childcare options. By ensuring reliable daycare services, Ellendale will strengthen family stability, support workforce development, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents. Potential collaborators for this effort include North Dakota Health & Human Services, Ellendale Job Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, local churches, and local social service organizations.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Increased number of licensed daycare slots available each year.
- ✓ Decreased number of families on waiting list for licensed daycare services.

Champion:
City Council

Timeline:
2026-2028

Goal 9: Increase access to mental health services in the community and strengthen behavioral and special education support within schools through partnerships, telehealth, and mobile resources

Ellendale will improve access to mental health services and enhance behavioral and special education support within schools by leveraging partnerships, telehealth, and mobile resources. The Chamber of Commerce and School District will collaborate with relevant organizations to help residents and students have timely access to counseling, therapy, and specialized education support. By integrating innovative service delivery methods and community partnerships, the partners aim to support the mental health and wellbeing of all residents, improve student outcomes, and building a healthier, more resilient community. Potential collaborators for this effort include North Dakota Health & Human Services, Mental Health America of North Dakota, the North Dakota Mental Health Association, Telehealth Resource Center's Great Plains Telehealth Resource & Assistance Center, local churches or ministerials, local school district, and social service organizations.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Number and variety of mental health services available for in-person consultation within the community.
- ✓ Documented reduction in unmet behavioral or special education needs within the school district.

Champions:
 Dickey County Health District, Kedish House

Timeline:
 2026-2030

Goal 10: Broaden senior services and encourage enhanced options for senior housing

Ellendale will broaden senior services and advocacy to include housing support, aiding older residents to live safely, comfortably, and independently in the community. The city will collaborate with housing organizations, churches and other nonprofits, service providers, and regional partners to offer guidance, resources, and programs that address senior housing needs, including accessibility modifications, affordable options, and relocation assistance when necessary. By integrating housing support into senior services, Ellendale aims to strengthen quality of life, promote stability, and empower seniors to remain active and engaged in the community. Potential collaborators for this effort include developers, Jamestown United Way, and ND AARP.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Annually track the number of seniors assisted with housing support.
- ✓ Annually survey senior households to determine number needing improved housing accessibility or stability. Aim for a decreased percentage with unmet needs.

Champion:
City Council

Timeline:
2026-2028

Community Culture

Goal 11: Revive newcomer welcome programs such as welcome bags, welcome committee, or newcomers banquet to help residents feel valued and included

Ellendale will revive its newcomer programs, including welcome bags, a welcome committee, and a newcomers' banquet to help new residents feel valued, informed, and included in the community. By providing resources, information about local services, and opportunities to connect with neighbors, Ellendale will help foster a sense of belonging, encourage civic engagement, and strengthen community cohesion. Potential collaborators for this effort include local churches, Ellendale Public School, Trinity Bible College, local businesses, and city council.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Number of new residents participating in welcome programs annually.
- ✓ Percentage of newcomers reporting they feel welcomed and informed about community resources via newcomer survey.

Champion:
Chamber of Commerce

Timeline:
2026-2030

Goal 12: Celebrate and communicate community values like compassion and neighborliness, through local events, newspaper stories, or social media posts

Ellendale will celebrate and communicate its community values, such as compassion and neighborliness, by highlighting positive stories, hosting local events, and sharing achievements through newspapers, social media, and other communication channels. By actively promoting these values, the city aims to strengthen community pride, foster connections among residents, and reinforce a culture of support and engagement. Potential collaborators for this effort include local churches and non-profit organizations, and city council.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Number of community events, newspaper features, or social media posts highlighting positive aspects of the Ellendale community.
- ✓ Track resident engagement or involvement such as number attending community events or other indices of engagement.

Champion:
Chamber of Commerce

Timeline:
2026-2030

Activities and Community Facilities

Goal 13: Develop/build a multiuse community center that includes indoor recreation, event space, kitchen facilities that can support cooking classes, and potentially childcare facilities

Ellendale will develop a multiuse community center to serve as a hub for recreation, learning, and social connection. The facility will provide facilities for indoor recreational spaces, event areas, cooking and educational classes, and childcare services. It will offer opportunities for residents of all ages to engage, learn, and connect. By creating a central, accessible space the city aims to better the quality of life for its residents, support families, and foster a stronger sense of community. Potential collaborators for this effort include USDA Rural Development and North Dakota Community Foundation.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Creation of a community center steering committee to guide the financing, site selection, and design/construction processes.
- ✓ Completion of the community center project within a planned timeline and budget.

Champion:
Comprehensive Plan
Steering Committee

Timeline:
2026-2030

Goal 14: Support ongoing improvement to existing assets like the Opera House, walking paths, and community pool to maximize community use

Ellendale will support ongoing improvements to existing community assets, such as the Opera House, walking paths, and community pool, to make sure they remain functional and attractive for residents and visitors. By maintaining and enhancing these facilities, the city will maximize community use, encourage recreation and cultural engagement, and strengthen the overall quality of life in Ellendale. Potential collaborators include ND Council on the Arts, ND Department of Commerce, ND Forest Service, and ND Parks and Recreation Department.

Evaluation Metric:

- ✓ Develop a master list of community assets and their maintenance or facility improvement objectives by the end of 2026.
- ✓ Track the number of improvement or maintenance projects completed each year.

Champion:
Parks Department,
O.P.E.R.A. Inc,
other community
organizations

Timeline:
2026-2030

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Appendix

Potential Grant Funding for Strategies

Goal 1: Expand affordable and accessible housing options to support community growth, inclusivity, and independence for all residents

- North Dakota Housing Finance Agency's Housing Incentive Fund
- USDA Rural Development's Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants

Goal 2: Expand existing incentives, resources, and enforcement policies to address blight and accessibility

- North Dakota Housing Finance Agency's Housing Incentive Fund
- USDA Rural Development's Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants

Goal 3: Improve sidewalks to make sure children and other residents can travel and recreate safely

- North Dakota Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives (TA)
- US Department of Transportation (USDOT)'s Safe Streets for All (SS4A)
- USDOT's Rebuilding American infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) – is this being refunded??

Goal 4: Establish a shared workspace program and business incubator program to support economic development

- USDA's Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grants in North Dakota
- USDA's Rural Development's Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program in North Dakota
- North Dakota Department of Commerce's Regional Workforce Impact Program (RWIP)
- North Dakota Department of Commerce's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- North Dakota Department of Commerce's Innovate ND

Goal 5: Address workforce shortages by collaborating with Trinity Bible College, high schools, and employers to attract young workers

- North Dakota Department of Commerce's Technical Skills Training Grant
- North Dakota Department of Commerce's RWIP
- North Dakota Department of Commerce's Global Talent Office Grant Program
- North Dakota Job Service's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – is this still available as its federally funded?)

Goal 6: Support local businesses

- USDA's Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grants in North Dakota
- USDA's Rural Development's Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program in North Dakota

Goal 7: Expand dining and retail/service options with extended hours and targeted business recruitment

- USDA's Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grants in North Dakota

Goal 8: Expand access to daycare

- USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program
- Child Care & Development Block Grant in North Dakota
- North Dakota Health and Human Services' Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five
- First Children's Finance's Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP)
- Choice Banks's Child Care Grant Program

Goal 9: Increase access to mental health services in the community and strengthen behavioral and special education support within schools through partnerships, telehealth, and mobile resources

- US Department of Education's School-Based Mental Health Services Grant Program
- USDA Rural Development's Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants (will it reopen?)

Goal 10: Broaden senior services and encourage enhanced options for senior housing

- North Dakota Housing Finance Agency's Housing Incentive Fund
- USDA Rural Development's Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants

Goal 11: Revive newcomers welcome programs such as welcome bags, welcome committee, or newcomers banquet to help residents feel valued and included

- Foundation for Rural Service's Community Grant Program
- Trust for Civic Life's Civic Experiment Grants
- USDA Rural Development's Rural Community Development Initiative Grants

Goal 12: Celebrate and communicate community values like compassion and neighborliness, though local events, newspaper stories, or social media posts

- Foundation for Rural Services' Community Grant Program

Goal 13: Develop/build a multiuse center that includes indoor recreation, event space, kitchen facilities that support cooking classes, and potentially childcare facilities

- USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant
- USDA Rural Development's Initiative Grants



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

Goal 14: Support ongoing improvement to existing assets like the Opera House, walking paths, and community pool to maximize community use

- North Dakota Department of Commerce's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)