



VISIT MANDAN

WHERE THE WEST BEGINS

BUSINESS STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2028

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Mandan Progress Organization's strategic plan for 2024-2028 is focused on revitalizing the Morton County and City of Mandan region through the 'Visit Mandan' brand. With a mission to enhance community spirit and economic vitality, the plan is structured around four core values: Community Engagement, Innovative Excellence, Collaborative Partnerships, and Sustainable Growth. The plan includes specific goals for each year, leading up to the 150th anniversary celebrations of Mandan Rodeo Days and laying the groundwork for the 2031 anniversaries of Morton County and Mandan. This blueprint is committed to transforming the area into a renowned destination for culture, recreation, and business, enriching the community and attracting both residents and visitors.

MISSION STATEMENT

"Empower the Mandan-Morton County and Bismarck Metro area by orchestrating dynamic experiences that celebrate our community's unique spirit, attract diverse audiences, and foster synergistic collaboration among local businesses and stakeholders, thereby enhancing the area's cultural and economic vitality."

VISION STATEMENT

"To become the leading force in Mandan-Morton County's transformation, driving cultural and economic growth through innovative events and partnerships, and aiming to increase community engagement and visitor attraction by 50% by 2031."

OUR VALUES

1 Community Engagement

MPO values active participation and engagement with the local community, fostering a sense of unity and belonging. This involves not just organizing events but also ensuring that these events reflect the spirit and diversity of Mandan.

2 Collaborative Partnerships

Valuing strong partnerships with local businesses, government entities, and other organizations, MPO believes in working together to achieve common goals. This collaboration extends to stakeholders in the City of Mandan, Mandan Park District, Mandan Public School District, Morton County, ND State Parks, and beyond.

3 Innovative Excellence

MPO is committed to innovation in event planning and community projects, striving for excellence in every endeavor. This includes continually reimagining and improving events like the 'Mandan Holiday Lights on Main' and initiatives under the 'Visit Mandan' brand.

4 Sustainable Growth

Ensuring the long-term growth and sustainability of the Mandan area's business and cultural landscape is central to MPO's values. This includes not only economic growth but also the sustainable development of the community in a way that respects and enhances the local environment and heritage.

COMPANY ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS - Common Themes

Event Management and Engagement: Passion for events, signature events, community attraction model, and successful execution of staple events.

Community Integration and Visibility: Strong community visibility and promotion, engagement with local organizations, and partnerships with city, county, schools, state parks, and tourism.

Leadership and Governance: Engaged board, strong leadership, and a dedicated team including key individuals like Matt & Arlyn.

Infrastructure and Resources: Access to venues like Dykshoorn Park, city support, and existing relationships with community organizations.

Branding and Vision: The 'Visit Mandan' brand and a clear trajectory for community development.

Innovation and Openness: Openness to new ideas and passion for community growth.

COMPANY ANALYSIS

WEAKNESSES - *Common Themes*

Financial Dependency and Funding Challenges: Reliance on sponsorship dollars, lack of varied revenue streams, and funding mechanisms.

Operational Constraints: Short staffing, stretched resources, and challenges in managing volunteers.

Structural and Policy Ambiguities: Unclear city direction concerning ordinances and policies, gray areas of responsibility, and undefined roles.

Event and Partnership Limitations: Resistance to change in event management, stagnant events, and variability in vendor service quality.

Branding and Vision: The 'Visit Mandan' brand and a clear trajectory for community development.

Innovation and Openness: Openness to new ideas and passion for community growth.

OPPORTUNITIES - *Common Themes*

Partnership Expansion: Opportunities for new and creative partnerships with city, county, schools, parks, state parks, and other entities.

Event Innovation and Management: Potential to revamp existing events, create new events, and manage public spaces more effectively.

Community and Infrastructure Development: Utilizing spaces like Dykshoorn Park and the Bandshell stage, and exploring opportunities outside of the downtown corridor.

Brand and Community Expansion: Leveraging the 'Visit Mandan' brand, involving Mandan High School students, developing volunteer engagement, and enhancing member benefits.

Strategic Growth Initiatives: Focus on internship programs, membership platforms, and attracting business support.

Innovation and Openness: Openness to new ideas and passion for community growth.

THREATS - *Common Themes*

Competitive Pressures and Market Dynamics: Bismarck's growth in events and programming, competing events, and the lure of Bismarck for businesses.

Operational and Environmental Risks: Weather challenges, lack of volunteers, and potential for accidents at events.

Economic and Funding Uncertainties: Sponsorship cutbacks, potential recessions, and dependency on external funding.

Perception and Community Engagement Issues: The 'grass is greener' syndrome with businesses moving to Bismarck and short-sighted views from some community members.

Strategic Growth Initiatives: Focus on internship programs, membership platforms, and attracting business support.

SWOT SUMMARY

The SWOT analysis for the Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) reveals a multifaceted picture of its operational environment. Strengths lie in its robust event management and community engagement, marked by a passion for events, high community visibility, strong leadership, and a dedicated team. The organization also benefits from good infrastructure and resources, and its 'Visit Mandan' branding is a clear driver of its vision and innovation. However, weaknesses such as financial dependency, operational constraints due to staffing challenges, structural ambiguities, and limitations in event and partnership dynamics pose challenges. Opportunities for growth are abundant, including potential for partnership expansion, event innovation, community and infrastructure development, and strategic growth initiatives like internships and enhanced member benefits. Conversely, threats like competitive pressures from neighboring Bismarck, operational and environmental risks, economic uncertainties, and perception issues in community engagement could impact MPO's progress. These insights highlight where MPO excels, the internal and external challenges it faces, and avenues for future growth and improvement.

STRATEGIC GOALS

SHORT-TERM (1-2 Years):

Goal: To strengthen the organizational foundation and expand community engagement.

Actions:

- Achieve a 30% increase in social media followers and website traffic, along with a 25% rise in online engagement metrics to strengthen the 'Visit Mandan' brand and digital presence.
- Reduce reliance on sponsorship dollars by 20% and secure at least five new long-term funding partnerships (Community Heros) to develop a more diversified funding strategy. Increase general memberships by 50%
- Increase volunteer numbers by 40% through the implementation of a robust volunteer recruitment and reward system.
- Establish a minimum of five new collaborative initiatives with local businesses, schools, and the city, and enhance community involvement in program development by 25%.

LONG-TERM (3-5 Years):

Goal: To establish MPO as a leading force in regional event management and a central hub for community and cultural activities in Mandan-Morton County.

Actions:

- Secure at least 10 major partnerships and funding sources to facilitate the development/management of public spaces and event spaces, enhancing MPO's role in city wide event management.
- Launch at least two signature events with state wide recognition and develop an city entertainment district to establish that district as a central hub for community and cultural activities.
- Expand MPO's influence to cover at least two additional community areas and demographics beyond downtown Mandan, ensuring a more inclusive and widespread impact.
- Implement a comprehensive rebranding strategy combining Visit Mandan, City of Mandan, and Morton County. Including website development social expansion and marketing leadership. Align Visit Mandan with its expanded role and vision, aiming for at least a 30% increase in brand recognition and online presence.

5 Year Results

In the first two years, the Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) aims to strengthen its organizational foundation and expand community engagement. The goals include achieving a 30% increase in social media followers and website traffic, along with a 25% rise in online engagement metrics to enhance the 'Visit Mandan' brand. MPO plans to reduce its reliance on sponsorship dollars by 20%, secure at least five new long-term funding partnerships, and increase general memberships by 50%. Additionally, the organization aims to increase volunteer numbers by 40% through a robust recruitment and reward system, and establish at least five new collaborative initiatives to enhance community involvement in program development by 25%.

In the following three to five years, MPO's goal is to become a leading force in regional event management and a central hub for community and cultural activities in Mandan-Morton County. Actions include securing at least 10 major partnerships and funding sources for the development and management of public and event spaces, launching at least two signature events with statewide recognition, and developing a city entertainment district. MPO also aims to expand its influence to cover at least two additional community areas and demographics beyond downtown Mandan. A comprehensive rebranding strategy will be implemented, combining Visit Mandan, City of Mandan, and Morton County, with a focus on website development, social expansion, and marketing leadership. The goal is to align Visit Mandan with its expanded role and vision, aiming for at least a 30% increase in brand recognition and online presence.

ACTION PLAN

Year 1-2: Establishing Foundations and Strengthening Community Engagement

Enhance ‘Visit Mandan’ Brand and Digital Presence

- Conduct a rebrand audit and exercises, update branding materials and strategies, and redesign the website.
- Increase social media engagement/consolidation and online marketing.
- Work with city and county to adopt Visit Mandan/ Visit Morton as official destination branding

Diversify Funding Sources

- Identify new sponsors, multi-year sponsorships, apply for grants, visitor fund requests and continue to promote hero memberships.
- Host monthly member mixers and education sessions, also quarterly fundraising events to support MPO.

Expand Volunteer Recruitment and Event Committees

- Launch a volunteer recruitment campaign and expand an online sign-up system.
- Offer training and recognition for volunteers.
- Recruit new members to Event Committees

Initiate Community Partnerships

- Increase our collaborations with local businesses, MPR, MPS and city/county representatives.
- Encourage new joint events and community projects.

Timeline

Completion within the first year, ongoing updates

Begin immediately, ongoing development

Initiate within the first 6 months, ongoing management

Ongoing Collaboration

Responsibility

MPO Executive Team

MPO Executive Team, Membership Engagement Committee

MPO Executive Team

Sales & Development/Events

1-2 YEAR ACTION SUMMARY

Over the next 1-2 years, the Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) plans to embark on a comprehensive initiative to enhance its brand and community engagement. Key actions include conducting a brand audit, updating branding materials, and redesigning the website to strengthen the ‘Visit Mandan’ brand and digital presence, including increasing social media engagement and consolidating online marketing efforts. In tandem, MPO will work with city and county authorities to officially adopt ‘Visit Mandan/Visit Morton’ as the destination brand. To ensure financial sustainability, the plan involves diversifying funding sources by identifying new sponsors, securing multi-year sponsorships, applying for grants, visitor fund requests, and promoting hero memberships. Additionally, quarterly fundraising events will be organized to support MPO’s initiatives. Expanding volunteer recruitment is also a priority, with plans to launch a volunteer recruitment campaign, expand online sign-up systems, and offer training and recognition programs. Further, MPO aims to recruit new members to its event committees. In terms of community engagement, the focus will be on increasing collaborations with local businesses, Mandan Park Recreation (MPR), Mandan Public Schools (MPS), and city/county representatives, while encouraging joint events and community projects.

ACTION PLAN

Year 3-5: Expanding Reach and Event Innovation

Develop Major Event Facilities and Public Spaces

- Secured funding and partners collaboration for Heritage Park project
- Designing and manage plan for facilitating large scale events .
- Work with city and county on other public space activation projects. i.e alley activations, parking lot festivals etc.

Launch Signature Anniversary Events - US 250th, MRD 150th, Mandan Morton 150th

- Create unique events that align with the upcoming anniversaries with broad appeal and market nationally.
- Engage with national sponsors and media.
- Marketing Destination on a national and global level through American Bus Association (ABA), and Rocky Mountain International (RMI)

Financial Stability

- Develop and implement a long-term financial model to forecast and manage revenues and expenses.
- Explore additional revenue streams such as gaming operations, merchandise sales, and rental income.
- Maintain and grow the multi-year funding commitments and partnerships.
- Allocate a portion of revenue for capital investments and in event infrastructure.
- Grow establish a reserve fund for financial stability and unforeseen circumstances.

Expand beyond Downtown

- Identify and engage with potential areas for expansion
- Launch new events and community projects in expanded areas

Timeline

Begin planning in Year 3, ongoing execution

2026 to 2028 extended to 2031

Start in Year 3, ongoing development

5 Year be positioned to begin planning and implementation

Responsibility

MPO Executive Team / City of Mandan

Event Planning Team

Executive Director/Board of Directors

Expansion and Growth Committee/City Planning

3-5 YEAR ACTION SUMMARY

In the 3 to 5 year phase of its strategic plan, the Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) focuses on expanding its event infrastructure and financial base, while broadening its community impact. This includes developing major event facilities like Heritage Park, planning large-scale events for significant anniversaries, and enhancing public space usage. Marketing efforts will be amplified on a national and global scale. Financially, MPO will diversify revenue streams, strengthen partnerships, and establish a reserve fund for stability. The plan also encompasses expanding beyond downtown Mandan, launching new events and projects in additional areas, solidifying MPO's position as a key cultural and economic driver in the region.

THE FUTURE

The Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) envisions a future where it emerges as a leader in event management and a central figure in destination development. By 2031, MPO aims to be the driving force behind major events and attractions in Mandan and Morton County, demonstrating excellence in collaboration, cooperation, and partnership with local entities, including the city, library, and county. This enhanced role is not just about organizing events but also about nurturing the community's development and securing funding for economic growth and tourism-related initiatives. As MPO grows, its image is set to evolve significantly. The organization aspires to become a renowned hub for visitors, recognized for hosting nationally acclaimed events and being a leading destination marketing organization. Plans for rebranding, including possibly a new organization name, and enhancing the 'Visit Mandan' digital presence, are key strategies to bolster its reputation and reach. MPO's commitment to becoming the main point of contact for community events and tourism in the region will establish it as a trusted authority in promoting local interests.

Facilitating larger roles in the community, MPO aims to solidify its identity as a champion of Mandan/Morton County and a central marketing hub for regional events and tourism. The organization plans to take full management of public spaces and possible future event facilities, ensuring comprehensive and professional event planning. Marketing and promotion will be critical, with the goal of developing the region as the festival capital of North Dakota. Additionally, MPO's aspirations extend to financial growth and infrastructure development. With ambitions for a larger budget and trust funds, the organization plans to assist in the development of new facilities, such as an event center and expanded event spaces near future hotels. The introduction of new amenities and attractions, including an entertainment plaza, pavilions, a skating rink, a splash pad, and drone shows, will complement the development of an entertainment district, enhancing the region's appeal.

Organizational development is also a priority for MPO. The coming years will focus on increasing full-time staff, solidifying organizational and committee structures, and expanding beyond downtown. This growth aligns with the organization's commitment to deeper community and cultural engagement. Initiatives like forming a youth committee, hosting Christmas markets, supporting a softball team, building up attractions, creating unique recreation opportunities, and organizing regular summer festivals are envisioned to engage the community profoundly. Through these ambitious plans and aspirations, MPO aims not only to enhance the quality of life in Mandan but also to position the region as a vibrant hub for culture, recreation, and business, contributing significantly to its cultural and economic fabric.

"Experience the Spirit of the West in Morton County and City of Mandan"



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Mandan Progress Organization
2023 Strategic Plan (Oct 2023)