On August 29th, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee completed a SWOT analysis, providing their opinions on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the City of Fairmont.
Personal Feedback

Individual steering committee members completed a SWOT analysis with the following results:

**Strengths**

- Excellent Education with focus on vocational education
- Community Volunteers / giving community members
- Diverse job opportunities (Agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, constructions, education and government)
- Lakes and parks
- Traffic
- Mayo
- Diversity in workforce
- School system – public and private
- Recreation importance – trails
- Agriculture
- Significant wealth in area
- Affordable housing
- Strong sense of community
- Strong community foundations and charities
- Geographical location
- Size
- Available land
- I-90
- Retail/healthcare hub
- Bacon Capital / the lakes radio station
- Some young people moving back

**Weaknesses**

- Millennials may feel lack of things to do
- Options for new multi-family housing
- Some of our own have a negative attitude about who and what we are
- Empty Businesses
- Roads
- Housing opportunities
- Acceptance of diversity
- Lack of skilled workforce
Aging population
Aging Infrastructure
Shortage and quality of rental housing
Difficult to attract young professionals
Workforce shortage
Close to states with lower taxes
Lack of retail
Blighted neighborhoods
“I-90 view” is not accurate representation of Fairmont
Conservative culture/ leadership
Broadband choices
Childcare availability
Lack of jobs to lure people back from metro
Entrance to town on highway 15
No campground on lake
Low unemployment

Opportunities
Build on regional health care (elderly population)
Healthcare providers are generally younger
Affordability of available housing
Lakes recreation, trails, 500 acres of park
Industrial Expansion
Regenerate college
New Martin County Campus
Other cities and towns in area shrinking
Reasonable cost of houses to purchase
Multiple areas for expansion
Food Processing
Young people coming back to Fairmont
Promoting employment growth
New families coming to Fairmont
Getting more jobs
Lake values rising
Increase in immigrant population
Revitalization of housing / new homes / apartments downtown (adding incentives)
Lack of amenities in surrounding communities
Serious effort in childcare core team
• Adding amenities such as a community center
• The business of caring for the aging population
• Replacing baby boomers in the workforce
• Fairmont as a more regional hub rather than Mankato
• Location to major highways
• Low immigrants – get ready
• Using retirees in the workforce
• Returning graduates
• Increase in business confidence

Threats

• Agriculture Economy
• State LGA
• Distance to Metro Area
• Empty Downtown
• Lose more big box stores
• Daycare availability
• Housing availability
• Tariffs
• Commodity prices
• Drug and alcohol abuse
• Amazon type companies
• Aging population
• Loss of tax base
• Comparing and competing with Mankato
• Negative minority dominating discussion
• Nearby communities seen as more desirable
• Cost of development
• Long term job growth (should we offer subsidies? Ethanol plants?)
• NAFTA – trade agreements
• Building code – downtown buildings
• Cost of rental housing
• Living wage income
Group feedback
After providing individual analysis, steering committee members were combined into three groups which provide the following refined SWOT Analysis.

Strengths
- Lakes and Parks
- Strong school districts + vacations and private schools
- Geographic Location
- Lack of traffic
- Community volunteers/ organizes
- Lots and varied community organizations
- Amenities
- Healthcare choices
- Strong community support for youth
- Active, passionate youth leaders

Weaknesses
- Housing is in poor or rough conditions
- Perceived lack of home ownership
- Lack of housing
- Infrastructure
- Empty business downtown
- Millennials may feel a lack of things to do
- Some of our own have a negative attitude about what and who we are
- Community narrative among residents
- Lack of recognition of agriculture importance among legislators
- Lack of workforce

Opportunities
- Brain Gain – Attract young people coming back
- Adding to Agriculture value
- Elderly care
- Health care hub for region – elderly people can bring young people to take care of them
- Room for industrial expansion
- College home health care
- Young people
- School workforce program expansion
• Focused effort/ funding for entrepreneurs

Threats
• Agriculture environment / economy
• Lack of (good) workforce
• State LGA loss population loss = funding loss
• Aging community
• Drug and Alcohol abuse
• Daycare availability
• Housing
• Funding loss for under 10,000