



AN ATLAS COMMUNITY STUDIOS

# Placemaking Action Plan for the City of Linton, ND

# **about atlas community studios**

Atlas Community Studios was founded by a small, diverse group of creatives, problem solvers, and entrepreneurs looking for the opportunity to advance the economic prosperity of small and rural communities across the country.

With more than 65 years of combined experience spanning both the public and private sectors, the Atlas team specializes in strategic planning, economic development, and creative placemaking.

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view the plan online: [whylintonnd.com](http://whylintonnd.com)



# introduction

Linton, ND is a *small but mighty* community and looking to make a name for itself. Linton's businesses and roughly 1,000 residents enjoy the benefits of small-town charm while still having access to amenities in Bismarck, just an hour away. However, Linton understands that to attract and retain people and jobs, it must offer unique amenities of their own. Leaders are determined to make Linton a better place for current residents and to attract future residents by making big things happen. By embarking on this placemaking effort, Linton is taking the first step in doing just that.

The Linton Industrial Development Corporation has partnered with Atlas Community Studios to develop a placemaking action plan for the city of Linton, North Dakota.

### **Goals of the Placemaking Action Plan**

Linton already holds key amenities that many rural communities wish they had – a hospital, a thriving school district, a country club, and more! They want to utilize those existing assets and develop a plan to create more amenities desired by the community.

The overall goals of the creative placemaking process are:

- Complete impactful & sustainable economic & social development projects
- Increase population & tourism
- Improve overall quality of life of current & future residents

# community visioning

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## introduction

Public engagement and input are necessary when developing a strategy or plan for an entire community. The community members must have an opportunity to give feedback and feel that their voices are heard. Throughout this process, this was our mantra. Due to COVID-19, we held virtual visioning sessions, first with the Steering Committee and then with the general public. This was where residents of Linton could share their hopes and dreams—ideas big and small—for what they see as Linton’s future.

In April 2021, Atlas Community Studios had the opportunity to visit the community of Linton. During this visit, they were able to tour the town, see the downtown district, chat with stakeholders, and hear Linton residents’ dreams and aspirations for the community. This time spent in Linton was essential to build rapport and see the community in-person to help develop a cohesive and inclusive placemaking plan.

### **The key topics discussed during the visioning sessions and public input meetings included:**

- Housing Infrastructure
- Main Street Business Development
- Family Activities & Amenities

# steering committee + public visioning sessions

To kickstart the placemaking process, a Steering Committee visioning session was held in February 2021. This 90-minute visioning session allowed for the Steering Committee to highlight Linton's current assets, identify current and future challenges, and brainstorm ideas of what they want Linton to become over the next 20 years.

Another visioning session was held for the public in March 2021. Again, residents were asked similar questions on Linton's current assets, challenges and potential barriers, and big ideas they envision for their community.

check out **appendix a** to read the visioning session responses!



## focus groups

Atlas Community Studios held many discussions with the Steering Committee, public officials, downtown business owners, and engaged citizens to learn more about their wants and dreams for Linton. The purpose of the focus groups was to dig deeper into the key topics identified in the visioning sessions. Atlas Community Studios heard more about

community members' personal experiences and the previous projects completed and collected more details on creating a plan that will best serve Linton.

## one-on-one interviews

More than 20 interviews were conducted in-person, by phone, or over Zoom during the community visioning process. A majority of interviews were conducted with local employers to learn about their role in the community and the challenges they face, specifically regarding COVID-19.

Atlas conducted additional interviews with economic development professionals in North Dakota, including local developers, Department of Commerce officials, and Regional Council Representatives. Atlas also interviewed officials from other North Dakota communities that have seen success with economic development projects in recent years.



check out **appendix b** to read the interview summary!



# key findings

After completing the visioning process, Atlas Community Studios learned that the following were strong assets in the Linton community:

- Hospital
- School District
- Access to the Missouri River

Linton has a good sense of community where people are friendly and care about one another. They take pride in their amenities, such as the hospital and restaurants, while boasting about the education programs offered through the high school. Linton also has access to recreational amenities, such as the Missouri River, Seeman Park, and the country club.

However, residents expressed their concern about barriers within the community:

- Housing
- Daycare

These two concepts were the most mentioned. People who grew up in Linton and want to return home have trouble finding adequate housing due to the short supply of suitable homes. A lack of rental units was also mentioned for individuals not looking to buy a home right away or for those who want to downsize. Daycare was another major barrier to growth in Linton. Some employers said that they cannot hire a workforce due to lack of daycare options.

During a site visit in April 2021, Atlas Community Studios toured various buildings in Linton to determine which location would be a viable Opportunity Zone project. Although many buildings could become valid contenders, such as the Linton Cafe and Lanes building, the Starlite bar and restaurant, and the Knights of Columbus event space, the Willows Apartment building was the strongest candidate with the ability to provide retail space for new businesses, a large theater space that could potentially hold community events, and a second floor with 20 apartment units that could expand housing options for residents.

# housing

## overview

Over the past few decades, people young and old have chosen to leave urban centers and move to surrounding suburbs and rural areas in search of more space, better schools, and cheaper living. In 2020, this was exacerbated even more by COVID-19. Now, people are flooding these areas because many have the luxury of [working remotely](#) and are able to keep their high-paying job while seeking out a more affordable lifestyle.

However, because of COVID, paired with the new ability to work remotely, the housing market took off due to people wanting to acquire more space or moving to an entirely new location. This has now caused housing prices to skyrocket, single-family home prices [jumped 20%](#) in the last year. The [average sale price](#) for a home hit \$350,000 in May 2021, the highest ever recorded since the data began being collected in 1999. A combination of people looking to move outside of cities and also find affordable housing provides a unique opportunity for rural areas to step up and promote themselves as a solution.

## background

An analysis was conducted to better understand the housing market in Linton. A variety of data sources were analyzed to

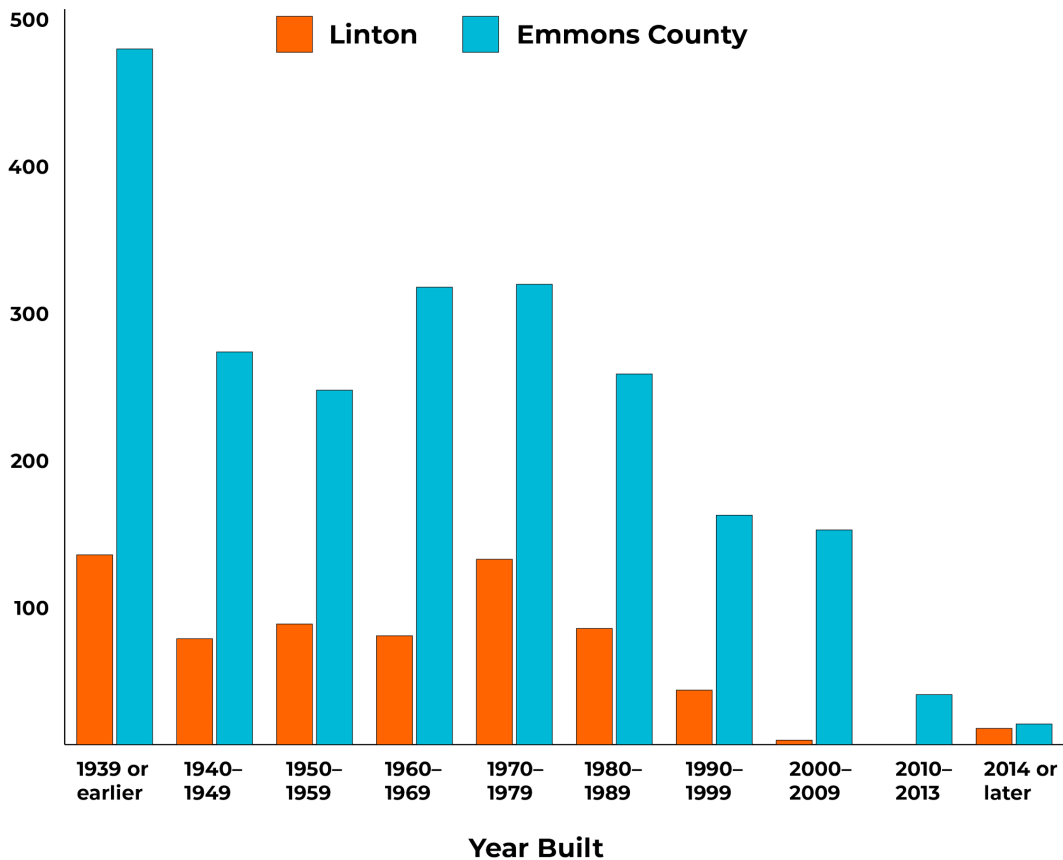
identify trends and challenges Linton faces with housing. These results were used to help identify strategies and models that can support Linton with new housing development, blight remediation, and home rehabilitation.

Over the past few decades, Linton has seen a large decrease in its population after its peak in 1960. Since 1970, Linton’s population has decreased by 728 people, resulting in a 43% loss of population.

Census Year	Population	Percent Change
1950	1,675	—
1960	1,826	+9.01%
1970	1,695	(7.17%)
1980	1,561	(7.91%)
1990	1,410	(9.67%)
2000	1,321	(6.31%)
2010	1,097	(16.96%)
2020	967	(11.85%)
2021	956	(1.14%)

*\*Population estimate provided by U.S. Census | SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau*

Linton, like many rural areas across the country, also has an older housing stock. As indicated by the graph on the following page, Linton’s housing growth peaked in the 1930s and again in the 1970s, and has slowly dwindled since.



SOURCE: U.S. Census via American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates 2015-2019

Decreasing population and an aging housing stock can make it difficult to attract developers to build new homes. Current median home prices and lumber costs can also disincentive housing development in rural areas due to lack of demand. For example, the average home value in Linton is \$79,200, while the average home value in North Dakota is \$193,900 and \$217,500 in the U.S. As demonstrated in the housing assessment conducted by Atlas, fortunately, Linton’s current housing market is stable, with a variety of homes (valued from less than \$40,000 to more than \$80,000) being sold in the past three years. This trend also demonstrates that Linton has an affordable housing market. This is a great advantage for Linton and should be used as a promotional tool. However,

just because the housing market is stable, it's also important not to let it become stagnant.

Not only is it becoming more costly for individuals and families to build new homes, it is also difficult for current homeowners to fix up older homes. Renovations for older homes, of which the average age of homes in Linton is almost 60 years old, can be costly and disincentivizes and or prices out current homeowners from making improvements. Without regular maintenance or much-needed renovation(s), homes continue to wear down and could become dilapidated, to the point where demolition is necessary.

In order to combat some of these barriers, Linton should be proactive and explore various incentive programs and models that encourage new housing development while also improving the quality and quantity of the existing housing stock.

## **linton's recent housing efforts**

The City of Linton recently purchased a piece of land east of town to expand residential development. This is a great first step for Linton to encourage new builds within the community! Referred to as the 8th Street Addition, it contains 21 residential lots, ranging in size from .30 to .61 acres and ranging in price from around \$40k to \$80k.

As mentioned earlier, COVID has exacerbated the housing market and significantly increased prices, not only of existing homes but the price to build a new home as well. According to [HomeGuide](#), it's around \$135 per square foot to build a new



check out the **housing story map** [online!](#)

home in North Dakota in 2021. Homes adjacent to the 8th Street Addition lots average around 2000 square feet, so if you multiply that by \$135, the cost to build a home can start at around \$270,000 plus the cost of the lot (not including the fluctuation of labor/materials cost). Demonstrating that this residential development area is catering to higher-income individuals/families.

These 21 additional lots represent roughly 4% of Linton's housing stock. The [housing analysis](#) shows that Linton has a stable housing market, which means that these new lots may be bought at a steady rate. However, Linton should also consider incentives that could speed this process up in the event the lots do not sell themselves. The goal is to fill the lots as quickly as possible and to avoid empty lots sitting for long periods of time. Even if Linton fills 11 lots within the first 5 years, but the remaining 10 lots stay empty for 10 years, that's roughly \*\$300,000 in property taxes that won't be collected. This is why looking at a variety of incentives could help speed the process up.

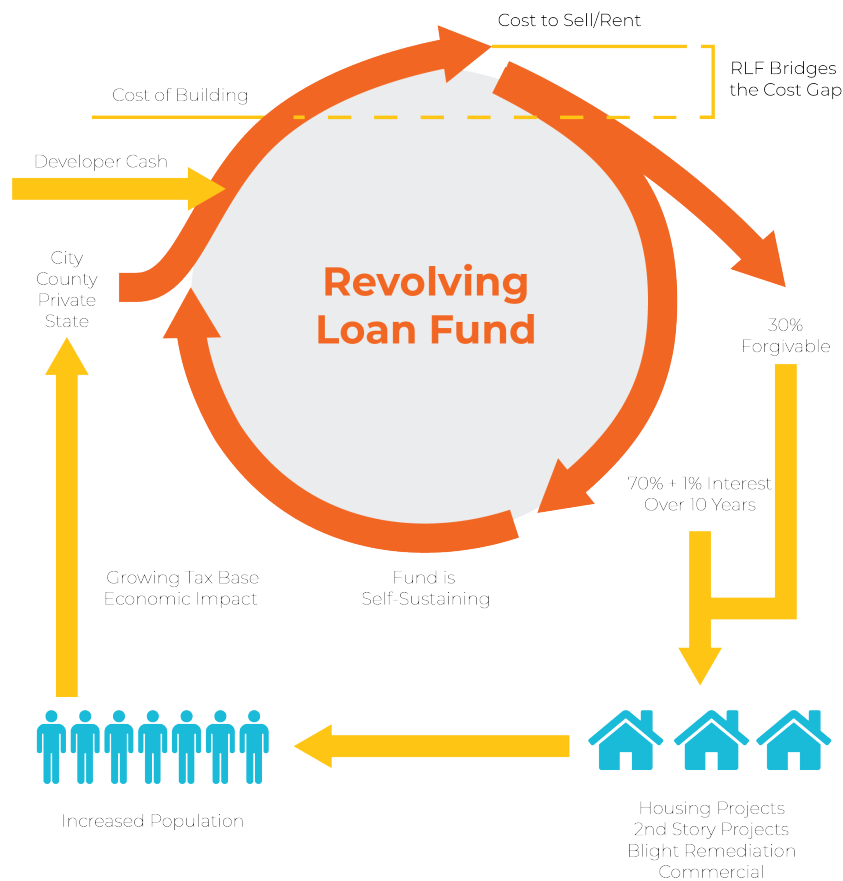
## **developer's incentive**

**Option #1:** An option the City has to entice a developer to come and build spec homes is to forgo the cost (or a certain percentage) of each lot. This could alleviate a significant up front cost that the developer would have to provide. This option provides some flexibility for the City, where it might not be necessary to forgo the full amount of each lot, but possibly \*reduce the price by 30-50%, depending on negotiations with a developer. This way, homes can be built and serve as a stronger marketing tool rather than empty lots.



*\*This model could also be used as a buyer's incentive in the event they are building customized homes.*

**Option #2:** Another option to incentivize a developer is through a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The Council of Development and Financing Agencies defines a RLF as a gap financing measure primarily used for the development and expansion of small businesses. It is a self-replenishing pool of money, utilizing interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new ones. While the majority of RLFs support local businesses, some target specific areas such as housing, healthcare, and environmental cleanup.



In the housing case, the RLF can help provide gap financing to developers in order to make new housing developments more affordable. Initial funding for the RLF should come from a variety of public sources, such as local, state, and federal governments, and private ones like financial institutions and philanthropic organizations. However, if communities utilize a majority of local resources, the RLF may have greater flexibility in lending and aid multiple community development projects.

For example, a RLF could be utilized with the 8th Street Addition lots. If the goal is to spur development and fill the new 21 in-fill housing lots within 5 years, the model could look like this:

If we use the previously stated numbers of \$135/square foot for a 2,000 square foot house = \$270,000 plus the average cost per lot at \$62,000. The total will be around \$330,000. If the goal is to make the total cost of each home \$250,000, you will need \$80,000 in gap financing per housing unit.

- **Single family homes:** 21 units
- **2,000 sq ft home:** \$270,000
- **Average price per lot:** \$60,000\*
- Developers need \$80,000 per housing unit = \$1,680,000 total over a total of 5 years (\$336,000 per year)

*\*This number can drop if the land is donated and/or owned by the municipality*

RLF Funding Availability		
RLF Total	Traditional Loan (70%)	Forgiveable Loan (30%)
\$2,000,000	\$1,400,000	\$600,000

Developer ABC: RLF Loan Request		
Total Request	Traditional Loan (70%)	Forgiveable Loan (30%)
\$350,000	\$245,000	\$105,000

Developer ABC: RLF Loan Repayment					
Total Loan	Traditional Loan (70%)	Interest Rate (1%) 10 years	Loan + Interest	Forgiveable Loan (30%)	Total Repayment
\$350,000	\$245,000	\$2,450	\$247,450	\$105,000	\$247,450

## buyer's incentive

Communities throughout the U.S. have created incentive programs that target people rather than companies, especially smaller metro cities and rural areas. Many models include offering assistance with a down payment or just straight-up cash when new residents purchase a home. Communities can also use this model to attract individuals within a certain workforce, such as remote workers or healthcare professionals. Here are two examples of communities that offer cash incentives:

### Southwest Michigan

A \$15,000 forgivable grant will be awarded to a homeowner that purchases a new home valued at \$200,000 or more, plus the option for annual memberships for co-working space, recreational activities, sporting events, and athletic clubs.



### Requirements

- Purchase of home is \$200,000 or more
- Not a current Michigan resident
- Home must be located within specified zip codes
- Full-time employment and working remotely for a company outside of Southwest Michigan
- Must consider volunteering with local organizations
- \$5,000 will be forgiven after each year of residency

[Learn more here.](#)

### **Newton, IA Housing Initiative**

Newton offers a \$10,000 cash incentive to individuals/families who build new single-family homes valued at \$180,000 or more, plus a Get to Know Newton Welcome Package (valued at \$2,500). Homes valued less than \$180,000 can receive a \$5,000 cash incentive along with the Welcome Package.

### Requirements

- Purchase of home is \$180,000 or more (to receive full incentive amount)
- Provided at the time and place of closing on financing for the home
- Construction of the home must be completed
- An appraisal or assessment must be completed

[Learn more here.](#)





## Advantages

Although not a traditional incentive model, it is becoming more popular and can be much more appealing to a wider audience, such as young individuals/families looking to buy their first home or city dwellers in search of a simpler lifestyle. This could help put Linton on the map of progressive thinkers in attracting new residents to their town.

- The [Tulsa Remote](#) program began in November 2018 and has received [over 25,000 applications](#) since its inception!

## Barriers

The planning phase would require collaboration from multiple parties to determine guidelines and requirements that would specifically match Linton's goals and objectives for offering this program i.e. to fill the lots on the 8th Street Addition, to attract new residents, etc. The funding source(s) would also require significant community collaboration in order to secure funding from either a federal, state, and/or local government entity, private foundation/non-profit, etc. Depending on the community's buy-in, it could take some time to implement.

# action steps - new build incentive program

## Identify/create incentive program that will fulfill Linton's goal of filling the 8th Street Addition lots

**Who:** City leadership, LIDC, Linton residents

**How:** Create an Housing Incentive task force that will conduct additional model research and best practices, collect local citizen input, and establish goals and objectives of the program

**When:** Q4 2021

## Design Linton's incentive program

**Who:** Housing Incentive task force

**How:** Develop rules and requirements for the program, determine the length of the program (can it be implemented in phases?), identify potential funding sources that can support the program throughout the desired duration

**When:** Q1 2022

## Launch the program

**Who:** Housing Incentive task force, City leadership, LIDC

**How:** Market the program as much as you can! Create marketing materials to hand out at local/regional events, share on social media accounts, and write press releases to local/regional/national media outlets

**When:** Q4 2022



see the **socioeconomic summary** [online](#).

## redeveloping the current housing stock

Although Linton has taken the first step to increasing the housing stock with the development of the 8th Street Addition, the GIS housing analysis demonstrates that Linton should also prioritize renovation and redevelopment of existing homes, where costs would be less overall than tearing down and building brand new. This priority will also cater to a larger percentage of homeowners since 20% of households in Linton make \$50 – \$75k while only 3% make \$150k or more. Rural areas cannot solely rely on homeowners to bear the entire cost of fixing up older homes, especially with a majority of Linton’s housing stock being built around the 1960s. Linton should consider some of the models outlined below to help assist and incentivize residents to care for older homes.

# property maintenance standards

A first step towards improving current housing conditions is identifying which properties need the most rehabilitation and enhancements. Dangerous and dilapidated homes can become a huge eye sore to visitors and decrease the possibility of new residents wanting to move to Linton, which is why it is important to prioritize fixing them up **along** with building new homes. It also demonstrates a lack of enforcement by the City and therefore, **condoning** this behavior, which can devalue the property in question and adjacent properties.

In order for Linton to improve the facades and infrastructure of existing older homes, they must develop property maintenance standards and enforce them. This will change residents' mindset from improvements being optional to (reasonably) required. It will also assist in increasing property values throughout the community. Creating a system that can help maintain certain standards should decrease the number of homes that might fall into the dangerous and dilapidated category. These standards and/or policies should be developed and adopted with collaboration in mind. By understanding the needs of property owners that might fall below the newly established maintenance standards, resources and programs can be identified to assist these property owners in making the necessary improvements to their homes.

The [International Code Council](#) is a great resource that can help build the foundation of property maintenance standards that fit your community.



# renaissance zones

[North Dakota's Renaissance Zone Program](#) is a great start for rural towns to assist current homeowners with rehabilitation costs for older homes. This [program](#) allows for homeowners to receive tax credits for renovation projects (up to \$10,000 every five years). Eligible homes must be located within the Renaissance Zone designation and receive approval for rehabilitation projects before starting them. This program remains active for 15 years, and requires a renewal every five years after the initial 15-year duration.

Atlas Community Studios spoke with [multiple communities](#) throughout North Dakota and learned of the success they've had with establishing a Renaissance Zone. [Hankinson, ND](#) has completed over 40 projects since its inception in the early 2000s, [Langdon, ND](#) has also seen similar success, both communities similar to the size of Linton.

Establishing a Renaissance Zone would not only assist homeowners with rehabilitation projects, but also serve as a support program for downtown revitalization. This program can assist current and future business owners in the downtown area with rehabilitations, building purchases (new and existing), leasing, and more. Because Linton is also an Opportunity Zone, these two programs pair nicely together and can be utilized to drastically increase revitalization of empty storefronts downtown. Harvey, ND is a similar size community and is a great example of utilizing both the Renaissance Zone and Opportunity Zone to support downtown revitalization and new businesses.

see **appendix c** for a list of community resources

A strong first step for Linton to focus efforts on improving the existing housing stock is to establish a Renaissance Zone. Fortunately, this can simultaneously foster downtown revitalization as well. [This GIS map](#) identifies corridors where a majority of businesses are in Linton, and can serve as a guiding tool for which blocks (up to 34) should be included in the Renaissance Zone designation.

## **blight remediation**

As indicated in the visioning session results and in conversations with local residents, blighted properties within Linton was a large concern. With additional GIS analysis, there were a number of identified lots that are vacant and existing homes valued at less than \$25,000, and could be considered dilapidated homes. A number of these properties were affected by the flood back in 2009 and most likely have not been revitalized since. Blighted properties can decrease surrounding property values, reduce local tax revenue, pose safety concerns, and erode the health of local housing markets. The [Compare All tab within the GIS housing analysis](#) identifies properties in Linton that should receive priority for redevelopment.

Linton can create a program that can assist homeowners with renovations and rehabilitations of older homes (especially if

these homes are located outside of a potential Renaissance Zone). For example, the initial fund could start at \$100,000 and allow for homeowners to apply for funds to make the necessary repairs, renovations, and updates to their home in order to increase property value. Applications can be submitted and reviewed by a task force made up of individuals, such as city council members, local business owners, engaged citizens, etc. Linton would have the flexibility to determine the funding structure, such as setting a flat maximum amount each household could receive (ex. \$10,000) or reviewing each project and allotting a range of funds to homes that might need more significant improvements than others. This program is a great option to help property owners that cannot afford to make necessary improvements as it can be restricted to a certain income level.

Newton, IA is a great example of a community creating a [program](#) for dangerous and dilapidated homes. They offer homeowners grants for demolition of dangerous and dilapidated homes, as well as funds to preserve and rehabilitate existing housing stock that might be on the path towards demolition. This funding model was achieved through bonding, specifically [General Obligation Bonds](#).

# To help redevelop the current housing stock, Linton should complete these action steps in order to implement the housing plan:

## **Create Housing Renovation task force**

**Who:** City leaders, LIDC, local businesses, Linton residents, etc.

**How:** Engage local key stakeholders that will develop program guidelines, the application and review process, and funding structure and source(s)

**When:** Q3 2021

## **Prepare and submit Renaissance Zone Application**

**Who:** Housing Renovation task force

**How:** The task force will designate which 34 blocks will be included, take inventory of the condition of each home/building on each block, and create a development plan for Linton

**When:** Q4 2021

## **Develop and adopt minimum property maintenance standards**

**Who:** City leadership, LIDC, Emmons County

**How:** Create a set of property maintenance standards. Develop standards that can work cohesively with existing (and future) home rehabilitation programs.

**When:** Q1 2022

*continued on the next page >>*

### Identify priority properties

**Who:** Housing Renovation task force

**How:** Review GIS data provided by Atlas that identifies vacant/blighted properties throughout the area

**When:** Q2 2022

### Secure necessary funding for blight remediation program

**Who:** Housing Renovation task force

**How:** Apply for state/federal funding (if needed), create a capital campaign, develop and propose a bond, etc.

**When:** Q3 2022 – Q1 2023

### Launch and market the program

**Who:** Housing Renovation task force, City of Linton, Emmons County, local businesses, engaged residents, etc.

**How:** Develop a specific marketing strategy to inform homeowners of the program through social media campaigns, flyers, radio announcements, etc.

**When:** Q2 2023



see **appendix d** for the action step checklist

# developer's tour

Once Linton has designated a Renaissance Zone and established one or multiple incentive programs listed above, it is time to show off the hard work that has been done to better Linton as a whole. It is important to get the word out about how Linton is the place to invest, and therefore, show these potential investments to local, regional, and national investors.

An Investment/Developer's tour is designed to bring potential developers, investors, property owners, commercial realtors, architects, banks, regional and state economic development professionals, and prospective business owners to Linton and give them a tour of investment opportunity projects throughout the community. Typically, rural areas are not the first places development players seek out, so it is important to pique their interest by inviting them to see shovel-ready projects. This tour also allows for these players to connect and potentially explore collaborative projects together. Please see the [marketing section](#) for additional information on strategies and tools for getting the word out about projects!

See [here](#) for an example of an Event Management Plan.



North Dakota also has a variety of options for housing resources, either through federal, state, or private entities, that can help with redeveloping existing housing stocks:

<b>Federal</b>
<a href="#">USDA: Housing Preservation Grant</a> <a href="#">USDA: Single Family Housing Programs</a>
<b>State</b>
<a href="#">Renaissance Zone Program</a> <a href="#">HOME Investment Partnerships Program</a> <a href="#">Community Development Block Grant</a>
<b>Private</b>
<a href="#">North Dakota Community Foundation: Community Endowment Fund Program</a>

# opportunity zone prospectus

## introduction

Linton, ND is a small but mighty community looking to make a name for themselves. Linton's businesses and roughly 1,000 residents enjoy the benefits of small town charm while still having access to amenities in the state's capitol city Bismarck, located just an hour away. However, Linton understands that in order to attract and retain people and jobs, they must offer unique amenities of their own. They are determined to make Linton a better place for current residents and to attract future residents by making big things happen. By embarking on this community development effort, Linton is taking the first step in doing just that.

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# overview

The [Opportunity Zone](#) policy is a federal policy created through the [Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017](#) that provides multiple tax incentives to individuals and corporations that use capital gains to make equity investments in designated census tracts called Opportunity Zones. By providing tax benefits for investments in real estate and businesses located in Opportunity Zones, the objective of this program is to spur community development through long-term investment projects.

Eligible investments must be made through a [Qualified Opportunity Fund \(QOF\)](#). Hundreds of QOFs have been established, raising an estimated [\\$75 billion](#) in Opportunity Zone equity from 2018 – 2019. Various types of [projects](#) have been supported through these funds, such as business expansions, blight removal, brownfield redevelopment, historic preservation, affordable and workforce housing, development of industrial facilities, and activation of new or vacant commercial storefronts and retail spaces.

Linton is one of 25 locations in the state of North Dakota. Linton Industrial Development Corporation (LIDC) and the North Dakota Dept. of Commerce worked with Atlas Community Studios to conduct an analysis of this Opportunity Zone and identify key assets in Linton.

# federal tax advantages

## Period of Investment:

1. If the Qualified Opportunity Zone investment is held for at least **7 years\***, there is a **15%** reduction of tax-liability on deferred capital gains
2. If the Qualified Opportunity Zone investment is held for at least **10 years**, there is a **100%** exclusion of tax-liability on any appreciation of the investment

*\*7-year will no longer be valid as of January 1, 2022 without pending legislative action to extend the policy*

## potential benefits

The OZ tax incentive can provide [3 benefits](#) to investors:

1. Deferral of any capital gains invested in a qualified opportunity fund (QOF) generally until 2026
2. Exclusion of up to 15% (or more) of the deferred gains from gross income
3. Tax-free gain for a QOF interest sold or exchanged after 10 years (this option is available through 2047)

Because benefits can be captured through 2047, private-sector investors estimate that, under a range of plausible assumptions about discount rates and rates of return on OZ capital, investors who maximally leverage the mixture of OZ policy incentives may ultimately increase their after-tax return by **approximately 40%**.



## timeline

In order to promote Linton as a pillar investment for an Opportunity Zone investor, the Linton Industrial Development Corporation (LIDC) partnered with Atlas Community Studios to develop a robust prospectus. Atlas offered expertise, technical assistance and capacity-building support to LIDC for the purpose of developing a sound investment report.

This project was funded through a planning grant that was awarded to LIDC through the North Dakota Department of Commerce. Linton's prospectus aims to highlight a prominent community project that demonstrates great impact in increasing the community's housing options and business development opportunities.

**Here is a timeline of important dates regarding the development of this prospectus and Opportunity Zones in general:**

**february 2021**

Atlas begins work with LIDC in Linton, ND

**march–april 2021**

Public Visioning Sessions held/Atlas completes site visit to Linton

**july 2021**

Atlas completes work with LIDC in Linton, ND and delivers action plan as final deliverable

**december 2021**

Final date to receive any basis step-up on the original gain



**june 2022–2026**

The final date to invest capital gains recognized in 2021 - 2025

**december 2026**

Original deferred gain is recognized

**april 2027**

Tax payments due on original deferred gain



**2028**

The first year in which some of the earliest Opportunity Zone investments may be sold and qualify for the 10-year gain exclusion

**december 2028**

Statutory expiration of the designation of Qualified Opportunity Zones



**june 2037**

The earliest date on which the last Opportunity Zone investments may be sold and qualify for the 10-year gain exclusion



**april 2027**

Tax payments due on original deferred gain



Source: *The Opportunity Zones Database, 2019*



# opportunity zone project

## **Willows Apartment Building**

112 S. Broadway Street

**Ownership:** David Schmidt

**Status:** Vacant

**area**

.29 acres

12,600 square feet

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**zoning**

commercial

---

**current use: mixed-use**

- First Floor: Consists of retail spaces that can be remodeled as is or combined to increase size of space
  - Second&ThirdFloor:20apartmentunits(oneandtwo-bedrooms)
  - Basement: previously served as additional commercial space
- 

Each floor will need to be further evaluated for exact renovations costs but initial project estimates suggest a remodel of the first floor retail space, second/third floor rental apartments, and basement floor space will be around \$400,000.

This building offers an exciting mixed-use opportunity and will be a catalytic project for the downtown area in more than one way. First, by renovating and updating the existing apartment units, Linton will be able to offer its residents additional housing options, especially for those that may not be ready to buy/build a new home or even for those individuals looking to downsize. This will meet the demand, as identified in the housing assessment, and Linton's goal of increasing housing options for current and future residents.

Second, the newly renovated storefronts can provide updated

spaces for potential business owners. Atlas Community Studios has strongly recommended that Linton complete an application to become a Renaissance Zone, which is a program designed to incentivize downtown revitalization and community redevelopment. Once implemented, Linton will be able to offer this incentive to current and future business owners, and hopes to specifically use this incentive to fill the storefronts within the Willows Apartment building.

This project will complement other unique amenities Linton has to offer to its residents. Typically, residents of small towns have to drive 30+ minutes to access healthcare, a variety of restaurants, and shopping. Fortunately, Linton has its own hospital and pharmacy, locally owned hardware and farm equipment stores, as well as a variety of restaurants, and even a country club. In addition to these amenities, Linton has a [well-ranked school district](#), close proximity to recreational amenities, and easy access to Highway 83 (which can take you all the way to Laredo, TX).

Linton and its residents are demonstrating their desire to grow as a community and the progressive steps needed to be taken in order for that to happen. Consider placing your capital here and grow your investment with Linton.

See the [Linton Housing Assessment](#) for more.



# zoning

## City of Linton, Commercial District (First Floor)

- **Permitted Uses:** Agriculture; Dry cleaning, pressing, tailor shops, and laundromats; electrical and plumbing shops; lumberyards; professional offices including banks, insurance, real estate, medical clinics, newspapers, and lawyers; retail and service uses including grocery, drugs, hardware, clothing, furniture stores, bakeries, restaurants, taverns, automobile service stations, used and new car lots, print shops, barber and beauty shops, and sale and service of appliances; sale and service of farm implements; wholesale activities not requiring yard storage; hotels and motels; theatres; bowling alleys and other recreational buildings; governmental facilities; clubs and lodges
- **Conditional Uses:** Warehouses; trucking or freight terminals; grain and feed mills; railroad trackage; special events and construction sheds and offices

## City of Linton, Residential District (Second and Third Floor)

- **Permitted Uses:** one- and two-family residential dwelling units; churches, schools, and related facilities; public parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities; public libraries, museums, and community centers; fire and police stations; accessory uses and structures customarily incidental to the uses permitted by this district
- **Conditionally Permitted Uses:** Home occupations; hotels, motels, tourist homes and boarding houses; multi-family residences for more than two families; nursing homes and basic care health facilities

# community partners

Linton Industrial Development Corporation (LIDC)  
City Council

## north dakota additional incentives

The Willows Apartment building is not only an ideal project for an Opportunity Zone investment but is eligible to be paired with additional state and federal incentive programs to maximize the investor's return on investment):

### [renaissance zone](#)

The Renaissance Zone program is a tool for community redevelopment and economic investment that incorporates tax incentives to business and residential properties. The program allows for a 5-year exemption on property taxes and up to \$500,000 of exempt income. The designation is valid for 15 years and then requires a renewal every 5 years.

### [state incentive programs](#)

### [north dakota housing finance authority](#)

### **historic tax credits**

**Federal:** The federal historic preservation tax incentive program provides up to 20% of the amount spent to rehabilitate a certified historic structure.

**State:** In North Dakota, in order to qualify for the state historic tax credit, the property must be located in a designated Renaissance Zone. The credit is up to 25% or \$250,000.

[Here](#) is more information on pairing an Opportunity Zone project with historic tax credits

### **new market tax credits**

The New Market Tax Credit program is designed to incentivize business owners who are creating jobs in a dedicated region. The program can cover over 20% of a project construction budget should the project meet certain criteria. A good rule of thumb is to have a project that costs over \$10,000,000 and is creating 20+ jobs, ideally jobs that are high paying (though this is not a rule). Should a project be less than the desired amount, it is still possible to get it funded either by finding a Community Development Entity (CDE) who will still fund the project or blending the project with others in their pipeline.

Contact Sharon Jangula for more information on local resources.

*\*Atlas Community Studios has strongly recommended that the city of Linton complete an application to designate a Renaissance Zone in order to increase community and economic development.*

# examples of similar oz projects

New community development ecosystems have emerged in many regions throughout the U.S. through the use of Opportunity Zones. Large urban centers and small rural areas have capitalized on Opportunity Zone investments. Here are examples of OZ projects similar to Linton's OZ concept:

**Brookville, IN:** Residents of Brookville tapped into local sources to secure a local developer and investor in order to develop a mixed-use property in their downtown. The project proposed mixed-income apartments with an assisted living component for seniors, and retail on the first floor, including a pharmacy, restaurant, primary care facility, and other community-servicing amenities.

**Birmingham, AL:** Local residents crowdsourced OZ investment to revitalize the historic Woodlawn theatre. Half of the building will be a 250-person music venue, and the other half will be space for a business that provides music lessons. Free lessons will be provided to children of low-income families.

**Craig, CO:** Four Points Funding is transforming the 5,000 square foot Boy-Ko building into a food hall that is designed to be an incubator for local food entrepreneurs, co-working space, a conference center available to the community, and coffeehouse. Inclusion Coffeehouse, owned by Craig locals, Toni and Ryan Hess, will provide employment and on-the-job training for young adults with disabilities.

**Ralston, NE:** The Old Ralston Granary will be the focus of a

\$14 million partnership to bring new housing, businesses and jobs to Ralston. I See It Ventures will invest \$2 million into a new business accelerator that will provide up-and-coming companies with capital investment, guidance, and support. Gordon Whittman, owner of I See It Ventures, noted that he chose Ralston due to its OZ designation, and the incentive will allow him to increase the amount he is investing by 27 percent.

**Michigan City, IN:** Previously vacant and dilapidated historic building is being redeveloped into a mixed-use property with an event venue and residential units.

## oz funds in north dakota

[Great Plains Opportunity Zone Fund](#)  
[Kilbourne Group](#)



## current oz data

With the program beginning in 2017, there is recent data showing trends among Opportunity Zones and characteristics of the investors taking advantage of this program. The State of Ohio was one state that fully embraced the program and provided additional incentives on top of deferring tax on eligible gains. For 2020 and 2021, investors were offered a total of [\\$50M in credits](#) by the State of Ohio, of which 22.5%

of projects utilized alongside their OZ incentive. The Ohio Development Services Agency claimed that OZ investments totaled [\\$453.4M in projects](#) since inception.

Surprisingly, the average amount an individual investor put towards OZ projects was around \$200,000. This report even shows that there were a greater number of investors contributing [\\$25,000 or less](#) than there were investing \$5M and above. This demonstrates that OZs can be a pathway for a variety of investors, big or small. The variety of projects is also apparent, projects can range from residences, operating businesses, historical preservation, and recreational assets.

# marketing

## introduction

This placemaking action plan as a whole has identified three high impact projects for catalytic community development. Atlas and the LIDC recognize the need to communicate the value and advantages of the projects to residents in Linton and throughout North Dakota. Atlas has curated a series of ideas and recommendations for marketing the community and these projects to fulfill this need.

**The following is organized into two sections as they relate to marketing and the rest of this plan:**

- Marketing Your Community
- Opportunity Zone Prospectus

## marketing your community

Just as marketing is essential to an organization or business, it is equally as important for your community. What makes it unique? What makes it home? If your community was a product, how would you sell it?

Based on the recommendations made for the housing section and the Opportunity Zone prospectus, Atlas recommends

identifying goals and objectives for marketing Linton.

- **Externally:** How Linton will appeal to visitors and potential future residents?
- **Internally:** How does Linton brand itself to its existing community or instill hometown pride?

Think through the major goals your community wants to achieve over the next year, 5 years, and even 10 years. Strategies outlined below can help begin the initiative with taking small steps towards a larger vision.

## community audit

Before you build a plan, start with an in-depth look at what you currently have. We recommend a community audit.

Imagine you're planning a trip to Linton, North Dakota. What are you able to find online about the town? What are the things to see or do or the places to stay? What do other people say about Linton?

In a digitally connected world, the internet is now your virtual information desk. A simple Google search may not tell you everything about Linton, but it should tell you enough to get people excited about what it has to offer.

Once you have a firm understanding of what Linton looks like to potential visitors and future residents, you can curate new content and develop strategies to fill the gap or address problem areas. It's also important to know if locals can access



relative information – what is happening in town, how easy or hard it is to find information about events/gatherings to those who currently live/work there.

## **branding**

An essential component of marketing is branding. It is the name, design, or symbol that sets you apart from others. There are nine cities called Linton in the United States. What makes Linton, North Dakota unique or different from all the rest?

Think about your community's brand and ask yourself the following questions:

- What does Linton's logo tell you about the city? Does it speak to who Linton is or wants to be in the future?
- What is Linton known for currently, and what do you want Linton to be known for in 5 or 10 years?
- Does the city website communicate and accurately reflect who Linton is?

A well-designed logo coupled with an inviting and informative website will help Linton put its best foot forward and set your community up for future success in all things marketing.

### **Hot Take**

The city logo and website look highly dated and do not match the description on the City+ or Quality of Life page. They could both use an update to reflect the quality of the community.

While the purpose of the city’s website is to provide resources, happenings and updates to local residents and workforce, the look and feel of the site is still important as a reflection of the community’s sense of self.

Additionally, in smaller communities the city’s website also needs to function as a tourism and economic development marketing and resource landing page. This is an opportunity to highlight what you have and make it as exciting and inviting as possible. Some information is available at NDtourism.com but it is extremely limited. Robust “Visit” and “Economic Development” pages with photos and links to other sites and resources will be extremely valuable.



check out **appendix e** to read the rapid marketing assessment!

## implementation

Full professional branding and marketing strategies including logo design, website development, public relations, and ad campaign concepts can easily cost \$100k and up. This is where communities can get creative and look at their local talent pools. Who in the community could help with a project like

this? A local designer, student, artist? Perhaps alumni who would be willing to help support their hometown? Depending on what the city's budget is, be realistic about what you are asking for – is this a paid gig or volunteering?

Alternatively, the City of Linton could host a logo contest open to the public (this could be open to local, regional or national applicants). There are many examples of programs like this and could really maximize your dollars. Most offer a prize of about \$500 and/or a prize package. Added bonus – this can be a really fun and exciting way to promote the community and for residents to participate in the implementation of this plan!

[99designs even has a platform](#) to host logo contests within its site and will help you build your brief and promote it to its network of designers across the country.

### **Other budget-friendly options**

There are countless online freelance sites that can help with logos, website development and marketing strategies. A few examples are:

[Upwork](#)

[99designs](#)

[Design Pickle](#)

[Fiverr](#)

### **Example: city logo design contest**

[City of Reading Invites Local Artists to Participate in Logo Design Contest](#)

# marketing plan

A plan will set direction and expectations about the future for the entire community, giving everyone a common goal. A marketing plan should contain (at minimum) the following:

- Goals/objectives
- Target audiences
- Strategies/initiatives

A well-thought-out marketing plan will have clearly defined and measurable goals or objectives. Such examples may include:

- Establish marketing committee through LIDC for implementation
- New logo and website developed and publicly rolled out by summer 2022
- Increase website traffic by 200% by summer 2023
- Increase the millennial population by 5% over the next five years
- Increase summer tourism by 15% by 2025

Once the goals are established, the target audiences can be defined. Who is the plan trying to target, and why? Understanding that your community cannot and will not appeal to everyone is essential. If everyone is your audience, no one is your audience. Be realistic about your community's current audiences and define the target audiences you would like to reach.

It is important to note that if Linton decides to pursue Atlas' recommendation of establishing a Renaissance Zone, it is



required to develop a strategy on how to market and promote the Renaissance Zone and include it in the application. These two initiatives could be developed together in order to achieve similar goals.

## **target audiences**

A great way to visualize these target audiences as real people and not just categories is to create personas. Think of it as a fictional character – why are they interested in Linton? What

do they value? What motivates them? Where do they get their information?

## **Examples**

- Linda is a retired empty nester. She and her husband live in Fargo and like to travel regionally. She is interested in handmade arts and crafts, antique shopping, historic tourism, and values travel and quality time with her family. She gets most of her information from the local paper, the nightly news, and Facebook.
- Will is a 24-year-old recent college grad. He and his roommates live in Bismarck and love finding unique, and affordable, activities to experience and, of course, share on Instagram. Will is interested in hiking, coffee, good food, craft beer and selfies. He gets most of his information from NY times, NPR, and Twitter.

Based on these personas you can build unique and targeted strategies to reach and appeal to these audiences.

Perhaps the most crucial component of the marketing plan is the strategies. The strategies should detail how and where you intend to reach your target audience(s). Will you use digital channels? What will your message be?

## **get social!**

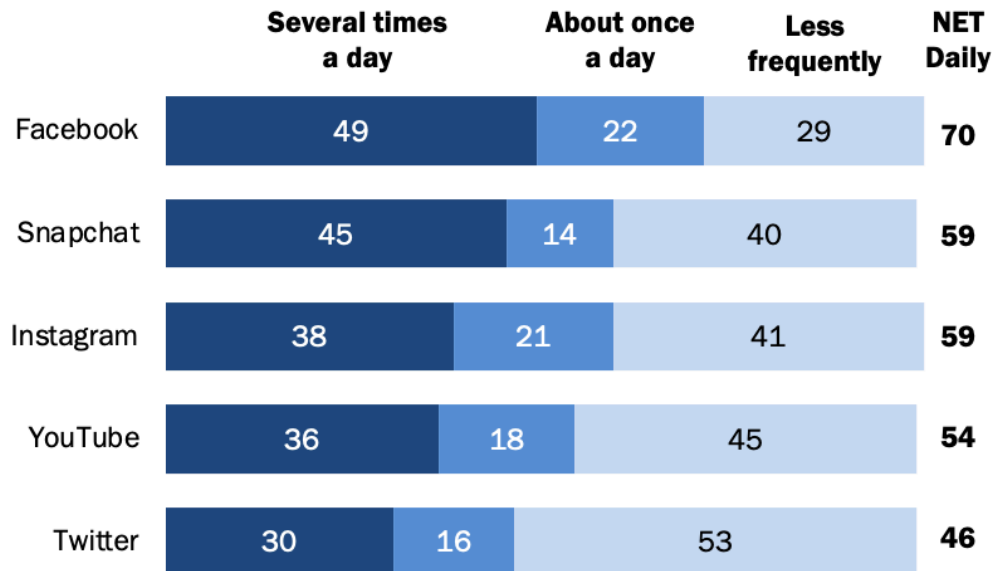
While social media should be a part of your marketing plan, its variety and broad audience reach make it an important callout. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), “roughly seven-

in-ten Americans say they ever use any kind of social media site.” What’s more, most respondents also noted their usage as being either once or several times a day.

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## Seven-in-ten Facebook users say they visit site daily

Among U.S. adults who say they use \_\_\_\_, % who use that site ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. “Less frequently” category includes users who visit these sites a few times a week, every few weeks or less often.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 25-Feb. 8, 2021.

“Social Media Use in 2021”

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

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While some are critical of social media’s pervasive nature, it also presents several advantages for your community.

- Free to have accounts
- Potential to reach a more significant number of people
- Variety of platforms to reach a variety of audiences
- Ability to connect directly with your audience

- Access to advertising opportunities where you set the budget (more affordable)
- Build awareness and increase visibility
- Drive website traffic
- Control over the content

Atlas recommends creating social media pages dedicated to your community that aim to serve current residents as well as potential visitors. These pages should showcase the community—current events, updates, wins/celebrations. Linton is an active and fun community where people want to be. It's important to realize that social media can be a validator of information. If people are looking for more information or photos of a place, event or business they will often look to social media channels.

Managing a channel can be a huge commitment but it also doesn't have to be! It also doesn't have to be an official city account. A Linton 'fan club' of a few dedicated volunteers, sharing their love of authentic Linton, can go a long way!

## **networking**

It can be beneficial to tap into a community's current network of alumni, business owners, and past/current residents to assist in marketing themselves. An excellent group to start with is the alumni who attended Linton High School, mainly because they could be a potential boomerang, who grew up in Linton, moved away, but eventually wants to return home. Although Linton has a smaller student population, building this network can support connections between the alumni and Linton as a



city but could help foster relationships with past students and current ones.

As mentioned above, increasing a social media presence is crucial to engaging alumni virtually. A standard option is to create an alumni Facebook group, either for each graduating class or the entire alumni network to interact with one another. A shared virtual space can also be a vehicle for providing local updates on news, current events, etc., in Linton while also allowing for students (present and past) to connect.

It can be equally beneficial also to host in-person events. These could be during a homecoming game, Dairy and Ag Days, or a holiday when people are already traveling home, such as the night before Thanksgiving. Planning specific events for alumni networking, such as a happy hour at a local bar/restaurant or a group golf outing, can entice people to attend even more. Even better—create an alumni opportunity to give back to your hometown—a community mural painting event during alumni week.

Creating this network is no small task, but a community can build it step by step. The initial steps could be conducted by a group of eager high school students, a previous alumni that wants to reconnect with Linton, or a task force of locals that want to increase engagement between alumni and the community:

- Start with collecting email addresses of alumni to build a database
- Work towards collecting more information on alumni, including career paths, subjects they studied in school, and where they live now



- Create a buddy/mentor program between younger and older alumni or even current high school students and alumni

As mentioned before, these potential commonalities could provide small support networks for students thinking about studying/working in similar fields. By fostering a sense of connection between alumni and Linton, it can keep those that no longer live there still feel engaged with their hometown community and potentially increase chances of alumni to return.

# stand out with an incentive program

Once a marketing plan has been established to highlight and enhance Linton's current businesses, residents, alumni, etc. Linton should explore additional ways to become unique among rural communities. Many rural communities are looking at alternative methods to attract new residents or boomerangs. Various types of incentive programs have sprung up around the country. [Topeka, KS](#) will offer remote workers \$10,000 in cash if you buy a home (\$5,000 if you rent) plus the chance to get \$1,000 worth of Jimmy John's sandwiches. [Augusta, ME](#), offers a tax rebate that could total state taxes, including additional benefits for individuals with specific degrees, including STEM and graduate degrees. You may find other incentive program examples through [MakeMyMove](#).

COVID-19 reshaped the structure of the traditional 9-5 office job. Now, [people are fleeing large cities](#) searching for smaller metros and rural areas due to the ability to work remotely. This workforce realizes their money can go a lot further in [rural Iowa](#) than in New York City or San Francisco. So why not give them a reason to consider Linton by offering incentives such as a down payment for a house or a free coworking membership for a year? These types of incentives focus on recruiting people instead of companies. The long-term effects of incentivizing people to move to Linton will be more beneficial for the community than incentivizing a large company.

If Linton pursues this type of program, it may entice former Linton residents to consider moving back and increase the community's visibility to a new audience. This type of coverage could attract those individuals looking for cheaper rent, more space, and a simpler life.

## **opportunity zone prospectus**

In essence, the Opportunity Zone Prospectus is your marketing piece. It should already contain valuable information about the community that will entice investors and developers to the area. Once the prospectus is completed, Linton needs to consider how and where to spread the word.

Just like for your community as a whole, Atlas recommends developing and utilizing a marketing plan for the OZ Prospectus. Again, a marketing plan should contain (at minimum) the following:

- Goals/Objectives
- Target Audiences
- Strategies/Initiatives

Atlas has outlined the above to serve as a jumping-off point for LIDC and the City of Linton.

### **Goals/Objectives**

The goal of the Opportunity Zone Prospectus is to attract an investor or developer to fund a renovation of the former Willows Apartments building located at 116 S. Broadway Street. Ideally, this money will

allow the first floor to become a premium retail space, while the second and third floors accommodate rental apartments.

## **Target Audiences**

Based on the identified goal above, the target audience(s) include the following:

- Local/regional investors (businesses or individuals)
- Local/regional developers
- Local/regional banks

Although Opportunity Zones offer the possibility of an investor to fund a project anywhere, Linton should [prioritize finding a local investor and developer](#), either in or around the Linton area or at least within the region. By prioritizing a local developer, the project can adopt a community-first, developer-led approach. The developer might already have (or can create and foster) a relationship with the community. “Thoughtful development can create a positive economic impact and a more vibrant [community] prepared for a better future.” as stated by Erik Hayden, Founder and Managing Partner of [Urban Catalyst](#). This is also more enticing to an outside investor by demonstrating local knowledge, momentum, and buy-in on the potential investment project.

The focus on securing a local investor might not seem feasible but is achievable. [Brookville, IN](#), is an excellent example of how a small town could complete an OZ project utilizing local resources. An Opportunity Zone analysis of recently reviewed data from the State of Ohio shows promising signs as well. Although the data doesn’t distinguish between in-state and



out-of-state investors, it does demonstrate that the [average investment amount](#) was around \$200,000. And of the 356 total investors, more than 30% of them contributed \$100,000 or less per project, with a [greater number of investors](#) contributing \$25,000 or less than those that contributed \$5 million or more. This demonstrates that this type of investment is not strictly for super-wealthy individuals or large corporations and that local individuals and businesses can participate.

### **Strategies: Take advantage of the ease of digital**

Atlas recommends creating social pages dedicated to this effort to inform the public about details and progress. People may come across social media pages and be directed to the Opportunity Zone website for more information.

Social media allows you to tell the story of Linton in a more in-depth and exciting way than just the prospectus, and more



importantly, you get to control the narrative. Create compelling and engaging content that demonstrates Linton as the right place to invest. Show them why their capital can grow in Linton.

It's also important to be mindful of your target audience. It's unlikely that you'll reach your audience through Snapchat or TikTok, but you may find tremendous success with Facebook and LinkedIn. Many of these platforms, like Facebook, also offer powerful targeted advertising tools, so you can reach the right individuals like those who work for a specific company or industry (i.e., development, real estate, finance).

### **Strategies: Make yourself visible within the community**

In addition to establishing a digital presence, Atlas also recommends getting involved with the community face-to-face. Use your OZ Prospectus to develop high-level, easy-to-digest brochures or informational pieces to hand out to

potential investors/developers at community events such as city council meetings, farmers' markets, festivals, etc.

You can also consider holding informational sessions or town halls to inform the public and solicit feedback throughout the process. A developer or investor who sees that the community supports the initiatives will be more willing to commit to a project.

While it's important not to waste too much time or energy connecting with people who are unlikely to be an investor or developer, remember that word of mouth is extremely valuable, especially in small towns. "Sue" may be "just a teacher," but she may also be good friends with a developer in the next county over, AND she could be a potential "client" of the newly developed area later down the road.

Visibility and transparency are vital to reaching your goals.

## **additional opportunity zone resources**

- [Golden Shovel Agency](#)
- [Economic Innovation Group](#)
- [Novogradac](#)
- [OZworks Group](#)



# after the oz project is complete

Once the Opportunity Zone project is complete, it's essential to share it with the world! Since the entire city of Linton is an Opportunity Zone, the completed project can be a marketing tool in itself for other potential projects. The Economic Innovation Group has developed an [Activity Map](#) for Opportunity Zone activity. Communities may submit their projects [here](#) to be featured and see what other projects are happening in North Dakota and throughout the U.S.

Atlas also recommends writing up press releases about the completed project. It's important to brag about this outstanding achievement! Writing a piece for local and regional news outlets on the project's background, the work it took to complete, and the positive impact it will have on the community is worthwhile.

Linton can also promote via the radio station, especially since the high school has an [award-winning student broadcasting team](#)! This can be another outlet as a way to promote the success of the project.

It is important to note that this prospectus can be modified to market future Opportunity Zone projects. Although the project details will change, much of the community-based data could still be relevant. By utilizing this information and working from a template, Linton can save time on preparing future prospectuses. This can increase capacity and allow for the development of multiple projects at one time.

# **appendices**

**appendix a: visioning results**

**appendix b: interview  
summary**

**appendix c: community  
resources list**

**appendix d: action step  
checklist**

**appendix e: rapid marketing  
assessment**

# **appendix a:** **visioning results**

LINTON, NORTH DAKOTA

# Steering Committee

AND

# Public Visioning Results

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*Public Input via Poll Everywhere*

## What is unique about Linton?

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- The quality of the school, businesses, hospital, and recreational opportunities surpasses most communities around us. The community can be improved upon, but we have a lot to offer!
- Agricultural and Energy Industry Opportunities for Development
- Small town with a lot of rec. opportunities
- Many generations of families choose to come back to raise their families here. We have a very supportive town that rallies around community members in need.
- People
- The many things it has to offer.
- We are a K-12 school with many new young staff members as well as a young administration. We are making many positive changes at our school with this new staff to directly improve our schools culture and climate.
- It is a clean, well-maintained town which offers many services not always provided in a small town - groceries, healthcare, financial, legal, mechanical, carpentry, auto sales, variety stores, etc.
- Linton is unique because it is located on a federal highway with traffic increasing nearly every year, is 15 miles from the Missouri River, is picturesque and surrounded by hills/buttes, has a state-of-the-art provider of quality water, has high-speed internet service and is an hour from a commercial airport with flights to major hubs.
- It is the county seat, most populous area in Emmons county, situated on a major highway, close proximity to excellent fishing and good hunting opportunities, does not have a nursing home, does not have any manufacturing/ warehousing facilities, does not have rail service.
- Growing small town.
- The quality of people living here
- Lake access, Quality hunting and fishing opportunities, clean wholesome community
- I believe it is a gem among small rural communities due to its current infrastructure benefits - ie; hospital, pharmacy, public health offices, long term care and assisted living in county, excellent school system, grocery store, county seat, hardware store, variety of faith organizations, Federal offices, swimming pool, parks, golf course, gun range, location along two major highways - one federal, proximity to Missouri river, proximity to Bismarck airport/arts/colleges, and other items. It has many young families relocating with young children. It is located in a beautiful natural location among ND's buttes. It has some needs though and hopefully these can be developed.
- Small town with great school, hospital, golf course, outdoor swimming pool, modern hotel
- Location - along Highway 83, 15 miles from the river, 62 miles from Bismarck
- Friendly community
- Test
- Safe community to raise a family
- Small community that provides relaxing activities hunting fishing camping
- Fitness Center
- Faith Communities
- Shopping Amenities (Grocery Store, Dollar General, Family Dollar, Nodak, Boutique, etc.)
- food options
- Quality of Life

- Hotels
- Hospital
- Missouri River
- German-Russian Culture
- Recreational Opportunities
- German food
- Fishing & hunting
- Hunting and Fishing Opportunities

## What is missing from Linton?

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- Entertainment - ex: bowling, movie theater, etc.
- Splash pad, Movie theater, bowling alley
- Stuff for young family's to do
- Busy main street.
- Standards based grading/curriculum alignment
- Indoor recreational activities for all ages.
- People. The city's population has been declining since the early 1960s.
- Warehousing, manufacturing, nursing home
- recreation for people in the colder months
- Laundry mat, automatic car wash, truck parking, bowling alley and theater updates.
- Entertainment for kids and adults
- More main street businesses, daycare, community center
- An additional needed item is increased daycare capacity.
- We need to have more activities for the children/youth of Linton. We are missing activities for the youth to be engaged in and offer alternative for socialization. Things I'd like to see if able - theatre, bowling alley, developed ice skating rink, roller skating rink, youth center. We need to revitalize our downtown area, find ways to bring back vibrant stores on main street. An expanded gas/convenience store to draw in more traffic and offer options for travelers or residents. Restaurants that have a regularly defined schedule that residents can depend on. Options for food for late night eating after sports activities - could be located in expanded gas/convenience store. Review of aged/abandoned houses that could be removed and offered as viable lots for new homeowners.
- Main street businesses
- Downtown
- Larger grocery options
- Mainstreet businesses
- Vibrant Main Street
- Wellness opportunities to keep people active in the winter
- Housing options, main street businesses, & daycare
- More professionals such as another practicing attorney
- Indoor recreation such as bowling alley
- Activity center for high school and younger kids

- More recreational opportunities
- Family hangout spots
- Indoor recreational opportunities for youth during winter months
- More local recreational activities
- Bowling. More community activities that utilize main Street and Seeman Park.
- Additional Childcare Options
- Extra activities for youth
- More well paying jobs
- Jobs
- Additional Housing Options

## **What did Linton used to have that it should have again?**

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- Movie Theater, Bowling
- Business that employs families
- bowling alley
- Busy main street with all buildings occupied.
- Peer tutoring
- No vacant buildings on main street, bowling alley, movie theater, appliance sales and repairs.
- People.
- Again, the answer is people. The city's population peaked in 1960 with 1,826 people and will likely fall below 1,000 residents when the final numbers from the 2020 U.S. Census are released.
- Again, the answer is population. The city's population has declined steadily since peaking at 1,826 people in the 1960 federal census. It will probably dip below 1,000 in the 2020 census.
- Not sure, have not been here long enough.
- Bowling alley
- Bowling alley, theater, laundry mat.
- Movie Theatre, bowling alley, Teen center
- bowling alley
- Theatre, bowling alley, downtown businesses, ice skating rink with warming house, roller skating rink, youth center, dances for youth.
- bowling alley and movie theatre
- Movie theater, bowling alley, teen center
- Vibrant downtown
- More people
- Modern apartment complex or two
- Movie Theater
- Bowling alley
- Bowling alley, movie theater, more businesses
- Bowling alley

## **Describe the current housing marketing in Linton, including assets and challenges.**

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- There are many houses that should be torn down so people can build on those lots. They have become “eye sores” and don’t help with attracting new residents that can help to grow our community.
- no green space
- We do not have an area for new development
- Many old homes which are “fixer-uppers” options can be limited.
- There seems to be older, run-down homes for sale that should be torn down or renovated. There aren’t many mid to upper price range homes for sale. Aside from low-income apartment units, there may not be much in affordable and well-maintained homes for lower wage earning families.
- The City of Linton and the Linton Industrial Development Corporation have wisely acquired land so that new housing can be built so the city can attract new residents while replacing housing lost in the 2009 flood. Housing prices are attractive to those who move from larger cities, and the challenge is to attract people to move to Linton.
- There is a lack of elderly friendly homes. Several blighted homes that need to be torn down.
- Really not a lot to choose from
- I don’t know.
- Housing market seems to be improving as there will soon be additional lots available.
- There are a lot of “fixer ups” available that don’t get fixed up. There are very few single family, 2 stall garage homes available.
- In my opinion there are opportunities to remove older, abandoned buildings which could accommodate larger lots which are attractive to buyers. Linton is somewhat land locked however the city has acquired two development areas with one existing that I am unaware has attracted any buyers. In my opinion we have not been consistent in following ordinances allowing for non-housing structures for one but not for another. I believe the pricing structure has been neutral between buyers and sellers.
- A large part of the town is in a flood zone
- Not enough updated single family homes
- Need more modern/attractive homes for young families that want to return to Linton
- Additional accessible housing for seniors
- Housing development
- Lacking Market rate apartments
- Low income house is adequate
- Houses are small, outdated

## **What kind of housing is needed and where?**

---

- There isn’t a lot to rent nor buy without having to fix up a house.
- need slab on grade housing for senior living
- need a housing development area



- Nicer homes in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range. We've had people come to town and can't find homes they like.
- Older homes on the market, but need a place to build new homes.
- New housing developments located in city limits.
- Possibly condo style apartments or homes for people looking to down-size which might open up the market to housing for families. Newer homes for people looking to make a "step-up" in their current housing.
- I think full-rate apartments are needed that would attract new residents and that would provide a place to rent until people are ready to buy a home, if that is their desire. I am not familiar with the need for rentals, including low-income facilities.
- I am not currently looking for a home but 10 years ago I found a home to fit my needs after 3 years of looking. Modern mid-size family homes are lacking. Anywhere in Linton would suffice.
- Apartments on Main Street is vacant, would like to see it reopened.
- New housing lots. we should also be looking into privatizing the Hogue manor so it can be used as apartments for anyone.
- single family homes
- We could benefit from one level elderly housing with parking garage options. Increased Assisted Living capacity may keep residents from moving out of the area.
- rental in town
- Updated single family housing, modern apartments, & development on new lots added to city
- Apartments for college grads entering the market with the new jobs created
- Middle to higher end housing
- Modern apartment complex
- Definitely more modern 3 to 4 bedroom houses attached garage
- Senior Living
- Increase number of single family homes that look/feel near move-in ready

### **What are reasonable price ranges for housing, including owned homes and rentals (ex. Single family homes, apartments/condos, etc.)?**

---

- 400-1,000
- 300K
- \$100,000 to \$200,000 for a home and \$500 for an apartment.
- \$60,000 - \$200,000
- Really not sure. Probably \$500 per month for an apartment; \$40,000 to \$75,000 for an entry level home; \$80,000 to \$150,000 for a mid-range home; \$150,000+ for well established.
- I am not qualified to answer this question.
- Reasonable varies with each individual, for me at this point would be about \$150k. I think the apartments in town should rent for around \$600 - \$700.
- Apartments- 525/month
- SFH- 120,000- 200,000
- I don't know that I am qualified to provide a dollar figure, not knowing the financial needs of others.

- I have no idea
- Apartment rent: 450 to 550
- 100k to 200k
- 100-225K
- \$150,000 - \$200,000
- 200k

**Should Linton offer incentives to prospective residents (ex. Down payment assistance, one-time cash payment, student loan forgiveness, etc.)?**

---

Response	Count
Yes	11
Unsure	7
No	4
Total	22

**If so, what incentives should Linton consider offering?**

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Response	Count
Startup capital for a new business (for example: \$10,000)	10
Discounted or free coworking/office space	3
A stipend for student debt loan payments	3
None of the above	2
A one-time cash payment (for example: \$10,000)	1
A stipend for housing expenses (mortgage or rent payments)	1
Relocation expenses	1
Total	21

## **What are the top 3 amenities you would like to see in Linton in order to attract a new workforce and help retain current residents.**

---

- movie theater
- bowling alley
- splash pad
- Some type of energy plant such as the natural gas plant discussed for west of town.
- New businesses with higher paying jobs for skilled labor, homes already built in the \$150,000 price range for these people
- Unsure
- Adequate daycare, indoor recreational opportunities, jobs (small factory, office/data center)
- Theater for movies, plays and programs; adult education through the public school; antique stores/boutiques.
- Nursing home, warehousing, manufacturing
- I would like to see some of the vacant buildings on main street be occupied and used. Possibly have a teen center and get our theatre going.
- daycare, community center, bowling alley/theatre
- Affordable housing, daycare, industry for jobs.
- 1) more better paying jobs 2) More things for youth 3) outdoor activities
- Businesses to fill up the downtown
- Recreation opportunities, beautiful downtown, daycare
- Small manufacturer that have decent wage on the other side of 20 dollars a hour
- Ice cream shop
- Better Housing Options
- Outdoor movie theater
- Bowling Alley, Movie Theater, REC Center
- Vibrant downtown
- Reception hall, rec center, daycare
- Attractive Housing, daycare, more recreational opportunities (bowling alley/movie theater)
- Movie theater, recreation center, daycare
- Daycare
- Daycare Options
- REC Center

## **What do you consider the key industries/businesses in Linton to be?**

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- Agriculture, retail
- school
- restaurants
- Hardware store
- Agriculture, healthcare, education, retail

- Farming, insurance, medical
- Agriculture, healthcare, government (county seat)
- Agribusiness, medical and education.
- Agriculture, hospital, county government
- Agriculture, daycare,
- Agriculture, medical
- agriculture
- If asking based on what is in existence - hospital, county & federal offices, school, farming/ranching
- hospital and school
- School, ag,
- Ag, seasonal tourism and recreation, healthcare, school
- There's no business that is dominant, but a lot of quality ones that employ 10 or less individuals.
- Agriculture, county seat (government), hospital, school
- Hospital school
- Agriculture
- Hospital
- Healthcare
- Agriculture
- Agriculture

## **What is Linton's brand as a community?**

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- Sports town
- It's a good-looking town in a good location.
- Agriculture
- Beautiful setting with high-speed internet access.
- Does it have one?
- Great school and great community to raise a family
- wholesome hard working community
- Successful, competitive, youthful.
- none
- That is what we need to figure out.

## **If you were selling Linton to a new resident or business - how would you sell it?**

---

- By showing what we have to offer, a hospital, several restaurants/bars, strong community foundation, churches etc.
- River close by
- Great school
- Progressive town with a lot to offer.

- Friendly community with much to offer new residents looking for a job.
- Linton is a great place to raise a family or retire. We have a great school system, healthcare, public transportation, parks, walking path, outdoor pool, fitness center. We also have high speed internet and natural gas.
- I would promote affordable homes, high-speed internet access, outdoor recreation, availability of buildings for businesses, medical services, daycare center and a good school system.
- It is a tough sell
- great location, pool and golf course
- If you are looking for a great place to raise a family, with a great education system, or just looking to retire in a safe community, Linton is your place.
- wholesome hard working community
- A community with a great infrastructure in place, offering items and opportunities not available in many other rural communities. Location at the crossroads of a Federal and State highway. Proximity to recreation areas of Missouri River, golf course, prime hunting areas. Proximity to Bismarck airport, arts, additional entertainment not available in Linton. Increase young families relocating to Linton. An exceptional school system with many recognized accomplishments.
- Safe small town with everything you need.
- Safe place to raise family
- We have everything that a big city has just not in quantity so I think that we could get retirement people in
- Great place to raise kids
- School, hospital, grocery store,, retail options
- Friendly, inviting community with opportunities
- Recreation, hwy 83,
- Wholesome people, strong community, in a rural setting. "A place to come...and stay".
- Various retail offerings in small
- Hard working people, quality school, outdoor opportunities
- Room for growth and opportunities
- Access to major highway.
- On a major thoroughfare Highway 83. Also close to major recreation area in Lake Oahe. Linton's sandstone buildings on Main Street are unique.

## **What are unique assets about Linton that should be marketed to prospective residents and businesses?**

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- We take pride in our town and strive to keep it growing. We have an amazing educational system, hospital, and our numbers are holding steady.
- School
- Churches
- Hunting/Fishing
- Location, school, strong families, good work ethics.

- Many different employment options.
- Affordable housing, high-speed internet, proximity to recreation, beautiful setting, location on a federal highway and proximity to an interstate highway and a regional airport.
- Hunting and fishing
- The school, the swimming pool, local organizations like the Lions club, great churches.
- lake access
- Pretty much what was said in question 12.
- Hospital dentist hardware store
- Lots of traffic moving through
- 1 hour drive from Bismarck
- One hour from a large city and airport
- Affordable housing market, strong school, quality healthcare, safe community, within an hour from the capital city.
- Natural gas available
- Close to lake oahe

**appendix b:**  
**interview**  
**summary**

LINTON, NORTH DAKOTA

# Interview Summary



Atlas Community Studios conducted interviews and held conversations with a variety of engaged citizens, employers, and employees within the Linton community. The LIDC, Linton Hospital, Linton Public School District, City Council, BNC National Bank, and more all provided valuable information and insight in order to develop this placemaking action plan. These entities allowed us to dive deeper into Linton's existing assets, current challenges and barriers, and potential strategic opportunity areas.

During the interview and research phase, Atlas also spoke with a variety of other communities that have implemented and seen success with programs related to Opportunity Zones, housing development, blight remediation, home remodel/renovation, Renaissance Zones, and more. The goal of these interviews was to gather relevant information for Linton and to create a list of individuals who can serve as resources for successful community development projects. Conversations with communities such as Langdon, Havey, Hankinson, and Mandan, ND helped identify models, strategies, and resources that local/regional communities are utilizing. These conversations were specific to Renaissance Zone and/or Opportunity Zone strategies and the success these towns have seen by identifying projects and implementing plans to increase economic development. All of the communities Atlas spoke with recommended applying to become a Renaissance Zone and attributed this program to much of their success in revitalizing their downtown areas, as well as assisting homeowners with remodeling and renovation projects.

Additional communities outside of North Dakota were identified through research of successful housing programs. These communities were contacted to learn more about their specific models, funding structures, and success they've seen since implementation. Many of these communities noted that housing was a significant issue for them and highlighted the importance of collaboration across entities to develop and implement a model/program that works best for each community. They suggested keeping an open line of communication and exploring new ideas, as well as understanding the level of investment that might be needed to create real impact, such as a bond proposition, tax increase, or revolving loan funds.

All of this collected information assisted Atlas in narrowing down concepts within the three focus areas: Housing, Opportunity Zone, and Marketing.

# **appendix c:** **community** **resources list**

LINTON, NORTH DAKOTA

*Contact List:*

# **Community Resources**

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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**Erin Chambers**, Community Development Director

City of Newton, IA

[erinc@newtongov.org](mailto:erinc@newtongov.org)

Newton Housing Initiatives

- [Dangerous & Dilapidated Homes Program](#)

**Bruce Showalter**, Housing Director

Newton Housing Development Corporation

[nhdcdirector@gmail.com](mailto:nhdcdirector@gmail.com)

Newton Housing Initiatives

- [Homebuyers Incentive](#)

**Ellen Huber**, Business Development & Communications Director

City of Mandan, ND

[ehuber@cityofmandan.com](mailto:ehuber@cityofmandan.com)

Mandan Storefront Improvement Program

- [Overview](#)
- [Application](#)

**Jeff Mostad**, Mostad Properties

Langdon, ND

[mostins@utma.com](mailto:mostins@utma.com)

Renaissance Zone Developer

**RoxAnne Hoffarth**, City Auditor

City of Langdon, ND

[roxanne@cityoflangdon.com](mailto:roxanne@cityoflangdon.com)

Renaissance Zone Program: Langdon, ND

- [Application](#)
- [Development Plan](#)

**Charlie Dissell**, Director of Community & Economic Development

City of Indianola, IA

[cdissell@indianolaiowa.gov](mailto:cdissell@indianolaiowa.gov)

[Incremental Tax Abatement Program](#)

- [Application](#)

**Bob Wurl**, President & CEO

Lincoln State Bank

[bwurl@lsbbank.com](mailto:bwurl@lsbbank.com)

Renaissance Zone Program: Hankinson, ND

• Application

**Mitch Calkins**, Program Manager

Lake Agassiz Regional Council

[mitch@lakeagassiz.com](mailto:mitch@lakeagassiz.com)

Renaissance Zone Program: Hankinson, ND

• Development Plan (link might be weird)

**Tory Jackson**, Attorney

Jackson Law Firm

[tory@tjacksonlaw.com](mailto:tory@tjacksonlaw.com)

Bismarck, ND

Historic Tax Credits (State & Federal)

**Tobias Marman**, Owner

Tobias Marman Construction

[tobiasmarman@hotmail.com](mailto:tobiasmarman@hotmail.com)

Bismarck, ND

Real Estate Developer

**Paul Gunderson**,

Harvey Development Job Authority

[jda@harveynd.com](mailto:jda@harveynd.com)

Harvey, ND

Economic Development / Opportunity Zone

# **appendix d:** **action step** **checklist**

## housing

### incentive program

- Identify/create incentive program that will fulfill Linton's goal of filling the 8th Street Addition lots

- Design Linton's incentive program

- Launch the program

### property maintenance standards

- Identify priority properties

- Develop and adopt minimum property maintenance standards

- Design local enforcement method

### renaissance zones

- Create Renaissance Zone task force to begin initial steps of the application process

- Prepare Linton development plan and submit for approval

- Start marketing the Renaissance Zones as much as possible

### blight remediation

- Create Housing Renovation Task Force

- Secure necessary funding for blight remediation program

- Launch and market the program

## oz prospectus

- Complete Opportunity Zone Prospectus

### marketing the oz prospectus

- Establish marketing committee

- Create marketing plan

- Create digital marketing content to publish on social media platforms

- Plan and coordinate an in-person event to increase visibility to potential investors

### Willows Apartment building project

- Identify local investor and developer

- Work with investor/develop/architect? to guide Willow Apartment building project

- Renovate and update the existing apartment units

- Apply to become a Renaissance Zone to incentivize development of storefronts within the Willows Apartment Building

- Complete Willows Apartment Building project

- Share this exciting accomplishment with the world through local and national press releases

## marketing

### community audit

- Conduct a community audit to identify gaps or problem areas in Linton's digital marketing strategy

### marketing plan

- Establish marketing committee

- Define measurable goals and objectives

- Identify target audiences

- Explore budget-friendly options for a branding refresh with emphasis on a logo redesign

- Update city website with new look and feel as well as additional information about tourism and economic development

### get social

- Define strategy to manage social media account/Assign responsibility of managing social media accounts

- Create clear guidelines for social media posts

- Enhance Facebook profile and page

### network with alumni

- Collect alumni email addresses to build a database

- Collect more information on alumni, including subjects studied in school/career paths, and where they live now/build profiles

- Create a buddy/mentor program among high school students and alumni

# **appendix e:** **rapid marketing** **assessment**



LINTON, NORTH DAKOTA

*Rapid Assessment:*

# **Marketing Analysis**

## WEBSITE

The City of Linton government website is well linked, with regularly posted meeting and calendar updates. It has a comprehensive overview of the City's offerings, including public parks, libraries, churches, and schools.

The website has a consistent typographic element, however, important information and headers are differentiated by caps lock, rather than a bolded font or a different point size (see figure 2). While fine to use for headers, it is recommended to not highlight important information using caps lock, but instead find other graphic elements, such as boxes, a bold font, or another color.



figure 1 Linton website homepage

The organizational structure of the site could be improved in order to regroup and categorize information in a more user-friendly and intuitive manner. For example, the 'City+' tab on the vertical navigation bar includes a wide range of information and resources, from job descriptions to payment portals to staff directories to ordinances. A clearer information taxonomy could improve site usability, making information easier to find. Other examples of hierarchy improvement could include moving the 'Businesses' tab under the 'Community+' tab, and turning the 'Blog' tab into either 'Announcements' or 'Meeting Minutes,' which is mostly what the Blog page currently includes.

### Recent Posts...

- APPROVED JUNE 7, 2021 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
- APPROVED JUNE 22, 2021 CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
- LINTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
- LINTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021
- REMINDER: THERE WILL BE NO GARBAGE PICK-UP ON MONDAY, JULY 5, 2021 IN OBSERVANCE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

figure 2 Linton website recent posts

When thinking through information hierarchies for government websites, it's important to consider key user groups — current residents, future residents, and visitors. What information do they need to easily access? What frequent questions do current residents have about town happenings or policies? What do you want to share with prospective residents or guests about Linton?

## WEBSITE CONT.

Recomendations
Apply for a .gov website ( <a href="https://home.dotgov.gov/registration/">https://home.dotgov.gov/registration/</a> )
Update navigation hierarchy
Implement brand refresh
Use bolded font instead of caps lock to highlight headers and other important information

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Facebook

The City of Linton's Facebook page ('[City of Linton Government](#)') was not the first, or even fifth, page to show up upon an initial search for 'Linton, ND.' The Facebook page was buried under other search options. The first five results were (1) Linton ND Online Rummage Sales (public group), (2) Linton, ND (place), (3) Linton Chamber of Commerce (page), (4) Linton, ND lost and found pets (page), and (5) Cobblestone Inn & Suites - Linton (place).

The 'Linton, ND' (place) result allows Facebook users to look at local restaurants, bars, and tourist attractions at a location to help plan trips, and tag locations in posts. It is a geolocation and location-based marketing tool for communities. This feature is a great opportunity for communities, because it is an easy way to consolidate and share their attractions and events. However, the Linton, ND (place) interface shares no locations within Linton, ND. For example, the closest restaurant shared is in Bismarck, an hour away. Some of the attractions listed, such as hunting and fishing opportunities, are in South Dakota.

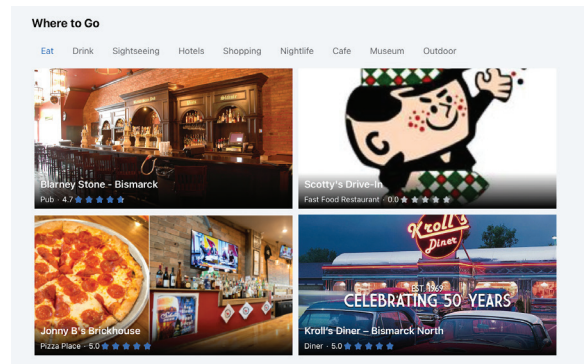


figure 3 Linton, ND Place feature on Facebook

Upon further digging, the 'City of Linton Government' page showed up, but this low priority in Facebook's SEO is likely due to inactivity, and an incomplete profile. The last post on the page is dated July 2, 2021, and it is a plain text post, half in caps lock, announcing a City Council meeting. Looking at the posts over the last year, the average number of likes is zero. The most liked post in the last year reached 4 likes, and was a request, again in all caps, to wear face masks in public to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This post was also shared 17 times, which is the greatest engagement on the page. Few

posts receive comments, but of the comments posted, none of them garnered a response from the City's page. This lack of engagement can prevent posts from being seen, as the Facebook algorithm is more likely to share pages that have higher rates of engagement and community.

There are exactly two photos on the page — the cover photo, and a small map photo. The latter looks as though it may have once been the profile picture, but has since been removed. The About page has a price scale rating, which is unnecessary for a government entity. As of July 13, 2021, the page has a total of 326 total likes, and 340 total follows.

There are two reviews of Linton, ND on the Facebook page, both of which are from 2013. Since there are only two reviews, the averaged recommendation for Linton currently sits at 3/5, seeing as one reviewer gave a negative rating.

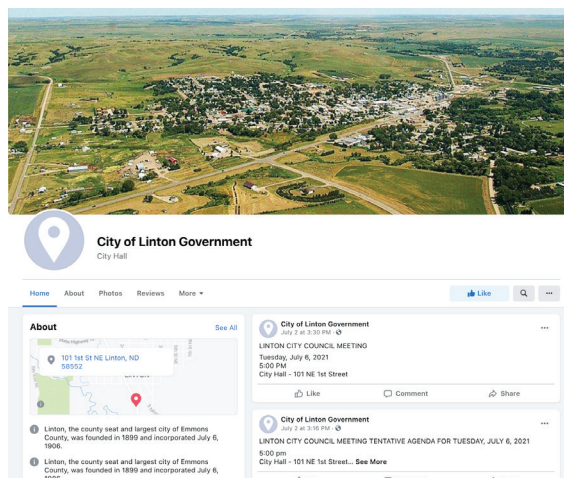


figure 4 City of Linton Facebook page

## Instagram

There is no Linton, ND Instagram page. Upon searching 'linton nd' on Instagram, the first result was a hashtag (#lintonnd) which has roughly 2,300 posts as of July 13, 2021. The majority of posts under this hashtag come from Boutique 23, a small shop located in both Linton and Bismarck.

Five individual profiles show up beneath the hashtag — four are person profiles, and one is the Linton Girls Basketball team Instagram page.

Directly beneath these five profiles, the location tag for Linton shows up. This location tag has a wider range of posts associated with it, including wedding photos, prom photos, high school sporting event photos, and selfies from community members.

## Twitter

There is no Linton, ND Twitter page. The content that results from a search for 'linton nd' ranges drastically, from posts about high school sports, to weather forecasts, to posts about DAPL.

## Yelp

Upon searching for restaurants and bars in Linton, ND, there were three results: (1) Thats A Pizza & More, (2) Model Bakery, and (3) The Grill.

When broadly looking for home services, six results showed up: (1) Guy Portillo, a handyman, (2) Shooting Star Plumbing, (3) K & H Electric, contractors and electricians, (4) Humann Heating & Air Conditioning, an HVAC company, (5) Prairie Winds Construction, a contracting company, (6) Weisser Real Estate.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CONT.

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In looking for auto services, there were five results: (1) RJ Sales and Service, (2) Wagner Body Shop, (3) Hedahls Parts Plus, (4) Schumacher's, and (5) Jay's Auto Body & Sales.

Recomendations
Enhance the Facebook page in order to maintain current following, and attract more followers
- Add a profile picture
- Update Facebook Place by encouraging local Linton businesses with existing Facebook pages to geotag and link their page to Linton, ND
Create clear guidelines for social media posts. This can include rules about posting schedules (i.e. x times/week), post length (i.e. no longer than 4-5 sentences), and post content (i.e. each post should include media such as photos, videos, or web links).

## SEO - SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

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### Google

A Google search for 'Linton, ND' yields roughly 2,200,000 results.

The top three results were:

1. The City of Linton's website.
2. ndtourism.com, which has a designated page for Linton and lists some of its businesses, parks and campgrounds, hotels, and other attractions. This would serve as a good resource for Linton visitor's, to help plan their trip, but is limited in scope. In addition to its limited scope, ndtourism.com does not include any Linton attractions in their top lists for North Dakota tourism more broadly, which means users (potential tourists) may only find Linton through searching for it specifically.
3. The Linton's Wikipedia page, which details Linton's history, demographic information, geography and climate, as well as some early photographs.

Interestingly, despite not showing up in a search through Facebook, the 'City of Linton Government' Facebook page showed up on the first page of Google search results, as the ninth result.

## NEWSPAPER

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### Emmons County Record

The local newspaper, Emmons County Record, was easy to find online upon a Google search with the keywords 'linton nd news.' This newspaper covers a range of townships across Emmons County, and regularly highlights events and news from Linton, such as the Independence Day parade and the Lions Club Demolition Derby.

In addition to news and events, the Emmons County Record website hosts an 'Emmons County Visitor Guide' PDF, a document created by the Linton Industrial Development Corporation, the Linton Chamber of Commerce, and the Emmons County Record. This document, also available on the City of Linton's website, shares a history of each township, as well as their local attractions, including parks, restaurants, businesses, hotels, airports, and churches.

## RADIO

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### KLHS and KLPS

While not a direct marketing connection from the City of Linton itself, a unique avenue for communication is the KLHS and KLPS radio stations based out of the Linton Public School. Run by Jay Schmaltz, who teaches the school's radio classes, these stations give students broadcasting experience, both behind the scenes and on the air. These online radio stations, sponsored by Farmers Union Insurance, share music, local news and weather, as well as sports.

<https://ndfu.org/linton-school-thriving-with-nds-only-prep-radio-station/>

### Recomendations

Since there is already interest and a robust program for broadcasting and journalism within the Linton public schools, there may be potential for future collaborations between the City and the school on other projects, such as social media campaigns.