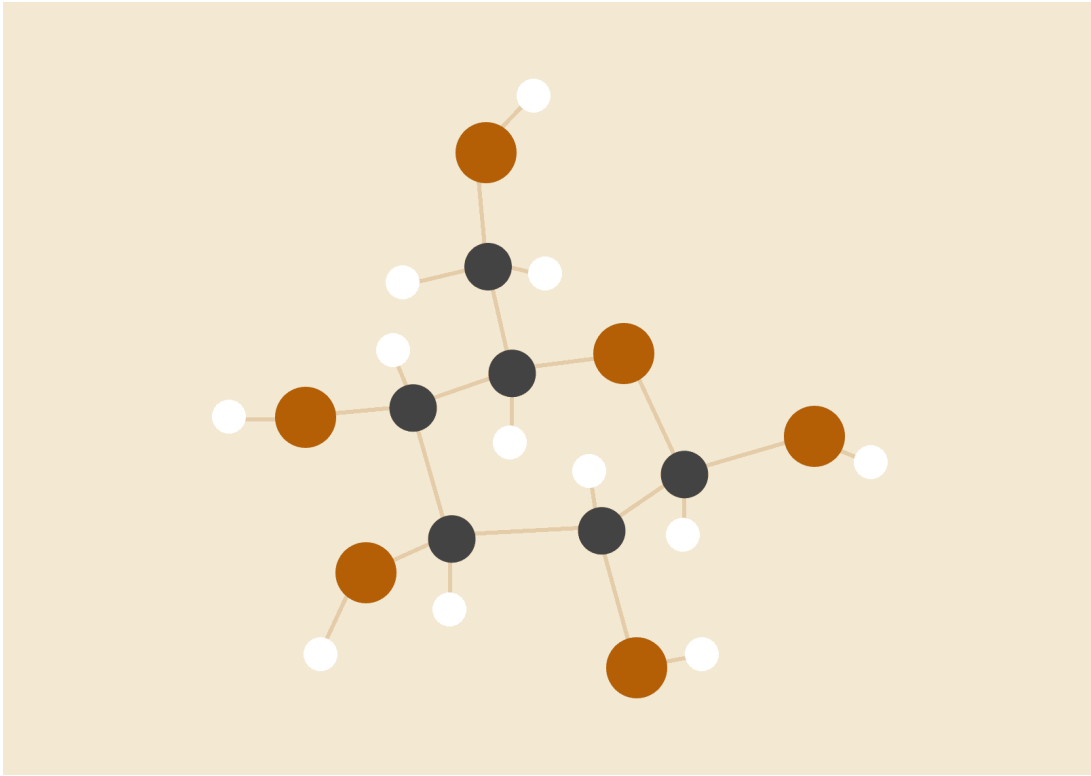


Minot Sustainability

Community conversations on future sustainability efforts.



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INTRODUCTION

In January of 2023, planning began to host community conversations throughout Minot on the topic of sustainability. This project was born out of personal curiosity from Tim Bauman, a Minot community member and founder of Environmentally Minded People of Minot.

PROJECT GOALS

1. **Engage community stakeholders** to gather an understanding of knowledge and interest in sustainable practices.
2. **Co-create a strategic sustainability plan** for Minot by accessing collective wisdom.
3. **Utilize local knowledge** to create tailored solutions that better fit the community's needs.
4. **Increase community engagement** and ownership of the decision-making process.
5. **Build social capital** by creating a space for community members to meet and discuss ideas they value.

PLANNING

Monthly planning sessions were held to ensure the community gatherings would be welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to many residents. Care was given to ensure meetings were offered during varied days and times to accommodate residents' schedules as well as in handicap-accessible spaces.

An invitation to participate in the public meetings was shared widely on social media, through email invitations, and direct calls to various stakeholder groups including state, city, and county governmental entities, Minot State University, members of Environmentally Minded People of Minot, schools, small business owners, local food producers, and other community stakeholders.

FUNDING

This project was made possible through a grant by the Change Network which receives funding from the Bush Foundation. The Bush Foundation works to inspire and support creative problem-solving — within and across sectors. The Bush Foundation funds projects, people, and ideas in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. (1)

MEETING OVERVIEW

Five meetings were scheduled over November 13th - 15th, 2023. Three meetings were open to the public, and two closed sessions were organized for high school students during Central Campus High School hours.

Two public meetings were hosted at Prairie Sky Breads from 5:30-7:30 pm on Monday and Tuesday evenings. The third public meeting was hosted at Main Street Books on Tuesday between 2-3 pm. This meeting was condensed down to one hour to allow access for community members with limited time availability.

A total of 58 community members actively participated in the sessions, representing a diverse age range from under 10 years old to individuals in their 70s. Attendees came from varied backgrounds and career paths. There were elected officials, students, retirees, teachers, small business owners, lawyers, students, pastors, farmers, and community advocates. Some participants have been lifelong residents of Minot and others had moved to the area in recent years.

The high school sessions took place in the Library at Central Campus High School. Ninth and tenth-grade science classes participated from two different schools; Central Campus and South Prairie High School. 140 students actively participated in the event. Although these sessions were focused on student input, a few teachers, a Minot Parks employee, an ND Dept. of Environmental Quality employee, MPS support personnel, and an EPA lawyer participated in the conversation to engage in first-hand dialogue with students.

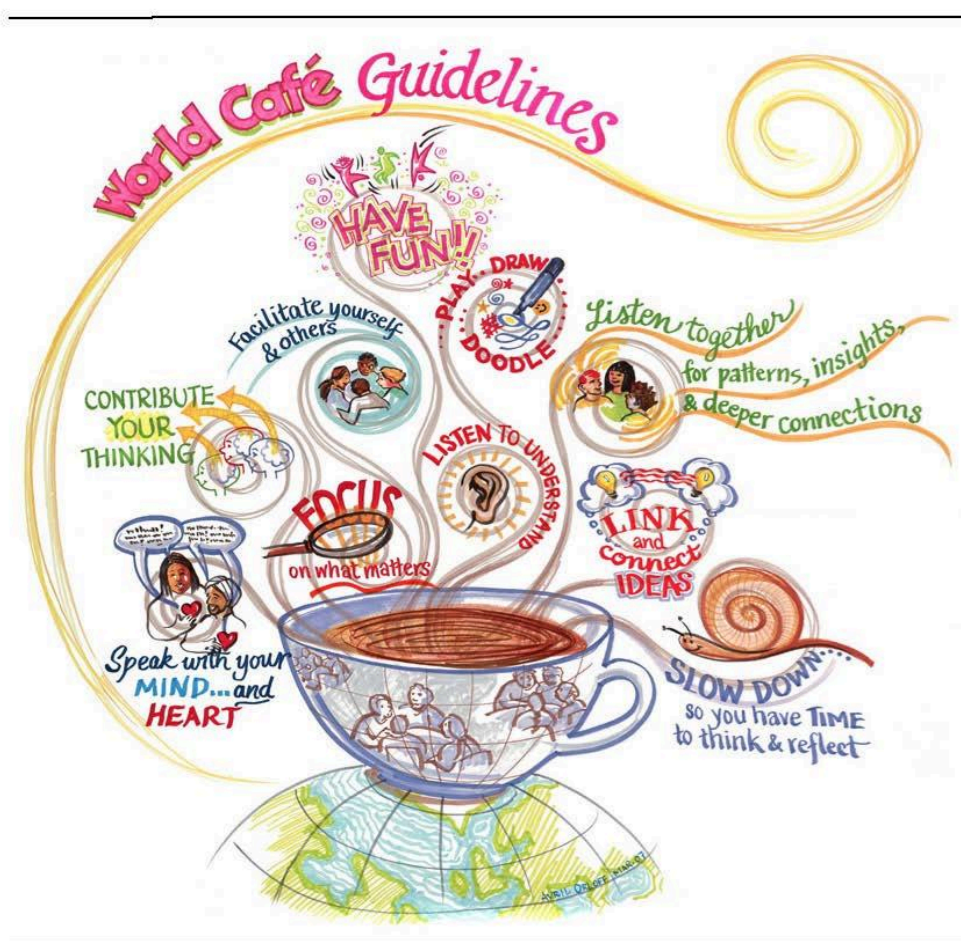
In addition to the in-person meeting, a survey was shared with the community for those who wanted to participate but were unable to attend in person.

The final group of data was received from Nedrose Public School from 9th and 10th grade science classes, who discussed the questions as an in-class project.

METHODS

All five meetings were facilitated through a World Café model. The World Café is a method for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter in real-life situations. World Café offers a great way of fostering interaction and dialogue with both large and small groups. It is particularly effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people. The café format can be used for many different purposes — information sharing, relationship building, deep reflection exploration, and action planning. (2)

You can learn more about World Café [here](#).



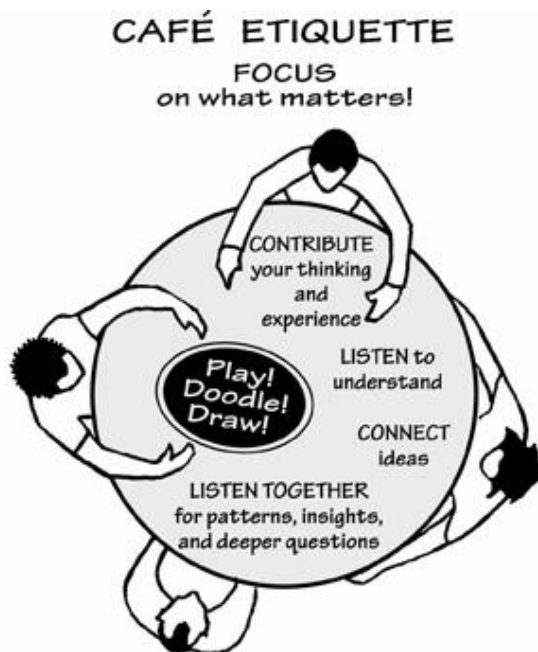
An artful rendition of the World Café guidelines.

FLOW OF THE WORLD CAFE METHOD

After welcome and introductions, the process began by asking participants to sit in groups of four or five. These small groups were presented with a question to discuss within their group. After a 20-minute interval, individuals are invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group.

Participants are then asked to move to a new table allowing for dialogue between many different people from various backgrounds. A designated "table host" stayed at their initial table for the subsequent round, welcoming the next group and providing a brief overview of the discussions from the previous round to cross-pollinate ideas between groups. During these community sessions, a series of three questions were asked.

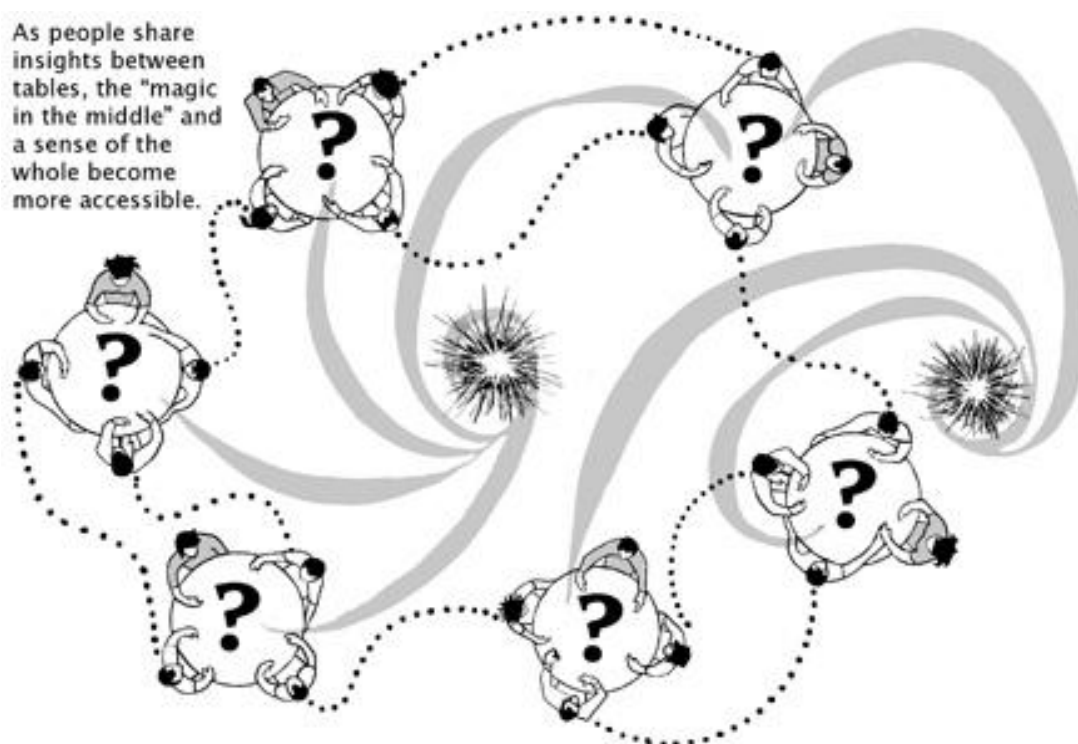
1. What sustainable practices is Minot currently doing well, and what else would you like to see?
2. What obstacles prevent us from adopting sustainable practices in our lives?
3. In an ideal future, what would you envision Minot to be like for yourself, your children, your grandchildren, and everyone who calls Minot home?



An illustration of the community conversation model utilized.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected in multiple ways during the events. Participants were asked to draw, doodle, and write ideas on paper tablecloths during their small group conversations. They were asked to synthesize the three main ideas discussed within the small groups and write them on a post-it note. Over **700** thoughts and ideas were collected on post-it notes from the five community meetings and additional online comments. Themes and topics were documented during the full group discussions, capturing the main ideas.



An illustration showing how participants move from table to table sharing ideas.

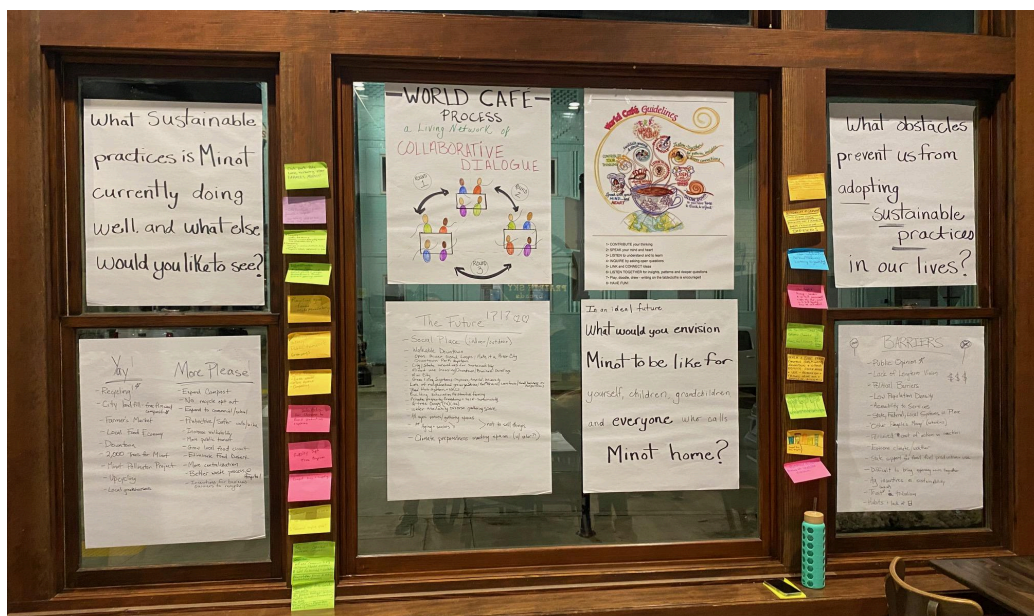
RESULTS

Question 1. Participants were asked:

What sustainable practices is Minot currently doing well, and what else would you like to see?

Residents celebrated some of Minot's current sustainable efforts. The top initiatives are as follows:

1. Residential Recycling
2. 2000 Trees for Minot
3. Minot Pollinator Project
4. Walking and Biking Trails
5. Parks and Outdoor Recreation Areas
6. Community Events such as Lee Wok and HøstFest
7. Free Compost at the City Landfill
8. Public Infrastructure such as Snow Management and Flood Walls
9. Clear skies for Stargazing



Data compilation following the second community conversation.

Prominent Trends

The following are the most prominent trends in what the participants would like to see more of:

- 1. Expand Recycling**
 - a. glass recycling
 - b. commercial recycling
 - c. recycling at apartment complexes
- 2. Expand Public Transportation and make it more Accessible**
 - a. connect to all areas of the city
 - b. bus shelters for winter riders
- 3. Increase Walkability and Bikeability**
 - a. expand bike lanes
 - b. connect paths to public transportation
 - c. allow people to bring bikes on public transit
 - d. Sidewalks with ramps
- 4. Reduce Food Waste with Compost Program and Gleaning/Sharing Efforts**
- 5. Reduce Plastic Bag Usage and Incentives for Businesses that Implement**
- 6. More Support for Local Food Initiatives & Community Gardens**
- 7. Protection and Expansion of Green Space**
 - a. parks/outdoor recreation
 - b. wildlife areas
 - c. native prairie
- 8. More Support of Local Businesses**
- 9. More Renewable Energy**
- 10. Education on Sustainable Practices and Available Resources**
- 11. Clean the River and Increase Accessibility**
- 12. More Cohesion and Inclusivity**
- 13. More Welcoming Spaces for Youth**
- 14. Free/Affordable Activities for Youth**

Question 2. Participants were asked:

The obstacles and barriers as described by participants are:

- 9

8. Peoples Limited Time to Work on Initiatives
9. Lack of Education and Central Resource Hub
10. Consumerism Mentality
11. Public Assumption of Infinite Resources
12. Built-in Obsolescence
 - a. fast fashion
 - b. low-quality goods not made to last
13. Convenience Factors
14. High Cost of Living/Inflation
15. Loss of Historical Knowledge/Preservation Skills
 - a. sewing/mending
 - b. gardening
 - c. food preservation
 - d. foraging
 - e. composting



Ellen & Tim engage students in a discussion at North Central High School.

Question 3. As a final question, participants were asked the following question:

In an ideal future, what would you envision Minot to be like for yourself, your children, your grandchildren, and everyone who calls Minot home?

The main themes expressed by participants are as follows:

- 1. Creating a shared community for more people to work together.**
 - a. embrace diversity
 - b. welcoming & inclusive
 - c. tolerance & openness
 - d. connection & pride of space
 - e. community placemaking
 - f. pay it forward opportunities
 - g. create a culture with shared values
 - h. “city with a soul”
- 2. Enhanced greenspace and shared/multi-purpose spaces especially downtown and in floodplain.**
- 3. Affordable access to food.**
 - a. winter community greenhouse
 - b. gardens in yards and community spaces
 - c. grocery store downtown and walkable locations
 - d. allow chickens in residential areas
 - e. economic development of the local food economy
 - f. expand and add more farmers markets
 - g. local food “farm to table” restaurant
- 4. Improvement of river**
 - a. clean-up river
 - b. open dead loops
 - c. increase public river access – camping & pedestrian paths
 - d. add river area greenspace with beach and swimming area
 - e. become a “river city” by creating access and commerce around the river
- 5. Transportation**
 - a. less dependency on single-driver cars
 - b. increased public transit to the whole city
 - c. pedestrian bridge over Broadway for safe crossing
 - d. connect the bus line to the hospital

6. Smart infrastructure

- a. Create multi-use spaces i.e. mixed use housing and grocery stores
- b. Green buildings for schools, daycares, nursing homes, and all public buildings
- c. Tiny home neighborhoods

7. Investment into more events and entertainment for all ages/people year round.

- a. places open later and on weekends where youth are welcome
- b. big indoor space for year-round activities
- c. zipline course and go karts
- d. all ages concerts

8. Address social issues

- a. increased childcare
- b. decreased homelessness,
- c. safe drug rehabilitation centers
- d. social service for pregnant teens
- e. increased job opportunities for teens

9. Efficient waste management

- a. encourage the reuse of materials
- b. place to donate/exchange architectural materials
- c. city-wide curbside composting program
- d. expand recycling program

CONCLUSION

Through these conversations, it is apparent that Minot residents are community-minded. The main themes in the provided data set highlight a vision for an improved and sustainable community in Minot. Some of the key areas include enhancing education on sustainability, establishing communal spaces for collaboration and activities, promoting open-mindedness, eliminating stereotypes, and increasing support for families. There is a strong emphasis on reducing dependency on single-car transport, improving river quality and access, and enhancing greenspaces, especially downtown and in floodplains. The community envisions a city with a soul, emphasizing pride of space and community placemaking. Sustainability efforts include waste management through composting and recycling, architectural material exchange, increased renewable energy, and a robust local food model. The data also supports affordable housing, better public transit, diverse and inclusive communities, and initiatives to

end poverty. Additional features include walkable neighborhoods, pedestrian bridges, local food restaurants, indigenous environmental connections, and winter placemaking. The community envisions a future where everyone has equal rights, childcare is accessible, and there are resources for rehabilitation and support for those in need. Overall, the vision is centered on creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable city for all.

NEXT STEPS

These results are for the community to use as they see fit. Some suggested next steps are as follows:

1. Distribute this document extensively among community members and public officials.
2. Select a prominent theme and organize a community brainstorming session dedicated to the chosen topic.
3. Initiate regular meetings for community members to collaborate and enhance their understanding of sustainability.

DISCLAIMER

We strived to ensure this report accurately reflects the people's views who participated in the conversations. We hope this summary will inform community decisions. But this report is not intended to be, nor should it be, a statistically valid survey of community opinion. We acknowledge that this is a small sampling group of the citizens of Minot. Nothing in this report should be interpreted as qualifying the level of support for various views.

REFERENCES

1. The Bush Foundation <https://www.bushfoundation.org/>
2. World Cafe Community Foundation
<https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>