

America in Bloom 2025 Evaluation Report



Community: Estelline, South Dakota

Evaluation Dates: June 9-10, 2025

Lead Advisor: Rod Barnes

Co-Advisor: Ed Hooker

America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage and planting pride through volunteerism.

Evaluation Areas	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent
Community Vitality	128.00	74.00	57.81%
Floral Impact	96.00	27.00	28.12%
Landscaped Areas	96.00	31.00	32.29%
Urban Forestry	96.00	2.00	2.08%
Environmental Initiatives	152.00	22.00	14.47%
Celebrating Heritage	112.00	37.00	33.03%
Overall Impression	112.00	47.00	41.96%
Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	13.00	12.00	92.30%
Total Points and Percent	805.00	252.00	31.30%
Star Rating	4		
Community Involvement Total	64	25	39.06%

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%

2 stars = 10% – 19.99%

3 stars = 20% – 29.99%

4 stars = 30% – 39.99%

5 stars = 40% – 49.99%

6 stars = 50% – 59.99%

7 stars = 60% – 69.99%

8 stars = 70% - 79.99%

9 stars = 80% – 89.99%

10 stars = 90% - 100%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report (three minimum)		
Name	Title	Email
Cole Hoyer	Development Board	Hoyercole@gmail.com
Renee Axtell	Mayor	rlaxtell@gmail.com
Jennifer Bortnem-Risty	Development Board	Jennifer.risty@gmail.com

GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION:

Communities are required to provide the following prior to evaluation:

- Community Profile organized to follow the criteria and metrics. For repeat communities, call out what is new and/or implemented due to advisors' recommendations.
- Evaluation Tour Itinerary with start and finish times for each day
- Community Map with community boundaries and the tour route
- Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour.

The areas to be scored:

Advisors will review Community Profiles, Community Maps, and Evaluation Tour Itineraries to confirm the appropriateness of the areas to be evaluated and contact communities prior to the tour so adjustments can be made.

- All areas (municipal, commercial, and residential) within the boundaries of the entrant's community/municipality (except as noted below) are scored and a representative portion of all areas must be included.
- Property to be scored, whether public or private, must be subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant's community/municipality.
- When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the property with labor and/or funding, then advisors may include in their scoring the property not subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant community.
- A community may request recommendations for areas toured but not scored.

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:

N/A (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, advisors will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages. Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

Not Started (0 points): programs or procedures are not in place.

In Progress (1-2 points): programs or procedures are developed, and a plan of action is implemented.

In Place (3-5 points): programs or procedures are utilized and beneficial.

Surpassing (6-8 points): programs or procedures are exceptional, utilized, and beneficial throughout the community.

Other:

- This Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts including its levels of participation in, or implementation of the metrics in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location. Make sure the advisors are made aware of any challenges that were faced during the year.

General Observations and Recommendations (recommendations are indicated in *italics*):

Congratulations to Estelline, South Dakota for the city's inaugural participation in the America in Bloom National Awards Program. America in Bloom is thrilled to have your community as part of our family. Your efforts have garnered you a rating of "4" stars. This is great for your first year. Your enthusiasm and mission to transform Estelline is to be commended.

Estelline, South Dakota is a beautiful rural community located in Hamlin County. It is located among fields of corn, soybeans, wheat, and beautiful dairy farms. The population of 768 makes it a rural center for agriculture,



education, and healthcare. Led by newly elected Mayor Renee Axtell, the town is ready for a revitalization that will transform it into a center for commerce in the local area. With a focus on revitalizing downtown, the community has a volunteer economic development corporation committed to this effort. Cole Hoyer, Jennifer Bortnem-Risty, Lynda Pierce, Molly, Julie, Linda Salmonson, and David Ebbers are an energetic team working to reinvigorate Estelline. It can already be seen in the changes happening

downtown. It is exciting to see new investment with the funeral home, the day care in the former funeral home building, the two new homes built and the development on the east side of the city, the



downtown building being remodeled, the new boutique in the former



library and the changes to the grocery store. Revitalizing downtown will not be an easy task. Using the Estelline Area Economic Development Committee to assist Mayor Axtell and the council is a great method to facilitate this transformation. Estelline has many wonderful assets starting with the school

system, the nursing and care center, Veteran's Memorial, and the parks system with the sport fields and community center. Estelline now can make a beautiful development on the east side of the city. A beautiful new development is in the works. Thoughtful planning will create an opportunity to expand open green space, create housing, a potential permanent home for the rodeo, trails, environmental initiatives and much needed housing that will only improve the quality of life in Estelline.



The city has two annual summer events by hosting the Estelline Rodeo Association Annual Rodeo Days and the school's Alumni Association Reunion. The Rodeo is known throughout the region and the state. It is managed and run by a local nonprofit with the help of volunteers. A parade that shows the community's close tie to agriculture is a key component of the annual event. The excitement of celebrating the city's long association with the rodeo and the contributions to the community that the Alumni Association has made over the years is a great way to celebrate heritage in Estelline. *We recommend you track the hours of the volunteers for Rodeo Days*

and all other activities in the city. Many times, the value of volunteerism can be used as match dollars for grants. Your volunteer interest card is a great way to reach out to find new volunteers that can help in all the areas that make your community vital.

We want to thank Cole Hoyer for his dedication to making our visit successful. We felt at home immediately and excited to be able to assist Estelline in developing into an even greater community where people want to live, work and play. We hope you will realize the benefits of the program and encourage you to continue your participation in America in Bloom.

Sincerely,

Rod Barnes and Ed Hooker
America in Bloom National Advisors 2025

COMMUNITY VITALITY: Policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and promote a sense of health and well-being. Includes, but not limited to, senior and community centers, libraries, museums, arts/cultural organizations, mentoring programs, schools, faith-based organizations, parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, golf courses, and other active and passive recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. An economic development plan is in place and implemented. It includes the direction for short- and long-term economic growth, and programs to improve the economy. It is regularly evaluated, measured, and/or reevaluated.		N/S			
2. Communication of ordinances and policies pertaining to Community Vitality are easily accessible. Topics include, but are not limited to, culture, education, government, recreation, and technology. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.				3	
3. Master plan exists for current and/or future public green space. Growth, enhancements, and/or protection of undeveloped areas are included. It is reviewed and routinely updated.		N/S			
4. Public parks and/or green spaces are available. Properties may include pocket, school, neighborhood, city, county, state, and national parks and green spaces. Parks and green spaces meet the needs of the community and are clean, maintained, welcoming, and utilized.					8
5. Active and/or passive recreation opportunities are available and meet the needs of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, water sports, golf, baseball, pickleball, skiing, soccer, hiking, nature trails, bird watching, picnic areas, and fishing. Year-round programs are available.					7
6. Seating is available near walking, exercise, playground areas, and/or public transportation stops. The seating and area are clean and accessible.				5	
7. Shade is provided for participants and/or spectators at cultural and sporting events. Structures include, but are not limited to, shade sails, dugouts, pergolas, arbors, and trees. Structures are maintained and inspected for safety.				4	
8. Community gathering space is available. The space is accessible and used throughout the year for all ages and abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, community center, senior center, YMCA, faith-based gathering places, libraries, and town hall.				5	

9. Age- and ability-appropriate play areas are accessible. Equipment is ADA-compliant and/or inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.					6
10. Active outdoor community events are offered throughout the year. Examples include, but are not limited to, Bike-to-Work Day, Walk to School Day, and 5K events.				5	
11. Community celebrations and/or cultural performances meet the needs of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, festivals, art, dance, theatre, music, and cinema.					7
12. Secure food programs are available. Examples include, but are not limited to, hunger relief efforts, food pantries, garden plots, rooftop gardens, community gardens, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture.					6
13. Alternative transportation programs are available. Transportation is available in all areas of the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, bicycle/scooter rental, car/van pools, public transportation, and/or ride sharing to all areas of the city.		N/S			
14. Safety policies, programs, and/or services are in place. Examples include, but are not limited to, police, fire, emergency medical services, community health, crime prevention, homeland security, gang prevention, traffic, homelessness, civil and human rights. Information is easily accessible and communicated.				5	
15. Youth-focused programs are in place for multiple ages and/or abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, sports, gardening, clubs, and lectures					7
16. Non-municipal volunteer boards are active and/or comprised of representatives from business and residents. Examples include, but are not limited to, In Bloom committee, Rotary, Veterans, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting, HOAs, and faith-based organizations.					6
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percent
1. Community Vitality	128		74		57.81%

Community Vitality Recommendations:

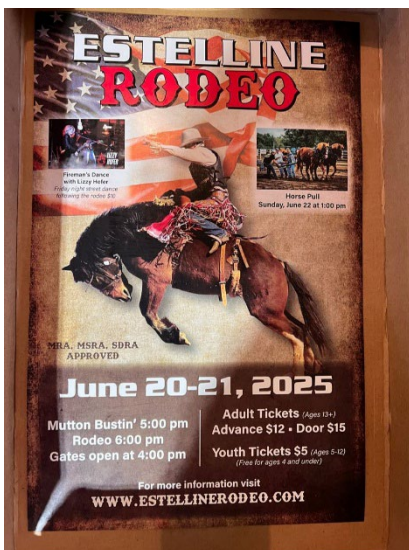
Estelline has taken the first step in working on an economic development plan and master plan. The Estelline Community Survey is a great tool to use to formulate both plans. *Seeking out a class from one of the local universities to conduct an Economic Development Strategic Plan.* It is clear residents believe in helping each other, promoting their first-rate education system, touting the nursing and care center, and experiencing small city friendliness. *We recommend using the survey to create an economic development action plan. Promoting the city's location to the lake, hunting, agritourism and the small-town atmosphere can be a win for the community.* From a quick internet search for grants available in South Dakota for economic development plans we found the following. Explore these and other grants available. Linda Salmonson should be the expert in assisting with grant work due to her background. *Use her expertise and connection to various agencies that provide grants in your region. Building a relationship with your state representatives can help open doors to grants many times also.*

State and Federal Grants

- South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED): Offers grants and funding programs aimed at enhancing economic development. Programs include the Economic Development Program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA): Provides funding for projects that promote economic development, including planning grants for local governments.

Local Programs

- South Dakota Community Foundation: Offers grants for community development projects that can include economic planning initiatives.
- Regional Development Organizations: Various organizations in South Dakota may provide funding or assistance for economic development plans tailored to local needs.



The Rodeo Days and Alumni reunion are both highly successful events in your city. *Working with the rodeo to secure a permanent site for the event would be beneficial.* The event generates vital tourist dollars for Estelline. Explore the new development on the east side of the city. This site seems to lend itself to this kind of activity connected to the school campus, the community building and sports fields.



The school system is an amazing asset for the city. The programs and sport facilities are top notch. The connection to the very active Alumni Association appears to be vital to helping augment the capital budget to improve facilities. Keeping the school district relevant is important to the community. Having the beautiful community center adjacent to the pool provides space for exercise, theatre, basketball and volleyball and is a tremendous advantage for the community. *Add to your economic plan the construction of a spray water park for children in the park near the pool.* These recreation facilities can be a great attraction for young people during the summer. Check out Travares, Florida's seaplane themed spray park. <https://www.tavaresfl.gov/910/Tavares-Splash-Park>



In the community survey, a library was mentioned several times. It is our understanding that there was a former library adjacent to the city hall. *Explore creating a new library space downtown that incorporates an internet café/bakery/library combination. Look at this website for an example of how a restaurant in the Washington DC metro created locations that cater to events/art/library. You can purchase a book, attend a lecture or book signing, order food, or spend time on the internet* <https://www.busboysandpoets.com/>. *This would be a potential attraction for young people. Another suggestion would be to use the school library as a community library open during the summer with volunteers. Finally, work with the schools to construct Little Libraries to expand the program and place them at additional key locations throughout the community. Make the Little Libraries art pieces on the outside. A great example of this is the Town of Edmonston Maryland. They partnered with a local nonprofit, Operation Arts Foundation, to create 5 Little Libraries. Each of the libraries are themed after a book or movie with art on the outside reflecting that theme.* <https://edmonstonmd.gov/little-free-library/>



Estelline is fortunate to have many options for nutrition with the community garden, farmer's market, 60's Plus Dining, Food Pantry and the Feeding South Dakota program. Your community garden space is wonderful. Incorporating the orchard and the garden plots is a great idea. The garden needs some focus with better signage and administration. *Add more raised beds for the seniors to be able to use. Using galvanized containers can work well to provide a taller workspace, allowing more seniors to participate. The garden could be coordinated by the master gardens, County Extension or the 4H students, local garden club, or a civic club. Charge a small fee to ensure buy in for the garden. Create rules so that participants create good gardens. Allow for a social space for gardeners to meet and share information. Create workdays for the gardeners along with education workshops for gardening.* District Heights Maryland has a great example called Fiesta Place. Check out this picture of their social space and their use of the galvanized containers. <https://www.districtheights.org/fiesta-place-garden>

The programs at the Estelline Nursing and Care Center are amazing. This facility is obviously the place to retire after a lifetime on the farm. The partnership between civic clubs, churches, the schools and the community are outstanding.

The farm program, gardening program, and flower program are all great examples that can be replicated throughout Estelline. *We encourage you to continue your projects with the Care Center.*



The city is fortunate to have a couple of options for exercise. The Estelline Wellness Center located at 305 Hospital Drive near the Care Center and the exercise center in the Community Building are great opportunities for the community to exercise and have year-round access to equipment. *We encourage you to promote these on your website further and through social media. Another suggestion is to form partnerships with local businesses to offer programs for employees to use the Wellness Center. This could increase usage.*

The school system is an outstanding example of community vitality in Estelline. From their academic programs, community involvement and extracurricular activities, to the amazing art tiles created by the seniors, it is very apparent that the Estelline community values the importance of having a first-rate education system. Partner with the school even further. *We encourage you to explore an art program with the school to provide murals for the windows on the side of the former library building. This will enhance the appearance of the gazebo park.* The tiles at the school demonstrate the ability of the students.



There is a beautiful mural downtown on one of the buildings. Adjacent to the building is a vacant corner lot. *Work with the owner of the building and create a pop-up park. This could include brightly colored picnic tables, string lights, containers of plants and flowers that create a boundary on each side of the lot. Add a fire pit for fall and consider adding music concerts by closing off the adjacent side street.* The picture is from a vacant lot in Ferndale Michigan that was turned into a temporary park and gathering place for residents. Using inexpensive water troughs placed along the street to form an outdoor room can create a great visual impact.

FLORAL IMPACT: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of floral displays and seasonal accents for beautification, including but not limited to annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, colorful foliage, and cultivated and native plants for season-round interest for displays in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground plantings.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Plant combinations are carefully selected for location and environmental conditions. The combinations create visual interest, provide dramatic effects, and appear coordinated. Routine maintenance is evident.			2		
2. In-ground flower displays are designed with mature plant heights, color, and texture in mind. Plants are healthy, robust, and floriferous. Routine maintenance is evident.			2		
3. Containers and/or hanging baskets are in use, scaled to their surroundings, and have suitable plants. Plantings are robust, floriferous, and provide a dramatic effect. Routine maintenance is evident.			2		
4. Floral displays are located throughout the community. Displays are well maintained and attractive. Examples include, but are not limited to, flowerbeds, raised beds, planters, hanging baskets, window boxes, carpet bedding, topiaries, and/or mosaics are located throughout the community.				4	
5. Regular pruning, deadheading, weeding, removal, and/or replacement of dead plants is conducted on public properties.			2		
6. Demonstration/display gardens are available. Plants are labeled. The garden is promoted to the public. Garden is available for events to residents and businesses.		N/S			
7. Efficient water-wise strategies are in use. Examples include, but are not limited to, drought-resistant plants, use of gray water, and timing of irrigation. Strategies are easily accessible and communicated. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.		N/S			
8. Appropriate fertilization (chemical and/or non-chemical) procedures for municipal, parks, and/or school properties are implemented. The procedures produce effective results. Educational information about fertilization is communicated. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.				5	

9. Training programs for proper floral displays care and maintenance are offered to seasonal staff and/or volunteers. Training is conducted by Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden centers, state agencies, and/or contractors.		N/S			
10. Efforts are in place to educate and raise public awareness of the importance of flowers in the landscape. Educational information about the selection and care of flowers for beautification is available and communicated to the public. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.			1		
11. Recognition programs are in place monthly, quarterly, and/or annually for attractive displays created by businesses and/or residents.				5	
12. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments in the community's floral displays. Routine opportunities present themselves to residents and/or businesses to get involved.				4	
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent		
2. Floral Impact	96	27	28.12%		

Floral Impact Recommendations:

The flower beds at various locations around the city are well done. The flowers at the Estelline Nursing and Care Center are superb. The few pots and hanging baskets located downtown are great additions to brighten up the city. *The city should focus on creating a showcase in one or two locations.* The primary location should be downtown. Adding flowerpots to the front of each building would create a more inviting appearance. Work with the local Co-op to produce containers that each business downtown can purchase. The business would be responsible for watering, or they could pay extra for the container and have your staff or volunteers do the watering. Shawnee Hills Ohio provides this program for their 35 businesses located in their downtown area. Check out the look of these containers. Contact Craig Baldrige at craig@shawneehillsblooms.org Craig can share with you the program that Shawnee Hills has been successful in their business community.

Creating better hanging baskets that flower throughout the summer is important. Here is an example of hanging baskets in Lewisburg, West Virginia. They select the dragon wing begonia as the flower to use for the baskets and carry that theme throughout the city. Remember to plant early after frost and to fertilize and water to create full, blooming plants for the entire season.



The Estelline Nursing and Care Facilities gardening program that allows residents to plant and care for the flowers and plants on the grounds is a wonderful physical activity for the senior citizens. *Expand this program with the adoption of a grandparent program and invite high school students to partner with the seniors to work with the flowers on the grounds.* The hanging baskets of flowers outside the residents' windows with many bird feeders is an outstanding way to keep the residents engaged. Kudos to the staff for developing this concept.

As the advisors toured the community, we observed many beautiful flower gardens at homes. The advisors awarded several "atta boy" door hangers to outstanding floral and landscaping homes. It is time the city took the lead and created an inviting floral display downtown. The city should focus on creating a showcase in one or two locations. The primary location to start is Gazebo Park next to the city hall building. That park can be the main focal point as you enter downtown. Adding hanging baskets in the gazebo, flowers around the gazebo and in front of the monument sign will add to making this park inviting.



The post office building downtown has a great flower bed in front of the building. Add beautiful flowering annuals to the bed. It is common for the U.S. Postal offices across the country to not focus on plants in front of their buildings. Many community volunteer groups provide services to the post office to ensure a beautiful look. *We encourage you to work with your post office to improve the flowers in the flower bed directly in front of the post office.*

LANDSCAPED AREAS: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of the managed landscape. This includes hardscape features, cultivated and native trees, shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, succulents, edibles, evergreen topiaries, turf, groundcovers, and pollinator-friendly plant material.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Action plan developed and implemented for proper maintenance, pruning, removal, and/or replacement of dead and overgrown plants. Best practices are utilized.				3	
2. Plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and/or maintenance of flowers and/or landscapes.			1		
3. Landscape ordinances and/or policies are in place. City landscape ordinance requires specifications for landscaping and maintenance for new and improved residential, commercial, and public development. Ordinances and/or policies are easily accessible.		N/S			
4. Landscaping is found throughout the community including public areas, parks, gateways, and/or key buildings. Landscape displays are selected for location, environmental conditions, and/or impact. Attractive designs are utilized and well maintained. Landscapes serve as focal areas in the community.				5	
5. Landscape displays enhance community entryways. The use of trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, signage, hardscapes, and/or lighting create a welcome display. The displays are attractive and/or well maintained.			1		
6. Residential landscapes provide streetscape appeal and reflect community value in landscaping. They are neat, attractive, and well maintained.					6
7. Effective use of naturalization, xeriscaping, rain gardens, and/or suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, and water management. Displays are well maintained.		N/S			
8. Lawn and turf areas display health and vigor. Procedures and practices, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and/or permaculture, are used to manage lawn and turf areas, including mowing, edging, watering, and/or weeding.					8
9. Procedures in place to monitor and/or manage diseases and/or pests in the landscape. Pertinent information is available and/or communicated to the public. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.				5	

10. Qualified landscape personnel and/or experienced contractors are available to design, install, source, and/or maintain public landscape floral and landscape sites. Additional support provided by growers, garden centers, County Extension, and/or city departments are utilized to create and implement municipal floral and landscape displays.		N/S			
11. Training programs for proper landscape display care and maintenance are available for seasonal staff and/or volunteers. Examples include, but are not limited to, Master Gardeners, County Extension, local garden centers, state agencies, and contractors.		N/S			
12. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community in the landscape displays. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in the design, planting, and/or care of floral and landscape displays.			2		
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percent
3. Landscaped Areas	96		31		32.29%

Landscaped Areas Recommendations :

Landscaped areas exist in Estelline in the private sector and in businesses including the Estelline Nursing and Care Center. It is a spectacularly landscaped facility with a koi pond, bird houses, a farm and hanging baskets outside residents' windows. Landscaping at the Veteran's Memorial is also well done. It is time for Estelline to work in their public spaces so that the landscaping looks appropriate and is well done throughout the community.

A prime location for landscaping is the parking lot adjacent to the downtown grocery store and around the digital sign on State Highway 28. This corner is at Main and Main so to speak. The parking lot for the grocery store does not provide a great appearance for travelers or visitors on the state highway. Consider creating a slender landscape bed along the south side of the parking lot next to the highway. Work with the owner of the property to create the landscape bed to include street trees. Use appropriate native plants to include trees, grasses, and shrubs along with perennial flowers. By using perennials, you reduce the need for maintenance. Consequently, go across the highway and place appropriate native plants around the digital sign. This could include cone flowers, black-eyed Susan's and low growing shrubs.



Create a landscape bed around the monument signs located in Gazebo Park, at the digital sign, wellness center and at the historic school. Incorporate perennials that will provide color the year around. Use low growing shrubs, grasses and plants that are native to the area and require low maintenance. At the school sign plant could be heritage in nature and connected to the age of the school building.





The overall grounds of the school district and adjacent city park property are attractive. It is all maintained in a tidy fashion, however the school building side facing Davis Street has a tired landscape. *This is a great opportunity to upgrade the look of the building as you enter the school. Involve the students to design and create a landscape bed that includes flowering trees, perennials, art and sculpture.*



This site at the Estelline Nursing and Care Center lends itself to a natural landscape with stones, pollinator plants, shrubs and a potential rain garden at the bottom of the incline to retain the water for a short period of time. To address the naturally seeping springs start with these steps:

Step 1: Evaluation

- *Determine water flow: Observe how water moves on the property to identify the spring's primary flow path.*
- *Evaluate slope: Determine the steepness and stability of the slope. For steeper slopes, terracing or retaining walls may be necessary.*
- *Check soil conditions: Identify the soil type and its drainage capabilities. This will inform your plant selection and drainage strategies.*

- *Observe existing vegetation: Note what plants are naturally thriving in the area around the spring and on the slope. This can provide clues for selecting appropriate native species.*

- *Create a plan of action.*

Step 2. Erosion control and water management

- *Install drains and swales: Dig trenches along the contour of the slope to redirect water to desired areas, preventing erosion.*
- *Consider French drains: For more severe drainage issues, install French drains to divert excess water away from the hillside.*
- *Use erosion control blankets: For slopes or newly planted areas, erosion control blankets or netting can provide temporary stabilization while plants establish roots.*

Step 3. Plant selection for slope stabilization and beauty

- *Choose native, deep-rooted plants: Native plants are well-adapted to South Dakota's local climate and require less water and maintenance. Deep-rooted species like junipers, California lilacs, and creeping phlox are excellent for stabilizing slopes.*
- *Consider groundcovers: Plants like creeping thyme, periwinkle (Vinca minor), or sedum spread quickly and form a dense mat over the soil, reducing erosion.*
- *Incorporate shrubs and trees: Shrubs like sumac and serviceberry, and trees like red maple and river birch, have extensive root systems that help anchor the soil.*

- *Select plants that thrive in moist conditions: If the spring creates a perpetually damp area, consider plants like willow, iris, cattail, or cardinal flower.*
- *Plant at the correct angle on slopes: For moderate slopes, plant small plant material at a slight angle with the root ball fully covered to prevent it from washing down.*
- *Avoid planting trees or large woody plants at an angle on slopes, as it can take many years for them to grow upright.*

Step 4. Design and aesthetics

- *Incorporate natural elements: Use rocks, boulders, and other natural materials to create a naturalistic landscape that blends seamlessly with the spring.*
- *Design a water feature: If desired, a natural spring can be incorporated into a water feature like a pond or a small waterfall.*

URBAN FORESTRY: Strategic design, use, installation, and maintenance of trees on public and private lands.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. The municipal plan addresses the role urban forest initiatives play in the green infrastructure of the community. Policy is enacted and enforced that includes performance requirements to meet the minimum crown canopy and/or succession planting.		N/S			
2. Efforts are in place to educate and raise the public awareness of the importance of urban forestry. Examples include, but are not limited to, the use of print, videos, websites, apps, and social media.		N/S			
3. Municipal ordinance enacted and enforced for tree planting and/or preservation. Ordinance addresses the handling and removal of damaged, dying, or dead trees. Ordinance includes public property, private property, and new construction projects. Communication of ordinances and policies are easily accessible.		N/S			
4. Tree board and/or department is available, active, and/or interact with the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, tree planting events, addressing safety concerns, education, and making recommendations to municipality.		N/S			
5. Certified municipal personnel, trained arborist, urban forester, and/or Department of Natural Resources (DNR) entity actively manages the urban forest. Businesses and residents are updated routinely on urban forestry matters. Information delivered via city website, paper, and social media.		N/S			
6. Trees are healthy and contribute to public health and wellness. Procedures are in place for the appropriate selection, diversity of tree species, proper spacing, planting depth, and/or monitoring and managing diseases and pests. Pertinent information is available and/or communicated to the public.			2		
7. Policies are implemented for the protection of historic trees located on public and private properties. Tree programs exist that spotlight and honor historic trees. Trees are labeled and/or indexed. Historic trees are highlighted in a brochure and/or tree walk.		N/S			

8. Programs in place to increase, support, promote, and/or protect trees. Examples include, but are not limited to, civic native tree nursery, repurposing fallen trees, managing destructive pests, and urban orchards.		N/S			
9. Trees are identified in public sites such as arboretums, parks, and/or cemeteries. Examples include, but are not limited to, identification labels, descriptive signage, QR codes, kiosks, maps, apps, and brochures.		N/S			
10. Policies are implemented, and education is available for the safe participation by volunteers and staff in planting trees on public properties. Ongoing urban forest tree care training and educational information and/or seminars available for residents and/or businesses.	N/A				
11. Effective communication of recommended trees is available to the public. Topics include "Right Tree in the Right Place," mulching, placement, spacing, and/or maintenance. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and social media.		N/S			
12. The municipality is a member of urban forestry organizations, participates in programs, and/or earns designations and awards. Examples include but are not limited to Tree City USA, Arbor Day Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and regional or state agencies.		N/S			
13. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's urban forestry. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in the design, planting, and/or care of the urban forest.		N/S			
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percent
4. Urban Forestry	96		2		2.08%

Urban Forestry Recommendations:

In 2022, Estelline experienced crippling effects from a derecho. This sparked the community's desire to become better stewards of the environment and focus on a resilient urban forestry program. Heritage trees around the City's bandstand were lost and the residents realized the need to replant a diverse tree palette that would be resilient to pests and disease. Currently Estelline does not have an active urban forestry program, but all the components are there. Knowing the percentage of tree canopy in the community can be a great tool in the development and planning of an urban forestry program. *Recommend comprehensively evaluating the tree canopy by 2027.* By having a tree inventory, when disaster strikes, federal funds from FEMA could be available to assist in re-establishing the tree population. *Beginning with public areas, identify and inventory high value and heritage trees and label them accordingly. Use these trees to educate the public about the value of trees and how to protect them, encouraging residents to apply the same principles to their own trees. Create a 'Tree of the Month' recognition campaign to include both commercial and residential properties.*

<https://www.itreetools.org/>

<http://www.treebenefits.com/calculator/>

<https://treeslouisville.org/what-we-do/resources/print-tree-tag/>

Consider enrolling in the Tree City USA program through the Arbor Day Foundation. Nearby Watertown has been involved in Tree City USA for 42 years and would be a great mentor in creating a program in Estelline. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources should be able to support this endeavor. For more information on Tree City USA, go to www.arborday.org.

Tree City USA focuses on 4 standards:

- 1) Establishment of a Tree Board.
- 2) Development of a Tree Care Ordinance.
- 3) A community Forestry Program with an Annual Budget of at least \$2 per capita.
- 4) An Arbor Day Observance or Proclamation.

In addition to the traditional Arbor Day event, keep the community involved by adding an additional tree planting event, such as Neighborhoods Month in October. Most garden centers and nurseries promote "Fall is for Planting". Identify a local nursery that may be a partner for a fall tree planting project. A native tree seed collection project would make a good companion or stand-alone event.

<https://www.arborday.org/programs/alliance-for-community-trees/neighborhoods/>

<https://www.potomacriver.org/resources/get-involved/water/native-seeds/>



The new East Side Addition residential neighborhood adjacent to the school campus currently has no street trees planned once the infrastructure is in place. *As this is a city-sponsored development, it is strongly recommended that street trees be considered and added to the plan. A minimum of 2 street trees per lot should be planted after the construction activities have finished.* Also, currently there are no street trees along Main Street. Street trees provide shade to the sidewalk and cars parked along the street provide a visual interest and define the pedestrian space from vehicular space. Street trees will assist in mitigating environmental issues, reduce emissions and save energy. An active and aggressive tree planting program can be a testament to how Estelline is progressing to solve urban sustainability as well as global climate change problems. Trees help reduce carbon emissions, clean air, and fight urban heated islands. *Purchasing and planting street trees should be a priority for the city. Explore doing it in a phased approach with concentrating on the first block closes*

to the State Highway 28. This could be a fundraising campaign to allow the community to come together and purchase trees for their most public street. *The city could purchase the trees for the East Side Addition housing development and temporarily place them along Main Street to give the community a feeling for what could be.* The city of Coshocton, Ohio connected with the New York City's million tree challenge and took advantage of surplus trees making their way across the country before being installed along the city streets of New York City. *Consider planting the trees close to the curb so that curb cuts can be completed, allowing for stormwater to run into each tree basin.* Another phase of the project would be to add electrical outlets so that Christmas lights could be added to the trees.



Consider adding trees along the public right of way down Davis Street East along the school property. Choose the appropriate tree variety that will provide color for the seasons and help create interest as you travel to the football stadium and parking lot. This street will see additional traffic when the new subdivision is completed, and the street network is connected. The trees will eventually provide shade for the classrooms located on this side of the school building.



Continue the trees from the parking lot entrance to the school along Davis Street to the football field.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES: Environmental and sustainable leadership, policies, plans, and programs for water, resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; climate change issues, green Infrastructure, and alternative energy resources.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Comprehensive plan to identify, protect, restore, and/or maintain natural areas. Examples include, but are not limited to, removal of invasives, no-mow areas planted with native grasses and wildflowers, and succession tree plantings.		N/S			
2. A municipal environmental plan is accessible and reviewed annually. The plan promotes water conservation, alternative energy use, food security and sustainability, carbon reduction, and/or responsible land management.		N/S			
3. Environmental board and/or Green Team are available, active, and/or interact with the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, sustainability initiatives, events, education, and making recommendations to the municipality.		N/S			
4. Public awareness strategies regarding environmental issues are implemented and effective, such as the 3 Rs (reduce/recycle/reuse), Earth Day events, pollution prevention, "leave no trace," landfill reduction, and community clean-up days. Municipal employees and/or volunteers receive training on environmental initiatives and participate in events.		N/S			
5. Communication of environmental plan and ordinances is easily accessible. Topics include sustainability, water quality, recycling, composting, reducing pesticide use, and light pollution. Examples of communication avenues include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, city hall, library, and social media.		N/S			
6. Programs to educate, encourage, and/or expand the understanding of the role and importance of pollinators and ecological habitats are available for all ages. Programs are held routinely.		N/S			
7. Green infrastructure policies and/or techniques are used throughout the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, naturalization, xeriscaping, rain gardens, suitable plant varieties to enhance such features as traffic calming, bank stabilization, stormwater run-off, and water management.		N/S			

8. Green infrastructure and natural asset inventory mapping are implemented. The inventory is regularly updated and includes climate, vegetation, soils, topography, wetlands, air, and/or water quality.	N/A				
9. Home and business energy audits are available and promoted. Incentives are available and communicated for items such as solar energy, water conservation, home appliance replacement, weatherization.		N/S			
10. Water conservation measures are used throughout the community. Examples include, but are not limited to, water-saving shower heads, full loads for dishwashers and washing machines, sink and toilet leaks, and lawn irrigation. Methods of water conservation are shared with the community through lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, and/or social media.		N/S			
11. Management strategies implemented for the effective reuse/repurpose of buildings, structures, and/or land. The municipality has a reuse plan in place.			2		
12. Collection is available for trash, recyclables, compostables, and food waste. Events and/or sites are offered for drop-off of hazardous, household, electronics, shredding and/or difficult-to-recycle items. Sites are available for year-round recycling.				5	
13. Recycling and trash containers are available in public areas. Containers to address both recyclables and trash present themselves together. Labeling is consistent. Routine trash and recycle pickup are scheduled. Additional containers are available during special events. Events promote zero waste.		N/S			
14. Reuse opportunities are offered. Clothing, books, household goods, resale shops, tool lending, durable medical equipment, and/or equipment repair initiatives are available for donations and/or purchase.				5	
15. The municipality uses energy-efficient vehicles in its fleet for police, fire, public transit, and/or city employees. Options may include electric, fuel cell electric, plug in electric hybrid, compressed natural gas, and/or hybrid electric vehicles.		N/S			
16. Electric vehicle charging stations are located throughout the community. Charging stations are available to city, residential, and/or visitor vehicles. 240-volt home charging outlet installation incentive is available and promoted.		N/S			
17. Mulch from renewable and/or sustainable sources is appropriately used by the municipality. Mulch is available for residential use.		N/S			

18. Educational programs for all ages are available and promote environmental initiatives such as rain barrels, backyard habitats, rain gardens, solitary bee hotels, xeriscaping, chemical reduction, water conservation, and green business practices.		N/S			
19. Youth organizations such as Scouts, Green Teams, schools, and 4H encourage involvement in environmental initiatives. Participants are recognized for their efforts and/or achievements. Efforts are communicated to the public through social media, newsletters, city website, and other methods.				5	
20. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's environmental initiatives. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions.				5	
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent		
5. Environmental Initiatives	152	22	14.47%		

Environmental Initiatives Recommendations:

The city has not embraced environmental initiatives to date. It is time to review appropriate activities that protect our environment. Start with downtown by exploring rain gardens at the intersections. The gardens would narrow the street and provide stormwater runoff options. Rain gardens are easily developed using soil mixtures that provide a positive filtration rate and contain native plants that provide color and variety the year round. Here are the benefits of rain gardens:

- No mowing necessary
- Water conservation
- Pollinator-friendly
- Groundwater recharge
- Biodiversity and wildlife
- No fertilizer, herbicide, or pesticide required
- Water pollution protection
- Flood risk reduction
- Drainage improvements



The city's economic development groups can collection is a great example of a volunteer effort to improve the environment. Kudos to you for starting this program. We know it can be difficult setting recycling bins at locations throughout the city because users place trash in the bins. Consider a two-step approach to implementing a program. *Begin with temporary recycling stations at all events, providing education via signs and directions. A second approach could be submitting a grant for a demonstration of Big Belly recycling container.* The Big Belly containers are solar operated and compact the trash. Once full, the units notify maintenance personnel that they are full. The containers can also serve as an advertising board for city events. Find information about Big Belly's here:

<https://bigbelly.com/products/bigbelly-element>

Green Teams are a great way to work to implement sustainability action plans. *You can incorporate sustainability in their strategic planning. We recommend the creation of a Green Team consisting of volunteers from the community. The Team could be used to educate and promote the sustainability efforts of Estelline. Remember to include ages from youth to senior in the make up of your green team.*

We did not see many electric vehicles or electric vehicle charging stations. *Explore grant options through the State of South Dakota to explore by adding them along the highway heading to the lake.* Visitors could stop to charge their vehicle and explore the community. While the grant currently listed on the State's website will be closed when you receive this report, watch for other grant programs available from the state. *In addition, evaluate purchasing electric vehicles for the city fleet when replacing administrative or public works vehicles. As lawn care equipment is replaced, do so with electric and battery-operated blowers, weed eaters, trimmers, etc.*

LED streetlighting could greatly enhance downtown streetscape. Select a style that is appropriate for the age of the buildings. Ensure the lampposts can support adding banners and hanging flower baskets. Add the lighting on State Highway 28, particularly in the blocks containing the grocery store parking lot and the city shops, and printing company. You want State Highway 28 to be attractive for the many visitors that travel this route to the lake. Hopefully, improvements like the lampposts, banners and hanging flower baskets will create the environment you are hoping for.

CELEBRATING HERITAGE: Recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Historic Preservation, Historic Society, and/or Architectural Review Board are available, active, and/or interact with the community. Activities/responsibilities include, but are not limited to, review proposals for construction and rehabilitation, promote historic preservation incentives, submit recommendations to National Register, and designate local historic landmarks.		N/S			
2. Historic Preservation ordinances are enacted and enforced. Ordinances effectively provide commercial and/or residential designation, guidance, and/or protection. Ordinances, policies, and restoration resources are available, easily accessible, and communicated.		N/S			
3. Historic districts, neighborhoods, structures, landmarks and/or objects are identified and/or labeled. Designation by such organizations as the Department of Archives and History and/or National Register are in place and/or in progress.				5	
4. Cemeteries and monuments are in place and well maintained. Historical plaques are used and well maintained. Examples of plaque locations include, but are not limited to, buildings, sites, residences, districts, historical events and people, and battle sites.					7
5. Historical museums and/or interpretive displays are available and maintained. Events and educational opportunities are held for all age groups to utilize historic assets.					6
6. Archives, artifacts, community records, and/or oral histories are collected, safely stored, preserved, and/or catalogued.				3	
7. Volunteers and/or staff are trained to maintain historical sites, archives, records, collections, artifacts, structures, and/or landscapes. Historic educators are trained to effectively communicate a community's history.	N/A				
8. Historic preservation incentives are available and promoted. Incentives may include but are not limited to tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, and/or rebates.				5	

9. Programs are in place for the purchase, installation, and/or long-term maintenance of memorial features. Examples include, but are not limited to, memorial benches, trees, brick pathways, and lamp posts.		N/S			
10. Natural and agricultural areas are identified and protected. Designation by such organizations as The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service, Department of Natural Resources are in place and/or in progress.		N/S			
11. Parades, festivals, events, and/or programs are held to commemorate the community's heritage, culture, and/or diversity. Participants represent all segments of the community.					6
12. Programs and/or events are available to bring history to life. Examples include, but are not limited to, theater dramas, reenactments, and historic characters at public events.		N/S			
13. Community heritage and/or cultural diversity are supported and promoted to all ages. Educational opportunities such as websites, publications, tours, interpretive signage, mobile apps, and/or programs.			2		
14. Youth of all ages and abilities participate in historical programs. Examples include, but are not limited to, lectures, tours, events, reenactments, research, and reader's theater. Participants are recognized for their efforts and/or achievements.				3	
15. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's heritage preservation efforts. Volunteer representatives from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions.		N/S			
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percent
6. Celebrating Heritage	112		37		33.03%

Celebrating Heritage Recommendations:

Estelline is in Hamlin County, named after President Abraham Lincoln's first Vice President Hannibal Hamlin. The post office in Estelline was established in 1879. The city was platted in 1882. The area was praised for its "excellent farming and stock raising" and Hamlin County was touted as a "fine agricultural county". The area grew with the expansion of the Northwestern Railroad. The city featured a depot and freight house. Many early commercial storefronts along Main Street were originally constructed of wood frame. In 1904, a fire devastated half a block of Main Street, and as a result replacement buildings were constructed of fireproof masonry, brick and concrete. An article published in 1917 boasted that Estelline was home to several churches representing a diverse religious population along with two banks, the Union House Hotel, a commercial club, an opera house, feed mill, 4 grain elevators, and an electric light plant along with a public water works. For a town of 600 residents, it is quite a thriving metropolis. *Recommend installing interpretive signage along Main Street with historic photos showing "before and after" of buildings along the street.*

The Estelline City Hall building was constructed in 1908. The same year, a building housing the public library on the street level and a Masonic Hall above were constructed. *This historic structure commands a presence on Main Street and would be the perfect location for a Visitors and Tourism office for the city. The building is too important not to be in the public realm.* This building with a corner entrance is adjacent to the park that houses the city's historic gazebo. Constructed in 1927, the octagonal concrete structure was originally called the "Bandstand" and was the social center of the city. Summer concert series were held annually from the 1930s and 40s through 1964. Families would load up in the car and head into town on the weekends, fill Main Street, and listen to the bands serenade the city from the bandstand. Estelline was famous for its high school bands, as evidenced in the display of musical instruments in the old Estelline Rural school House located on the Estelline school campus. *Recommend installing interpretive signage with historic photos of the band events and cars along Main Street.* The National Register Nomination states that the gazebo had "18 shrubs, 10 evergreens and 12 deciduous trees" on the grounds of the Bandstand Park. *A planting plan following historic precedent can be executed to restore the cultural and historic landscape around the Bandstand. The city could put out a request to residents to share plants from their yards and gardens to fill the flower beds around the Bandstand.*

There are currently 3 properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places – The Bandstand, the Hoffelt Drug Store, ca. 1911, and the Charles and Mary Lohr House, ca. 1901. The drug store is a time capsule, and the intact interior contains original furnishings, the soda fountain, light fixtures, cabinets, pharmaceutical tools, bottles and even labels. Sadly, the current owners are not community-minded, and the drug store is rarely available for the public to experience the collection. *The city should propose to the owners that the city lease the building and collection and offer regular tours of the historic structure.*

The residential streets that are adjacent to the main commercial area of the city contain a good collection of late 19th and early 20th century residential architecture. Housing stock is in general good condition, and the structures have not been altered in a way that would keep them from being listed as contributing elements within a new historic district. *We recommend working with the South Dakota State Historical Society, the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, to assist in survey and registration of Estelline's historic structures. Because Main Street is only 2 blocks long, a district encompassing both commercial and residential can be created. Once the district is designated, historic preservation grants and funding incentives would be available to assist owners with preservation efforts.*

The Estelline Nursing and Care Center, owned and managed by the city, is home to many of Estelline's former leaders. These residents still have a great deal to contribute to the community, and *establishing an oral history*

program to record and archive stories told by these residents about their experiences in Estelline would be a great way to honor the City's elders. Many of the nursing home residents come from an agricultural background. The City's agricultural heritage should be celebrated with possibly Founders Day or some other type of festival that would bring former residents and their descendants back to the community. This could recreate the atmosphere originally created by the band concerts held at the Bandstand.

OVERALL IMPRESSION: Adequate and effective amenities are provided and in good condition. The community is welcoming, attractive, and leaves a positive impression.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Not Started (N/S) 0	In Progress 1-2	In Place 3-5	Surpasses 6-8
1. Signage ordinances are enacted and enforced. Ordinances address temporary stake signs, billboards, and/or permanent signs. Enforcement helps to reduce visual clutter and/or helps to enhance the community's identity.				5	
2. Ordinances are enacted and enforced to address issues such as overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, building facades, and/or empty storefronts windows. Ordinances are routinely reviewed and updated as needed.				3	
3. Code enforcement/compliance officer is available. Violations are detected, investigated, and/or resolved. Code enforcement includes, but is not limited to, public health, safety, consumer protection, building standards, and land use.				3	
4. Communication of ordinances is easily accessible. Examples of communication include, but are not limited to, lectures, print, city website, library, City Hall, social media, and calendar of events.				3	
5. First impressions are positive in residential, business, and/or municipal areas. Properties, buildings, structures, grounds, decks, patios, and yards are neat and in order. Examples include, but are not limited to, lack of vandalism, graffiti, broken windows, peeling or faded paint, and rust. Programs exist and are effective to minimize graffiti, litter, and nuisance areas.				3	
6. Community infrastructure is in good condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, roadways, road shoulders, curbs, corner pads, medians, sidewalks, railroad crossings, sewers, transformers, and/or utility poles.				4	
7. Community amenities are in good condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, signs, site furnishings, public restrooms, water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, safe parking, proper lighting, crosswalks/pavement markings, containers, planters, and/or cigarette receptacles.				5	
8. Community is accessible to people of all abilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, public buildings, parking,				3	

sidewalks, public transportation, playgrounds, parks, sports fields, and trails.					
9. Wayfinding signage is visible, attractive, and in appropriate locations throughout the community. Signage adequately lists directional information and/or areas of interest.			1		
10. Public art is located throughout the community. Features such as banners, murals, and/or statues are used, attractive, and effective.					7
11. Year-round seasonal decorations are used in key areas. The decorations are well maintained and attractive. Examples include, but are not limited to, lighting, ornamental displays, wreaths, planters, luminaries, and displays in government buildings, residential homes, and storefronts.			2		
12. Pet waste policies are posted and/or enforced. Pet clean-up stations are available throughout the community. Stations are monitored and stocked.		N/S			
13. Volunteers participate in community improvement initiatives. Examples include, but are not limited to, Habitat for Humanity, home repair programs, disaster relief, and clean-up days.				3	
14. Programs are in place to encourage, recruit, and/or engage volunteers of all ages and segments of the community's overall impression. Volunteers from businesses, residents, schools, and/or organizations participate in events, programs, boards, and promotions.				5	
Totals:	Possible Points		Actual Points		Percent
7. Overall Impression	112		47		41.96%

Overall Impression Recommendations:

It was exciting to hear that the Estelline Economic Development Committee was working on leading the revitalization of Main Street and making the Gazebo Park a showcase as the entrance to downtown. You have many successes to celebrate with the opening of the new boutique in the former library, the grocery store, new funeral home building, day care, and the co-op store. Each of these are great examples of creating a new look for the downtown. We applaud you in looking at developing an identity for the downtown.



It is important to have welcoming signage to a community. There is lots of information contained in the signs at the west entrance to the city on State Highway 28 and at the east entrance. All the information is important to communicate with visitors. *We recommend that you create monument signs at both locations welcoming visitors and travelers to the City of Estelline. Create a landscaped bed to place the sign in. There appears to be plenty of space to create a sign that makes a statement to let people know they have entered the beautiful City of Estelline.*



Transforming downtown includes coordinating public infrastructure. This includes wayfaring signs, lampposts, banners on new lampposts, and various types of informational signage needed at public buildings. Estelline does not currently have good signage in the downtown corridor and on State Highway 28. The example at the left is fine, but if a uniform look was adopted for the whole city, the sign could look much better. We

recommend creating a uniform

design for such signs which easily identify the signs as part of Estelline (branding). Adopt the standard and as funds are identified, begin the replacement of existing signage. Install them at critical intersections to direct foot and vehicular traffic to significant destinations such as the city hall,

Veteran's Memorial, Estelline schools, the parks, the community center and the swimming pool. The wayfaring signage should let everyone know they are in Estelline so use the symbol most associated with the city on the signs. Here is an example of a good wayfaring sign. Here is an example of a consultant selecting coordinating signage for a community.



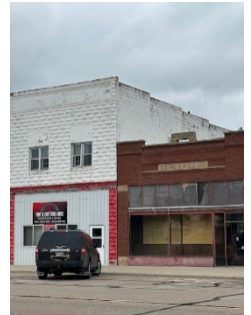
The City of Estelline is the gateway to Lake Poinsette, however this connection is not really marketed or capitalized on. Visitors to the lake pass right by Estelline's Main Street when traveling from I-29 to the lake. There is a huge opportunity to pull tourism dollars into the community through simple additions to the intersection with Main Street and State Highway 28.

Identify city area with crosswalks at intersections, possibly with the cherry and gray colors of the Estelline School District. Possibly even paint the RedHawks image in the intersections.

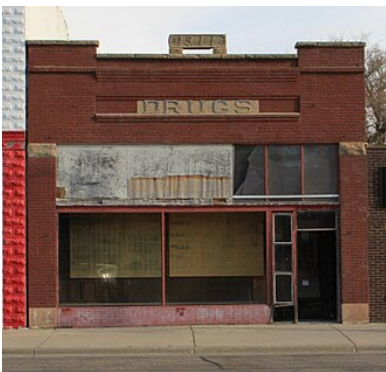


Code enforcement in any community is an important tool to ensure that properties are maintained, which in turn results in property values staying at an acceptable rate. Currently Estelline doesn't have a code enforcement officer. The city has a Public Nuisance Ordinance that defines several unsightly conditions that detract from an overall impression of a community. Estelline should consider adding the position of Community Policing or an Ordinance Compliance Officer to the city staff to address these issues. The position could be part time to focus only on compliance, or full time and the position could also include the task of volunteer coordinator. A volunteer coordinator could work to ensure community events have adequate volunteer support, and track volunteer hours which in turn can be used as in-kind support in grants applications. Ordinances are in

place to address issues such as deteriorating building facades, unkempt lawns, abandoned vehicles, and general property maintenance, however it appears the ordinances are not widely enforced. The condition of homes, business buildings, sidewalks and other infrastructure is important to create an inviting community. A ride through the commercial district indicates that area is also in need of enforcement with several commercial properties that are in disrepair. We were approached by a local resident concerned with this very issue. After driving by his home and the adjacent home that he was complaining about, it was evident that the city needed to take action to improve the neighborhood. *We recommend you give the property owner the appropriate notices needed to clean up his yard and to improve his home. If you do not have a detailed property maintenance code on your books, here is an example from Edmonston, Maryland.* <https://ecode360.com/32894798>



You have a great mural located downtown. The mural is colorful and well maintained. Murals are a great way to brighten up the downtown area. Look at Ottawa Illinois mural program. They even provide QR codes to tell the visitor the story. <https://www.hcdestinations.com/blog/ottawa-murals> *You have several locations where a mural could work downtown. First is the grocery store building. The owner seems receptive to the concept. Explore funding through donations or work with Linda Sanderson who had secured funding previously. Once you add the mural to the building, you can explore a streetscape improvement at this corner.*



We understand that the Economic Development committee has access to funds to potentially purchase vacant buildings downtown and/or to assist with grants or loans to assist with façade upgrade. *Façade programs are very helpful to maintain the look of a downtown. Using grants and other ways to finance low interest loans and assistance to business owners is a great way to upgrade facades on aging buildings. Explore South Dakota Main Street, Community Development Block Grants administered by the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development or check with the South Dakota State Historical Society. One building worth pursuing development of is the historic Hoffelt Drug Store at 212 Main Street. This building was listed in the national Register of Historic Places in 2008.*

The significance of redeveloping this building is that the interior is intact with the soda fountain, tables and chairs, light fixtures, cabinets and other accessories. Attempt to work with the owner to reopen the building using grants and other funding options.

EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS: Community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour including an informative Community Profile, preparedness prior to Advisors' arrival, and effective content during the Evaluation Tour. Succession plans are evident.	Not Applicable (N/A)	Unmet (U/M) 0	Met 1
1. Community contact was available for pre-visit meeting for introductions and discussion of preparations.			1
2. Community Profile was provided to Advisors at least two weeks prior to the first official tour date.			1
3. Community Profile includes contacts with emails and positions.			1
4. Community Profile from a returning community includes what is new and implemented from previous Advisors' recommendations (scored as Not Applicable for a new community).	N/A		
5. Community Profile includes a map with tour boundaries and a daily itinerary.			1
6. Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community.			1
7. Advisors met with elected/appointed municipal leaders and staff.			1
8. Advisors met with the business and non-profit community.			1
9. Advisors met with volunteers.			1
10. Advisors met with the media (print, radio, tv, social media) and/or have been given media contact information.			1
11. Advisors were asked to give a presentation.			1
12. A tour wrap-up session was conducted with a community representative.			1
13. Enough time was allotted for Advisors to work on the Evaluation Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi.			1
14. Succession plans are evident, and next year's chair is present and participating in the tour.		U/M	
15. CN grant project(s) are reviewed (scored as Not Applicable for a community not receiving a CN grant).	N/A		
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percent
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions	13	12	92.30%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions Recommendations:

Cole Hoyer and his team did an outstanding job preparing for the advisor's visit. The excitement of Mayor Axtell and the Economic Development Board members is very apparent the minute you start talking about the community. We sincerely hope this group can stay together and keep building momentum going forward. The positive thinking and attitude are bound to pay dividends for the future.

The community profile was well done. *Use this document as a living document to modify and change each year going forward. Post it for residents to see what has been accomplished in the city.*

The advisors were shown to the entire community and met with businesspeople, volunteers and city officials. The itinerary was well done. The advisors saw all the community including the good and the bad. Everything was handled in a timely manner. The potluck dinner at the park was especially nice. It was great to share with volunteers and residents.

Finally, don't forget to set up a structure for the development commission that will provide for continuity and succession planning. Cole may tire of being the leader of the commission and a new leader might not be as receptive to the growth initiatives the current administration is interested in. Include youth where you can in your committees and your boards.

DISCLAIMERS:

1. Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour. Please note that the metric calculations contained herein are final, and each community is encouraged to focus on any changes during the following year's entry in the America in Bloom Level 3 program.
2. All information is given to the best of America in Bloom's knowledge and is believed to be accurate. Your conditions of use and application of recommendations and/or suggested products are beyond our control. There is no warranty expressed or implied regarding the accuracy of any given data or statements. America in Bloom specifically disclaims any responsibility or liability relating to the use of the recommendations and/or suggested products and shall under no circumstances whatsoever be liable for any special, incidental, or consequential damages which may arise from such use.
3. Reference herein to any specific commercial products, processes, or service by trade named trademark manufacturer or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation or favoring by America in Bloom. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

2025 Community Recognitions

Community name/state: Estelline, South Dakota

Recognized Criterion: Community Vitality

Estelline is a vibrant community located in farm country. Benefited by the natural beauty of the surrounding area, including the state's largest lake located only a few miles from the town, Estelline residents enjoy a high quality of life. One of the strong points for the community is its first-rate school district. The district is fortunate to have outstanding facilities for sports. The Community is blessed to have a swimming pool, disc golf course, community center, and baseball fields in their well-maintained parks. The school has a first-class football stadium with a walking track and partners with the city to use the community center for a stage and gymnasium. These amenities provide outstanding options for residents. Estelline residents enjoy a high quality of life.

Another major asset for the community is the city-owned Estelline Nursing and Care Center. This outstanding facility provides a park like setting for residents to enjoy nature at its finest. Highlighting the Center in the middle of the courtyard is a farm petting zoo. The residents get the opportunity to care for the animals as if they were on the farm. Beautifully landscaped beds adorn the grounds. Vegetable garden plots abound, and bird feeders attract birds of all varieties.

The city has an amazing memorial dedicated to veterans. Reflections Memorial Park is strategically located between the care center and the cemetery. The park provides visitors a beautiful tribute to all the courageous men and women who served in our military. The park is well maintained and a testament to the volunteerism and dedication of the residents of the city of Estelline to ensure that life is celebrated every day.

Finally, Estelline hosts an annual rodeo and reunion day event every year in June. The alumni association of the school conducts its reunion at the same time as the famous Estelline Rodeo Days. A big parade with lots of family fun with music, food, and lots of amazing rodeo competitions. Estelline is well prepared to provide residents, visitors and the surrounding area options for living a good life.

Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Farm Petting Zoo at the Care Center

Estelline owns and operates the Estelline Nursing and Care Facility. The facility is an outstanding option for local senior citizens to call home. Beautiful landscaping, outdoor seating areas, a fishpond, bird feeders, and garden boxes add to the desirability of the facility. However, the top attraction is a farm petting zoo in the center of the courtyard that provides residents with the option to care for various farm animals daily. Many of the residents are from the farm so this option creates a great environment for residents to enjoy.

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