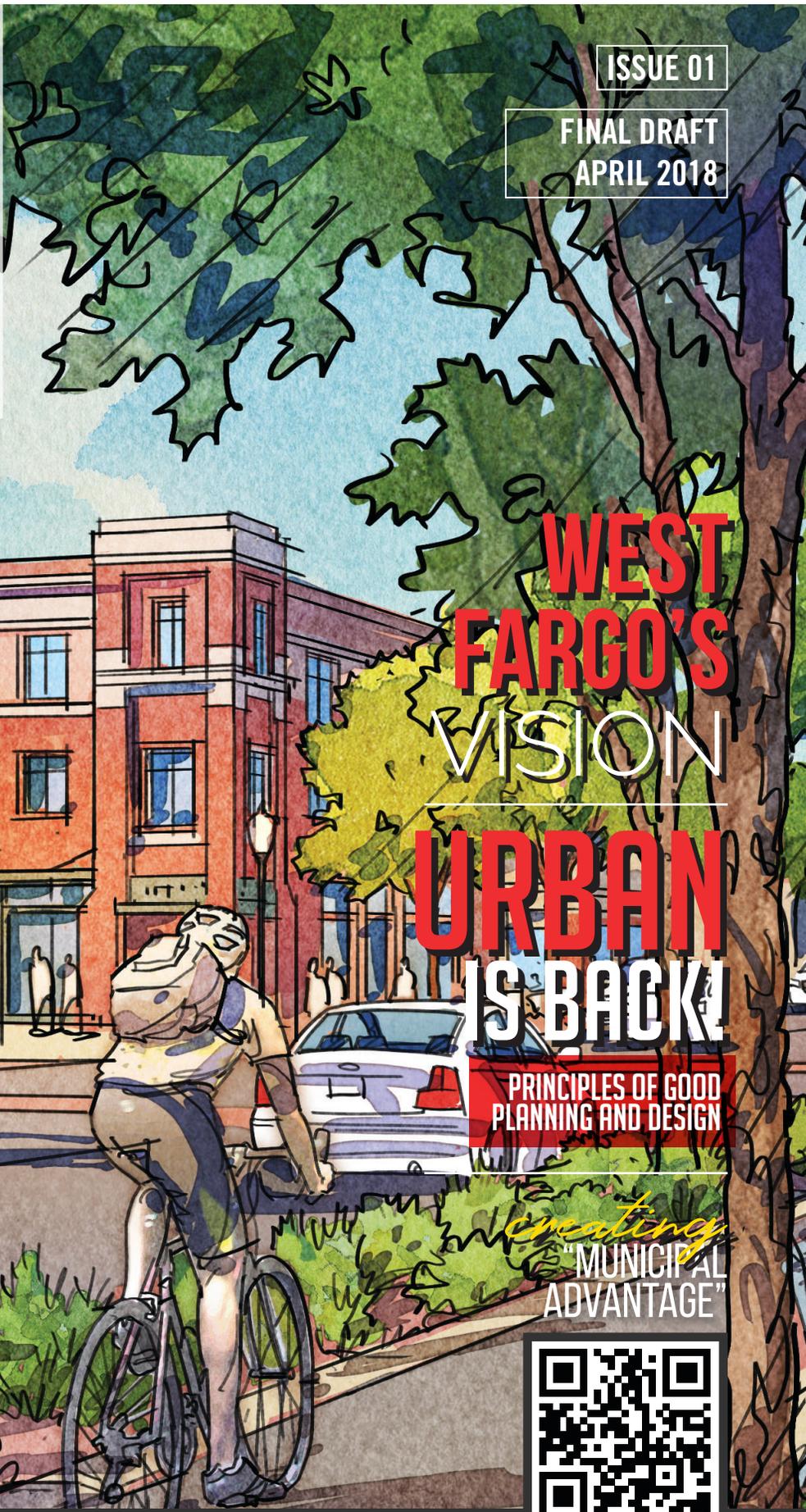


ISSUE 01

FINAL DRAFT
APRIL 2018



WEST
FARGO'S
VISION

URBAN
IS BACK!

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD
PLANNING AND DESIGN

creating
"MUNICIPAL
ADVANTAGE"

BIG
IDEAS

GROW
THE
ECONOMY

AROUND
THE PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Melissa Richard, Communication Director



Lead Consultant: Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative, LLC
www.tpudc.com

Subconsultants: Toole Design Group - Arnett Muldrow & Associates - City Explained



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



As well-known community planner Ed McMahon once said: "Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how." As a rapidly growing and highly desirable place to live and do business, West Fargo must "take the reins," be bold and have a proactive role in its future. The status quo is no longer what residents or businesses want. The well-articulated vision developed during the West Fargo 2.0 – Redefining Tomorrow process gives the community a clear path forward.

Be proactive!

West Fargo 2.0 gives everyone an opportunity to proactively prepare for inevitable growth, ensuring that the character of the city core and neighborhoods will evolve while remaining familiar and comfortable. You have understood the need to make your voices heard as many residents, business owners and elected officials came together for this significant collaborative effort; defining a vision for West Fargo.

Making choices!

This plan is about choices – choices for where and in what type of housing people have the option to live, where they have the option to work, how they may move around the community, and how they can enjoy all of the many great options West Fargo can offer. This plan places an emphasis on ways to promote and improve a broader mix of uses and quality urban design, to provide affordable and diverse housing options, to create a transportation system that enables all modes equally, and to create quality infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.

Only the beginning!

West Fargo 2.0 is only the first step to making West Fargo more vibrant for residents and more economically viable, where workers, shoppers, and visitors abound. Putting into action what the community has agreed upon in this plan is now the task at hand. Only with a concerted effort by all will the vision of this plan ever become reality.

West Fargo 2.0 represents a social contract bringing citizens and businesses together around common goals for their future. I invite you to adopt it and make it your own.

Sandrine Thibault

Sandrine Thibault, AICP
TPUDC Director of Municipal Services



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Welcome to West Fargo 2.0!

"A city on the grow" has been the City of West Fargo's battle cry for good reason. The community has more than doubled in both population and land area since 2000. The community has grown from a bedroom community with a blue collar, industrial work force to one of substantial industry and the highest median income in the metro area.

With this incredible evolution comes the opportunity to develop the city's vision going forward. Through meetings, workshops, online surveys and outreach at community events, hundreds of residents and businesses have contributed to a new vision for the City of West Fargo. This vision comes at a turning point, as we face a bursting school population, downtown revitalization, increased opportunities in the workforce and the prospect of regional flood control.

West Fargo 2.0 represents a call from our community to harness the strength of our past growth and future opportunities to plan for a West Fargo that is redefined as the place to live and work. In this plan you'll find new designs and strategies for streets, infrastructure, neighborhoods, economic development, funding, community building, education, senior services, and more.

Change has been a constant variable in our past. However, change with a purpose guided by the vision of our residents and businesses alike will make our community prosper.

Larry Weil

Larry Weil
Community Development Director



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INTRODUCTION

Building on past planning efforts, especially the 2008 West Fargo comprehensive plan, West Fargo 2.0 seeks to implement a vision that preserves the character of the City of West Fargo, still perceived by some as a rural community, while addressing growth in a way that provides, protects and improves upon the high quality of life for all residents.

This plan focuses on sustainable development — measured by environmental stewardship, economic prosperity, and

an equitable distribution of community resources — that reflects the community's unique character and local values.

The West Fargo 2.0 document provides a vision and a policy framework from which the zoning ordinance, site and subdivision regulations, capital improvements plan, and annual budget are guided. It also helps manage municipal service areas and influences other planning documents. It should be used by elected of-

ficials and appointed board members to evaluate development applications, amend ordinances, and plan future expenditures. Together, the plan and its implementation tools ensure that future decision-making regarding development is consistent with the community's vision and residents' expectations for a higher quality of life.

Ultimately, West Fargo 2.0's relevance will be measured by its use during every day decision-making. Monitoring the plan's implementation should be an open and ongoing process, summarized each year in a community report card that examines performance, measures achievement, and reflects changes generated by the plan.

The comprehensive plan is the official adopted statement for future development and conservation in the city. It establishes a vision and guiding principles, analyzes existing conditions and emerging trends, describes and illustrates a plan for future development and supporting infrastructure, provides the city with strategies for growth, and outlines steps for implementation. It will serve as the foundation for determining effective public policy and making land use decisions for the future, and will provide an ongoing framework for informed and directed public investment and private development. The long-term horizon for the Plan keeps the document somewhat general. However, the broad range of development issues and city services addressed makes it a true blueprint for smart, growth that reflects the priorities, values, and requirements of West Fargo's residents, safeguarding the city's history and sense of place but stimulating the conditions for short- and long-term needs and desires of West Fargo.

All municipal governments in the State of North Dakota derive authority to enact land use control measures from the general municipal authority granted in the Century Code. The specific authority for a statutory municipality to plan and zone is contained in Chapter 40.



► WHY PLAN?

West Fargo is located within the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area and for the past two decades has been the fastest-growing city in Cass County. With an estimated population of about 34,858 (2016), West Fargo is the fifth largest city in the state of North Dakota, with Fargo being the largest city with more than 120,000 people. The next closest large US city is Minneapolis, with more than 400,000 people. Founded in 1926, the City of West Fargo now has a total area of 14.72 square miles (excluding the Ex-

traterritorial Area which encompasses 27 square miles) of which, 14.44 square miles is land and 0.28 square miles is water.

West Fargo sits in a climatic region typified by large seasonal temperature differences, with warm to hot (and often humid) summers and cold (sometimes severely cold) winters. The Sheyenne River is one of the major tributaries of the Red River and runs through the community. Unlike Fargo and Moorhead, West Fargo has permanent flood protection in the form of a

diversion channel that directs the waters of the Sheyenne River away from the community. Completed in 1992, the diversion created large amounts of “dry” land in West Fargo, which allowed opportunities for development away from areas prone to flooding. The rapid growth that West Fargo has seen in the last two decades can certainly be attributed to the presence of the diversion, along with other factors such as the quality of schools, abundance of parks, and the ease with which developments are approved.

This fast-paced growth has brought challenges that this comprehensive plan attempts to solve. These challenges in-

clude: increased pressure on the transportation infrastructure, resulting in congestion; increased demand for housing and declining affordability; and difficulties in meeting local workforce demands.

The previous comprehensive plan is now almost 10 years old. As with many of the planning documents written in the past, the current comprehensive plan is text and data heavy, and therefore uninviting for the general public to read. This new version of the comprehensive plan, while providing a high level of detail, aims to be more reader-friendly and help spur the imagination and interest of the reader.

► WHAT DOES LIVABILITY MEAN?

For some, a livable community makes it convenient to travel by foot, bike, or transit to access nearby stores, parks, and other amenities. For others, affordable housing or open space is more important. Because people look for different things when searching for a satisfying place to call home, measuring the livability of cities and towns across the U.S. can be challenging. Livability indexes typically give higher scores to communities with diverse features that help people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Livability is about realizing values that are

central to healthy communities: independence, choice, and security. Livable communities help residents thrive, and when residents thrive, communities prosper.

Throughout this plan, there are livability indicators identified to help the City of West Fargo, in conjunction with others such as the West Fargo Park District, assess its progress toward increasing quality of life for all residents and newcomers.

WEST FARGO PARK DISTRICT



► A USER'S GUIDE

1

WE HEARD YOU.

This plan is the culmination of an extensive and transparent community planning process that reflects many differing points of view. Hundreds of West Fargo residents, businesses, visitors and supporters participated in the process and contributed to the creation of this plan. While there's something for everyone contained within these pages, not everyone is going to love everything in the plan. But consider the big picture, and whether the plan as a whole takes West Fargo in the right direction.

2

UNDERSTAND THE ELEMENT OF TIME.

At first glance, the plan may seem ambitious and daunting. It is important to understand that not everything in the plan will happen all at once, and some things may not happen at all. Included are some big ideas that, if implemented, would bring about transformative change, taking years or even decades to come to fruition. Other ideas are smaller and can happen right away. This planning process is about planting seeds and seeing what we can make grow under the right conditions and careful tending.

3

BE A CHAMPION OF THE PLAN.

The Common Vision and Guiding Principles in this Plan reflect the ideas of an entire community and include many differing points of view — a bit of something for everyone. We hope that everyone can get excited about the plan and becomes a champion, helping bring this community vision to life!

5

BE A PART OF THE ACTION TEAM.

Although we all wish our tax dollars bought us unlimited city services, the reality is that there is more work to do than staff to do it. All of these great ideas take time, money, and capacity. For this plan to become a reality, a large number of people must decide they care enough to stay involved and help execute the plan. Get on a city commission, join a citizen task force, or turn out to support new projects that are in concert with West Fargo 2.0 as they come forward. We will need everyone to actively engage and support this plan over the years. Communities that work together, and work smartly, succeed.

4

SHOW ME THE MONEY.

The one thing that everyone wants to know is “How much will this cost and who's going to pay for it?” What's important to understand is that much of what will be needed to bring this vision to life is private investment on individual properties. The role of this plan is to offer a vision for the future and set a course of action. The city will have to play a role in ensuring that the stage is set through supportive regulations and investments in infrastructure, but most of the cost and responsibility for development will fall to individual private and non-profit property owners, often in partnership with public entities.



THE PROCESS

The City of West Fargo and its consultant, Town Planning and Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC), led an open public engagement process unlike any other planning effort in the city. Over the course of 12 months, the city offered an array of engagement opportunities, using a number of creative techniques to try and reach a broad cross-section of West Fargo and spread the word about the West Fargo 2.0 project. In today's busy world, where there is no one way to reach people, West Fargo went above and beyond to reach constituents, inventing creative ways to engage the public and generate buzz.

WORD-OF-MOUTH

The City of West Fargo planning staff spent hours of time communicating directly with other city departments, stakeholders, and members of the public. In person, word-of-mouth communication and having champions of the project were critical to building excitement for the project.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

In November 2016, the West Fargo 2.0 team held a project kick-off, where close to 80 residents attended to hear about the project, learn about the process and provide some initial feedback on what is important to them. In January 2017, the team held two visioning sessions, one at city hall and one at the Rustad Recreation Center, which were attended by approximately 100 participants, including elected and appointed officials, residents, and city staff members. These two interactive workshops were focused on reaffirming the broad vision, and encouraging participants to articulate their wishes and hopes for the future of the city.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

TPUDC and city staff maintained a web presence (www.wf2point0.com) and the project's Facebook page was used to help disseminate information about the project and upcoming events. The project website was used to post documents and gather public input through the use of discussion boards, map-based exercises, photo-sharing, and more. The website remained active throughout the entire process with more than 2,500 visitors and more than 2,000 individual visits. The team also used the project's Twitter account to share information on the project.



PERSONAL OUTREACH

Emails were sent to community stakeholders, inviting them to participate in all public events as well as the Planapalooza™. In the months leading up to Planapalooza™, TPUDC conducted interviews of policy makers including members of the Planning Commission and City Commission.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

Monthly project updates and email invitations were sent directly to stakeholders who registered on to the West Fargo 2.0 website (150 subscribers).

MEDIA

City staff supplied press releases to local media that resulted in coverage of events. Before to the Planapalooza™, the West Fargo Pioneer published articles encouraging public participation. Reporters from the West Fargo Pioneer wrote about the Planapalooza™ meetings and events throughout the process. City staff was also interviewed on AM1100 The Flag, AM790 KFGO, WDAY and KVRR several times and invited to share information about the project. TPUDC and city staff designed and produced posters that were displayed in prominent locations throughout the city and provided during events leading up to the Planapalooza™.

TACTICAL URBANISM

As part of West Fest in September 2017, the city created a parklet on Sheyenne Street within the downtown area, installing a temporary tent and tables for conversation which proved to be handy during the rainy weather of that year event. This “parklet” remained in place for the duration of West Fest, drawing additional attention to the project and providing a place for people to gather.



PLAN THE FUTURE

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR WEST FARGO

APRIL
20TH-25TH

JOIN US FOR
A SERIES OF
FUN EVENTS

THE CITY OF WEST FARGO
WANTS TO INVOLVE THE
COMMUNITY IN
DEVELOPING THE CITY FOR
THE NEXT GENERATION.

NOW IS YOUR CHANCE TO
PLAY A ROLE IN ENHANCING
THE FUTURE OF
WEST FARGO.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 20 - **Prairie Heights Church - 319 32nd Ave E**
 5:30 p.m. - Opening Workshop - Spring Thaw Out Social (FREE Pizza)
 Join us for a brief presentation followed by a hands-on workshop where you'll get to give YOUR Community!

FRIDAY, APRIL 21 (SPECIALTY DISCUSSIONS) - **City Hall - 800 4th Ave E**
 9 a.m. - Services, Facilities & Infrastructure
 10:30 a.m. - Housing & Neighborhoods
 12:30 p.m. - Transportation, Mobility & Parking
 2 p.m. - Business, Tourism & the Economy
 3:30 p.m. - Downtown Revitalization & Redevelopment

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 (SPECIALTY DISCUSSIONS) - **City Hall - 800 4th Ave E**
 9 a.m. - Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources
 10:30 a.m. - Sustainability & Resiliency

SUNDAY, APRIL 23 - **City Hall - 800 4th Ave E**
 6:30 p.m. - Public Pin-up & Review

TUESDAY, APRIL 25 - **Prairie Heights Church - 319 32nd Ave E**
 7:30 p.m. - Closing Presentation - The work is done!
 ART CONTEST WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED!

PLANAPALOOZA 2017

What's a Planapalooza?
 |planruh|pub|loozuh| n.
 A Planapalooza is an intense, participatory design, and public input process where you are invited to work directly with your neighbors, fellow business owners and a multidisciplinary consulting team. The entire process is open to the public at all times. So please join us as we work together to prepare a Comprehensive Plan that will protect and enhance West Fargo and set a clear vision for the future.
 For more information visit: www.Facebook.com/westfargo2.0
 and/or: www.wf2point0.com

PRESENTED BY: WEST FARGO PUBLIC WORKS

CITY OF WEST FARGO

TPUDC

WEST FARGO 2.0
REDEFINING TOMORROW

PLANAPALOOZA™

From April 20 through April 25, 2017, the citizens, business owners and visitors of West Fargo were invited to participate in a multi-day planning and design charrette called Planapalooza™ to continue honing the issues and wishes of the community for the future.

Planapalooza™, an intensive and fun community planning and design event, brought together the citizens of West Fargo to think about the future of the city. This interactive engagement process provided an open forum for the public to work closely with Planning Staff and consultants from TPUDC to identify big ideas and generate a vision that will drive policy decisions for the city while also building local capital and community-driven action. The Planapalooza™ team, along with city planning staff, set up a full working office and studio at City Hall, with more than 250 members of the public stopping by to attend meetings, provide input, or talk with the planners.

On the first evening of the charrette, TPUDC delivered an introductory presentation on comprehensive planning and the project at Prairie Heights Church. Immediately following the presentation, the TPUDC charrette team facilitated a hands-on “speed-planning” workshop where the public was invited to roll up their sleeves, draw and brainstorm their ideas for improving three areas of the city: the sewage lagoons, downtown and 32nd Avenue and Sheyenne Street intersection. Working over base maps, participants identified key areas where infill, redevelopment, or other interventions should be focused. On the second and third day of the charrette, the team conducted technical meetings on a variety of topics important to the project. These included economic development, infrastructure, transportation, development, environmental concerns, and more. Meanwhile, members of the team began developing plan alternatives, while gathering information from these meetings in real time.

On the third night of the charrette, a public pin-up/open house was held in the studio, giving the team a chance to present alternative plan scenarios based on ideas generated by the public. Over 35 people assembled to see the draft plans and provide feedback on what they liked about the ideas presented, and where further work was needed.

During the remainder of the charrette, members of the public continued to filter into the studio, adding their ideas, talking to the team, and filling out questionnaires. Feeding off this buzz of activity, the team entered production mode, synthesizing ideas, collaborating over design challenges, preparing renderings, and compiling existing conditions images.



Based on all the input from the public gathered at the hands-on workshop, stakeholder meetings, the pin-up, and drop-ins, the charrette team developed examples of how the three master planned areas could look if re-development and new development were to occur at those locations. The plans depict possible redevelopment and infill scenarios, building configurations, parks and plazas, street connections, and public facilities.

A final presentation took place on the last day of the charrette at Prairie Heights Church, at which time all of the work produced during the week was presented and explained. The meeting was attended by over 85 members of the community.

DRAFT WEST FARGO 2.0 PLAN REVIEW

A first draft of this document was released February 2018, giving everyone a chance to review and comment. Paper copies were made available and the draft plan was added to the project website where stakeholders could comment on various sections of the plan. Finally, a West Fargo 2.0 Open House was held in March 2018 for two days, providing an opportunity for the public to review, discuss, and comment on the draft. About twenty comments were received and analyzed to prepare the final plan, which was completed in April 2018.



URBAN IS BACK





WALKABILITY

CONNECTIVITY

MIXED-USE

SCALE

INTENSITY

HIDDEN PARKING

PRINCIPLES OF

GOOD PLANNING

AND DESIGN

Because the City of West Fargo is such a desirable place to live, it will always face development pressure. Strategies and policies focused on the built environment can help to conserve and enhance the aspects of the city that make it special to residents and visitors. Over the past four decades, planners and urban designers have been studying the most-loved cities and towns centers around the world to learn what makes them so vibrant, and livable. What they have discovered is a set of fundamental characteristics that most-loved places possess. These principles, including walkability, connectivity, density, scale, and mixed uses, are described here in more detail.



01 WALKABILITY

The term “walkability” has become a buzzword in recent years without much effort to provide definition. As a result, it is often misunderstood to mean a pedestrian-only place. In fact, the term describes an environment where there is balance between many modes of transportation. Most importantly, it describes an environment in which people feel comfortable walking. In West Fargo, climate often makes it challenging to travel on foot during winter months but walkability is nonetheless a goal to which the community should aspire.

The constituent elements of walkability are referred to as “The 3 D’s”: Distance, Destination, and Design. When each of these elements is addressed, people are more likely to walk.



DESTINATION

People tend to walk more if they have somewhere meaningful to go. Meaningful destinations include parks, schools, and commercial areas like downtowns where daily or weekly shopping needs can be met. Often these destinations, when centrally located, become the “heart” of the community. In West Fargo, the downtown could act as the center for both locals and visitors, with other areas such as the 32nd Avenue and Sheyenne Street intersection serving as additional destinations.



DISTANCE

The average pedestrian is willing to walk up to one-quarter of a mile (1320 feet) or roughly five minutes to a specific destination. This walk from a neighborhood to a meaningful destination at the center is called a “pedestrian shed”. Most Americans, choose to take trips requiring more than a five-minute walk by car, rather than on foot.



DESIGN

An interesting streetscape, pedestrian safety and comfort are critical for a walkable environment. Narrow driving lanes, tree-lined streets, sidewalks and on-street parking all act as effective psychological cues, helping to slow automobiles and, in turn, enhance pedestrian comfort. The design elements of the building themselves also provide visual interest and diversity of experience along the way. In West Fargo, there is a varying degree of comfort level for walking, depending on the location. There is a lack of cohesive streetscape and proper pedestrian facilities in many areas that detracts from walkability in the city.

DESTINATION

DISTANCE

DESIGN

02 CONNECTIVITY

In typical communities, “connectivity” means that all streets should be connected to other streets, maximizing the number of routes to and from a destination. By avoiding dead ends and cul-de-sacs and creating an interconnected street network, drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and emergency services can choose from a number of different options. Greater connec-

tivity allows for traffic to disperse, minimizing congestion by providing multiple ways to get from point A to point B. West Fargo’s development patterns in the last couple of decades have reduced the number of interconnected streets, increasing traffic on the few major roads in and out of neighborhoods.

03 MIXED-USE

Whenever possible, activity centers should include a mix of commercial (retail, restaurants and offices), residential, recreational, and civic uses. This mix should be well-balanced, incorporating both vertical and horizontal mixed-use within the block and the building. An ideal mix allows residents and visitors to meet all of their daily needs within a short walking distance. When this occurs, the number of automobile trips per household is substantially reduced. This mix of uses is optimized when commercial

establishments have residential dwelling units above to help promote active streets. In West Fargo, the sprawling nature of the community and its suburban residential style of development have limited the mix of uses throughout the community. However, downtown West Fargo and other areas of the city offer tremendous opportunities for added integration of various uses.

04 SCALE

Scale refers to the size of buildings and their relationship to their occupants, to nearby pedestrians and to the buildings around them. The term “human-scale” refers to a size that feels comfortable to people. Both short and tall buildings can be human-scale, and having variation is important. The proportions of doors and windows, the height of each story, the relationship between details of the building and the way a building relates proportionally to the spaces people occupy around it. All these factors impact whether a building is at a scale that feels “right”

to a person. It is important in the design of walkable places to create a sense of enclosure and human-scale by locating buildings closer to the street and minimizing the large expanses of pavement that can make a pedestrian feel exposed and out of place. The most important aspect of creating buildings that are scaled appropriately is the design of the first floor and how it relates to the sidewalk and pedestrian areas adjacent to it.

05 INTENSITY

Developing in a more compact pattern in strategic locations, where multi-story buildings are located closely together, can minimize air and water pollution, preserve open space, and enhance social interactions and a sense of community. There is widespread global acceptance that development intensity is an integral component of environmental stewardship and sustainability. Intensity plays a role in the creation of neighbor-

hoods that offer convenience, value and a high quality of life. In addition, more compact development patterns are likely to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) by enabling more people to walk or bike to work or to run errands. Density can also produce reductions in energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions both directly and indirectly. In West Fargo, the downtown presents opportunities for added development intensity.

06 HIDDEN PARKING

Visible parking lots in front of, and beside buildings, has a detrimental effect on people's willingness to walk. If a pedestrian has to walk past large gaps in the streetscape, especially when it is covered with asphalt parking lots, they lose the comforting sense of enclosure and visual interest, making the walking experience less desirable. This begins to make them less likely to walk this route in the future. To combat this, parking should be hidden behind buildings in the internal parts of a block or be wrapped with buildings to screen the parking and activate the street or civic spaces. The redevelopment of surface parking lots and some

existing buildings presents opportunities to hide parking either under buildings or within parking structures that are lined with buildings. Garages should incorporate wayfinding and smart parking technologies to maximize their efficiency and ease of use, and should also accommodate space for bike lockers.

Adding transparent windows to buildings on the ground floor will provide an inviting atmosphere and will help entice people to visit businesses that might otherwise feel uninviting.

For more information on these Principles for Good Design, we recommend referencing *The Smart Growth Manual* by Andres Duany, Jeff Speck and Mike Lydon, 2009.

WEST FARGO'S

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N

The community vision was first developed during the 2008 comprehensive plan update process and still holds true today. The guiding principles that follow were generated during the West Fargo 2.0 public engagement process, especially during the Visioning Sessions and Planapalooza™. These principles are meant to set priorities for moving forward. The strength of the recommendations contained within this plan depends on local leaders incorporating them into the decision-making culture.

VISION

The community vision for West Fargo is to be “a complete, sustainable, and prosperous city that plays a pivotal role in the metro by providing a high quality of life for its citizens and a thriving economy.”

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

TPUDC worked with the public to identify a set of enduring guiding principles critical to West Fargo’s current and future quality of life. These principles embody the core philosophy and vision expressed by the community. Though the local context and approach for achieving these goals may change over time, the guiding principles should endure for generations.



WE ENVISION

WEST FARGO ...



HEALTHY

as a healthy community with engaging parks, public spaces, and facilities that provide a range of amenities and experiences throughout a safe, inviting and connected system.



VIBRANT

with dynamic economic, educational, and cultural opportunities that support our citizens by growing our local economy, encouraging local businesses and improving the arts.



AUTHENTIC

with a distinctive sense of place and community identity that is uniquely West Fargo, creating places that are interesting, beautiful, useful and likely to provide long-standing value.



BALANCED

as a community with balanced and diverse land uses that expand our lifestyle choices and quality of life.



WELCOMING

with strong, livable neighborhoods where families and neighbors can build relationships in a safe, attractive and healthy environment.

CONNECTED



through a safe, efficient and reliable transportation system that encourages active transportation while balancing all modes of transportation during all season, offers strong linkage between neighborhoods and incorporates a network of complete and walkable streets.

FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE



as a city dedicated to delivering excellent municipal services in a fiscally responsible manner that reduces the impacts of special assessments on the local population.

ENGAGED



with strong leadership that cultivates community, incorporates equity and sustainability in decision-making, fosters partnerships to further local and regional goals, and thrives through active citizen engagement.

BOLD



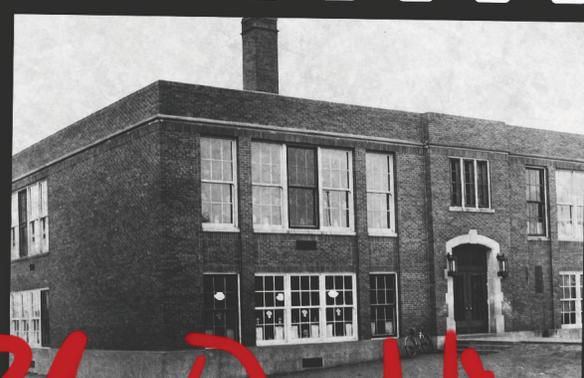
moves forward with initiatives and programs secure in the knowledge that we are worthy of the best, and staying one step ahead of peer cities in innovation, creativity, prosperity and quality of life.

PROACTIVE



plans for the future success rather than react to today's concerns.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW WEST FARGO?



WEST FARGO, ND





SOUTHWEST FARGO INCORPORATED AS A CITY



ARMOUR & COMPANY BOUGHT EQUITY CO-OP PACKING COMPANY

UNION STOCKYARDS OPENED

HAGGART BECAME A VILLAGE (NORTH OF MAIN AVENUE)



FIRST EUROPEAN SETTLERS ARRIVE AND BONANZA FARMS BEGIN IN AREA

RAILROAD REACHED MOORHEAD, MN

1872

1875

1916

1918

1919

1925

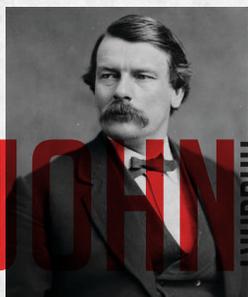
1935

1937

1948

1950

JOHN HAGGART FILED HOMESTEAD IN WHAT WOULD BECOME THE VILLAGE CALLED HAGGART



EQUITY CO-OP PACKING COMPANY FORMED

VILLAGE OF HAGGART BECAME VILLAGE OF WEST FARGO (NORTH OF MAIN AVENUE)



EQUITY CO-OP PACKING COMPANY OPENED

SOUTHWEST FARGO INCORPORATED AS A VILLAGE (SOUTH OF MAIN AVENUE)

CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTIVE TO STUDY FLOOD CONTROL FOR THE RED RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

ONE CITY

WEST FARGO AND RIVERSIDE MERGED TO BECOME ONE CITY

ANNEXATION AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF FARGO OPENS UP LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT SOUTH OF INTERSTATE 94

CONSTRUCTION OF THE KINDRED DAM PROJECT (SHEYENNE RIVER) AUTHORIZED WITH NO FUNDING

WEST FARGO RENAMED TO WEST FARGO INDUSTRIAL PARK

SHEYENNE RIVER FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT AUTHORIZED

HORACE & WEST FARGO SEGMENTS OF SHEYENNE RIVER FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT COMPLETED

VETERANS BOULEVARD AND INTERSTATE INTERCHANGE OPENS PROVIDING ADDITIONAL CONNECTION TO DEVELOPMENT SOUTH OF I-94

19
67

19
70

19
74

19
86

19
89

19
90

19
92

20
00

20
09

20
18

SOUTHWEST FARGO RENAMED TO
WEST FARGO

WEST FARGO INDUSTRIAL PARK RENAMED TO RIVERSIDE

GROUND BREAKING FOR HORACE AND WEST FARGO SEGMENTS OF SHEYENNE RIVER FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

REDEFINING WEST FARGO 2.0 - NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

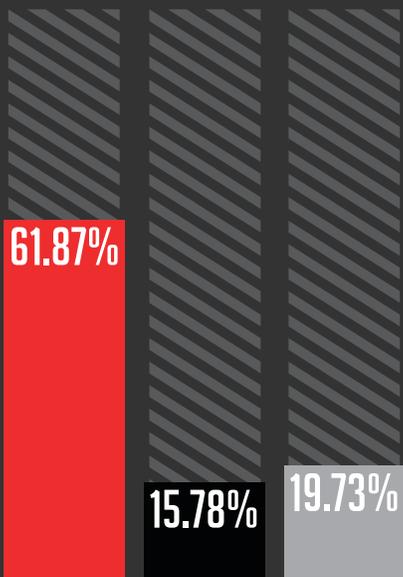
POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

NOTE: The demographics in this section are from Environics known as Claritas at the time the data was gathered. The demographic reports cited from Environics are called Claritas Pop-Facts Premier.

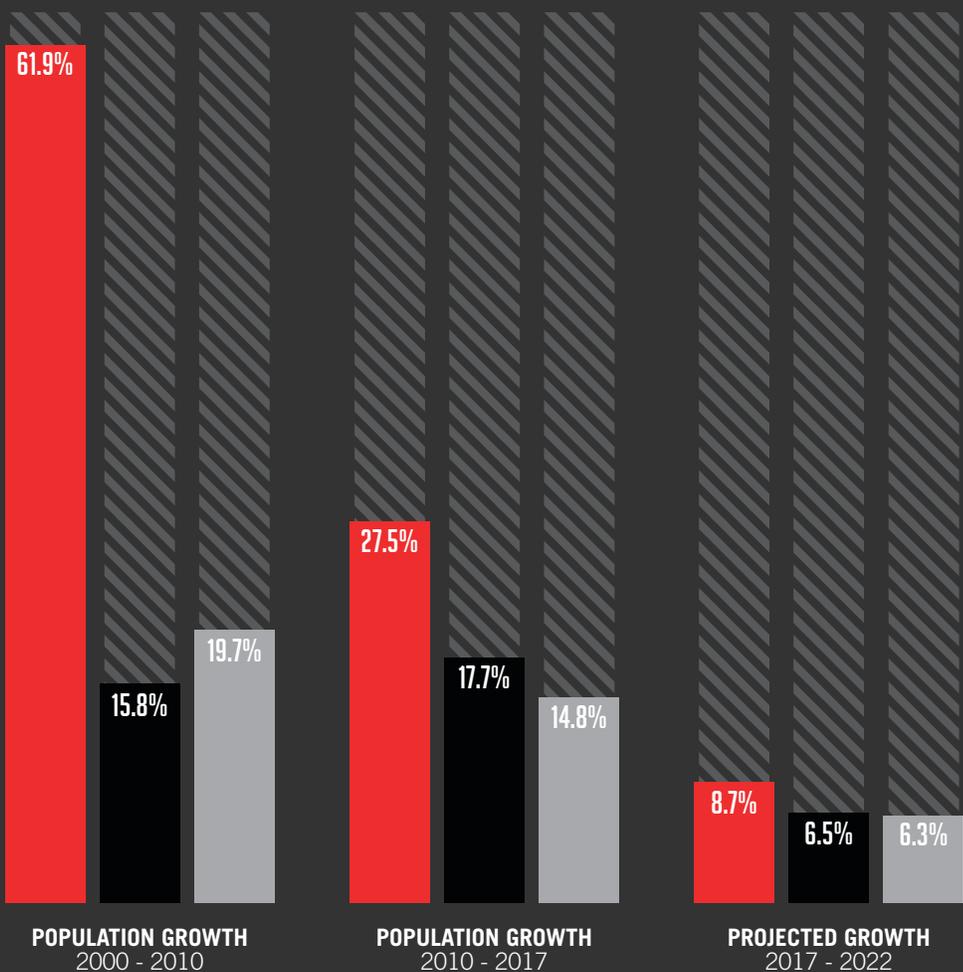
The population of West Fargo has increased by 106 percent since 2000 to a 2017 estimate of 34,858. This population increase over the past two decades has far exceeded that of the region (the Fargo, ND-MN Core Base Statistical Area (CBSA)), particularly between 2000 and 2010 when the city saw an extraordinary 61.87 percent growth from 14,940 in the 2000 census to 25,830 in the 2010 census. While the rate of growth is slowing, West Fargo is still projected to grow significantly - reaching almost 40,000 people by 2025 according to the Fargo-Moorhead Council of Government (Metro COG) 2017 Demographic Forecast). This slower rate of growth is more aligned with the rest of the region.

In 2000 West Fargo was home to 8.9 percent of the households of the Fargo ND-MN core base statistical areas. The market share of households in West Fargo has since increased to 13.2 percent of the households. The 2017 Demographic Forecast for the region mirrors the Environics data shown below. They predict that West Fargo will grow to 42,190 by 2040 and will continue to lead in rate of population growth in the region.

POPULATION GROWTH
2000 - 2010



POPULATION GROWTH
2000 - 2022



■ WEST FARGO ■ FARGO ■ FARGO ND-MN CBSA

The number of households has increased by 111 percent since 2000, going from 6,288 in 2000 to 13,270 in 2017. The number of households is expected to increase by 8.85 percent (up to 14,444) by 2022. In West Fargo, 65 percent of the households are occupied by families, which is 15 percent higher than that of Fargo and 8 percent higher than the region. (Source: EnviroNics)

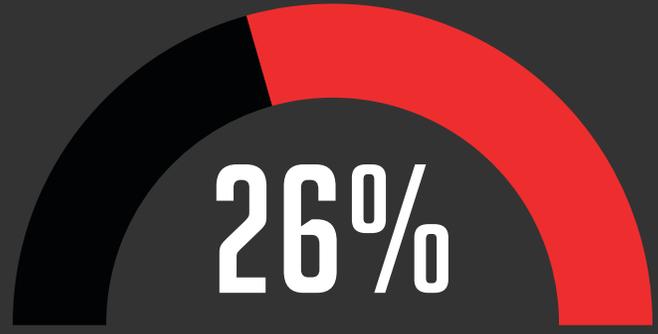
The majority of the population of West Fargo that identifies as white is 90.3 percent. The next highest racial classification is black at 4.0 percent with asian alone at 2.0 percent, and two or more races at 2.3 percent. Of the population in West Fargo, 2.44 percent identify as hispanic or latino. On the whole, the racial and ethnic population of West Fargo mirrors that of the greater region.

The median age of West Fargo residents, 33.9, is slightly older than and the metro area but significantly lower than that of the U.S. (Source: EnviroNics)

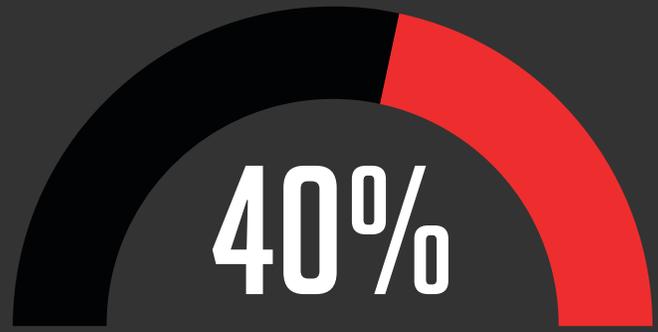
MEDIAN INCOME

\$73,402

WEST FARGO

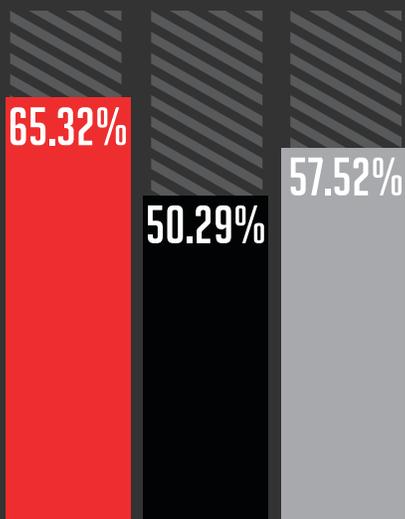


MORE THAN THE METRO REGION



MORE THAN THE STATE

FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS AS A % OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS



Over 52 percent of the population of West Fargo has a degree from an institution of higher learning and 95 percent of the population is a high school graduate. These numbers mirror both Fargo and the metro area. (Source: EnviroNics)

The median household income of West Fargo is \$73,402. This is 43 percent higher than that of Fargo (\$51,317) and 26 percent higher than the metro region (\$58,348). This income level places West Fargo more than 40 percent higher than the median household income of both the U.S. and North Dakota. In fact, nearly a third of the households in West Fargo earn more than \$100,000 per year. The poverty rate in West Fargo echoes these numbers with 5.3 percent of families under the poverty line compared to 7.5 percent for the metro. (Source: EnviroNics)

52%

HAVE A HIGHER
LEARNING
DEGREE



Psychographics is the study and classification of people according to their attitudes, aspirations, and other psychological criteria, especially in market research. Environics provides this data through Claritas Prizm Lifestage Segments (segmentationsolutions.nielsen.com.) Environics develops these psychographics based on accrued demographic data from a variety of sources including census, TV habits, car-purchasing habits, shopping trends, and other factors. These studies can be

valuable to give an indication of behaviors and beliefs of a certain demographic within the city. (Source: Environics)

The psychographics study informs us that West Fargo is a highly family-oriented community with some of the top-tier psychographic categories for families in wealth, educational attainment, jobs, and disposable income in the nation. Four of the categories are family-oriented, representing 33 percent of the households. A fifth category

is comprised of students, which represents an opportunity for West Fargo to cultivate a different psychographic segment.

On the whole the community, skews younger, affluent, and potentially more demanding. Residents who expect high-quality amenities for children and have disposable income comprise the majority of the West Fargo population. They desire specialty shopping, dining and entertainment. The five largest segments in West Fargo include:

1

NEW HOMESTEADERS (10.8%)

Upscale Younger Mostly with Children. Young, upper-middle-class families seeking to escape suburban sprawl find refuge in New Homesteaders, a collection of small rustic townships. With a mix of jobs in white- and blue-collar industries, these dual-income couples have fashioned comfortable, child-centered lifestyles. Their driveways are filled with campers and powerboats, and their houses with the latest technological gadgets and hunting gear.

2

WHITE PICKET FENCES (9.8%)

Midscale Younger Family Mix. Residents in White Picket Fences look a lot like the stereotypical American household of a generation ago: upper-middle-class and married with children. But the current version reflects changing patterns, with some parents just beginning to start families while others approach the empty-nest stage as their children age. They enjoy reading, following sports, and DIY projects and crafts.

3

SMALL-TOWN COLLEGIATES (5.8%)

Downscale Younger Family Mix. The residents of Small-Town Collegiates are younger families and singles who are just starting out. They are often students - full or part-time - focused on building a better life for themselves and their growing families.

5

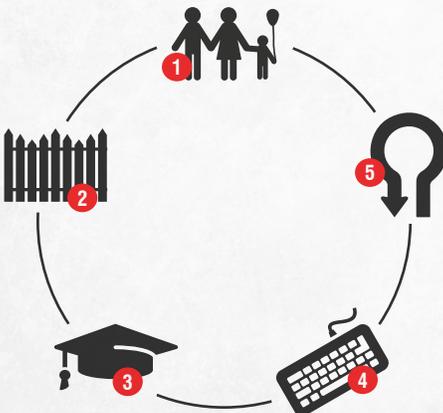
CHILDREN & CUL-DE-SACS (4.3%)

Upscale Younger Family Mix. Upper-middle-class, suburban, married couples with children - that's the skinny on Children and Cul-de-Sacs, an enviable lifestyle of large families in recently built subdivisions. This segment is a refuge for college-educated, white-collar professionals with administrative jobs and upper-middle-class incomes. Their nexus of education, affluence, and children translates into large outlays for child-centered products and services.

4

EXECUTIVE SUITES (7.8%)

Upscale Middle Age Mostly with Children. The residents of Executive Suites tend to be prosperous and active professionals who own multiple computers, large-screen TV sets, and are above average in their use of technology. Executive Suites also enjoy cultural activities, from reading books to attending theater and watching independent movies.

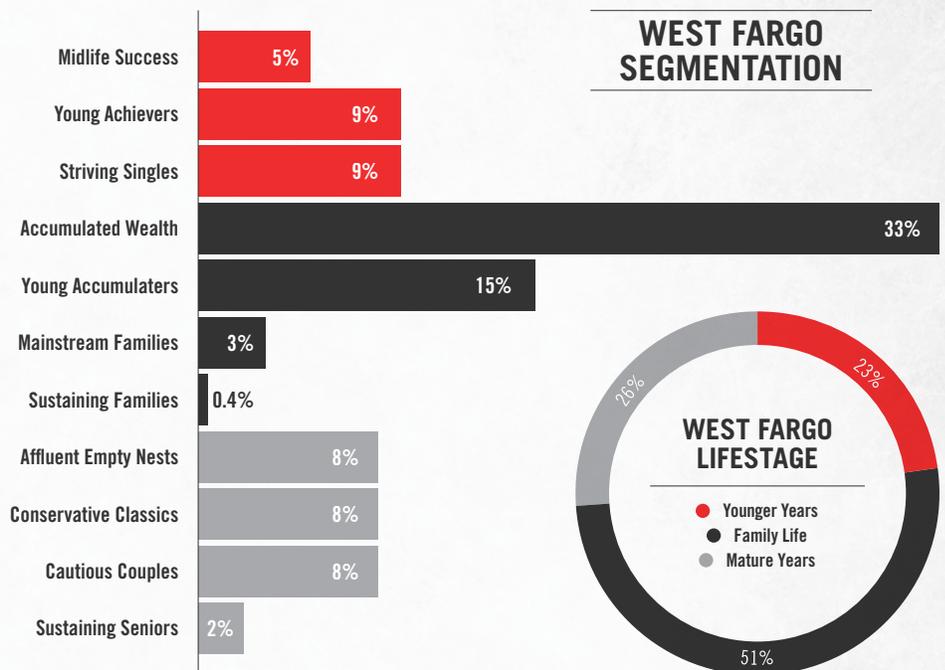




LIFESTAGE

The chart to the right explains the lifestage of households in West Fargo. Family-oriented segments dominate the market with many of these households. Another significant portion of the households are younger and relatively affluent. College students create a segment that is less affluent, but with strong spending potential. Households with older families are the least predominate, and few households overall are facing economic challenges.

- The psychographics show people with the means to make choices.
- Family orientation and curating a community that has child-friendly amenities will be important.
- Relative affluence allows for the cultivation of special spaces, niche retail, and alternatives to traditional workspaces.
- West Fargo can cultivate a younger population base with housing choice, greater entertainment options, and independent businesses that millennials are looking for.



West Fargo has experienced extraordinary growth. As a result, the community is dramatically different than it was in 2000. This growth, while expected to continue, will slow in pace. From a policy standpoint growth of this magnitude typically places communities in the role of being reactive to development rather than proactive. The slow in the rate of growth provides West Fargo the ideal timing to examine its strategies to create a more vibrant community.

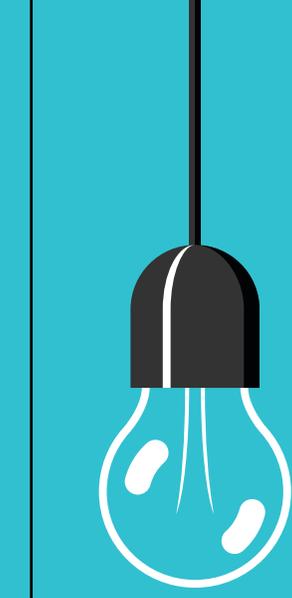
The community is highly educated and has a significantly higher income than

the metropolitan area, the state, and the nation. This education and income level coupled with some of the most affluent psychographic segments in the U.S. place West Fargo in the unique position of being able to make decisions about the future of the city in order to cultivate ongoing quality of life improvements, curate options for business and retail development for future development that will satisfy a relatively sophisticated consumers, and be proactive about quality development rather than reactive to any development proposal presented to the community.

BIG

IDEAS





PROVIDE QUALITY

GROW THE ECONOMY

PROMOTE TRANSPORTATION
CHOICE & MOBILITY

INCREASE

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

RECREATION SERVICES

REVITALIZE

DOWNTOWN

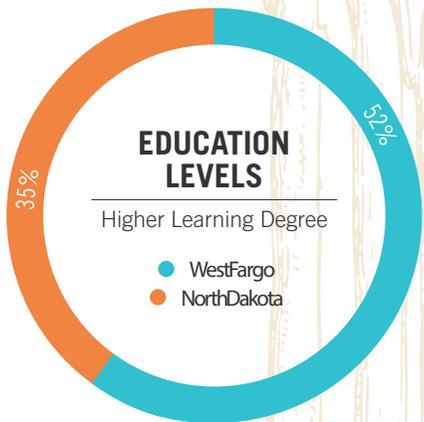
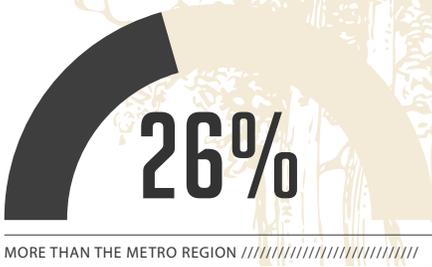
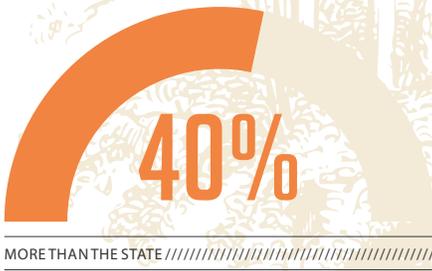
NEIGHBORHOODS

& EXPAND HOUSING CH

PROVIDE RELIABLE SERVICE
& MUNIC

GROW THE ECONOMY

MEDIAN INCOME
\$73,402 WEST FARGO



With a rapidly growing population that has outpaced that of the metropolitan region, increased by 100 percent and is expected to grow to more than 45,000 by 2040, the City of West Fargo is well poised to capitalize on aggressive economic development activity. This effort is critical to maintaining a job/housing balance in the community, to ensure that the city remains competitive and to balance the tax base of the city so residents can continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

The City of West Fargo has a median household income of \$73,402, which exceeds the metro by 26 percent and the state of North Dakota by 40 percent. As a result, the well-educated population (more than 52 percent of West Fargo residents have a degree from an institution of higher learning compared with 35 percent for North Dakota), the relatively young population (with a median age is 33.9 which is far younger than that of the U.S. at 37.8,) and a strong contingent of households with families (65.3 percent), indicates opportunities for economic development success on many fronts.

A key indicator of the opportunity to enhance jobs in West Fargo is a simple metric. In Fargo, there are 0.81 jobs per capita. In West Fargo that number drops significantly to 0.37 jobs per capita. While it is not unusual to see an imbalance for a community that borders a central city, it is worth comparing this figure with a community where the job/housing balance has dramatically shifted in just a few short decades. Des Moines and West Des Moines, Iowa

are similar to Fargo and West Fargo in many ways. However, West Des Moines has seen a massive influx of economic development activity bringing corporate headquarters, services jobs, research and development jobs and other economic development to the city. In fact, the tables have turned for these two cities. Des Moines jobs per capita (0.65) now lags that of West Des Moines (0.89).



Fortunately, West Fargo is well positioned to capitalize on the growth of the region. The Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project (FM Area Diversion Project) stands to open up an abundance of developable land for economic development in the northwestern quadrant of the city. This area is highly desirable for economic development, as it is positioned along a major rail corridor, I-94, and an easy drive from Hector International Airport. The Fargo-Moorhead metro region has pent up demand for flex space that accommodates a variety of uses including warehousing, distribution, research, office, and light manufacturing. In fact, the metro area has among the highest rents for such space in the

nation, with strong demand for more. (Source: Konrad Olson Commercial Real Estate 25th Annual Industrial Survey 2014 Review/2015 Forecast) On the retail front, West Fargo also has significant economic development opportunities. A look at retail leakage in the City of West Fargo indicates that the market is at "virtual" equilibrium. This means that consumers in West Fargo spend approximately \$637.4 million per year on goods while stores in West Fargo sell approximately \$637.6 million in goods. (Source: Envirionics Retail Market Potential Report)

On the surface this appears to be a good thing. However, when taken into the overall dynamic of the metropolitan region, West Fargo is lagging in commercial sales. The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area has sales equaling \$5.63 billion in retail business. Consumers in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan market spend only \$4.59 billion in the same retail categories. Consequently, sales in the market outweigh what local consumers spend and the metro imports one billion dollars in sales annually. Its location in the region means that the Fargo metropolitan area attracts from a large catchment area that includes many rural communities in the two states. This is not unusual for a metropolitan area located amid more rural locations.

SOURCE: ENVIRIONICS RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL REPORT



Evidence of the retail opportunity in West Fargo also bears out in sales per capita. West Fargo has \$18,363 in retail sales per person living in the city, the metropolitan area has \$22,095 in retail sales per year. Delving deeper into the data allows for a better look at the potential for growth in the City of West Fargo's retail market. The numbers cited above are aggregate retail sales versus consumer demand numbers. Exploration of subcategories of retail sales and consumer expenditures reveals gaps in retail categories that are underserved in the West Fargo market. The City of West Fargo leaks sales to other markets, primarily Fargo.

Moreover, the retail gaps that exist now revealing the potential for 185,000 square feet of retail space. Considering projections of future growth and the fact that the entire metro region has a large retail catchment area that attracts visitors from far outside of the urbanized area, the market potential of 185,000 square feet for West Fargo is already conservative. Using the growth projections alone that number could grow to well more than 200,000 by 2022. Considering that West Fargo could attract additional sales from outside the market that number increases even more.

On the tourism and accommodations front, West Fargo is also in an excellent position as newer properties in the market are clustering in the city. The recently opened Doubletree hotel (a full-service product), and a number of select service hotels have recently open in West Fargo. Hotel revenues and occupancy are being "shaken up" as new product is displacing older hotels. Fortunately, West Fargo is the beneficiary of these changes. This dynamic points to the obvious question of whether West Fargo should contemplate some sort of meeting facility in addition to the 5,700 square feet available at the Doubletree Hotel to capitalize on lack of regional meeting facility in the metropolitan area.

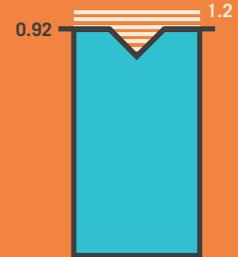
In total, opportunities for growth and development in economic development in West Fargo abound. Economic vitality is of critical importance to the city to ensure that it does not become simply a "bedroom community" to Fargo. Recommendations presented in the Interventions section of the plan are designed to encourage West Fargo to explore ways to enhance its economic development position.

West Fargo can look forward to a bright economic future thanks to a close partnership between private businesses, the city and the community. Numerous groups are working together to define a new economic identity that builds on the city's unique location and capacity for attracting a productive population. Bottom-up efforts paired with top-down policies can meet in the middle to create a sustainable economy that spans all sectors. West Fargo has been successful in attracting new investment and large-scale businesses. Continuing this positive trend can launch the city into a new era of growth and productivity.

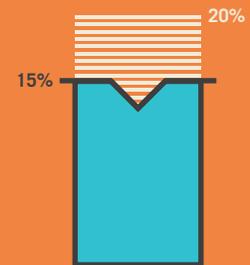
LIVABILITY MEASURES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

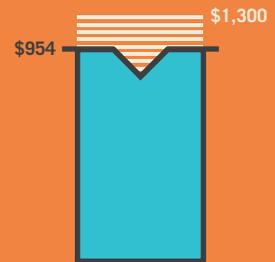
Jobs/Housing Ratio



People who live and work in the city (% of working population)



Food/Beverage Sales per Capita



Retail Sales per Capita



■ BENCHMARK ■ TARGET

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance an Aggressive Economic Development Recruitment Package

- Share the market potential identified in other parts of this plan with the local development community. The data included in this report makes a compelling case for ongoing economic development activity in West Fargo.
- Cooperate with local property owners to inventory and promote available space. Available properties can initially be listed on the city's website in cooperation with local brokers. An available property template can also be created with information on size, zoning, utilities, and pricing. This recommendation is critical to steer investors to key sites throughout West Fargo.
- Develop a cohesive marketing strategy for key sites, buildings, investments, and overall recruitment to West Fargo.



Pursue Food/Dining Opportunities in West Fargo

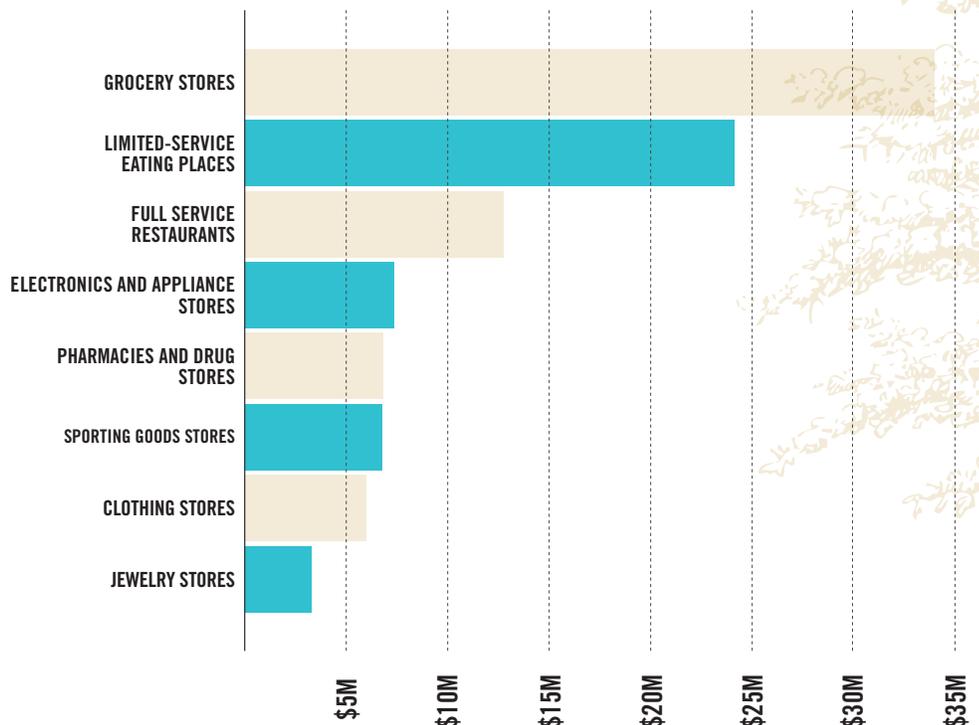
The market data indicates the potential for additional retail and dining business throughout West Fargo. Demand is high in the grocery store segment and dining establishments category (both limited service and full service). While "big box" retail and shopping malls are going through the throes of change as more and more consumers shift to online shopping, groceries are undergoing growth as consumers seek more variety in grocery options. Supermarkets that offer a higher end range of goods are in demand, so are smaller format grocers such as Aldi and Lidl, and independent specialty food stores are filling in gaps in specialty districts. West Fargo has the potential for a full-service grocer at present, with the potential for specialty food stores in districts throughout the city as additional options.

The same trend is happening with dining establishments. Independent, "fast casual" (Panera Bread being a prime example), and ethnic restaurants are thriving as traditional casual dining

restaurants reshuffle their menus to accommodate customer demands. West Fargo has the potential to grow its restaurant business in both the full service and limited service categories. From a policy standpoint, the city should consider encouraging dining and groceries to cluster together as part of mixed-use walkable nodes, in lieu of supporting corridor strip commercial development where customers do not get to experience a walkable environment. This could happen in both downtown and other mixed-use districts such as the 32nd Avenue and Sheyenne Street district highlighted in this plan.

Recruiting dining and grocery opportunities should happen on several fronts. First, West Fargo economic development staff should use the data in this report to share with retailers at the International Council of Shopping Centers regional meetings. More grassroots recruiting can happen by contacting retailers and restaurants in the market that may be seeking expansion opportunities.

Total sales by market categories



SOURCE: ENVIRONICS RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL REPORT

Initiate Independent Retail/Micro Retail Pilot Program as Part of Mixed Use Projects

Independent retailers with small footprints represent a great opportunity for West Fargo both in the downtown area and in other zones where mixed-use development is being recommended. West Fargo should consider an incentive program that would work with the private sector to build small footprint specialty retail space in mixed-use developments to encourage entrepreneurial development. Some communities have

created an independent retail task force to support of start-up and expanding independent retailers. Such groups involve a partnership between the private sector, local government, and entities like a Chamber of Commerce or Small Business Development Center. Some concepts may include:

- A retail forum where independent retailers can learn about

opportunities, incentives, and locations in West Fargo suitable for development.

- Encouraging “pop up” and “portable” retail spaces that use vacant property for things like food trucks, short-term retail and markets. Even shipping containers that can be used on a temporary basis at key locations in the city.

Continue Promoting West Fargo Economic Development and Incentive Program

West Fargo has done a good job of creating a clear and useful economic development web presence. Few communities take the time and effort to have an independent page promoting the economic development advantages of their location – this is impressive and should continue.

Moreover, the Enterprise Zone Façade grant program is an essential effort for the Main Avenue and Sheyenne Street corridor that will continue to yield redevelopment results as they are promoted and used.

The Payment In lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and PACE loan programs are valuable throughout the city and should be continued. As with any incentive program, West Fargo should closely track results, and be willing to “tweak” the program if necessary.



Consider City of West Fargo initiated Tax Increment Financing District(s)

North Dakota's legislation allows municipalities to establish Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts in blighted areas whereby the base value of a district continues to flow to the general fund of taxing jurisdictions while any incremental growth within that district would go to fund public improvements within the designated area. TIF districts have been instrumental in blighted areas where investment has created an incremental value to fund public improvements.

While the City of West Fargo markets the opportunities to create TIF districts, it should contemplate a proactive approach to this effort. Particularly in downtown, where new investments will create an incremental value that could

go toward public-sector improvements in the district. Many communities rely on the private sector to suggest TIF financing, however a proactive approach where the City of West Fargo initiates the TIF district in downtown and/or other areas could create a funding opportunity to capture growth and dedicate it to improvements in the district.

Typically, a proactive, city-initiated TIF district signals that the community is encouraging economic development and mixed-use development that will have a need for public infrastructure and will ultimately provide a greater economic development benefit to the city once the tax increment bonds are satisfied.

Develop Industrial “Village” Concept in Northwest Sector of the City

The industrial village concept recognizes that the traditional view of the industrial park has limitations to attract “new economy” investors. More and more, the strictly functional nature of an industrial park where employees simply work and must leave to eat or recreate, does not allow for a creative mix of uses. More and more, businesses are locating in parks that also have a retail component (breweries, distilleries, food-related businesses). The mix of retail-meets-

production is a nationally growing trend. Recognizing the strong and ongoing need for flex space for industrial uses in the region, West Fargo should “leapfrog” over conventional thinking and explore areas where such an industrial village could occur.

Ideally, the location would be in the northwest sector of the city, an area that is already largely industrial and offers the benefit of proximity to the interstate, rail service, and

Hector International Airport. Public improvements in such a development could be funded through a TIF district and include dining establishments for employees and recreational amenities to attract businesses.

Such a location would also be ideal for a maker space and/or incubator space (discussed elsewhere in this report) for businesses not suitable for downtown West Fargo.

Target a balanced mix of uses in key nodes throughout the city to include employment, retail, office, and living. Target appropriate locations to maximize impact and functionality of such districts

West Fargo has an opportunity beyond downtown along Sheyenne to create nodes where mixed-use development can thrive in walkable districts that offer a variety of housing types, office settings, retail, entertainment, and dining options.

This comprehensive plan details opportunities for mixed-use development and land uses in

several areas of West Fargo. These opportunities will create additional space for needed uses, but also a more well-rounded community that will be attractive to a wider audience of residents, entrepreneurs and investors. In addition, West Fargo’s business development efforts should include working with existing and future business owners to locate retail and destination uses on the

street level, with office and residential uses on upper levels. Mixed-use development creates a higher tax base because the “stacked uses” allow for denser development. Moreover, mixed use developments create a “built in” customer base for the uses on the ground floor, allows for a variety of housing options, and encourages a broader range of household types to locate in a community.

Create a Distinct Market Position for West Fargo to Encourage Economic Investment and Expand Customer Base for Local Businesses.

West Fargo should continue to reinforce its branding and marketing strategy to promote the city as a key location in the region for business. This effort should be inclusive and engage the business community, while detailing distinct market positions as a platform for promoting the community:

- Business development – Positioning West Fargo as a destination for investment and increased tax base, while maintaining its character as a great place to live.

- Target markets – Expanding customer base for businesses by recruiting new residents to mixed-use development identified in plan, marketing to the region, and targeted millennial professionals, families, and empty nesters to live in the City of West Fargo.
- West Fargo as a destination – Promoting West Fargo’s character and quality of life, including marketing destination businesses, visitor attractions, and recreational amenities in the city.

- Development partner - Coordinate with regional developers to partner on developments identified in this plan. West Fargo’s role could simply be development support through communication or partnerships. Other communities have found success in negotiating development needs with investors, such as providing parking and other public infrastructure to support development, or facilitating land swaps.

Enhance gateways and districts in West Fargo with branded signage.

Utilize the West Fargo brand to create gateway signs, wayfinding, and banner systems to signify key entries into the city, direct locals and visitors to civic and cultural destinations, identify the character districts of West Fargo, and to distinguish the city in the region.

Continue to Explore Meeting Facility

The issue of a regional meeting facility (convention, conference, or hybrid) has been discussed in the metro region for some time now. West Fargo should continue to explore such a facility in the community, considering sites such as the Red River Valley Fairgrounds or adjacent to an existing or new hotel property. It is imperative that West Fargo balance the cost of constructing and operating such a facility with the direct and induced benefits that the facility would create. This will take careful study to establish the needed size, functionality, and location of the facility.



RED
RIVER
VALLEY
FAIRGROUNDS

STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS AND EXPAND HOUSING CHOICE

West Fargo benefits from the presence of very distinct neighborhoods that residents strongly identify with and have come to appreciate. The large majority of housing in West Fargo is detached single-family residential.



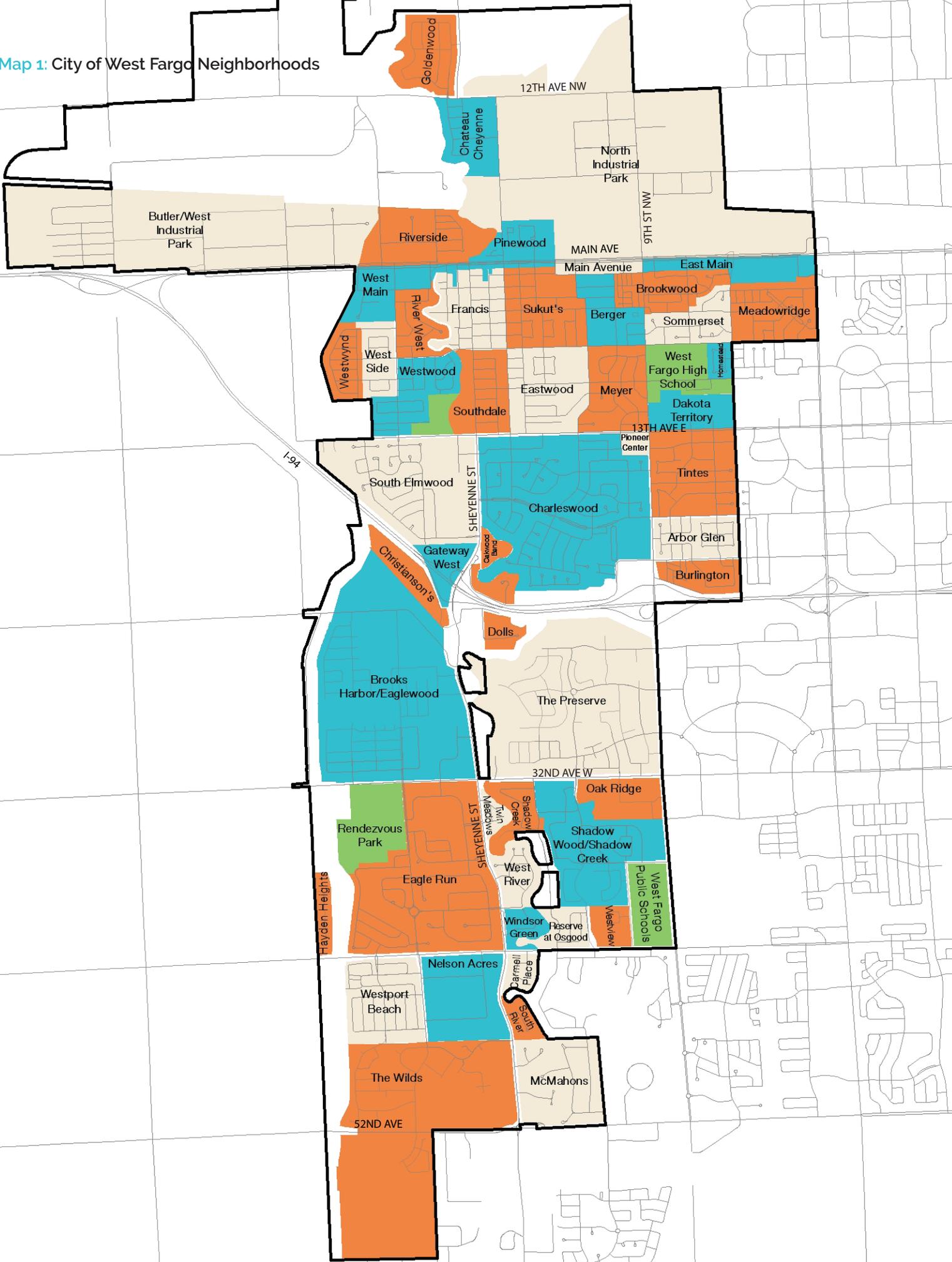
Neighborhoods

West Fargo is a city made up of a series of many neighborhoods. Although their boundaries are not specifically identified other than some moderate efforts by city staff, many residents would be able to identify a neighborhood they live in by name. The oldest and more traditional neighborhoods are found in the northern part of the city, closer to Main Avenue and northern Sheyenne Street. The majority of the housing in this area is smaller single-family homes with some multifamily buildings interspersed throughout.

As one moves south toward I-94, neighborhoods begin to take a different shape, with curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, reducing connectivity throughout the neighborhoods. The newest neighborhoods south of I-94, most of which were built in the last two decades, reinforce this pattern of development. Reduced connectivity in these areas forces vehicular traffic onto a few major arterials. Despite this lack of connectivity, most neighborhoods in West Fargo have parks integrated within them and most of schools in West Fargo are also neighborhood schools, allowing easy access for children.

Neighborhoods are the backbone of society; besides being a place to live, they also provide the essential components for a complete life that includes places to socialize, stores to buy necessities, and nearby schools and employment centers. Traditionally, neighborhoods were organized around an interconnected street network, which allowed easy movement for both vehicles and pedestrians. These streets and natural features defined the edges of neighborhood areas, each with their own unique pockets of community life along smaller residential streets and in neighborhood centers.

Map 1: City of West Fargo Neighborhoods



Housing

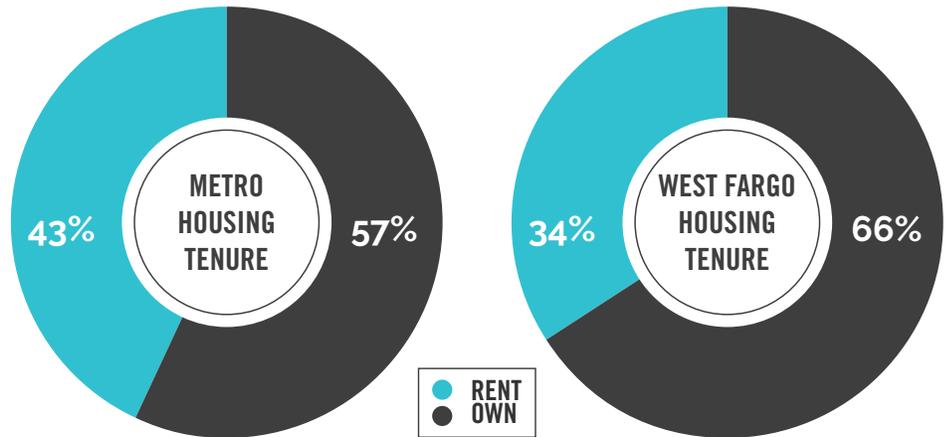
As of 2017, West Fargo is home to an estimated 13,777 housing units. This represents a 13 percent share of the housing units in the metropolitan area. Of these housing units 66 percent are owner occupied and 34 percent are renter occupied. This compares with 46 percent owner occupied and 54 percent renter occupied in adjacent Fargo. On the whole, West Fargo has a higher percentage of home ownership than the region.

Housing in West Fargo is largely single-family units scattered throughout various neighborhoods, with a few concentrations of multifamily housing developments. In fact, over three quarters of the units are single family (both attached and detached) at 69.5 percent with only 29.3 percent of the units being multifamily, compared with 52.4 percent multifamily in Fargo. While many may perceive that West Fargo has a disproportionately

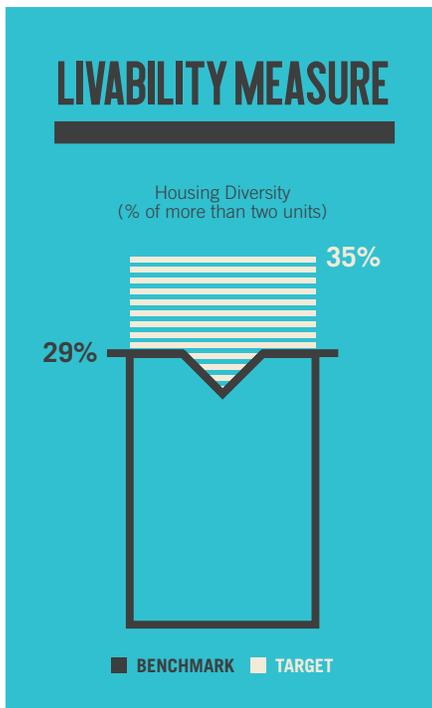
large percentage of multifamily units, the data does not bear this out. Many of the most recently constructed large format multifamily units fall outside of the City Limit line of West Fargo giving the impression that these units fall outside of the city limit. During the planning process, residents have expressed concerns about multifamily development, specifically the

design, location on the lot and scale of development. Currently, multifamily units are often part of enclaves of development that stand out from the rest of the lower intensity neighborhoods. Multifamily units could be better integrated throughout neighborhoods as part of a variety of housing types provided.

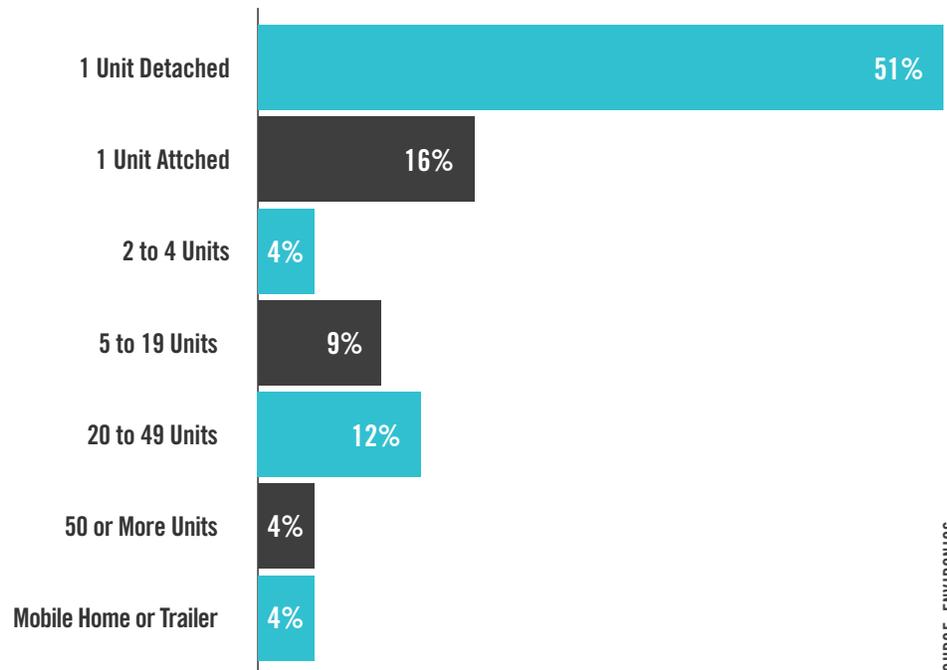
2017 EST. HOUSING TENURE



SOURCE: ENVIRONICS



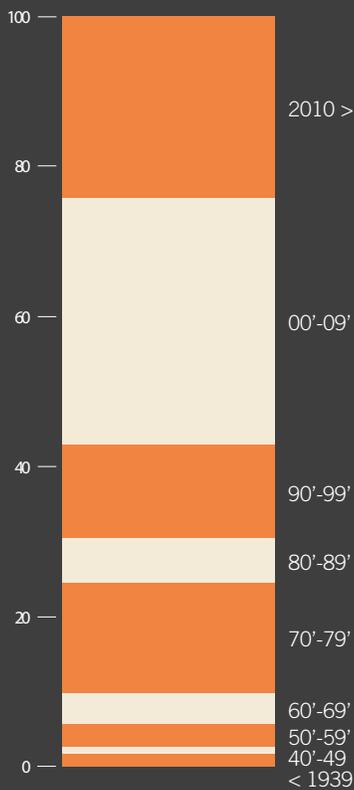
2017 EST. HOUSING UNITS BY UNITS IN STRUCTURE



SOURCE: ENVIRONICS

Compared to Fargo and the metro area, West Fargo's housing stock is considerably younger. The median year that housing structures were built in West Fargo is 2002, compared to 1989 in Fargo and 1988 in the rest of the metro. Reflecting the population growth of West Fargo, 57% of the West Fargo housing stock was built between 2000 and 2017.

Year Housing Was Built (West Fargo)



MULTI-FAMILY UNITS



While, the median value of owner-occupied housing in West Fargo is \$226,300 (City Assessor), which is also higher than Fargo (\$197,906) and the metro (\$195,392), the median sales price is at \$267,943. Considering that a household living in West Fargo and making the median income could afford a ~\$200,000 home to stay within affordable housing limits, there is a definite decline in affordability in the city and region.

The National Association of Realtors ranks the Fargo Metro Region 85th in affordability out of 180 metro areas around the country. While housing prices have quickly increased in the Fargo area, it is still much more affordable than other areas around the country.

Rental rates vary widely in West Fargo, starting as low as \$470, and ranging all the way up to \$2,000. This represents an average rent to household income rate of 28.9 percent (and increasing),

West Fargo had a higher total number of single-family building permits issued from 2011 to 2015 than Fargo

which is in line with the nationwide trend of approximately 30 percent.

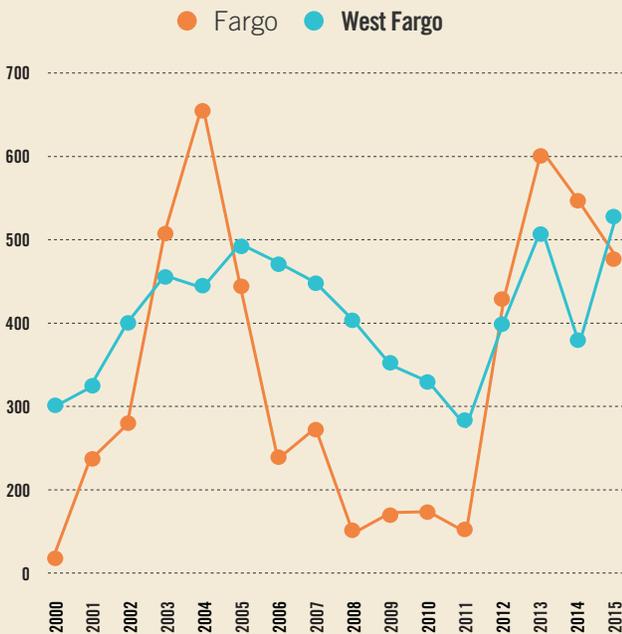
It is important to remember that most often, a household at the median income level will be homeowner and not a renter, so it could be argued here once again that affordability is slowly declining with prices going up. Several apartment developments for families and seniors within the city have used tax credits to help increase affordability.

Housing studies have shown that there is an ever-increasing need for affordable family housing in the community. Currently the city does not have a program in place to build affordable subsidized family housing. The city has encouraged more affordable market rate family housing by decreasing development costs through smaller lot sizes and narrower streets. This has resulted in a significant number of more affordable

residential dwellings being constructed. Even so, with the significant increase in housing costs, many families simply cannot afford to own a home. The city should consider additional options to assist in the development of affordable housing for families. West Fargo had a higher total number of single-family building permits issued from 2011 to 2015 than Fargo, despite the size difference in the two cities. Fargo has a significantly higher number of multifamily building permits during the same time period. (Source: 2015 West Fargo Annual Report)

As with demographics, the housing assessment of West Fargo indicates significant growth, higher housing values, newer housing stock, and greater owner occupancy. All told, there are opportunities to create a more diverse set of housing options in the community to satisfy all potential residents. Furthermore, national trends, as well as comments received during the planning process, indicate that the active empty nester population, alongside young singles and couples, are seeking housing types that go beyond the traditional single-family model. West Fargo has the opportunity to capitalize on this trend.

SINGLE FAMILY BUILDING PERMITS



MULTI FAMILY BUILDING PERMITS (UNITS)



Senior Housing

There are several senior housing facilities in West Fargo including independent living, assisted living, nursing homes and memory care facilities. According to information provided by the planning department, there are approximately 650 elderly housing units in the city, all categories included. With a population of about 3,500 residents aged 65 and older as of 2017, there is a potential shortage of housing options for this demographic, although many likely still live in their homes until much later in life. Section 8 funding, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and a local Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) program are some of the mechanisms used to increase affordability of those units for the elderly.

The city has reviewed market studies regularly, which demonstrate that there is continually a need for more senior housing which is affordable. The city has recognized the increased need for subsidized housing for the elderly and has supported applications, as well as provided tax incentives to stimulate project development.

West Fargo faces a complex and challenging housing conundrum. If the city is going to capitalize on its rapid recent growth and continue to appeal to young families, it must respond to shifting demographics that prefer a greater array of housing choices and more urban living options. The city has an opportunity to craft a progressive new housing policy that redirects resources to certain areas of the community and limits the extension of pricey infrastructure networks for suburban, single-family home construction. While housing is provided primarily by the private sector, strong public policies are needed to ensure a healthy balance of mixed-income housing that is located in the right place and in conjunction with other types of uses. Part of this renewed housing strategy may involve the city taking a stronger position on the design of neighborhoods and housing options to help reduce cost, create more complete neighborhoods and take advantage of infill opportunities in older parts of the community.

650
ELDERLY
HOUSING
UNITS



3,500

65 AND OLDER

RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in Older Neighborhoods

Though it may be hard to imagine, the older West Fargo neighborhoods located closer to the downtown area, can evolve into hip, mixed-income, desirable places to live. Local leaders can facilitate this transformation and enable it to happen faster by taking a few proactive steps. Rehabilitation of buildings and infrastructure followed by consistent and careful maintenance needs to become a priority. Community members have expressed this need during the planning process, identifying improvements to parks as a key component to quality of life in these older neighborhoods. Investment from both the public and private sectors is critical to improve the housing stock as well as city amenities.

Improve Neighborhood Structure

Neighborhoods should contain a discernible center and a clear edge. This is an organizational concept that provides an identity to the community. While it may be more difficult to have a well-defined edge surrounding a neighborhood, it is imperative that its center be well-formed. The center of the neighborhood should include a civic open space such as a park, square, or plaza depending on its location within the range of contexts, from rural to urban. This center should have the most urban character in the community, with buildings pulled up close to the street and a generous sidewalk in front. In West Fargo, there are opportunities to create small nodes of activity within walking distance of nearby residents, while continuing to strengthen and improve linkages to the existing civic and commercial centers.

Increase mix of uses

Whenever possible, neighborhoods should include a mix of commercial (i.e., retail, restaurants, and offices), residential, recreational, and civic uses. This mix should be well-balanced, incorporating both vertical and horizontal mixed-use within the neighborhood, the block, and the building. An example of vertical mixed use is when a multiple story building contains commercial activity on the first floor and residential

above. Horizontal mixed use occurs when buildings with different uses are located next to each other. An ideal mix would allow residents to meet all of their daily needs within a short walking distance. When this occurs, the number of automobile trips per household is substantially reduced. This mix of uses is optimized when commercial establishments have residential dwelling units above to help promote active streets.

Concentrate Housing within Mixed-Use Areas

Based on the limited amount of land still available for development within the existing city limits, new housing development should be concentrated around mixed-use areas such as the downtown and other identified growth areas. To better meet current and emerging trends, future development should focus on including, high-quality, multifamily residences as opposed to the current trend of building development comprised only of single-family homes. Making the decision to shift housing and development policy in this way will have far reaching implications for both the city's and property owner's pocket book.



Improve Neighborhood and House Design

Many neighborhoods in West Fargo, especially the most recently built, are typified by the presence of “snout houses,” large streets and a limited amount of greenery. Snout houses are often single-family or duplex dwellings where the garage juts out past the main body of the house, visually dominating the lot. If you look down the street in a development of similarly styled homes, what stands out are garage doors, which aren’t nearly as inviting as the façade of a home. If on top of it, the development is devoid of mature trees, the area may look more like a rental storage unit business than a suburban neighborhood. The concern is understandable. Snout houses may look wonderful inside, and their design may be perfect for young families who can’t afford a more conventional home that sits on a large lot. But, their exterior design emphasizes what is typically the least attractive element of a house: the garage. Clustered together, snout houses convey the message that cars, not people, occupy the neighborhood. As a result, such developments are less friendly to pedestrians.

Municipal streets are designed with a “design speed” in mind – a sort of rational speed that a reasonable person would want to instinctively drive at, based on the width and other conditions of the street design. Transportation experts suggest that the actual design speed of most streets is actually higher than the posted speed limit, leading to an instinctive urge to drive faster than the speed limit. In garage-filled neighborhoods, this design speed challenge is made much worse. That’s because the width of streets is based on the assumption of on-street parking, usually on both sides, or at least one. So the streets are wide enough to accommodate very comfortable drive lanes, plus the on-street parking width, which often is neither needed nor used.

In addition to the speeding issues, multiple garages mean that the house is set back deeply from the street, usually at least 20 feet with very small porches or none at all. This separation of the house and the street eliminates the possibility for social interaction between the sidewalk and the private frontage. The setback and blocking

garages also mean there are no “eyes on the street,” which makes the street less safe and social. It can sometimes feel like there’s no house at all, or at best that it’s a house attached to a garage, rather than a garage attached to a house.

Members of the public have also mentioned the lack of a landscape green strip, and most importantly street trees in some newer West Fargo neighborhoods. Add to these losses the previously discussed absence of on-street parking, which can actually play a valuable role as a buffer separating pedestrians from moving cars, and you have a significant impact on the quality of the walking experience, the walkability, of the neighborhood. When the walking experience is less inviting, more people choose to drive, with all of the health, expense, environmental and social/quality-of-life implications that come with that choice.

Some design approaches such as consolidated “shared” drives between two lots, or single width driveways

at the curb that then widen to accommodate wider garages, can improve these conditions a bit, but not completely. The best option, especially for thin lot widths, is rear lanes, which allow the home to be moved closer to the street for better sociability and safety, while replacing less usable front yards with more private rear yards.

Garages aren’t the only issue and challenge affecting our suburban street designs, or even the biggest. Outdated engineering street standards, designing for fire truck sizes, snow storage expectations in cities like West Fargo and the underlying disconnectedness of typical subdivision design all play huge roles in our history of car-dependent sprawl. As we strive to build smarter, more walkable neighborhoods, while undertaking “sprawl repair” on those we’ve already built, it’s time to think about better design to increase quality of life, social connections and the pedestrian experience.

Garages matter a great deal to the design and enjoyment of our neighborhoods, well beyond that garage door. Perhaps it’s finally time to reconsider whether having garages out front is really more important than the character of our neighborhoods.



Support the Growing Senior Population

The fourth largest cohort in West Fargo today is the 55 to 64 age group, indicative of families with children that have left home or are just about to. In the coming decades, this group will demand more senior-focused services, infrastructure, and housing. Currently, there are a number of suitable age-in-place housing options for seniors, but the need will remain. Many seniors prefer to remain in their homes rather than moving to isolated, age-

restricted developments or assisted living facilities, which can be unaffordable to seniors on a fixed income. The city can help encourage this option by supporting community assistance programs such as Valley Senior Services, an organization that provides transportation services for the metro region's at-home seniors who need assistance getting to doctor's appointments, social events, and the grocery store.

4TH
LARGEST
COHORT
55 TO 64
age group

Allow Accessory Dwelling Units

An accessory unit is a flexible space that shares ownership, site, and utility connections with the principal building on the lot, but has its own entrance. Usually situated over a garage toward the rear of the principal house, the outbuilding increases privacy and enclosure in the backyard by screening the yard from the house next door. Accessory units are significantly different from the "bonus rooms" that are found in conventional suburban subdivisions because they are not connected to the rest of the house. Instead it is much more private—making it well suited for use as a home office, guest room, or rental property. In addition to providing a potential source of income for the primary mortgage holder, accessory units provide additional low-cost housing options within the community. In West Fargo, permitting accessory units would be a sustainable and cost-effective way for the city to encourage affordable housing that complements the character of the existing neighborhoods, by putting the control in the hands of the residents.



Diversify Housing Choices

Demographic diversity of people in age, income level, culture, and race provides a sense of interest and vitality within the most loved places in the world. In order to attract this type of diversity to a community, the physical form must be conducive to the varied lifestyles of these groups. A key component of creating an environment where diversity thrives is the provision of a mix of housing options. There should be many different types, sizes, and price points intermingled in close proximity, with a range of living experiences from rural to denser, so that there is something for everyone.

The variety of dwelling types should include: different sizes of detached

single-family houses, rowhouses, multifamily buildings, and live-work buildings. In addition, small ancillary buildings with a living space above the garage should be permitted within the rear yard of each principal building for extended family, tenants, or guests to stay or live. Residential units should be available either for leasing or for ownership. This allows young and old, singles and families, and residents having a range of income levels to find a home that suits their preferences and lifestyles. An additional benefit of this mix of housing types is that workers can live within walking distance of their jobs, rather than requiring that they commute to work, worsening traffic on local roads.

Allow Reduced Unit Size

The city should consider updating codes and ordinances to allow for "microhousing," or apartments totaling less than 400 square feet. Smaller units like studio apartments are ideal for households without children, young professionals, and the elderly. This housing type has been successful in both large and small cities, and would provide a reasonably priced option that could help many households gain financial independence or those who just want the option for a lifestyle that scaled-down living provides.

Explore Ways to Improve Design while Keeping Infrastructure and Housing Costs Down

Working closely with the development community and Homebuilder Association, the City of West Fargo should explore ways to decrease infrastructure and housing costs while improving the design of homes and neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are the building blocks of a community. They are more than subdivisions, and are defined as much by the sense of community they create for their residents as by the structures, streets and amenities within their boundaries. Quality neighborhoods offer choices, provide residents with a sense of identity and connections, and encourage continuous renewal and reinvestment.

Better designed homes are durable and appropriate to the character and scale of their neighborhood, while creating an inviting and walkable environment. Communities around the country have required better design successfully for decades and they have brought improved quality of life to residents while also providing a better return on investment for developers.

By working together and collaborating on this challenge, the City of West Fargo and development community will surely find opportunities for greater affordability and predictability for the property owners, reducing the impact of special assessments over time.

LESS
THAN
400
SQ. FT.



PROVIDE QUALITY AND COORDINATED PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

The West Fargo Park District's

Mission is to...

Provide Opportunities for its citizens
to enjoy their leisure time.

Contribute to the physical, mental,
and social development of our citizens.

Contribute to the quality of
community life.

Meet citizen's needs and interests
through quality services at a reasonable
price.

As West Fargo has grown tremendously in the last two decades so has the number of parks within the City of West Fargo. Parks and their facilities are managed by the West Fargo Park District, a stand-alone entity managed by a five-member board and run by a staff of 12 parks and recreation professionals. The district plans, builds and operates its own facilities with approval from the board. Other entities such as the City of West Fargo, the West Fargo Public School District and the West Fargo Public Library

play a role in the development and maintenance of certain recreation facilities, trails and other public spaces.

On average, more than 30,000 people a year participate in the park district's recreation programs through community centers, senior services, teen services, youth sports, day camps, and other events and programs. In addition, approximately 800 people volunteer annually to support a wide variety of programs and services offered by the West Fargo Park District.

Thousands of West Fargo residents, workers, and visitors regularly use the parks system, which encompasses just about 500 acres, 50 miles of bike path (including city and park paths), 33 parks, 9 activity centers, and 5 warming houses. The Park District manages activity centers located across the city, as well as athletic fields and courts supporting organized outdoor sports. The park's system also includes an ice arena, recreation center. Table 1 below illustrates existing park district facilities in the City of West Fargo.

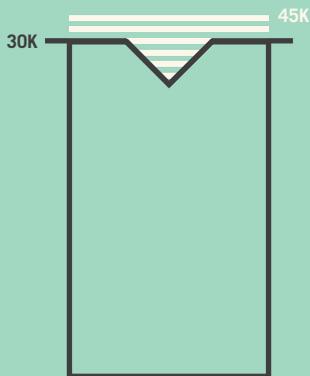
Table 1: West Fargo Parks and Facilities

| Parks/Types of Facilities | | Picnic Shelters | Hiking/Biking Trails | Outdoor Pool | Tennis | Sledding | Cross-Country Skiing | Baseball/Softball Fields | Soccer Fields | Basketball Courts | Volleyball Courts | Playground | Skate Park | Horseshoes | Restrooms | Concessions | Ice Rink | Warming Hut | Disc Golf | Fitness Equipment | Splash Park | Indoor Walking Track | Pickleball Courts | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------|--------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|
| North Main Ave | Goldenwood | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Armour | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pinewood Park | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Riverside | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Between I-94 and Main Ave | Arbor Woods | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Burlington | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Charleswood Area | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Citizen's | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Elmwood (North) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Elmwood (South) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Herb Tintes (Veterans Pool) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Heritage Square | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Maplewood Park | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Meadowridge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Meadowridge Tot Lot | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Northridge Way | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Scheel's Soccer Complex | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Service Club | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Tower's Soccer Complex | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Westside | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Veterans Memorial Arena | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| South of I-94 | Brooks Harbor | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Eagle Run | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Eaglewood | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 40th Ave West Park | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Maple Ridge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Rendezvous (Active Center) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | River's Bend (Active Center) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Shawdow Creek | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Shadow Wood Pocket | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Shadow Wood (Splash Pad) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | The Wilds | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | The Wilds South | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | West River | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Rusted Recreation Center | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

LIVABILITY MEASURES

PARKS

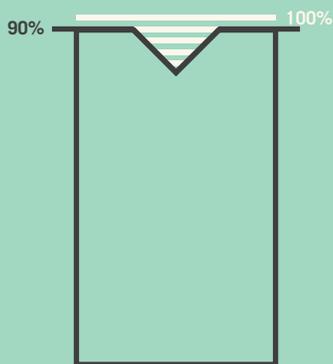
Number of Participants



Acres of Park per 1,000 residents



Average Proximity to a Park via Greenway



■ BENCHMARK ■ TARGET

Urban Livability

A framework for a park system with a strong identity and enduring amenities provides a firm foundation for West Fargo to catalyze new investments and foster long-term growth. Economists around the country and abroad recognize the dollar value of urban open spaces and recreational amenities in terms of adjacent land values, tax revenues, preventative health care, and recreation benefit.

As the park district and city reinvest in open spaces, it is reinforcing its competitiveness and ability to continue attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. It is clear from all the input received during the planning process that West Fargo residents value greatly their neighborhood open spaces and want more investment in creating connected parks and neighborhoods.

Across the country, parks are becoming more understood as real economic generators within the urban areas they touch. The West Fargo park system must be properly funded to support these activities, otherwise recreation opportunities will be compromised resulting in a major impact on our local economy.



People

Whenever possible, neighborhoods should include a mix of commercial (i.e., retail, restaurants, and offices), residential, recreational, and civic uses. This mix should be well-balanced, incorporating both vertical and horizontal mixed-use within the neighborhood, the block, and the

building. An example of vertical mixed use is when a multiple story building contains commercial activity on the first floor and residential above. Horizontal mixed use occurs when buildings with different uses are located next to each other. An ideal mix would allow residents to meet

all of their daily needs within a short walking distance. When this occurs, the number of automobile trips per household is substantially reduced. This mix of uses is optimized when commercial establishments have residential dwelling units above to help promote active streets.



LOCAL PRIDE AND REGIONAL DESTINATION

As the region's fastest growing city, West Fargo has become a very desirable place to live for young families in the region. The quality of its schools and park system plays a big role in that rise of popularity. Its parks and recreation offerings reinforce this role through their exceptional physical attributes and programming opportunities. West Fargo's parks offer important social gathering spaces for everyone, hosting events, farmers markets, children camps, and offering facilities for residents' enjoyment. The park district supports all of these activities and strives to provide equitable means for all residents and guests to access these essential cultural resources that make West Fargo unique.



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with the city and school district allow the park district to operate a broad range of programming and support programming that, as a separate entity, it would be unable to offer. It also can make physical space more accessible to both partners, expanding venue opportunities. In addition, these collaborations make programs financially viable. Without partnership this doesn't happen, which in turn limits opportunity in the community.

It is incumbent on the park district, city and school district to not only develop working partnerships, but to grow lasting community relationships between themselves and with other organizations and individuals. There are opportunities, and clear needs, to expand recreation and programming options to broader communities, including seniors and low-income families. Partnerships provide a relational vehicle for these opportunities to be realized.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Volunteerism represents the most dynamic and complex way that people interact and engage with the Park District services. Many aspects of the district rely on volunteer support. By the numbers, more than 800 volunteers play a role in the district annually. These volunteers account for more than 5,467 hours of service, and at the national estimated value of volunteer time (\$23.07/hr) total volunteer value for the park district is upwards of \$128,000/annual. Whether it is a youth coach, a park board member, or a community member helping with a one-day event, volunteers matter in a big way for the park district.

During the planning process, we have found that the people of West Fargo are highly motivated and eager to get involved in beautifying the natural environment. Participation in these activities provides a sense of stewardship and ownership that only comes with hands-on experience.

The net value of the volunteers who give their time is much greater than the tangible benefits to the programs, parks and services. Volunteerism is a gateway to education, awareness, and ultimately appreciation. Through engaging young people in conservation projects, we are investing in the future preservation of open space and environmentalism.

Wellness

► Recreation Opportunities

West Fargo has a young and active population with a strong interest in recreation and programming. The city's fast growing demographic trends has brought challenges with the need to increase the number of parks and recreational offerings quickly, keeping up with the growth in population and the addition of new neighborhoods.

The parks district should look to user groups to inform changing local trends while maintaining an awareness of national trends and finding creative spatial solutions to meet needs. Multi-use play areas are critical to meeting the changing demands. To increase participation and satisfaction, the right programs must be tailored to meet community needs. Future programming must be prioritized with the interests of the community.

► Indoor Recreation Facilities

While West Fargo has several outdoor parks facilities, there are a lower number of indoor facilities throughout the community. Examining the national standards based on the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) PRORAGIS National Database for peer cities data, could be a helpful indicator to establish if West Fargo has sufficient indoor facilities. PRORAGIS is the most comprehensive and largest collection of detailed data on municipal, county and state park systems in the U.S. Particularly noteworthy is the need for indoor facilities in northern climate where wind, snow and cold dominate for large portions of the year.

Veterans Memorial Arena

The Veterans Memorial Arena (VMA) opened to the public in 1989. The lobby was added in 1999 and the Vets 2 building was added in 2003. Since its opening, the Veterans Memorial Arena has been a valuable asset to the community of West Fargo and has hosted many events. The VMA is home ice of the West Fargo Stampede Youth Hockey Association and the West Fargo Public School District girls and boys hockey programs. Year-round, the VMA host many Park District, community and regional events and rentals. The VMA features two NHL size rinks (seasonal), open public skate (seasonal), year-round one-eighth mile walking track, bleachers, concessions,

two meeting rooms, two tennis courts (seasonal), 3-on-3 basketball court, a large lobby, a fitness room for ages 18 and up and an interactive gaming system. The VMA is available for rental for small events up to large trade shows.

The district's continuous goal is to program the space with quality activities and rent as much ice as possible. District staff is dedicated to fostering relationships with outside organizations and supporting children as they learn how to skate. These children eventually grow and transition into participation in other local and regional skating organizations.



Rustad Recreation Center

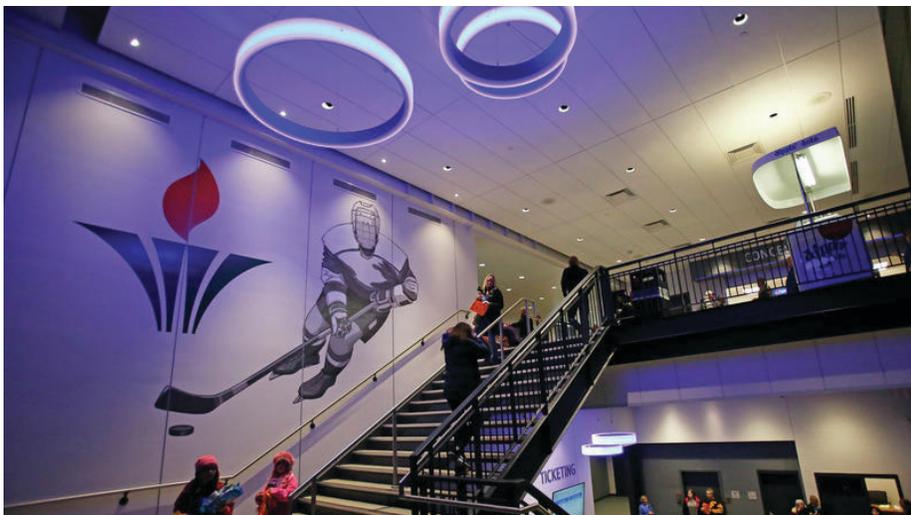
The park district's only recreation center, the 44,000 square foot Rustad Recreation Center opened in 2016. The center offers a full-size gymnasium with basketball, volleyball and pickle ball courts, fitness studio, walking track, playroom, community room space, and park district offices. Supported activities include pickleball, basketball, adult fitness classes, camps, and art.

Many partners and user groups take advantage of all that Rustad has to offer. From a wellness perspective, the center strives to maintain strong programming with a focus on fitness and youth sports. Within West Fargo, the Rustad Recreation Center is a regional recreation facility.



West Fargo Sports Arena

The West Fargo Sports Arena, recently completed and funded by the West Fargo School District, includes two indoor ice rinks and a community room.



Aquatics Facilities

Currently, the Veterans Memorial Pool is the only outdoor public swimming pool in West Fargo. There is also a splash park at Shadowood Park in the southern end of the city. There is also an aquatic center that is provided by the West Fargo School District, the Hulbert Aquatic Center. Feedback from the public during the planning process reinforced the importance of aquatic facilities and water play in West Fargo.

Veterans Memorial Pool

Built in 1956, the original pool at Tintes Park was suffering from an aging structure and equipment that has outlasted its design life, and it became inoperable and unsafe. The pool was rebuilt in 2014 at the request of the neighborhood who preferred a new pool to a large splash park that was being proposed by the Park Board members. The pool is now being used and enjoyed by people throughout the community.



Hulbert Aquatic Center

The Hulbert Aquatic Center is a state-of-the-art aquatic facility that opened in December 2017. Hulbert is home to the Packers' and Mustangs' swim teams. The facility includes the following features:

- Competition pool that is 54-meters long by 25-yards wide that can accommodate 20-plus lanes of swimming and nine different competitive configurations
- Six regulation diving boards, four 1-meter boards and two 3-meter boards
- Warm water, 25-yard, 6-lane teaching pool
- Dryland diving and training room

The new facility accommodates the district's needs, as well as those of the community and the larger region. Both the West Fargo High School Packers and the Sheyenne High School Mustangs has Hulbert Aquatic Center, the home for their boys and girls swimming and diving teams. Specially designed locker rooms allow the teams a secure place to keep their gear, as well as provide a place for team meetings. Beyond athletic space,

the aquatic center has classroom space for classes and meetings. The one large classroom has been designed so that it can also be divided into two smaller, accommodating multiple needs and events. Additional highlights of the space include a large concession area, family locker rooms, and an observation room overlooking the lesson pool.



Connection

► Walkability/Bikeability

Although the majority of city neighborhoods have access to a park within a five-minute or quarter-mile walk (see Map 2 on page 63), it is essential to develop a detailed needs assessment to evaluate if there is adequate service in all neighborhoods based on amenities and facilities available at each park. The city's long, linear shape, as well as the presence of I-94 as a physical barrier, restrict connectivity between the north and south areas of the city. It is essential to improve accessibility to parks by better connecting neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by utilizing and improving existing trail systems and key linkage points to increase the number of users that reach parks by walking or biking.

► Multiuse Paths

Together, the park district and City of West Fargo manage and maintain 50 miles of multi-use paths throughout the community (See map 1 on page 62). The network currently connects several parks together but it is incomplete and several important gaps should be closed to provide a continuous and seamless network of trails/paths for residents' enjoyment and transportation needs.



► A Place for Community Building

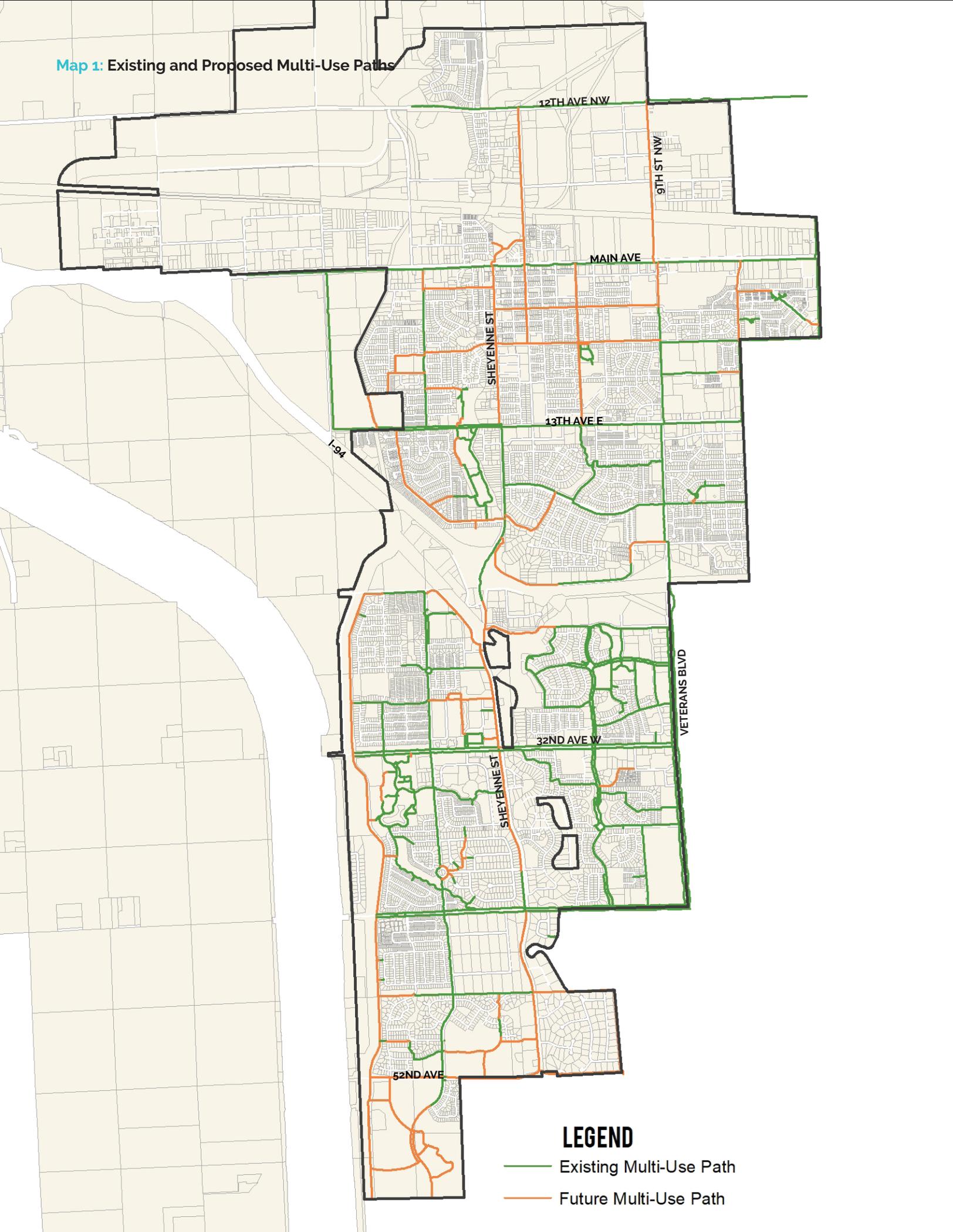
Urban parks are often seen as places for people to step away from city life and reconnect with nature. That said, West Fargo residents have a unique relationship with their city parks, which provide places to connect with both urban life and the great outdoors. West Fargo is part of an urban metro region in a rural state whose city parks provide tremendous opportunities for social engagement, which is important to sustaining a healthy and vibrant community.

► Inclusive Social Places

The Park District must continue to advance as a leader in expanding and creating recreational opportunities for people of all ages, genders, and cultures. The District has a deep commitment to supporting places where everyone can practice wellness. This perspective aligns with themes outlined in the rest of this document.



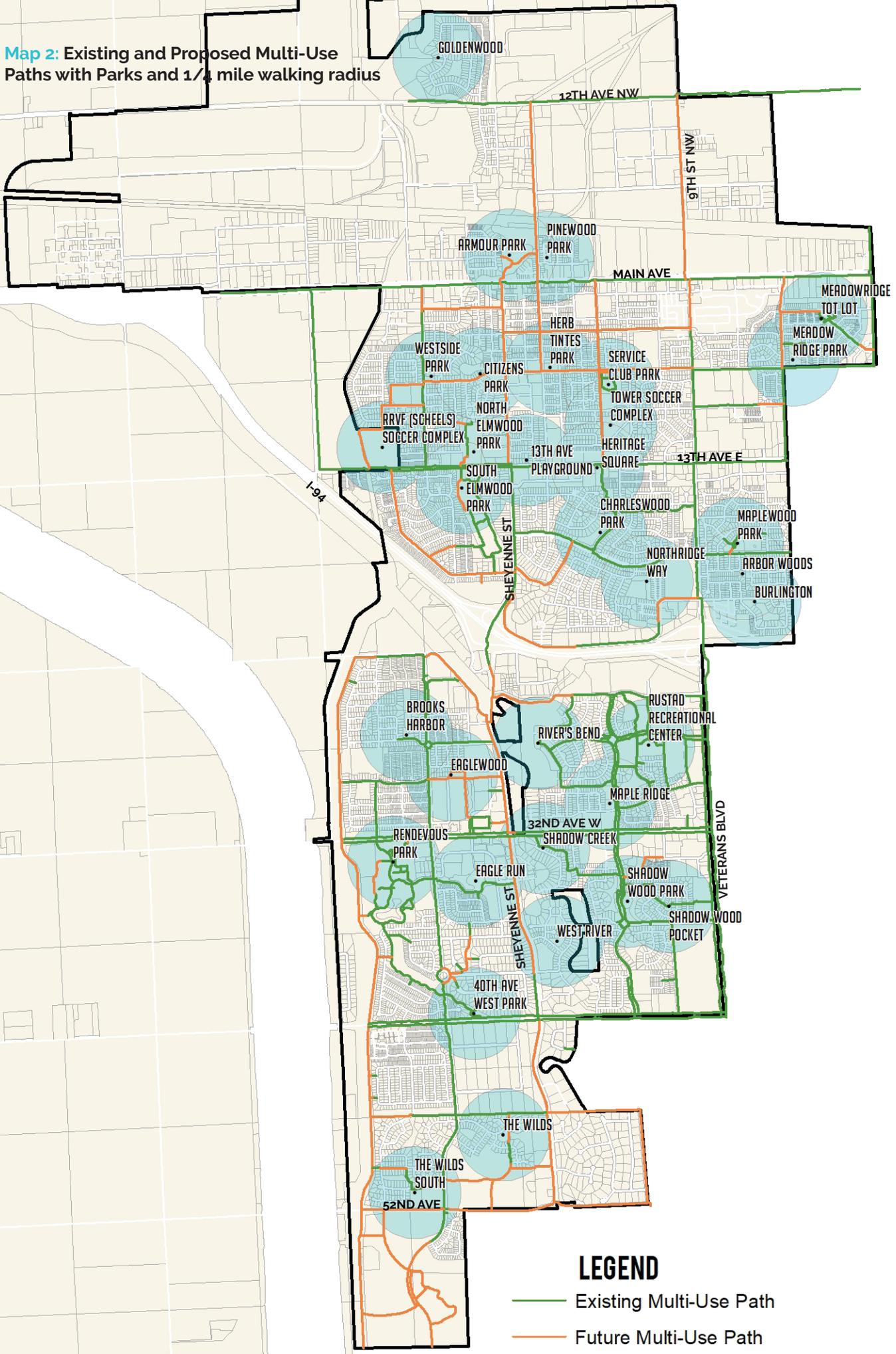
Map 1: Existing and Proposed Multi-Use Paths



LEGEND

- Existing Multi-Use Path
- Future Multi-Use Path

Map 2: Existing and Proposed Multi-Use Paths with Parks and 1/4 mile walking radius



LEGEND

- Existing Multi-Use Path
- Future Multi-Use Path

RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a Comprehensive Park District Master Plan

West Fargo is home to approximately 400 acres of parks owned and operated by the park district. This translates to 12.88 acres per thousand residents, which is well above the national standard of cities with a similar population. While this comprehensive plan update begins to identify parks amenities and possible future needs, there is a need to develop a specific West Fargo Park District master plan. This would include a detailed park needs assessment, identify parks based on their type and provide the park district and West Fargo Park Board with an in-depth analysis of the community's needs for possible changes to park amenities or creation of future parks.

Park types are generally based on a size classification (mini, neighborhood, community, and regional) with some consideration of use and often include:

- Mini or pocket parks: <1 acre
- Neighborhood parks: 1-10 acres
- Community parks: 10-50 acres
- Regional parks: >50 acres

Based on these standards, one could quickly categorize West Fargo Park District as follows:

Table 2: Park Types

| | | Mini or pocket parks: <1 acre | Neighborhood parks: 1 - 10 acres | Community parks: 10 - 50 acres | Regional parks: >50 acres |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| North Main Ave | Goldenwood | | | | |
| | Armour | | | | |
| | Pinewood Park | | | | |
| | Riverside | | | | |
| Between I-94 and Main Ave | Arbor Woods | | | | |
| | Burlington | | | | |
| | Charleswood Area | | | | |
| | Citizen's | | | | |
| | Elmwood (North) | | | | |
| | Elmwood (South) | | | | |
| | Herb Tintes (Veterans Pool) | | | | |
| | Heritage Square | | | | |
| | Maplewood Park (Activity Center) | | | | |
| | Meadowridge | | | | |
| | Meadowridge Tot Lot | | | | |
| | Northridge Way | | | | |
| | Scheel's Soccer Complex | | | | |
| | Service Club | | | | |
| | Tower's Soccer Complex | | | | |
| Westside | | | | | |
| Veterans Memorial Arena | | | | | |
| South of I-94 | Brooks Harbor | | | | |
| | Eagle Run | | | | |
| | Eaglewood | | | | |
| | 40th Ave West Park | | | | |
| | Maple Ridge | | | | |
| | Rendezvous (Active Center) | | | | |
| | River's Bend (Active Center) | | | | |
| | Shadow Creek | | | | |
| | Shadow Wood Pocket | | | | |
| | Shawdow Wood (Splash Pad) | | | | |
| | The Wilds | | | | |
| | The Wilds South | | | | |
| | West River | | | | |
| | Rusted Recreation Center | | | | |

Park amenities are the built elements within a park that support various forms of recreation, such as playground equipment. For many users, these are the primary reason they visit parks. It is critical that parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users. Additionally, as the de-

mographics of a city change over time, park amenities need to be assessed for their relevance to changing user groups. Level of Service (LOS) standards provide metrics for this assessment. This more specific level of analysis would take place during the preparation of a West Fargo Park District master plan.



Strengthen Partnership

While this section of the plan mainly focuses on the park district it is essential to also consider public spaces and amenities available through the West Fargo Public School District and City of West Fargo. Additional playgrounds exist on school property and are generally available outside of school hours for public use. School athletic fields are also open play spaces that have the potential to be utilized by the public. The Park District already uses several school spaces for their current programs.

Service gaps could potentially be addressed through improved maintenance and collaboration with the school district. This could lead to improved public access and amenities across the city.

As mentioned, the park district and the City of West Fargo work in conjunction to build and maintain bike paths and multi-use trails throughout the community. This partnership could be strengthened to continue to develop and maintain a comprehensive bike-way/trail system throughout the community for pedestrians and bicycles.



Continue to Use National Standards To Help Plan For Needed Amenities

Until recently, the standard way of assessing community parks and recreation amenities was national standards developed by the National Parks & Recreation Association (NRPA). While those standard metrics are helpful, the realization emerged that tighter metrics - more attuned to population and density - could better serve communities. NRPA now provides access to a national database called Parks and Recreation Operating Ration and Geographic Information System (PRORAGIS). Using this tool, communities can see how they compare to one another and become better informed about areas where they are meeting the mark or lagging behind.

West Fargo's culture, location, and park system are all unique. Yet, there are great examples of cities nationwide that share similar traits with West Fargo.

West Fargo far exceeds many of the national standards and has been using them to benchmark the Park District against how well other communities are doing.

During the planning process, community members identified the possibility of developing a recreational trail within the Sheyenne Diversion right of way. These types of new facilities can be evaluated using national standards and an overall planning scheme for parks, open space and recreational facilities in West Fargo. With the high cost of such infrastructures, it is essential that future parks and amenities be carefully planned and evaluated to ensure that community needs are met while costs are kept to a manageable and sustainable level.

PROMOTE TRANSPORTATION CHOICE AND MOBILITY



Photo Credit: Toole Design Group (TDG)

Table 1: Examples of commute share in other Midwestern suburbs (11'-15')

| | West Fargo | Edina, MN | Middleton, WI | Richfield, MN |
|----------------|------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Drove Alone | 85.4% | 79.1% | 80.1% | 73.5% |
| Carpooled | 9.2% | 6.7% | 5.6% | 11.4% |
| Public Transit | 0.4% | 3.1% | 6.2% | 7.1% |
| Work at Home | 2.9% | 7.9% | 6.2% | 3.3% |
| Walked | 1.2% | 1.6% | 1.1% | 3.2% |
| Other | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| Bicycle | 0.2% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.6% |
| Motorcycle | 0.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.5% |
| Taxi | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.0% | 0.1% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011-2015

The City of West Fargo, like many communities around the region and country, has a transportation network which is dominated by automobiles. Yet walking, bicycling, and transit are playing increasingly important roles in the community, and will continue to influence West Fargo's commercial and residential development, park system, health and overall identity.

The community's expanding street network already connects residential neighborhoods with businesses, schools, and surrounding communities. But some arterial streets are challenged by increasing traffic and a street network that is not a grid. In addition, many of West Fargo's busy roads and neighborhood streets have sidewalks or shared use paths for walking and bicycling, but these networks are not fully developed and connected.

Transit service exists along MAT-BUS's Routes 22 and 24, serving neighborhoods north of I-94, but buses are infrequent, with a circuitous path. Improvements to these multi-modal networks should continue, so that residents can choose to reduce automobile travel and costs.

West Fargo commuters predominantly drive alone to work. Currently only 1.8 percent of West Fargo resident-commuters use the multi-modal network on a regular basis. Walking makes up 1.2 percent, followed by public transit at 0.4 percent and bicycling at 0.2 percent. In comparison, peer suburbs in the Upper Midwest have increased those percentages, in large part due to the development of robust multi-modal transportation networks

This chapter is organized into the following sections and includes existing conditions as well as recommendations:

- Roadway network and congestion
- Sidewalks and bikeway networks
- Commuting and transit



Roadway Network and Congestion

The existing roadway network consists of four major east-west and two north-south routes (Figure 1). Main Avenue, 12th Ave, 13th Avenue, I-94, 32nd Ave, 40th Ave and 52nd Ave are primary east-west roads. Sheyenne Street and 9th Street are two primary north-south roads, and are also spaced at one-mile increments. Because West Fargo is approximately 6 miles long by 2 miles wide, there are fewer north-south options, with heavy traffic concentrating on each road as they approach I-94. Automobile traffic along east-west roads is heaviest along the boundary with Fargo, reflecting the draw of Fargo and Moorhead, as well as West Fargo's geographic location on the west side of the metropolitan area.

The City of West Fargo has grown significantly since the 2008 comprehensive plan was adopted. Much of this growth has been south of I-94, indicating the importance of roadway crossings of the freeway. When looking at the roadway network conditions, transportation planners and traffic engineers can analyze patterns in more than one way. This allows a community like West Fargo to consider more than one way to influence future patterns.

For example, traffic forecasts are one tool frequently used by communities. There are strengths and weaknesses to this approach. Map 1 (see page 66) shows 2015 volumes and 2030 forecasts in West Fargo. In some cases, such as the 9th Street corridor, 2015 traffic volumes already exceed the future forecast. Other corridors, such as Main Avenue carry traffic volumes that are still quite a bit lower than forecast. Travel demand forecasting is only as good as the data that goes into it, and in both cases, the draw of land uses (or lack thereof) may have more influence than anticipated. This is why planning for transportation in conjunction with planning for land use is so important and is a component of this chapter.

Another way to analyze a roadway network is through network permeability, or the extent to which connectivity of streets, sidewalks, and bike ways permit (or restrict) movement in different directions. Network permeability impacts traffic distribution patterns by providing more options for trips and can relieve otherwise highly concentrated traffic on just a few streets. The following section describes this dynamic in West Fargo.

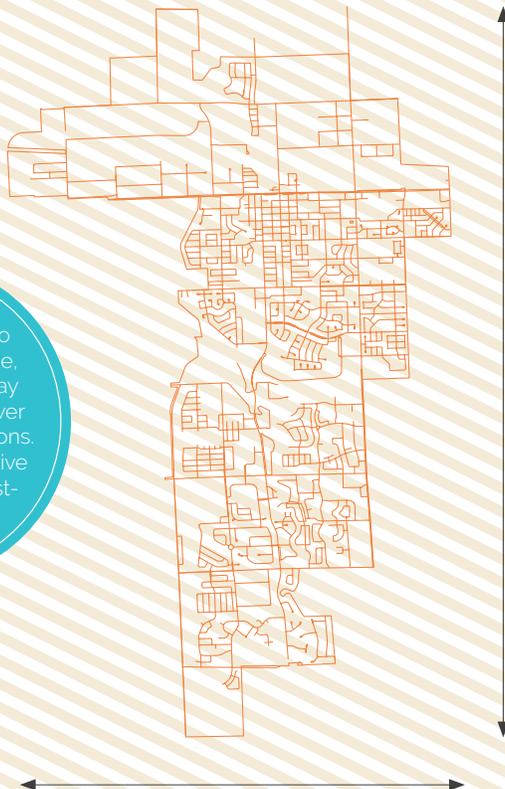
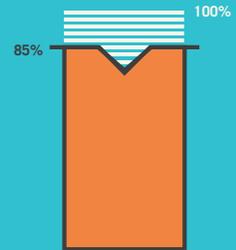


Figure 1. West Fargo is taller than it is wide, resulting in a roadway network that has fewer north-south connections. I-94 is also an attractive thoroughfare for east-west motorists.

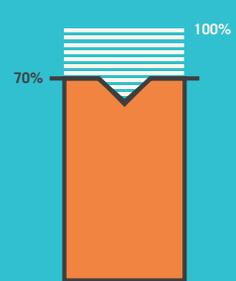
LIVABILITY MEASURES

TRANSPORTATION

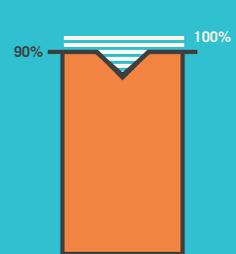
% of arterials with bikeways on one or more sides



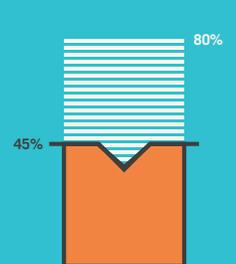
% of arterials with bikeways on one or more sides



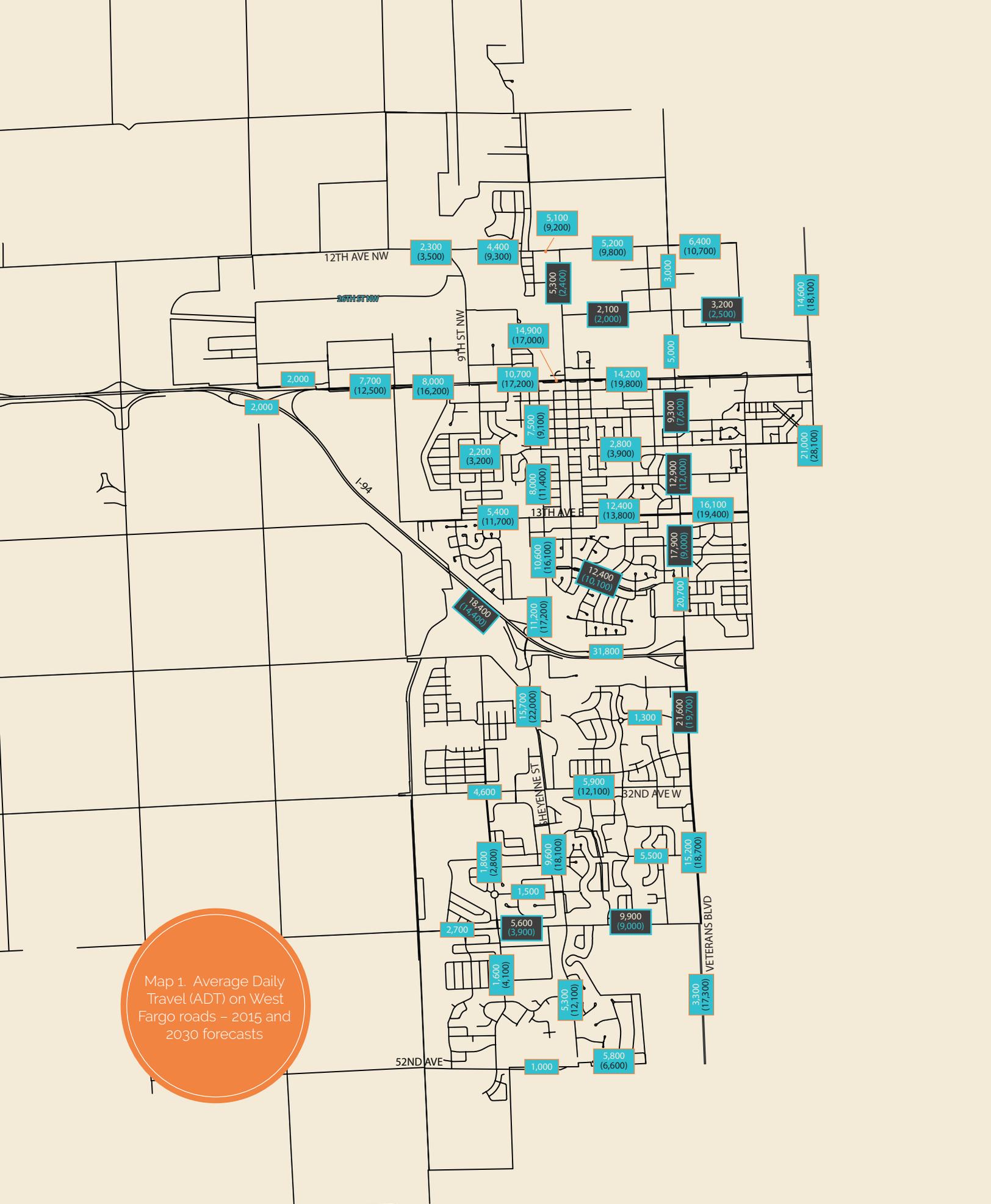
% population within 1/4 mile of a bicycle path



% population within 1/4 mile of fixed route transit stop



■ BENCHMARK ■ TARGET



Map 1. Average Daily Travel (ADT) on West Fargo roads – 2015 and 2030 forecasts

Network Patterns

West Fargo's roadway network patterns differ in some areas of the city based on whether they follow a more traditional grid network or a more 20th Century functional classification network. North of I-94, West Fargo is largely built upon a traditional grid network, with many connections between local neighborhoods and busy arterial streets. South of I-94, development patterns result in fewer intersections between local and arterial streets. The more established neighborhoods of West Fargo - located east of Sheyenne Street and south of Main Avenue - have a more traditional grid pattern. In these areas, there are many options for routes to travel from Point A to Point B, and fewer bottlenecks. South of I-94, West Fargo is largely built upon the 20th century functional classification of roadways. Under this

classification scheme, local roads are used primarily for access to residential areas and individual lots, while large arterials such as 32nd Avenue and Sheyenne Street are primarily designed to move traffic through an area. This hierarchy of roads concentrates traffic onto the arterials, creating bottlenecks and congestion issues. Table 2 summarizes the main differences between a traditional grid and a "suburban" or functional class network.

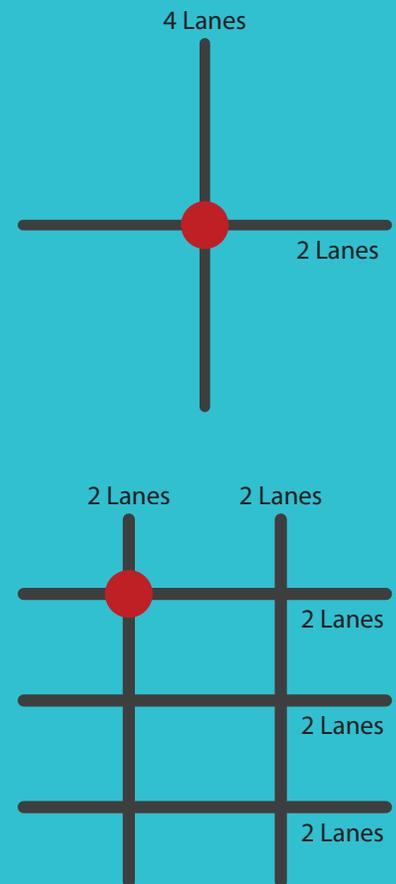
The city should consider their existing functional classification system and how to improve to a more connected grid network. This will involve working with North Dakota Department of Transportation (ND DOT) and Fargo-Moorhead Metro Council of Governments (COG).

Table 2: Comparing a connected traditional grid network with a disconnected suburban network

| | Connected grid network | Disconnected suburban network |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Travel Distance for a Typical Trip | Less | More |
| Intersection Conflict Points | More | Less |
| Traffic on Local Streets | More | Less |
| Traffic on Arterial Streets | Less | More |
| Frequency of Bicycle and Pedestrian Trips | More | Less |

Another way to illustrate the difference between a permeable traditional grid network and a more hierarchical roadway network is by showing large lane totals. In figure 3, the left side shows large arterials and the right side shows the same number of lanes, but dispersed. As a rule, greater network connectivity results in lesser congestion. Figure 2 also illustrates the impact of an incident on the two types of networks. Traffic is better able to respond to a closure or congestion by taking advantage of the network to move around the obstruction.

Figure 2: Roadway network comparison



Same total lanes, more robust network

In the case of West Fargo, the biggest barrier to network connectivity is I-94. Expanding the number of available crossings for vehicles (as well as for pedestrians and people on bicycles) would help reduce the stress on the existing arterials that now cross it. Figure 4 illustrates locations for crossing I-94 – the divider between traditional grid patterns and newer development patterns.

Figure 3 illustrates potential locations for

crossing including a critical connection of 13th Avenue West that is spaced well between the two existing crossings. Figure 4 also shows a 3.5-mile segment between the Sheyenne Street and 38th Street West interchanges. Crossing the barrier is the most important, but because of the directional nature of travel in West Fargo, the potential for a partial interchange at this location should also be considered.

I-94 as well as the Sheyenne River

create barriers to better connections within the transportation network in West Fargo. Crossing the interstate or the river limits the amount of links from one side to the other.

Current land use development patterns, especially south of I-94, also limit the potential for a more connected network of streets. Cul-de-sacs and enclosed neighborhoods put more traffic onto major connectors and reduce the number of options for drivers.

Figure 3: Existing and potential crossing locations



Policy and zoning that separates land uses into discrete types and locations makes traveling longer distances necessary. If the only destination near someone’s home is more housing, trips to the grocery store or park frequently require getting in the car. If land uses are mixed, trips become shorter and the broader transportation network is not needed for small, daily trips.

A simple way to measure land use mix is through walkscore.com. While walkscore.com is often used to indicate walkability, it is also useful in broader transportation planning because it counts destination types there are within a short distance. Shorter distances are good for walking,

but they also are good for minimizing strain on a roadway network. In the case of West Fargo, neighborhoods to the north of I-94 and east of Sheyenne Street have more destinations in closer proximity, translating into a higher walk score. Currently, West Fargo has a walk score of 29, which might indicate that most errands require a car. However, there are some areas of town with high scores such as the eastern portion of 13th Avenue with a score of 74, which might indicate most errands can be accomplished on foot. Conversely, the area south of I-94 is very low with a score of 4. More midrange is the area at Sheyenne Street and Main Avenue that scores 51, indicating that some errands can be accomplished on foot.

Figure 4: West Fargo Walk Score (29)

| | | |
|--------|-------------------|--|
| 90-100 | Walker’s Paradise | Daily errands do not require a car |
| 70-89 | Very Walkable | Some errands can be accomplished on foot |
| 50-69 | Somewhat Walkable | Some errands require a car |
| 25-49 | Car-Dependent | Most errands require a car |
| 0-24 | Car-Dependent | Almost all errands require a car |

Source: www.walkscore.com

West Fargo has programmed many roadway projects, several with regional partners including the North Dakota Department of Transportation (ND DOT) and the Fargo-Moorhead Council of Governments (FMCOG). Major projects involving regional partners are programmed and funded with matching federal dollars through FMCOG’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Currently programmed projects scheduled for completion in the 2016 – 2020 LRTP include:

- 12th Avenue widening (completed)
- 12th Avenue North and Ninth Street East roundabout (completed)
- 32nd Avenue widening (completed)
- New signals or signal timing improvements at multiple intersections along 9th Street E, 32nd Avenue E, and Sheyenne Street
- Sheyenne Street widening (approved)

Several corridor studies have been completed recently in West Fargo, including 9th Street East / Veterans Boulevard, and 12th Avenue North, and Sheyenne Street. The studies accurately apply conventional traffic engineering approaches to assessing the corridors, and the results are summarized on page 70. One limitation to conducting studies using only conventional traffic engineering approaches is that the considerations are limited to just one mode, and creative solutions are limited. This concept is discussed further in the recommendations section.



9TH ST E./VETERAN'S BLVD

Based on 2011 volumes, traffic operations on 9th Street East are acceptable, except for some individual movements at unsignalized intersections. Delay for drivers waiting at some two-way stop intersections is higher than considered acceptable. Based on an assumed increase in traffic, the study recommended widening 9th Street / Veterans Boulevard and adding turn lanes.



12TH AVENUE NE/NW

Based on 2012 volumes, all intersections on 12th Avenue Northwest were found to operate at acceptable levels of service (LOS), except for the intersection of 12th Avenue Northwest and 9th Street East, which operated at LOS F. One recommendation is to consider a roundabout at 12th/9th.



19TH AVENUE NORTH

Based on 2010 traffic volumes, all intersections on 19th Avenue North were found to operate at acceptable levels of service (LOS), except for some individual movements at unsignalized intersections. Delay for drivers waiting at some two-way stop intersections is higher than considered acceptable. Based on an assumed increase in traffic, the study recommended widening 19th Avenue North and adding turn lanes.

Note: This study was prepared by the City of Fargo but could have impacts in West Fargo as well.



SHEYENNE STREET

A top priority for West Fargo is the widening of Sheyenne Street, to prevent rush hour backups which have developed at the I-94 interchange, and to decrease travel times along the corridor. Congestion issues on Sheyenne Street are mostly related to condensed commuting peak hours, in the early mornings and late afternoons. Between 2018 and 2020, the City of West Fargo will expand the street from a two-lane section with occasional turn lanes to four-lane and six-lane sections with more frequent turn lanes. The ND DOT will also reconstruct the interchange of I-94.

Commuting and Transit

► Planning Context

In December 2016, the Metro COG released the Transit Development Plan (TDP) for Metro Area Transit (MATBUS) service in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth. The horizon year for the plan is 2020. MATBUS is collectively operated by the cities of Fargo and Moorhead, and the City of West Fargo contracts transit service from Fargo. MATBUS provides one route to West Fargo – Route 16 is a one-way clockwise loop with a one-hour headway. MATBUS's door-to-door paratransit service operates within the West Fargo city limits and supplemented by additional services from three nonprofit agencies.

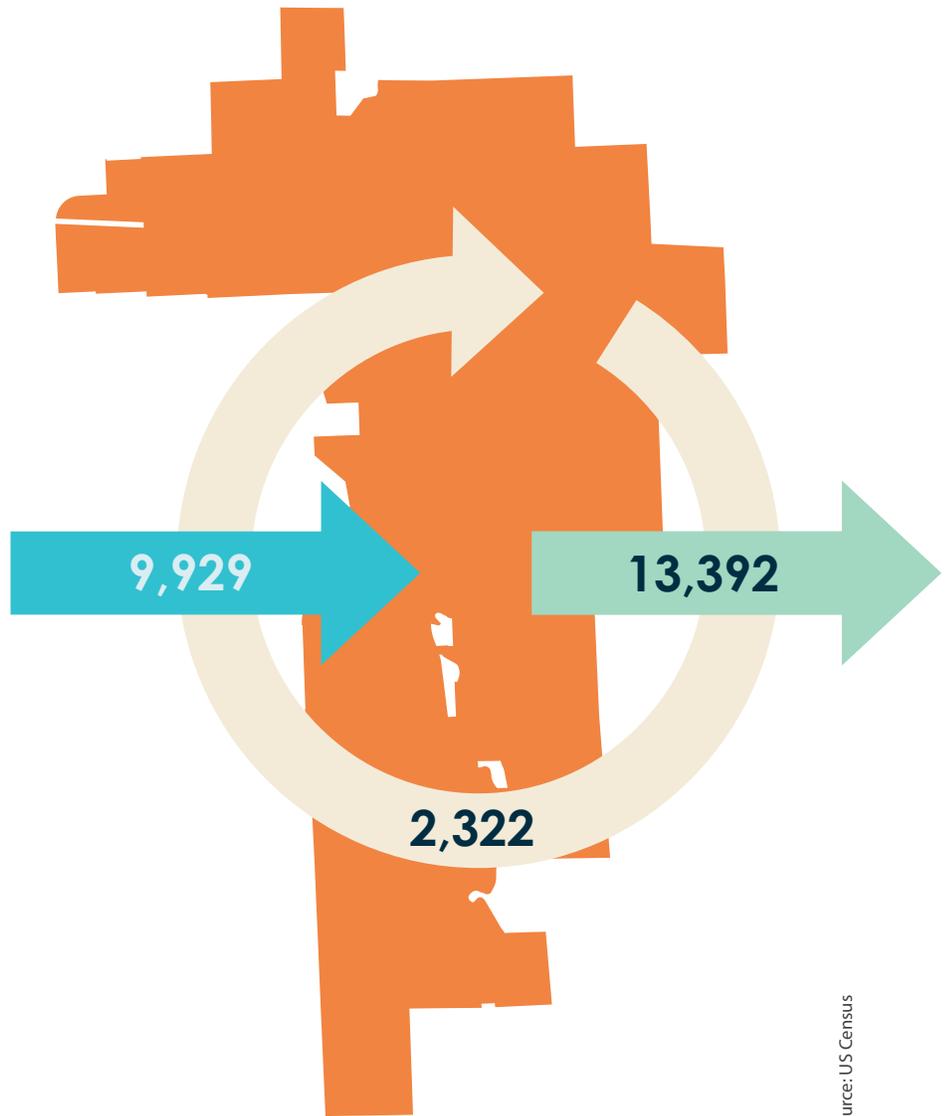
The TDP recommendations for the West Fargo area include a slight shift in Route 16 near Walmart, renumbering it to Route 22, and changing the direction of travel from clockwise to counterclockwise. The recommendations also include the creation of Route 24, which would provide access to the southern portion of West Fargo via 32nd Avenue West on a one-hour headway.

These modest improvements to the fixed route system would provide slightly better transit access for those in West Fargo. However, the long headways and circuitous routes mean that the service may not be attractive to commuters or other choice riders. In order for transit to be a viable option in West Fargo, an efficient and reliable system needs to be available.

► Network Conditions

West Fargo is commonly considered a bedroom community for the City of Fargo. However, the market analysis indicated that more is going on (Figure 5). While more than 13,000 people commute out of West Fargo every day for work, another 10,000 people commute into West Fargo every day. Only about 2,300 people live and work in the city. Addressing this heavy commute pattern will help to relieve vehicle congestion and prevent overbuilding infrastructure in West Fargo.

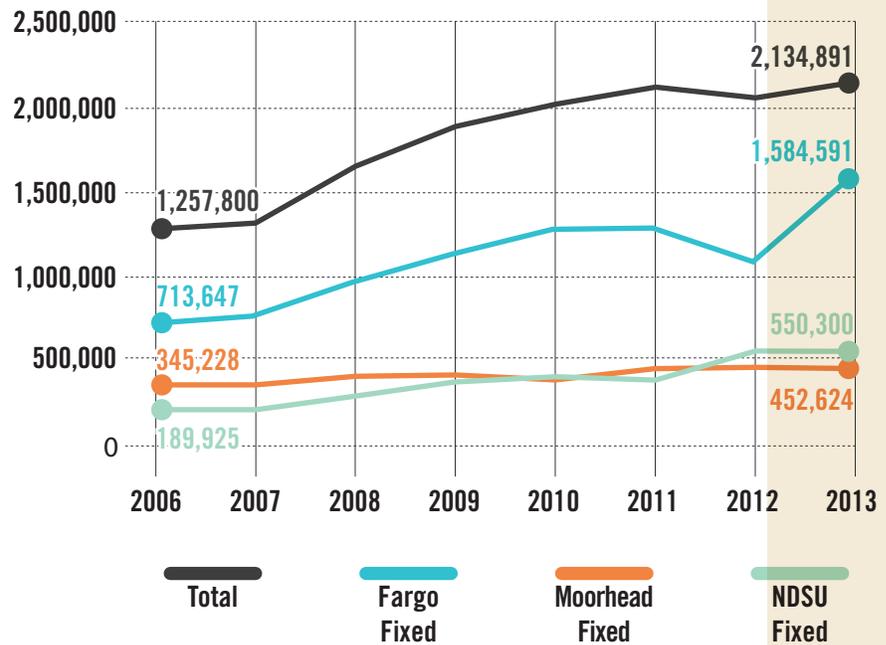
Figure 5: Job circulation around West Fargo



Source: US Census

On the entire MATBUS system, overall ridership has been increasing. Currently, 50 percent of passengers are college students, 28 percent of riders are adults without a fare discount, and 22 percent qualify for discounts (e.g., are disabled, elderly, or children). Adults with no fare discount are the group most likely to include “choice riders,” or people who use transit despite having other transportation options such as driving. Currently, choice riders make up only a small portion of MATBUS’s ridership. To address commute patterns, a transit system needs to attract more choice riders. Another advantage of increasing choice riders is that the system can increase usage, and revenue in high-use areas to subsidize lower use routes that still need to be in operation.

Figure 7. Historic MATBUS Ridership



Source: MATBUS, Metro COG (2014)

Sidewalks and Bikeway Networks

► Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Context

Two regional planning documents provide the context for sidewalks and bikeways in the West Fargo comprehensive plan. In 2010, Metro COG, along with stakeholders, adopted a complete streets policy statement for the metro area. The statement suggests that [emphasis added]:

Complete Streets is an on-going and comprehensive planning, design, construction, and operations process, with a long-range perspective, aimed at improving safety, usability, and quality of life. By embracing Complete Streets, Metro COG seeks to plan and program public rights of way that fully integrate and balance the needs of all street users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, commercial vehicles, emergency services vehicles and passenger vehicles. Users of all ages and abilities will be considered.

In February 2017, Metro COG adopted a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Fargo-Moorhead metro. This plan puts forward 11 goals for the metro region [emphasis added]:

1. Improve connectivity of the regional bicycle and pedestrian network
2. Continue / increase maintenance efforts on regional bicycle and pedestrian network
3. Improve safety of the regional bicycle and pedestrian network
4. Educate motorists, pedestrians, and bicycle users regarding rules of the road, and safety
5. Promote bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel for both recreation and transportation purposes
6. Improve bikeability/walkability within region
7. Encourage ongoing enforcement of motorists, bicycle users and pedestrian laws so as to create a safer transportation network
8. Promote safety throughout the region's bicycle and pedestrian network
9. Provide support for existing and proposed laws
10. Evaluate usage of regional bicycle and pedestrian network
11. Ensure equal bicycle and pedestrian opportunities for all

The complete streets statement and the stated goals of the bicycle and pedestrian plan are consistent with the input received during the planning process for this comprehensive plan and align closely with the vision of a healthy and connected West Fargo.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Patterns

The bicycle and pedestrian network in West Fargo suffers from a lack of connectivity. The problem is magnified when traveling by these slower modes. Requiring people to go a mile or two out of their way to reach a busy arterial is annoying for drivers, but it becomes prohibitive for those wishing to travel by foot (Figure 9).

The biggest barrier to network connectivity for all modes in West Fargo is the I-94 freeway. Expanding the number of available crossings for vehicles as well as for pedestrians and bicyclists will help reduce the stress on the existing arterials that now cross it.

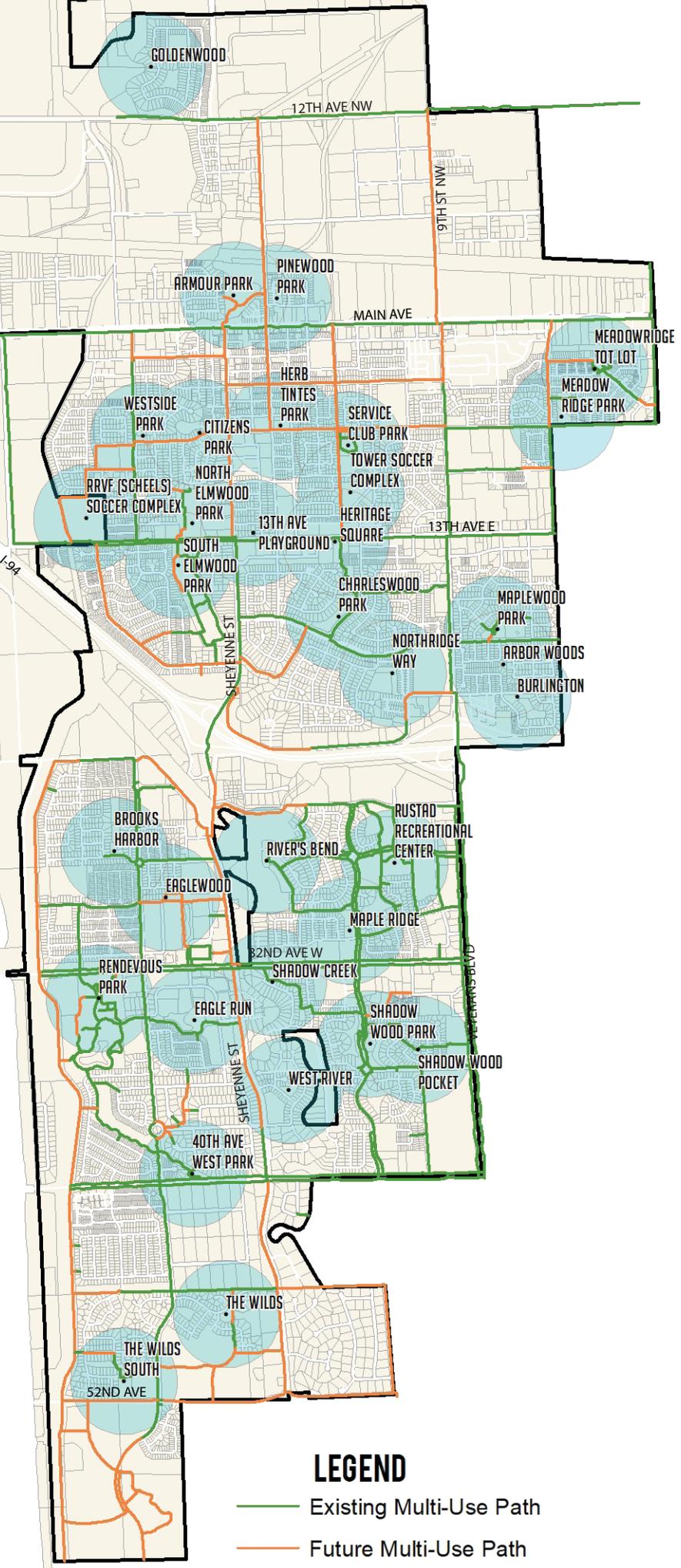
Older neighborhoods with a traditional grid system have more direct connectivity. Newer neighborhoods have a more disconnected network – making it harder to walk or bike to a destination.

Most streets have a sidewalk on at least one side. In newer areas (such as 32nd Ave E), the City of West Fargo has included 10-foot shared use paths along one side of arterials, and a sidewalk on the other as they are reconstructed. Field visits during the planning process revealed all types of West Fargo residents, including families with children, use the shared use paths for recreation and transportation. The distinction between sidewalk and shared use path is important because the city has an ordinance prohibiting people over the age of 12 from riding a bicycle on the sidewalk.

As shown in Map 2, the density of parks in West Fargo is very good, and most homes fall within a short straight-line distance from a green space or park facility. However, the existing network conditions mean that walking distances to some parks are longer than people are willing to walk. This results in people driving to parks, which is contrary to the healthy vision of West Fargo.



Map 2. West Fargo park map with walking radius and multi-use path.



LEGEND

- Existing Multi-Use Path
- Future Multi-Use Path

Pedestrian and Bicycle Policy

West Fargo is the only city in the region with a sidewalk-riding ordinance that applies to the entire city. Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth limit sidewalk riding in business districts, where pedestrian activity is higher and takes precedent. The West Fargo ordinance states:

People bicycling are not allowed to ride on any sidewalk unless under the age of 12, supervising a rider under 12, or delivering newspapers. Also, people bicycling are not allowed to ride on the sidewalk of a business district or on a sidewalk if it is part of an underpass regardless of age (Ord. 131818).

Separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic in high traffic areas, such as downtowns, is important. However, the blanket prohibition of bicycling on any sidewalk significantly limits the network available to bicyclists that are less comfortable riding with traffic. Comfort is a significant factor for bicyclists and pedestrians. A healthy, family-friendly city should provide spaces for all residents, even children over the age of 12, to comfortably ride their bikes to their destinations. Figure 8 provides an illustration of the different types of bicyclist that planners typically discuss. West Fargo's network should accommodate all of these users.

In addition, the city has recently started incorporating shared use paths on one side of the right of way as roads in the southern part of town are expanded. These facilities offer a lower-stress option for people to travel by bicycle or walk that are behind the curb and typically separated from the roadway by a landscaped boulevard space. Shared use paths are a common treatment in suburban areas where non-motorized volumes are low, and can provide the minimum connectivity along busy, high-speed arterials.

However as shown in Figure 9, not all drivers in West Fargo understand the distinction between a shared use path where biking by adults is allowed, and a sidewalk, where it is not. A revision to the sidewalk-riding ordinance, as well as driver education efforts may help address this issue.

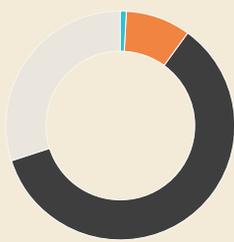


Figure 8. Range of bicyclist types and comfort levels

1% Experienced and Confident
 9% Casual and Somewhat Confident
 60% Interested but Concerned



Source: Dill, J., McNeil, N. (2012). Four Types of Cyclists? Examining a Typology to Better Understand Bicycling Behavior and Potential.

Figure 9. Input on the sidewalk-riding ordinances.

BIKE LANE
 PEOPLE RIDE BICYCLES IN A DEDICATED LANE,
 SEPARATED FROM TRAFFIC BY A PAINTED STRIP
- That's what sidewalks are for!

Public Input on Walking and Biking

Those spoken to at the planning activities all indicated that they typically travel by driving alone. But, given a comfortable route and good weather, 45 percent would be willing to walk 10-15 minutes - about 1/2 mile at a comfortable walking pace. One-third of respondents indicated they'd be willing to walk more than 15 minutes, given the right conditions.

Attendees were also asked to rank their comfort level on a variety of bikeway and walkway conditions. Figure 10 shows that a separated bike lane, with a buffer space between the bikeway and the roadway, was considered the most comfortable. Similarly, Figure 11 shows that a sidewalk with a buffer from the roadway was considered the most comfortable.

Interestingly, for both walking and biking, people did not consider the shared use path to be the most comfortable. Due to the speed differential between bicyclists (typically 8-14 mph) and walkers (typically 2-4 mph), sharing a space can be stressful for all users. In areas where bicycle and pedestrian volumes are very low, this type of shared facility may be acceptable, but as volumes increase, separation becomes more important.



Figure 10. Bikeway comfort-level scores

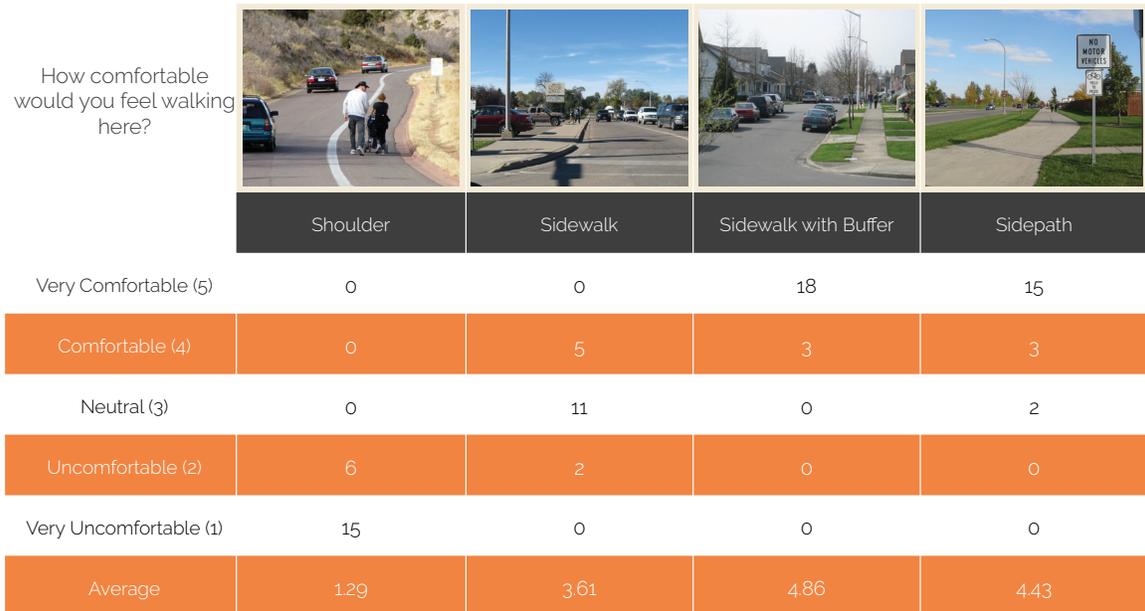


Figure 11. Walkway comfort-level scores

Photo Credit: All photos provided by Toole Design Group (TDG)

Safety

In Cass County, there were more than 15,000 crashes from 2008 to 2012. This included 157 fatal or serious injury crashes, an average of 31 per year. Of the 11,644 crashes in the county that were classified as occurring in an urban area, 31 percent occurred on a road classified as a minor arterial.

These “in between” roads can be the most challenging for drivers to navigate, which is typical for cities of this size. Roadway designs and visual cues from land uses may imply a higher speed, lower complexity environment. However, minor arterials are also roads most often used by pedestrians and bicyclists because they include destina-

tions like homes or businesses, generating both vehicle turning movements and attracting non-motorized users.

► Walking and Biking Crashes

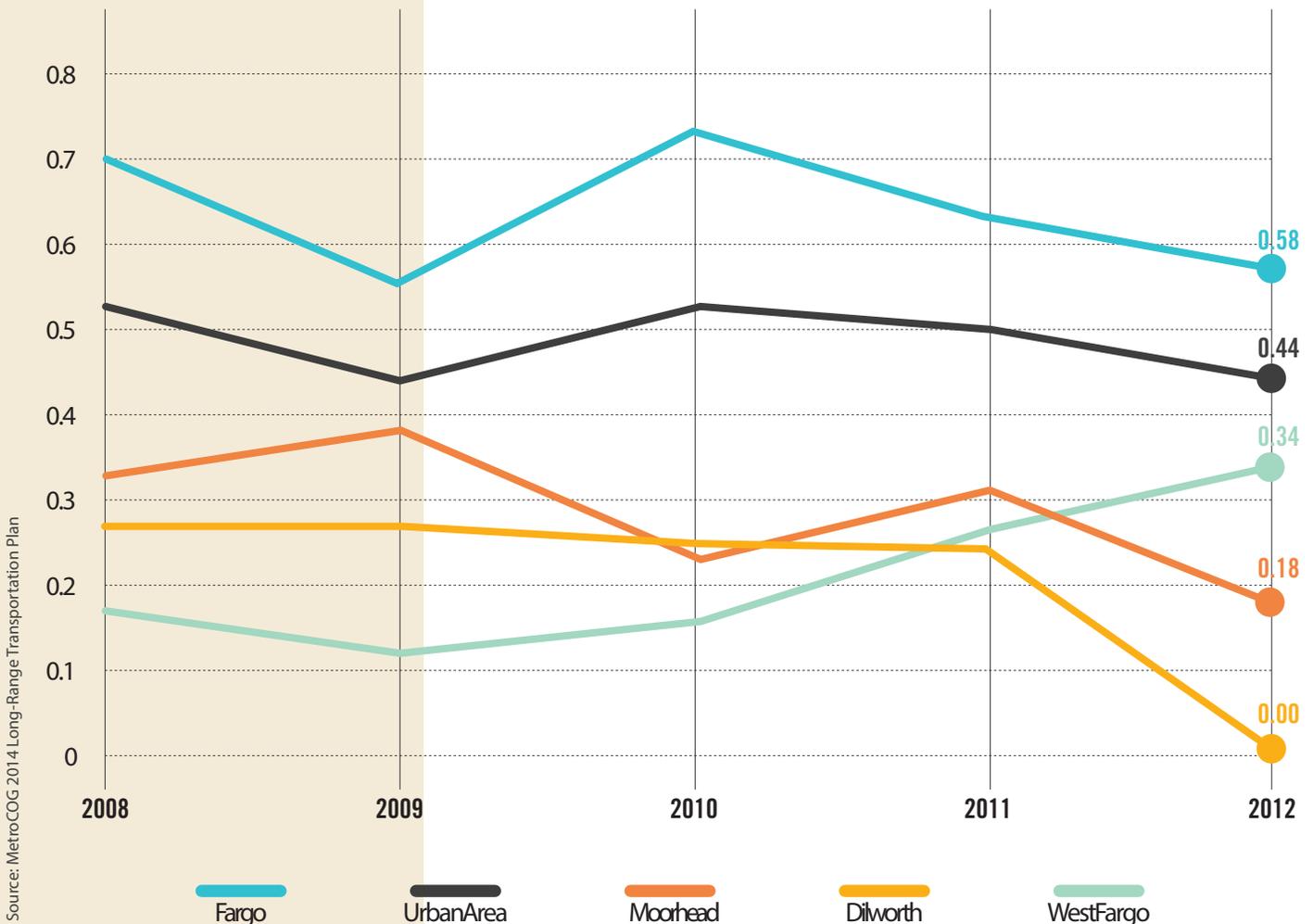
The Metro COG bicycle and pedestrian plan includes a detailed crash analysis for bicycle- and pedestrian-involved crashes in the metro region. From 2011 to 2015, there were 72 crashes involving pedestrians and 115 involving bicyclists. These crashes included two fatalities.

For both modes, the majority of the crashes occurred during daylight hours – 60 percent for pedestri-

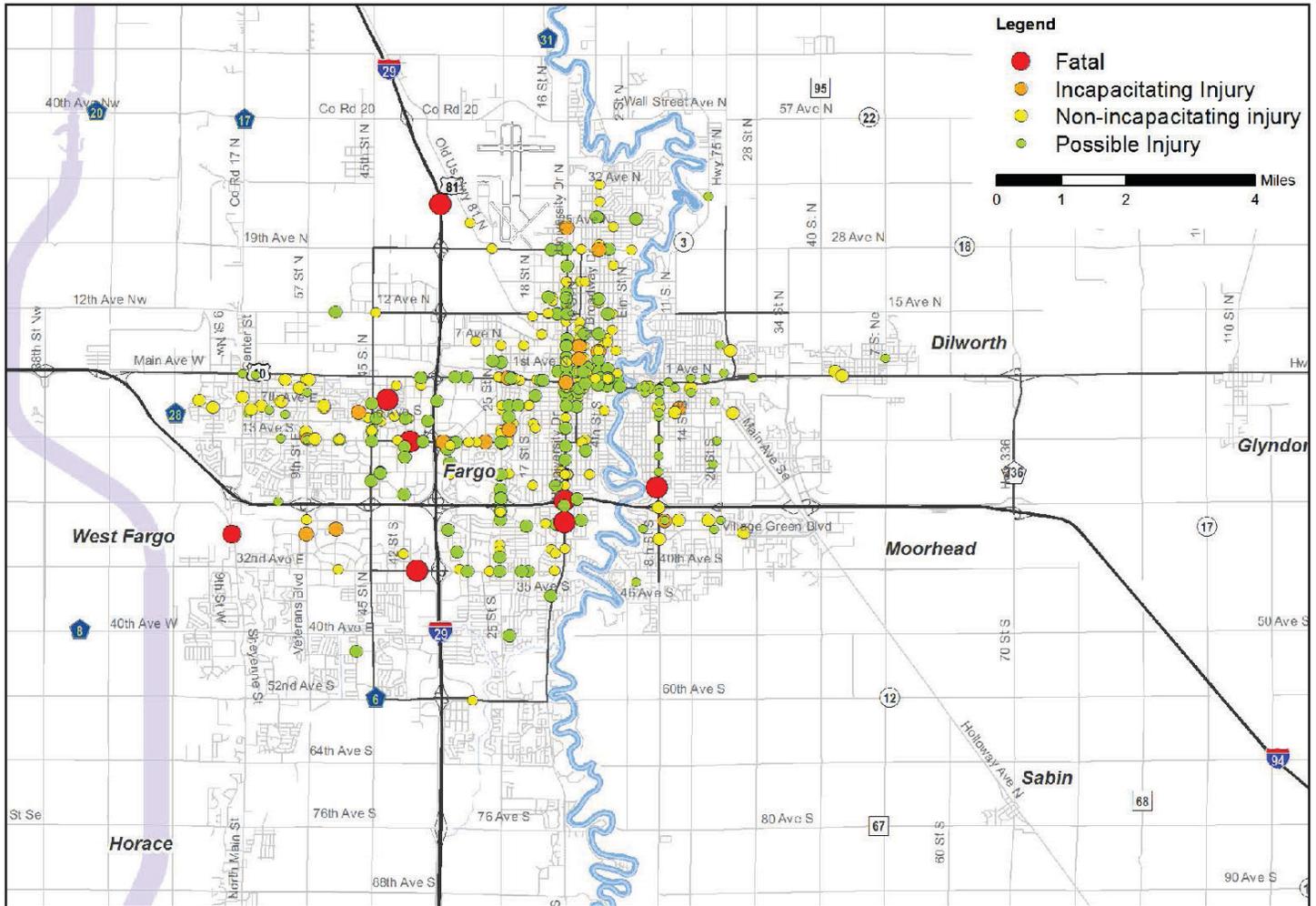
ans and 83 percent for bicyclists. In these cases, visibility was likely not an issue, so recommendations beyond wearing bright colors or adding lights to a bicycle are warranted. Rather, infrastructure, design solutions and improved signage that aim to reduce vehicle speeds and provide separate spaces by mode are needed to reduce these types of crashes.

Currently in West Fargo, pedestrian and bicycle crashes per 1,000 residents is lower than neighboring Fargo (Figure 12). However, Fargo’s crashes per capita are decreasing and West Fargo’s are increasing. The following graph illustrates these trends.

Figure 12. Bicycle crash rates per 1,000 residents by year



Map 3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Severity (2011-2015)



Source: MetroCOG 2014 Long-Range Transportation Plan

Map 3 shows the locations and severity of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. The fatal and incapacitating injuries are concentrated on higher traffic and higher speed roadways. It can be difficult to identify specific geographic areas where safety countermeasures should be concentrated, however roadway characteristics are a strong indicator of vulnerability.

In 2014, the Metro COG adopted the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Fargo-Moorhead region. This plan provides the framework for prioritizing transportation investments and is the primary context for the street- and parking-related recommendations in the West Fargo comprehensive plan. Projects in the LRTP are evaluated based on their ability to meet the following goals:

01. Maintain the existing transportation system
02. Improve the efficiency, performance and connectivity of a balanced transportation system
03. Maximize the cost effectiveness of transportation
04. Promote consistency between land use and transportation plans to enhance mobility and accessibility
05. Provide safe and secure transportation
06. Support economic vitality
07. Protect the environment and conserve resources

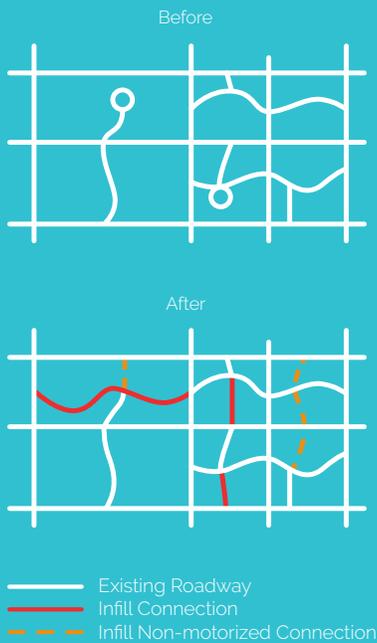
These goals are consistent with the input received during the comprehensive plan planning process and align closely with the vision of a connected West Fargo.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve Network Design

Modifying the existing roadway network during infill development will help reduce the dependence on arterial roadways. This is one way to address congestion issues, to date, have been studied using conventional traffic engineering approaches. Infill network designs are another tool the City of West Fargo should add to the toolbox. These types of infill projects would most likely occur in commercial or industrial areas, because adjustments to residential neighborhood circulation patterns may prove more challenging. In areas where the roadway network creates circuitous paths for walkers and bikers, the city should continue to implement bicycle and pedestrian only connections. Figure 13 illustrates an example of network infill.

Figure 13. Network infill



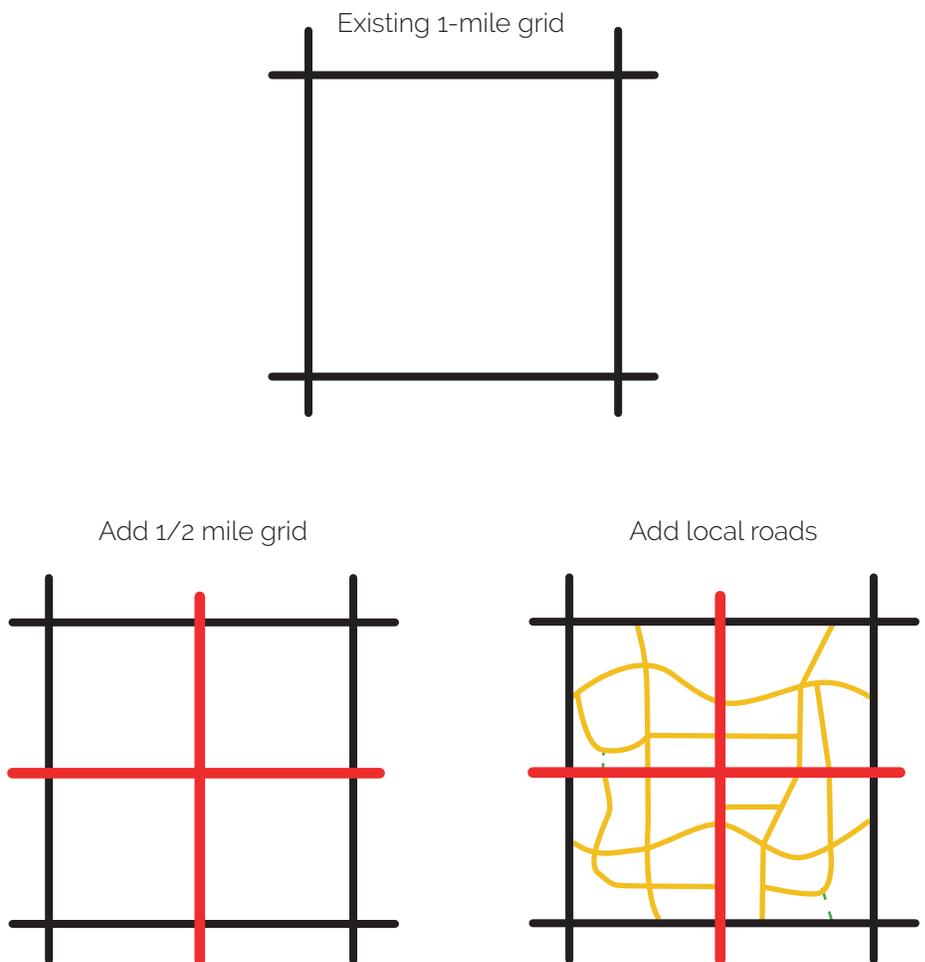
Assuming the construction of the FM Area Diversion Project, the area west of I-94 may open for future development. Building on a potential I-94 crossing on 13th Avenue West, it is critical that a strong network be built to support development in these areas. A one-mile grid of roads is already in place. Rather than allowing developers to decide the roadway system, the City of West Fargo should be deliberate in the development of a new network.

As shown in Figure 14, a continuous one-mile and half-mile grid is crit-

ical to overall circulation. Then, as smaller, local roads are added, they should also be as connected as possible, with multiple connections to the one-mile and half-mile roads.

A perfectly square grid is not required in every neighborhood - curvilinear streets can still be effective if the connectivity is still achieved. Some developers may be motivated to keep cul-de-sacs in their designs, however they counter the objective of having neighborhoods supported with multiple connections to the larger network.

Figure 14. Building a strong network



Improve Parking Design

Parking supply is not a major issue in West Fargo. Most homes have garages, or at a minimum, off-street parking. Residential areas have plenty of on-street space available for “party parking” (i.e., overflow parking). The big-box retail area parking lots are designed to accommodate peak holiday shopping volumes and are underutilized during most of the year. The only commercial area with on-street parking is Sheyenne Street in downtown West Fargo. However, most current land uses already include off-street parking, some in front of the building, so the on-street parking is currently redundant.

The 2011 Downtown Framework Study suggests moving off-street parking behind the buildings as re-development occurs. In this case, on-street parking in this area may become more attractive, especially for businesses that depend on high park-

ing turnover – such as drug stores, dry cleaners, and coffee shops. Because West Fargo has ample parking, the city may want to consider the benefits of reducing parking in some areas. For example, removing on street parking in places where it is underutilized can free up right of way to be used for sidewalk buffers, or bicycle facilities. One way to re-imagine the space typically reserved for on-street parking is by piloting a parklet demonstration project.

Another area where parking reduction could lead to benefits is land utilization. For instance, in communities where zoning code requires parking to accommodate the highest use days of the year (i.e., Black Friday), the parking lots lie dormant the rest of the year. The City of West Fargo could examine zoning codes and consider revisions so developers can

maximize land use without being restricted by high parking minimums. Finally, there are often adjacent land uses that have inverted parking patterns. A good example is a business that is only open during the weekdays, and a church that is only open on the weekends. Shared parking can be a way to encourage more intense land uses and encourage economic development by reducing the amount of unused parking.

As previously described, many people who live in West Fargo work elsewhere and people who work in West Fargo commute from outside the community. This pattern creates unnecessary vehicle travel, and contributes to the lack of a sense of community. Rather than simply focusing on the number of vehicles on the road, it is important to look at the bigger picture of travel patterns.

Enhanced Transit Access to Fargo

Heavy commuting patterns lend themselves well to transit-oriented development. If large portions of the West Fargo population are traveling to Fargo at the same time every day, high-quality transit between the two cities may provide an alternative to driving. Travel time is a significant factor for commuters, and local transit routes are usually not competitive with driving. Express buses with limited stops are a good way to entice commuters into using transit.



Housing and Land Use Policy

In addition to the commute from West Fargo to Fargo, almost 10,000 people drive into West Fargo every day for work. These commuters are drawn by the industrial jobs in West Fargo and are an important part of the regional workforce. Land use and housing policies that encourage the construction of affordable housing can result in fewer cars on the roads, and increasing the number of people who walk or bike for their commute.

Co-working Space

As communication technology continues to improve, the need for employees to be present in the office every day is not as great as it was 50 years ago. Co-working spaces, also known as shared offices are flexible spaces that allow off-site employees a more office-like environment as an alternative to working from home. They can also serve as incubators for independent, startup and small businesses – growing West Fargo's economy and providing more employment opportunities in town.



Travel Demand Management

Travel demand management (TDM) strategies are policies and programs aimed at redistributing travel demand outside the peak hour. For example, carpooling is a simple alternative to driving alone. A carpool incentive program would likely need to be implemented at the regional level, so that commuters to/from all communities could be engaged. These

programs include designated parking lots in which carpool participants meet, priority lanes on freeways and on-ramps, and parking discounts in the central business district. Employer-based programs such as staggered shift start and flexible work hours are also effective TDM strategies.



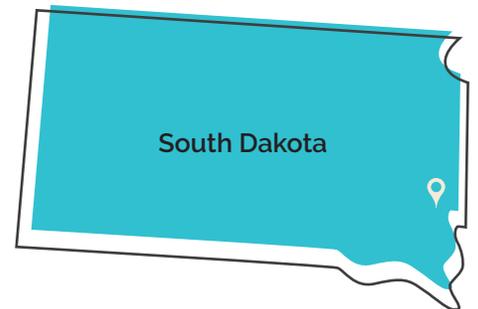
Adopt Citywide Complete Streets Policy

Generally, the purpose of a complete streets policy is to make sure no transportation modes are ignored and all street users are accommodated fairly.

Complete streets encourage projects that have slower traffic speeds, more and higher-quality bicycle infrastructure, and safer street and intersection designs that benefit walking and biking conditions. Many smaller cities have had success in developing and implementing complete streets, including Albert Lea, Minnesota, a city with a

population around 18,000. Albert Lea passed a complete streets subdivision requirement in 2009 that supports more walking and biking. In total, more than 1,000 cities across the country have already adopted complete streets policies, pledging to equally consider all modes of transportation in street design projects. Examples of communities near West Fargo with complete streets policies include:

- Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Pipestone, Minnesota
- Worthington, Minnesota
- Lincoln, Nebraska
- Fergus Falls, Minnesota
- Battle Lake, Minnesota
- Austin, Minnesota
- Albert Lea, Minnesota



The City of West Fargo, in keeping in line with the plan's vision and goals, and the work of Metro COG, should consider developing and adopting its own complete streets policy. A strong complete streets policy includes:

- A purpose and vision for the policy, including how and why the community wants to develop complete streets.
- A comprehensive approach that includes all users and is applicable on all streets.
- Community input to guide the planning process.
- Guidance for both new and retrofit street design projects.
- Tailored solutions that complement the existing conditions and the context in the community.
- Specific next steps for policy implementation, including planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance.
- Exceptions to the policy that are clear and require a procedure for approval.
- Performance standards and measurable outcomes to allow for evaluation of completed projects.

The implementation of a complete streets policy is more likely to be successful when the policy is integrated into other city documents, plans, procedures, or processes. The City of West Fargo should review the elements of typical roadway design projects, and ensure that they support the complete streets policy. For example, engineering standards are often the default reference for roadway projects, and should be flexible and supportive of design approaches that balance the needs of bicyclists with other modes of transportation. Similarly, corridor studies (as referenced earlier in this chapter) should include multi-modal evaluation.

Address Major Barriers to Non-motorized Connectivity

I-94 is a barrier to vehicle travel, but it is an even bigger barrier to travel for walkers and bikers. Figure 18 shows two potential locations for additional non-motorized only crossings of the freeway. In areas where the roadway network creates circuitous paths for walkers and bikers,

the city should consider making bicycle and pedestrian-only connections. Figure 15 shows an example of this type of retrofit connection.

The 4th Street East corridor is a good example of a route that could be improved for non-motorized use. Al-

though this area of West Fargo has a more complete network, the drain along this corridor does not support cars, but could support a trail. Extending the sidewalks along Fourth Street East to a pedestrian bridge over I-94 that connects to Beaton Drive would provide connectivity.

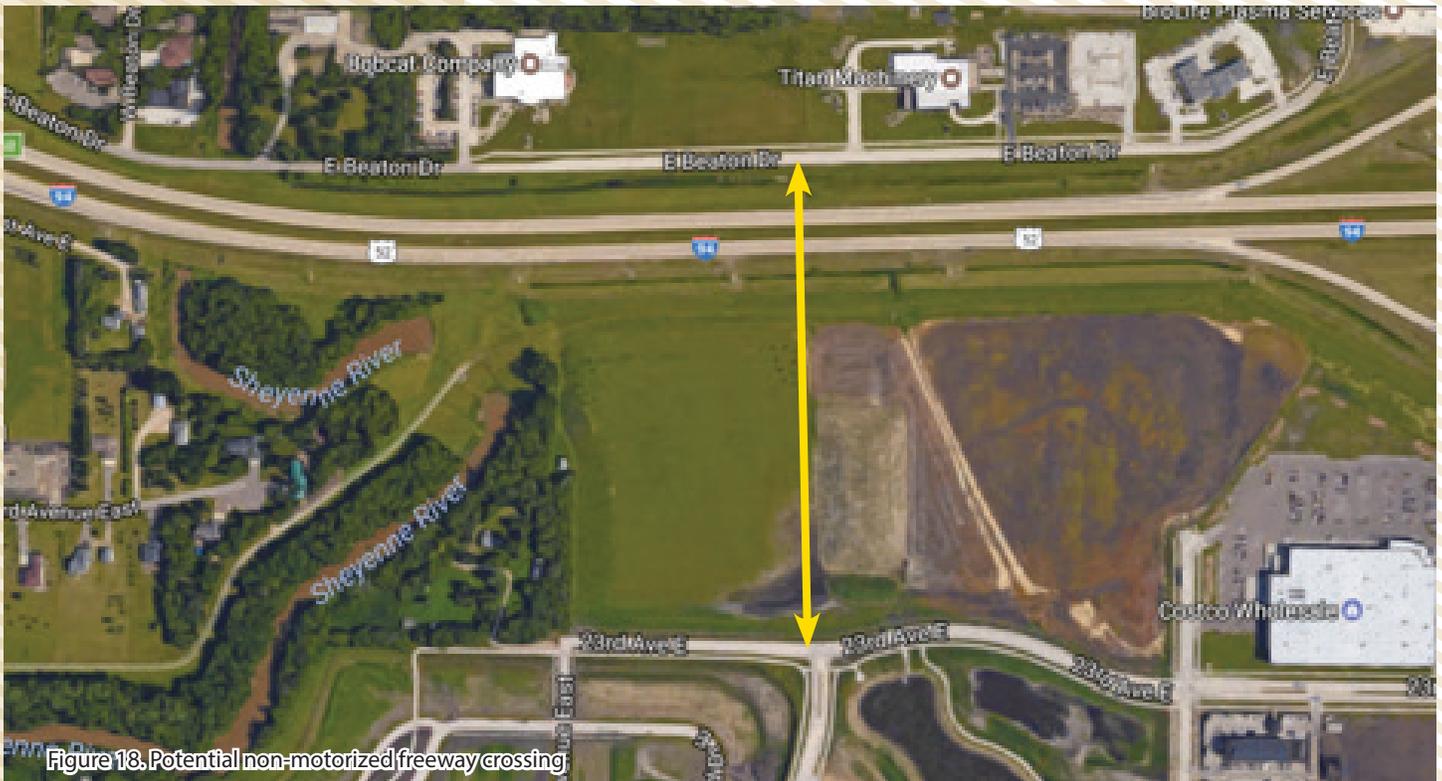


Figure 18. Potential non-motorized freeway crossing



Figure 15. An example of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge connection from Carmell Place to 66th Street, connecting residents to neighborhoods across the Sheyenne River. Driving would require a longer trip.

Implement Safe Routes to School Program

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is designed to encourage walking and biking as a mode of transportation for children. Learning how to travel this way at a young age makes people more likely to do it later in life. SRTS plans are a great way to start or grow a SRTS program. SRTS plans are comprehensive school travel plans created for schools to evaluate existing conditions and

make an action plan for future work. Some plans focus on one school, while others focus on a school district.

The planning process begins by working with the local SRTS team to evaluate conditions through walking audits, parent surveys and hand tallies. At the end of the planning process an action plan is developed to guide the SRTS work at

the school. The action plan includes long- and short-term goals, and includes implementation goals of infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Another key piece of the planning process is outreach to stakeholders throughout the school year; including parents, students, teachers and other local partners.

Improve Safety for All Modes Via Vision Zero Program

West Fargo currently experiences occasional traffic-related fatalities and more frequent serious injuries. In general, these preventable incidents take place along the community's busiest streets. Communities across the world are beginning to implement a Vision Zero program, which aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. This is accomplished by prioritizing safety over speed and convenience.

In addition to continuing to implement safety improvements to reduce

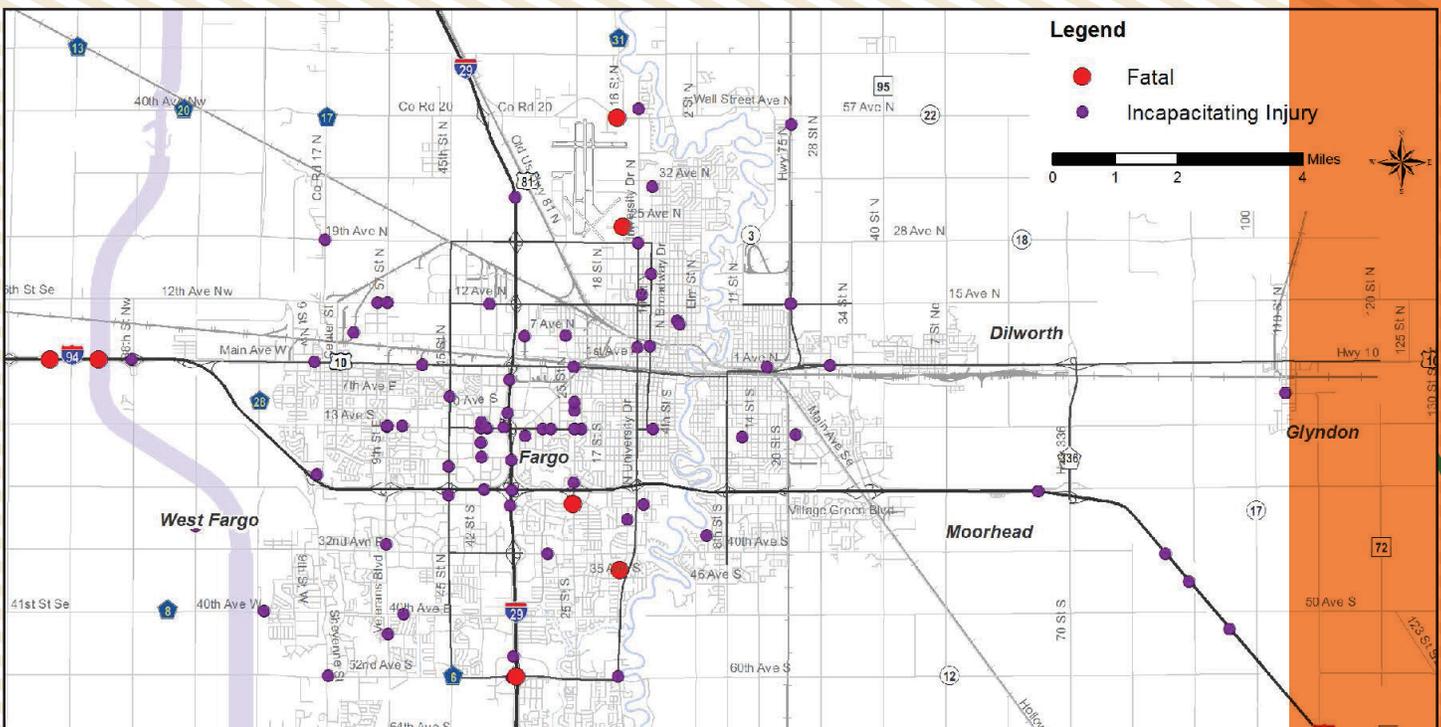
and eliminate transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries, the City of West Fargo should consider adopting a vision zero plan. Strong Vision Zero plans examine areas of high crashes and identify strategies to address systemic safety issues. Components may include:

- Targeted crash analysis
- Policy analysis
- Rapid response/design
- Evaluation and guidance

Figure 20 comes from the Metro COG LRTP. West Fargo should consider using ND DOT data to produce a 10-year chart (i.e., trend line) for fatalities and serious injuries, so that the city has a way to measure progress toward reduction. This is one way in which West Fargo can integrate some aspects of Vision Zero into programmed projects.

The State of North Dakota has a vision zero program in place. For more information visit: <https://visionzero.nd.gov/>

Map 4: Locations of fatal and serious injury crashes (2011-2013)



Source: MetroCOG 2014 Long-Range Transportation Plan

PROVIDE RELIABLE SERVICES AND MUNICIPAL TRANSPARENCY



Governments have certain responsibilities to construct, operate, maintain and replace community facilities and services to keep pace with existing and future development patterns. Some infrastructure categories are planned and funded solely by the City of West Fargo. Others operate as enterprise funds that sets rates and plans capital improvements. Some infrastructure categories — like roads and transit service

— also rely on state and federal funding for planning and implementation.

The type, location and capacity of infrastructure in the community is critical to the city's abilities to grow and develop in relation to the Deferred Development and Growth Map, and its desire to offer a high quality-of-life for West Fargo residents. Service delivery is also critical to managing the cost and timing of needed im-

provements, which can dramatically impact property owners because of the special assessment system used to allocate project costs over time.

A description of community facilities and services provided in West Fargo follows, including those provided by outside partners that residents, businesses and visitors use to meet their daily needs.

Water System

The water system generally consists of a raw water intake, water treatment plant, pressure zones, water storage tanks, and water pipes that deliver drinking water to customers. In 2015, the City of West Fargo partnered with the City of Fargo to share resources and provide water to West Fargo residents and businesses.

Under the agreement, the City of West Fargo purchases 1 million gallons per day (MGD) from the City of Fargo. Fargo also purchased or built most of the equipment and infrastructure needed to connect the two systems at multiple locations. The City of West Fargo is still responsible for their system of pressure zones, water storage tanks, and water pipes serving its residents and businesses. Four water towers and several lift stations and main loops in the city were built to complete the new regional water system. A fifth water tower is also planned to maintain required water pressures for the system.

The City of Fargo Water Treatment Plant is designed and permitted for 30.0 million gallons per day (MGD), and agreements between the two cities anticipate capacity that exists for both areas to continue growing and developing long into the future.

Sewer System

The sewer system in West Fargo consists of collection mains, lift stations, and a series of municipal lagoons. The lagoons currently represent a multi-pond stabilization system — approximately 520 acres in size using eight different ponds — near the intersection of 12th Avenue NW and 14th Street NW.

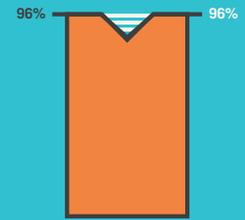
Normal operation of the lagoon system generates odors from time to time as temperatures warm, algae grows and hydrogen sulfide is released into the air. Unfortunately, it is a 'heavy gas' that stays close to the ground, and thus impacts wider areas as winds push the odors around the city. Odors from the lagoons are monitored by the North Dakota Department of Health, and to date, they have never registered a reading high enough to pose a health concern for the community. However, several participants in the planning process for the comprehensive plan cited odors from the lagoon system as a detriment to their quality-of-life.

The city recently entered into an agreement with the City of Fargo for connection to their wastewater treatment plant. This option was studied with three others and found to be the most cost-effective of all alternatives. Having the City of Fargo manage the wastewater also allows the City of West Fargo to decommission the municipal lagoon system, which would eventually help eliminate odors each spring and open up land for development.

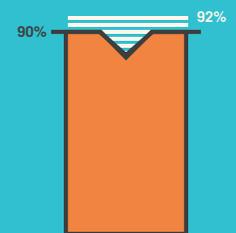
LIVABILITY MEASURES

SCHOOL

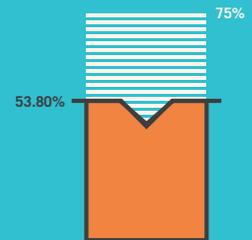
District Attendance Rate



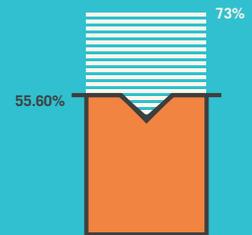
District Graduation Rate



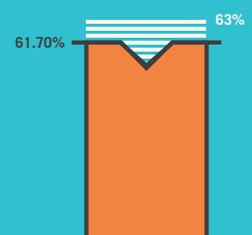
NDSA Scores - Math



NDSA Scores - English



NDSA Scores - Science

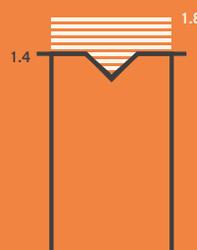


■ BENCHMARK ■ TARGET

LIVABILITY MEASURES

POLICE

Number of Sworn Officers per 1,000 Residents



Sanitation

The City of West Fargo provides solid waste collection throughout the community. Residential curbside pickup is provided on a weekly basis. Multifamily and non-residential uses (i.e., dumpster service) are also served by the city. A transfer station located at 1620 W. Main Avenue accepts building materials, wood, dry-wall, furniture, metals, tires, appliances (for a fee) and regular waste.

The city contracts with Waste Management, Inc. for single-stream, curbside recycling in residential neighborhoods. The program is very popular throughout the community and participation is high at this time. Recycling receptacles are provided in two city locations for multifamily residents or businesses that want to participate. Compost can be dropped off at one of four locations in the city. The current compost program, and residents' participation in it, is relatively low at this time.

Most solid waste collected in the city is sent to the City of Fargo landfill, with the exception of some 'inert materials' that are stored at the City of West Fargo landfill on 26th Street NW. The Fargo facility accepts residential and commercial trash and construction debris and demolition materials. Based on current service demands, the City of Fargo landfill is estimated to have sufficient capacity for future years.

Forestry

The city's forestry division is responsible for promoting and maintaining a healthy urban forest, which improves the visual interest and environmental quality of West Fargo. Generally speaking, few trees have been planted in the city to date. Those that have been planted are varieties susceptible to disease and insects. GIS data for city limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction east of the proposed FM Area Diversion Project estimates approximately 2.7 percent of the planning area is covered by tree canopy.

Plans, programs and funds are being used now to diversify tree species planted in the city — those more appropriate for cold climates and disease resistant — and increase overall tree counts in the city, especially in parks and along streets. City staff are completing a condition assessments to prioritize future work and investments.

There are several opportunities throughout the city to increase tree canopy on public property: life stations, ponds, bike paths and street corridors. These areas are great opportunities to increase the number of trees, improve species diversity, and showcase some areas of the city. The city also has a street tree program encouraging private property owners to plant trees along boulevard throughout the community following a specific set of guidelines in order to ensure safety and proper planting.

Recognizing that the preservation of existing trees and the planning of new trees can significantly impact quality of life for residents, the city has landscaping regulations in place in its zoning regulations. The standards regulate trees species, how and where trees can be planted.

Police Protection

The City of West Fargo provides police protection from its headquarters in City Hall. Forty-nine sworn officers, 12 civilian staff, and five volunteers serve the department in one of three divisions: administration, investigation and patrol. The police department also sponsors several programs aimed at building community, increasing crime awareness, and improving citizen-police relations to the city; including Citizen's Police Academy, Crime-Free Multi Housing Program, Explorers program for young adults, Coffee with a Cop and Night to Unite. There are more than four school resource officers. Three officers in the police department also serve on the Red River Valley SWAT Team.

Resources of the police department were used to respond to 23,449 calls for service in 2015. Circumstances at those calls resulted in 599 investigation cases; 647 parking tickets; 3,622 traffic citations; and 2,154 arrests.

Fire Protection

The West Fargo Fire Department is autonomous from the City of West Fargo, but very important to its residents and business owners. It contracts annually with the city to provide fire protection services with resources from two facilities, central station located at 106 First St. and southside station located at 445 29th Ave. W. Each station supports a "first run" engine company and rescue truck for emergency medical calls. The central station also supports a tower ladder truck, brush truck, and a tanker. The southside station also supports a battalion chief truck, tanker and brush truck. Twenty-two volunteers report to Central Station. Fourteen full-time firefighters and twenty-two volunteers report to southside station. The city district for the fire department maintains an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 4 for the entire service area.

Resources of the fire department were used to respond to 334 fire protection and rescue calls in 2015. The Department also has mutual aid agreements with other fire departments in Cass County and Minnesota.

The West Fargo Fire Department's 2016 Strategic Plan identified increased traffic congestion and the expanding footprint of the city as challenges for maintaining consistent response times, both in terms of station to incident and volunteers-to-incident conditions. Both conditions were cited as causes for inconsistent call response times, and inconsistent personnel on site. Fire officials have enacted a sweeping change, creating a hybrid full-time/volunteer system, whereby single engine calls for service (car fires, medical calls, service calls) are handled with full time engine crew of four and a battalion chief. Eight additional volunteers respond to all first-alarm calls for service with the full-time engine crew and battalion chief. In the case of a second alarm or greater calls, an additional 45 off-duty and volunteer firefighters can respond to the scene.

Stormwater Management

The City of West Fargo's storm sewer system drains into the Sheyenne River, and its performance has a direct influence on the natural environment and the likelihood that homes or properties may flood in the future. Impervious surfaces — roads, parking lots, building rooftops, etc. — interfere with the ability of rain water to soak into the ground. Stormwater run-off from a rain event travels quickly across impervious surfaces, picking up pollutants, and carrying them to the city's storm sewer system or directly to nearby lakes and rivers. The simultaneous increase in both water quantity and suspended water pollutants leads to stream erosion and degraded water quality.

Federal mandates in the Clean Water Act require cities to obtain permits to meet National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, including a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Phase II Permit and strategies to address combined sewer overflow (CSO) occurrences. Specifically, the NPDES MS4 Phase II Program requires West Fargo address six minimum criteria:

1. [Public education and outreach](#)
2. [Public participation and involvement](#)
3. [Illicit discharge and detection](#)
4. [Construction site run-off](#)
5. [Post construction run-off control](#)
6. [Pollution prevention and good housekeeping](#)

The City of West Fargo treats stormwater management as an opportunity to increase property values, create scenic views, manage flood events, and attract wildlife. Stormwater management standards, best management practices, contractor requirements, perimeter controls, etc. are all enforced by the city for new residential and non-residential developments.

Public Library

The West Fargo Public Library recognizes that a fast-growing, thriving community needs 21st century resources to be a center for learning, culture, and family activities. Unfortunately, the library's facilities are currently too small to meet demand, and the location is not optimal for providing resources to the community-as-a-whole. Improvements to the library and its resources will require partnerships with the City of West Fargo, local businesses, local schools, non-profit agencies, and individual residents.

A library board, department staff and volunteer team support a variety of activities, including a summer reading program, senior citizen program, baby bags for new parents, a historical archive, pre-school story time, technology classes, and adult book clubs.

The library will continue to be a resource as the city grows, and the services provided should be expanded to meet the needs of its patrons (either on site or through distance-learning). City officials should consider building a main library campus, and one or more smaller 'learning centers' throughout the community.

Public Schools

The West Fargo Public School District is autonomous from the City of West Fargo but very important to its residents. The school system includes 20 facilities serving residents throughout the city: Aurora Elementary, Eastwood Elementary, Horace Elementary, Legacy Elementary, Westside Elementary, Brooks Harbor Elementary, Freedom Elementary, Independence Elementary, Osgood Elementary, Clayton A. Lodoen Kindergarten Center, Harwood Elementary, L.E. Berger Elementary, South Elementary, Cheney Miccle School, Liberty Middle School, West Fargo High School, Sheyenne High School, Community High School, West Fargo Sports Arena and Hulbert Aquatic Center. Total enrollment in the schools was 10,573 for the 2017-18 school year. School officials anticipate enrollment in all grade levels to 12, 736 by 2024.

The school district completed a long range facilities plan in 2015 to start meeting anticipated demands. Projects in Phase 1 of the plan were approved by voters via referendum in the same year. Participants at Planapalooza continually ranked the school system as one of the biggest contributors to residents' high quality of life.

Continued coordination between the city and school district will ensure efficient and high-quality services into the future. Specifically, the timing and location of new development influenced by the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances should be closely coordinated with the district's 2015 long-range facilities plan.

West Fargo Park District

The West Fargo Park District is autonomous from the City of West Fargo, but very important for providing a healthy lifestyle and high quality-of-life for its residents. The district plans, builds and operates its own facilities with approval from the West Fargo Park Board of Commissioners. In some cases, the district partners with West Fargo Public School District to co-locate recreation facilities on school grounds.

A variety of parks and recreation facilities are provided by the district, including parks, indoor and outdoor athletic and recreation facilities, playgrounds, natural green areas, and walking trails. Activities offered by the district address a variety of interests and abilities and special events like dog shows, jamborees, luncheons are held throughout the year. In 2016, nearly 30,000 people participated in one or more of the district's recreation

programs and special events.

In some cases, land for parks and recreation facilities are donated by a developer during the subdivision review process. Or, a cash-in-lieu payment is made to the City of West Fargo to offset impacts to existing parks and recreation facilities. The city then works with the District to identify and program improvements in the same areas where the development(s) paid their fees.

The city should be more active in partnering with the district to define categories of parks provided in the community — regional, community, neighborhood and pocket — and how other improvements like greenways and trails connect parks and neighborhoods. Both groups should also be more proactive in their planning for future parks and recreation facilities in the community.

Table 1. Inventory of Parks and Facilities

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| 500 acres | Parkland |
| 50 miles | Bike Path |
| 31 | Parks |
| 9 | Activity Centers |
| 5 | Warming Houses |
| 30,000 | Visitors |
| 591 | Volunteers |
| 5,467 | Volunteer Hours (2016) |

☒ Important Themes Moving Forward

Data, research and outreach conducted during the Planapalooza™ were captured in a series of themes important for planning and programming future infrastructure. The themes are highlighted in the following pages.



Services in Silos

Several important facilities and services provided in West Fargo are the responsibility of others — parks and recreation, schools, fire protection, and some aspects of water and transportation. Nonetheless, residents and business owners do not realize the collection of service providers operating in the city, and expect everything is well-coordinated and streamlined to manage future growth and development patterns throughout the community.

City officials should work closely with service providers in West Fargo to formalize agreements, protocols, available funding and schedules by service provider as necessary to foster healthy partnerships and better coordinate plans, programs and projects. Mechanisms should be included in each agreement to ensure accountability and commitment to on-time and on-budget completion of projects.

True Cost of Infrastructure

West Fargo has been in a development boom since 2000, more than doubling its population and far outpacing growth in other areas of the metropolitan region. So, how does the city ensure growth does not overwhelm existing or expanding infrastructure? And, how does the city budget for the true costs of infrastructure now and in the future, including construction, operation, maintenance and replacement?

Service providers in West Fargo generally use either district wide tax collections or special assessments to fund new or repair infrastructure such as the construction and replacement components of infrastructure. Projects are identified, planned and programmed using cash reserves, bonds or special assessment revenues that are guaranteed by the district or the benefit area, as appropriate. The timing and amount of expenditures can be unpredictable in a fast-growing community.

Closing Infrastructure Funding Gaps

The “missing middle” infrastructure funding gap in West Fargo focuses on two topics: annual operation and maintenance responsibilities, and capital reserves. Ad valorem tax millage rate adjustments, basically lowering millage rates when property values increase to maintain current tax bills for residents and businesses, reduces the saving power for officials that need to fund budgets for the operation and maintenance of infrastructure. It also reduces abilities of the city to save each year for future infrastructure replacement costs that might eliminate, or at least reduce, the need for expensive and sometimes sudden special assessments.

The city generally uses a portion of annual sales tax revenue and a water and sewer reserve fund to fund construction, operation, maintenance and capital reserves spending. The remaining needs are funded by special assessments. It also has a general fund reserve that could be used, if needed, for expenditures in these categories.

Unfortunately, priorities, targets and policies are not in place to focus maintenance, operation and capital reserve dollars by infrastructure category. The absence of predictability for short- and long-term infrastructure spending creates unwanted confusion about the use of city funds to operate, maintain and save for future infrastructure needs.

Issues surrounding infrastructure deficiencies and expensive, unplanned improvements are exacerbated when decisions are made not to follow the adopted Deferred Development and Growth, especially when moving toward more low-density, single-use and decentralized growth patterns. These patterns are generally more expensive to serve because of expanded service areas. To this end, the city’s planning department should be included in the capital improvement program (CIP) process to ensure future development patterns and intensities are considered when deciding how to make systems more efficient and less costly to build, operate, maintain and replace.

Capital Improvements Plan

The city uses a capital improvements project list to track future projects, their costs, and funding allocations. This list is not a capital improvements plan, which also considers funding categories and a schedule of expenditures for more insight into large and expensive infrastructure projects. The CIP process distributes costly projects over time, protecting the community from abrupt tax increases or special assessments.

By requiring local governments to periodically review their current and potential capital needs, a CIP also improves planning for large projects and protects local government officials from being confronted by a sudden need for an unplanned capital expenditure. Information presented in the document helps decision-makers coordinate improvements for greater efficiency and assess short-term financing requirements in the context of long-term fiscal needs and constraints.

Although a CIP extends over many years, it should be updated annually to reflect progress toward implementation and include more current information for planned expenditures and revenues. In many cases, the first year of the CIP becomes the annual capital budget that is submitted concurrent with the operating budget for consideration. CIPs can also improve a municipality’s bond rating and lower interest costs based on demonstrated prudent fiscal management. Often times, this document becomes the benchmark for the overall fiscal health of the local government.

Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project

The Red River regularly floods and spills into surrounding cities and towns, reaching flood stage in 49 of the last 110 years. In 2008, studies and partner agreements in the region were signed to complete environmental studies, and begin permitting and design processes for a permanent solution to the problem.

The FM Area Diversion Project was the result of the studies and plans started in 2008 to reduce flooding vulnerabilities in the Red River Valley. If built, will The project will extend 36 miles, measure 1,500 feet across and cost \$2.2 billion. The funding will come from federal, state and local resources, and potentially a public-private partnership. The Diversion Board of Authority will oversee the project and work

with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The current alignment for the FM Area Diversion Project will significantly increase the amount of developable land in the extraterritorial area of West Fargo, nearly doubling developable land for the city compared to the current limits. Any outward expansion from the current city limits will have a significant impact on the timing, magnitude and cost of providing infrastructure water, sewer, transportation, schools, parks, police, fire and libraries to new neighborhoods and employment centers. City officials should carefully manage the timing and magnitude of any expansion for city limits to be good stewards of government finances and the impacts of special assessments on nearby property owners.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Formally Adopt an Infrastructure Investment Strategy and Capital Improvements Plan Following Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan

All future land use decisions in the city should maximize market potential in key growth areas on the Deferred Development and Growth Map while leveraging and maximizing the city's investment in infrastructure. This will be done, in part, by preparing an infrastructure and investment strategy for city services that captures recommendations for encouraging the appropriate mix, timing and distribution of development in the community and for maximizing the efficiency of infrastructure and services.

Important projects identified in the infrastructure investment strategy should be programmed in a new 5-year CIP for the city, which is updated annually with the annual budget. The CIP should include anticipated expenditures, revenues and an implementation schedule for each project in the document. The CIP process should follow a traditional public planning process.

- ◆ Next Step: Complete an infrastructure investment strategy Study for the city that evaluates return on investment for future capital projects, including value capture, preferred short- and long-term service areas and project schedules, and optimized funding scenarios.
- ◆ Adopt recommendations from the study in a formal 5-year CIP for the city.
- ◆ Responsible Party: City administrator with support from the city's finance, public works, park district and economic development, planning and GIS departments.

★ **Formally Adopt a Policy that Categorizes Infrastructure Saving and Spending Dollars in the City**

The city has funds available for maintenance, operation and capital reserve needs in the community: sales tax revenue, the water and sewer reserve fund, and the general fund. However, there is not clear direction today on how these funds are spent each year, and the lack of direction eliminates certain abilities to plan, fund and program for each infrastructure category with greater confidence. Funds for each infrastructure category should be maintained in separate fund accounts to increase predictability.

★ **Next Step:** Implement a policy that allocates city infrastructure dollars by category to meet short-term and long-term needs in the community. The policy should include priorities, targets, procedures, funding formulas, and fund allocations — between planning and permitting, construction, operation, maintenance and capital reserves — to formalize infrastructure-spending in the city. The city may decide to review and revise portions of the policy each year, taking into account changing needs in the community. This should be done at least six months ahead of the next budget year initiative to maintain a more predictable framework for infrastructure spending.

★ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the City's Finance, Public Works, Parks and Recreation and Economic Development Departments

▣ **Coordinate with Service Providers**

Formally engage service providers in West Fargo — parks and recreation, schools, fire, and some aspects of water and transportation and enter into Memorandums of Understanding to confirm processes, protocols, available funding and schedules (by service provider, to the extent necessary) to foster healthy partnerships and better-coordinate plans, programs and projects. Mechanisms should be included in each agreement to ensure accountability and commitment to project completed on time and on budget.

▣ **Next Step:** Advocate for recommendations in the City of West Fargo comprehensive plan with regional service providers in the area, and participate in the processes established for updating their strategic plans and capital investment plans.

▣ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from other City Departments (as appropriate)

☞ **Maintain a Balanced City Budget**

Maintain a structurally-balanced budget for the city each year to cover regular operating expenses.

☞ **Next Step:** Establish a budget committee that includes department heads, elected officials and citizen representatives to review annually anticipated revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year. Input from the committee should help the City Administrator prepare the next year's budget, and provide greater consensus at multiple partner levels about the strategy used to prioritize and budget future expenditures based on anticipated revenues.

☞ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the Finance Department

☞ **Increase Local Tree Canopy to 20 percent by 2030**

The national Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) average in major U.S. cities is roughly 27 percent, with a recommended goal of 40 percent coverage. With West Fargo's current coverage at about 2.7 percent, the city has a great amount of work to do to increase it closer to national averages. Shade trees planted throughout the community provide simple and beautiful solutions to clean the air, prevent stream erosion, save energy and cool streets and buildings. Tree planting and preservation programs, tree ordinances, and capital investments should all be explored as ways to increase the city's tree canopy.

☞ **Next Step:** Increase the number and diversity of trees throughout the City in conformance with the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan.

☞ **Responsible Party:** Public Works Department with support from the Planning Department

☑ **Become a 'Digital City' and Provide Greater Access to Information and Analysis via the Internet**

West Fargo currently uses its official website (and other web tools) to disseminate information in more traditional, static formats. This might include providing access to maps, documents, photos, statistics or staff contact information for public viewing (typically one-way communication). The opportunity for two-way dialog between citizens, visitors and the government via the internet is very limited at this time.

City officials should explore opportunities to engage the community via the official website or other web tools more effectively. Simple ideas include a mobile application that lets people report problems from vandalism to potholes to water main breaks (such as See-Click-Fix), or a web-based GIS application that allows people the opportunity to provide digital comments on draft maps or plans via

RECOMMENDATIONS

virtual push pins (similar to the Visioning Sessions Map on the West Fargo comprehensive plan 2.0 project website).

☒ **Next Step:** Develop in-house computer technology (starting first with ArcGIS resources) that facilitates two-way communication between city government and residents, business owners, visitors, etc.

☒ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from Information Technology Group and Communications Department

☒ **Implement a Regional Stormwater Management Strategy**

Advocate for a city-wide stormwater management strategy that spans the boundaries of individual parcels to collect and store stormwater in local lakes, ponds, streams and swales for groundwater infiltration. An interconnected stormwater retention system — connected by either gravity or pump station technology — could help increase property values, create scenic views, manage flood events and attract wildlife throughout the community.

☒ **Next Step:** Continue to implement plans, programs, policies, and projects to meet the city's requirements under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Phase II Permit; highlighting opportunities to connect stormwater infrastructure throughout the community into a single system.

☒ **Responsible Party:** Public Works Department with support from the Planning Department

🕒 **Evaluate the City's Recycling Program and Identify Opportunities to Maximize Its Return on Investment**

Recycling is the right thing to do in the community, and the current program is very popular with city residents. New ideas for growing the program should focus on 1) increasing the city's cost recovery levels for funding the program, and 2) preventing more waste from reaching the landfill. Great 'recycling cities' to follow and study for best practices include: San Francisco, CA (80 percent of garbage diverted from landfills); Los Angeles, CA (76 percent diversion rate); San Jose, CA (75 percent diversion rate); Portland, OR (70 percent diversion rate); and San Diego, CA (68 percent diversion rate).

🕒 **Next Step:** Establish a recycling program review committee that includes city department heads, representatives for Waste Management (as the hired contractor), elected officials, and West Fargo citizens to 1) review the current recycling program, 2) study other model programs in the U.S., and 3) make short-term and long-term recommendations for improving the local program.

🕒 **Responsible Party:** Public Works Department

🕒 **Be Innovative with Waste Management**

Comprehensive material resource management does not just include waste management, but also the management of waste generation and consumption patterns. While recycling is a big step in the right direction, it is insufficient by itself as a means of achieving sustainability. Recycling deals with a fraction of the resources involved in the current system of extraction, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal. To be truly sustainable, West Fargo should take more steps toward a closed loop or "zero waste" system of production. Such a system requires that the city maximize its existing recycling and reuse efforts, while ensuring that products used by both city staff, residents and businesses are designed for the environment and have the potential to be repaired, re-used, or recycled.

Zero Waste is a philosophy that encourages the redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused. No trash is sent to landfills or incinerators. The process recommended is one similar to the way that resources are reused in nature. Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use. While this approach to waste management may be far reaching, exploring this possibility could help the city further its already comprehensive waste management policies..

🕒 **Next Step:**

1) Explore what a Zero Waste approach would entail and determine if any element could be achieved and brought forward to help reduce waste generation in the city.

2) Encourage residents to consider a zero-waste approach to living by providing them information as well as opportunities to implement that approach.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE CULTURAL AND

NATURAL RESOURCES



넵 Cultural Resources

History, culture and the arts are the manifestations of human evolutionary and intellectual achievement. They are one way we define, challenge, and make ourselves distinct. An active arts community and unique local culture is essential to achieving a high "quality of life" and attracting residents, visitors and businesses to West Fargo. Perhaps most importantly, a strong cultural identity empowers a community by nurturing self-respect and self-esteem, enhancing cultural sensitivity, and making the learning process more broadly accessible to all members of a community.

A Shared Identity

The cities that comprise the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area share much of their arts scene and cultural identity, with West Fargo remaining relatively dependent on neighboring Fargo and Moorhead when it comes to museums, art galleries, movie theaters, live music and other events. Together the region provides a multitude of historical, artistic, and cultural resources, including those made possible by the presence of several universities, museums, heritage sites, and arts facilities.

There is plenty of cooperation and collaboration between the cities that make up the Fargo-Moorhead area, but residents of West Fargo still desire to have access to a variety of cultural resources internally. By making these resources more accessible and available within the city, West Fargo can become more self-reliant and sustainable. Additionally, by continuing and developing joint efforts with the other arts organizations and communities in Fargo-Moorhead, West Fargo can reach a wider audience in the metropolitan area and attract newcomers from the broader region.

History

Founded in 1926, West Fargo is a relatively young city in comparison to neighboring Fargo, which was founded in 1871. It therefore lacks some of the historical and architectural resources found in turn-of-the-century cities. While it is unnecessary to duplicate the cultural offerings of one city in another, it is important for West Fargo to develop its own identity and to celebrate those resources and events that make it unique.

The region's largest historical attraction is the Bonanzaville Pioneer Village. Operated by the Cass County Historical society, it home to 43 historic buildings and 400,000 artifacts, which the attraction uses to teach visitors about the history and cultural heritage of the Red River Valley. The 12-acre property includes the Eugene Dahl Car Museum, the Eagle Air Museum, the Tractor Museum, the Law Enforcement Museum, and the Cass County Museum, which features exhibits on Native Americans and the history of farming and homesteading. Bonanzaville hosts special celebrations for the 4th of July, Fall History Day, Christmas on the Prairie, Pioneer Days and more. The Pioneer Village is an invaluable resource for the region's students and educators, providing school tours at discounted rates and programming aligned with the North Dakota and Minnesota State education standards. The attraction also has opportunities for volunteers and interns, giving residents the ability to learn more about the history of Cass County while sharing that knowledge with future generations.

Visual Arts

Many of the region's galleries and museums are located in Fargo, limiting the ability to enjoy art created by others in West Fargo. However, there are plenty of opportunities for residents to express their creativity and create their own art, through classes provided by the West Fargo Park District. Several programs for children of all ages are available, from music, painting, baking, sewing, and woodcrafts. In addition, the Park District offers a variety of photography classes and DIY workshops for adults. Involvement in the arts provides children (and adults alike) opportunities to develop their creativity, social skills, goal achievement, communication, and self-esteem.

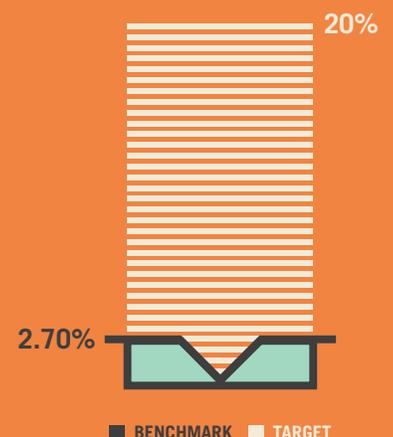
The West Fargo Public Library also provides opportunities for residents to view and participate in visual arts, including painting, music, photography, fiber arts, calligraphy classes as well as exhibits showcasing photography, history, quilting, and student art. The library also offers hundreds of free online classes, including Adobe Photoshop, music appreciation and how-to-start a craft business.



LIVABILITY MEASURES

FORESTRY

% of Planning Area Covered by Tree Canopy



🎭 Performing Arts

The City of West Fargo benefits from its location in the greater Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area when it comes to the performing arts. The region provides opportunities to enjoy films, live music, and performances by both local and traveling artists. The Bluestem Center for the Arts in Moorhead is a valuable regional resource, providing high-quality arts education and community entertainment. The West Fargo Public Schools system provides vouchers for students to use toward programs at the Trollwood Performing Arts School at Bluestem, a great example of the cooperative sharing of cultural resources, even across state lines.

Within West Fargo, the Park District offers a children's theater program in conjunction with the Missoula Children's theater, the nation's largest touring children's theater. The city's two public high schools, West Fargo High School and Sheyenne High School have an active theater program that puts on several productions each year. Close proximity to the performing arts offered at North Dakota State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, and Concordia College offers residents varying opportunities at almost anytime of the year. A Summer Arts Intensive offers programs for middle school, high school and collegiate artists in the metro area. The 2017 program included performances of "Willy Wonka Jr." and "Grease."

The Red River Valley Fairgrounds offers grandstand entertainment during the annual Red River Valley Fair, attracting both regional and national musical acts. While local musicians play in several of the restaurants and lounges in West Fargo, there are limited opportunities to enjoy live entertainment without traveling to Fargo or Moorhead. Many residents feel that the addition of a large indoor performing arts venue in West Fargo could attract a wider variety of entertainment options and give touring companies an alternative to the other venues in the region.

The West Fargo Public Library has also held concerts in their space, including bell ringers, Irish music, orchestra and traditional American music.

🎪 Events and Festivals

A number of festivals and performing arts events take place in West Fargo every year, offering a range of entertainment opportunities to residents and visitors alike. The city should continue to support these performances and celebrations while exploring additional opportunities for unique events that showcase the history and culture of West Fargo. Some of West Fargo's most well-loved and attended events include:

📌 THE FARMERS MARKET AND BEYOND

Established in 2007 by the West Fargo Park District, the farmers market runs from July to October on Mondays and Thursdays. The market, located in the South Elmwood Parking Lot, provides local growers and shoppers with the ability to buy and sell fresh produce, flowers, processed and canned goods, meat, and dairy products. The "Beyond" segment of the market includes food vendors, home-based business products, and arts and crafts from local artisans.

West Fargo's climate restricts the season for an outdoor farmers market, but the city could explore opportunities for an indoor venue during the fall, winter and spring months. While fresh, local food will be limited during this time, vendors could provide more baked goods and prepared foods, along with the non-consumable products normally offered.

📌 RED RIVER VALLEY FAIR

The Red River Valley Fair Association is a privately-owned non-profit that has provided family entertainment to the Fargo-Moorhead area and surrounding region for more than 100 years. The annual fair is held in July, and includes grandstand concerts, auto racing, entertainment, carnival rides, agricultural exhibits, and competitions in fruit and vegetable growing, baking, canning, beer making, sewing, quilting, and arts and crafts.

The fair is important to the economy of West Fargo, and provides an opportunity to learn more about the history of the region and the impact that agriculture has on both rural and urban society.

📌 WEST FARGO WINTER DAYS

This event, which takes place in mid-January, is presented by the West Fargo Park District and offers activities for all ages. Festival highlights include the Silver Snowflake search, sleigh rides, a sledding party, coloring contest, and a chili cookoff.

📌 WEST FEST

This weekend-long September festival for all ages features a parade typically attended by thousands of West Fargo residents. The festival began in 1992 when the West Fargo Chamber of Commerce joined with local businesses and organizations to celebrate the city and its residents. The City of West Fargo has coordinated the festival since 2011. Considered many West Fargo residents' favorite fall celebration, West Fest includes a craft fair and softball tournament and has a different theme each year. West Fest and West Fargo Winter Days are great ways for residents of West Fargo to celebrate their unique identity as such. Festivals like these are a way for families and friends to maintain traditions, come together as a community, and welcome new neighbors to the City.



📌 BIG IRON FARM SHOW

This annual agribusiness event has taken place at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds every September since 1981. As the largest farm show in the upper Midwest, Big Iron strives to educate farmers and ranchers from around the world in the latest cutting-edge agricultural products, equipment, technology and services. The show features more than 900 exhibit booths, training sessions, field demonstrations, health screenings, and concessions.

This event is important to the West Fargo economy and is a yearly opportunity to showcase the city to visitors from around the Midwest.

☒ BONANZAVILLE PIONEER DAYS

Bonanzaville Pioneer Village truly comes alive during this event in August, with historical activities and docents and demonstrators in period costume. Live demonstrations include blacksmithing, threshing and fur trading.

Events like this are important educational opportunities for West Fargo residents and visitors to learn about life on the North Dakota prairie.

☒ NITE TO UNITE

This August event is hosted by the West Fargo Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement officials, emergency responders, businesses, non-profit organizations, city officials and citizens come together to educate the community about safety and crime prevention during this annual event. It includes K9, fire, and law enforcement demonstrations in addition to complimentary concessions, performances, and activities.

Events like "Nite To Unite" give the public an opportunity to interact one-on-one with government officials and the volunteers and professionals who keep the community safe and healthy. In a time of increasing tension between citizens and public safety agencies, it is important to foster positive relationships between the groups, allowing for better communication and cooperation in any situation.

☒ FROSTIVAL

Embrace the cool of winter with two days of active events such as snow golf, kick-ball, cardboard sled races and children winter boot camp. This event is hosted the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the West Fargo, Moorhead and Fargo Park Districts. A multitude of events are held throughout the 3 cities in early January



☒ CRUISE NIGHT

A fun evening for the whole family, Cruise Night is held on Sheyenne Street in downtown West Fargo every third Thursday of the months of June, July, August and September. Sponsored by the Toppers Car Club, the event brings between 2,000 and 3,000 visitors and displays more than 600 classic cars every night. People enjoy cruising Sheyenne, enjoying the cars and stopping to visit their favorite food vendor.

The residents of West Fargo value the small-town atmosphere, variety of neighborhoods, and the community events and gatherings that take place there. Residents of West Fargo have expressed the desire for more cultural resources and opportunities independent of those offered outside the city. Some see bringing new cultural events and increasing the presence of art throughout the community as a way to give West Fargo an identity that is more rooted in arts and culture. Preserving the small town ambiance while encouraging creative community and citywide events creates opportunities for interaction between residents from different parts of town, while giving visitors from the broader region new reasons to visit West Fargo.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a Public Art Master Plan

West Fargo may look to neighboring Fargo for inspiration in creating their own public art master plan in order to make art more accessible to its residents and to provide visitors with another reason to explore and spend time in West Fargo. The city can work with the local artist community to commission public art pieces and identify locations where they could be installed. Each development proposal should be reviewed for the inclusion of proposed public art.

- Next Step: Complete an Infrastructure
- Responsible Party: City Administrator





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WEST FARGO
FIRE DEPT.

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HARLEY-DAVIDSON
MOTORCYCLES
EST. 1903

☒ Natural Resources

☒ Trees and Forests

West Fargo has been a Tree City for more than 30 years. The City meets the requirements of Tree City USA by maintaining a Forestry Department, by having a community tree ordinance, by spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, and by celebrating Arbor Day. The West Fargo Forestry Department's mission is to "promote and maintain a safe and healthy urban forest that enhances the visual appeal and environmental quality of the City of West Fargo." The Department furthers their mission through the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan, prepared in March 2015, that addresses public relations and education, emergency storm response, tree planting and maintenance, and short- and long-term action items that address the needs of the urban forest. The urban forest is an important economic and environmental asset to West Fargo, contributing positively to the health of the environment, the quality of life of residents and the experience of visitors. Trees are invaluable in their ability to clean the air, provide visual and auditory buffers, preserve soil and reduce erosion, and enhance streetscapes and public spaces.

The city has made strides in the field of urban forestry by learning more about tree species best suited for the climate and region, and by integrating and adapting new forestry technology to improve knowledge and efficiency. Selecting trees appropriate to the region, soil conditions, and climate of West Fargo is an ongoing challenge for the Forestry Department, and one that should remain a priority as the city continues to develop. The care and maintenance of both young and old trees varies across the city.

☒ Water Resources

As of June 2016, the City of West Fargo purchases its water from and shares water mains with the City of Fargo. The Fargo Water Treatment plant draws water from the Red River and the Sheyenne River, treats it, and pumps it into West Fargo's elevated tanks and water distribution system.

As required by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the City of West Fargo issues an annual Water Quality Report that provides West Fargo residents with information about possible contaminants, and tips to conserve water and protect water sources. The Water Quality Report speaks to the need for water conservation and highlights various initiatives to help reduce water consumption in the city, specifically by using water-saving bathroom fixtures, washing machines and dishwashers, and addressing leaking fixtures. Additional strategies

for protecting water sources include the elimination of harmful pesticides and fertilizers, responsible disposal of hazardous chemicals, and proper maintenance of septic systems. The city has also implemented water use restrictions during the summer months, allowing the watering of lawns on even- or odd-numbered day depending on property address. Watering is encouraged to take place only in the morning and evening hours to avoid evaporative loss of this valuable natural resource. While the city has already implemented several water conservation policies, a more comprehensive program may be considered.

The Sheyenne River is one of the major tributaries of the Red River of the North, flowing through West Fargo from south to north. The Sheyenne diversion canal, built in the early 1990s, channels water along the west side of the city to divert floodwaters



and prevent damaging flooding to the City of West Fargo. A second, FM Area Diversion Project will further protect 1 in 5 North Dakotans by establishing permanent flood protection measures for the Fargo-Moorhead region. The FM Area Diversion Project will significantly reduce the potential damage of a 100-year flood event, and give the region a better chance of weathering a 500-year flood event. A significant portion of land within West Fargo's extra-territorial Jurisdiction will become part of the FM Area Diversion Project.

Recognizing the river as an important asset to the community is an important step toward preserving this vital natural resource. Unfortunately, except for the stretch along Veteran's Memorial Ballpark, Elmwood Park, and Armour Park, much of the Sheyenne riverbank in West Fargo is privatized, with homes backing up to the river.

Many residents expressed interest in making the Sheyenne River more available for fishing and public enjoyment. The city, in conjunction with the Park District, should explore opportunities to enhance the accessibility and appearance of the river by way of public access areas, trails and crossings.

☒ Soils

West Fargo is part of the Cass County Soil Conservation District (CCSCD), whose mission is to "inform, educate, and provide leadership in conservation and stewardship of soil, water, and related natural resources." The District accomplishes these goals through several initiatives, including stabilizing riverbanks; encouraging no-till farming practices; and planting tree rows to serve as windbreaks and

snow fences and to reduce erosion. The CCSCD also encourages urban conservation techniques including composting, rain barrels, rain gardens, xeriscaping and gardening for pollinators. The Urban Living Handbook is a document prepared by the CCSCD that serves as a resource for environmentally- and sustainably-responsible living in Cass County.

☒ Agricultural Resources

West Fargo contains large tracts of agricultural land, primarily on the west side of the city in the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction. Much of this area is currently designated as agricultural preservation/urban reserve, in order to protect the character of the land and to plan for future urban growth.



► Preservation Land

The City of West Fargo includes nearly 12,000 acres of land designated as Agricultural Preservation (by the previous Comp Plan) within the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction. The city should consider conserving some of that land as is into the future except for the potential development of mixed-use and employment areas should the new FM Area Diversion Project be built. See the Plan Framework section of the plan for more discussion on this topic.

► Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

While there are no designated wildlife management areas within West Fargo, future development should be located and designed to minimize its impact to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Wetland and riparian communities are especially significant in this regard because they have the highest density and diversity of wildlife species.

► Air Quality

An air pollutant is defined as a substance in the air that, in high enough concentrations, produces a detrimental environmental effect. A pollutant can affect the health of humans, plants and animals. Many sources of air pollutants also are sources of greenhouse gases, including power plants and facilities associated with the production of oil and natural gas, and transportation. Strategies exist that can both reduce air pollution and the impacts of climate change.

Air pollutants can either be particles or gases. A primary pollutant is one that is emitted into the atmosphere directly from its source and retains the same chemical form, such as solid waste ash. A secondary pollutant is one that is formed by atmospheric reactions of precursor or primary emissions. Secondary pollutants undergo a chemical change once they reach the atmosphere. Ozone is an example of a secondary pollutant. Secondary pollutants are more

problematic to control because precursor compounds and their sources need to be identified to understand the specific chemical reactions that result in the formation of the secondary pollutant. Source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

West Fargo's location on the wide-open plains of North Dakota means that the wind typically dilutes airborne particulates or harmful gases, maintaining relatively low air pollution levels compared to more densely populated regions and larger metropolitan areas. In its 2017 "State of the Air" report, the American Lung Association ranked Fargo-Moorhead ND-MN in the Top 25 Cleanest Cities for Year-round Particle Pollution, and one of the Cleanest U.S. Cities for Ozone Air Pollution.

PM stands for particulate matter (also called particle pollution): the term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Some particles, such as dust, dirt, soot, or smoke, are large or dark enough to be seen with the naked eye. Others are so small they can only be detected using an electron microscope. Source: EPA Website: <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution>

West Fargo can have a significant impact on maintaining and even improving air quality by reducing the amount of vehicle miles traveled within the community and around the region. Creating high-density mixed-use development and a more efficient multi-modal transportation network can help reduce reliance on vehicles within the city.

► Addressing Climate Change and Its Impacts on West Fargo

Preserving its natural environment and confronting climate change is essential to the future economic success and enjoyment of cities and towns across the U.S.. Efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG)

emissions also help diminish pollution, save money, improve long-term stability of the economy, and can make communities more livable – benefiting both residents and visitors alike. For example, by promoting a more compact development pattern closer to the existing major nodes such as downtown as well as ensuring the construction of green buildings, we not only have the potential of reducing air pollution and vehicles miles traveled (traffic congestion) but also gaining measurable savings in energy expenses.

The West Fargo community has significant opportunities to reduce emissions and air quality concerns through compact development patterns; energy efficient building siting, design and construction; promotion of multi-modal transportation alternatives; preservation of natural areas and resources; and other initiatives and activities. Many of these strategies are addressed in this plan and will allow the community to better adapt to our changing and warming climate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

● Increase Tree Canopy Coverage

A healthy, wide-spread urban forest in the City of West Fargo provides economic and environmental benefits to the community: cleaner air, dynamic buffers, noise reduction, soil conservation, temperature mitigation, and improved visual qualities for the city. Unfortunately, tree choices are more limited in a far northern climate because of annual low temperatures, low precipitation in the winter, and strong winds. Planting fewer species in the city has left trees highly-susceptible to disease and insects.

The City of West Fargo Urban and Community Forest Management Plan (completed in 2015) established a comprehensive strategy to increase tree canopy and tree diversity in the community. Implementing recommendations from the Plan will create a more resilient, thriving tree canopy throughout the community.

● **Next Step:** Increase the number and diversity of trees throughout the city in conformance with the Urban and Community Forest Management Plan.

● **Responsible Party:** Public Works Department with support from the Planning Department

● Foster and/or Create Partnerships with Regional Conservation and Environmental Organizations

Several regional organizations offer resources and services that the City of West Fargo should take advantage of when it comes to helping protect natural resources around the community. With increased urbanization, conservation of resources become just as important as rural areas conservation. The Urban Conservation Program of the County Soil Conservation District provides a handbook full of urban conservation practices ideas that the City of West Fargo could put in place. Partnership with the Water Resource District could increase access to water resources protection as well as better flood control opportunities in the future. Finally, Fargo-Moorhead Metro Council of Government has several programs and policies in place such as a local food policy committee, and could be of great assistance to the City of West Fargo for local food programs that would increase public health overall.

● **Next Step:** Pursue the establishment of permanent and long-standing partnerships with local and regional organizations that will help the City of West Fargo meet its natural resources protection and environmental goals.

● **Responsible Party:** City Administrator

RECOMMENDATIONS

INCREASE COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Resilience and resource efficiency measures identified for the city's comprehensive plan will improve its ability to respond and recover quickly from natural disasters, and reduce vulnerabilities to future disasters using conservation, community design, and engineering technology solutions. Good stewardship of natural areas and forward-thinking about building resilient communities and supporting infrastructure (referred to as "blue sky planning") should also help West Fargo adapt to changing climate conditions or extreme, unexpected weather events.

The city's commitment to resilience and resource efficiency measures starts with implementation of the strategies and partnerships identified in the North Dakota Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Cass County Emergency Operations Plan. The West Fargo Police Department oversees emergency preparedness activities for the city at this time, which should expand in the future to include other departments in pre-disaster planning activities. The goal of these efforts should be to make the community more resilient and resource efficient by way of preferred development types, patterns, locations and intensities depicted in the Deferred Development and Growth Map, and by way of infrastructure strategies (natural and man-made systems) that provide multiple lines of defense against hazardous events.

Generally speaking, the city should promote resilience and resource efficiency measures through encouragement, incentives, regulation and leading by example. The topics below identify early targets for improving readiness and addressing environmental/infrastructure vulnerabilities in West Fargo. A Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for West Fargo developed after adoption of the comprehensive plan should evaluate the overall capability of the city to reduce or eliminate vulnerabilities to natural hazards and outline a coordinated mitigation strategy for pre-disaster planning and disaster response (complementing the work completed for the statewide and countywide initiatives before).

RECOMMENDATIONS

○ Manage Inland Flooding

The Red River regularly floods and spills into surrounding cities and towns, reaching flood stage in 49 of the last 110 years. In 2008, studies and partner agreements in the region were signed to complete environmental studies, and begin permitting and design processes for a permanent solution to the problem.

The FM Area Diversion Project (the result of the studies and plans started in 2008) is an initiative to reduce flooding vulnerabilities in the Red River Valley. The project, extending thirty-six miles and measuring 1,500 feet across, will cost \$2.2 billion with funding from federal, state and local resources (and potentially a public-private partnership). The Flood Diversion Authority will oversee the project, working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Completion of the FM Area Diversion Project would significantly reduce inland flooding vulnerabilities for western portions of West Fargo and surrounding areas.

Thinking more-locally, the city should also implement a community-wide stormwater management strategy that spans the boundaries of individual parcels to collect and store stormwater in local lakes, ponds, streams and swales for groundwater infiltration. An interconnected stormwater retention system — connected by either gravity or pump station technology — could help manage flood events.

◆ **Next Step:** City officials should carefully monitor studies, permitting, funding, etc. for the FM Area Diversion Project and plan local policies and resources accordingly. Continue to implement plans, programs, policies, and projects to meet the city's requirements under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Phase II Permit; highlighting opportunities to connect stormwater infrastructure throughout the community into a single system.

◆ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the Planning Department. Public Works Department with support from the Planning Department

■ Improve Emergency Preparedness

The North Dakota Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan evaluates the probability and extent of potential statewide threats to people and property. High-level threats identified for the State include: severe winter weather, severe summary weather, flooding and wildland fire. The Plan addresses the overall capability of state and local governments to reduce or eliminate the vulnerability of communities to these hazards, and outlines a coordinated mitigation strategy for pre-disaster planning and disaster response.

Cass County Emergency Management and the City of West Fargo Police Department oversee emergency preparedness activities for the community. Memorandums of Understanding with Cass County and the City of Fargo provide shared resources for pre-disaster planning and disaster response. City of West Fargo officials should continue to streamline MOUs and other processes to eliminate potential inefficiencies before to an emergency declaration. A local Hazard Mitigation Committee working with county, state and federal partners should also be formed to study and embed resiliency in future city initiatives: land development, infrastructure planning, conservation planning,

etc. Ultimately, resiliency-thinking should spread to all city departments.

■ **Next Step:** Develop a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for West Fargo after adoption of the comprehensive plan to evaluate the overall capability of the city to reduce or eliminate vulnerabilities to natural hazards and outline a coordinated mitigation strategy for pre-disaster planning and disaster response.

■ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the Police, Planning, Engineering and Public Works Departments

◌ Consider Zero Waste Initiative

The city currently contracts with Waste Management of North Dakota for single stream, curbside recycling in residential neighborhoods. The program is very popular throughout the community and participation is high at this time. A zero waste initiative in West Fargo promoting reduction, reuse, recycle and compost components would strengthen the city's leadership for waste reduction in North Dakota, and help brand the community as forward-thinking with the likes of Boulder, CO; Minneapolis, MN; and Austin, TX.

Several programs are available to divert waste from the landfill, including aggregate recovery, a 'drop and swap' programs, various recycling programs, and food and landscape waste composting initiatives. City officials should study the merits of a zero waste initiative for West Fargo in terms of environmental, social and economic benefits, and visit other cities throughout the U.S. with successful programs underway to learn more.

◌ **Next Step:** Study the feasibility of implementing a zero waste initiative in West Fargo, and act on reasonable findings and recommendations from the study in future years.

◌ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the Public Works Department

RECOMMENDATIONS

■ Increase Energy Conservation and Efficiency

Many developers and cities throughout the U.S. are incorporating LEED Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design principles into the design of buildings, blocks, neighborhoods and development activity centers. LEED-certified projects are resource efficient, especially in terms of water and energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and off-site impacts.

West Fargo can promote energy conservation and efficiency through methods of encouragement, incentives, regulation and leading by example. Government operations and buildings should be models for resource efficiency and renewable sources, and provisions should be made in local rules and policies to promote renewable energy options for homes and businesses in the area. Reinvestment in existing areas of the city either through infill development or redevelopment can also more energy efficient compared to low-density, sprawling development patterns.

■ **Next Step:** Complete an energy audit of government operations and buildings in West Fargo to identify opportunities that let the city lead by example in terms of energy conservation and efficiency. The audit should also include a review of existing rules and policies that promote or prohibit energy conservation in the community for developers, residents and business owners. Act on reasonable findings and recommendations from the audit in future years.

■ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the Planning Department

■ Considering Climate and Infrastructure

Eastern North Dakota experiences extreme weather changes throughout the year, from warm/hot summers to extremely cold, windy winters. Drastic changes in seasonal conditions West Fargo's climate may increase stress and shock on built infrastructure like stormwater, water and sewer systems; road networks; and bridges. This may increase maintenance and rehabilitation costs for existing infrastructure, damage private property, disrupt services, or inconvenience residents, business owners, etc. in extreme cases.

■ **Next Step:** Complete an Infrastructure Investment Strategy Study for the city that evaluates construction, operation, maintenance and rehabilitation costs for infrastructure in terms of resiliency and resource efficiency. Adopt recommendations from the Study in a formal Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan for the city. Explore the possibility of updating zoning regulations to include allowance and/or incentivize sources of renewable energy to be installed on buildings and/or properties.

■ **Responsible Party:** City Administrator with support from the City's Finance, Public Works, Park District and Recreation and Economic Development Departments



Moving Forward

Incorporating resilience and resource efficiency measures into city policies, functions and operations does not mandate radical or expensive solutions to see immediate impacts. City officials should identify a mix of big and small solutions in the forthcoming Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan for West Fargo that could be implemented by different levels of government, the development community, volunteer organizations, or residents' willing to change activities and behaviors. Recommendations should include plans, policies and design standards that build more resilient communities and supporting infrastructure, and work to ensure individual decisions and investments reinforce a citywide initiative to be more resilient and resource efficient in the future.



ESTABLISH DOWNTOWN AS A CULTURAL CENTER FOR WEST FARGO

Downtown West Fargo has an opportunity to evolve as a distinct district in the region. While much of West Fargo has developed as a suburban community that plays a major role in the metropolitan area, national trends coupled with distinct economic data from the community indicate that West Fargo is ideally suited to support a revitalized downtown district that follows the following four themes:

- Is a walkable district that connects existing neighborhoods.
- Is home to a vibrant mix of uses centered on Sheyenne Street that would include retail, residential, dining, entertainment, and office space.
- Is a place to create public/private partnerships to foster creative redevelopment, entrepreneurship, the arts, and unique businesses.
- Is viewed by the West Fargo residents and the region as a unique district that defines West Fargo's character.

With a median household income exceeding that of the region, a growing population base, and a largely suburban development pattern, downtown West Fargo can re-emerge as a central gathering place for the community. The primary commercial portion of the district is along Sheyenne Street from Seventh Avenue West to Main Avenue West and has the potential to extend to the east and west along

Main Avenue. The current conditions of the commercial district include a mix of institutional uses including churches and civic facilities; commercial businesses including restaurants, stores in large and small footprint building; and a collection of service businesses.

Over time, much of the growth along Sheyenne Street has developed with staggered street frontage, front loaded parking, and extensive curb cuts. Meanwhile, the public infrastructure along the corridor lacks distinct character elements such as lighting, street trees, street furniture, or pedestrian amenities. Armour Park and the Sheyenne River - which terminate the street, are not connected to the district via pedestrian crossings, trails, or signage.

The following recommendations are designed to foster a downtown in West Fargo that is truly unique to the community, thereby enhancing West Fargo's identity while encouraging future business development.



RECOMMENDATIONS

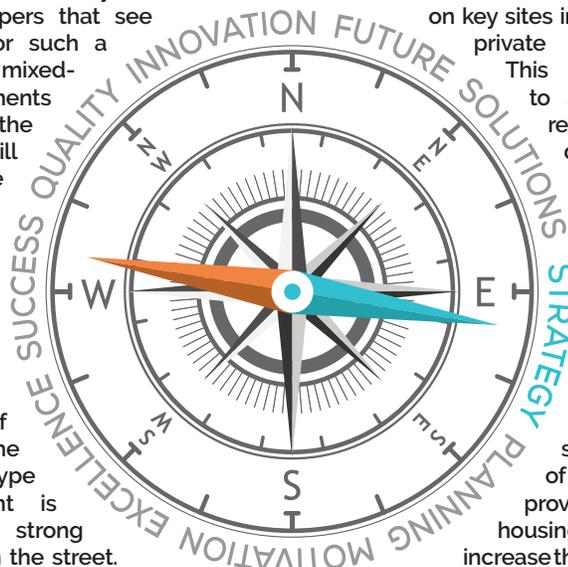
- Establish a Recruitment Strategy to Grow Business and Bring in New investment to Downtown
- ▶ Share the market potential identified in other parts of this plan with local businesses. This can help them understand potential for expansion and can be incorporated into their business and financing plans.
- ▶ Cooperate with local property owners to inventory and promote available space. Available properties can initially be listed on the city's website in cooperation with local brokers. An available property template can also be created with information on size, zoning, utilities, and pricing.
- ▶ Coordinate with regional developers to partner on developments in downtown. West Fargo's role could simply be development support through communication or partnerships. Other communities have found success in negotiating development needs with investors such as providing parking to support development, or facilitating land swaps.

Create a Recruitment Strategy for Downtown Mixed use residential

Mixed-use development including residential space and ground floor office or retail space is currently under development in downtown West Fargo. This project represents a bellwether for how the development community views the district. Because there are few comparable products for mixed-use in West Fargo, the community is fortunate to have developers that see the potential for such a product type. As mixed-use developments continue, the market will hone in on the importance of preserving ground floor space for retail development and developments may incorporate a greater mix of use types. The key to this type of development is maintaining a strong relationship with the street. West Fargo can continue to be proactive in encouraging this kind of development by doing the following:

- Identify property for residential and mixed-use development and work with property owners to pursue public private partnerships, or enter into an agreement with existing owners to work together to attract the development identified in the plan.

- Solicit interest from regional developers that have successfully completed similar projects in the metro area (or even outside of North Dakota).
- Issue a Request for Development Proposal (RFDP) for projects based off a vision for a mixed-use downtown on key sites in partnership with private sector owners. This would be used to solicit bids from regional or selected developers and would incorporate development criteria to ensure any new development is consistent with the vision. Developing residential should be one of these criteria, providing market rate housing options that will increase the variety and price point of product in West Fargo.
- Enter into public-private partnerships with developers that could include the provision of infrastructure, parking structures, or land write-down or swaps.
- Coordinate with regional economic development partners to determine if any other incentives may be applicable for a significant mixed-use or residential development.



Consider a Micro-enterprise Retail Project In or Near Downtown

The market snapshot of West Fargo clearly indicates the potential for additional retail/restaurant development in the community, particularly within specialty retail categories that include specialty and ethnic dining. Many small businesses face challenges during their start up phase, especially in a district such as downtown West Fargo that is not on the "main drag" for many traditional big box retail stores. Nationally, as large retailers are seeing consolidation and closures, highly specialized retailers can become opportunities for entrepreneurial growth. More and more often, communities are exploring micro-enterprise retail projects to help small business owners start up while at the same time creating a "critical mass" of shopping and a destination for locals and visitors. There are several sites in and around Sheyenne in West Fargo's downtown that could accommodate these type uses. Micro retail can take several forms:

- Small retail spaces in mixed use buildings: these spaces often utilize shopfront space in mixed use buildings to allow for ground floor activity, amenities for residents who live and or work above, and to maximize return on investment. The Art Crossing project in Greenville, South Carolina uses spaces the size of parking spots to create affordable studios for artists in the heart of the downtown.
- Emporium style retail: This type of product encourages retail development clustered in one larger space. Each retailer can either operate independently within the development while others allow for retailers to become "vendors" in the

space depending on their needs for growth. 19 West Main Street in Spokane, Washington is home to an artisan bakery, a brewery, a restaurant and a coffee shop featuring local artists. The building is configured so that each tenant has a small space within the larger building.

- Cottage/container village: This small format retail/restaurant use takes advantage of vacant and/or underutilized space and uses either small cottage style retail spaces or containers to create dynamic retail, entertainment, and dining experiences. Pascagoula's Anchor Square is home to 17 merchants and restaurants in cottages recycled from Hurricane Katrina; while Las Vegas is home to Downtown Container Park, a mixed use development using recycled shipping containers to house restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues.



Pascagoula's Anchor Square



Container Park - Las Vegas, NV - Photo Credit: Arnett Muldrow Associates

Promote and Augment the Façade Improvement Program to Assist Investments in Downtown Buildings in Conjunction with Design Guidelines

West Fargo has deployed a façade improvement program for the downtown area of the city. This program is a valuable opportunity for property owners to enhance their building facades and improve the downtown area as a walkable mixed-use district.

The city should continue this program and consider coupling the façade program with design guidelines that provide property owners a framework to work within to take advantage of the incentive program. Some communities have taken a proactive approach toward promoting design guidelines by working with local designers to illustrate the potential of inexpensive improvements to facades while others provide grant assistance to encourage sensitive development in the downtown district. This type of incentive can be accompanied by Design Guidelines or a Pattern Book

that can serve as a guide to downtown character by providing either suggestions and regulatory guidance for treatment of building renovations and new construction that are create a downtown setting for the city.

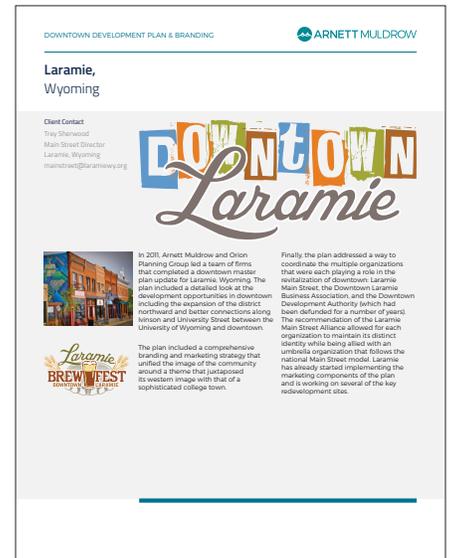
Other options for this program could explore providing incentives for code compliance for buildings that otherwise might not be able to make full use of the building. These could include sprinklers, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance assistance, and rear façade improvements to activate other streets. In any event, West Fargo should actively promote the façade program with literature, meetings, and marketing for local property owners.



Develop a Comprehensive Marketing and Branding Program for Downtown

West Fargo has done a good job of creating a citywide identity that reinforces its core strengths; a family friendly place to live, a place that provides a high level of service for its residents, and a progressive community. Downtown West Fargo, however, has no distinct identity of its own. For the outside visitor Sheyenne Street could be “any street” in “any town” and not the downtown district for a fast growing and dynamic city. Moreover, in the metro market, Fargo’s downtown revitalization success and Moorhead, Minnesota’s infill development in downtown has eclipsed the identity of West Fargo’s downtown. Having said that, West Fargo has a series of dynamic events that are held downtown and bring residents and visitors together. West Fargo should consider a branding package for downtown that would include the following:

- Create a Brand Statement for West Fargo’s downtown: A brand statement is a way to position a community in the marketplace. It should resonate with local residents, visitors, and investors. The brand statement for downtown should be assertive and should differentiate the downtown from other districts in the region.
- Initiate a Consistent Logo and Tagline for Marketing West Fargo: West Fargo’s downtown should have a marketing logo that is distinct from that of the municipal government. It should be inviting to residents, resonant with visitors, reinforcing to local businesses, and provide a platform to expand as downtown continues to develop.
- Extend Downtown Marketing to Collateral Material and Events in the district: A great opportunity to extend the downtown identity is to adapt the typeface and color scheme to special events and collateral materials such as tee shirts, hats, and other marketing materials as downtown develops.



Delaware

Authentic Every Day. *City*

All branding examples provided by Arnett Muldrow Associates

Continue to Promote the Downtown West Fargo Business Association

West Fargo currently has a recently implemented business association in downtown that serves as a link between the public and private sector to advocate for the vitality of a district. Typically, these associations may begin informally and meet regularly to discuss issues and develop strategies to attract business and investment to the district. West Fargo should actively promote this group for businesses with an online presence, social media, and continue to enhance its role as a link between the public and private sector to become a group that actively promotes itself to the overall community.

While diverse – the shops, restaurants, services, and institutions of downtown West Fargo share a common thread of location and the desire for continued vitality. Perhaps a more important opportunity for West Fargo is to capitalize on the statewide momentum to pursue a Main Street Program modeled after state programs across the Country. To date, the state has

incentivized a loan program geared toward downtown businesses and elected officials have discussed the importance of downtown vitality as a pillar for economic success. As the West Fargo Downtown Business Association continues it should make sure to include ongoing efforts to do the following:

- Create programming to share peer knowledge and expertise during regular meetings (marketing, digital media, merchandising, financial planning, etc)
- Host real estate and developer roundtables to bring investors into downtown West Fargo to communicate the district's vision and investment opportunities.
- Most importantly, provide a conduit for shared and cooperative marketing efforts to promote downtown West Fargo businesses to facilitate a "Shop Local" strategy.

Contemplate a West Fargo Business Improvement District (BID)

As interest in West Fargo continues to grow, the city may want to work with property owners and other interests to consider a Business Improvement District in downtown. This is a funding mechanism whereby commercial businesses incur an additional tax in exchange for a series of enhanced services to the district. Frequently, BID districts are governed by a board of directors with representation from both the local government and the business community contained within the district. While common nationally, Fargo is the only city in North Dakota that currently has a business improvement district. Fargo's downtown BID follows five key tenets to keep downtown: clean, safe, maintained, beautified, and promoted.

Enhance Gateways and Wayfinding into Downtown West Fargo with a Consistent Sign System

Utilizing the assets created in the branding of downtown as outlined above, West Fargo should create branded wayfinding and banner systems to signify key entries into downtown, direct locals and visitors to parking as well as key attractions and nearby locations. Ultimately this system should extend citywide to help visitors and residents navigate West Fargo while reinforcing its unique identity.



Create a Targeted Strategy Focusing on Bringing Millennials and Active Empty Nesters to Downtown

The primary demographic base of West Fargo is young to middle aged families, however, downtown West Fargo could emerge (particularly with the development of new mixed use buildings) into an alternate destination for young professionals and active empty nesters. Marketing tools focusing on the quality of life and future plans for West Fargo can be created including advertisements, social media strategies, and overall messaging that is relevant to the targeted population of young professionals and active empty nesters – both a significant part of the metro and local population.



Develop the West Fargo Creative Spaces Initiative

Creative spaces such as co-working spaces, accelerators, makerspace, and hybrid concepts are thriving in the U.S.. These spaces have witnessed dramatic growth in the last five years and are expected to continue these patterns as businesses and entrepreneurs rethink the traditional work environment. The metro market has one existing co-working space in downtown Fargo: The Prairie Den. The combination of high skilled blue collar jobs, independent operators who desire flexible space, young professionals emerging from the region's higher education system, and "trailing spouses" who may want unique spaces to work indicates potential for such a product in West Fargo.

Co-working spaces have moved from what some might consider a fad into a full-blown national trend with more than 80 percent growth in spaces over the last two years. West Fargo has the opportunity to capitalize on this growth while fostering an environment of creativity in the community. In fact, the West Fargo Public Library has been offering opportunities for children and adults to utilize technology and education to broaden their skills for years. Before delving into the specific recommendations, it is important to begin to define how each of these spaces work, as semantics can sometimes get in the way of truly understanding the purpose of these new models. It is also important to know that, although their definitions are provided below, the fluidity within

which they can function in a space is as creative as the very ideas themselves.

Co-working Spaces provide spaces for individuals or small companies to work in a shared environment. Companies can interact with one another in informal ways, form collaborations, or simply share in the creative atmosphere of the space. Co-working spaces may host events and activities but rarely provide formal business coaching.

Examples:

[Prairie Den – Fargo](#)
[CoCo – Minneapolis](#)
[Gravitate – Ames](#)
[Juniper – Bismarck](#)

Accelerator Spaces provide a structured way to graduate companies, often within a specified period of time. These spaces may have a higher education partner that is helping to cultivate and coach a business toward success. In other examples, accelerator spaces receive significant support from venture capital that is directly investing in the companies in the spaces. The goals of an accelerator is to "spin out" successful ventures. These spaces tend to gravitate around "like businesses" that have collaborative capabilities.

Examples:

[RetailXerator – Minneapolis](#)
[Techstars - Boulder](#)

Makerspaces are physical locations where people gather to share resources and knowledge. Unlike the spaces described above, makerspaces focus on projects and fabrication. Consequently, makerspaces provide tools and facilities for the makers. While experts or university-affiliated advisors may be available, makers frequently get help from other users. These spaces began to be associated with fields such as engineering, fabrication, computer science, and graphic design. Many makerspaces have higher education partnerships that desire to create an informal combination of lab, shop, and conference room. Frequently, 3-D printers, manual tools, and classroom spaces are associated with makerspace. Even local libraries are offering makers spaces and camps for children.

Examples:

[SpaceLab – Outside of Chicago](#)
[Twin Cities Maker – Minneapolis](#)
[Meld Workshop – Fargo](#)

For West Fargo, these spaces should be considered fluid and subject to change with downtown being a focal point early on for this development. Some of the infrastructure that may be required for such spaces is high speed internet capabilities that will allow for technology firms to thrive in the environment.





AROUND THE PLAN

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR
GROWTH IN WEST FARGO



WHY A FRAMEWORK FOR DEFERRED DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH?

DEFERRED DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH MAP

DEFERRED DEVELOPMENT SECTORS

GROWTH SECTORS

West Fargo residents understand that planning for growth and development will result in a stronger local economy, greater sustainability, and an improved quality of life for current and future residents. This section provides a description of the Deferred Development and Growth Map. The map establishes a citywide framework for investing in areas supported by existing infrastructure, retrofitting areas in need of redevelopment, and planning for possible growth outside of the existing city limits should the new Fargo-Moorhead diversion be built. A description of how this map is organized, according to deferred development and growth areas, is provided. The identified growth sectors include areas for infill, redevelopment, retrofit and some level of new possible growth. A number of these growth areas are illustrated in detail to show possibilities of how development that reflects the goals and aspirations of the community could occur.

**DOWNTOWN
WEST FARGO**

**32ND AVENUE EAST
AND SHEYENNE STREET**

**THE WILDS
SOUTH**

THE LAGOONS

WHY A FRAMEWORK FOR DEFERRED DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH?

While West Fargo has seen tremendously rapid growth in the last couple of decades, this growth has quickly spread across the land into a low-density, single-use and car-oriented fashion. Newly created neighborhoods lack connectivity and a mix of uses forcing residents to use their cars for any trips to the store or to their workplace. The irregular street grid also brings increased traffic on the main arterials creating more congestion, especially when people attempt to get to work and school in the mornings and back in the evenings. This sprawling pattern of development also increases costs.

The costs of sprawl are many and diverse. Some are measurable, others are hidden – they don't show up on financial statements, but they are nonetheless real. Different stakeholders pay for sprawl in various ways, either directly or indirectly. Businesses pay the cost of sprawl every day with roads congested by commuter traffic delaying freight and raising delivery costs, while long-distance commuting itself raises mental and physical health issues and employee absenteeism. Homeowners find themselves dependent on their cars for transportation, increasing cost and risk of injury and higher obesity levels. In the case of West Fargo, homeowners are also impacted directly by the added cost of infrastructure (longer roads, pipes for water and sewer, etc) that they pay through special assessments on their property. These costs will continue to rise in the future as maintenance issues occur. Finally, governments pay many of these costs themselves for infrastructure and services used by developments. In order to respond to these issues, the Deferred Development and Growth Map provides a new framework for growth that addresses quality of life for residents while seeking to have a positive impact on the economy, business climate, tax base, and the sustainability of the city into the future.

DEFERRED DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH MAP

Input from participants at the Visioning Sessions and Planapalooza™ supported the concept of an deferred development and growth approach; focusing on redevelopment of the existing nodes. The nodes identified include the downtown, 32nd Ave and Sheyenne St, intersection, as well as the possible development of the lagoons should they be relocated or close. The Deferred Development and Growth Map also takes into consideration the planned FM Area Diversion Project which would provide a large amount of "new" dry land to the west of the existing Sheyenne Diversion. This approach affirms the community's feeling that redevelopment should happen in certain areas to add more intensity of the use of the land and that future growth should be proactively planned in a more efficient fashion. The Deferred Development and Growth Map organizes the community into Sectors prioritized for varying degrees of land preservation, including both permanently protected and recreation open spaces, existing developed neighborhoods, and growth sectors that support existing and proposed walkable, complete activity centers. Existing suburban-style residential areas are not recommended for a major change and would remain in their current land use designations with the possibility of minor modifications if needed.

The Deferred Development and Growth Map will guide nearterm revisions to the city's zoning ordinance to assure that the land use regulations are consistent with the vision set forth in this Plan. The assignment of growth sectors provides a framework for a new approach to zoning that specifically addresses the concerns related to enhancing community character city-wide. This approach will help West Fargo increase economic potential and quality of life goals. By organizing the city according to deferred development and growth sectors, intentional and informed decisions can be made about how to most efficiently spend dollars on in-

frastructure improvements that will support the comprehensive plan.

The Deferred Development and Growth Map graphically illustrates how the city's land use policies apply to the physical landscape of the community and where and how deferred development, growth and redevelopment should or should not be accommodated over the next decades. The Map is not a zoning map. It is intended to show, in a general sense, the desired amount of deferred development and the pattern and location of future development or redevelopment. The boundaries shown are imperfect and intended only to reflect the general pattern of desired future development. A more detailed zoning map will need to be generated with significant public involvement as a part of a future zoning ordinance update to achieve a more fine-grained assignment of zoning classifications.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MAP

The Deferred Development and Growth Map is organized around growth sectors. These Sectors set out priorities and inform the intensity and the character of new growth. This varies from the approach used by a conventional Future Land Use Map that focuses primarily on separating land by use rather than grouping areas with similar existing or desired future character. Sectors are used to guide where and to what extent growth is encouraged and directed. A number of factors drive the assignment of sectors, including location of valuable open space, presence of existing neighborhoods, and availability of existing and future infrastructure.

West Fargo's Deferred Development and Growth Map has one (1) deferred development sector: C-1 Extraterritorial Sector. There are six (6) growth sectors: G-1 Potential Rural-Restricted Growth Sector, G-2 Sub-Urban Sector, G-3 Employment Sector, G-4A Core-Retrofit Growth Sector, G-4B Future Mixed-Use Center, and G-5 Future Employment Center. Specific descriptions of each sector's attributes will follow on subsequent pages. The C-1 Deferred Development Land

Sector includes those areas outside the planned FM Area Diversion Project which will still be mostly unsuitable for development at this time, as well as land in the most northern section of the extraterritorial area, which should also be safe for future generations to develop, reducing the sprawling landscape of West Fargo.

Within each of the Growth Sectors, there is a varying degree of potential for new development or redevelopment. Some of the growth sectors are already developed and a small amount of change is anticipated in the future, especially in established residential neighborhoods. Other sectors are oriented toward a center of activity, with a primary focus on changing the character of the area, making them more walkable in nature and increasing the intensity of development. Finally, with the possible construction of the FM Area Diversion Project, new development opportunities could arise and some growth sectors have been identified where new neighborhood or employment centers could be located in the future.

An interconnected network of major streets provides structure for the growth sectors while distributing traffic. Future development within growth areas will also take into account the provision and cost of infrastructure, finding ways to reduce impact on the taxpayers. The G-4 and G-5 sectors identify locations that are the most suitable for future mixed-use and employment areas.

DEFERRED DEVELOPMENT SECTORS

C-1 Deferred Development Sector

The area where development is deferred includes spaces west of the proposed FM Area Diversion Project, as well as land located in the northern section of the extraterritorial areas. At the time of this comprehensive plan update, plans and specifications for the FM Area Diversion Project were under development and completion of the diversion is not anticipated until the year 2024, at the earliest. It has not been determined what effects the project will have upon properties along the diversion. Therefore, it is recommended that planning and development not take place in these areas until the diversion is operational and revised floodplain maps have been made available. Other areas within this sector might be best kept in reserve until infrastructure can efficiently be provided or innovative conservation methods can be employed to avoid costly upgrades in the future.



GROWTH SECTORS

G-1 Sub-Urban - Restricted Growth Sector (Potential)

The Sub-Urban - Restricted Growth Sector includes areas between the current and proposed diversion that may have new development potential should the new diversion be built. The G-1 area identifies significant tracts of land that are currently rural, but where directed and well-planned new development could occur around the identified potential Future Mixed-Use and Employment Centers.

G-2 Sub-Urban Growth Sector

The Sub-Urban Growth Sector includes existing residential neighborhoods and developed commercial areas that are not likely to see much change in the next decades. There may be a few undeveloped tracts of land still available for development. Typically, conventional suburban development patterns of primarily detached single-family houses define this area with a small percentage of multifamily units.

G-3 Employment Growth Sector

The Employment Growth Sector is comprised of the existing industrial area north of Main Avenue where a small amount of change and infill development might occur in the future. The presence of the airport within this area can play a major role in continuing to attract new businesses to West Fargo.

G-4A Core - Retrofit Growth Sector

The Core - Retrofit Growth Sectors are areas that are mostly developed but still contain underutilized parcels. They were developed in a conventional, auto-oriented suburban pattern. New development, redevelopment, or the reuse of existing land and buildings should be encouraged to better meet the local goal of achieving more walkable and bikeable corridors and a better-connected village core. Additional growth and development within West Fargo is most desirable within these areas due to the presence of existing infrastructure and proximity of services. The plan envisions that most mixed-use development in the next decades will occur in this growth sector.



G-4B Future Mixed-Use Growth Center Sector

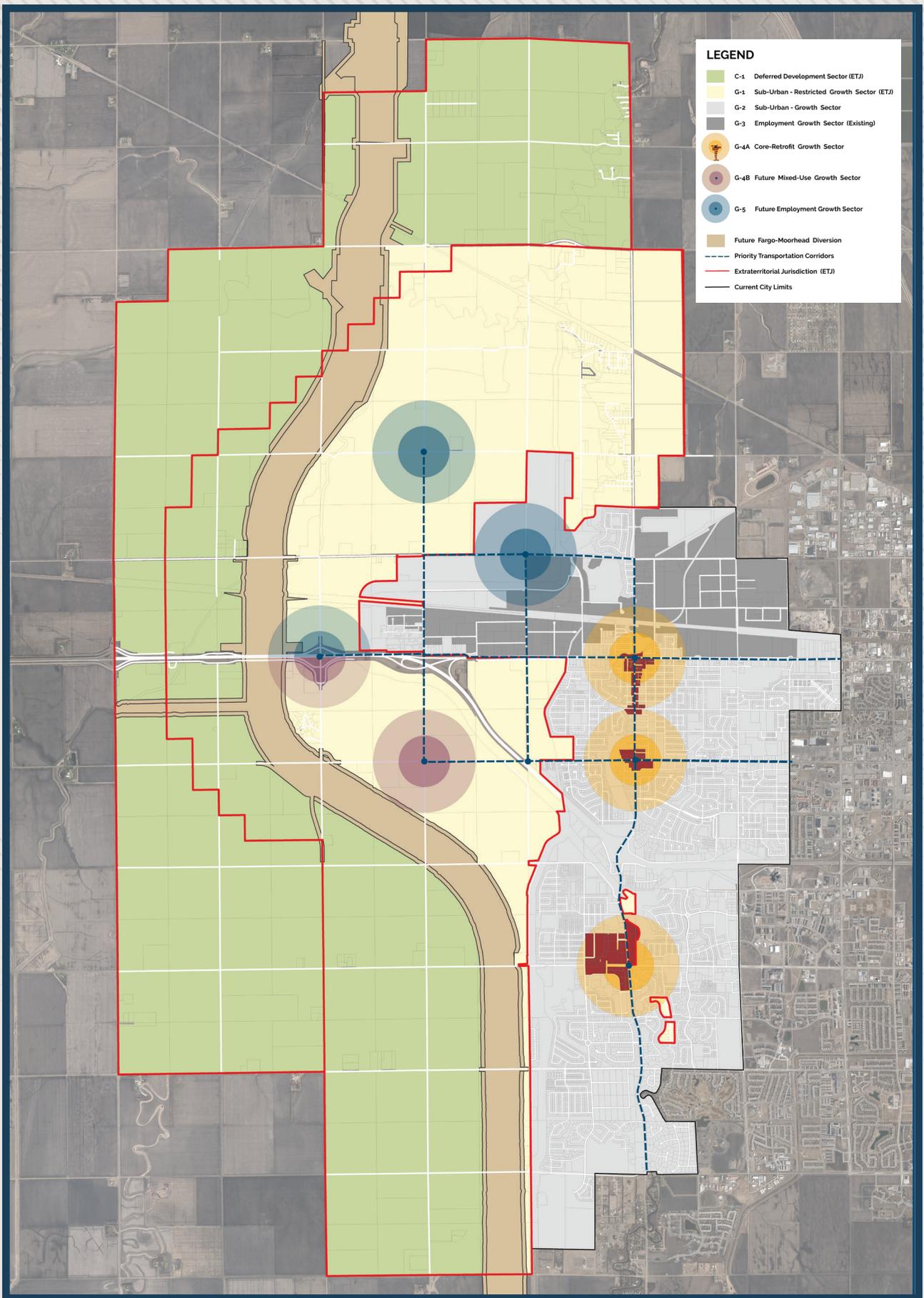
The Future Mixed-Use Growth Center Sector is assigned to areas outside of the current Sheyenne Diversion that may support substantial mixed-used development due to proximity to existing or planned regional thoroughfares or transit. Future development should occur as complete communities in the form of activity centers. These sectors are primarily intended for development if the proposed FM Area Diversion Project is built.



G-5 Future Employment Growth Center Sector

The Future Employment Growth Center Sector represents the concept for a self-sustaining, industrial village outside of the current Sheyenne Diversion. The center would promote industrial, office, and retail development; and act as a sustainable, closed-loop industrial center, where businesses feed each other for productivity. These sectors are primarily intended for development if the proposed FM Area Diversion Project is built.

Map 1: Deferred Development and Growth Map



A LONG-TERM VISION

There is nothing like an illustration to bring complex ideas to life. What follows are a collection of examples and drawings—some simple and others very bold—for how the urban design principles and Interventions discussed previously could actually come to life and what these ideas might look like. While it is important to remember that the new development illustrated here might not be built exactly as envisioned, taken collectively the following pages represent a strong and lasting vision for the future of West Fargo - a vision that will have a positive impact on the economy, business climate, tax base, affordability, mobility, environment, and quality of life. What is particularly important is that all of these ideas for the built environment, economy, housing supply, and transportation system are considered together so that they can complement and support each other and present a truly comprehensive vision for the future, one that reflects the ideas and input of hundreds of citizens, stakeholders, and city departments, all of whom will play a critical role in turning this vision into a built reality.

These long-range conceptual plans were developed during the Planapalooza™ and are based on the input received from participants. The activity center plans detailed in this section show one potential development outcome for three of the growth sectors identified within the city as well as one residential neighborhood model. These plans illustrate a standard by which future policy decisions, capital improvements, and development proposals can be evaluated.

LONG-RANGE CONCEPTUAL PLAN AREAS



DOWNTOWN WEST FARGO



32ND AVE W AND SHEYENNE STREET



THE WILDS SOUTH



THE LAGOONS



DOWNTOWN WEST FARGO

1 New Downtown Square

Incorporating a central civic space within the downtown would create an important presence as well as a main gathering space for city events and activities. This plan shows a large civic green at the intersection of Main Avenue and Sheyenne St. This public space could provide a location for outdoor dining and gathering, promoting investment in new mixed-use buildings. It would create a destination and place for daily civic life for both the community and passersby.

2 Pedestrian Connection to Armour Park

The Sheyenne River to the north of Main Avenue acts as a barrier for what could be an easy connection with Armour Park. The distance is very short between the northern end of downtown and the park. This lack of connection forces potential park users to drive to Second Avenue West in order to access the neighborhood and finally the park, or likely deters them altogether from visiting it. There is an opportunity to link downtown to Armour Park directly with the construction of a pedestrian bridge, which coupled with the new downtown square could create a fun destination for residents and visitors alike. A second connection to the park from Center Street could also provide easy access to people living and working to the east of the Sheyenne River.

3 New Civic Building

The new square transforms the downtown into a destination and place for daily civic life. The plan shows the new square with mixed-use buildings facing it as well as a new civic building that would help enclose the space and provide community services in this new gathering place. The new library could be located here, along with a community facility for young and seniors to attend activities and events. This would also be a great location for public restrooms to be provided.

The West Fargo downtown is located at the intersection of Sheyenne Street and Main Avenue, in the northern and oldest part of the city. This area is currently not considered the city center by many because of the lack of activity and identifiable civic space. However, there are currently two new mixed-use projects under development on Sheyenne Street at 4th Avenue, with one under construction that will begin to change the character of the area and begin a pattern of downtown development. Continuing this redevelopment activity will greatly benefit the city and can help create a “true” downtown giving a geographic heart to the city and creating a place where local residents will gather and others from around the region will be excited to visit.

The plan shows one version of what a fully redeveloped downtown could look like in the future. A new downtown square at the intersection of Sheyenne Street and Main Avenue could provide a much-needed gathering space where grand events and the more intimate moments of daily life could happen. From there, a pedestrian bridge to Armour Park (as well as another pedestrian bridge to the east of the park) would allow more West Fargo citizens to enjoy this great space. Several new mixed-use buildings are shown along Sheyenne Street and Main Avenue that would help frame the street and create an inviting public realm for living, walking, shopping, and recreation. New multifamily buildings are also shown on some of the side streets and could be built as smaller apartment houses, fitting more closely with the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods. This could help create a transition from the more intensive/taller buildings on Sheyenne to the existing smaller residential homes.

4 New Mixed-Use Buildings

This plan illustrates how new mixed-use buildings could be incorporated and located throughout the downtown. The orientation of these new buildings defines blocks, creates walkable streets, and brings buildings up to the sidewalk to create an activated pedestrian environment. These new mixed-use buildings would incorporate retail/restaurants uses on the ground floor with offices or residential units on the upper floors to bring more people into downtown and create 24/7 vibrancy.

5 New Multifamily Units (Apartment Houses)

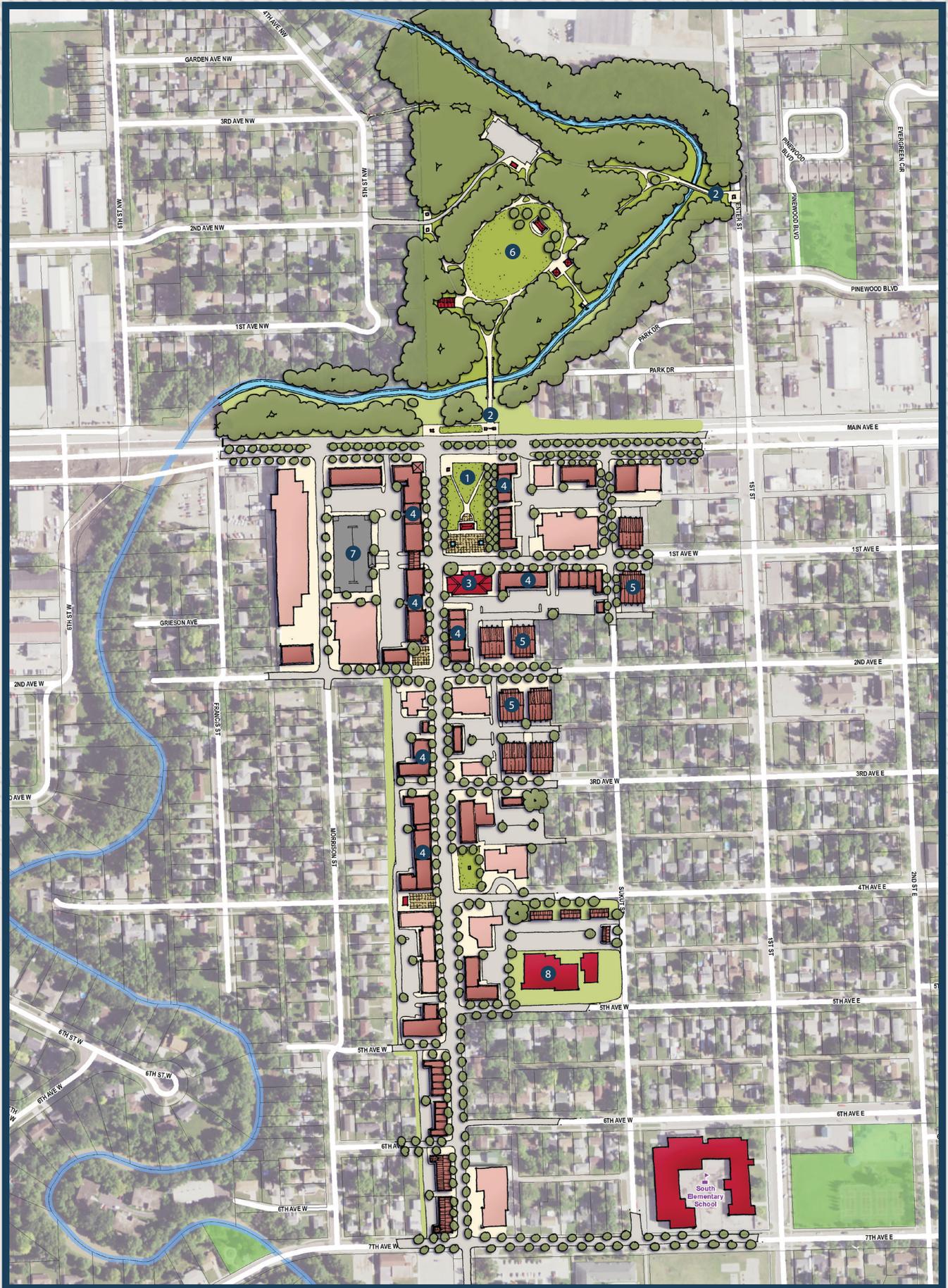
Apartment houses are smaller multifamily units where the building appears to be a large house divided into several units. This medium intensity of multifamily development could provide a great transition from the new mixed-used buildings along Sheyenne Street and Main Avenue to the single-family residential units present in the adjacent neighborhoods.

6 Armour Park Redesign

The re-design of Armour Park should ensure that this important civic space retains its park-like qualities while enhancing its ability to be activated with people, events, and public art. Spaces should be accessible and designed for safe active use and public events, as well as quiet contemplation and respite. Vegetation at the entrance along the river should be thinned so that a clear view of the park is visible from Main Avenue and the new downtown square.

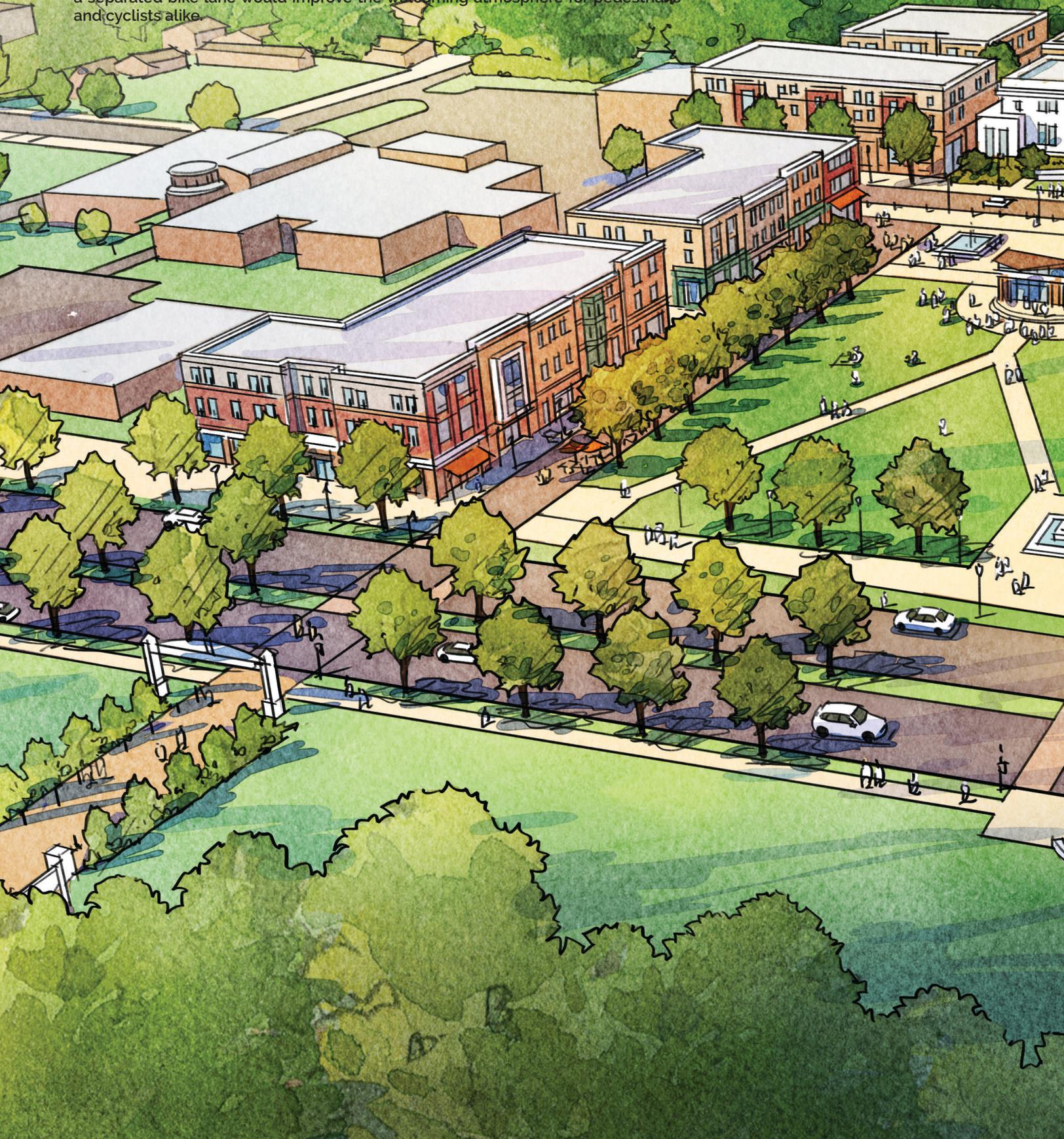
7 Possible Parking Garage

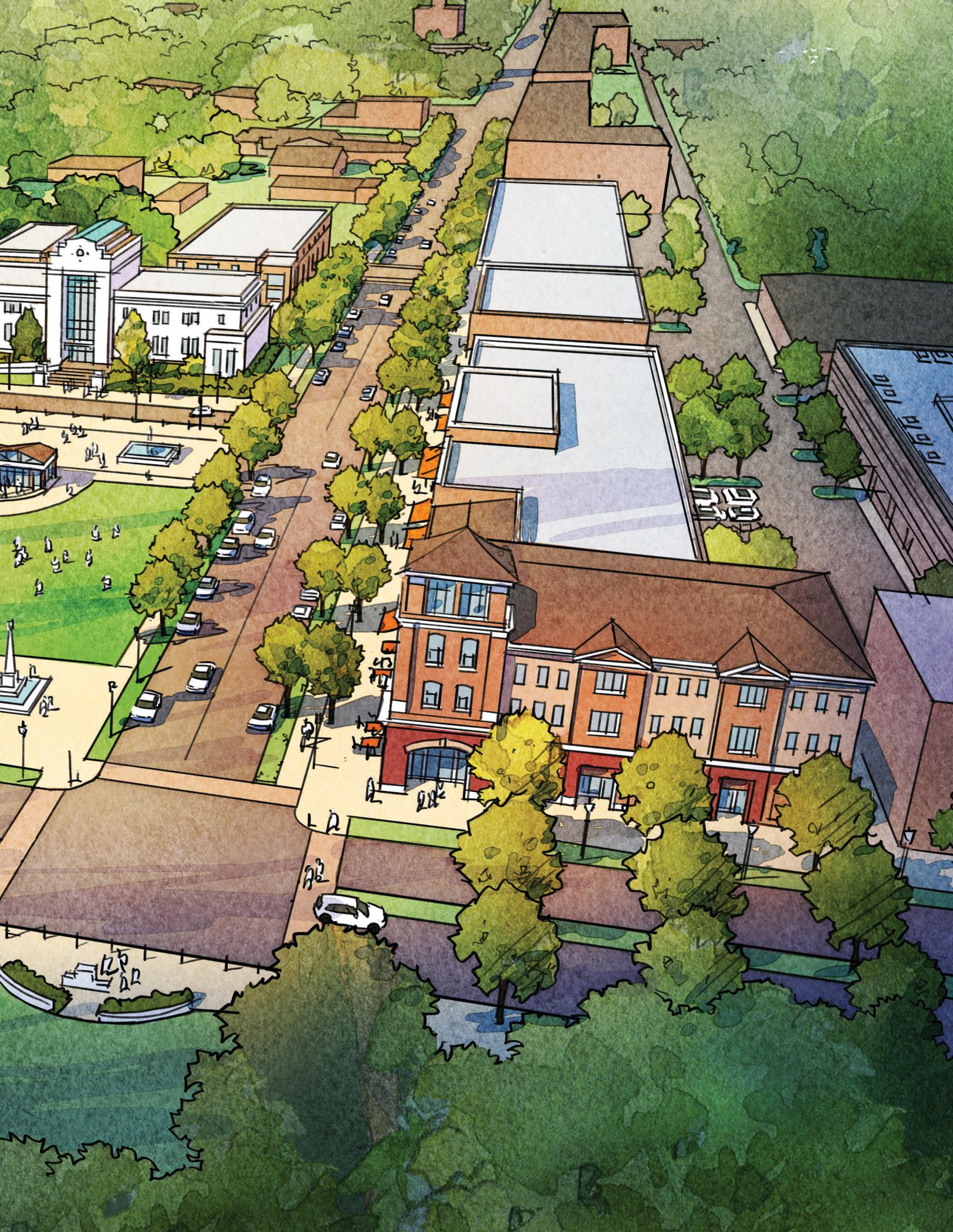
If more businesses and residential units are added to downtown, a certain amount of parking will be needed to serve those uses. Additional parking located in the downtown should be hidden behind buildings with clear wayfinding signage directing people to it. New surface parking lots and a municipal parking structure are likely to be necessary to accommodate the needs of the new development in the area.



Downtown Bird's Eye View

As the main community gathering space for local residents, West Fargo's downtown could provide a much needed location where people could meet daily or for special occasions. This rendering demonstrates the possibility of the downtown to become just that, creating a mixed-use area where day-to-day services are available, along with office space and some additional housing located above retail. Parking would be provided behind buildings or in a parking garage creating a more walkable and attractive streetscape, while still being easily accessible by car. Wider sidewalks and a separated bike lane would improve the welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians and cyclists alike.









32ND AVE W AND SHEYENNE STREET

The 32nd Ave W. and Sheyenne Street intersection currently includes a gas station and a few businesses built in a suburban style of development. With the construction of the new ice arena currently underway, this intersection has the potential to provide a new center of activity for people living in the southern part of the city. Redevelopment of the area into a mixed-use node, including community-serving commercial uses with parking hidden behind buildings, along with additional townhouse or small scale multifamily development, would bring more people to the area and provide a secondary gathering space to complement the downtown area. Providing easy access for people to visit on foot or bike would allow nearby residents to choose non-vehicular transportation alternatives and begin reducing the traffic congestion on roads in the area. During the planning process, we also heard that there is a desire to have access to the Sheyenne River, which could be provided in this location on the northeast parcel.

1 Proposed Development

The northwest quadrant of the intersection is already under review for future development.

2 New Mixed-Use Buildings

This plan illustrates how new mixed-use buildings could be incorporated and located throughout this area. The orientation of these new buildings defines blocks, creates walkable streets, and brings buildings up to the sidewalk to create an activated pedestrian environment. These new mixed-use buildings would incorporate retail/restaurants uses on the ground floor with residential units on the upper floors to create 24/7 vibrancy in this area and provide affordable apartment style housing.

3 New Plaza

Incorporating a civic space within the redevelopment of this intersection would create another gathering space for events and daily enjoyment by users. This plan shows a small plaza at the intersection of 32nd Avenue East and Sheyenne Street. This public space could provide a location for outdoor dining and gathering, promoting investment in new mixed-use buildings. It would create a destination and place for daily civic life for both the community and passersby.

4 Hidden Parking

Relocation of parking to the interior of the blocks, hidden behind buildings, helps reduce the focus on the automobile and create a more pedestrian friendly and inviting environment for people to be in. Because the parking is located in the interior of the block and screened by buildings, proper signage is important to allow it to be easily found.

5 More Housing Choices

Townhouse style housing units are not commonly found in West Fargo. These attached units are shown as facing onto a common open courtyard with access for parking via back alleys. Increasing the amount and diversity of housing can help to address several important community objectives — particularly economic vitality, reduction in energy consumption, decreased traffic congestion, and social equity. Dramatically changing demographics in West Fargo and across the country are working in our favor — the baby-boomers are looking to downsize and live in close proximity to work, entertainment, culture, and services, while the millennials (students and young professionals) are looking to become active participants in an urban lifestyle, drive less (if at all), and also want to live close to job and entertainment centers. A greater diversity of housing choices will ensure a broader and healthier customer and employment base to support new and expanding downtown business, in turn boosting economic vitality.

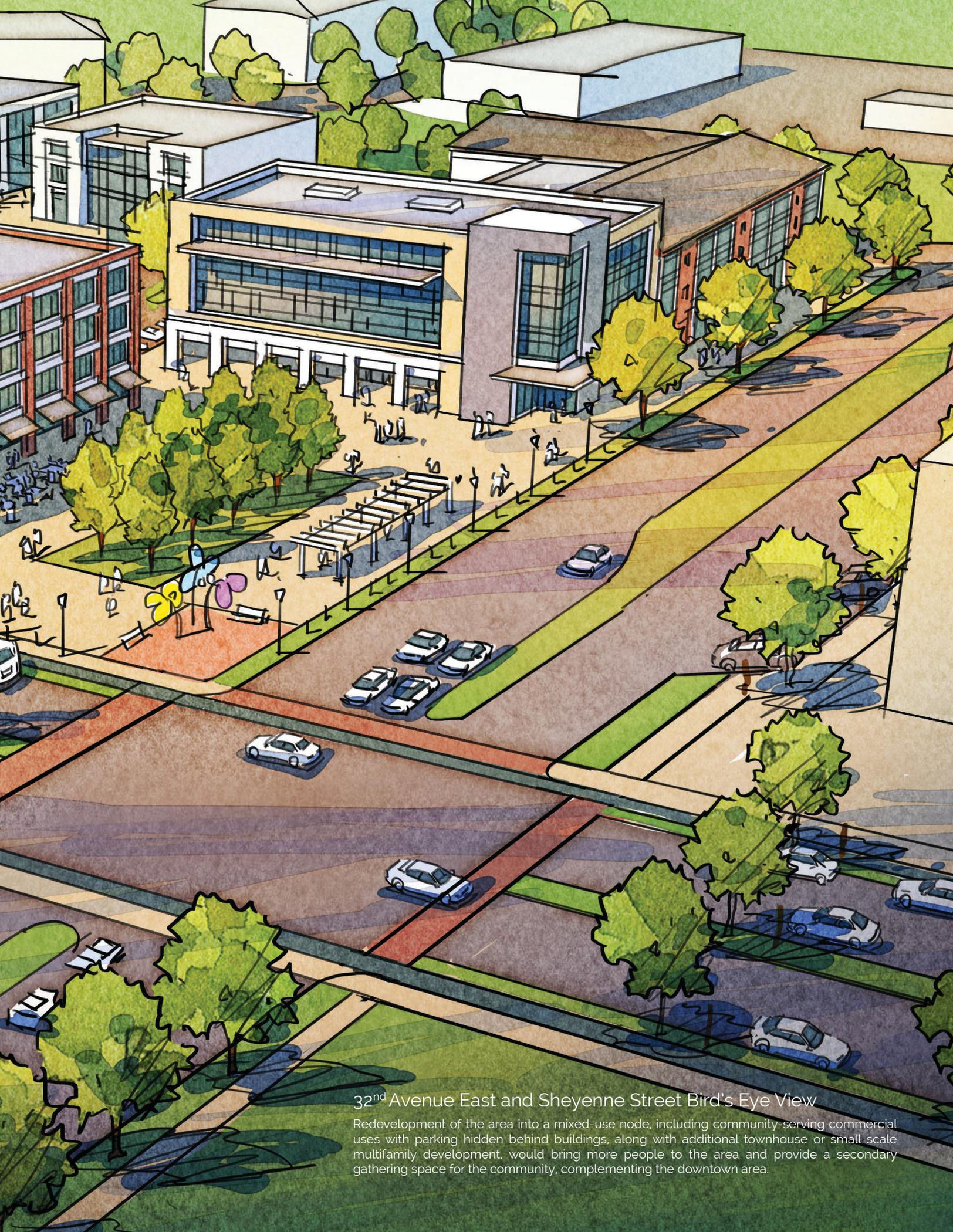


6 River Access

The Sheyenne River is, in most part of the city, hidden behind private properties and not easily accessible by all for enjoyment. River access in this area could allow local resident to take advantage of this great asset for fishing or relaxation.







32nd Avenue East and Sheyenne Street Bird's Eye View

Redevelopment of the area into a mixed-use node, including community-serving commercial uses with parking hidden behind buildings, along with additional townhouse or small scale multifamily development, would bring more people to the area and provide a secondary gathering space for the community, complementing the downtown area.

THE WILDS SOUTH

1 Neighborhood Central Civic Space

A civic space with townhouses framing it would provide a central gathering place for the neighborhood where events and gatherings of all sorts could take place. An ice skating rink could even be provided in the winter on the plaza area and the small red civic building could be used for a café or public restrooms/ice skating hut.

2 Complete Neighborhood

The plan includes a small civic space at the entrance of the neighborhood to the north, where commercial uses could be located, within walking distance for residents. The neighborhood plan integrates a range of housing types at different price points. Rowhouses and detached homes on small and medium sized lots nearer to the center of the neighborhood accommodate for young families, retirees and others. As you move away from the central civic space, lots increase in size providing a wide range of housing types for all. All housing faces onto the streets or civic spaces, providing continuous energy and a sense that something is always happening, with residents functioning as guardians of the civic space. Rear alleys are well-lit and safe providing access to garages located behind homes and where alleys are not present, garages are pushed back from the façade of the homes, and with front porches and stoops being the main architectural elements.

3 Framing the Civic Space

This plan shows a narrow two-lane street around the neighborhood park, fronted by attached buildings that would frame the space nicely as well as provide a housing option not often available in West Fargo.

West Fargo has seen tremendous growth within the last few decades and all of this growth has occurred in the form of conventional suburban development. This plan shows how future residential development could take place following the newer model of traditional neighborhood development which creates a vibrant neighborhood that includes several types of residential buildings (townhouses, duplexes, small, medium and large homes), as well as opportunities for some small-scale mixed-use commercial along 52nd Ave.). The illustrative plan also shows the creation of public parks and greenways with the front of houses facing them, providing "eyes on the parks" and making them safer, more welcoming and accessible to all (rather than having backyards face on the open space like many subdivisions currently do). For lots close to the center of the neighborhood, rear alleys and lanes provide access to garages that are placed behind the homes, allowing for a more interesting and walkable streetscape. On lots where front driveway access is provided, garages are set back at least 20 feet from the facade of the building so that the garage doors are not the prominent architectural feature of the house and allows any cars parked in the driveway to be behind the front wall of the house. This also keeps the streetscape more inviting by having home facades and porches on the street.

4 5 Mixing Housing Types

To meet the diverse needs of a greater number of people, more housing choices should be provided in new neighborhoods, offering a little something for everyone. West Fargo's existing residential housing stock is predominantly single-family homes and large multifamily developments typically gathered together in large suburban apartment complexes surrounded by massive parking lots and blank walls of garages. Mixing housing types within the same neighborhood, to include single-family homes, but also townhouses, duplexes, smaller apartment buildings, and condo buildings would be more appealing to a wider variety of residents and enhance the character of the city.

6 Community Gardens

The plan integrates small-scale community gardens throughout the neighborhood to provide opportunities for people to grow their own food. Such a use of the land can also help build a sense of community for neighbors.

7 Sheyenne Diversion

The Sheyenne Diversion right of way presents opportunities for recreational amenities such as walking/bike paths that would provide an important north/south connection for the entire length of the city. Such a facility could also be helpful in connecting various existing parks and neighborhoods of the city.

8 Sustainable Stormwater Feature/Park

Through the use of urban design, landscape architecture, and civil engineering, the City of West Fargo has the opportunity to greatly advance its existing sustainable stormwater management. This plan shows the use of stormwater capture ponds as an interconnected system of civic spaces designed to collect, temporarily store and treat stormwater runoff. These features could also act as park space with housing facing on them.

51STAVE W

The Wilds
South

WILDFLOWER PL W

8TH CT W

8TH ST W

ALBERT DR W

S 1518







A NEIGHBORHOOD FOR ALL

The graphics below depict the various types of development intensity that could be found in a single neighborhood in West Fargo. These varied examples of street and housing types, planned together can provide in a complete neighborhood where residents can walk to local services and where various housing types and affordability levels are offered for all to enjoy. These areas are called Character Districts and could easily be replicated throughout the community in new neighborhoods.

CD-2 Large Lot Suburban

CD-2 consists of primarily low density single-family detached residential units. The houses are set up further from the street and there is considerable space between houses. The streets have sidewalks and street trees. Garages are accessed via back alleys or tucked several feet in behind the main facade of the building to accentuate the house facade and front door rather than the garage.

CD-3 Small Lot Suburban

CD-3 similarly consists of primarily low density single-family detached residential units, but could also include a few duplexes throughout. The houses are set closer to the street and lots are smaller leaving less space between houses. The streets have sidewalks and street trees. Garages are accessed via back alleys or tucked several feet in behind the main facade of the building to accentuate the house facade and front door rather than the garage.

CD-4 General Urban

CD-4 consists of a medium density area within the neighborhood, often located at the core or on the outskirts. This area has a mix of residential building types (single-family detached, duplexes, rowhouses, apartment units above retail) and may also include some neighborhood retail uses such as coffee shops, bakeries, small convenient stores, etc. The buildings are set closer to the street often located right up to the edge of the right a way. The streets have sidewalks, street trees with occasional outdoor seating when businesses are present. Garages are accessed via back alleys or are tucked several feet in behind the main facade of the building to accentuate the house facade and front door rather than the garage.

CD-2



CD-3



CD-4



THE LAGOONS

The site of the lagoons may be a good location for residential or mixed-use development considering the demand for more industrial space within city limits, the lagoons, if moved, could present a great location for an extended industrial village. This plan presents an alternative to the conventional industrial park, imagining the lagoons as a self-sustaining center for industry and “making” in the region. People who currently work in West Fargo’s existing industrial area must drive to meet all of their daily needs. The Lagoons Industrial Village could accommodate a variety of manufacturing, office, and other industrial uses, as well as the services and recreational opportunities needed to support workers and reduce the number of car trips on local roads. Designed around a network of interconnected streets, the Lagoons Industrial Village would provide a healthy and convenient place for workers. This area also presents opportunities for expansion of the local airport to welcome larger corporate jets, allowing executives to easily come and go from destinations around the country.

1 Industrial Park Civic Spaces

A square or plaza is located within a 5-minute walk of every building, with one outdoor civic space provided in each of the four quadrants of the plan. Some of these spaces could accommodate a soccer field and/or a fitness center to provide for active team recreation and convenient exercise space for workers during breaks.

2 Support Services

The Industrial Village is intended to function as a place where office and factory workers can meet their daily needs within a short walk. These services might include restaurants, dry cleaning, hardware store, and other services that are often utilized during lunch breaks or after work. It is likely that these service businesses would also attract the community at large because of the interesting activities taking place and the attention to the quality of the public realm. This area might also serve as a viable location for nightlife, with its separation from residential areas and ample parking made available when office workers leave at the end of the business day. Some of these smaller format buildings could also serve as business incubator space and/or makerspace.

3 Factory Buildings

The plan includes locations for clusters of manufacturing and warehouse buildings, for both large-scale and medium-sized footprints. This arrangement allows for these industrial uses to be physically separated from office and retail. It accommodates for potential noise and fumes, while still being close enough to be a reasonable walk to nearby support services. Like historic factories, the Industrial Park Plan shows the buildings pulled up to the street and located close to adjacent buildings to enable this area to remain convenient for walking. Light Imprint design principles have been incorporated to promote sustainable stormwater solutions. Some of these buildings could integrate incubator or makerspaces to provide spaces for smaller startups. Large, medium and small-scale facilities should be offered to allow for a business to run its full lifecycle in the industrial Village moving in the area as the business grows.

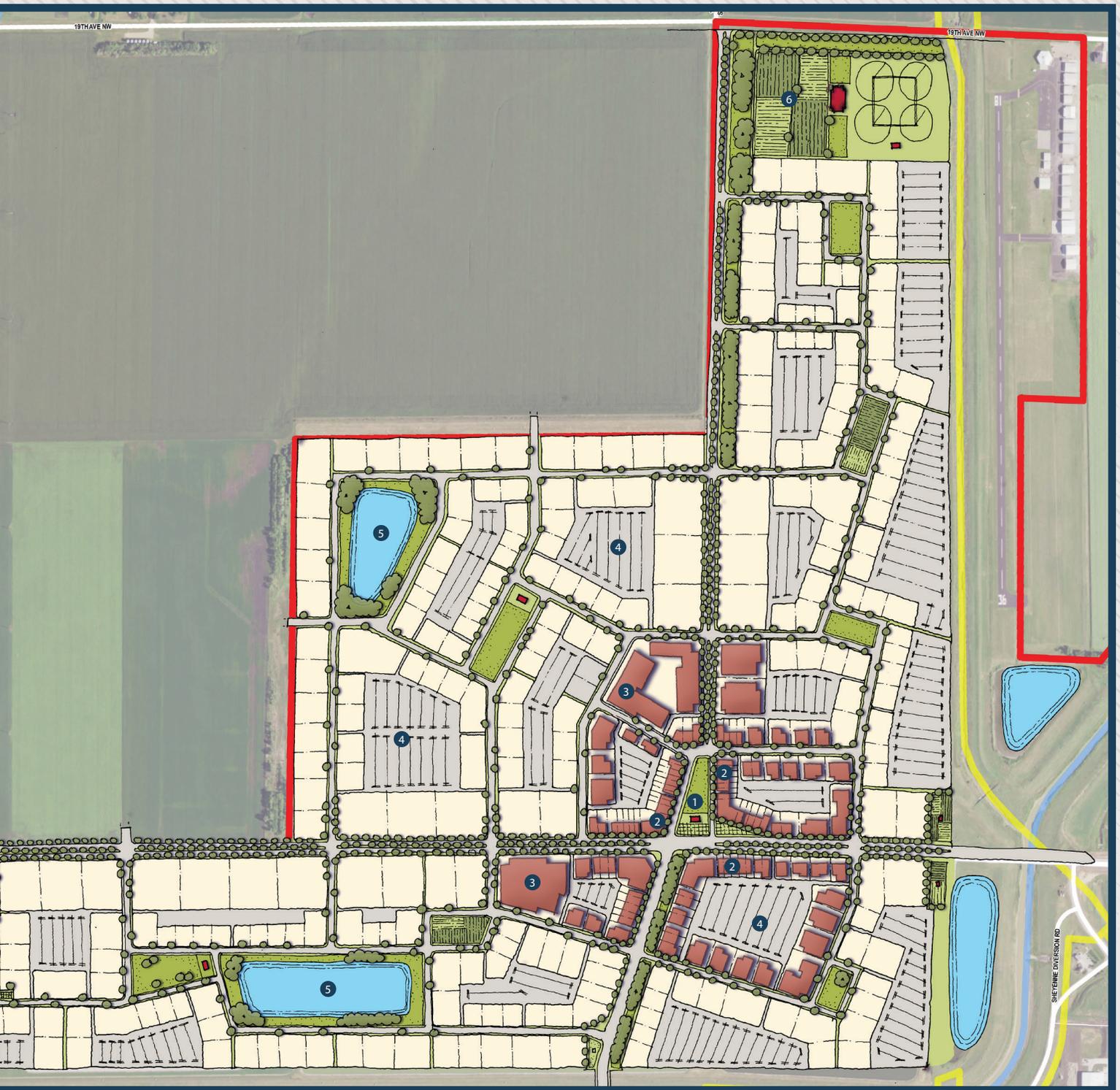
4 Hidden Parking and Shipping

Surface parking lots and delivery/shipping vehicle circulation will be provided at the interior of the blocks, hidden behind buildings, help reduce the focus on the automobile and create a more pedestrian friendly and inviting environment for people to be in.



5 Stormwater Feature / Park

Through the use of urban design, landscape architecture, and civil engineering the City of West Fargo has the opportunity to greatly advance its existing sustainable



stormwater management. This plan shows the use of stormwater capture ponds as an interconnected system of civic spaces designed to collect, temporarily store and treat stormwater runoff.

6 Agricultural Land

Agricultural land is located at the northern end of the industrial park. More agricultural land could also surround the park, providing significant tracts of land for agricultural production, as well as small plots for specialty crops. This agricultural land plays an

important role in letting the Industrial Park function as a self-sustaining, closed loop system. Food grown in this area can be used by nearby manufacturers or served in the local restaurants. For instance, locally grown barley used by a brewery in the industrial village to produce a craft beer that could then be served in a restaurant down the street.







ACTION PLAN

A graphic of a target with concentric circles in red and white, partially visible in the top left corner.

SETTING TARGETS

PROJECTS, PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

Implementing the city's comprehensive plan depends greatly on the ability of property owners, developers, city staff, elected officials, and the general public to work together for a common purpose. The "action plan" presented in this document organizes projects and action items important to helping West Fargo meet its economic and quality of life goals while informing future city investments and key decision-making. The intent of the action plan is threefold. First, it provides decision-makers with a blueprint for implementation. Second, clearly defined projects and action items identify public or private investment opportunities that are healthy, sustainable, and achievable. Third, regularly measuring achievements against the action plan (i.e., a "community report card") provides stakeholders with the opportunity to track progress and hold elected officials accountable for implementing the plan. The structure of the action plan does not require all projects or action items be completed in sequence. Instead, it promotes flexibility and partnership opportunities between the city and other stakeholders for implementing the vision in phases, consistent with the pace of growth, emerging regional initiatives, or available funding. The information that follows summarizes key components of the city's action plan.

A graphic of a target with concentric circles in teal and white, partially visible in the bottom left corner.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

SETTING TARGETS

The following targets define a desired, promised, minimum, or aspirational set of directives that should drive decision-making. The targets are implemented through specific projects, plans, or initiatives recommended in the Plan Implementation Phase; with each decision improving conditions consistent with the comprehensive plan.

► BALANCED BUDGET

Keep a balanced budget for the city each year that does not borrow large sums of money from fund reserves to cover regular operating expenses.

► LIVABILITY INDICATORS

A set of Livability Indicators has been developed to help the city, Park District and School District jointly track progress on various quality of life measures.

| | | Benchmark | Target |
|----------------|--|-----------|----------|
| FORESTRY | Percent of Planning Area Covered by Tree Canopy | 2.70% | 20% |
| POLICE | Number of Sworn Officers per 1,000 Residents | 14 | 18 |
| SCHOOLS | District Attendance Rate | 96% | 92% |
| | District Graduation Rate | 90% | 92% |
| | NDSA Scores - Math | 53.8% | 75% |
| | NDSA Scores - English | 55.6% | 73% |
| PARKS | NDSA Scores - Science | 61.7% | 63% |
| | Number of Participants | 30,000 | 45,000 |
| | Acres of Park per 1,000 residents | 12.88 | 12 |
| TRANSPORTATION | Average Proximity to a Park via Greenway | 90% | 100% |
| | Percent of arterials with bikeways on one or more sides | 85% | 100% |
| | Percent of roadways with sidewalks on both sides | 70% | 100% |
| | Percent population within ¼ mile of a bicycle path | 90% | 100% |
| HOUSING | Percent population within ¼ mile of fixed route transit stop | 45% | 80% |
| | Housing Diversity (percent of more than two units) | 29% | 35% |
| ECONOMIC DEV | Jobs/Housing Ratio | 0.92 | 1.2 |
| | People who live and work in the city | 15% | 20% |
| | Food/Beverage Sales per Capita | \$954 | \$1,300 |
| | Retail Sales per Capita | \$19,363 | \$23,000 |

PROJECTS, PLANS, POLICIES, & INITIATIVES

New or amended projects, plans, policies, and initiatives are recommended throughout this comprehensive plan to fulfill the community's vision for growth and quality of life. A brief summary of these items follows:

► CITY PLANS AND POLICIES

In order to implement many of the recommendations in this document, revisions need to be made to the local zoning regulations, as well as supporting policies and ordinances. Additional plans and studies for specific sites will be needed to support their implementation.

► CITY INITIATIVES

New initiatives led by the city will address a wide range of topics important to promoting economic development and improving the quality of life for residents. These initiatives are a critical opportunity to build local capacity by involving active and new members of the community in seeing through the recommendations of this Plan.

► CAPITAL PROJECTS

Capital projects identified for the city address existing deficiencies and/or anticipated future year needs. Implementation of projects recommended in this comprehensive plan provides additional capacity to serve the magnitude and timing of development depicted on the Deferred Development and Growth Map. Some of the projects listed in the matrix require coordination with responsible county or state agencies.

► SPECIFIC PLANS AND STUDIES

Some plans or initiatives recommended in the Plan Implementation Matrix have already been developed or are currently under development. The city's Planning Department should coordinate with other city departments to request funds and schedule special studies consistent with the timeframes presented in the matrix.



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Plan Implementation Matrix helps policymakers and stakeholders implement this comprehensive plan. Each project, policy, or initiative identified in the document is also listed in the matrix. A brief description, budget allowance, funding options, timeframe, and responsible party provided for each item will help guide city officials with implementation activities. Many items in the matrix are underway, while others should be started with adoption of this Plan.

| Big Idea | Recommendation |
|--|---|
| Grow the Economy | Enhance an Aggressive Economic Development Recruitment Package |
| | Pursue Food/Dining Opportunities in West Fargo |
| | Initiate Independent Retail/Microretail Pilot Program as Part of Mixed-Use Projects |
| | Continue Promoting West Fargo Economic Development and Incentive Program |
| | Consider City of West Fargo Initiated Tax Increment Financing District(s) |
| | Develop Industrial Village Concept in Northwest Sector of the City |
| | Create a Distinct Market Position for West Fargo to Encourage Economic Investment and Expand Customer Case for Local Businesses |
| | Target a Balanced Mix of Uses in Key Nodes |
| | Enhance Gateways and Districts in West Fargo with Branded Signage |
| Strengthen Neighborhoods and Expand Housing Choice | Continue to Explore Meeting Facility |
| | Invest in Older Neighborhoods |
| | Improve Neighborhood Structure |
| | Increase Mix of Uses |
| | Concentrate Housing within Mixed-Use Areas |
| | Improve Neighborhood Design |
| | Support the Growing Senior Population |
| | Allow Accessory Dwelling Units |
| | Diversify Housing Choices |
| | Allow Reduced Unit Size |
| Explore Ways to Improve Design while Keeping Infrastructure and Housing Costs Down | |
| Provide Quality and Coordinated Parks and Recreation Services | Develop a Comprehensive Park District Master Plan |
| | Strengthen Partnership |
| | Continue to Use National Standards To Help Plan For Needed Amenities |



| Lead Department or Entity | Other Partners | Term | Funding Source |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Economic Development | | Short | General Fund (GF) |
| Economic Development | | Short | GF |
| Economic Development | | Short/Mid | PILOT, TIF |
| Economic Development | | Short | GF |
| Economic Development | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short/Mid | TIF |
| Economic Development | | Mid/Long | TIF, SID, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development | | Short/Mid | GF |
| Economic Development | | Short | GF |
| Economic Development | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short | GF |
| Economic Development | | Short | Creative Financing |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short/Mid | Creative Financing, CDBG, SID |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short/Mid | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short/Mid | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short/Mid | LIHTC, PILOT, Creative Financing |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short/Mid | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short/Mid | GF |
| Park District | City of West Fargo | Short | Internal Financing |
| Park District | City of West Fargo, West Fargo School District | Short | GF |
| Park District | | Ongoing | |

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Plan Implementation Matrix helps policymakers and stakeholders implement this comprehensive plan. Each project, policy, or initiative identified in the document is also listed in the matrix. A brief description, budget allowance, funding options, timeframe, and responsible party provided for each item will help guide city officials with implementation activities. Many items in the matrix are underway, while others should be started with adoption of this Plan.

| Big Idea | Recommendation |
|--|---|
| Promote Transportation Choice and Mobility | Improve Network Design |
| | Improve Parking Design |
| | Enhanced Transit Access to Fargo |
| | Housing and Land Use Policy |
| | Co-working Space |
| | Travel Demand Management and Carpooling |
| | Adopt Citywide Complete Streets Policy |
| | Address Major Barriers to Non-motorized Connectivity |
| | Implement Safe Routes to School Program |
| Improve Safety for All Modes via Vision Zero Program | |
| Provide Reliable Services and Municipal Transparency | Formally Adopt an Infrastructure Investment Strategy and Capital Improvements Plan |
| | Formally Adopt a Policy that Categorizes Infrastructure Saving and Spending Dollars in the City |
| | Coordinate with Service Providers |
| | Increase Local Tree Canopy to 20 percent by 2030 |
| | Become a "Digital City" and Provide Greater Access to Information and Analysis via the Internet |
| | Implement a Regional Stormwater Management Strategy |
| | Evaluate the City's Recycling Program and Identify Opportunities to Maximize its Return on Investment |
| Be Innovative with Waste Management | |
| Protect and Enhance Cultural and Natural Resources | Create a Public Art Master Plan |
| | Increase Tree Canopy Coverage |
| | Foster and/or Create Partnerships with Regional Conservation and Environmental Organizations |



| Lead Department or Entity | Other Partners | Term | Funding Source |
|--|---|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Engineering | Public Works, Planning & Com. Dev. | Short | GF |
| Engineering, Planning & Com. Dev, Public Works | | Short | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | Economic Development | Short/Mid | GF |
| Planning & Com. Dev. | Engineering, Public Works, PD, Fire, Economic Development | Short | Internal |
| Economic Development | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short/Mid | GF |
| Public Works, Engineering, Planning | FM Metro COG | Short/Mid | GF |
| Public Works, Engineering, Planning | | Short | GF |
| Public Works, Engineering, Planning | | Short | SID, Creative Financing |
| Public Works, Engineering, Planning | West Fargo School District, Public Works | Short | GF |
| Engineering | Public Works, Planning & Com. Dev. | Short/Mid | Fed. Funding, SID, Creative Fin. |
| Engineering, Finance, Administration, Public Works | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short | GF, W/S Fund |
| Administration, Finance | | Short | Internal |
| Administration | Finance, Public Works | Short | Internal |
| Public Works | West Fargo Park District | Mid/Long | Forestry Fee, GF, Creative Fin. |
| Communications | All Departments | Short/Mid | GF |
| Engineering, Public Works | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short | SID |
| Public Works, Finance | | Short | Internal |
| Public Works, Finance | | Short/Mid | internal |
| Planning & Com. Dev., Economic Development, Public Works, The Arts Partnership | Communications, Administration, Engineering | Short | GF, Creative Financing |
| Public Works | West Fargo Park District | S/M/L | Forestry Fee, GF, Creative Fin. |
| Public Works, Planning & Com. Dev., Engineering | Cass Soil Conservation, SE Cass WRD, ND Game and Fish, | Short | Internal |

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Plan Implementation Matrix helps policymakers and stakeholders implement this comprehensive plan. Each project, policy, or initiative identified in the document is also listed in the matrix. A brief description, budget allowance, funding options, timeframe, and responsible party provided for each item will help guide city officials with implementation activities. Many items in the matrix are underway, while others should be started with adoption of this Plan.

| Big Idea | Recommendation |
|--|--|
| Increase Community Resiliency | Manage Inland Flooding |
| | Improve Emergency Preparedness |
| | Consider Zero Waste Initiative |
| | Increase Energy Conservation and Efficiency |
| | Considering Climate and Infrastructure |
| Establish Downtown as a Cultural Center for West Fargo | Establish a Recruitment Strategy to Grow Business and Bring in New Investment to Downtown |
| | Create a Recruitment Strategy for Downtown Mixed-use Residential |
| | Consider a Micro-enterprise Retail Project In or Near Downtown |
| | Promote and Augment the Façade Improvement Program to Assist Investments in Downtown Buildings in Conjunction with Design Guidelines |
| | Develop a Comprehensive Marketing and Branding Program for Downtown |
| | Continue to Promote the Downtown West Fargo Business Association |
| | Contemplate a West Fargo Business Improvement District (BID) |
| | Enhance Gateways and Wayfinding into Downtown West Fargo with a Consistent Sign System |
| | Create a Targeted Strategy Focused on Bringing Millennials and Active Empty Nesters to Downtown |
| | Develop the West Fargo Creative Spaces Initiative |



| Lead Department or Entity | Other Partners | Term | Funding Source |
|---|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Public Works, Engineering | | S/M/L | SID, Creative Financing |
| Emergency Management | All Departments | Short | Creative Financing |
| Public Works | | Short/Mid | Creative Financing |
| Public Works, Finance, Administration | | S/M/L | Creative Financing |
| Administration | All Departments | Short/Mid | Creative Financing |
| Economic Development | | Short | GF, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development | | Short | PILOT, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development | | Short | PILOT, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development, Finance, Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short | GF, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development, Communications | | Short | GF |
| Economic Development | | S/M/L | Creative Financing |
| Economic Development, Finance | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short/Mid | BID Financing |
| Economic Development, Planning & Com. Dev., Public Works, Engineering | | Short | GF, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development, Planning & Com. Dev. | | Short | GF, Creative Financing |
| Economic Development | Planning & Com. Dev. | Short | GF, Creative Financing |

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

With adoption of this comprehensive plan, city officials should allocate municipal resources with specific recommended outcomes in mind that meet the goals of this Plan. This includes funding specific projects, plans, and initiatives consistent within the timeframes presented in the Plan Implementation Matrix. These expenditures are critical to advancing the goals of the plan and preparing West Fargo for a prosperous future.

► CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

The city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) guides future funding, schedule, and construction of capital improvements so that necessary infrastructure is in place consistent with demand. It distributes expensive projects over time, helping decision-makers coordinate improvements for greater efficiency and assess short-term financing requirements in the context of long-term fiscal needs and constraints. A well-coordinated and regularly-updated CIP document protects the community from abrupt tax increases.

Projects in the CIP should focus on short-term and long-term investments identified in this comprehensive plan. Other projects recommended from year-to-year should "buy results" that citizens value, measured by fulfillment of the Vision and Guiding Principles, before being included in the CIP document.

► ANNUAL BUDGET

The City Commission adopts an annual budget authorizing spending for the coming year. It authorizes spending, assures the budget is balanced, and levies property tax for the budget year.

The first year of the CIP should become the annual capital budget submitted concurrent with the operating budget for consideration by the City Commission. The city should also implement a five-year budget strategy to allow for a more comprehensive approach to planning for future expenditures. The allocation of funding should direct resources toward specific projects detailed in the comprehensive master plan, so that results can be seen.

► COMMUNITY REPORT CARD

A community report card will monitor and evaluate progress in implementing recommendations in the comprehensive plan. It should give a full and honest assessment of conditions in the planning area; and be used specifically to monitor performance, measure achievement, and reflect change generated by the plan.

Formal presentation of the document should be made to the City Commission each January.

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