

GENERAL PLAN

FOR URBAN RENEWAL

AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Approved May 2018

The West Fargo General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development was reviewed and approved by the West Fargo Planning and Zoning Commission on April 9, 2018.

WEST FARGO PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Tom McDougall - Chairman
Joe Kolb - Vice Chairman

Scott Diamond
David Gust
Shane Lebahn
Jana Reinke
April Walker

The West Fargo General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development was adopted by the West Fargo City Commission on May 21, 2018.

WEST FARGO CITY COMMISSION

Rich Mattern, President
Duane Hanson
Mark Simmons
Mike Thorstad
Mark Wentz

WEST FARGO PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF

Larry M. Weil – Community Development Director
Tim Solberg- Planning Director
Lisa Sankey - Planner

Member Mike Thorstad introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION APPROVING WEST FARGO GENERAL PLAN FOR
URBAN RENEWAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, the City of West Fargo is in the process of amending its West Fargo General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development, which was adopted on May 17, 1993 and amended on November 29, 2004, October 13, 2008, August 3, 2015, and June 19, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the City has studied properties throughout the City and identified blighted areas which are potential redevelopment areas, as well as commercial and industrial areas which are intended for development; and

WHEREAS, development, rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment, or a combination thereof, of the area or properties is necessary in the interest of the public economy, health, safety, morals, or welfare of the residents of the municipality;

WHEREAS, the City Commission held a public hearing on May 21, 2018, concerning the approval of an updated West Fargo General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing the Plan, the City Commissioners of the City of West Fargo believe it is in the best interest of the City to adopt and approve the attached West Fargo General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Commission of the City of West Fargo, North Dakota, that the attached West Fargo General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development is hereby approved and adopted and that such plan supersedes all prior General Plans for Urban Renewal and Urban Development, which have been adopted by the City in the past.

APPROVED:

BY: 
President of the Board of City
Commissioners

ATTEST:


Tina Fisk, City Administrator

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly seconded by Commissioner Mark Simmons. On roll call vote, the following commissioners voted aye: Duane Hanson, Mark Simmons, Mike Thorstad and Rich Mattern. The following commissioners voted nay: None. The following commissioners were absent and not voting: Mark Wentz. The majority having voted aye, the motion carried and the resolution was duly adopted.

WEST FARGO GENERAL PLAN FOR URBAN RENEWAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the dangers of slums and blight as well as the need to create economic growth and development, the City of West Fargo has initiated a long-range program to foster positive change pursuant to the North Dakota Century Code Urban Renewal Law.

Consistent with the sound needs of the municipality as a whole, the primary objective of this plan is to stimulate, through the public actions and commitments specified herein, private investment in the development, rehabilitation or redevelopment of the renewal or development area by private enterprise.

It is the intent of the City's program to effectuate the following:

1. Elimination of slums and blighted areas as defined under the North Dakota Century Code Urban Renewal Law; and/or
2. Implementation of an economic development program including tax increment financing to facilitate projects that create economic growth and development.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are to be achieved through the development, rehabilitation or redevelopment of the renewal or development areas identified within the General Plan:

1. To preserve and create an environment within the renewal or development areas which will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the City and to preserve existing values of properties within and adjacent to the renewal or development areas.
2. To remove environmental deficiencies that deter development and inhibit rehabilitation or redevelopment of the renewal or development areas.
3. To eliminate substandard and obsolete buildings, blighting influences, and environmental deficiencies, which presently detract from the functional unity, aesthetic appearance, and economic well-being of the identified areas of the City, and to establish conditions which will prevent the recurrence of blight and blighting conditions.
4. To strengthen the economic well-being of the development and renewal areas and the City by increasing industrial and retail activity, taxable values, and job opportunities.
5. To eliminate blighting influences such as incompatible land use relationship.

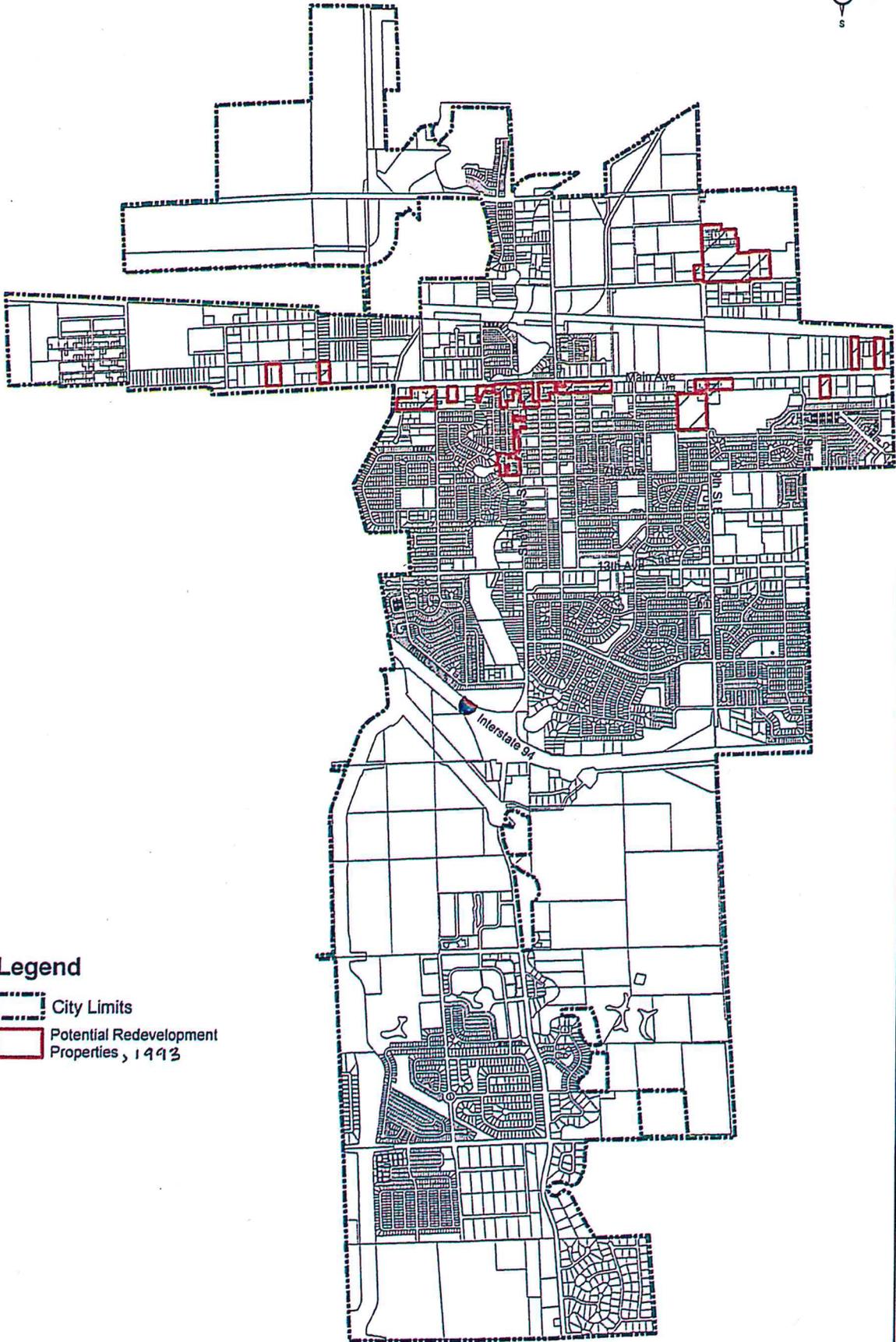
6. To provide for parcels of sufficient size to permit and attract economic and sound new development.
7. To provide efficient use of underutilized land.
8. To assure development of high standards in site planning, use compatibility, buildings, and creation of an environment that will promote new development in areas.
9. To attract and retain businesses that pay favorable wages to the benefit of the citizens and to prevent overburdening to public social service agencies.
10. To attract and retain businesses that do not damage the physical environment which is a social and economic burden to all.
11. To address the development imbalance between residential and nonresidential uses which exists in West Fargo by expanding and diversifying the tax base.
12. To spend public economic development dollars and resources wisely.
13. To provide for adequate public infrastructure improvements such as sewer, water, storm sewer, pedestrian facilities and streets conforming to good design and coordinated to facilitate development or redevelopment.
14. To provide for adequate project site improvements such as grading, drainage, landscaping, infrastructure, and other necessary site improvements.
15. To provide underground public and private utility services where practicable.
16. To provide for safe, efficient and attractive vehicular access to and circulation within the renewal and development areas.
17. To promote development or redevelopment which will be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and ordinances.

DESCRIPTION OF URBAN RENEWAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. Urban Renewal Area

Many of the areas in the City of West Fargo which have been identified as redevelopment areas for urban renewal were previously studied as part of the General Urban Renewal Plan of 1988 (Please refer to Figure 1) and were incorporated in the General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development which was approved in May 1993. The Plan has been amended and approved on several occasions. The most recent amendment was in June 2017.

Figure 1



Legend

-  City Limits
-  Potential Redevelopment Properties, 1993

However, the parcels identified as potential redevelopment properties have not been evaluated for changes in conditions since 1993. These areas contain slums or blighting conditions, which have had negative effects on the City. Some of these areas, which are in commercial and industrial areas, would also be eligible as Urban Development areas. A number of different types of uses are present ranging from residential to commercial to industrial. Some redevelopment has already occurred naturally, though development has not realized full development potential. Redevelopment of these areas should be studied closely and promote only those uses, which are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and Housing and Building Codes. The City should include within its work program a complete study of properties in the core area of the community to determine if structures are in good or standard condition, are deteriorating in condition and need structural improvements, or are in dilapidated condition and should be removed and the property redeveloped. The City should update the map of Potential Redevelopment Properties and develop strategies within a development/redevelopment plan to foster community support to address deteriorating conditions or redevelopment of the properties.

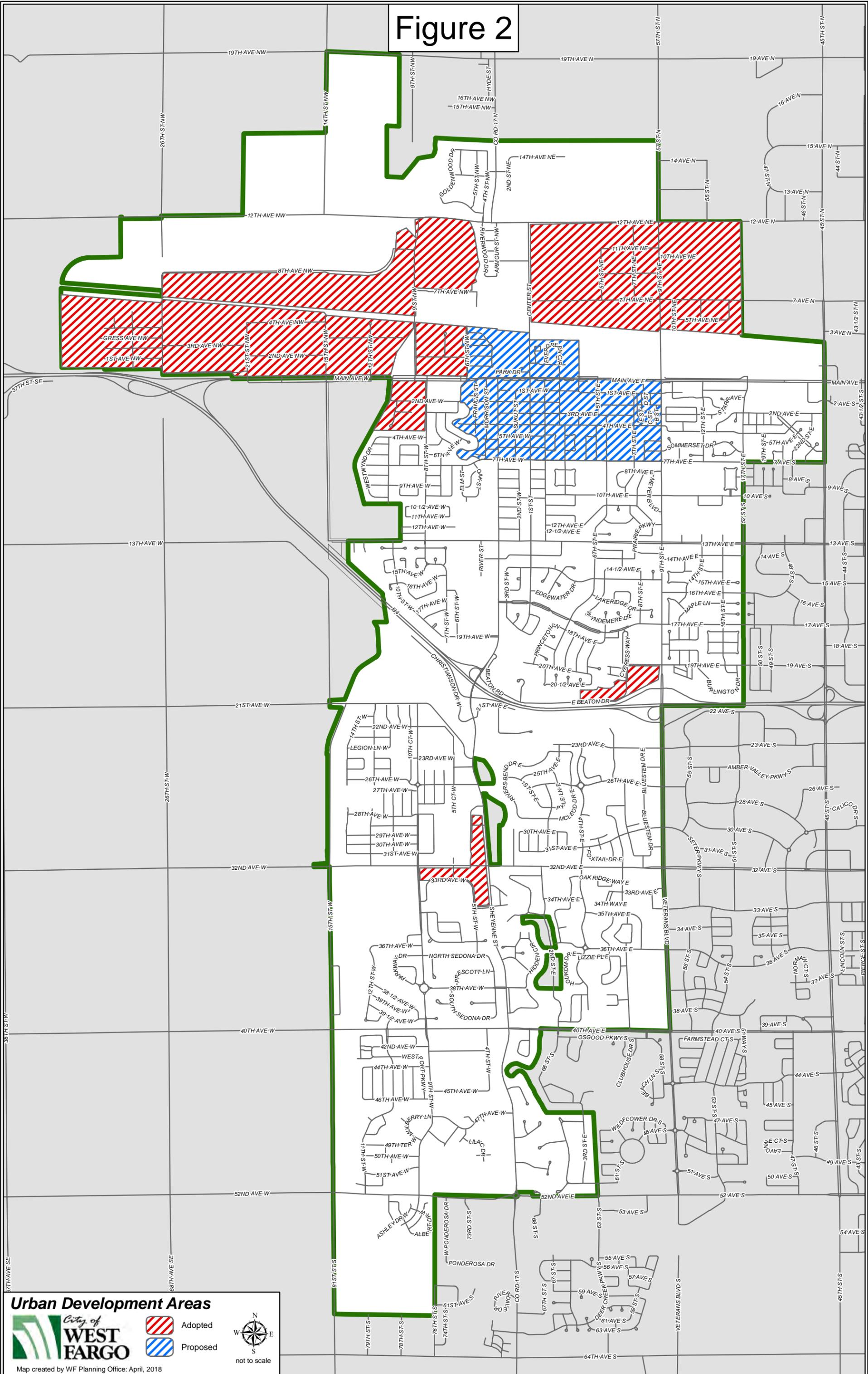
B. Urban Development Area

The areas identified as West Fargo's urban development areas are shown in Figure 2. The areas along West Main Avenue, as well as the northwest and northeast part of the City, are primarily intended for industrial uses; however, some of the areas are plagued by the lack of proper lot layout, inadequate or lack of streets, deteriorated and dilapidated structures, inadequate sewer and water services, inadequate drainage facilities, and some incompatible uses. Though many problems are evident, the areas are well suited for targeted industrial development. Platted lots and large unplatted tracts of land are available. Also, major street and railroad networks are in place.

The area along Interstate 94 and west of 9th Street East is intended for commercial and office uses. Most of the area has been platted and serviced since 2008 with little area remaining to be developed. With public involvement it is believed that private investment would be spurred effectuating positive change and increasing the City's tax base.

The proposed area at Sheyenne Street and 32nd Avenue is a commercial node for the City. The area has been slow to develop following platting a number of years ago. A few businesses in strip centers have been established, however several have struggled. Several applications have been received to change the City Comprehensive Plan's designated commercial land use on some properties to medium density residential. There has been some interest in providing a significant mixed-use development north of 32nd Avenue, which would complement an adjacent school hockey facility under construction and to spur additional development activity. The residents in surrounding residential

Figure 2



Urban Development Areas



-  Adopted
-  Proposed



not to scale

Map created by WF Planning Office: April, 2018

developments would like to see additional commercial services offered in this area.

Development, rehabilitation or redevelopment activities within these areas should be in accordance to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Housing and Building Codes.

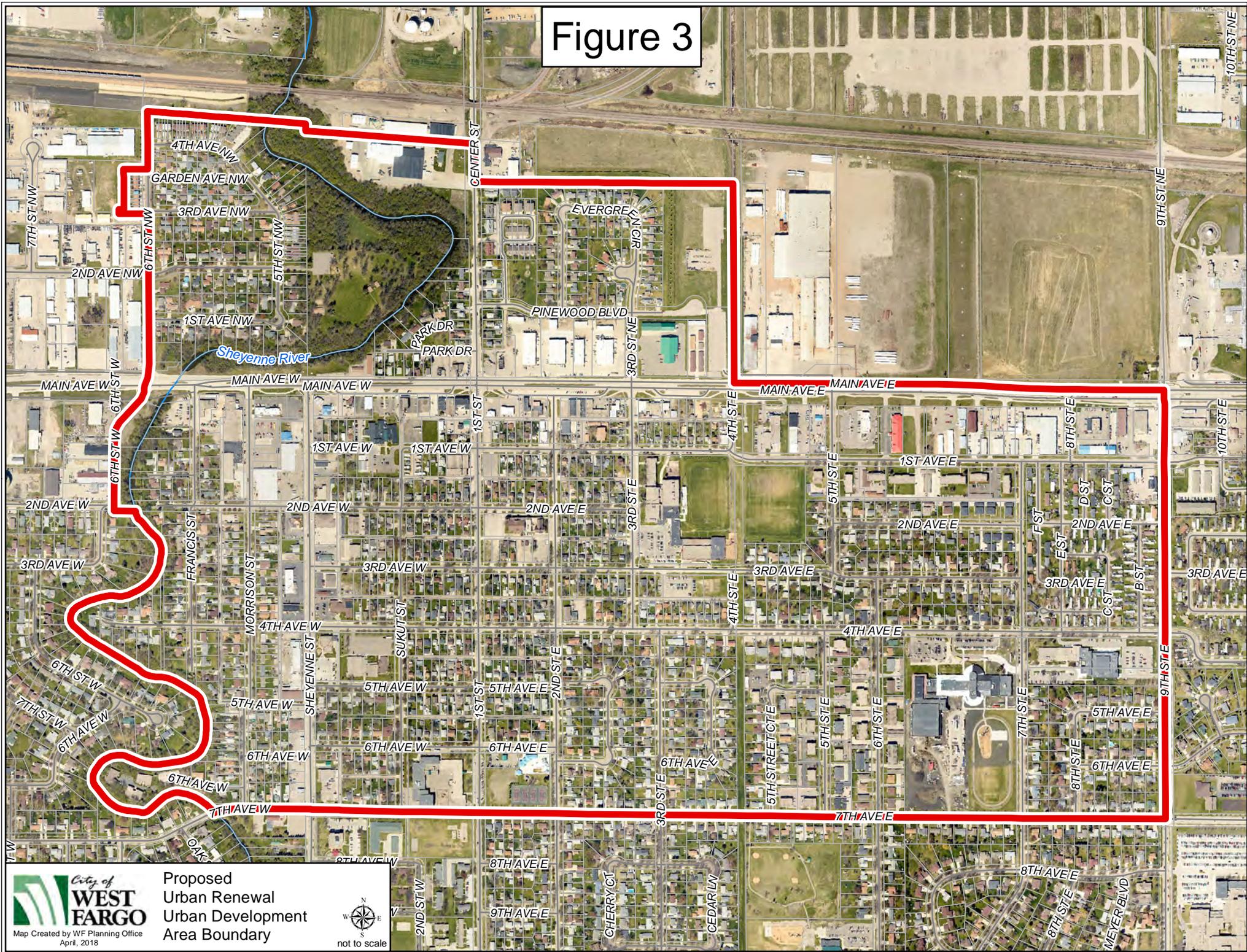
C. Urban Renewal/Urban Development Area

The area identified as the urban renewal/urban development area is shown on Figure 3. This area is rather complex as it comprises the community core for the City of West Fargo, so most of the development has been in place for quite some time. The properties along Sheyenne Street and Main Avenue are commercial in nature and make up what was the original downtown center for the City. Several studies have been completed which focus on revitalization of the area, as most of the structures are old and the property not utilized to its economic potential. Additionally, the area has been the impetus for establishing the Renaissance Zone, which provides tax incentives to improve the properties. Several properties have taken advantage of this incentive, though to adequately address the redevelopment needs, additional incentive programs are needed.

The community core is also made up of a number of blocks of small single family homes with some smaller apartment buildings mixed in close to the commercial areas. The area has a significant number of families and seniors that have low to moderate incomes. A number of the homes are dilapidated or blighted condition. Several housing rehabilitation projects have been completed over the years, which has extended the life of some of the homes. The City had included a number of residential blocks within the Renaissance Zone, however the type of incentives were not what was needed for the homeowners to support the needed investment in rehabilitating the homes. Homeowners did not utilize the Renaissance Zone program, so many of the blocks were removed from the Zone. Some of the blocks of homes near the commercial areas were identified in the late 1950s as redevelopment properties for commercial based on the condition and location of the structures. As a result the blocks were rezoned to commercial which made the single family homes nonconforming uses. The City will need to develop strategies to address the varying conditions and needs of residential homes. Many homes can be rehabilitated with minimal to no assistance, as homeowners have the means to do so. Education, encouragement and developing minimal maintenance codes may be considerations to address deteriorating or dilapidated housing conditions. Other homeowners will need more assistance to accomplish needed improvements.

The City is currently studying the properties in the community core, as the infrastructure has served beyond its life and is beginning to fail. Major investment in sewer, water, storm sewer and streets will need to be made in the next few years to maintain essential services, which will be burdensome for

Figure 3



young families and seniors with low to moderate incomes if the improvements are financed only through the use of special assessments. Added costs to homeowners to pay for infrastructure will only exacerbate housing conditions, as financial resources for making needed improvements will be greatly reduced. The City is collecting and analyzing information relating to the infrastructure. Additionally, the City is researching information pertaining to the demographics and income levels of the households in this area. Once we have a better understanding of the extent of infrastructure costs and replacement timing, as well as household financial capacity, the City will consider developing programs to assist those households in need.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/LAND USE PLAN

The City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan and its Land Use Plan with amendments through January 2018, is depicted on Figure 4. Land uses are categorized into Agricultural Preservation/Urban Reserve, Institutional/Community/School, Parks & Recreation, Rural Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Office Park, General Commercial, Light Industrial, General Industrial, and Utility/Transportation classifications.

The City is currently developing a new comprehensive plan, which is in the final draft form. The proposed comprehensive plan identifies the downtown and core area of the City as the Core-Retrofit Growth Sector on Figure 5, which includes a commercial service base and supporting residential development. New development, redevelopment, or the reuse of existing land and buildings is 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. Hearings on the Comprehensive Plan: West Fargo 2.0 have been scheduled for April and May 2018. Final adoption will take place following the hearings and consideration of public comments.

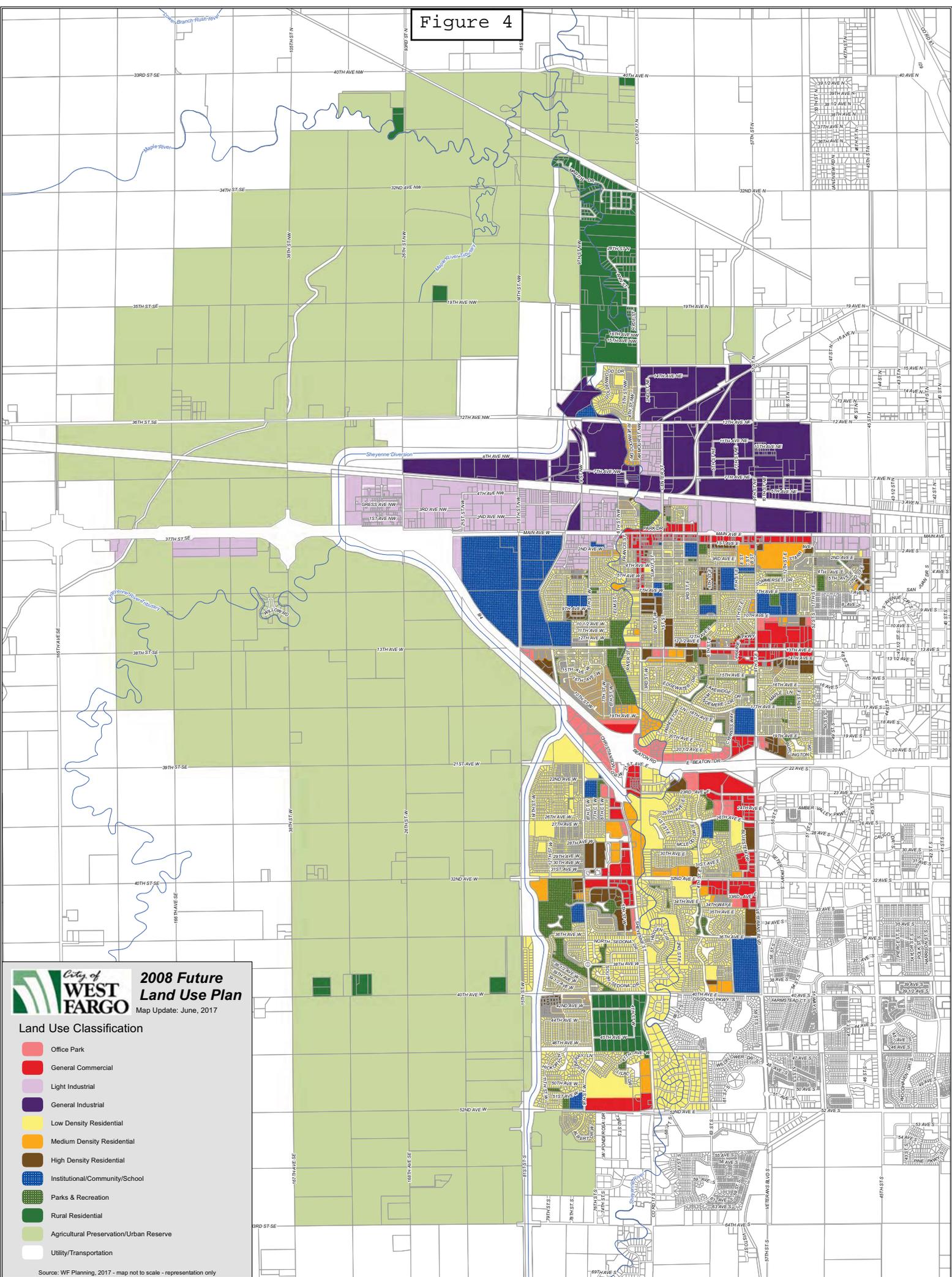
When establishing a development plan for a specific project, the City's Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed to insure development consistency with the Plan.

WORKABLE PROGRAM

The City of West Fargo hereby establishes the following workable program to carry out the statement of objectives as described in this General Plan:

1. The development of industrial or commercial properties;
2. The prevention of the spread of blight into areas of the City of West Fargo, which are free from blight through diligent enforcement of building, housing, zoning, and occupancy controls and standards;

Figure 4



2008 Future Land Use Plan

Map Update: June, 2017

Land Use Classification

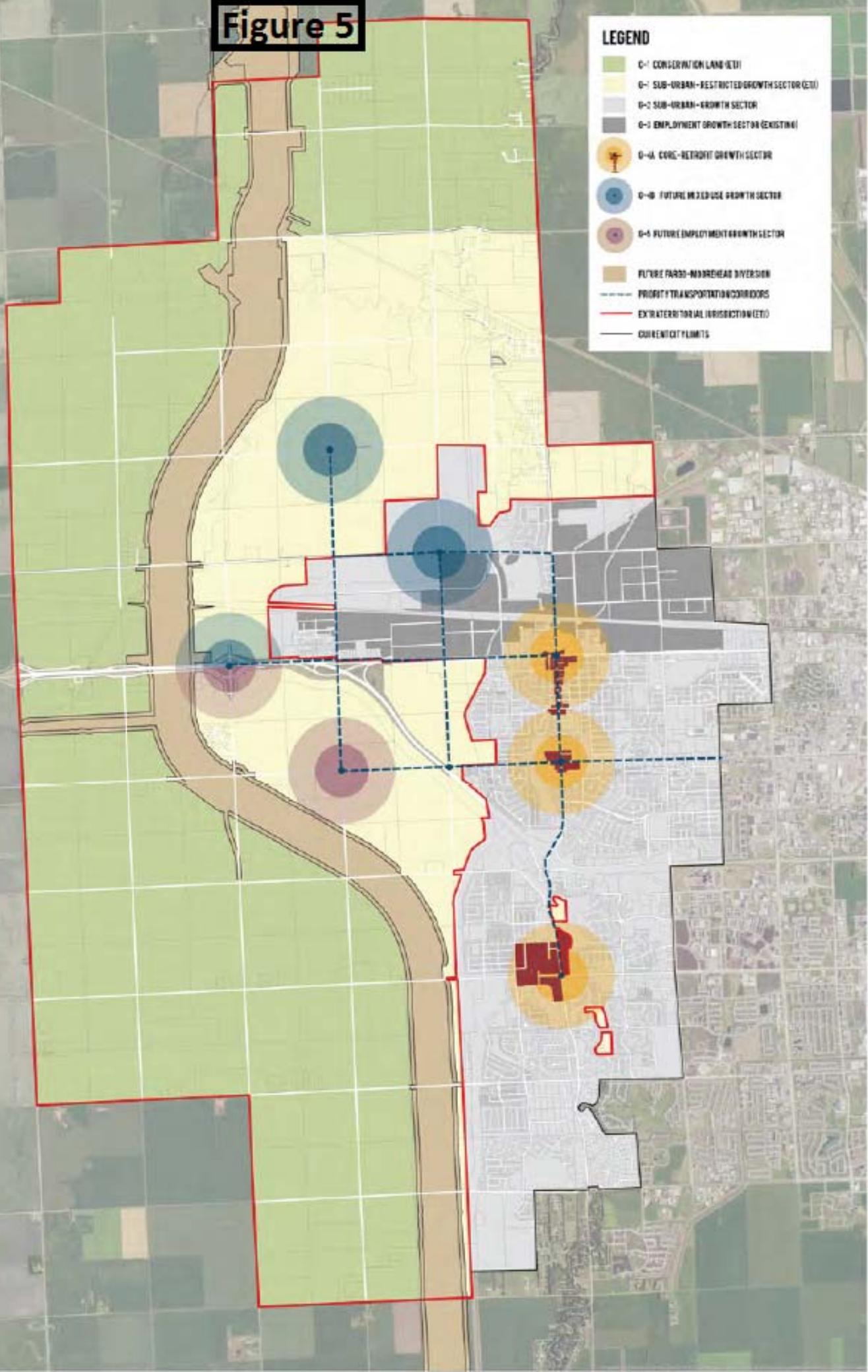
- Office Park
- General Commercial
- Light Industrial
- General Industrial
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Institutional/Community/School
- Parks & Recreation
- Rural Residential
- Agricultural Preservation/Urban Reserve
- Utility/Transportation

Source: WF Planning, 2017 - map not to scale - representation only

Figure 5

LEGEND

- D-1 CONSERVATION LAND (ETI)
- D-2 SUB-URBAN-RESTRICTED GROWTH SECTOR (ETI)
- D-3 SUB-URBAN-GROWTH SECTOR
- D-4 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH SECTOR (EXISTING)
- D-4A CORE-RETROFIT GROWTH SECTOR
- D-4B FUTURE MIXED USE GROWTH SECTOR
- D-5 FUTURE EMPLOYMENT GROWTH SECTOR
- FUTURE FARMS-MIDRIVER DIVERSION
- PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS
- EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ)
- CURRENT CITY LIMITS



3. The rehabilitation or conservation of slum and blighted areas or portions of those areas by replanning, removing congestion, providing parks, playgrounds, and other public improvements, by encouraging voluntary rehabilitation and by compelling the repair and rehabilitation of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; and
4. The clearance and redevelopment of slum areas or portions of those areas.

The workable program will utilize appropriate private and public resources, including those provided for in the North Dakota Century Code Urban Renewal Law.

URBAN RENEWAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

Several techniques are proposed to accomplish the workable program for urban renewal and urban development areas. The identified techniques are as follows:

1. Land Acquisition

Property may be acquired in the urban renewal or urban development areas for private development and needed public facilities. Portions of some of the properties in these areas may be dedicated for street right-of-way.

2. Public Construction

Public construction is allowed to provide needed sewer, water, storm drainage and storm sewer, streets, and other essential public facilities and services.

3. Clearance

Removal of dilapidated or obsolete structures is allowed.

4. Site Preparation

Preparation of sites within the project area for private construction is allowed.

5. Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing will be used to provide funds for land acquisition, public construction, clearance, and site preparation over and above normal development costs. All or a portion of the Public Construction costs normally assessed to private development may be allowed under Tax Increment Financing. Those costs not provided for under Tax Increment Financing shall be paid through special assessments to the private development.

PREPARATION AND APPROVAL OF RENEWAL OR DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Prior to undertaking any renewal or development activity the City must first prepare a specific project plan utilizing the following guidelines:

1. Renewal or Development Plans may only be approved for areas which have been identified within the General Plan. These areas have been determined by resolution to be slum or blighted areas or consist of industrial or commercial properties, or a combination of these. The General Plan may be amended by resolution to include additional slum or blighted areas or industrial or commercial properties where appropriate. The City may not acquire real property for renewal or development project unless the City Commission approves the renewal or development plan in accordance with subsection 4.
2. The City may prepare or cause to be prepared a renewal or development plan, or any person or agency, public or private may submit a renewal or development plan to a City. Prior to its approval of a renewal or development plan, the City Commission shall submit the plan to the City Planning and Zoning Commission for review and recommendations as to its conformity with the General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development, as well as the Comprehensive Plan for the development of the City of West Fargo as a whole; however, if the renewal or development plan relates only to the proposed development of industrial or commercial property, the City Commission is not required to submit the plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission unless the proposed development is not consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall submit its written recommendations with respect to the proposed renewal or development plan to the City Commission within thirty days after receipt of the plan for review. Upon receipt of the recommendations of the Planning and Zoning Commission, or if no recommendations are received within the thirty-day period, the City Commission may proceed with the hearing on the proposed renewal or development plan prescribed by subsection 3.
3. The City Commission shall hold a public hearing on a renewal or development plan or substantial modification of an approved plan, after public notice of the hearing is provided by publication in the official newspaper for the City. The notice must describe the time, date, place and purpose of the hearing, generally outline the renewal or development area covered by the Plan, and outline the general scope of the renewal or development project under consideration.
4. Following the hearing, the City Commission may approve a renewal or development plan if it finds that:
 - a. A feasible method exists for the location of families who will be displaced from the renewal or development area in decent, safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations within their means and without undue hardship to those families;

- b. The renewal or development plan conforms to the General Plan for Urban Renewal and Urban Development and Comprehensive Plan of the City of West Fargo as a whole; and
 - c. The renewal or development plan will afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the City as a whole, for the development, rehabilitation, or redevelopment of the renewal or development areas by private enterprise.
5. A renewal or development plan may be modified at any time; provided, that if modified after the lease or sale by the City of real property in the renewal or development project area, the modification is subject to the rights at law or in equity as a lessee or purchaser, or the lessee's or purchaser's successor or successors in interest, is entitled to assert. Any proposed modification which will substantially change the renewal or development plan as previously approved by the City Commission is subject to the requirements of this section, including the requirement of a public hearing, before it may be approved.
6. Upon the approval of a renewal or development plan by the City, the provisions of the plan governing the future use and building requirements applicable to the property by the plan control the future use of and building on the property.

The City can best address the specific conditions of properties and groups of properties, as well as the needs of the owners, through the preparation of renewal or development plans. By coordinating with agencies, intergovernmental cooperation, and understanding the needs and limitations of owners in the area, solutions can be developed to adequately address the blighting conditions of these areas. Urban renewal and urban development programs will create additional economic opportunity and revitalize the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, which will increase the City's tax base, as well as strengthen the community as a whole.