

Land Use and Zoning

Since the purpose of the growth plan is to establish a framework for future development and infrastructure construction, it is important to be able to use the plan as a guideline for the next steps of the planning process. Street connections and alignments are an important aspect of the subdivision process. Land use also determines the form of a subdivision to some extent, but more importantly, it determines the type of zoning that is appropriate. Therefore, it is important to set forth the zoning categories anticipated within each land use category. The zoning then becomes the main set of regulations that must be met when the property is platted, such as minimum lot sizes, dimensional requirements, and density. Zoning also determines specific land use limitations. It should be noted that some of the standards and approaches to land use taken in this growth plan may require that the zoning standards of the city be re-evaluated and altered.

Each land use category included in the Growth Plan is listed below with the zoning categories that are anticipated as appropriate for that land use. Obviously, some thought must be given to transitions of land uses within each broad category and to the mix of building types within each category. For example, if a low density area is adjacent to a high density area, it may not be desirable to place SR-1 zoning directly adjacent to MR-3 zoning. Although this is technically compatible, a more gradual transition is desirable and more aesthetically pleasing overall. The inclusion of larger structures within the SR-1 zone and smaller structures within the MR-3 zone also help to create a transition between the two zoning areas.

Rural Residential Use

The rural residential zone has been established to allow for large lot residential development within close proximity to the city. The area, shown on the south land-use map in light yellow-green, is limited to an area between the Wild Rice River and the Red River of the North. This area is prone to periodic flooding and is not within the flood protection area planned for the city. Therefore, any development within this land use zone must provide its own flood protection strategies.

Low to Medium Density Residential Use

The low to medium density residential land use category, which is shown in yellow on the land use map, is expected to have the overall character of a single family neighborhood, with a mix that includes twin homes and town homes. Both of these types of housing constitute single-family living, since individual entrances, garages, and driveways are provided. In some cases, where a low to medium land use area transitions into a commercial area, a low density apartment style development could be appropriate. One potential alteration to the zoning codes would be to allow small four to five unit apartment buildings anywhere in a single family neighborhood. This approach is intended to create a mix of housing styles, types and sizes within each neighborhood to provide our residents with a variety of choices to meet their individual housing needs.

The maximum building height is 35 feet in all of the SR zoning districts as well as the MR-1 zoning district. The vertical scale of the developments is then consistent throughout the areas designated as low to medium density residential. Maximum lot coverage ranges from 25-

45 percent in the SR zoning districts and is 35 percent in the MR-1 zoning district.

To support our goals to create a sustainable and efficient city, the growth plan seeks to increase the overall density within Fargo from 10 people per developable acre to 12 people per developable acre. This slight increase translates to density goals for low to medium density residential areas of 5 to 8 dwelling units per net developable acre. In turn, this may require the city to re-evaluate the lot coverage requirements listed above.

As shown on the land use plans each sub-neighborhood, approximately a quarter section of land, contains a neighborhood park with linkage to other parks and recreation trails. Each neighborhood, approximately one section of land, has a park or school at its center and neighborhood commercial near one of its edges.

The following zoning districts are anticipated to be utilized in the low to medium land use areas:

- SR-0, SR-2, SR-3, and SR-4
- MR-1 zoning may be acceptable as a mix in SR zones and in transitional areas.
- P/I Public and Institutional, such as religious institutions, parks and schools (especially elementary schools)
- NC Neighborhood Commercial, and NO Neighborhood Office, adjacent to arterial and/or collector roadways, or in transitional areas.

Medium to High Density Residential Use

The medium to high density residential land use category includes apartments, any style of attached housing (8 plex, 4-plex, etc.) or town homes. This category is envisioned as one that slightly overlaps with low to medium density residential in terms of the transitional housing styles that would be appropriate. In the establishment of these land use categories, it was determined that it was more workable to overlap the two residential land use categories somewhat, to ensure that both allow similar transitional styles of residential land use rather than establishing a separate “medium density residential” category. These medium density transitions are envisioned as attached housing such as row houses or 4-plexes, and lower density apartments such as MR-1 developments. During the discussions with property owners applying for platting and zoning approval it will be important for City staff to bring neighboring property owners together to

discuss the transitions of the potential zoning and housing styles on adjacent properties.

A vertical transition begins to occur with the MR zoning districts. While MR-1 zoning has the same maximum building height as single family residential (35'), MR-2 and MR-3 have maximum building heights of 45' and 60' respectively. The Land Development Code does not establish a maximum building height for Public and Institutional zoning. In terms of lot coverage, the MR zoning districts, because of parking and landscape requirements, actually have less lot coverage at 35 percent than SR-4 zoning, which is allowed a 45 percent coverage.

Medium to High Density Residential areas need parks and recreation spaces as much as any other part of the city. The land use plans show parks, recreation spaces, and connections to trails for every part of the extraterritorial area. Generally, multiple family developments will be in closer proximity to commercial land use, but the type of commercial businesses may not necessarily provide convenience for residents. A neighborhood commercial site may be desirable in some of these areas to allow the neighborhood to function without using the surrounding arterial roadway system to accommodate all of their basic shopping needs.

The following zoning districts are anticipated to be utilized in the medium to high density residential land use areas:

- SR-3 and SR-4 may be acceptable as a form of housing in some transitional areas, in the form of duplexes or town homes.
- MR-1, MR-2, and MR-3
- NC neighborhood commercial and NO neighborhood office, adjacent to arterial and/or collector roadways, or in transitional areas
- P/I Public and Institutional, such as religious institutions, parks, schools, day-care centers and community service organizations

Commercial Land Use

The commercial land use category is envisioned as a fairly flexible land use category which can accommodate a variety of commercial, office, institutional and residential land uses. This category is generally used in areas along arterial roadways, and other sites where single family residential land uses are not desirable. In some cases, commercial land use has been worked into the land use plan to provide convenient services in the midst of a future

development area. Since this category is somewhat broad, discussions will need to take place about the type of zoning that is most appropriate for specific areas. For example, in some areas, LC limited commercial zoning may be more appropriate than GC general commercial because of the fact that GC zoning allows some uses that are more industrial in nature.

Mixed use developments that incorporate residential development are encouraged in these areas. This could be achieved through the use of existing zoning categories, or a "growth area" type of mixed use zoning category could be created, with some similarities to DMU zoning.

Building heights range from a maximum of 35 feet in limited commercial zoning, to 60 feet in general office zoning, to no established height limit in general commercial and public/institutional zoning. Maximum lot coverages range from 55 percent to 85 percent, with no maximum established for public/institutional.

The zoning districts applicable to commercial land uses are:

- LC limited commercial
- GC general commercial
- GO general office
- P/I public institutional, for uses such as religious institutions, parks, schools, colleges, community service organizations, and health care facilities.
- DMU downtown mixed use zoning could also be considered if a traditional downtown style mixed use development is desired.

Industrial Land Use

The industrial land use category is viewed as an area that could have less intense uses, such as retail sales and service, but would be predominantly industrial in nature. This land use has been used mainly in areas where some industrial land uses have already been developed or in areas that are impacted by airport noise, railroad tracks, interstate highway noise, or other potential negative impacts that are undesirable for other types of development.

There is no maximum building height in the industrial zoning districts, and maximum lot coverage are 85 percent in both industrial zoning districts.

The zoning districts applicable to the industrial land use designation area:

- LI limited industrial
- GI general industrial
- GC general commercial

Research Related Agricultural Use

The unique relationship that exists between the city of Fargo and North Dakota State University provides several challenges and opportunities for planning in north Fargo. As the state's land grant educational institution, NDSU has substantial agricultural research and outreach programs contained on their land holdings in north Fargo. The need for NDSU to maintain agricultural fields and test plots combined with the city's desire to present an appealing entryway into

the city provide an excellent opportunity to line the I-29 freeway with green agricultural fields and research farms. The desire on the part of the Airport Authority to limit construction within the noise contours established for the airport also provides opportunities for NDSU to establish additional research fields within the city limits. The growth plan sets aside these areas for agricultural research uses within the growth areas of the city.

Parks and Open Space

The growth plan treats parks and open spaces as an integral part of the infrastructure of the city, not as a land use that we could choose to build or not. The parks, recreation, and pedestrian systems of the city are as important as the streets, the water distribution and the sewer systems. The land use plans show these features where they seem particularly appropriate, such as along rivers, around storm water retention ponds, adjacent to existing utility easements, adjacent to planned schools, at the center of each sub-neighborhood and at the center of each neighborhood.

As discussed in the goals section of this plan, parks and open spaces are identified in the land use plans as approximately 10% of the acreage of residentially developed land. The neighborhood parks are designated as 10 to 15 acres in size while the sub-neighborhood parks are intended to be about 2 to 4 acres in size. The connectivity of park to park is vitally important and occurs along collector streets as well as along natural land features, drainages, and along utility easements.

A Beautiful City

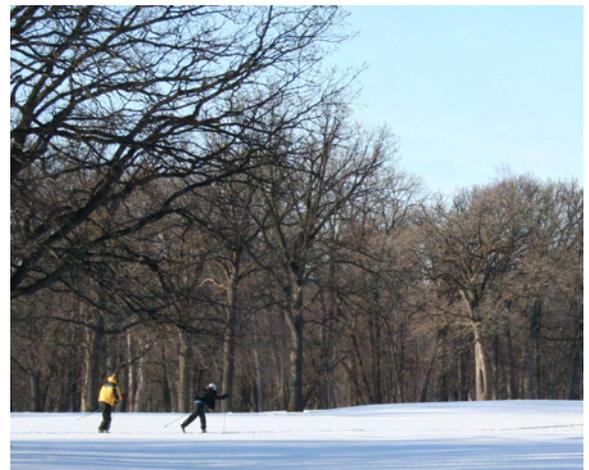
The aesthetic quality of the community is an area of concern for a great many residents of Fargo. Some of this concern results from the nature of the area which is flat, primarily treeless, and lacking in natural water features such as lakes and wetlands. Aside from the Red River, the Sheyenne River and the Wild Rice River, there are no natural features that require the kinds of gaps in development that result in open vistas and natural open spaces. Rose Coulee is an example of a feature that has been used in this manner in one area of our city. Aesthetic concerns have been addressed in the goals and objectives regarding open spaces and greenways.

The development of a beautiful city relies on many elements. We have chosen to focus on the following five elements to help us create a beautiful city for our citizens and visitors alike:

- Cherish the connection between the city and its natural environment
- Encourage art, in its many guises, as an integral part of our community
- Identify the components that create a positive image of Fargo and concentrate on maintaining and developing them in the growth areas
- Build on the knowledge that good design positively impacts everyone
 - Encourage the development of design standards for the growth areas of the city that support the concept of a beautiful city



Rose Coulee as it has been developed through the Rose Creek Golf Course.



Being in contact with our natural environment. Cross-country skiing in a city park.



Art in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area.

- Understand the importance of major corridors and gateways in the city

The City and Its Natural Environment

Many issues covered previously in this growth plan address the linkage between the city and its natural environment. As the city grows and develops into a more compact, integrated and livable city it is important that we be exposed to our natural surroundings on a daily basis. The re-establishment of the balance between man and nature is one of our societies primary challenges in the 21st century. The concepts covered in the growth plan that address this issue include:

- Development of parks and recreation uses adjacent to existing rivers and drainages.
- Development of parks and recreation in association with flood control measures
- The protection of wet lands as a part of the flood control plan
- The inclusion of winter activities in all parts of the city
- Increasing the compactness of the city to limit our consumption of land and the creation of pollution through travel
- Connections, both physical and visual with the agrarian heritage of the region

Art in the City

The efforts of many arts groups throughout the Fargo/Moorhead area in recent years have begun to generate real interest in the visual arts as a part of our living environment. The development of a civic plaza on the Main Avenue bridge, an international competition for an art piece in Fargo, the Herd About the Prairie program all have contributed to an increase in art in our city. The presence of art in a city communicates something about the heart of a place. The number of creative residents in a city is a good indicator of the future economic health of the city according to Richard Florida, in his book *The Creative Class*. The growth of the creative class echoes the changes that the city is seeing as our economy shifts from an agricultural base to a broader service and knowledge economy. The city's ability to respond to these shifting conditions is vital to our healthy and sustainable future. The creative class in Fargo seems to be growing and we should support its growth as we contemplate development into the extraterritorial areas of the city.

This is particularly germane in the growth areas of the city. A majority of the civic art enjoyed in Fargo is contained in the downtown. As a part of the growth plan we recommend that the city explore ways and means of encouraging public art throughout the city, not just in the downtown. The *Herd About the Prairie* was an excellent example of an art project that touched all parts of the city. More is necessary.

Positive Images of Fargo

Throughout the history of Fargo, several characteristics have developed that contribute to an overall positive image for the city. These characteristics include a safe city, good schools, ease of

movement, and a friendly caring attitude. Many of these characteristics are attributable to the traditions of the Upper Midwest but others are specific to the physical aspects of the city. We are interested in identifying these physical characteristics and maintaining them as the city grows. Although there may be additional characteristics that are important to the positive image of Fargo, we will concentrate on the following three positive characteristics and one negative characteristic:

- The existence of a strong public presence
- The canopied streets of American Elm trees
- Human scaled design
- The negative impact of high volume traffic corridors

Fargo Image - A Strong Public Presence

Like most older cities in the northern half of North America, Fargo developed with a strong sense of shared public space. Businesses and houses opened to the public street with entries and porches to welcome visitors. There developed a clear distinction between the front, public, side of a development and the back, private, side. Sidewalks connect all parts of the traditional city helping people connect with one another. Small but important public spaces were set aside for gathering and recreating.

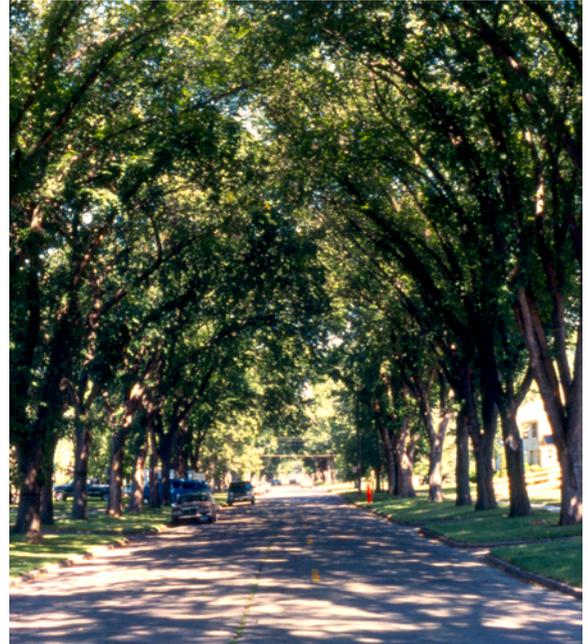
Public space like parks is highly valued in Fargo and continues to be a very important part of our new growth areas. Other public spaces such as sidewalks and public fronts have not fared so well in recent growth areas of the city. To help re-establish this strong tradition of public space the growth plan calls for the following standards throughout the extra-territorial areas of Fargo:

- All commercial development should front on the public streets as mandated in the Land Development Code
- Residential developments may not turn their back to collectors or local streets.
- All developments must establish sidewalks within each development and develop well designed sidewalk connections between developments

Fargo Image - Canopied Streets

Fargo is indeed one of only a few cities in the United States with significant numbers of American Elm trees lining our streets. Dutch Elm Disease has ravaged most cities and wiped out these beautiful trees. Whatever the environmental or scientific reason is for Fargo keeping many of its elm lined streets we are blessed with these magnificent canopied streets. It is an important image for the city. But unfortunately, Dutch Elm Disease is taking its toll in Fargo as well. We lose several trees each year.

Because the trees are important to the image of Fargo and because Fargo is home to North Dakota State University, a land grant university; we have the potential to protect and possibly reinforce this important feature of the city. The growth plan recommends the following actions:



Elm trees canopied over a street in Fargo



The same street during winter.

- Become committed to maintaining and extending this natural resource
- Become national leaders in street tree usage by
 - Partnering with NDSU to develop treatments to keep existing trees healthy
 - Partnering with NDSU to test the disease resistant trees they have already developed
 - Aggressively plant newly developed areas with trees that will canopy over the streets
- All new developments must address this issue of canopied streets

Fargo Image - Human Scaled Design

Although human scaled design is part of a livable community concept, it is difficult to address at this stage of land use planning. For one thing, human scaled design refers to developments that make pedestrian and bicycle travel feasible and desirable. This is accomplished through both the provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and through the incorporation of developments and buildings that are small enough in scale to make it attractive to walk from one land use to another, or from one business establishment to another. Size is not the only factor. Human scale is also established through orienting building and developments toward the street rather than toward a huge expanse of parking, by making building entrances just as easy to access for pedestrians and bicyclists as drivers, and with architectural features like windows, porches, and welcoming entrances. Livable community proponents also encourage using landscaping and buildings together to design privacy where it is desired, and to create intimate, human scaled spaces outdoors in both public and private developments. At this stage of the planning process, human scaled design can be addressed through goals and objectives that will lead to the establishment of design standards, and the incorporation of human scale features as part of public improvement projects.

Fargo Image - High Volume Traffic Corridors

One focus of aesthetics in this land use plan applies to the image presented along high volume travel corridors. The land development code has provided improved landscaping, buffering, and open space requirements, and the aesthetic benefits of those requirements are still being evaluated. However, one policy from the Comprehensive Policy Plan still needs a significant amount of work to bring it to the implementation stage. It involves the ability to present a positive image along high volume travel corridors such as the freeway or arterial streets. The following approaches help address the issues of image along well traveled streets:

- Arterial streets and freeways are identified as high visibility corridors within the growth areas and therefore require particular attention and care with the following:
 - Developments should not place service areas and garages on arterial streets
 - Particular attention should be paid to boulevard development and the planting of street trees

- Set back depths may want to be enlarged with additional landscaping included in the set back
- Entries into Fargo along the freeways should be developed with a particular eye to the image presented to visitors
- Uses along freeways should be heavily landscaped to address the visual image along the freeway as well as address pollution mitigation in terms of noise and emissions from cars and trucks.
- Residential uses are not allowed along freeways
- Residential has been limited as much as possible along major high traffic streets.
- Land uses, within this plan, have been designated to encourage high quality developments along the high visibility roads
- Create and adopt development standards for areas with high visibility as a follow-up to adoption of the growth plan

neighborhood. The incorporation of design standards is a new approach for the city of Fargo but one whose time has come if we are to ensure the development of a livable, walkable city with a high quality of life.

Good Design

The citizens of Fargo are showing an increasing interest in the quality of design that surrounds their lives. Concern about ugly places or inappropriate development are talked about much more frequently than in years past. Good design utilizing good materials with appropriate details creates lasting value for owners and the community. Poorly designed projects detract from the city and eventually cost more to replace or re-purpose than a well designed project.

Design quality can be addressed rather generally in the growth plan but it can be addressed more rigorously in area plans or zoning. The city should work with land owners and developers to establish design guidelines for individual projects or smaller development areas.

Good Design - Design Standards

Design standards for any given neighborhood might be developed to address many of the following architectural and planning issues:

- Specific mix of housing types
- Standards for fronting on public streets
- Amount and type of openings required
- Activity at the street level of commercial projects
- Parking location
- Signage
- Location of service facilities
- Lot coverage
- Minimum density of development
- Planting standards
- Limitations on building materials
- Timing of city utility extensions
- Anti-monotony standards

This list is just an example of the types of standards that could be set for individual neighborhoods or commercial developments. This is not an exhaustive list nor would all of the items be appropriate in each

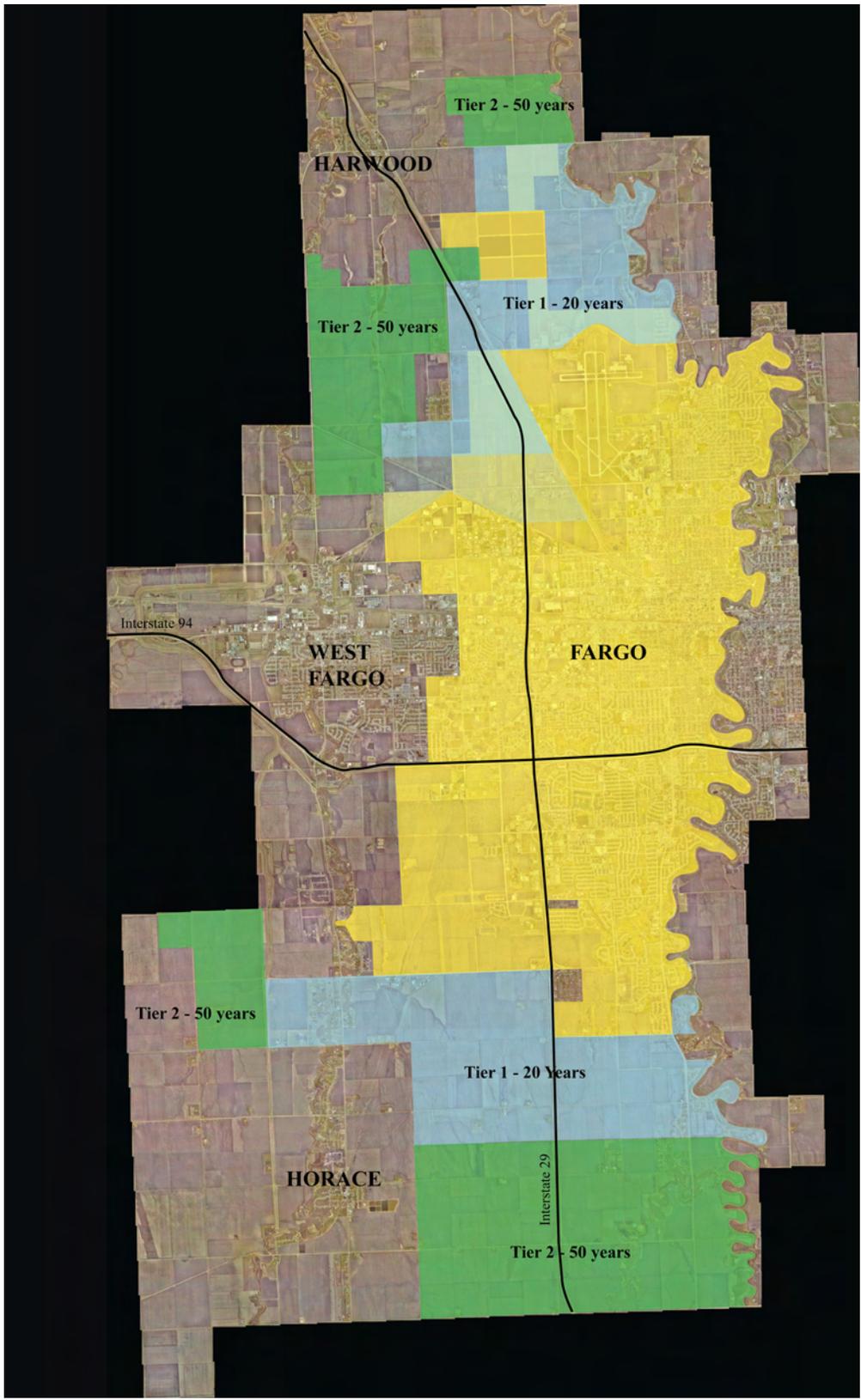


Illustration of two Tiers of development within the Growth Plan. Tier One indicates the area that could be developed in the next 20 years.