



Moorhead's Comprehensive Plan: *Onward Moorhead*

Background Report

July 13, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Community Context and Demographics
2. Economic and Market Context
3. Land Use
4. Mobility
5. Parks and Open Space
6. Sustainability and Resilience
7. Arts, Culture and Placemaking

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

LOCAL CONTEXT

The City of Moorhead is located along the western border of Minnesota and is the largest city in Clay County. The city is bordered by Fargo, North Dakota to the west, with the Red River forming the physical boundary between the two cities and the city of Dilworth to the east of Moorhead. Moorhead is the second largest city in the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan area. Regionally connected by Interstate 94 and Highway 10, the city is roughly 250 miles northwest of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and 220 miles south of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Historical Development

The Red River Valley was formed by receding glacier ice at the end of the last major ice age, and the Red River of the North is therefore a fairly young geographical feature in the region. The first people in the Red River Valley were ancestors of the American Indians whose time in the region dates back to roughly 10,000 years ago. Prior to European settlement, native peoples interacted with the land as both hunters and gatherers and likely practiced early farming and cultivation of the land. Europeans were first drawn to the area as fur traders, and later for cultivation.¹

¹ <https://www2.mnstate.edu/northwest-mn/red-river-valley-history.aspx>



The City of Moorhead was incorporated as a village in 1875 with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad bridge across the Red River, providing the stimulus for economic and population growth in the Moorhead area. The Homestead Act also provided for further settlement of the area, incentivizing individuals to move west by providing free land in exchange for the creation of farms and homesteads. Moorhead also served as a transfer point for passengers and freight between the Twin Cities and Winnipeg, Manitoba.² Today, the agricultural and distribution sectors are both still important to Moorhead's economy, with the more recent additions of the education and service industries.

Past Plans

Past plans were reviewed and summarized in the *Moorhead Summary of Plans* document. This past plan review was used as a basis for consultant technical experts to analyze existing conditions and current policies within the City of Moorhead relating to land use, mobility, parks and open space, sustainability and resilience, and arts, culture and placemaking. It is also a recognition of the work completed by City staff, Metro COG, and other experts on topics that required a plan of action in order to implement change. These past planning efforts will inform the Comprehensive Plan process and provide the backbone for Phase 1 public engagement.

While this report focuses on the policies and objectives in the 2004 and 2009 Comprehensive Plans, it's also important to understand the current vision and goals for the city. The most recent documentation of these goals is in the 2019 Strategic Plan and Objectives. The Strategic Plan is a living document and meant to operate as both a vision for the city, and a workplan for City staff. The strategic initiatives documented below can be complemented and built upon by the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Identity – Clearly define who Moorhead is at its core.
2. Governance and Teamwork – Govern and manage City operations with professional excellence.
3. Infrastructure – Support growth through well-maintained, functional, sustainable infrastructure to support our existing community and to support growth and development.
4. Economy – Expand economic opportunities by creating a climate for the community to thrive.
5. Community Safety and Wellbeing – Promote and protect well-being and safety through a strong community.
6. Communication – Strengthen connection with the community to create a compelling sense of purpose, deep pride, and commitment.
7. Partnerships – Leverage partnerships to enhance public services and quality of life.

The content in this background report identifies key takeaways from the existing conditions and planning context in Moorhead. While it is presented primarily in topical chapters such as land use, mobility, etc., the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan will be to understand how each of these individual systems interact now and can act together as a catalyst for future growth and livability improvements in Moorhead over the next ten years.

² <http://www.cityofmoorhead.com/about-the-city/history>



POPULATION GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the population and demographic trends for the City of Moorhead and the region is a crucial building block in determining the city’s future needs. As part of this report, population and demographic trends were analyzed and general trends are summarized below. Should data from the 2020 Census become available during the Comprehensive Plan process, these trends can be revisited based on that data.

Population

Moorhead is a growing city in a growing region. The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has been one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country over the last decade. Moorhead has benefited from being part of this dynamic region. As shown in Figure 1, Moorhead has experienced an estimated growth of around 14% over the past decade.

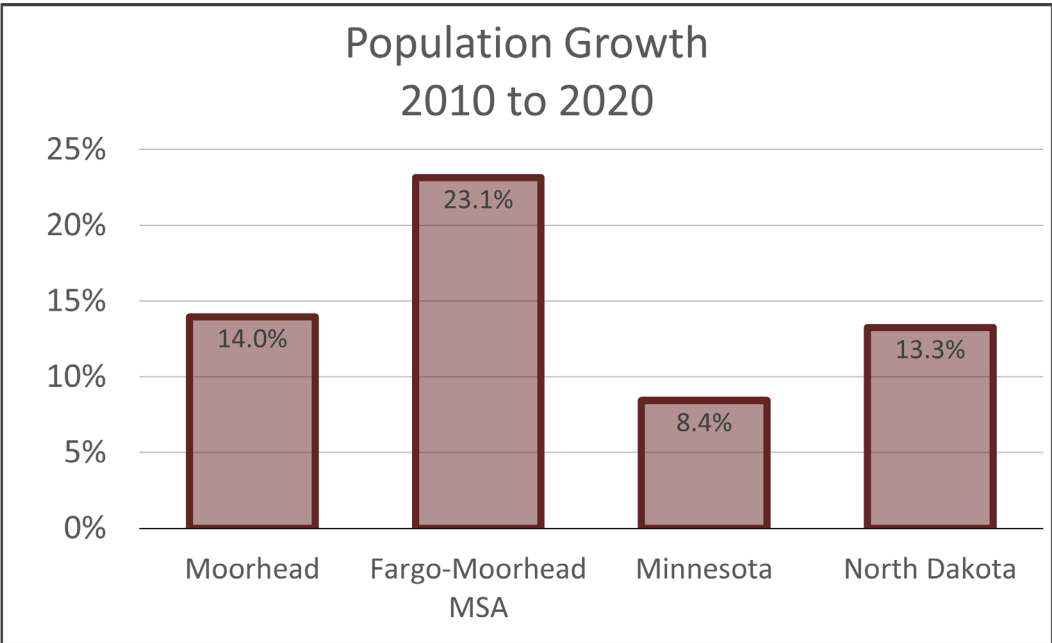


Figure 1. Population Growth from 2010-2020 (ESRI, US Census Bureau)



Population Projections

Moorhead's growth is expected to continue. ESRI³ projects its population to grow by an additional 3,000 people by 2025 as shown in Figure 2. In a 2017 report for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (MetroCOG), summarized in Figure 3, it is estimated that the 2025 population of Moorhead would be around 49,000, and that it would reach around 59,000 by 2045.

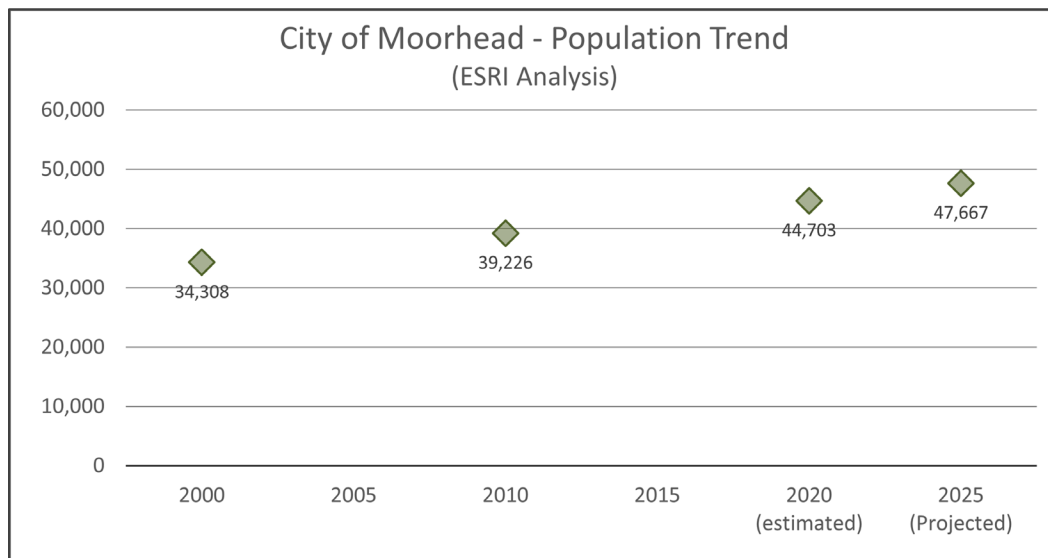


Figure 2. City of Moorhead 2025 Population Projection (ESRI, US Census Bureau)

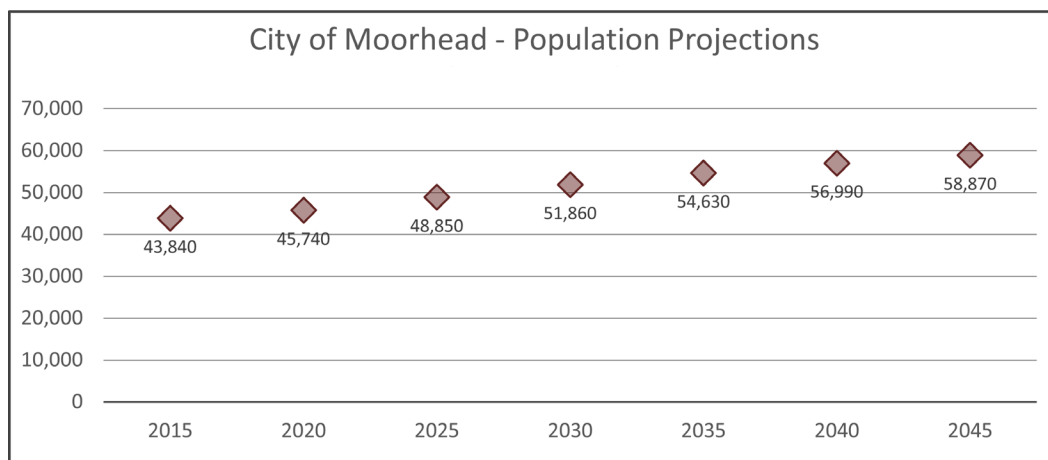


Figure 3. City of Moorhead 2045 Population Projection (Demographic Forecast Study for the FM Metropolitan Area, KLJ Consultants)

³ ESRI is a company that makes an industry-leading GIS (geographic information system) software and provides demographic and economic data and information.



Demographics of Residents

Like the Fargo-Moorhead region as a whole, Moorhead's population skews toward young adults, reflecting the important concentration of college students and recent graduates in Moorhead's population mix. Figure 4 shows that 37% of Moorhead's population is between the ages of 15 and 34. That compares with 26% of Minnesota's population that is within that age range. Adults between ages 35 and 74 are a much lower share of Moorhead's population compared with the state as a whole. Moorhead's share of children, and its share of adults 75 and older, are similar to the state as a whole.

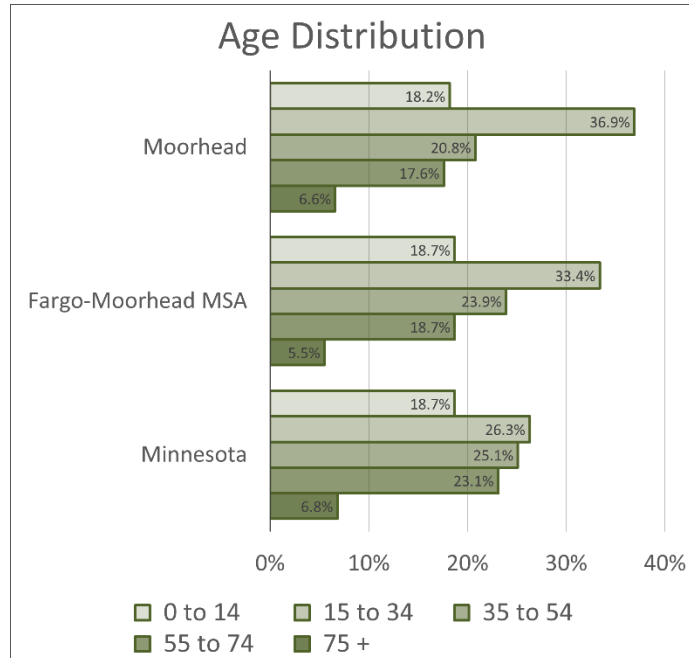


Figure 4. Comparison of Age Distribution for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)

Families and Households

Around 59% of Moorhead households are families⁴, a measure that is greater than the share of family households in the Fargo Moorhead MSA. However, Figure 5 shows this share is lower than the share of family households in the state of Minnesota.

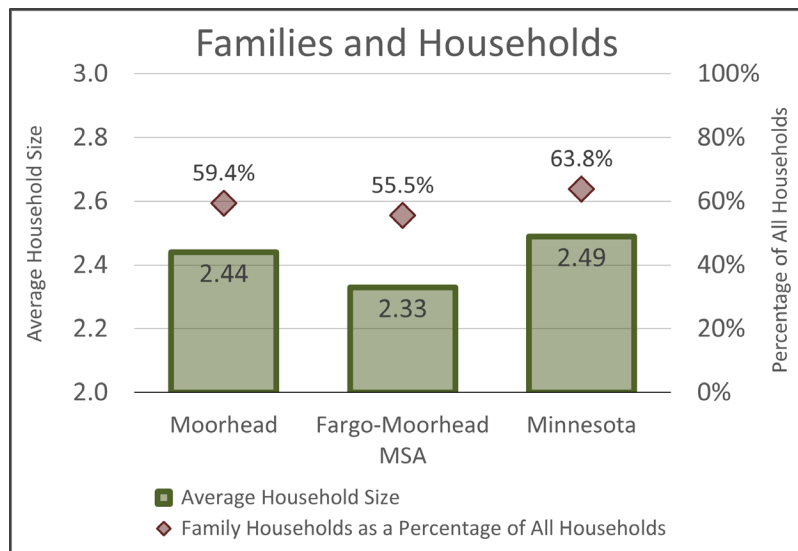


Figure 5. Comparison of Household Size and Family Households in Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)

⁴ The US Census Bureau defines family as "a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family."



Housing Tenure

Moorhead's relatively younger population contributes to a higher than average proportion of renter occupied housing units, as shown in Figure 6. Housing market dynamics will be discussed further in the next section of this report.

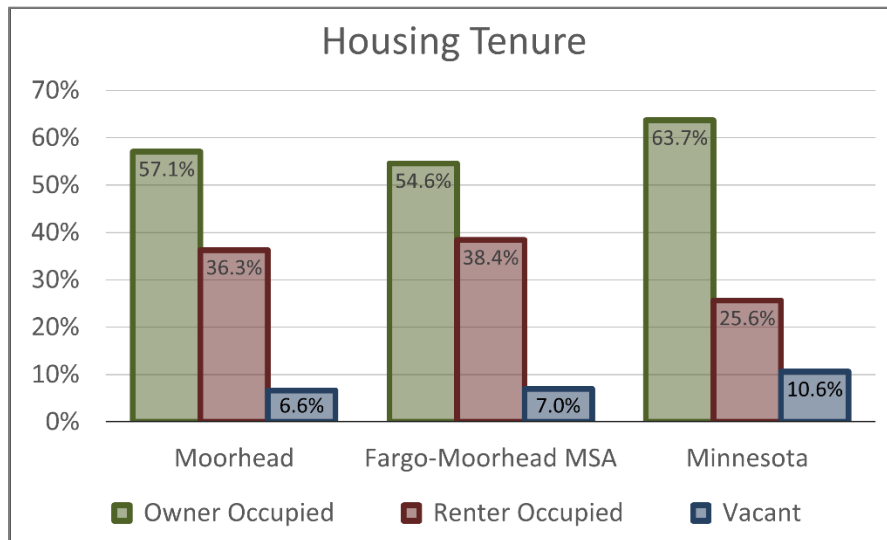


Figure 6. Comparison of Housing Tenure in Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)

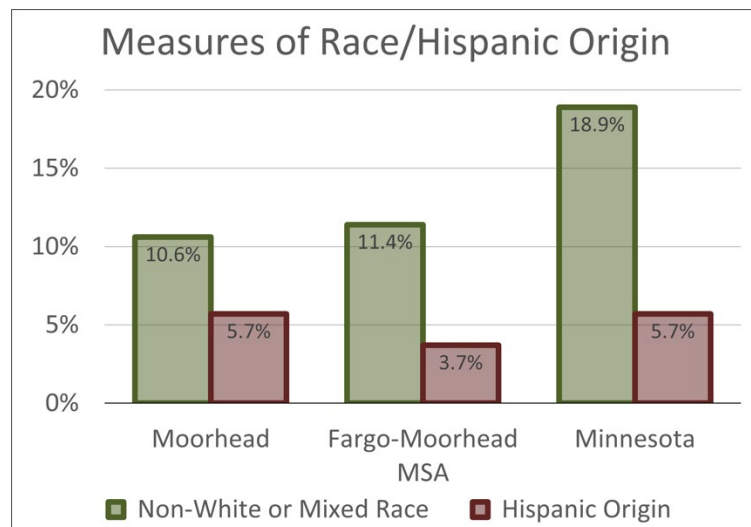


Figure 7. Comparison of Race/Hispanic Origin for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)

Race/Hispanic Origin

Moorhead is a less diverse community than most in Minnesota. Figure 7 shows that around 11% of its residents are non-White or mixed race, which compares to a statewide average of around 19%. Its proportion of Hispanic residents is similar to the state of Minnesota, as a whole.



Educational Attainment

Moorhead is an educated community, especially for a community outside the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The comparison in Figure 8 shows that Moorhead’s share of residents with some college education is higher than the state average. This statistic continues to point toward the influence of colleges such as Concordia and Moorhead State University – Moorhead (MSUM).

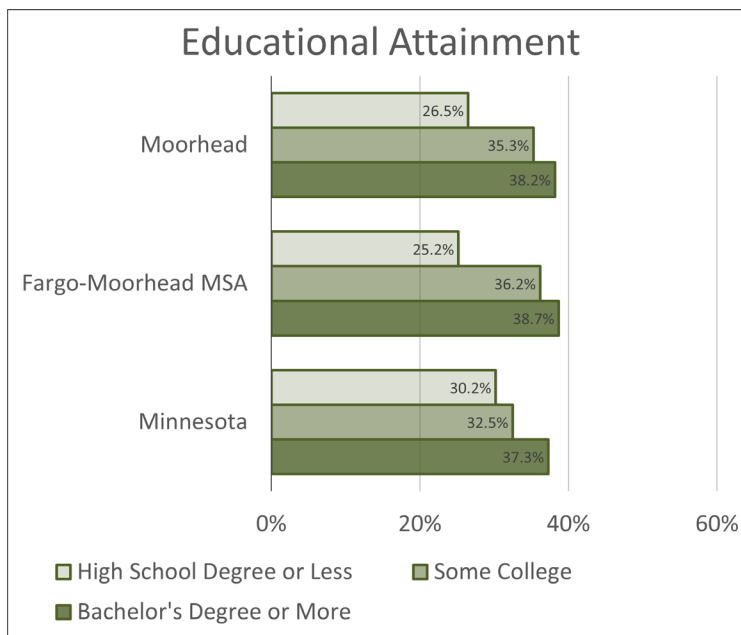
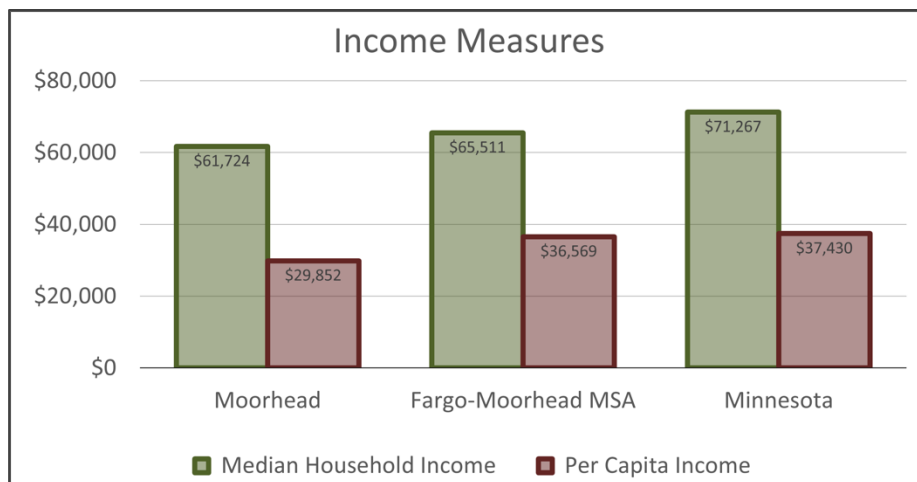


Figure 8. Comparison of Educational Attainment for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)



Household Income

Household income levels in Moorhead are lower than average for Minnesota, and lower than the Fargo-Moorhead metro area as a whole. Figure 9 shows that per capita income levels are especially low in Moorhead as compared with the state and the region⁵.

Figure 9. Comparison of Income for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)

⁵ Median household income is the income earned by a household that is at the 50% percentile of all households. In other words, half of all households earn more and half of all households earn less. Per capita income is the total income earned in the geography by all persons aged 15 years and older, divided by the total population in the geography.



Home Value

Finally, similar to household income, home values in Moorhead are lower than in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area as a whole. Figure 10 shows a comparison of median home values in Moorhead as compared with the region and state.

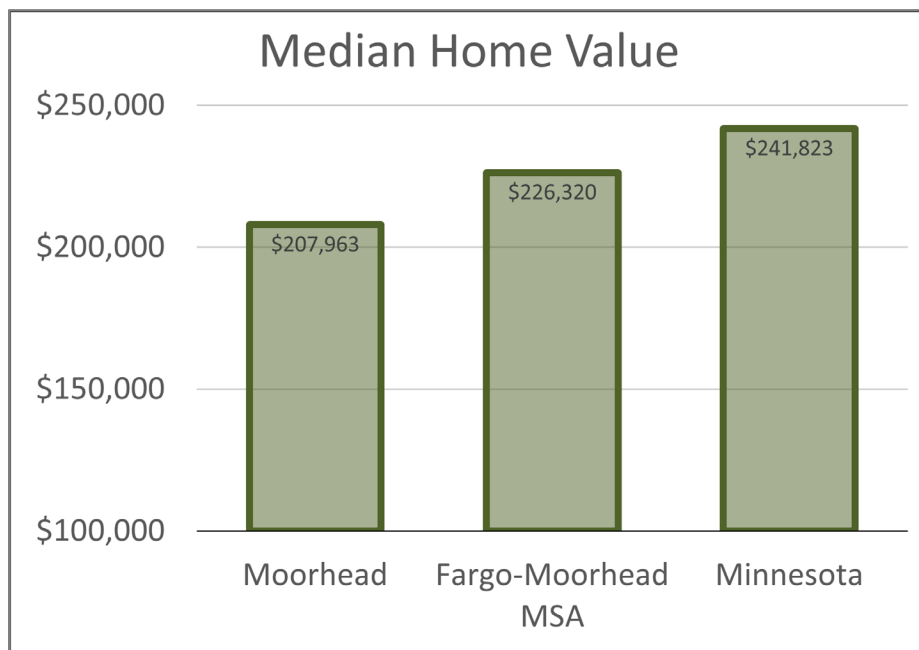


Figure 10. Comparison of Median Home Value for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (ESRI, US Census Bureau)



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ECONOMIC AND MARKET CONTEXT

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of Moorhead's economy and real estate markets is a crucial step in setting a strong base for this Comprehensive Planning process. In order to assess growth and development opportunities, we must first understand the economic drivers and barriers. This market analysis is meant to be a high-level summary of Moorhead's overall economy, and the state of housing, retail, and industrial development in the city.

MOORHEAD'S ECONOMY

Moorhead's job base has grown over the past two decades as shown in Figure 11; however, its employment has grown at a slower rate than the Fargo-Moorhead region as a whole as shown in the Figure 12 comparison.

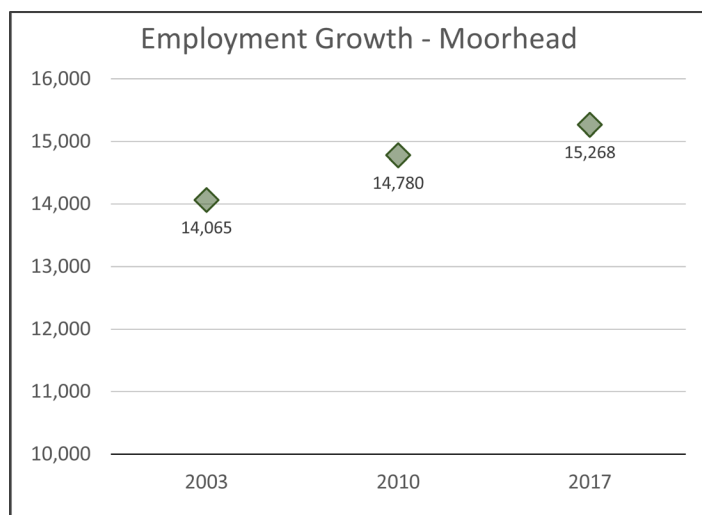


Figure 11. Employment Growth in Moorhead since 2003 (OnTheMap, US Census Bureau)

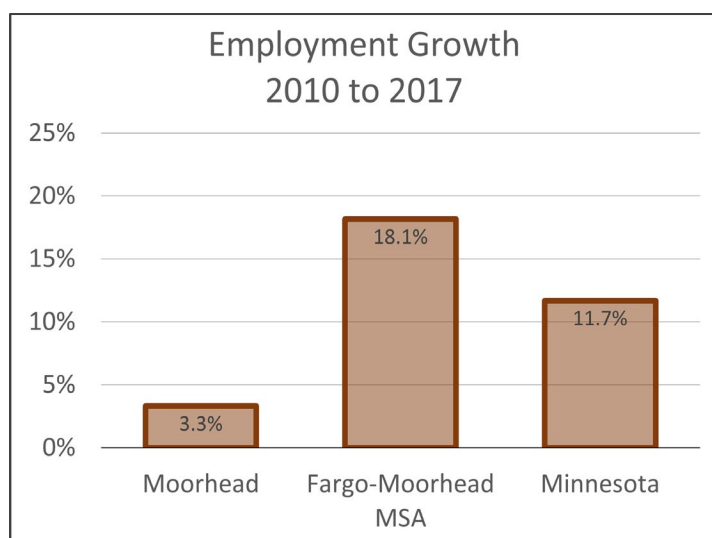


Figure 12. Comparison of Employment Growth for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (OnTheMap, US Census Bureau)



Employment

Employment growth has also lagged population growth. In 2017, around 14,600 Moorhead residents left the city to work in other locations, while around 10,400 residents of other communities came to a job in Moorhead. Figure 13 shows the distribution and concentration of jobs throughout the city.

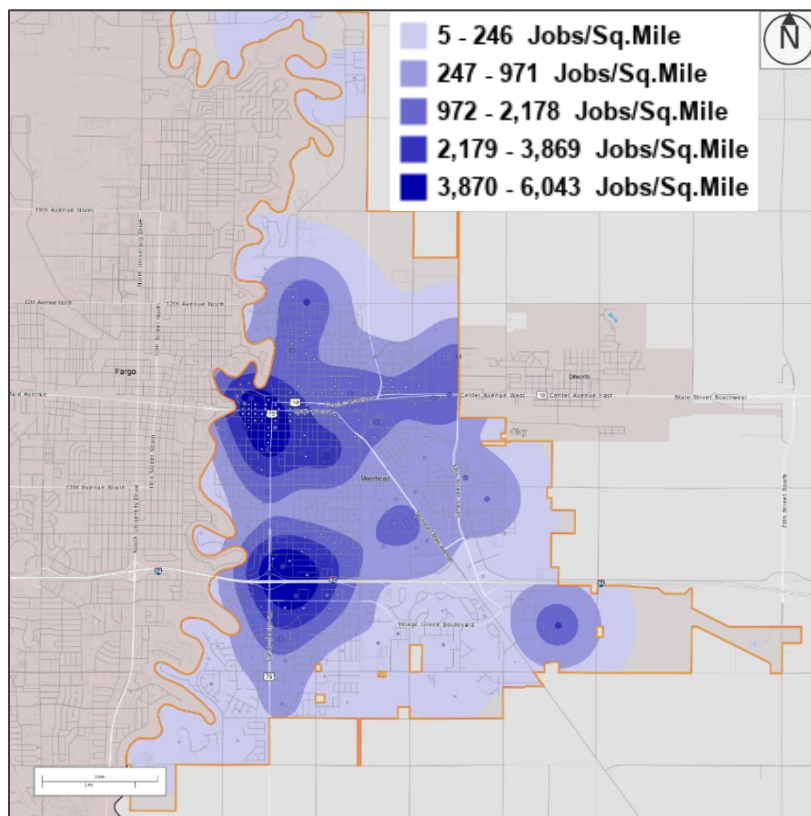


Figure 13. Job Concentrations in Moorhead (OnTheMap, US Census Bureau)



Economic Drivers and Industry Mix

Moorhead is an anchor community in the robust and growing Fargo-Moorhead region. The region is powered by five key economic segments, based on a recent industrial park positioning study conducted for the city.

- **Agriculture.** The region is an agriculture service and processing center for the surrounding farming communities.
- **Higher education.** The region attracts students and faculty for education and training at four area colleges.
- **Manufacturing.** The region hosts a diverse set of manufacturers producing products in industries such as agriculture, construction, energy, and transportation.
- **Energy development.** The region provides products and services in support of the petroleum industry.
- **Consumer related retail and services.** Fargo and Moorhead provide destination retail stores and services for a broad geography.

An analysis of the distribution of jobs by industry sector underscores the importance of Moorhead’s two educational institutions in its economy. Almost 24% of Moorhead jobs are in Educational Services. That compares with 9.4% of jobs in Minnesota as a whole. Enrollment at MSUM is around 7,500 while 2,000 students are enrolled at Concordia College.

Other strong sectors in the Moorhead economy:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Public Administration

Including the Educational Services sector, these five employment sectors represent around 69 percent, or over 2/3 of all jobs in Moorhead. A breakdown of the top 10 industries employment is shown in Figure 14 below.

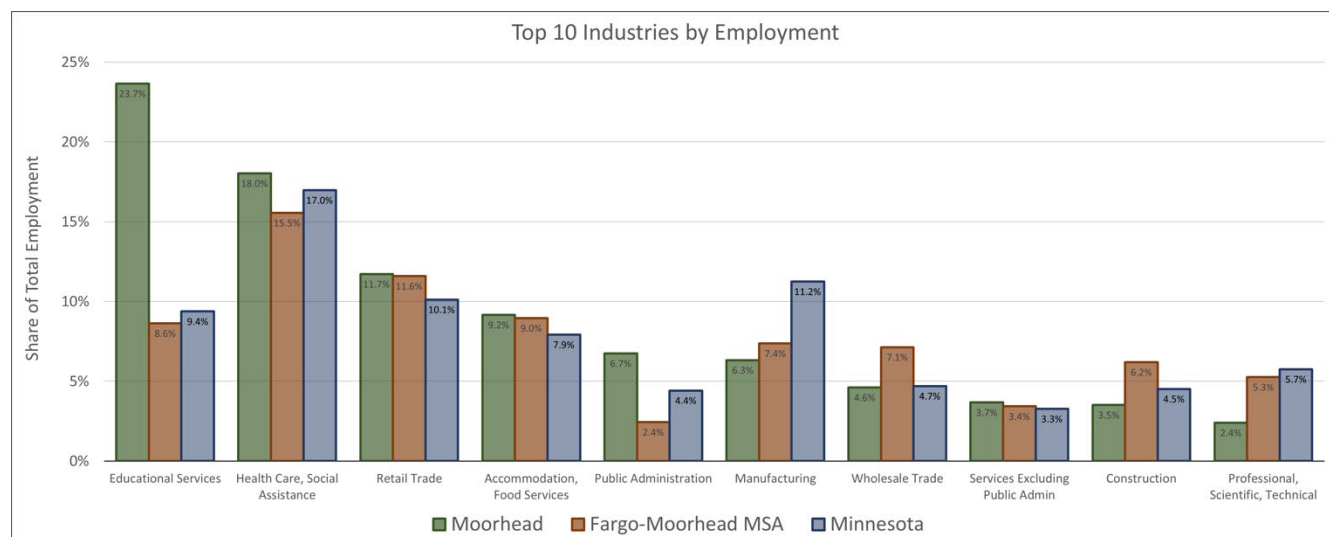


Figure 14. Comparison of Industries by Employment for Moorhead, Fargo-Moorhead MSA and Minnesota (OnTheMap, US Census Bureau)



HOUSING MARKET

Housing Growth Since 2010

Around 39 percent of Moorhead households are currently renting their dwelling units, a trend that has remained stable over the past decade. As shown in Figure 15, around 1647 rental apartment units (51% of all housing units) were developed over that period, while around 1,500 single family building permits were issued—which are presumably owner occupied, and represent 46% of all housing units. The 3% of housing units that were duplexes to quad homes may have been built as ownership or rental housing.

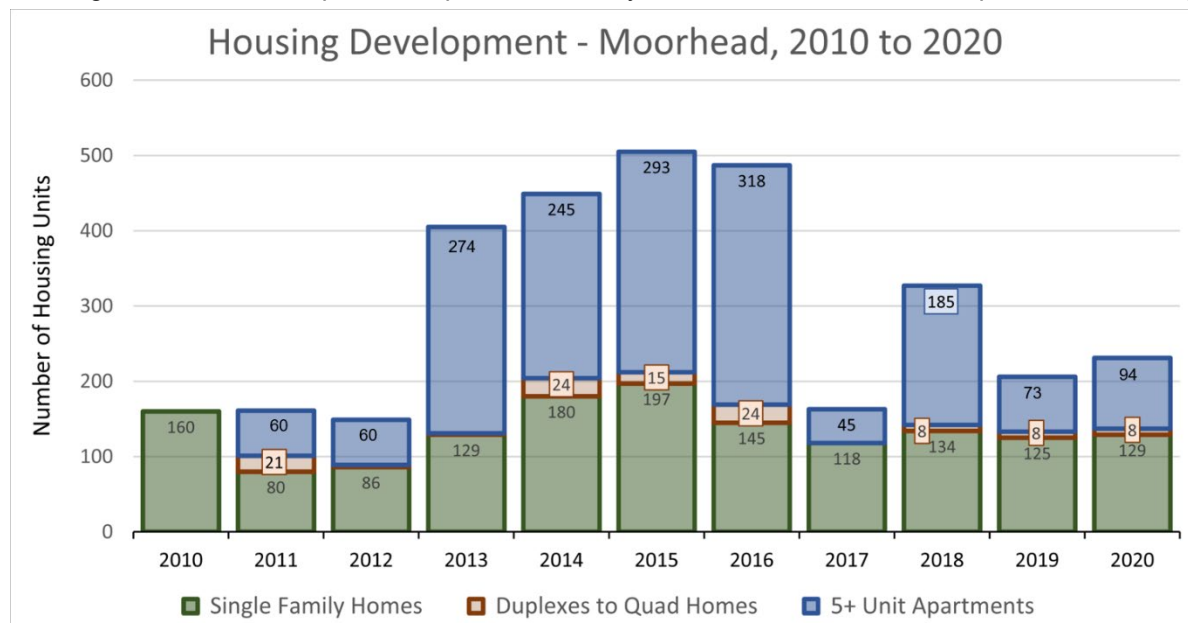


Figure 15. New Housing Development in Moorhead (2010-2020) (Costar, City of Moorhead, Building Permit Survey/US Census Bureau)

Even with the growth in apartment developments over the past decade, demand for housing remains strong in 2020. As seen in Figure 16, rent growth and reductions in vacancy rates for apartment buildings that preexisted the past decade are an indication that strong demand for rental housing is ongoing.

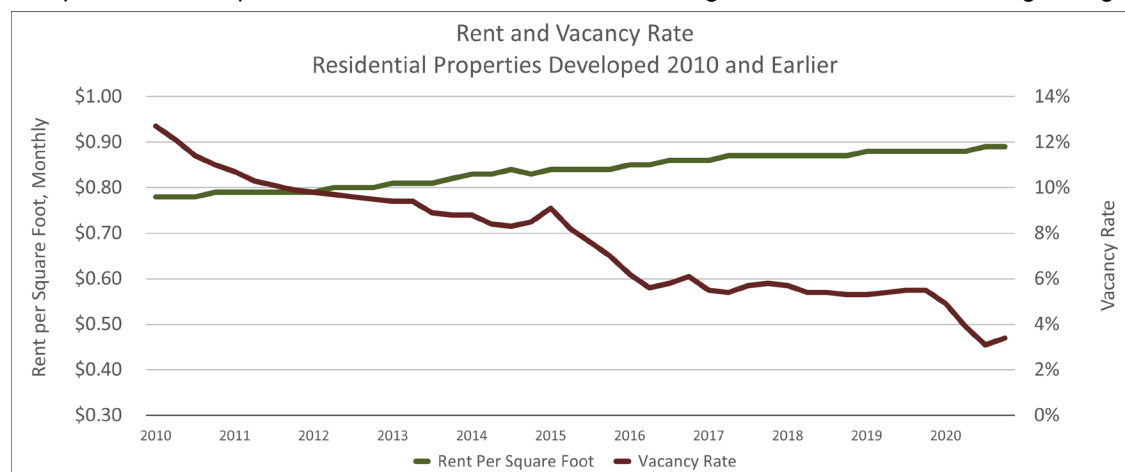


Figure 16. Rent and Vacancy Rate for Residential Properties in Moorhead (Costar)



The apartment developments that were constructed since 2010 are illustrated in Figure 17 below. Most are medium to large, offering between 50 and 150 dwelling units and outside of the downtown core. They are all market-rate general occupancy apartment buildings.

The 2017 Housing Needs Assessment prepared for the City by Maxfield Research and Consulting documented a total of around 750 dwelling units or rooms in senior housing facilities in Moorhead—almost all of which was built prior to 2010. An additional 280 rooms are available in skilled nursing facilities.

The Housing Needs Assessment identified 12 developments in Moorhead that are income restricted, providing a total of 461 housing units to low-income households.

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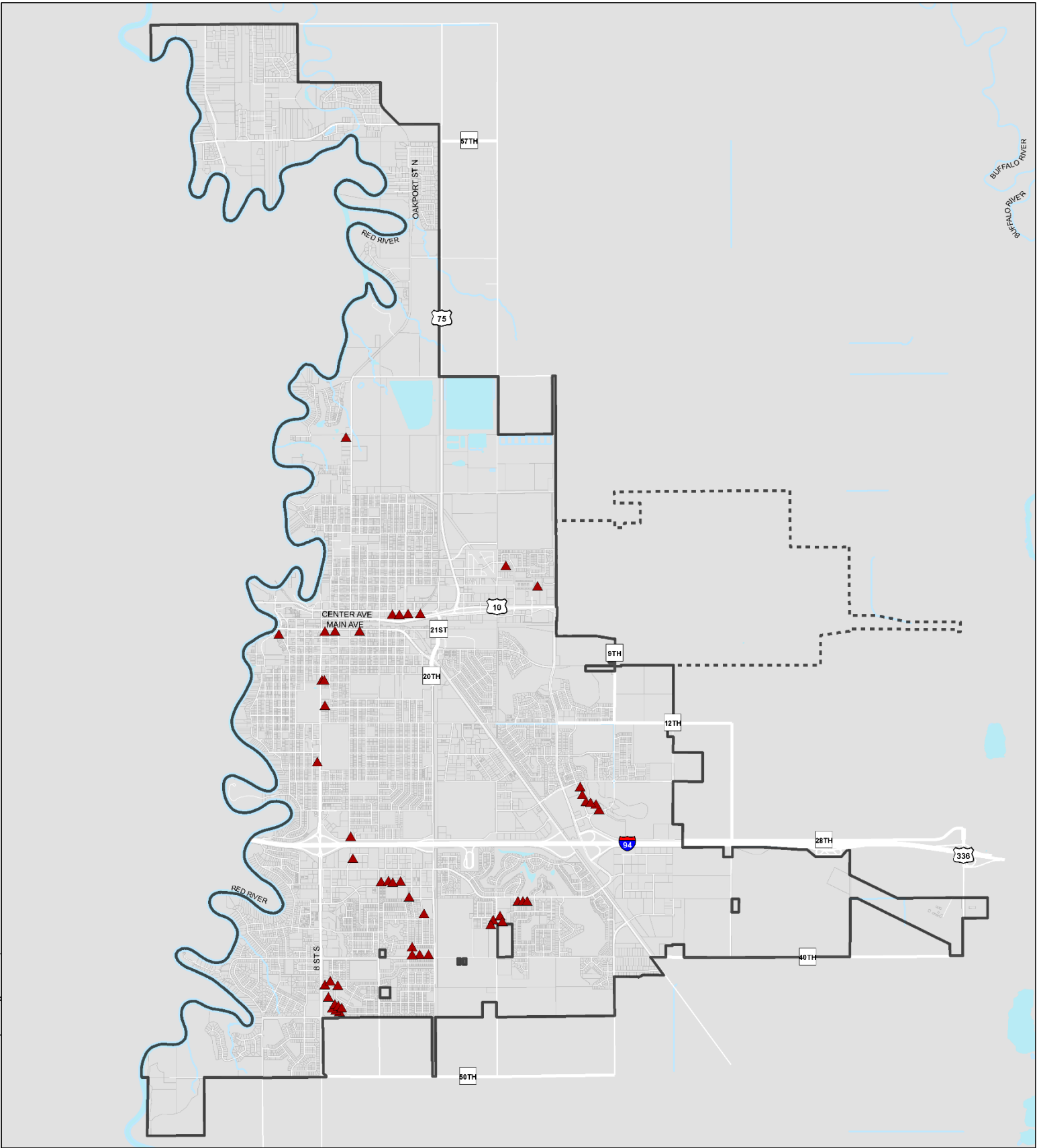






Figure 19. New multi-family developments since 2010 (City of Moorhead building permit data)



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan City of Moorhead, MN

February 2, 2021

LEGEND

-  Apartments with 5+ Units
-  Moorhead City
-  Dilworth City
-  Water Bodies





Cost Burdened Households

There are also households within Moorhead that are considered housing cost burdened. A household is said to be cost burdened when it pays more than 30% of its income towards housing expenses. Figure 18 below shows that 56.5% of renter households in Moorhead are cost burdened, compared with 17.2% of owner-occupied households. The proportion of rental households that are cost burdened in Moorhead is greater than the state of Minnesota as a whole, while the proportion of cost burdened owner households is less than statewide.

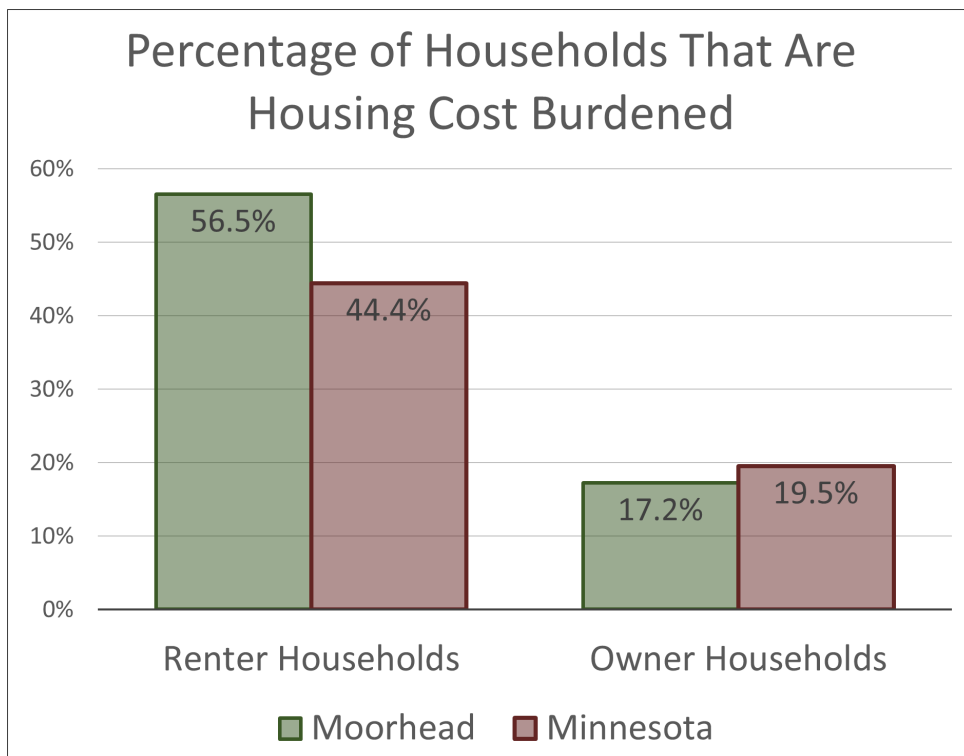


Figure 18. Cost Burdened Households (US Census Bureau, MN Housing Partnership)

Figure 19 shows the geographic concentrations of cost burdened households. The red areas, where around 30-40% of households are considered cost burdened are concentrated around the colleges where a higher proportion of renters reside.

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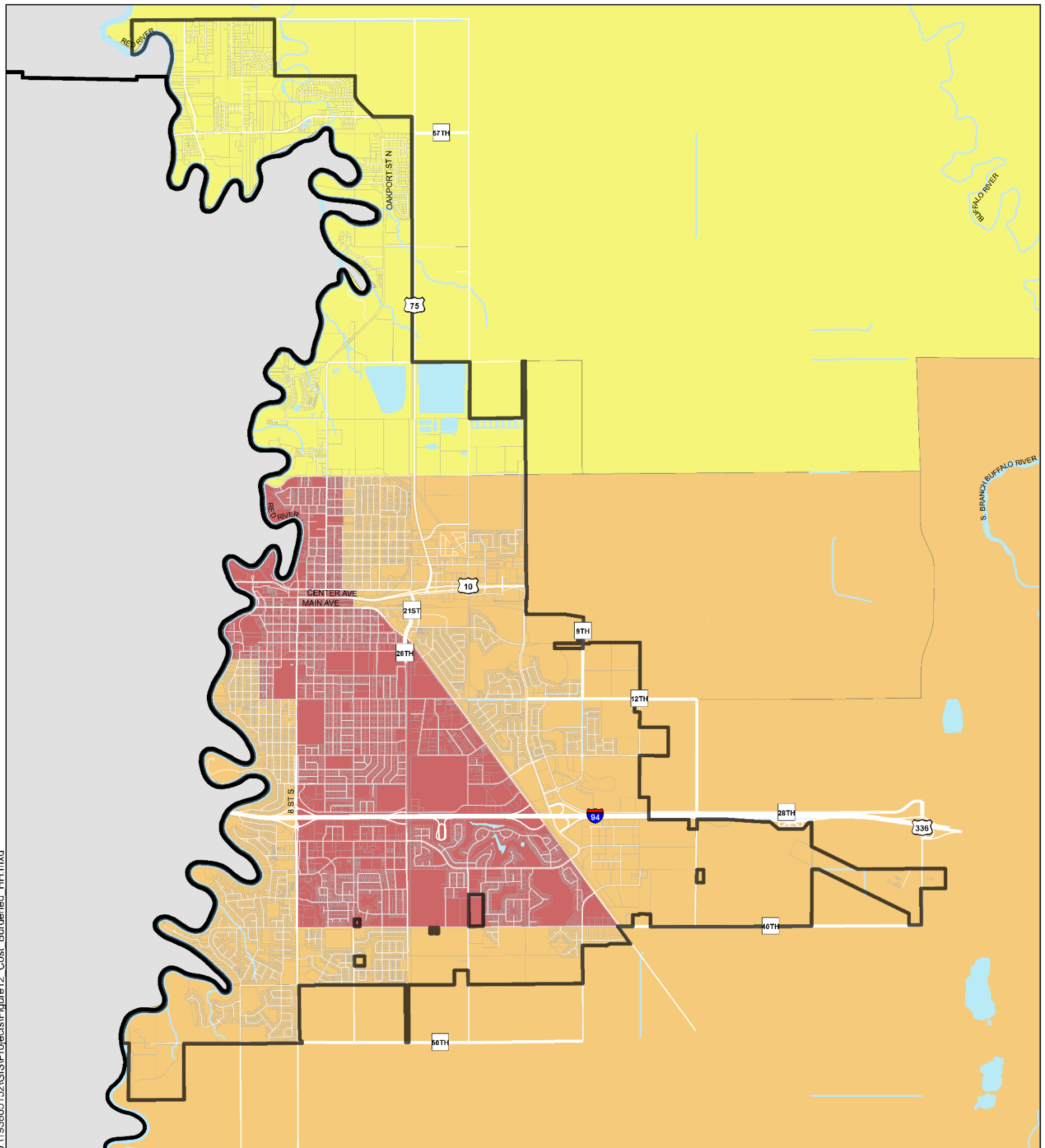


Figure 19. Concentrations of Cost-Burdened Households (US Census Bureau)



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan City of Moorhead, MN

January 19, 2020

LEGEND

- 0 - 10%
- 11 - 20%
- 21 - 30%
- 31 - 40%
- Municipal Boundary
- Water Bodies





Housing Forecast

Moorhead’s projected household growth, shown in Figure 20, implies a demand for around 280 housing units per year for the next ten years. If existing rental/ownership patterns hold, that equates to a demand of 109 rental housing units per year—a number that closely matches the apartment production between 2010 and 2020.

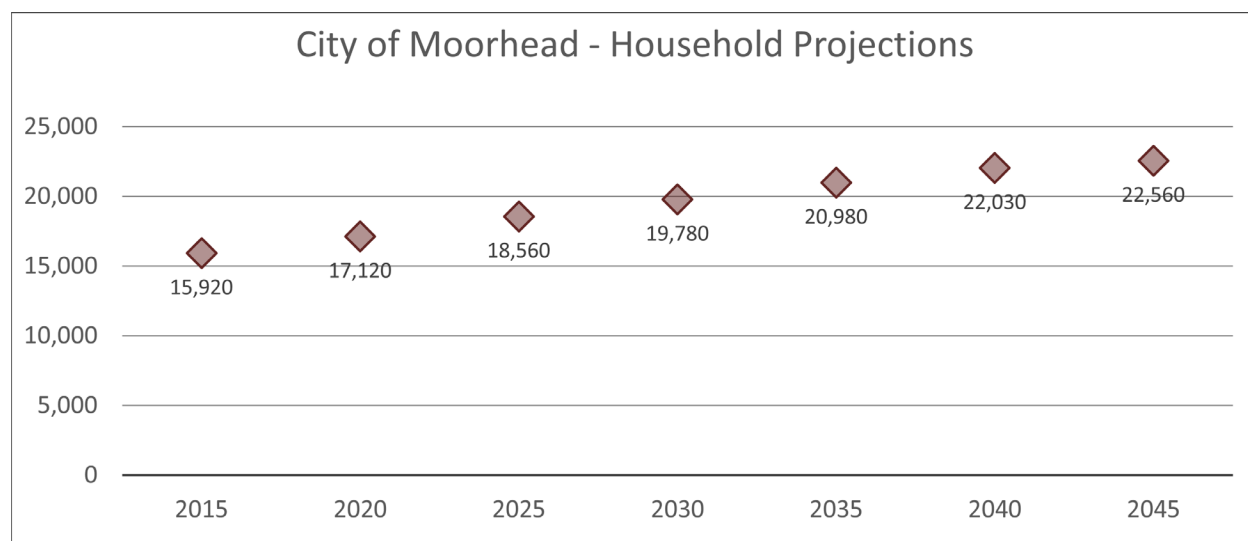


Figure 20. Household Projections in Moorhead (KLJ Consultants)

Intentional efforts may be required to ensure that the housing mix accommodates people at all income levels and life stages.

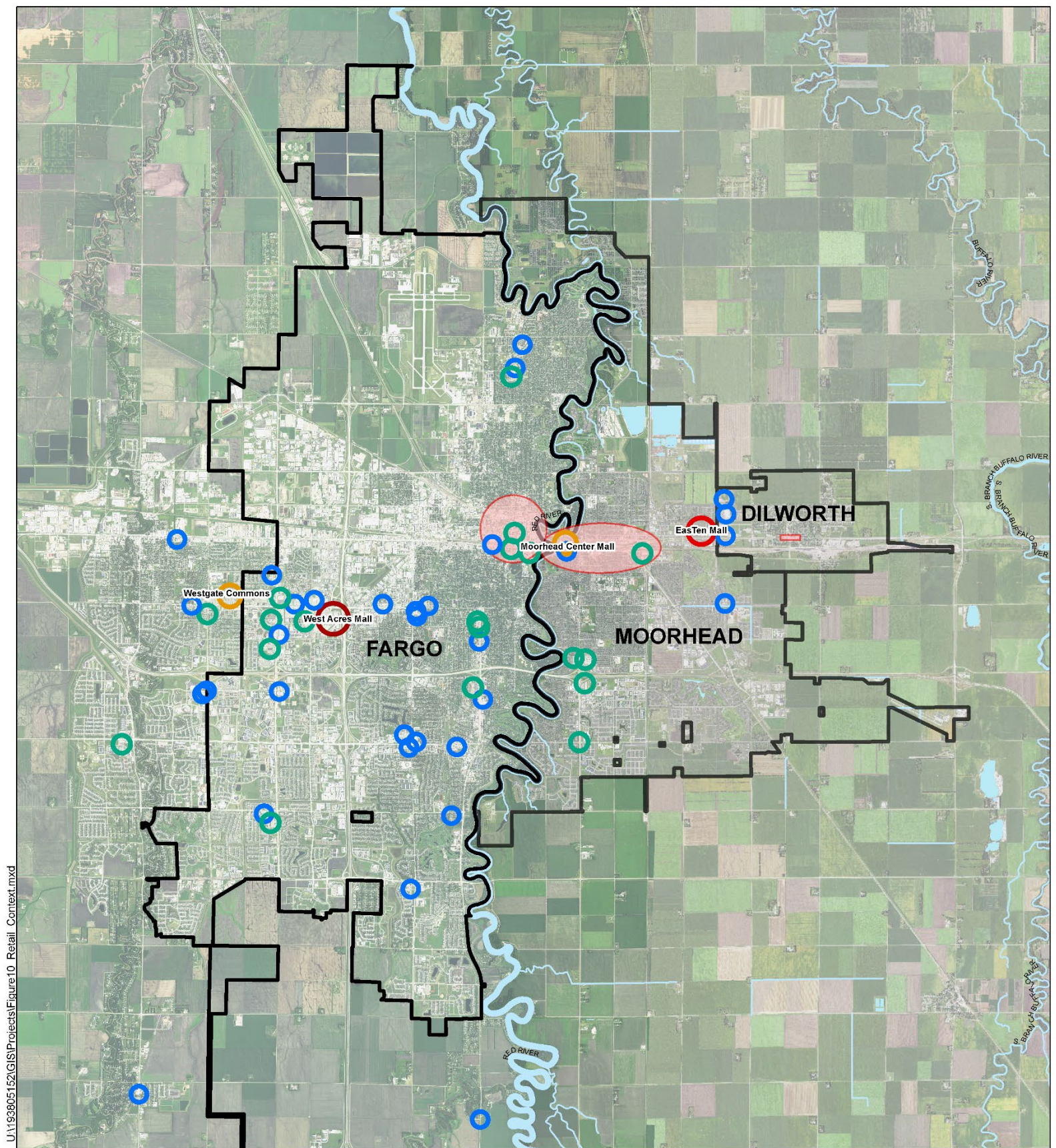
RETAIL MARKET

The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area serves as a regional center for shopping and retail services for a broad surrounding area. Finding a comparable selection of store offerings would require a 200-mile drive west to Bismarck, a 175-mile drive southeast to St. Cloud, or a 220-mile drive north to Winnepeg.

The map in Figure 21 below illustrates the landscape of retail offerings in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Moorhead offers two of the largest shopping centers in the area—the EastTen Mall and the Moorhead Center Mall—in addition to quite a few neighborhood retail centers and a walkable retail district in Downtown Moorhead⁶.

Retail is a dynamic market sector. Highway oriented retail has been putting strains on neighborhood retail stores for decades, while the growth of online shopping has taken market share from store-based retailers. The COVID pandemic may also be exacerbating that transition as consumers turn increasingly to a delivery model for their retail purchases. It is not known how long-lasting the pandemic’s dampening impact on retail stores, restaurants, and personal services will be.

⁶ The shopping mall distinctions shown in Figure 21 are derived from CoStar and generally have to do with size of retail footprint, not a measure of retail activity.



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Figure 21. Retail Context in Moorhead (Costar, Stantec)



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

January 19, 2021

LEGEND

-  Super Regional Mall
-  Community Center
-  Downtown Walkable Retail
-  Power Center
-  Neighborhood Center
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Strip Center
-  Water Bodies





Rent/Vacancy Trends

Rent levels and vacancy rates have held broadly steady over the past decade. Those trends are graphed in Figure 22 below for existing retail properties based on information from Costar.

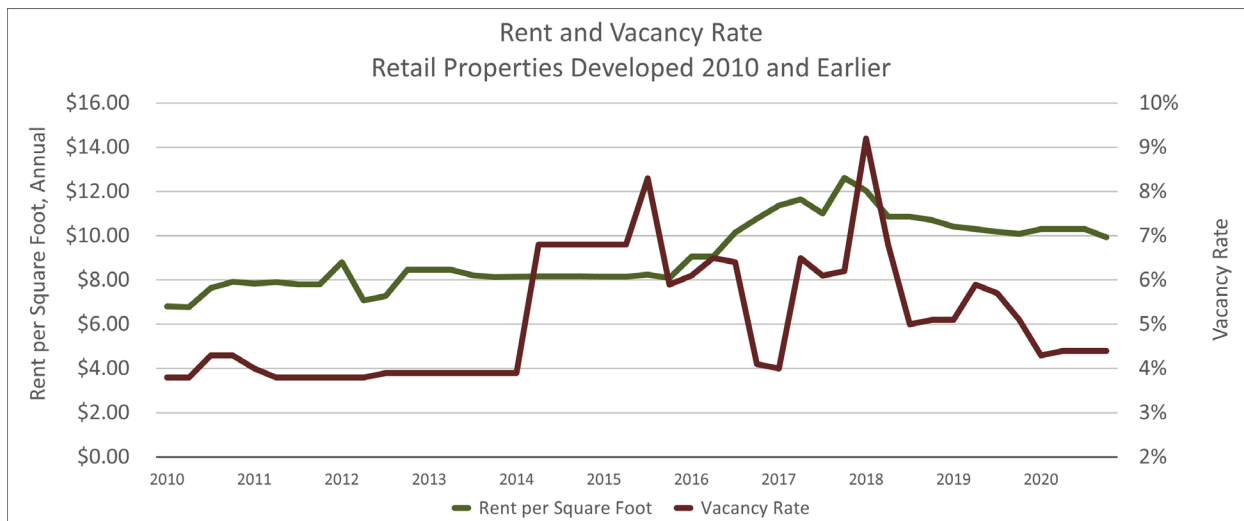


Figure 22. Rent and Vacancy Rate for Retail Properties in Moorhead (Costar)

Commercial Development Since 2010

The challenges in the retail market are evident in the low number of new retail properties that have been developed over the last decade, as shown in Figure 23. The most significant of those was a 139,000 square-foot Sam’s Club that closed five years after its 2013 opening.

Given these considerations, it is likely that retail growth will lag population growth in the near to medium term.

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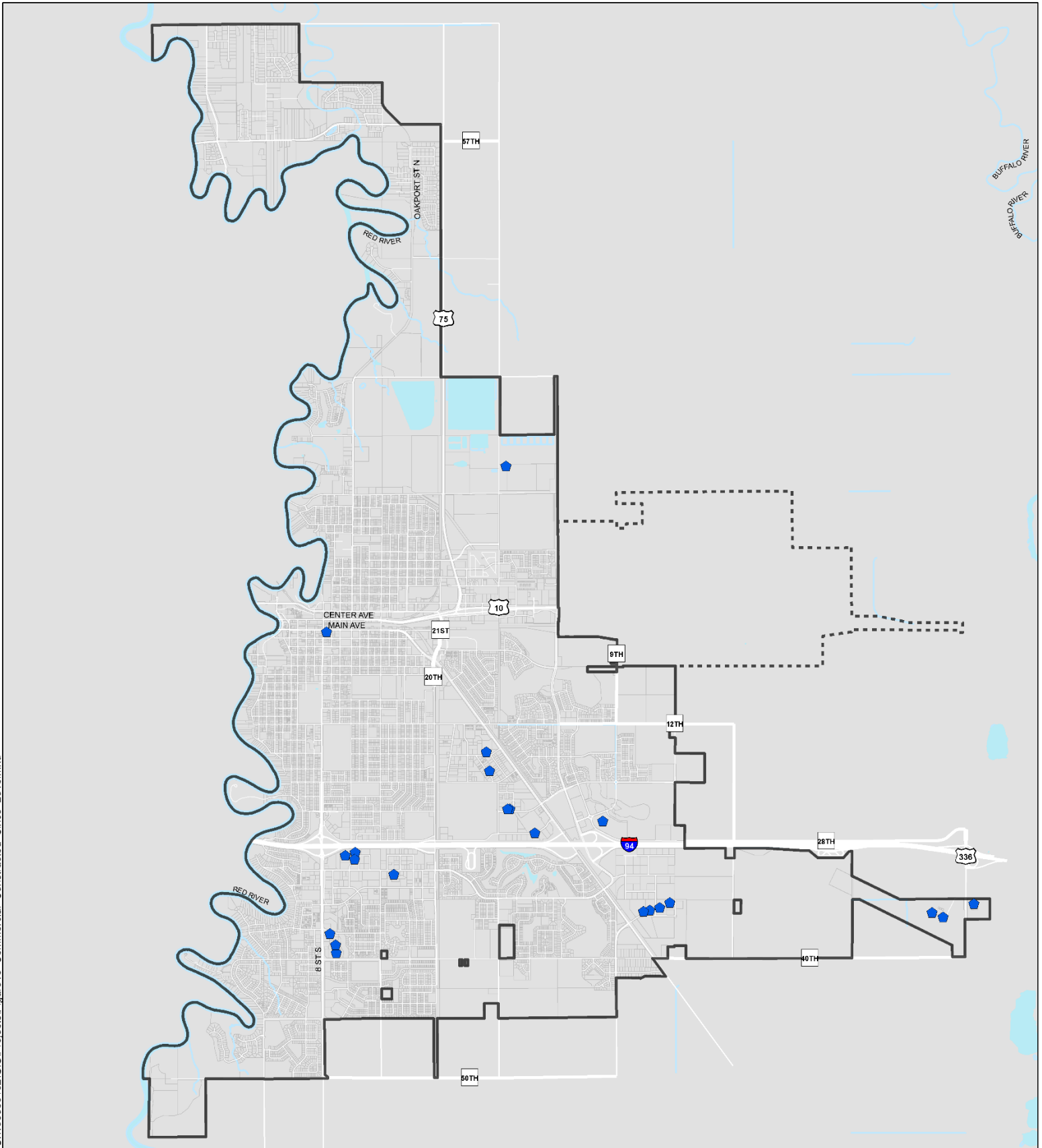






Figure 23. New Commercial Development Since 2010 (10,000+ square feet)
 (City of Moorhead Building Permits)



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
 City of Moorhead, MN

February 5, 2021

LEGEND

-  Commercial Development Over 10,000 SF
-  Moorhead City
-  Dilworth City
-  Water Bodies





INDUSTRIAL MARKET

Moorhead's primary economic strengths are in non-industrial sectors. It has relatively fewer businesses and jobs in industries such as manufacturing, warehousing/distribution, wholesaling, construction, compared with the rest of the Fargo-Moorhead region. However, the city does have the headquarters and a major factory for American Crystal Sugar, which is a benefit to the city's industrial sector.

Figure 24 provides some context for the industrial development market in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. Moorhead has two areas with a concentrated presence of industrial businesses. One of them is the MCCARA Industrial Park located at the southeast quadrant of I-94 and County Highway 52. The map illustrates the locations of industrial parks, as well as new industrial developments since 2010.

Moorhead Industrial Market Advantages

The 2014 Industrial Park Study prepared for the City by Moran, Stahl and Boyer shows that although there is a clear perceptual edge for North Dakota vs. Minnesota with respect to industrial development, when you line up the various factors, including taxes, incentives and other costs, the cities are similar. Each city has advantages over the other.

Perhaps the strongest asset that Moorhead has is the prime location of its industrial park—the MCCARA Industrial Park. This industrial park is better situated with respect to freeway access than anything in Fargo, and it has plenty of land that is ready to be developed.

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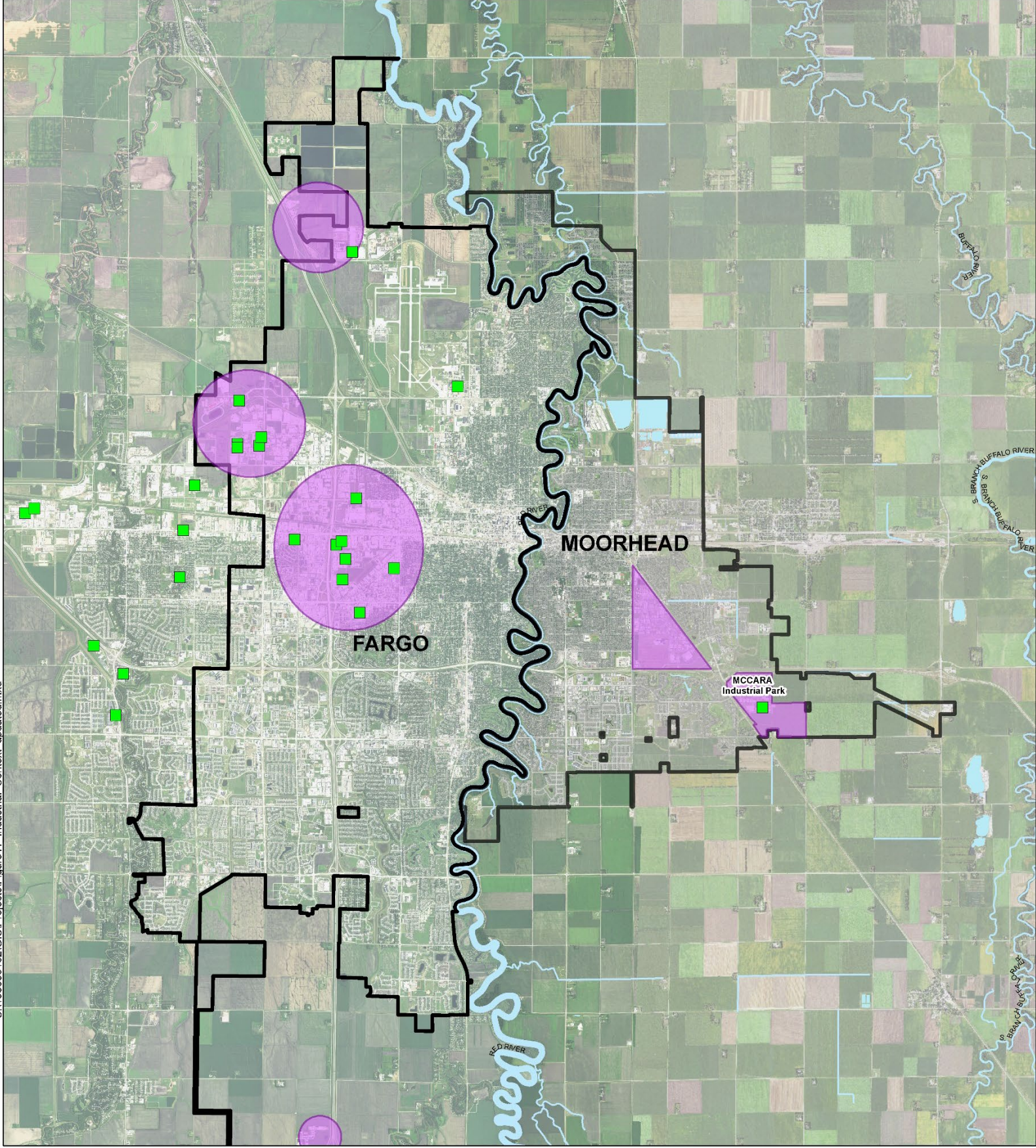


Figure 24. Industrial Context in Moorhead (Costar, Stantec)



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

February 5, 2021

LEGEND

- New Industrial Development (within the last 10 years)
- Water Bodies
- Major Industrial Areas
- Municipal Boundary





Rent/Vacancy Trends

The demand for existing industrial space in Moorhead appears to be healthy and ongoing. Figure 25 shows rent levels have steadily risen over the past decade from around \$4 per square foot to around \$7 per square foot. Property vacancy is modest, vacillating within a few points of a 5 percent vacancy rate.

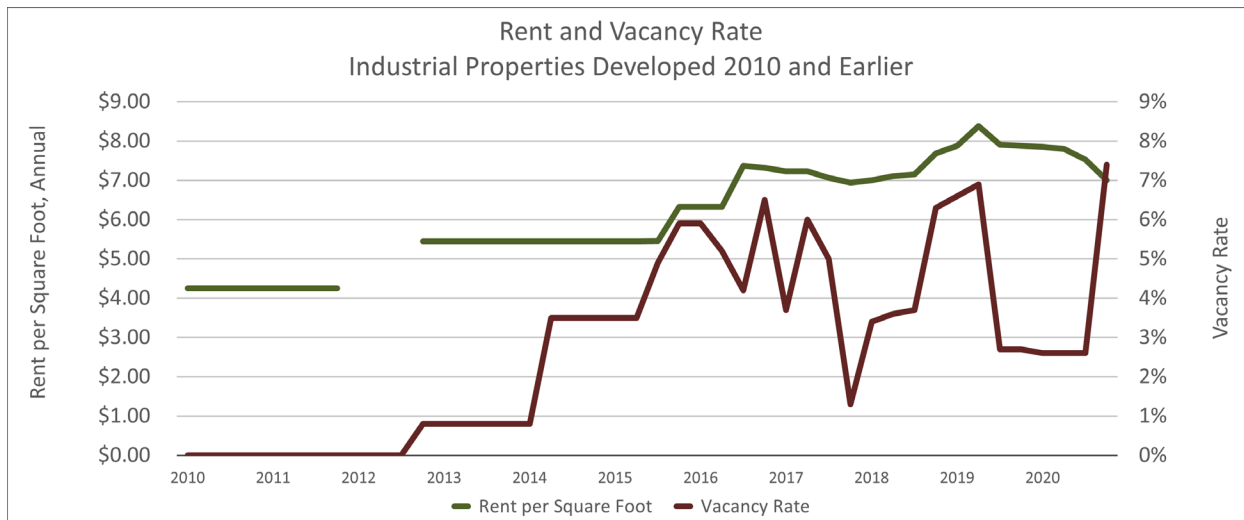


Figure 25. Rent and Vacancy Rate for Industrial Properties in Moorhead (Costar)

Industrial Growth

Industrial development has been ongoing in the Fargo-Moorhead region over the past decade, the majority of which has gone to cities in North Dakota. Moorhead has captured 6 percent of the region's industrial growth, as shown in Figure 26, although it has 17 percent of the region's population.

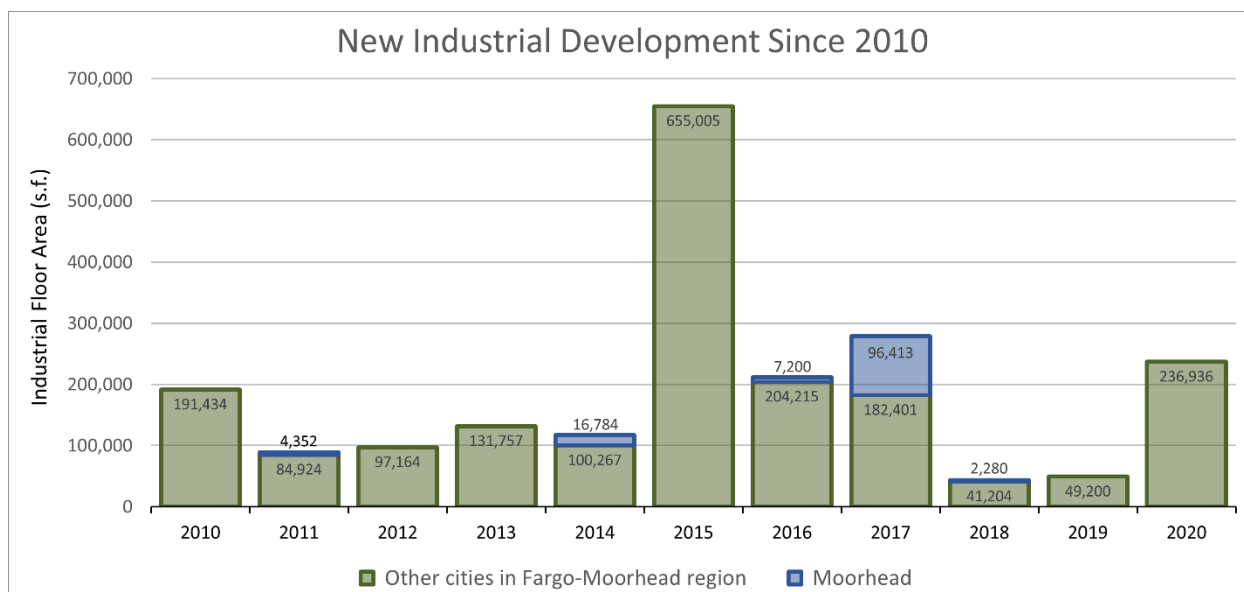


Figure 26. New Industrial Development in Moorhead and the Fargo-Moorhead region since 2010 (Costar)



If growth trends continue, the region will attract 1.9 million square feet of industrial development over the next decade, and Moorhead can anticipate capturing around 120,000 square feet of industrial growth. But given its well situated MCCARA Industrial Park, and ongoing communication to correct market perceptions, Moorhead may be able to capture a more proportionate share of the region's industrial growth.



LAND USE

Land use is the basis for any Comprehensive Plan. It can tell us where people are choosing to live and how dense that development is, where new businesses are locating, and whether there is a consistent distribution of amenities – like parks – throughout the city. More than that, though, it tells us how the City of Moorhead has directed these uses to be in certain parts of the city through previous Comprehensive Plans and its regulatory framework. This planning process is an opportunity to evaluate the location and health of existing land uses compared to not only market realities, but how existing conditions and policies may be unknowingly impacting disparities in the community.

EXISTING LAND USE

The City of Moorhead has defined its existing land uses in both the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum. The definitions of existing land uses were the same in both plans and are included below. A map of existing land use is also shown in Figure 27. This existing land use map will be updated with the most current land use information, as the data provided to the consultant was last updated for the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum. Any new development since 2009 or transition in land use should be documented and reflected in an updated existing land use map and table for this Comprehensive Plan.

The dominant land use within the city is low-density residential, mainly single-family homes. There is a smaller but growing proportion of medium and high-density housing. There is a significant although shrinking amount of agricultural land within the city limits. Much of this vacant and agricultural land is within the city's designated growth areas and planned for more intensive land uses in the future. There are several areas of commercial development within the city including the area along Highway 10 from Downtown to the EastTen shopping center, as well as the area surrounding the Interstate 94 and Highway 75 intersection. There are three main areas of industrial development within the city including the existing industrial parks (Moorhead Industrial Park and MCCARA), as well as the American Crystal Sugar Property South of 28th Avenue North and east of 11th Street North. Finally, the city has a robust network of parks and open space, including significant land within the floodplain of the Red River.

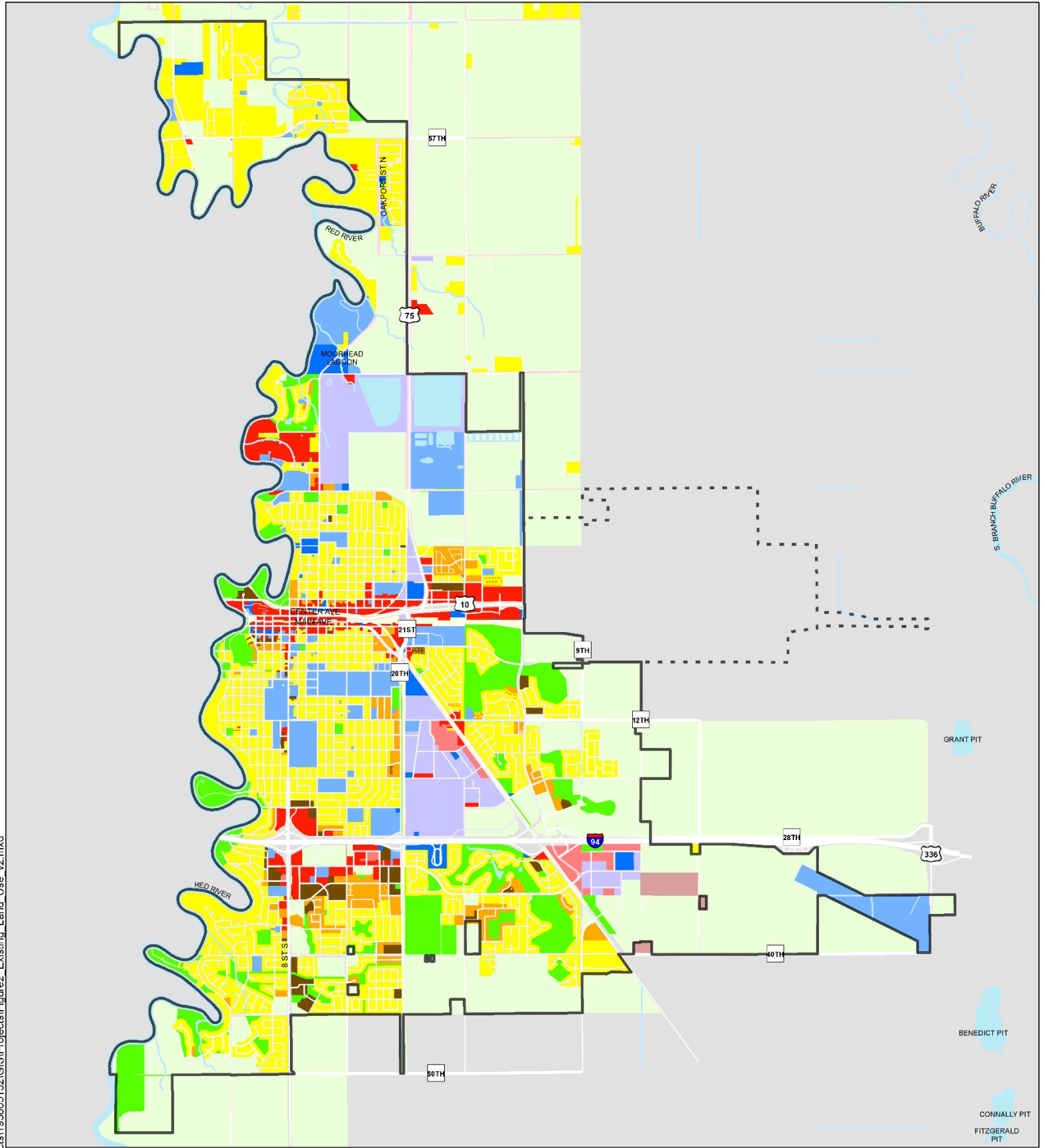


Figure 27. Existing Land Use



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

December 30, 2020

LEGEND

	High Density Residential	Outside City Limits	Right-of-Way
	Industrial	Parks/Open Space	Semi-Public
	Low Density Residential	Public	Vacant
	Med Density Residential	Railroad	Vacant-Res Platted



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Existing Land Use Categories (from the 2004 and 2009 Comprehensive Plans):

- **Single Family Residential:** Single family residential is the largest proportion of all residential land uses. Densities range from 1 to 4 units per acre. In addition to traditional single family detached homes, it includes attached products like twin homes and duplexes.
- **Medium Density Residential:** Medium density residential has a density of 4 to 10 units per acre. Some examples are duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes and attached townhomes. It also includes manufactured home parks. Medium density residential can be found in the greatest concentrations in the southern portion of Moorhead but occurs throughout the city.
- **High Density Residential:** High density residential describes housing that consists of more than 10 units per acre. This usually occurs with apartment buildings of two or more stories. Most housing of this nature is located in or near downtown Moorhead or the college and university.
- **Industrial:** Industrial business describes facilities which manufacture or process food, goods, or equipment. It also includes warehouses, repacking facilities, and self-storage buildings. These businesses typically have little space devoted to displays and often do not sell directly to the general public.
- **Commercial:** Commercial includes a wide range of businesses. The most recognized are businesses which sell food, merchandise, entertainment, or professional services. These businesses typically devote a significant portion of their space for product display or customer services. Some examples would include retail stores, restaurants, hotels, meeting facilities, movie theaters, gas stations, and professional agencies like insurance, real estate, and funeral homes. Commercial can also include office businesses which provide professional services but have limited interaction with customers.
- **Parks and Open Space:** Parks describe municipal and County owned facilities such as playgrounds, ball fields and recreational trails. It also includes land which does not serve a recreational purpose but provides undisturbed natural areas for the community. Private recreational facilities, like the Moorhead Country Club, are also included.
- **Public/Semi-public:** Public refers to land owned by municipalities or counties. Facilities include libraries, fire stations, community pools, ice arenas and public power facilities. Semi-public refers to land owned by institutions such as schools, churches, hospitals and nursing homes.
- **Railroad:** Railroad includes the tracks and right-of-way owned by the railroads in Moorhead.
- **Agricultural:** Agricultural refers to land being cultivated for crops
- **Vacant:** Vacant land is available for development and not being used for agricultural purposes.



PAST PLANS AND CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE FOR LAND USE

The City has several plans that discuss land use within Moorhead. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan defined future land uses for the entire city, which was then updated in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum. The 2004 Plan identified 20 planning districts, and 5 focus areas (meaning topics, not physical areas) within the city for further study. Minor updates were made to the Future Land Use Plan in the 2009 Addendum, including updated guidance for the South and East Growth Areas, as well as the North Moorhead/Oakport Township Growth Area Plan. In 2016, the City also adopted updated Growth Area Plans for the East, Southwest and Southeast Growth Areas. These growth plans will be added through this Comprehensive Planning Process. Finally, in 2018, the City conducted Alternative Urban Areawide Reviews (AUAR) for three areas of anticipated development within the city including the North, East and South growth areas. These past plans as well as emerging trends and public input will guide the future land use for the Comprehensive Planning process.

Future Land Use Map

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum updated the Future Land Use Map from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan with specific updates focused on identified growth areas to the south and east and the North Moorhead/Oakport Township growth area to the north. The 2009 update also focused on redevelopment options for Downtown as well as infill/redevelopment options for the 1st Avenue, SE Main and Center Avenue Corridors. The Future Land Use Map from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, and land use changes that have occurred between 2009 - 2020 are shown in Figure 28.

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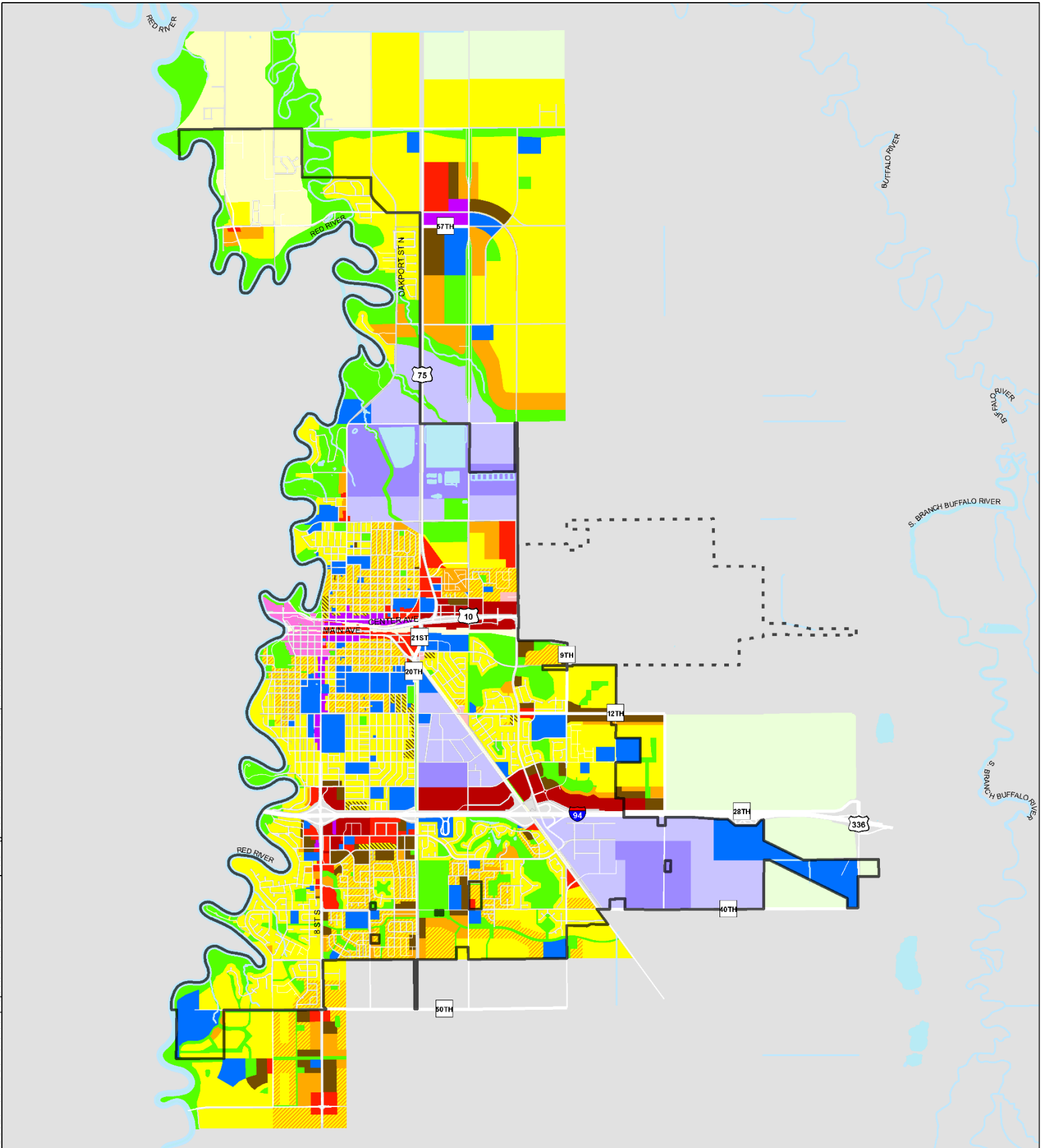


Figure 28. Future Land Use (2009 – 2020)

Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

February 5, 2021



LEGEND

Moorhead City	Low Density Residential	Neighborhood Commercial	Light Industrial
Dilworth City	Medium Density Residential	Community Commercial	Heavy Industrial
Agricultural	Medium Density Mixed Residential	Regional Commercial	Public/Institutional
Railroad	High Density Residential	Downtown	Parks/Open Space
Rural Residential	High Density Mixed Residential	Mixed Use	





Summary of Comprehensive Plan Policies

The 2004 and 2009 Comprehensive Plans both include strategic initiatives which act as the policies for implementing the Plan's vision. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum includes several strategic initiatives related to land use, development, and growth management.

- Strategic Initiative #1 recommends that the Growth Plan guide development decisions, including both land use and design principles. Long-range planning for these growth areas was updated with the 2016 Moorhead Growth Area Plan. The 2016 Plan recommends further guidance to future land uses and additional strategic initiatives for the growth areas.
- Strategic Initiative #2 relates to downtown/infill redevelopment and suggests implementation of existing zoning and public corridor improvements to support the desired street character.
- Strategic Initiative #7 addresses growth management and includes several steps the City can take to manage growth including monitoring vacant land supply and identifying critical areas prior to development, ensuring sufficient land for a mix of land uses, maintaining rural development standards, and establishing policies for new development and municipal services.

Summary of Activity Centers/Growth Areas

In the 2004 and 2009 Comprehensive Plans, several activity centers and growth areas were identified. Several of these areas have been the focus of planning efforts since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum, including the 2016 Growth Area Plan and 2020 Downtown Moorhead Master Plan. The Comprehensive Planning process will incorporate these relevant plans and update guidance for the activity centers and growth areas within the city. The activity and growth areas that have been identified through past planning processes are described below. This list may be expanded or modified as more is learned about the priorities for this Comprehensive Plan.

Downtown: Historically the economic and social heart of the community, now challenged by competition from other commercial areas within the region. Downtown is characterized by a mix of businesses and civic uses developed over the last 50 years, with a few of the historic main street buildings remaining. Moorhead Center Mall serves as an important anchor to Downtown and was a focus of the recent Downtown Moorhead Master Plan. The Downtown Master Plan provides guidance for this part of the city, which will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Camtown: This is the area where Concordia College and MSUM are located. These neighborhoods are major housing and job centers for the community. Improving the connection to Downtown is an important priority for this activity center.

EasTen: This activity center encompasses the EasTen regional shopping center and is commercial in nature. Commercial development along Highway 10 includes a series of strip centers and big box stores.

Midtown: Midtown is located along Highway 10 between EasTen and Downtown, serving as the transition between urban and suburban character. The neighborhood encompasses a mix of small retail, office and service businesses, and industrial businesses near the railroad.

Holiday: This activity center encompasses the area around Interstate 94 between Highway 75 and 20th St S. This was one of the first commercial areas to develop after downtown and has good visibility from Interstate 94.



Fields: This is an activity center that was anticipated for commercial development within the next decade in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan. This activity center includes the area north of Interstate 94, near the confluence of Main Avenue SE and 34th Street.

East Growth Area: This growth area is located east of 40th St S and north of I-94. The growth area was identified to address the expansion of the Horizon Shores development, potential of a new I-94 interchange, and development near the New Moorhead Elementary School.

Southeast Growth Area: The growth area is located between 40th Avenue South on the north, Hwy 52 on the east, 50th Avenue South on the south, and the existing Growth Area Plan on the railroad on the west. The future land use plan for the Southeast Growth Area includes a mix of community commercial, mixes use residential, and low-medium density residential.

Southwest Growth Area: This property is located between 40th Avenue South on the north, the railroad and the Southeast Growth Area on the east, 60th Avenue South on the south, and the existing Growth Area Plan on the west. The growth area plan shows mixed use and low-medium density residential uses.

CURRENT TRENDS FOR LAND USE

Current trends are defined as trends that we have seen in Moorhead and in other cities across the country in the last 10 years, as well as trends that we have seen in past plans and studies from the City of Moorhead and its planning partners.

- As the city has continued to grow in population, growth area plans and AUAR environmental reviews have been conducted to prepare for development both within and just outside of city limits.
- Based on demographic shifts, more and more people are choosing to live in neighborhoods where they can easily walk to get their daily errands done. This trend points toward a demand for areas with either a horizontal or vertical mix of land uses.
- The form of sites and buildings is becoming just as important as the function, or land uses. Tying design criteria to specific sites, corridors, or neighborhoods can aide new development to fit into the character and context of the existing community.
- 21st century industrial uses are more eclectic than traditional manufacturing and warehousing. Comprehensive Planning is now analyzing how to encourage industrial uses that are more geared toward technology, innovation, and makers spaces (e.g. breweries and art studios).



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MOBILITY

The mobility network includes the system of streets and paths that get people from one place to another, no matter what mode of transportation they use. Ever since the origination of the federal highway system, most cities have been designed to primarily accommodate efficient automobile traffic. This planning process will evaluate the overall effectiveness of Moorhead's transportation system but also analyze alternative mobility options and trends that would be a good fit for Moorhead's future.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Bus System

Metro Area Transit (MATBUS) serves as the public transit agency in the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. MATBUS operates Monday through Saturday in the communities of Moorhead & Dilworth, Minnesota and Fargo & West Fargo, North Dakota. As shown in Figure 29, there are seven MATBUS routes and nine buses operating within the City of Moorhead – Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 4-Ext⁷, 5, 6, and 9.

In late 2019, LinkFM, a fare-free circulator route that connects downtown Moorhead with downtown Fargo, was discontinued as a regular service route. LinkFM was initiated as a circulator route between the two cities to provide easy access to the downtowns' amenities and alleviate parking concerns. The route circulated between the two downtowns every 15 minutes with stops at Center Mall and Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead and the library, post office, federal court building, and bus depot in Fargo. With the elimination of this service, riders can still take a bus between the two downtowns but it is at the standard rate and every 30 minutes. Both City Councils agreed to continue using LinkFM for major events.

The majority of the routes in Moorhead connect to Downtown Moorhead or cross the Red River into Downtown Fargo. Some routes require a transfer in order to connect to the downtowns. MATBUS offers Paratransit, a public transportation option available on request for persons with disabilities who are unable to use MATBUS Fixed Route Bus Service without assistance. The City of Moorhead also contracts with the Fargo Park Board and Valley Senior Services for Metro Senior Ride, an on-demand public transportation option for senior citizen 60 and older. Riders may transfer to the Fargo Metropolitan Area Transit System at the Ground Transportation Center in Downtown Fargo. Key transit destinations in Moorhead include Downtown, the East Highway 10 shopping area, Center Mall, Hornbachers Foods, MSUM, M State, Concordia College, Essential Health, and the Courtyard by Marriott transfer point. MATBUS vehicles also have bicycle racks that can accommodate up to three bicycles.

⁷Route 4 operates with two buses. The route is 60 minutes long, and the buses are spaced 30 minutes apart for 30-minute frequency. Also, Route 2 has an extra bus during the academic year from 2:30-6:30 pm.

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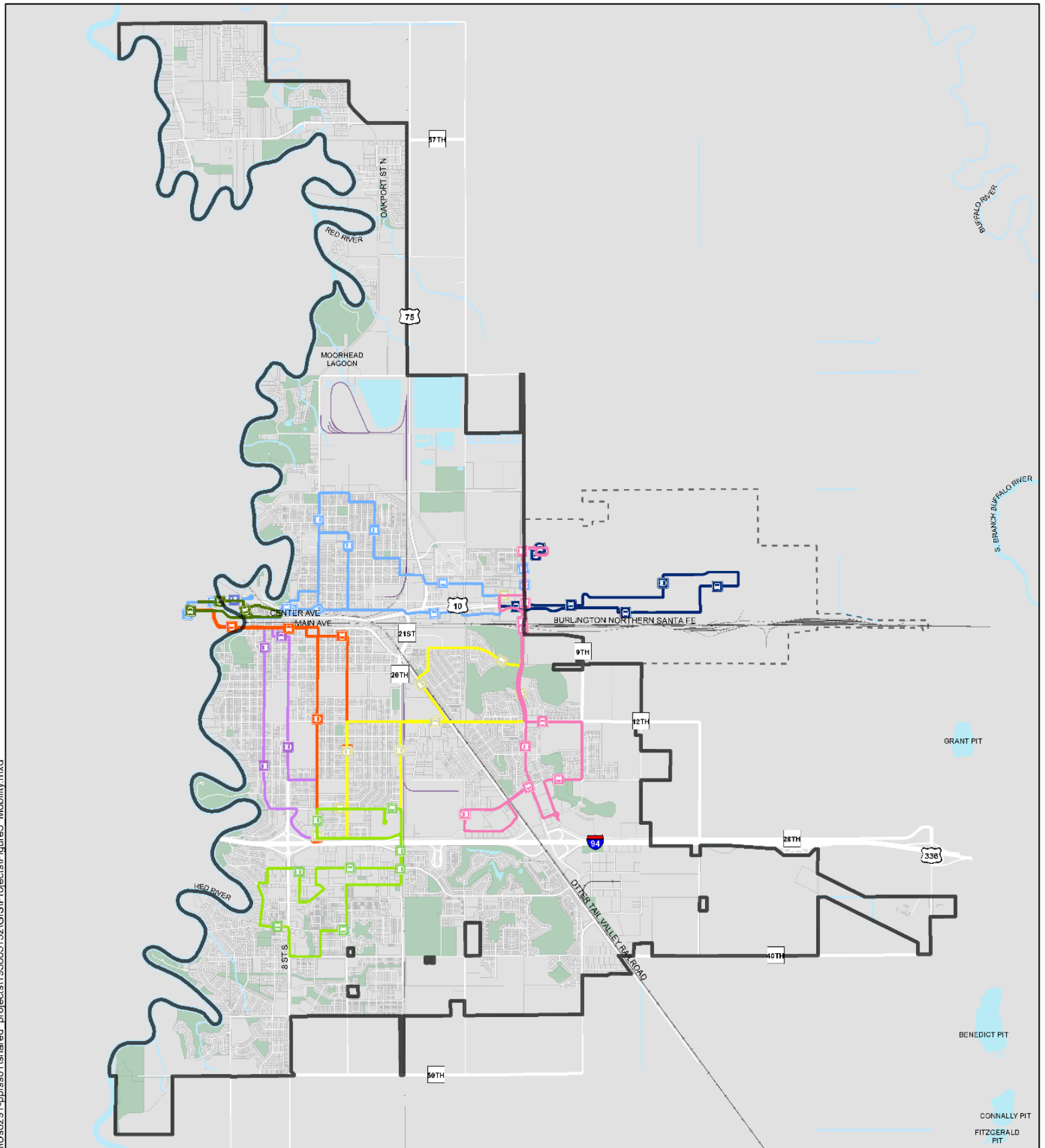


Figure 29. Existing Mobility: Bus Routes



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

December 8, 2020

LEGEND

- Municipal Boundary
- Dilworth City
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 4-EXT
- 5
- 6
- 9
- LINKFM





Walking and Biking

Moorhead's walking and bicycling network is made up of a variety of facility types, including sidewalks, shared use paths, walking loops, on-street bike lanes, bike routes (streets with "bike route" signs), and wide shoulders that can be used for bicycling or walking (Figures 30 and 31). Walking loops are paths that are designated walking routes featuring wayfinding signage. Most residential neighborhoods in the city have sidewalks on both sides of the street, as well as in downtown and other commercial areas. There are a number of planned local and State trails in the city as well, including the Heartland State Trail Extension which will link the current western end of the trail at Park Rapids to the City of Moorhead and connect Moorhead to the communities of Park Rapids, Wolf Lake, Frazee, Detroit Lakes, Audubon, Lake Park, Hawley, Glyndon, and Dilworth.

On-street bike lanes are dedicated facilities for people bicycling, marked by striping, pavement markings, and bike lane signs. On-street bike lanes in Moorhead are relatively limited and disjointed. Examples include 11th St N which turns into Oakport St at 28th Ave N. Some roads considered on-street bike lanes lack pavement markings and bike lane signage, such as Oakport Street N/CSAH 96. Signed bike routes are more prevalent in Moorhead, including 2nd Ave N and 7th Ave S. While these routes are signed to indicate they are a designated route for people bicycling, they do not provide any dedicated or protected infrastructure for bicyclists. Roads with shoulders of 8 feet or greater are considered 'wide shoulders' and are often used by bicyclists. Examples of roads with wide shoulders include 28th Ave N and 28th St N.

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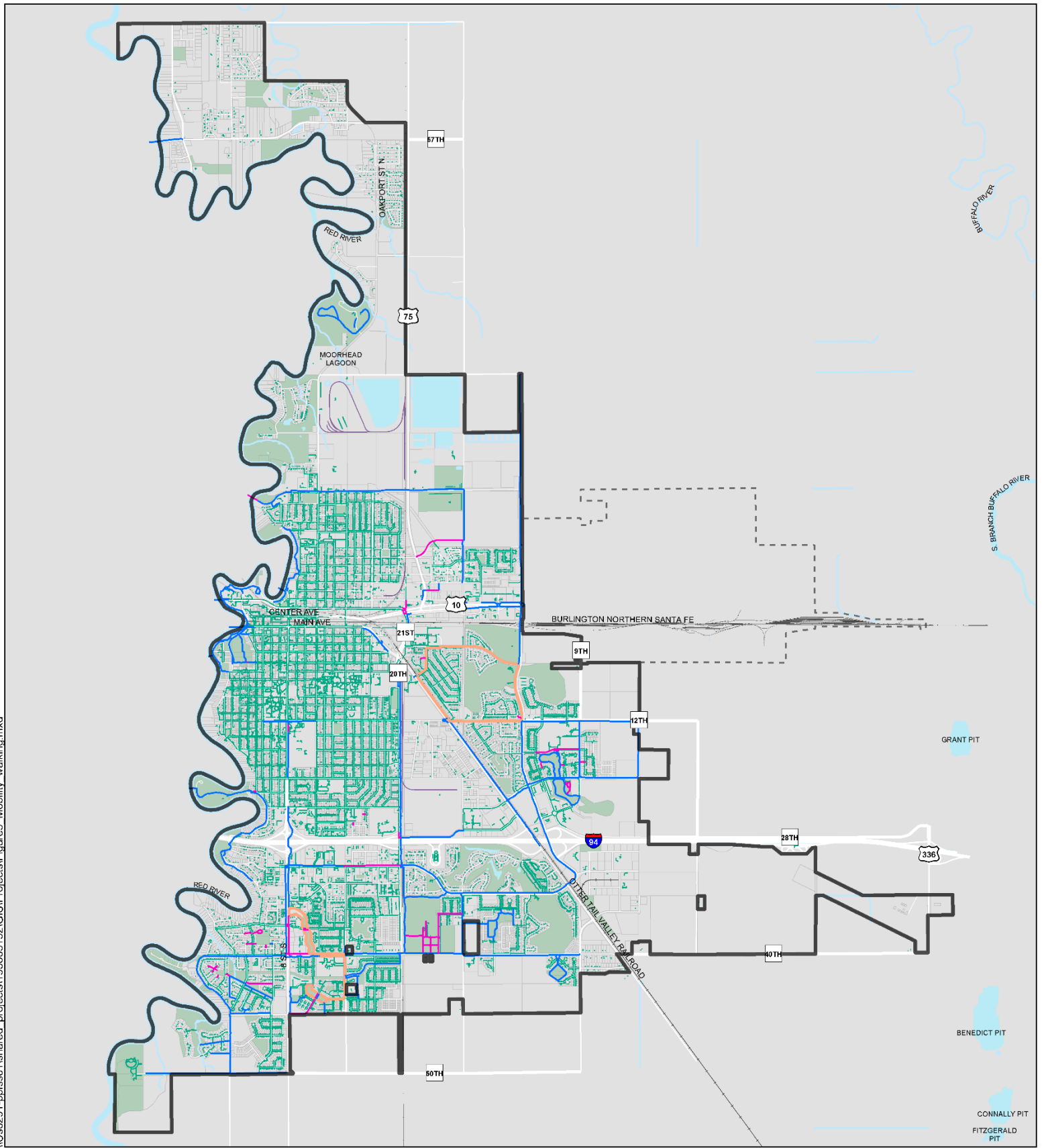


Figure 30. Existing Mobility: Walking



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan City of Moorhead, MN

December 23, 2020

LEGEND

- Municipal Boundary
- Dilworth City
- Wide Sidewalk (5'+)
- Shared Use Path
- Walking Loop
- Sidewalk



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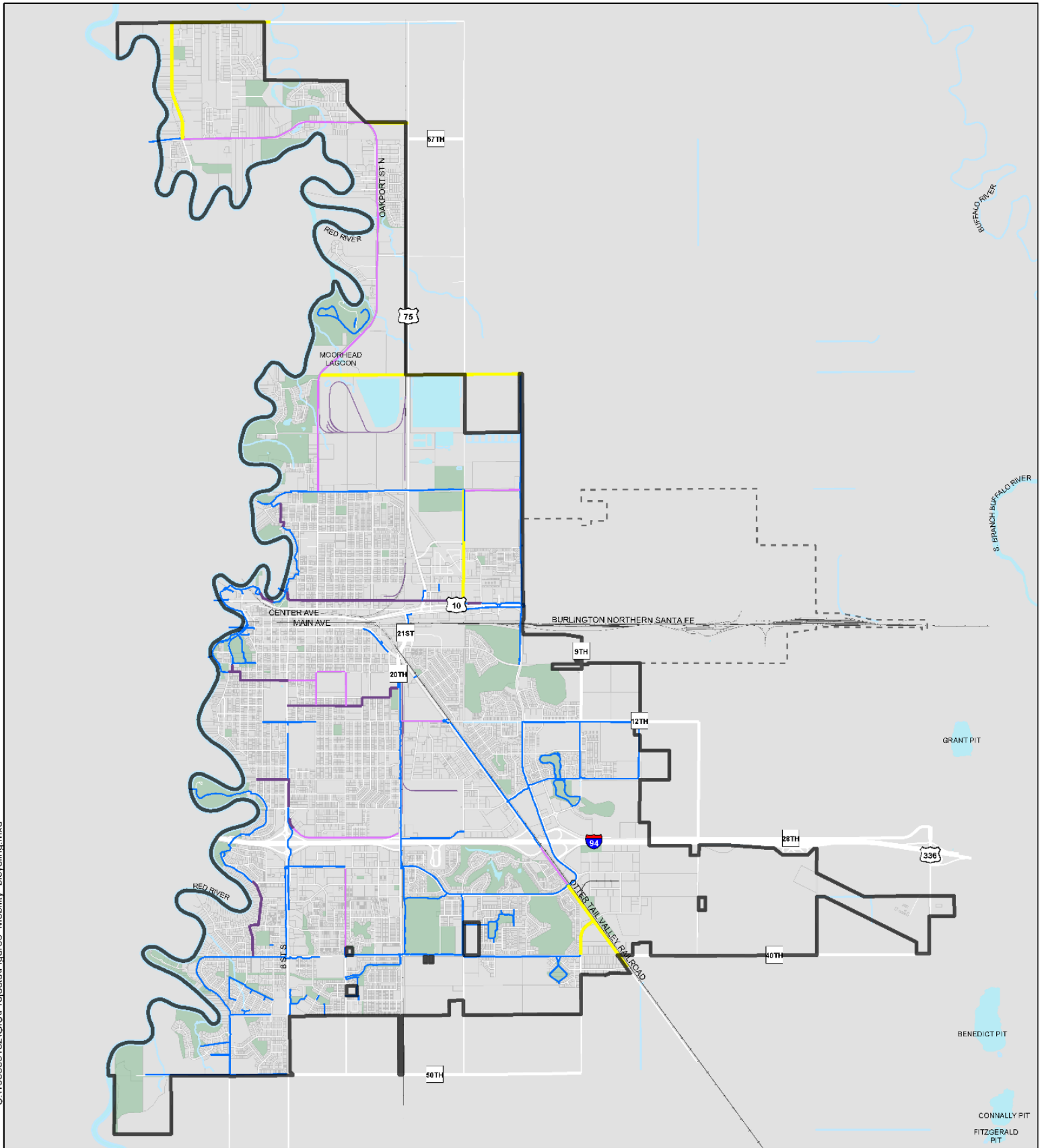


Figure 31. Existing Mobility: Bicycling



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan City of Moorhead, MN

December 23, 2020

LEGEND

- Municipal Boundary
- Dilworth City
- On-Street Bike Route
- Shared Use Path
- Bike Lane
- Wide Shoulder





Functional Classification

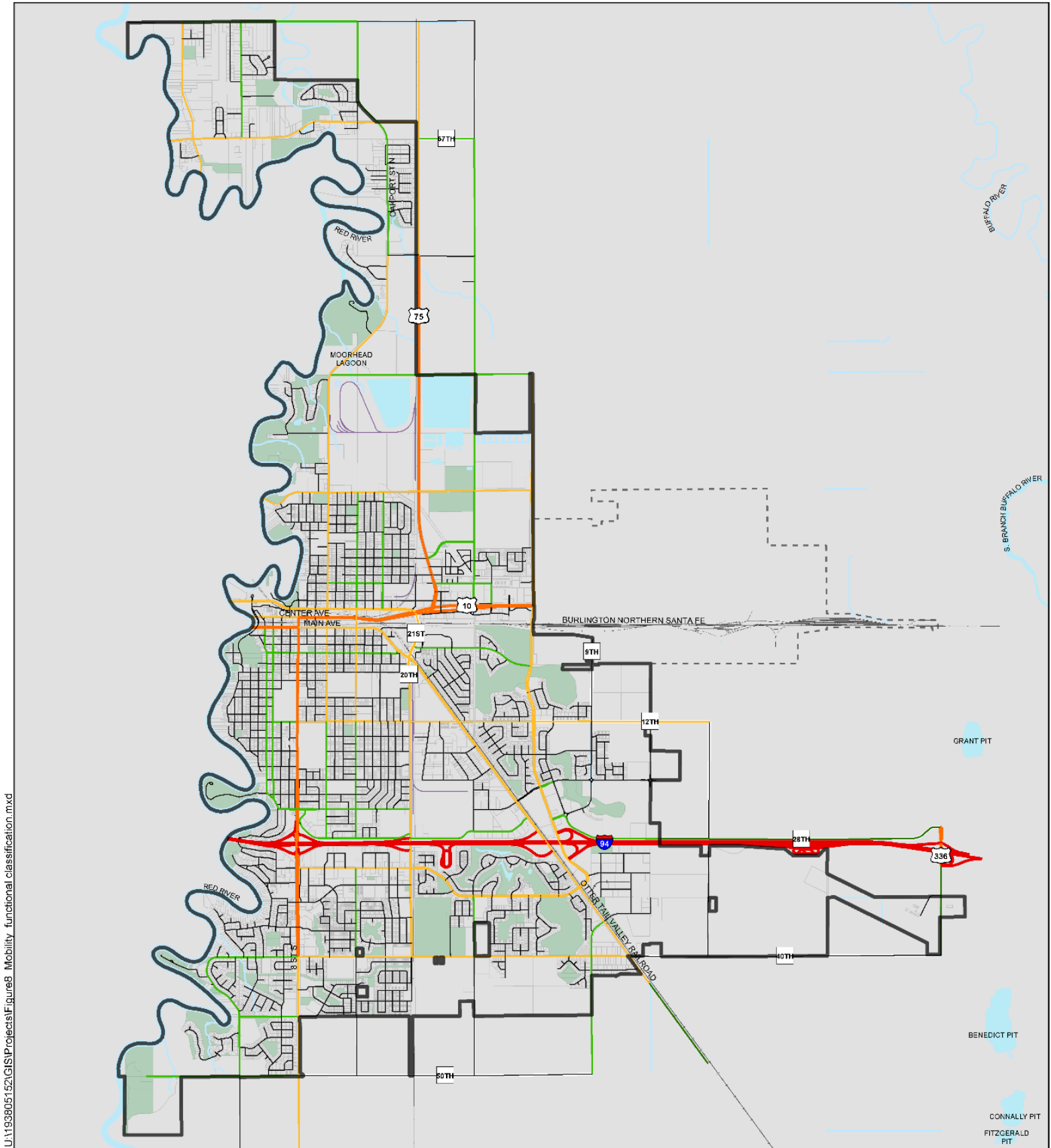
Roadways are classified based on the role they serve in the transportation system for motor vehicles – known as functional classification. Each roadway type is designated based on its need or priority for motor vehicle access or mobility and not necessarily on the adjacent land use. The city's roadway functional classification system is presented in Figure 32. The functional classification system includes interstate highways, principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors, collectors, and local roads. Generally, roadways that provide the highest mobility for motor vehicles is the least safe for people walking and biking.

Roadways with highest mobility (speed) and limited access are classified as Interstate Highways and principal arterials. These roadways carry high volumes of traffic at high speeds. Interstate Highway 94 travels east-west through the center of Moorhead. Principal arterials in Moorhead include 8th Street South or Highway 75 (north of 40th Ave) and Highway 10. They are very efficient at moving vehicles; however, they can be dangerous for people walking, bicycling or other non-motorized travel. Because access is limited on these roadways, so are potential crossings for pedestrians. These roadways are typically very wide, making crossing even more difficult or impossible. Certain characteristics of roadways (i.e., high traffic speeds and volumes) makes on-road use uninviting for pedestrians and bicyclists, so it is important to provide off-street paths for people walking and bicycling. Principal arterials in Moorhead often lack bicycling and pedestrian facilities, but 8th Street S is an example of a principal arterial in Moorhead that features a shared use path between 24th Ave S and 40th Ave S.

Minor arterials provide more access and slightly decreased speeds than principal arterials. These roadways connect smaller centers of activity within and between neighborhoods and connect principal arterials. Minor arterials in Moorhead include 8th Street South or Highway 75 (south of 40th Ave), Main Avenue S.E., 1st Avenue N, 11th St N, 15th Avenue N, 34 Street , 20th Street S, 12th Avenue S, 30th Avenue S, Village Green Boulevard, and 40th Avenue S. High traffic speeds and volumes on minor arterials may pose obstacles and safety risks for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Collectors provide relatively equal amounts of access and mobility. Traffic volumes and travel speeds are generally lower than arterial roadways. Collectors provide more mobility within residential neighborhoods, serving to gather traffic from residential (local) streets and channel it onto the arterial system. Collector streets often connect residential areas to commercial areas and employment centers in the city, so it is important to provide infrastructure for walking and biking to help promote active transportation. Collector streets in Moorhead include 28th Ave S, 24th Ave S, 11th St S, and 14th St S, 5th St S and 4th St S.

Local streets provide many points of direct access and limited mobility. Speeds and traffic volumes are relatively low and through traffic is discouraged. Nearly all residential, neighborhood streets in Moorhead are considered local streets. These streets typically have lower motor vehicles volumes and travel speeds, which make them more pleasant for people walking and bicycling.



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Figure 32. Existing Mobility: Functional Classification



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

December 23, 2020

LEGEND

- Municipal Boundary
- Dilworth City
- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Major Collector
- Collector
- Minor Arterial
- Local





PAST PLANS AND CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE FOR MOBILITY

Summary of Current Comprehensive Plan Policies Related to Mobility

The 2004 and 2009 Comprehensive Plans included “strategic initiatives”, which were recommendations for public and private actions to achieve the communities’ Vision for the Plan. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan identified seven new strategic initiatives with many including recommendations related to future mobility in Moorhead. Among the recommendations related to mobility are:

- The adoption of a “Complete Streets” Design philosophy (Strategic Initiative #5)
- Streetscaping improvements (Strategic Initiative #2), and
- Supporting the Active in Moorhead (AIM) partnership (#4) by creating and promoting environments that are safe and convenient for people to integrate physical activity such as walking, biking, jogging, in-line skating and cross country skiing into their daily lives.

The Plan recommends that sidewalks and trails should connect to neighborhood attractions such as schools, churches, parks, or neighborhood retail centers so that they can serve a transportation purpose as well as recreational. Strategic Initiative #4 also recommends working with MATBUS to improve access to transit and to identify future transit needs and service areas.

Strategic initiative #2 recommends “Streetscaping improvements along the public realm are critical for building a comfortable and attractive environment for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users as well as motorists.” Strategic Initiative #5 has the largest and most direct impact on future mobility in Moorhead. It recommends implementing a “Complete Streets” design philosophy, which moves away from a design philosophy that focuses primarily on moving motor vehicle traffic and shifts to a more balanced, multimodal approach that safely accommodates other transportation modes such as transit riders, people walking, people bicycling, and more. Since the last Comprehensive Plan, the City adopted the FM Metro COG Complete Street Policy.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan also addressed other mobility infrastructure, such as airports and railroads. During visioning exercises, Planning Commission members identified measures to improve mobility and safety along the railroad tracks including underpasses, overpasses, and quiet zones. The Plan also recommended an airport overlay zoning district to prevent land use conflicts when anticipated development occurs in east Moorhead. The Plan recommended the overlay district be established long before development pressures reach the airport’s influence area so that residents, landowners and developers can make informed decisions about development and investment decisions.

Summary of Priority Projects/Areas

11th Street Railroad Grade Separation

Moorhead is bisected by multiple rail lines which causes traffic blockages when heavy rail traffic travels through the city. The City of Moorhead and the Minnesota Department of Transportation are partnering on this project to develop two grade separated underpasses of 11 Street in Downtown under the BNSF rail lines. The extents of the project are between 2nd Ave S and 2nd Ave N. In addition to alleviating the traffic blockages caused by the rail traffic, this project will also include other safety and mobility benefits including new roadway paving, new shared use paths on both sides of the street, pedestrian accessibility (ADA) improvements, utility replacements, and new signals.



Midtown Trail Corridor

The City of Moorhead received a \$661,000 state grant in November 2020 for construction of the Midtown Trail – a 1.25-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail in the middle of the city that will connect Woodlawn Park to the Blue Goose Trail, a concrete trail constructed in 2020 starting near Gooseberry Mound Park. The Midtown Trail is one segment of the larger Moorhead River Corridor. The new Midtown Trail will include 0.83 miles of off-road pathway, with 0.45 miles on the street.

The trail could be constructed in 2022, although the state Legislature must sign off on the grant that was approved for the City by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission. When the new Midtown Trail segment is completed, the Moorhead River Corridor Trail will offer residents a 16-mile continuous paved trail along the Red River from Wall Street Avenue North to 40th Avenue South near the Bluestem Center for the Arts. Some of the 16-mile trail corridor is on streets, with many other parts paved and off-road.

CURRENT TRENDS FOR MOBILITY

The trends described in this section offer ideas and strategies from either city or regional plans adopted since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum or successful mobility initiatives in other cities.

Micromobility

Micromobility solutions encompass conventional and dockless bike-sharing programs, e-scooters and other small personal mobility devices, such as e-skateboards. While many of these devices originate in a human-powered form, the availability of electric versions and the on-demand nature of recent deployments has increased their appeal. Micromobility devices can support access to transit and promote a car-free lifestyle. However, they also increase conflicts on sidewalks and raise safety concerns. Because the widespread use of these devices is a relatively recent phenomenon, standards for where and how they should be used have not been established.

Shared Mobility

The sharing economy has led to the rise in shared mobility which allows people to gain access to a certain mode of transportation without owning the vehicle. Shared mobility is a broader term that includes all forms of micromobility as well as carsharing. Shared mobility programs increase travel options for residents and can provide first- and last-mile connections. Carshare and bikeshare have historically been the most popular forms of shared mobility. However, scooter share programs have become extremely popular in cities throughout the country in the last few years. The City does not currently have plans for sharing programs, however the *2045 Fargo Moorhead Transportation Plan (Metro Grow)* recognizes the need to prepare for these changes and has identified the goal to “incorporate transportation trends and new technologies in regional transportation plans”. Three different types of shared mobility are:

- **Bike Sharing Systems (Docked and Dockless)** - A service that allows people to rent bicycles for a short period of time for a small fee through a docked or dockless systems. An example is Fargo’s Great Rides system or Concordia’s COBBikes.
- **E-Scooter share** - Systems where electric scooters are available publicly as short-term rental options. Rules and regulations vary by municipality, but scooter use is often prohibited on sidewalks, and municipalities encourage users to utilize bikeways or roadway shoulders while riding.



- Car sharing - Allows individuals or businesses access to a car on an as-needed basis. Carsharing provides people with the benefits of individual car ownership while reducing some of the burdens like cost, maintenance, and parking.

Increased Demand for Active Transportation Infrastructure

Cities across the country have seen an increased demand in providing safer, more connected infrastructure for active transportation – walking and bicycling. More and more communities have developed plans and policies aimed at developing more walking and biking infrastructure, including bicycle master plans, pedestrian master plans, active transportation plans, complete streets policies, vision zero plans and policies, trail master plans, and more. Several recent plans or studies by the City of Moorhead or its partners call for additional trails, sidewalks and bikeways, including the *FM Greenway Recreation Master Plan*, the *FM Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*, the *FM Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis Study*, *City of Moorhead Safe Routes to School Study*, the *Heartland Trail Master Plan*, the *2045 Fargo-Moorhead Transportation Plan*, and the *2016 Moorhead Growth Area Plan*. These policies provide direction for:

- Complete Streets – This approach requires street design to be context-sensitive and to address the needs of all travelers, including people who walk, bicycle, take transit or drive (passenger, freight, emergency vehicles). Developing Complete Streets was a key recommendation in the City’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan, and the City has worked to incorporate complete streets as project opportunities presented themselves, including the ongoing 17th Street North corridor study.
- Separated bicycle lanes – They feature some form of vertical separation between the bicycle facility and the motor vehicle lane with concrete curbs, flexible delineators/flex posts, planter boxes, and other materials. There are currently no separated bicycle lanes in Moorhead, although they have been studied as part of the FM Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis.
- Vision Zero Plans/Policies - In recent years, communities across the nation have strengthened their commitment to transportation safety by adopting Vision Zero policies and action plans. The objective of vision zero planning is to create a transportation system with no serious injuries or fatalities. In Minnesota, Minneapolis is the first community to adopt a Vision Zero policy and plan that focuses on the safety of people walking and bicycling.
- Traffic Calming - Street design features are used to manage motor vehicle speeds and volumes, improve safety, and enhance neighborhoods. The City of Moorhead has incorporated traffic calming measures such as curb extensions into recent roadway rehabilitation or reconstruction projects and is evaluating some traffic calming measures as part of the 17th Street N corridor study.
- Floating bus stops - Sidewalk-level platforms are built between the bicycle lane and the roadway travel lane that are designed to mitigate safety challenges between various modes. Floating bus stops have notable safety benefits for bicyclists because they eliminate bus and bicyclist interactions while reducing interactions between bicyclists and bus passengers. There are currently no floating bus stops in Moorhead, however the *FM Metro Bikeways Gap Analysis* did identify locations where floating bus stops may be appropriate.
- Rapid Implementation / “quick build” infrastructure – These programs work to install bicycle and pedestrian facilities quickly and with minimal budget. There are various reasons for adopting a rapid implementation approach including: safety improvements to a road segment or intersection in response to a crash, creation of a demonstration “backbone” bike network that increases demand for bicycling and justifies future investments and expansion, and gap closures to enhance the connectivity of bike and pedestrian networks. The City of Moorhead has not completed any rapid implementation infrastructure projects to date.



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PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The open space system in a city is a significant driver for where residents purchase homes and how amenity-rich they find their neighborhoods. Not only are the park and open spaces themselves important, but people need to be able to access them efficiently and comfortably. This Comprehensive Plan will evaluate both the parks system itself and how accessible it is for residents, employees, and visitors.

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Moorhead has a robust network of recreation opportunities available to the community. City owned and operated facilities are managed by the City’s Parks & Recreation Department and Public Works Department. The City has valuable online resources for residents and visitors, including maps provided for: Moorhead Parks and Trails, Moorhead: A City with “Walkability”, M.B. Johnson Park Trails Map, Viking Ship Park Cross Country Ski Trails Map, Gooseberry Park Trail Map, Bike Trails Map, River Corridor Trails, Snowmobile Trails Maps and a list of Walking and Running Tracks in Moorhead. There is also an interactive Parks and Trails Finder which allows the user to look for the locations of specific recreational facilities in specific park(s) or locations within the community. Searchable activities include: ball field, basketball, bocce court, cross country skiing, disc golf, drinking water, grills, hockey rink, horseshoe pits, neighborhood recreation center, pickleball court, picnic shelter rental, picnic tables, playground, pleasure skating rink, restrooms, sand volleyball, sledding hill, soccer nets, tennis courts and wading pool.

The City classifies its parks and recreation facilities using the following categories: Neighborhood, Community or Regional Park, Park Facilities or Non-Park Facilities. Figure 33 shows the location of park facilities within Moorhead.

Table 1: Parks and Recreation Facilities

CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER	TOTAL ACREAGE
Neighborhood Parks	37	200.69
Community Parks	4	125.62
Regional Parks	5	288.92
Park Facilities (includes public golf courses)	12	522.18
Non-Park Facilities (i.e. pools, private golf courses, hockey arenas, and schools)	13	372.85

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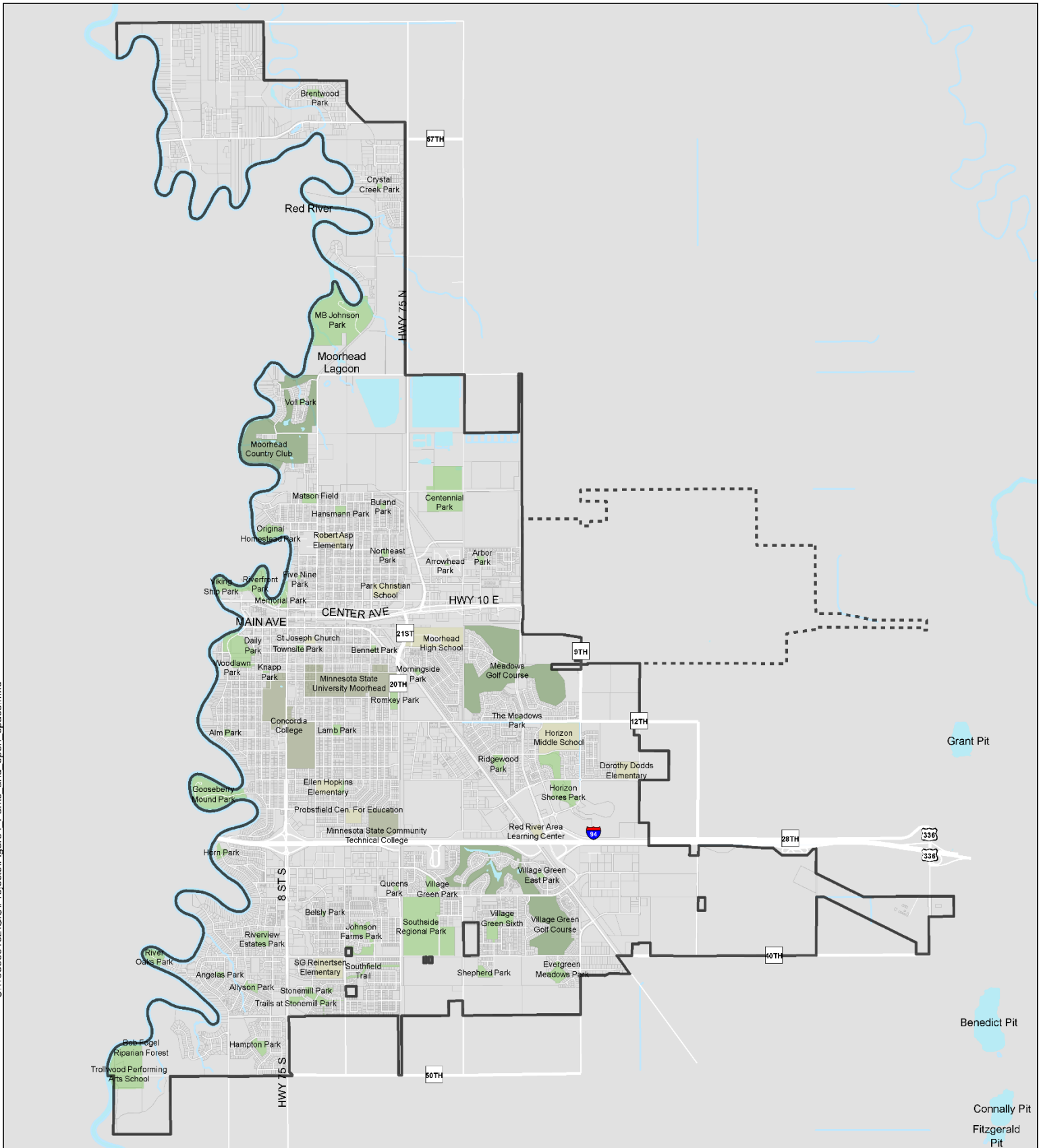


Figure 33. Existing Parks and Open Space



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

December 29, 2020

LEGEND

- Moorhead City
- Dilworth City
- Water Bodies
- Park
- College
- School
- Golf Course





Moorhead Recreation Facilities

The City manages the Moorhead Sports Center, an indoor recreation center owned by Moorhead Area Public Schools. The Sports Center is an indoor ice-skating rink that is open year-round. The Center is located adjacent to Moorhead High School and is home to the Red River Valley Skating Club, and the Moorhead High School Hockey team also uses the facility. The Moorhead Youth Hockey Arena is a City-owned facility that offers additional Hockey programming. The City also owns and operates the Hjemkomst Center, a unique multi-use facility that is adorned on the City’s Logo. Other park facilities include several golf courses, ten neighborhood recreation centers, Southside Regional Park, Centennial Park/Athletic Complex/Dog Park, River Oaks Dog Park, the historic log cabin, and the Trollwood Performing Arts Center. Non-Park Facilities are school properties and can be found in the Moorhead Recreational Partnership section below.

Moorhead Trails

More information pertaining to the city’s bicycle and pedestrian facilities are discussed in the Mobility section.

Moorhead Swimming Pools

The City owns the Moorhead Municipal Swimming Pool, which has 2 wading pools and a full-size swimming pool. A variety of programs and events are offered including swim lessons, water exercise, lap swim, adaptive swim lessons and the annual Dive into Summer and Summer Splash events. The City also owns six neighborhood wading pools at the following parks: Hansmann Park, Northeast Park, Ridgewood Park, Riverview Estates Park, South Park, Village Green Park.

MOORHEAD RECREATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Moorhead Parks and Recreation Department has several successful partnerships with other local agencies, providing additional resources to residents. Specifically, the City has an agreement with Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd for shared use of the gym and an agreement with Moorhead Youth Hockey to use of 1 rink during the summer months. The Moorhead Community Fund offered through the F-M Area Foundation allows residents to fund a variety of park amenities, recreational opportunities and artistic and cultural opportunities. Donors to the fund may choose specific parks or activities or donate to general categories such as river trails or a youth scholarship fund. Moorhead public and private schools offer additional opportunities to residents for both active and passive recreation.

Moorhead School Facilities

The following is a list of Moorhead’s schools, including their amenities.

SCHOOLS	AMENITIES
St Joseph Church	None (Proximate to Townsend Park)
Red River Area Learning Center	Daycare Facility (None)
Probstfield Cen. For Education	Playground, Open Field
Park Christian School	Playground, Football field, open space
Robert Asp Elementary	Playground, track, baseball/softball diamond, soccer field, open space
Ellen Hopkins Elementary	Playground, running track, football field, pole vaulting, long jump, baseball/softball diamond, outdoor ice rink



Dorothy Dodds Elementary	Track, synthetic turf, (2) playgrounds, open space
SG Reinertsen Elementary	(2) Playground, track, open fields
Moorhead High School	Moorhead Sports Center, track, football, pole vaulting, (2) softball diamonds, baseball diamond, (8) tennis courts, (1) pool ⁸
Horizon Middle School	Baseball diamond, (2) softball diamonds, running track, long jump, pole vault, football field and various other multi-use fields

Minnesota State Parks

Moorhead residents have access to one of Minnesota’s State Parks - Buffalo River State Park is located 14 miles east of Moorhead along US Highway 10. The park offers picnic areas, camping, fishing, a swimming beach, 6.25 miles of trails, and a native bluestem prairie. MSUM also operates the Regional Science Center adjacent to the State Park

Minnesota State University-Moorhead Campus

MSUM has recreational facilities on their campus that include the Scheels Field Football Stadium, Softball, (6) tennis courts, track, long jump, and pole vaulting, shot put and open other multi-sport fields.

PAST PLANS AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Past Plans that provide guidance for Parks and Open Space planning include the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan provided a Park System Matrix highlighting Regional Parks, Park Facilities, Neighborhood Parks, School Parks & Non-Park Facilities. Since the time of the Comprehensive Plan, the City has added many new parks to the system and the parks have been reclassified as regional park, community park, park facilities, non-park facilities and neighborhood parks.

The Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of parks within two Focus Areas - Neighborhoods and Public Realm. The following criteria were identified:

- Neighborhoods – within walking distance (1/2 mile) of every resident, mix of active and passive recreation opportunities, caters to all ages, designed with public right-of-way as street frontage, linear park system as connectors, and stormwater management features as natural amenities. The City of Oakport annexation if 2015 complicates this goal and the City could explore options to use the existing flood levee system in partnership with BBRWSD for parkland or River Corridor Trail expansion areas.
- Public Realm-Parks and Recreation Policy – 10% of buildable land set aside for park space, park facilities built concurrently with housing development in new neighborhoods, barrier-free access to neighborhood parks, co-location of park and recreation facilities with school facilities, parks as central feature of neighborhoods, a balance of active and passive park areas available year-round, trails linking parks to major activity areas, and park design to enhance the community’s image.

⁸ Renovations are currently underway to improve recreational facilities at Moorhead High School. Improvements include a three-station gymnasium, including seating for approximately 2,500 on all four sides of the primary court space and a second-level running track.



The 2009 Plan Addendum talked about increasing recreational opportunities such as community centers, dog parks, easily accessible neighborhood parks, and community gardens.

The City adopted the River Corridor Plan in 2014 that envisions a continuous trail along the Red River and would connect M.B. Johnson Park on the north side of the city to the Bluestem Center for the Arts on the south side. Since the adoption of the plan the City has made progress implementing improvements to make that vision a reality.

CURRENT TRENDS FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The trends described in this section offer ideas and strategies from either city or regional plans adopted since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum.

- As neighborhoods are developed, land set aside for park space increases the facilities and recreational opportunities to residents.
- School facilities provide recreational opportunities to their students/residents. Dorothy Dodds Elementary School is the newest school built in the City and has new outdoor recreation amenities, along with additional facilities at S.G. Reinertson Elementary School and Horizon Middle School.
- The City continues to purchase properties along the Red River for flood mitigation efforts which in some areas may also provide opportunities for parks/open space and trails. The City recently received a grant from GMRPTC (Legacy Grant) for Midtown Trail – one of the trail segments along the River Corridor, adding to the miles of existing trails along the river.
- Ongoing efforts to connect parks and open spaces with trails.
- Pickle ball courts have been installed in the community, a sport growing in popularity nationally. The City recently transitioned a tennis facility into a three court Pickleball facility.
- Addition of public art in parks.
- Winter related outdoor activities to embrace the colder months. The city has a special initiative called Winter Activation with activities such as group ski, sledding, snow sculptures and educational programs on skiing, winter camping, snow showing and fat tire bikes. It is also generally important for the City to keep paths cleared in the winter and ski trails groomed.
- Pandemic-related adaptations such as purchasing additional City-owned ski grooming equipment to keep up with increased trail use, and continuation of existing river paddling rental and excursions during the summer months.



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SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Comprehensive Planning is a systematic process that is intended to identify and implement strategies to protect and enhance both public and private investment and promote a high quality of life. It often involves the creation of an aspirational vision for the community's future, along with goals and policies directed at overcoming challenges and pursuing opportunities.

Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present generation, without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In the context of community planning, a sustainable plan is viewed as one that balances the natural environment, economic vitality, and community health.

Resilience and sustainability are often discussed together. Strategies that are deployed to achieve resilience are those that increase the ability to adapt to changing conditions and recover rapidly when disruptions or events occur. When considered regarding major weather events, resilience is often discussed as a system that is designed to better withstand the impact and recover more readily after a major event occurs.

For many reasons, the Comprehensive Planning process is an ideal time for a community to take inventory, complete assessments, engage a broad cross section of stakeholders, and foster conversations about sustainability and resilience. The health and well-being of the entire region is threatened by climate change. In the Midwest, those threats are manifested in more severe storms, more numerous flood events and temperature extremes. These risks impact infrastructure, as well as the health and prosperity of residents and frequently impact socially disadvantage populations disproportionately.

PAST PLANS AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

While topics like sustainability and resiliency can be tied to a variety of planning initiatives related to the environment, the economy, or the social health of a community, it was the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum that most directly discussed sustainability and resiliency strategies.

- Strategic Initiative #3 (Flood Risk Reduction) emphasized the need for a comprehensive and long-term flood risk reduction strategy, acquiring flooded properties, preserving undeveloped land in the river corridors, and updating regulations. The Flood Diversion Project described below has since been initiated and the City has acquired many properties.
- Strategic Initiative #6 (Planning in a time of Economic Distress) discusses a theme from 2009 that is ever present today during the pandemic. Public revenue streams were challenged, businesses were failing, and there was a decline in property values. This strategy focused on enhancing a neighborhood monitoring program, reviewing existing housing programs, tracking foreclosures, reviewing business incentive programs, engaging businesses early that may be in distress, and aggressively seeking grants.
- Strategic Initiative #7 (Growth Management) places importance on proactive planning for coordinated infrastructure expansion for development. This strategy recommends maintaining a database of vacant land supply and then actively monitoring those properties, identifying critical natural resource areas, mapping growth and staging areas, maintaining rural development standards, evaluating infrastructure funds, and prioritizing phased extensions of utilities. The 2016 Growth Area Plan and 2018 Alternative Urban Areawide Reviews (AUARs) supported this strategy.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

There are several significant parallel projects and initiatives that present opportunities for collaboration, engagement regarding resilience and sustainability in Moorhead and the surrounding region. Many of these initiatives have a variety of partners, including FEMA, the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Fargo/Moorhead Flood Diversion Project

It would be hard to overstate the magnitude of the Fargo/Moorhead Flood Diversion Project. Well over 230,000 people have been regularly threatened by serious flooding of the Red River. In addition to the risks to human life, the damage to property and infrastructure and major disruptions to the lives of impacted residents has been perennially frustrating and expensive.

The 36-mile long and 1,500 ft. wide diversion channel and related bank stabilization and infrastructure systems were designed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Board of Authority. The \$2.2 Billion project will be operational in 2026. Once completed, the cities can apply for revisions to the National Flood Insurance Map. When approved, this revised map will certify that the project has protected extensive acreage from the 100-year flood event.

This flood diversion project is the very definition of resilience. It will provide direct protection from major flood events and greatly improve recovery post flooding. In addition to these obvious and direct benefits, the project presents tremendous opportunities for natural resource restoration and conservation activities, which will yield multiple environmental and community health benefits.

The Green Step Cities Program

The Minnesota Green Step Cities Program is sponsored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. It is a voluntary program that challenges cities to achieve their sustainability and quality of life goals. The program recognizes 29 best practices within the following five categories: Buildings & Lighting, Land Use, Transportation, Environmental Management, and Resilient Economic Development.

Within the best practice areas, cities complete one or more actions at a 1, 2, or 3-star level. Moorhead chose to pursue: energy efficient lighting, Comprehensive Planning, solid waste management and recycling, renewable energy, communication, wastewater efforts, urban forestry, mixed-use development & infill planning, and transit and mobility options.

The City completed step one in July of 2017, step two in May of 2018, and step three in May of 2019, and is currently working on Step 4 of the program. River Keepers, the Audubon Society, and Moorhead Public Services were active partners with the City in pursuing this important work.

The platform created by the Green Step Cities program presents the City with the opportunity to evaluate its work on each of the best practices previously pursued and to consider opportunities to consider others. It is also an opportunity to continue to engage with existing partners and seek others to accomplish even more.



Moorhead Community Resilience Task Force

Another opportunity for collaboration and cooperation is presented by the Moorhead Community Resilience Task Force. This work is being funded by a \$207,000 Bush Foundation Community Innovation Grant and is being led by Concordia College Professor Dr. Kenneth Foster.

The task force has identified six areas of work:

1. Building relationships, trust, and a culture of collaboration
2. Investigation, analysis, and deliberation by the five working groups organized around the five dimensions of resilience
3. Capacity building for task force members
4. Community engagement – educational opportunities and input gathering
5. Pilot/demonstration projects
6. Produce a Resilience Assessment, a set of S.M.A.R.T resilience-building goals, and a Playbook/Implementation Plan for moving forward post 2021

The task force consists of representatives from a numerous and diverse group of community organizations, including government, non-profits, interest groups, the faith community, and more. The expected outcomes for this work present great synergy with the Comprehensive Plan and the task force itself represents an important set of stakeholders to engage. With an anticipated project term of December 2019-December 2021, the task force timeline fits nicely with the anticipated completion of the Comprehensive Plan in early 2022. There is no question that strong coordination between the Comprehensive Planning process and the Moorhead Community Resilience Task Force will be mutually beneficial and improve the work of each.

EXISTING FLOOD INVENTORY

As mentioned in the section above, flooding from the Red River was a significant challenge for Moorhead which has been greatly improved with the construction of flood mitigation infrastructure. In terms of sustainability, addressing both the cause and impact of flooding is possibly the most important step the city can take to improve its resiliency. The current FEMA floodway and floodplain map is shown in Figure 34, showing the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Significant land along the Red River of the North is within one of these floodplains. The map also shows tree cover within the city, another measure of resiliency to the elements.

CURRENT TRENDS FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

The trends described in this section offer ideas and strategies from either city or regional plans adopted since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum. Likely more than other topics in this document, resiliency trends are intimately tied to design and function of parks and open space, economic development, and alternative mobility options.

- Planting trees and other landscaping along streets and in parks which play a vital role in storm water management and quality improvements. There is also a renewed awareness about the public health benefits associated with urban forests.
- Selecting species of trees for urban forests that are adaptable to climate change and disease resistant.



- Using structured underground stormwater management systems with new tree plantings in highly impervious areas such as along streets and in parking lots.
- Rather than designing stormwater ponds, instead create native planting amenity areas that can be used as open space.
- Participation in programs that encourage City-led sustainability actions such as GreenStep Cities, Regional Indicators Initiative and Envision Minnesota.
- Healthy buildings including aspects such as indoor air quality, lighting, access to open space, etc.
- Shift towards electric vehicles and the installation of charging infrastructure that is easier, more reliable and convenient.

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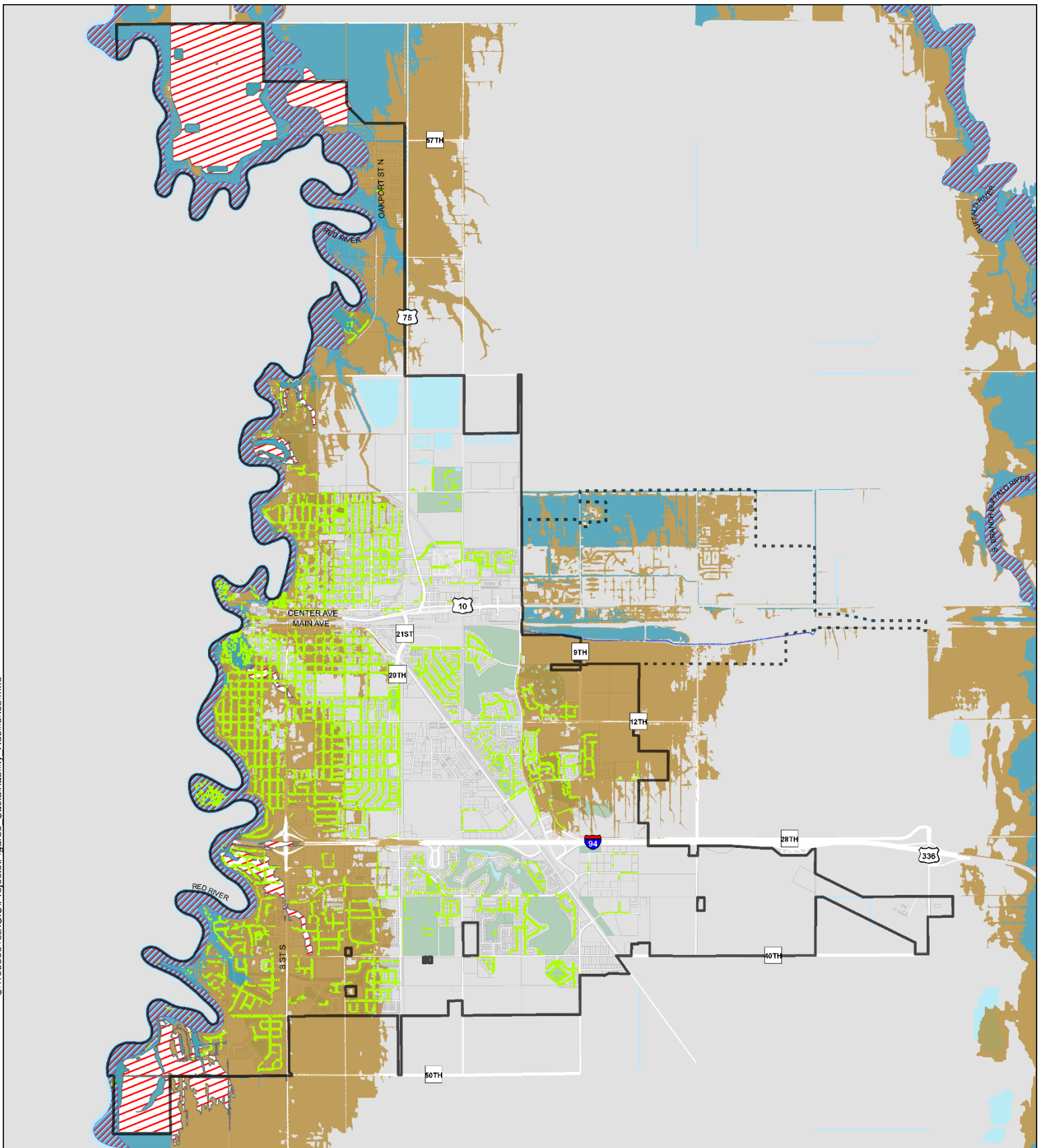


Figure 34. Sustainability: Flooding and Tree Cover



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
City of Moorhead, MN

January 19, 2020

LEGEND

- Moorhead City
- Dilworth City
- Trees
- Floodway
- 100-year flood zone
- 500-year flood zone
- FEMA LOMC





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CITY ARTS, CULTURE, AND PLACEMAKING

The arts and culture scene in Moorhead is part of what makes the city a great place to live, work and play. The City has intentionally fostered partnerships and organizations that enhance the vibrancy of Moorhead. The sections below describe the efforts that the City has taken to build on its strong cultural resources.

EXISTING INVENTORY

Context

The City has created an inventory, shown in Figure 35, that maps the city's arts and cultural features including historic properties, works of art, cultural and community organizations and businesses. The map was developed in 2018 with art points, and the historic data and oral history points were added in 2019 in partnership with Concordia. The map also shows the properties on the national register of historic places. This inventory shows a cluster of historic and art spaces in Downtown Moorhead, as well as south along 8th St. Several of these works of art include sidewalk stamps, which explains the frequency of works of art along SE Main St and 8th St. A few of the important cultural spaces Downtown include the Rourke Art Museum and the Hjemkomst Center. In the northern part of the city is the Probstfield farm and house, which is on the national historic register. Finally, in the southwest portion of the city, the map shows two cultural assets including the Bluestem Center for the Arts and the Trollwood Performing Arts School.

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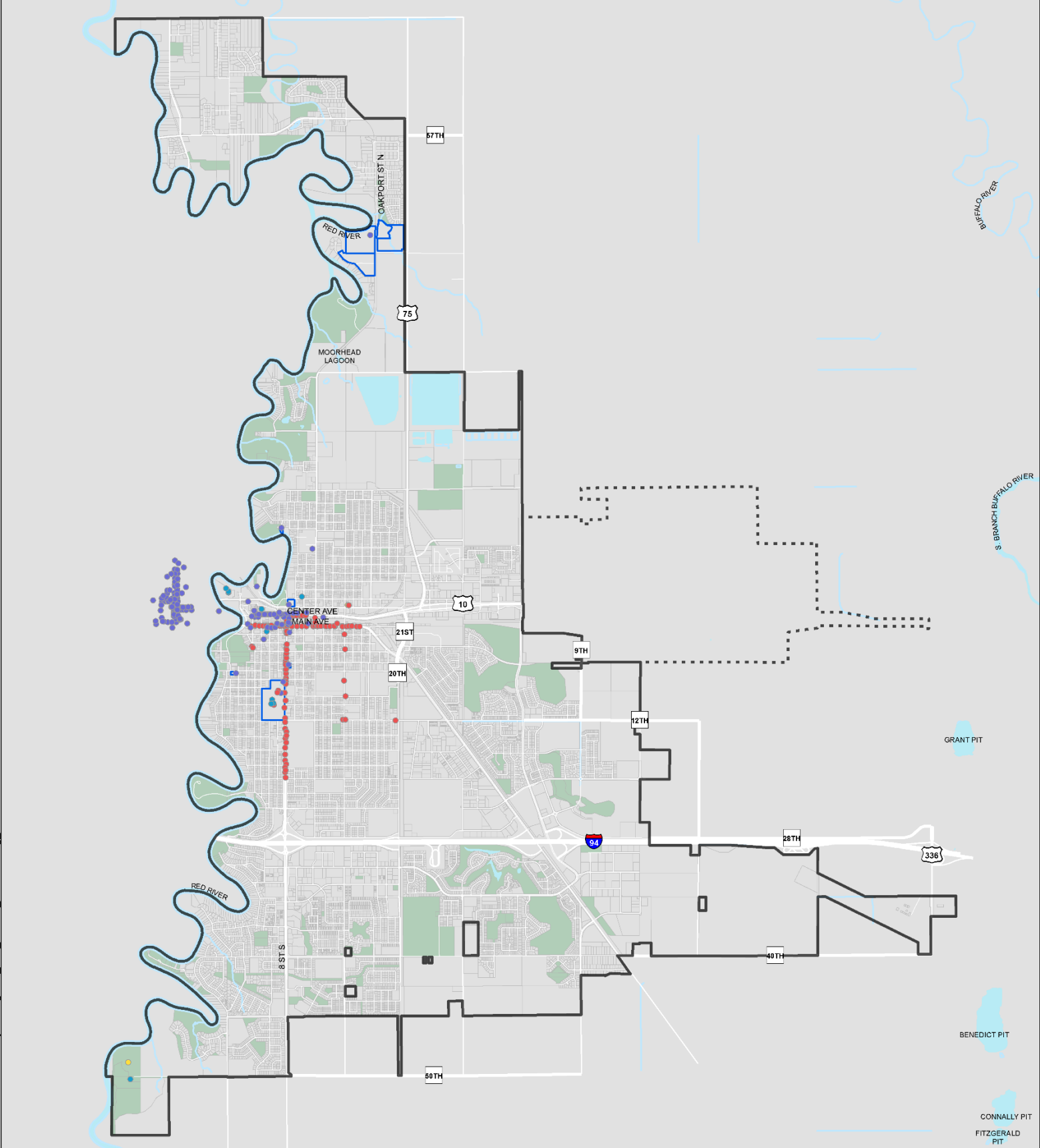


Figure 35. Arts, Culture and Placemaking



Moorhead Comprehensive Plan
 City of Moorhead, MN
 February 5, 2021

LEGEND

- Moorhead City
- Advocacy
- Festivals and Events
- Dilworth City
- Civic and Community Orgs
- Heritage Resources
- Other
- Creators
- Historic Spaces
- Works of Art
- Cultural Facilities and Businesses
- Historic National Register Properties
- Arts and Cultural Orgs
- Cultural Heritage Professionals





Arts and Culture Commission

The City has established an Arts and Culture Commission to advise the Mayor and City Council on the development of arts and cultural activities, projects, organizations, and facilities within the city. The following summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the Arts and Culture Commission:

“The Commission is tasked to develop, update and recommend Arts and Culture vision, goals, public agenda and strategic plan for arts and culture in Moorhead; provide leadership for completing the Comprehensive Plan sections regarding civic arts and culture goals and planning and providing input for plan revisions; plan and advocate funding from individuals, corporate, foundation and city funding for arts and culture activities approved by the City Council; and facilitate collaboration and joint planning among public and private agencies involved with related issues such as economic development, tourism and arts education.”

A few accomplishments of the Commission include creating policies related to public art, streetlight banners, and special events. The Arts and Culture Commission also led the development of the 2018 Arts and Culture Framework Plan, which is discussed further in the Past Plans section below, and sets a vision and path for development of Moorhead as a city known for its arts and culture.

Art in Moorhead Website

The City highlights the arts on their website, including information about public art installations, the arts and culture commission and the arts and culture framework plan. Highlighted public works of art include water tower art, storm drain community art, utility box art, sidewalk art and poetry and the Florence Klingensmith Mural in Downtown.

PAST PLANS AND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND PLACEMAKING

Comprehensive Plan(s)

There are several past plans that address arts, culture and placemaking, including the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Addendum. Both plans discuss arts and culture as a defining feature in Moorhead’s community identity. Specifically, the plans discuss the university, colleges, schools, and community organizations that serve both residents and visitors and showcase the diversity and partnerships within the community. The 2009 Plan identifies areas for redevelopment including Downtown Moorhead, 1st Avenue Corridor, SE Main, Center Avenue and the power plant site (Woodlawn Pointe). One of the guidelines within these redevelopment areas suggests incorporating “vibrant sidewalks and public spaces, characterized by farmer’s markets, public art, gathering spaces, and community spaces.” The 2004 Comprehensive Plan also discusses the historic nature of some of the buildings in Downtown Moorhead, and the importance of preserving this character. The Plan discusses creating small gathering spaces throughout Downtown which are described as “small [with a] combination of landscaping, lighting, art, and furniture to create a place that feels separated from the adjacent public uses.” While these elements are not specifically captured in the Comprehensive Plan policies, it shows the importance of arts, culture, and placemaking in the Comprehensive Planning process.



2018 Arts and Culture Framework Plan

The City has a 2018 Arts and Culture Framework Plan that specifically addresses how Moorhead can build on its rich cultural assets. This plan discusses the cultural assets that Moorhead already has including the colleges and schools, natural environment, and significant creative and cultural presence. The plan envisions a future Moorhead with community cohesion, known for its arts and culture as well as celebrating diversity, a respected place to learn and a city that celebrates its natural environment. The plan also discusses the benefits of embracing arts and culture including their importance in community vitality, arts and culture as a catalyst for growth, cultural inclusion, drawing skilled workers and overall civic engagement. The framework provides a “creativity and cultural roadmap” providing the city and members of the community with guidance on investing dollars and effort to accomplish specific goals and ultimately achieve measurable long-term objectives. One of the areas for strategic investment is placemaking and creating places where people want to gather, specifically in Downtown and neighborhoods with public art and gathering spaces. The Plan also emphasizes the importance of working together with public and private partners to grow the creative sector. To enhance this growth, the Plan also emphasizes branding and positioning the city as a home for creativity, progressive, and youthful culture. Finally, the plan suggests that in order for the framework to be successful, champions will be needed to plan and implement the framework – this includes champions in both the public and private sectors.

Other Plans

The City has also woven arts, culture and placemaking into several other planning efforts including the 2014 Moorhead River Corridor Master Plan. The 2014 Moorhead River Corridor Master Plan includes preserving and promoting “the history and culture of the region through education” in its vision for the River Corridor. The Plan also includes a goal that the “Moorhead River Corridor will include opportunities pertaining to the local communities, natural environment, local culture and history of the area.” This focus on interpretation shows that the city values preserving its culture and history.

The 2019 Strategic Plan is another plan that incorporates the importance of partnerships to fostering a vibrant Moorhead. One of the goals within the Plan encourages new partnerships with the objective of developing “short and long term strategies to leverage partnerships and grant funds to support community parks, trails, river corridor enhancement and art and culture opportunities.” Within the broader strategic plan, this objective acts as an operational plan for City Staff and elected officials, instructing them to create and maintain these important partnerships as part of the City’s mission and vision.

CURRENT TRENDS FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND PLACEMAKING

The trends described in this section offer ideas and strategies that go beyond the 2018 Arts and Culture Framework Plan.

- Public art does not need to be a standalone art piece but instead can be incorporated into infrastructure such as manholes, tree grates, bike racks, and retaining walls.
- More cities are using dynamic art like light and electronic images that can be directed by not just the artist but users of the space.
- A dedicated funding source for public art can be incorporated into a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Best practices dedicate between 1-2% of the overall budget.
- Some cities require public art as a component of all new development.