

# Comprehensive Plan

For the City of Moorhead, Minnesota

*A place where people are proud to live, work, learn, play and grow...*



# PREAMBLE

The 2004 City of Moorhead Comprehensive Plan was built around an understanding of what the City of Moorhead residents, businesses and citizens envisioned for their community, and an understanding of the market impacts that the policy decisions imply. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes and accepts the fact that what the community envisions today may not be exactly what is built tomorrow. However, a core vision and set of principles has been established, that if followed will give the community its greatest opportunity to achieve what is desired. It is strongly believed that the market challenges are not insurmountable and that the development community will not only adapt and persevere, but endeavor and, indeed, succeed in making Moorhead a great place to live, work, grow, learn and play, as envisioned by residents. In the event that there are unintended consequences that result from the policy directions established within the Plan, the City Council pledges to thoroughly evaluate such policy directions and adjust the Plan accordingly.

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## Chapter One

# Setting the Stage

### Setting the Stage

#### *Planning for the Future*

#### *Strategic Initiatives*

This document contains the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Moorhead. It provides the blueprints and tools to build the community envisioned by its citizens, a place where people are proud to live, learn, work, play and grow.

The Plan has been organized into three parts. Although all are essential components of the Plan, each section has been designed to be used independently of the others. This allows individuals to focus on the section specifically addressing their needs. The three parts of Moorhead's Comprehensive Plan are:

- Setting the Stage – basis for planning, process overview, acknowledgments, and background information about the community.
- Planning for the Future – defining the Vision, identifying directions and policies, and determining a future land use plan.
- Strategic Initiatives – identifying public and private initiatives needed to achieve the community's Vision.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING OVERVIEW

## What is a Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool for guiding the growth and redevelopment of Moorhead. The Plan contains a Vision for the community's future with general directions, policies and strategies for reaching that Vision. Although land use is an important component, the Comprehensive Plan addresses a broad range of community features, including:

- Housing
- Parks and Open Space
- Transportation
- Transit
- Infrastructure – water, electricity, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer
- Downtown
- Commercial Growth
- Economic Development
- Redevelopment
- Community Image

The Plan seeks to create and sustain the elements that define the character, heritage and identity of Moorhead. New investment is attracted and guided to its proper location in the community. The Plan also protects investment in existing properties by promoting strong residential neighborhoods and business districts.

The Comprehensive Plan guides decisions of the City Council and Planning Commission. Both groups use the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate the merits of proposed development and redevelopment. The Comprehensive Plan also serves as a tool for City Staff in the operation of municipal government. It provides a framework for public action that makes the best and most appropriate use of City resources.

## Why have a Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plans are important to ensuring a community's future quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan helps to ensure that development occurs in a manner desired by the community, rather than simply as a result of market trends and patterns. The Comprehensive Plan protects what makes the community unique and what made people initially want to live here.



The process of Comprehensive Planning, described in more detail below, is as important as the final document. Public Workshops provide an opportunity for community residents, businesses and leaders to participate in decision-making and guide the community's future. Participants are able to learn about others' viewpoints and work cooperatively to address community issues. The community is also able to consider future impacts of the various alternatives available to achieve the community's shared Vision.

The Comprehensive Plan is also an important tool for other governmental agencies and local organizations. The Plan provides an understanding of the community's Vision for the future. Entities are able to coordinate their programs and strategies to help achieve the Vision and support the implementation initiatives identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Authority to Plan**

The power to create and employ a comprehensive plan comes from State Law. Minnesota Statutes, Sections 462.351 to 462.364 contain the planning powers granted to Minnesota cities. Specifically, M.S. Section 462.353, Subd. 1 authorizes the City to "carry on comprehensive municipal planning activities for guiding the future development and improvement of the municipality and may prepare, adopt and amend a comprehensive municipal plan and implement such plan by ordinance or other official measure."

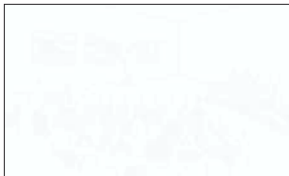
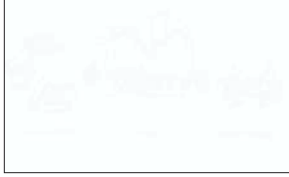
The Comprehensive Plan is the foundation on which regulatory tools, such as zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and capital improvement programs are developed. Once in place, future development and redevelopment in a community should be evaluated on whether it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Planning Process**

The planning process was structured to facilitate the inclusion of a wide range of community perspectives. The following describes the key steps in developing Moorhead's Comprehensive Plan:

#### **Organizing the Effort**

The initial step of the planning process sets the foundation of the planning process. Background information about the community was collected to provide an understanding of the current characteristics, strengths and challenges of the community. This step also focused on clarifying the roles of participants, including City staff, consultants, Steering Committee, other boards/commissions and the general public.



### **Developing the Moorhead Housing Study, January 2004**

Residential development is a key component of the community's vision for the future. The Moorhead Housing Study, January 2004 was undertaken to provide information on potential residential development demand in the City of Moorhead. It analyzed the economic, social and geographic factors that influence demand for housing. The study also examined possible housing niches, such as rental units and senior housing. The forecasts and suggested strategies were used in the planning process in the development of the land use plan and implementation initiatives. The Moorhead Housing Study of January 2004 is not included in this Plan.

### **Defining the Vision and Understanding the Issues**

The community's first public workshop focused on defining a vision and exploring concerns. Attended by nearly 80 community representatives, the workshop used a set of individual and group exercises to explore participants' views. Based on the workshop responses, the Steering Committee developed a Vision Statement for the community.

### **Defining the Framework and Exploring Alternatives**

Based on the Vision and community desires, a series of alternatives were developed. Although not detailed plans, the alternatives depicted possible patterns, organizations, focal points and connections within the community. The alternatives were reviewed by the public, Steering Committee, Planning Commission and City Council.

### **Converging on Preferred Alternatives**

Continued review and discussion refined the alternatives and led to the identification of a preferred concept that addressed the community's Vision.

### **Preparing the Plan and Seeking Approvals**

The draft Plan was reviewed through a series of meetings with the public, Steering Committee, Planning Commission, other advisory boards/commissions, and City Council. The Plan was refined as needed to meet community needs. Detailed summaries of meetings and public workshops are available in Appendix A.

### **Acknowledgments**

A fifteen-member Steering Committee guided the planning process. Each member brought a unique set of perspectives and insights about Moorhead. The Steering Committee provided a valuable link to the different constituencies of the community. The Steering Committee was composed of the following community members and representatives:



- Ernie Mancini, Chair
- Rick Hoganson, Vice-Chair
- Clyde Allen
- Barb Chromy
- David Crockett
- Sylvia Garcia
- Rick Henderson
- Sonia Hohnadel
- Jerry Keogh
- Tammy Norgard
- Dr. Larry Nybladh
- Val Rood
- Camille Ross
- Eileen Scheel
- Mike Slette

The Planning Commission and City Council met at key times throughout the process. These meetings provided an opportunity for both groups to learn about the process and provide their feedback on specific issues. Their valuable insights were shared with Steering Committee members and incorporated into the planning process.

#### City Council Members:

- Mark Voxland, Mayor
- Nancy Otto
- Morris R. Kelsven
- Diane Wray Williams
- John Rowell
- Dan Hunt
- Lauri Winterfeldt-Shanks
- Jim Danielson
- Greg Lemke

#### Planning Commission Members:

- Camille Ross, Chair
- Jim Iverson, Vice-Chair
- Jim Danielson
- Robert Kennedy
- Mary Kava
- Mike McCarthy
- Rick Hoganson

Also key in the planning process were members of City staff. Jeff Schaumann, City Planner, was the lead staff person responsible for the Comprehensive Plan update.

## COMMUNITY CONTEXT

This portion of the Plan summarizes the large amount of information reviewed and analyzed as part of the planning process. The data was gathered from a variety of sources, including existing plans, websites, and interviews with staff and community leaders.

The City of Moorhead is located along the Red River of the North on Minnesota’s western border. Moorhead is the largest city in Clay County and the second largest in the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. Interstate

94 and Highway 10 connect Moorhead to other areas of the region. The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is 250 miles to the southwest, while Winnipeg, Canada is about 220 miles to the north.

### History

Moorhead was first settled in the 1870s when the Northern Pacific Railroad built a crossing on the Red River of the North. Moorhead also served as a transfer point for passengers and freight being sent north on riverboats. The Red River Valley was settled by many European immigrants seeking to farm on its rich soil.

Additional historical information is available from the Clay County Historical Society located at the Hjemkomst Center or online at [www.info.co.clay.mn.us/History/](http://www.info.co.clay.mn.us/History/).

Although transportation still plays an important role in Moorhead, the community is most notable for its educational institutions. Moorhead is home to Minnesota State University Moorhead, Concordia College and the Moorhead Campus of Minnesota State Community and Technical College.

### Existing Land Use

Categorizing existing land use provides a valuable synopsis of the community’s current conditions and patterns. The categorization helps to identify areas that may need to be preserved or redeveloped, as well as areas where future growth is anticipated. It also shows patterns and densities which may impact future development. Figure 1-2 on page 9 shows the existing land use pattern, while Table 1-1 on page 8 summarizes the total number of acres in each land use category and its proportion to all land area within the current city limits of Moorhead.

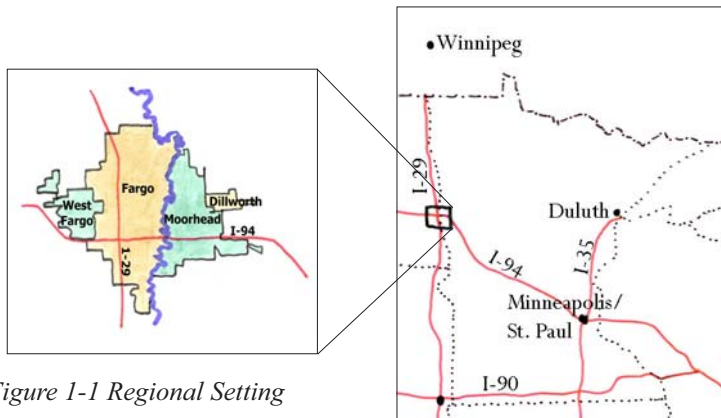


Figure 1-1 Regional Setting

## **Residential**

Residential land uses comprise the largest developed part of the community's land area. There are currently 2,200 acres in residential uses representing 26 percent of Moorhead's total land area. Moorhead's existing residential land use has been further divided into the categories of low, medium, and high density residential.

### ***Low Density 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 twinhomes and duplexes.

### ***Medium Density Residential***

Medium Density Residential has a density of 4 to 10 housing units per acre. Some examples are duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes and attached townhomes. It also includes single family homes which have been split into multiple units and manufactured home parks.

### ***High Density Residential***

High Density Residential describes housing that consists of more than 10 units per acre. This usually occurs with stacked apartment buildings of two or more stories.

## **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.

## **Industrial**

Industrial business describes facilities which manufacture or process food, goods, or equipment. It also includes warehouses, repackaging facilities and self-storage buildings. These businesses typically have little space devoted to displays and often do not sell directly to the general public.

### Public/Semi-Public

Public refers to land owned by municipalities or counties. Facilities include offices, libraries, fire stations, community pools, ice arenas, cultural centers, water treatment plants, and public power facilities. Semi-Public refers to land owned by institutions such as schools, churches, hospitals and nursing homes. Generally these land uses are tax-exempt.

### Park 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.

### Railroad

Railroad includes the tracks and right-of-way owned by the railroads in Moorhead.

### Agricultural

Agricultural refers to land being cultivated for crops that is within Moorhead's city limits.

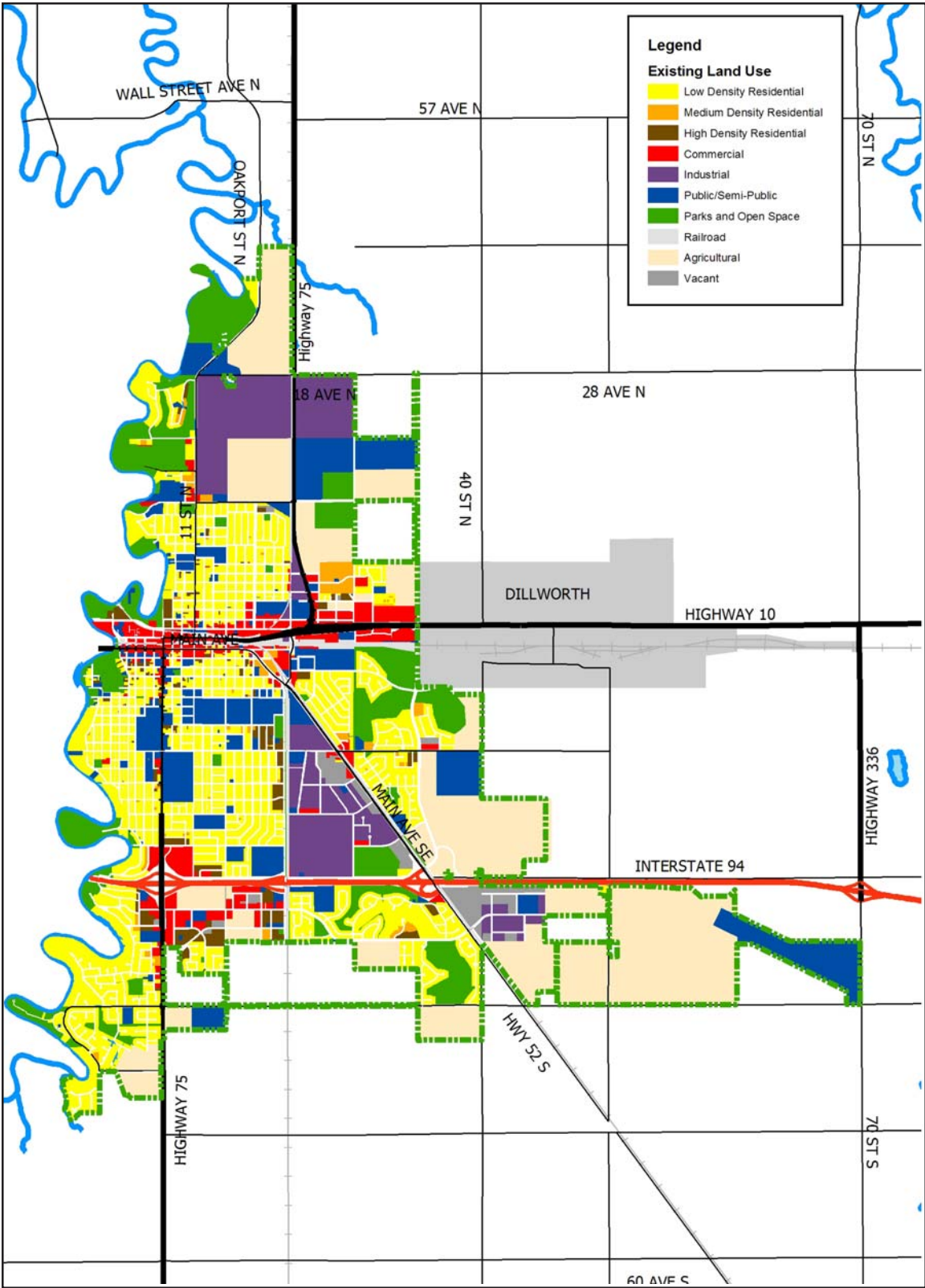
### Vacant

Vacant land is located within Moorhead's city limits, available for development, and not being used for agricultural purposes.

Table 1-1 Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total
Residential	2,216	26.39%
Low Density Residential	1,925	22.93%
Medium Density Residential	111	1.32%
High Density Residential	180	2.14%
Commercial	410	4.88%
Industrial	835	9.95%
Public	363	4.33%
Semi-Public	791	9.43%
Parks/Open Space	1,014	12.08%
Railroad	160	1.91%
Agricultural	2,264	26.97%
Vacant	341	4.06%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,394</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Figure 1-2 Existing Land Use Map (please note a large version of this map can be made available)



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## Downtown

Downtown Moorhead is the historical, social and economic focal point for the community. Originally platted in the late 1800s, Moorhead’s Downtown stretches from the Red River east along 1st, Center and Main Avenues, the three major transportation corridors connecting Moorhead to Fargo.

Downtown continues to have a mixture of business and civic uses. Community institutions like City Hall and the public library remain. It also is home to cultural facilities like the Hjemkomst Center, Rourke Art Museum and Gallery, and the Folk Arts Center. Businesses are located in the Moorhead Center Mall, as well as along Center and Main Avenues. Housing is located in neighborhoods surrounding Downtown.

Parks and open space is located on the outer edges of Downtown. Over 80 acres of parkland was created from flood prone residential and commercial areas. The parks provide many trails and recreational activities for area residents, as well as sites for community events. Continuing efforts are being made to connect the Downtown and its surrounding residential areas to these parks.

One of the challenges for Downtown Moorhead is the Burlington Northern Santa Fe mainline which bisects the block between Center and Main Avenues. With over 60 trains a day, noise and safety in Downtown is a concern. The metropolitan area is working with the railroad to create a “Whistle Free” zone through the Downtown.

Redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown continues to be a focus of the community. Throughout the planning process participants expressed a need for a strong and vibrant Downtown. Recent efforts by community leaders to address this desire include the development of a *Strategic Action Plan* in 1999 and a *Plan for Revitalization and Reinvestment--Downtown Redevelopment Framework Plan* in 2000. These plans identify a variety of strategies, such as design standards, streetscape system, master planning, encouragement of additional residential development and additional trails.

A redevelopment project anticipated to start in 2004 is the development of housing and retail on a 3.4 acre site on Main Avenue around 4th Street S. The development is to include about 35,000 square feet of commercial space and over 100 housing units. The project will retain and renovate the historic Kassenborg Block building.



*Moorhead Center Mall is one area for shopping in Downtown.*



*Over 60 trains a day go through Downtown Moorhead.*



*This historic property is anticipated for renovation in 2004.*





Figure 1-3 Moorhead and Oakport Township have an agreement which directs future annexation by the City.

## Growth Areas

### Oakport Township

The City of Moorhead has expanded to the north due to an Orderly Annexation Agreement with Oakport Township. The agreement, executed in 1990, identified a 1,100 acre tract of land which was immediately annexed to the City. A second tract of 1,770 acres is to be annexed in 2015. The 1,030 acres in the third tract of land has not been scheduled for annexation.

Most of the area in tract two is zoned rural residential which primarily allows farming and single-family dwellings on one-half acre or larger lots. There are also small sections in tract two which are zoned R1-B. Development in these areas is primarily limited to single-family dwellings, though minimum lot sizes are reduced to 12,500 square feet.

### Moorhead Township

Development continues to push south and east into Moorhead Township. Currently there is not an orderly annexation agreement with the Township. While annexations have generally occurred on a case by case basis, the City is currently going through the annexation process for 1,700 acres of land within the infrastructure service area.

### Dilworth

The City of Moorhead and Dilworth entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 1990 which establishes a mutually agreed upon boundary between the two communities. This boundary guides future development and annexations for both communities. The boundary north of Trunk Highway 10 follows 34th Street while the boundary south of Dilworth's city limits follows Main Street.

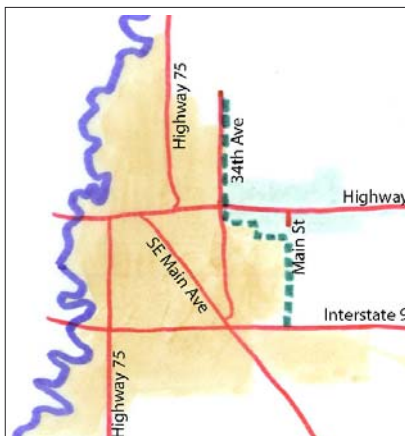


Figure 1-4 Moorhead and Dilworth have an agreement defining growth boundaries for the two communities as illustrated above by the dashed line.

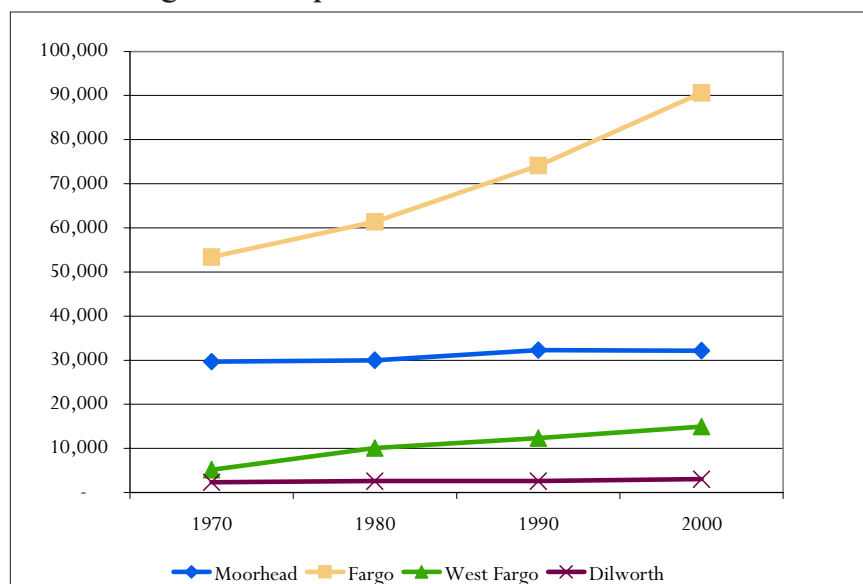
## Demographics

An examination of population and housing characteristics provides valuable information about possible future development needs and patterns. For example, an increase in the senior population indicates a need for additional senior housing options, while an increase in families with school aged children signals a need for parks and community facilities. A complete analysis of 2000 Census data was completed as part of the planning process. A detailed summary of 2000 Census data is available in Appendix B.

## Population

The City of Moorhead has grown steadily over the last three decades to almost 33,000 residents, of which about 20% are college students. With 18 percent of the population, Moorhead is the second largest city in the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. As Figure 1-5 illustrates, Moorhead’s growth over the last three decades has not been as strong as the other cities in the region. Between 1970 and 2000 Moorhead grew by about eight percent, while Dilworth grew by 29 percent, Fargo by 70 percent and West Fargo by 189 percent.

**Figure 1-5 Population Growth from 1970 to 2000**



**Table 1-2 Population Growth from 1970 to 2000**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1970-2000
<b>Moorhead</b>	29,687	29,998	32,295	32,177	8.39%
<b>Fargo</b>	53,365	61,383	74,111	90,599	69.77%
<b>West Fargo</b>	5,161	10,099	12,287	14,940	189.48%
<b>Dilworth</b>	2,321	2,585	2,562	3,001	29.30%

*Source: 2000 Census*

Population growth has historically been higher in Fargo and West Fargo due to actual and perceived community differences. These differences were examined as part of the Moorhead Housing Study recently completed in January of 2004. The Study found that the recent increase in housing construction in Moorhead may signify a shift in the following factors that have historically been limiting growth in Moorhead:

- Cost of Living – The historical perception was that Moorhead was a



more expensive place to live due to higher income taxes. In reality, the difference in income taxes between Minnesota and North Dakota is largely offset by differences in property taxes. Over the last few years the City of Moorhead has educated the community about the relatively close cost of living between the communities. These educational efforts seem to be changing the perception of cost differences between Moorhead and North Dakota communities.

- Migration Trends – As the largest city in North Dakota, Fargo has benefited as the place to go for rural North Dakotans while Moorhead does not have such a status in Minnesota. Although this will likely continue, Clay County has recently been able to capture more residents from Cass County than in the past.
- Critical Mass – Fargo has traditionally drawn development due to its status as the regional commercial hub and primary housing market. This development has begun to change the character of the region around West Acres Mall. Moorhead may be able to capture an increasing share of the housing market if it can nurture a more positive perception of the character of its neighborhoods. In addition, as development must move further out from the central area, Moorhead will be an increasingly convenient place to live.
- Developer Friendliness – A lack of developer friendliness has been cited as a barrier to residential development in Moorhead. Discussions with developers and other real estate professionals indicate that City efforts to address this perception have begun to make an impact.
- Developer Familiarity – Developers typically continue with a product type they are familiar with and has that been successful for them. Thus, developer success in Fargo has led to more construction in Fargo. As Moorhead has successful developments, it will be able to draw developers who had previously not worked in the community.

### Households

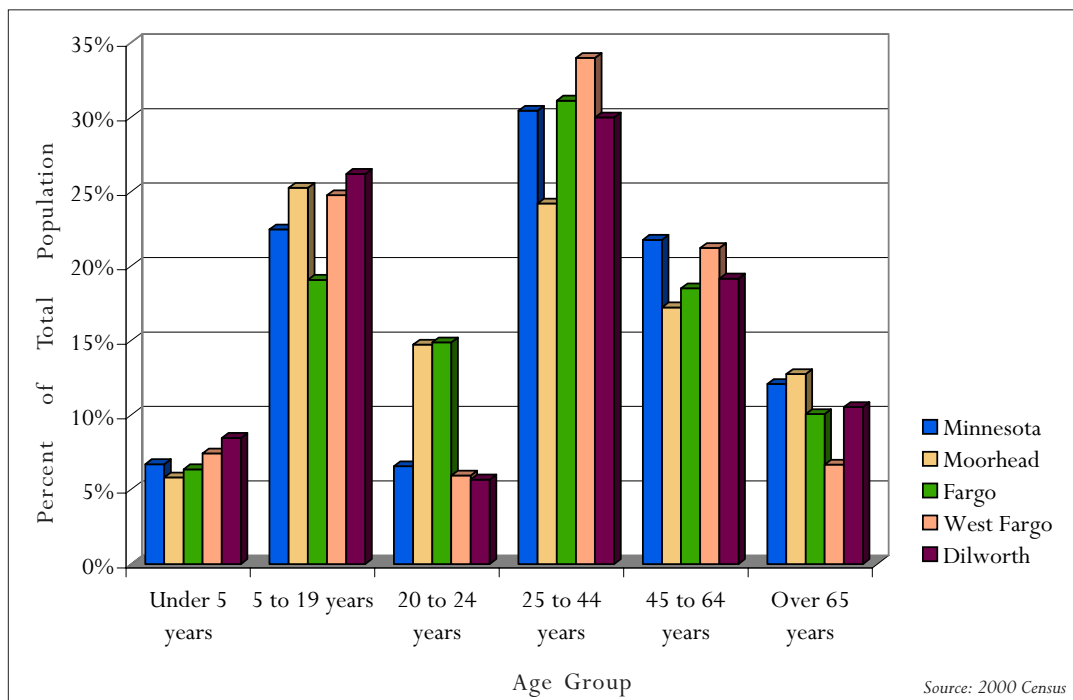
The number of households in Moorhead grew faster than its population in the last decade to 11,600 in 2000. Following a national trend the number of persons per household has continued to drop in Moorhead. In 2000, Moorhead had 2.43 persons per household, which was lower than the Minnesota state average of 2.52, but higher than Fargo at 2.20. This trend is the result of the increase in divorced households and marriages occurring later in life.

### Age Distribution

As an educational center, Moorhead has a large proportion of school-aged

residents. As Figure 1-6 illustrates, 40% of Moorhead’s population is between the ages of 5 and 24, compared to the state average of 29% and Fargo’s average of 34%. In order to meet the needs of this age group, a community focuses on such issues as quality schools, parks, recreational activities and

Figure 1-6 Age Distribution in 2000



affordable rental housing.

In comparison to the other communities in the metropolitan area, Moorhead does not have as large of a share of residents between 25 and 44. This means that many of the students who graduate from Moorhead’s educational institutions are unable to stay in the community. This may be due to a lack of employment opportunities or affordable entry level housing, or both. The smaller size of this age group may also be a concern because they usually have school-aged children. This may be one of the factors contributing to Moorhead School District’s recent declining enrollments.

Moorhead has continued to see a steady rise in the number of residents over age 65. This trend is likely to continue as people live longer and the baby boom generation continues to age. Although this trend is not unique to Moorhead, it is important for the community to respond to the changing needs of this age group. Housing seems to be important as active seniors are looking for alternatives for traditional senior housing. Innovative strategies for attracting new housing products may be needed to meet this group’s



desire to continue living in Moorhead.

### Diversity

The diversity of Moorhead’s residents has changed slightly in the last decade. From 1990 to 2000, the share of minorities in the community rose from 5 to

**Table 1-3 Race and Ethnicity in 2000**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	29,628	92.08%
Black or African American	247	0.77%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	625	1.94%
Asian	424	1.32%
Some other race	676	2.10%
Two or more races	577	1.79%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>32,177</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,439	4.47%
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*Source: 2000 Census*

8 percent. Although not a race, Hispanics or Latinos comprise the largest proportion at 4.5 percent. The largest racial groups continue to be American Indians at 1.9 percent and Asians at 1.3 percent.

Community diversity was noted in many community discussions. Public meeting participants expressed a desire to celebrate residents’ cultural differences. A variety of events occur each year including dance, art exhibits, music and conferences. There is also a weekly radio broadcast called Notas Latinas which provides music, news, current events and commentary for the Hispanic community. As diversity increases in the region it will be important to work with community leaders to facilitate discussion, ensure needs are being met and support the integration of cultures and a sense of belonging to the community.

### Housing

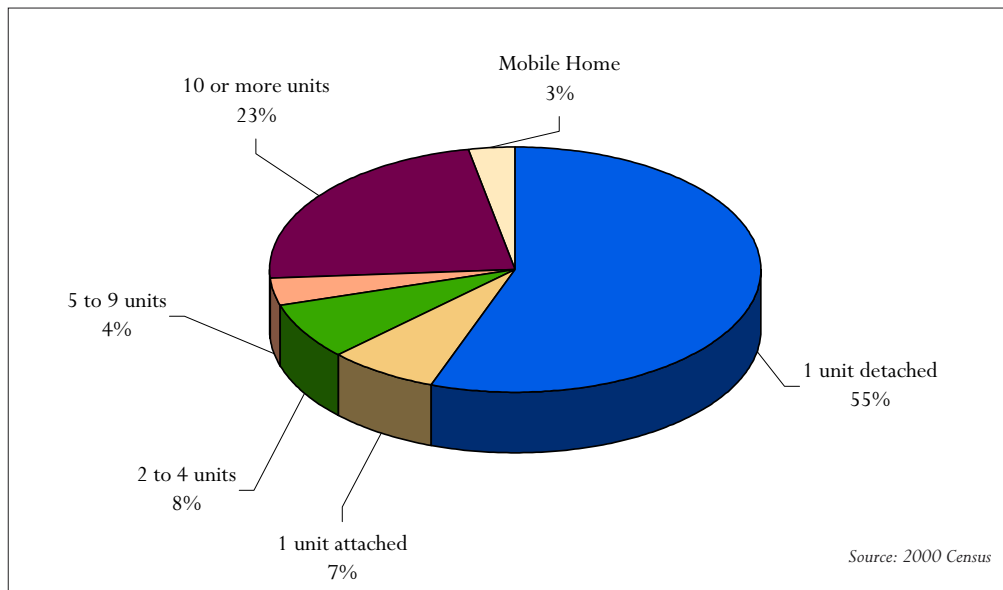
The decision to live in a particular community is influenced by a number of factors. One of the most important is the availability of housing units that affordably meet the needs of a household. To encourage continued growth and provide for life-cycle housing needs, communities must strive to achieve a balanced mix of housing.

### Housing Types

Moorhead continues to be a community with a predominance of single-family detached homes. As of the 2000 Census, 55 percent of Moorhead’s 12,180 housing units were single-family detached. The types of housing units being



Figure 1-7 Housing Types in 2000

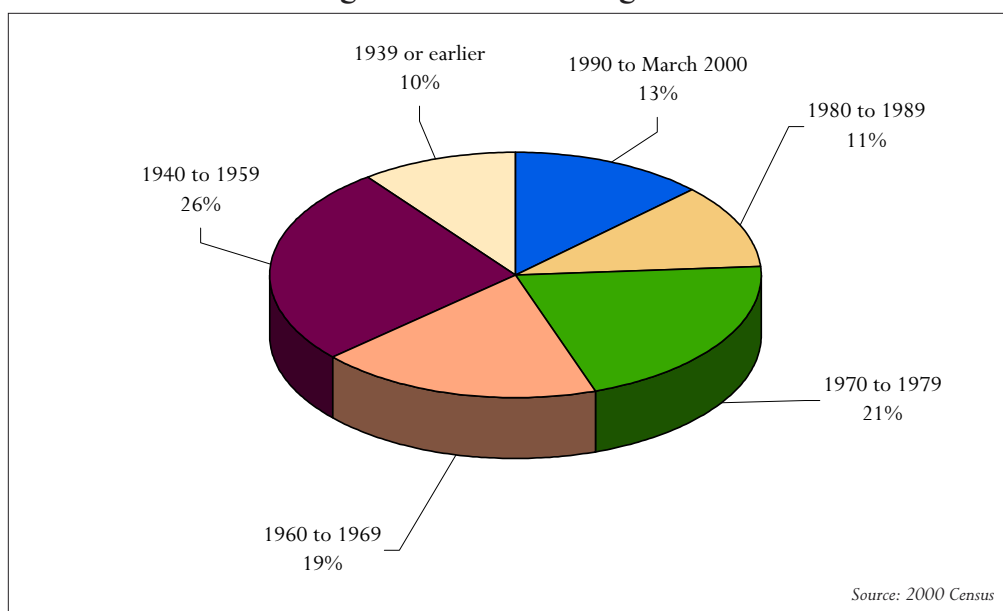


built in Moorhead will likely change in the coming decade as other forms of housing are built. For example, in the last two years 284 housing units were constructed in buildings with 5 or more units while the previous nine years saw only 269 permits for such buildings issued.

### Age of Housing

Age of the housing stock can be a general indicator as to its condition and a need for increased maintenance or renovation. Over 75 percent of the housing stock is 25 years or older, with 46 percent built before 1960. The high

Figure 1-8 Year Housing Built



percentage of older homes is a result of a slower rate of housing starts since the 1960s. However, since 2000, the rate of housing starts in Moorhead has increased resulting in a more equally distributed age of housing.

**Tenure**

Rentals comprised 36 percent of all occupied housing units in 2000. Although higher than the state average of 25 percent, this figure is still significantly lower than neighboring Fargo at 52 percent. As Figure 1-9 shows, the majority of renters occupy buildings with 10 or more units. According to the Moorhead Housing Study, most of Moorhead’s rental units are contained in mid-rise

**Figure 1-9 Types of Units Renters Occupy**

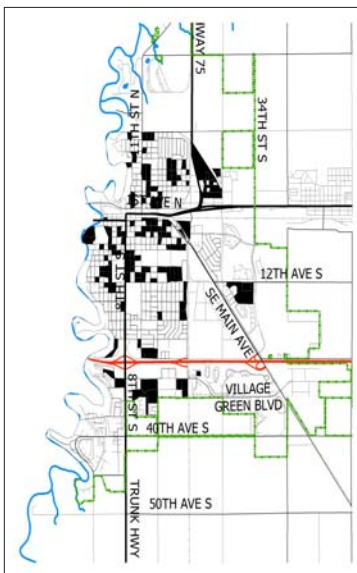
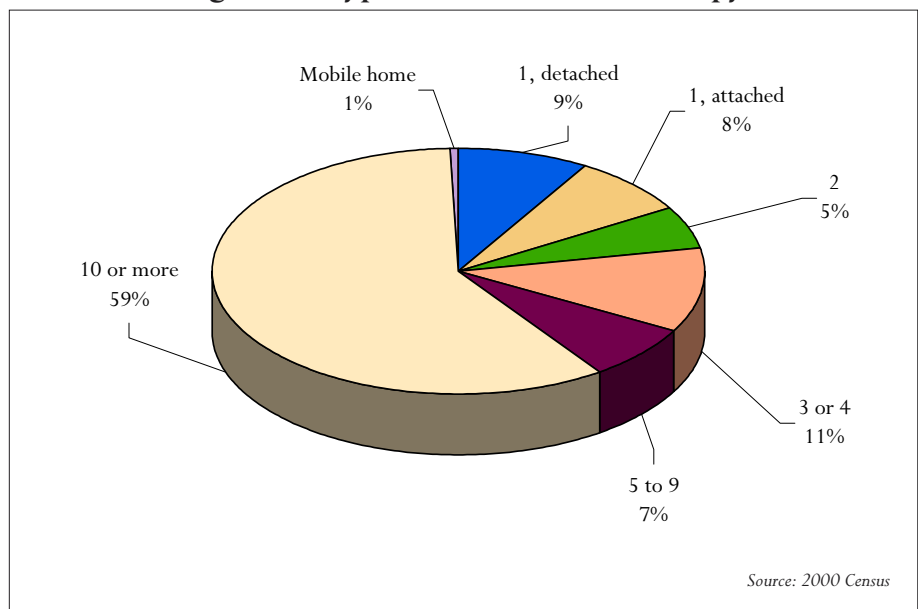


Figure 1-10 2000 Census: Blocks where more than 15 percent of the households have one or more nonrelatives living together are shown in black.

buildings with 20 to 50 units. Little apartment development occurred in Moorhead in the 1990s. That trend seems to be changing as nearly 170 units have been built in the last few years. While these new developments have been successful, the Moorhead Housing Study concluded that there is still an unmet need for rental housing in Moorhead.

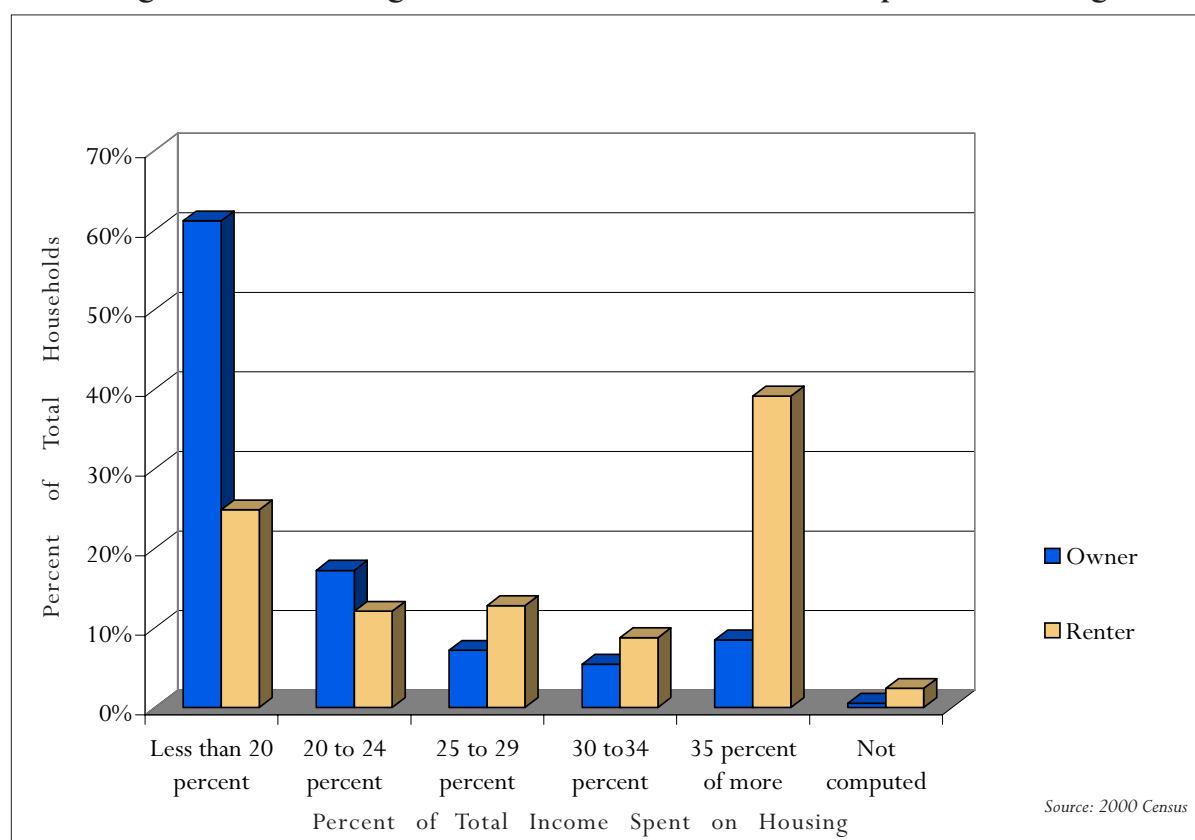
Community members continue to be concerned about the number of single family homes that have been converted into rental property. Although it is still under 15 percent for the entire community, Figure 1-10 suggests that a higher percentage of households around the college campuses contain one or more nonrelatives. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that single family housing conversions are the result of a lack of affordable rental housing near MSUM and Concordia College. Parents are purchasing homes for their

children and their friends to live in during their college years. Since rental property is often not maintained as well, limiting the amount of single family conversion will likely be important for the long-term sustainability of the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the college/university campuses.

### Affordability

A major concern for owners and renters alike is the affordability of housing. Housing affordability is important because it impacts the diversity of the people living in a community, the ability of area businesses to find employees and the customer base for area retailers. A generally accepted standard is that households should not spend more than 30 percent of their income on

**Figure 1-11 Percentage of Owner’s and Renter’s Income Spent on Housing**



mortgage costs. As illustrated in Figure 1-11, only 14 percent of homeowners in Moorhead spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent. This may be reflective of the prevalence of older, more affordable homes in the community. In contrast, almost 50 percent of renters spend over 30 percent of their income on rent.

### Public Housing

Moorhead Public Housing Agency (MPHA) currently has four public housing



## Community Context



Public Senior Housing Complex

complexes with over 200 units in Moorhead. This includes 151 one-bedroom units, 25 two-bedroom, 26 three-bedroom and 6 four-bedroom. The 46 Family Units at Riverview Heights are slated for demolition in the next few years. Rather than constructing new units, a comparable amount of Section 8 Certificates will be available. These Section 8 Certificates will add to the 25 Certificates MPHA currently has.

In addition to MPHA, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidizes 281 units in Moorhead. Rental certificates and vouchers from Clay County Redevelopment Authority and the City of Fargo can also be used in Moorhead.

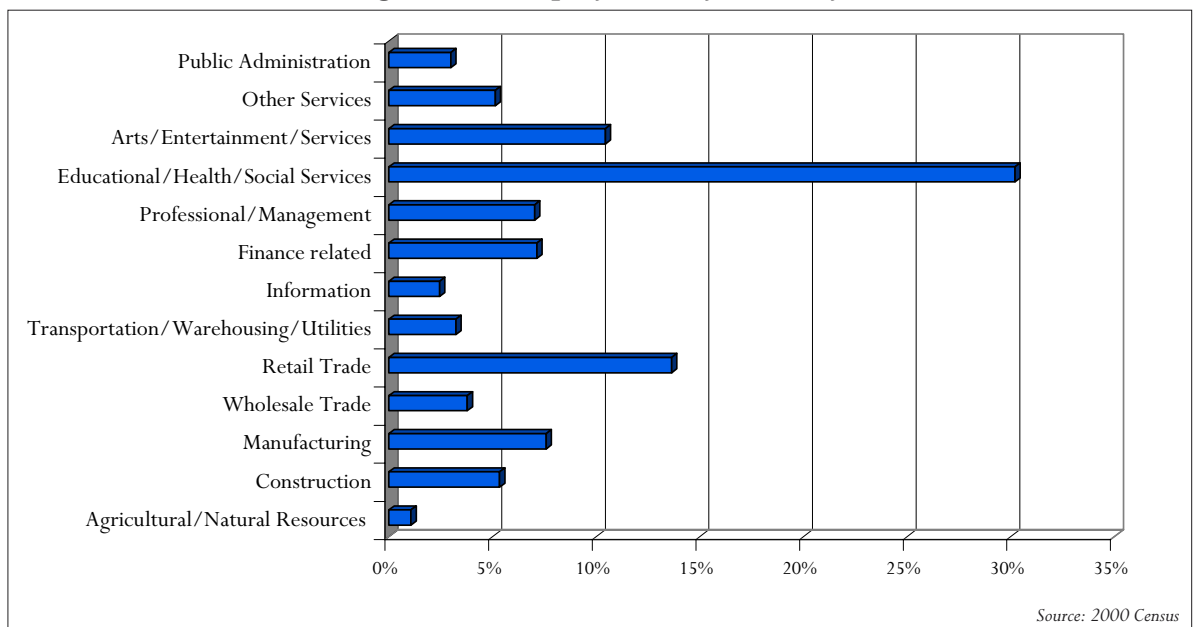
### Housing Assistance Programs

Moorhead has over five financial assistance programs for new and existing homebuyers. These programs, available in partnership with the State of Minnesota, are available to those who meet income limitations. First time home purchasers can receive assistance in the form of down payment or mortgage financing. Existing homeowners can access loan funds for the update, improvement or repair of their house. Additional information about current programs is available from City staff.

### Economic Climate

A strong economic climate provides employment for residents, choices for consumers and tax base for the City. Moorhead continues to predominantly

Figure 1-12 Employment by Industry



**Table 1-4 Moorhead Major Employers**

Employer	Number of Employees
Moorhead Public Schools	815
Minnesota State University Moorhead	800
Concordia College	613
Eventide Lutheran Home	452
American Crystal Sugar Co.	380
Clay County	365
City of Moorhead	254
Asp Inc.	200
Moorhead Electric Inc.	171
Minnesota State Community and Technical College - Moorhead Campus	163

Source: MN Department of Employment and Economic Development Community Profile

be an educational community. As Figure 1-12 shows, the largest industry in Moorhead is the Education, Health and Social Services segment at 30 percent. This is followed by retail trade at 14 percent and arts, entertainment and food services at 10 percent. Of the top ten employers shown in Table 1-4, there are four educational institutions, two governmental agencies and a nursing home.

### Industrial Development

Most industrial development in Moorhead is guided to one of two industrial parks. The most notable area outside of the industrial parks is located on the north side of Moorhead. American Crystal Sugar Company, an agricultural cooperative, has a sugar beet processing plant on over 300 acres north of 15th Avenue N along 11th Street N. This large parcel may impact the timing of residential development to the north since it provides a physical separation between Moorhead’s developed neighborhoods and potential growth areas.

#### MCCARA Industrial Park

MCCARA Industrial Park is located on the southeast side of the City, adjacent to Interstate 94 and County Highway 52. Owned by the City of Moorhead, MCCARA has lots starting at 2 acres. In addition to easy access to Interstate

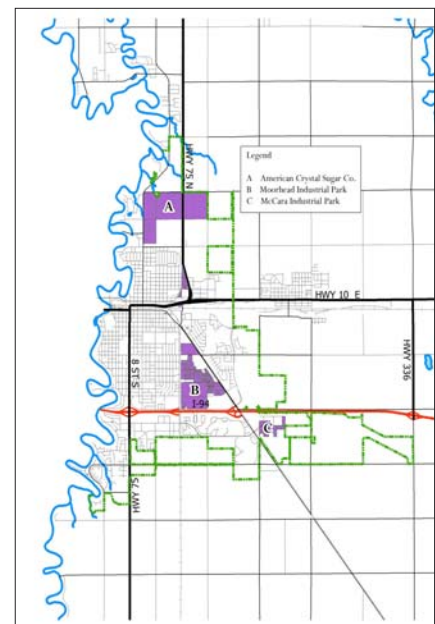


Figure 1-13 Moorhead’s existing industrial areas are shown in purple.



94, MCCARA is located only two miles west of the Moorhead Municipal Airport and has a rail spur, serviced by Otter Tail Valley Railroad, which connects to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad.

A 2004 southerly expansion of MCCARA Industrial Park will install streets and utilities for another 83 acres of future industrial development. Five large lots, ranging in size between 10 and 20 acres, will be created to serve distribution and manufacturing businesses. A new entrance with a rail crossing to County Highway 52 and a storm water retention pond will be created.

### **Moorhead Industrial Park**

Moorhead Industrial Park is a privately owned park located north of Interstate 94 and west of Southeast Main Avenue. Originally platted in the 1950s, it has a mixture of businesses including an Anheuser Busch malt plant, constructed in the 1970s. Although most lots are ½ acre in size, larger lots are available.

### **Commercial Centers**

Commercial development in Moorhead is located in three areas of the community. As the traditional center of the community, Downtown Moorhead continues to have a commercial presence. The Moorhead Center Mall is home to over 50 businesses and City Hall. Moorhead Center Mall was developed in the 1970s as part of Moorhead's Urban Renewal Program and as an effort to revitalize Downtown.

The area around the interchange of Interstate 94 and Highway 75/8th Street S was developed as a commercial center in the early 1960s. The Brookdale Mall was developed on the northwest quadrant while Holiday Mall was on the northeast. With its proximity to West Acres, this area was in decline for a number of years. Recent efforts to revitalize the area have begun to succeed. A new Moorhead Area Conference Center and Courtyard by Marriott Hotel opened in 2003.

Stretching from Downtown to the east, the area between 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North and Main Avenue are lined with a variety of commercial businesses. This commercial strip continues eastward to the EasTen Shopping Center which is located on Moorhead's border with Dilworth. EasTen Shopping Center has over 25 stores and is the major location of discount retailers in Moorhead. It was primarily developed in the 1990s to capture more of the retail market in the region. The construction of a bridge over the railroad tracks at 34th Street recently connected EasTen to the rapidly growing areas in southern Moorhead.

Commercial development and redevelopment in Moorhead has been

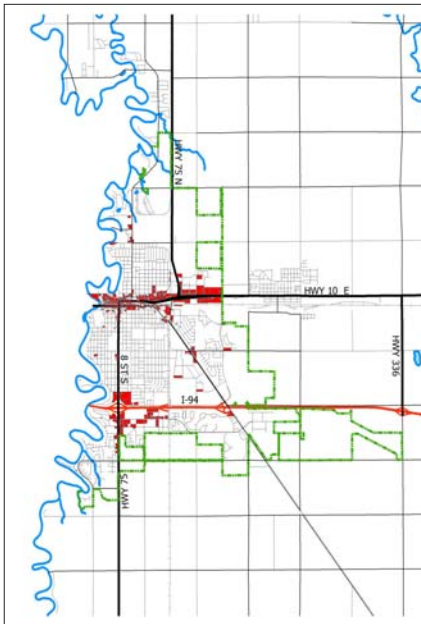


Figure 1-14 Moorhead's existing commercial areas are shown in red.



challenging since the development of West Acres Mall in Fargo in 1972. With over 100 stores, West Acres has the critical mass to draw national retailers. Since many of these retailers consider Fargo-Moorhead one region, convincing these retailers to open a second store in Moorhead may be difficult.

### ***Economic Development***

Economic development in Moorhead continues to be challenging due to the cost differences between North Dakota and Minnesota. Businesses locating in Minnesota have higher state income taxes, sales taxes, workers compensation rates, and unemployment rates. However, Minnesota does have lower property taxes, water rates and electricity costs. In addition, commercial and industrial land can be less expensive than in North Dakota.

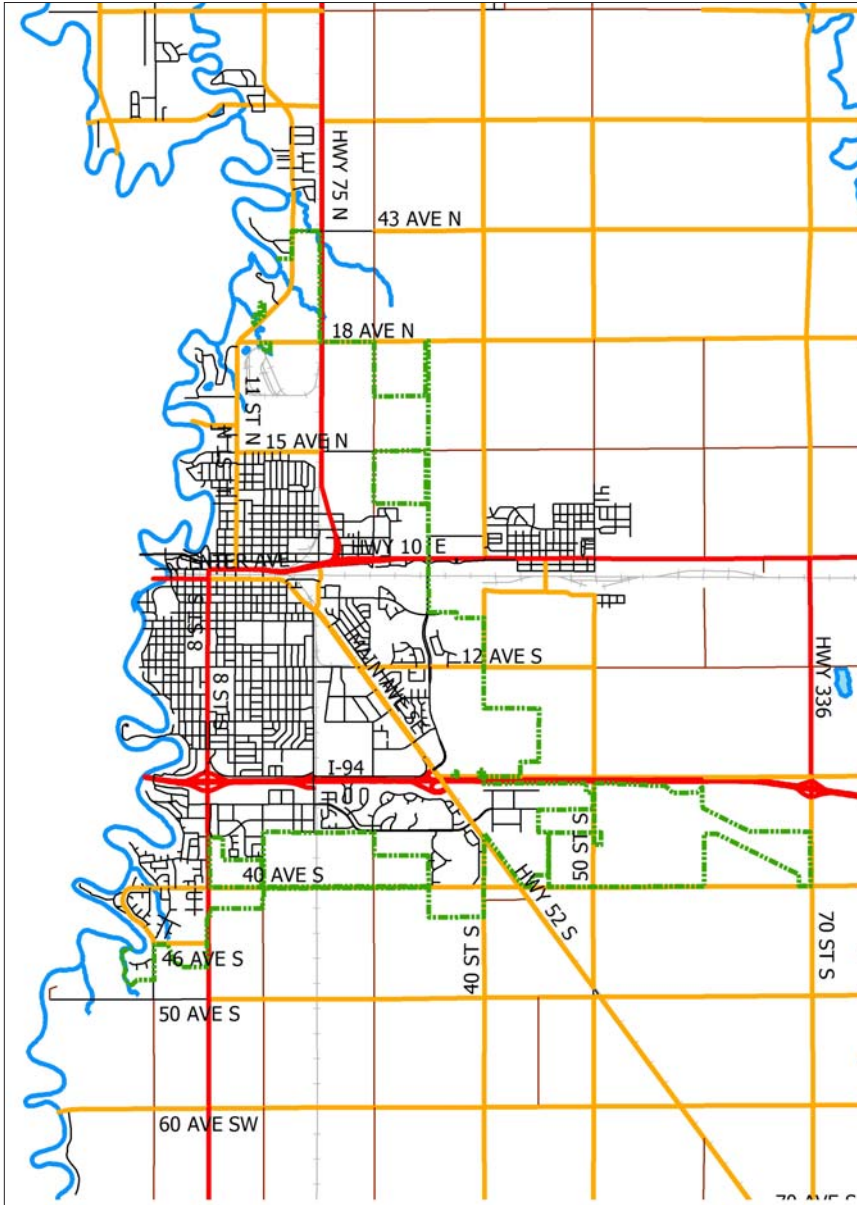
Moorhead has been able to increase its competitiveness through the following economic development programs:

- JOBZ (Job Opportunity Building Zone) provides broad tax incentives on 467 acres of Moorhead’s vacant, industrially zoned property. Incentives through 2015 are offered to new construction valued at more than \$500,000 and include a state corporate income/franchise tax exemption, a sales tax exemption, income tax credits on jobs paying between \$30,000 and \$100,000 per year, and a property tax reduction of approximately 50%. The program is geared to industrial and high paying office projects. Retail projects are not permitted.
- Border City Development Zone provides citywide property tax exemptions for two or more years on a sliding scale for new commercial/ industrial construction valued at more than \$150,000. Sales tax credits are also available for these projects if the business is also purchasing at least \$100,000 in new equipment as part of the project. The program is available for all types of commercial and industrial projects, including retail and franchised restaurants.
- Border City Enterprise Zone provides a state-paid income tax credit to approximately 200 businesses each year based on a percentage of the business’s workers compensation expense. This is an ongoing program used to retain existing businesses and requires no expansion or new investment.
- Loan Funds provided by the City and West Central Initiative offer “gap” financing for up to 50% of a project cost at below market rates. Loans of

up to \$200,000 can be structured to businesses that will be creating jobs and demonstrate an ability to repay the loans. The program is geared to primary sector or retail and service employers that have no local competition in Moorhead.

- Disparity Reduction Credit is a state-paid credit that since 1988 has reduced Moorhead’s commercial and industrial property tax rates to a net of 2.3% of estimated market value. This net value matches C/I property tax rates in neighboring Fargo, ND.

Figure 1-15 Jurisdictional Classification



Roadways under the state’s jurisdiction are in red, the county’s are in orange and local roadways are in black. The City’s boundary is shown in green.

### Transportation Systems

Moorhead has 175 miles in its local street system, of which 156.5 miles, almost 90 percent, are under the City’s jurisdiction. As Figure 1-15 shows, 12 of the remaining miles are under state jurisdiction while 6.5 miles are under Clay County’s jurisdiction.

Transportation planning is done in conjunction with the Fargo-Moorhead Council of Government (Metro COG). Metro COG is the primary transportation planning agency for the metropolitan area. Metro COG coordinates the development of a comprehensive and coordinated transportation system for the area. In addition to roadway networks, Metro COG also works on transit and bicycle routes.

### Functional Classification

Functional Classification groups roadways according to the type of service they are intended to provide. The purpose of this

classification is to create a roadway network which provides safe and expedient movement of traffic, as well as access to individual properties. Access and mobility have an inverse relationship such that increasing access decreases ones mobility and decreasing access increases ones mobility. Thus, in order

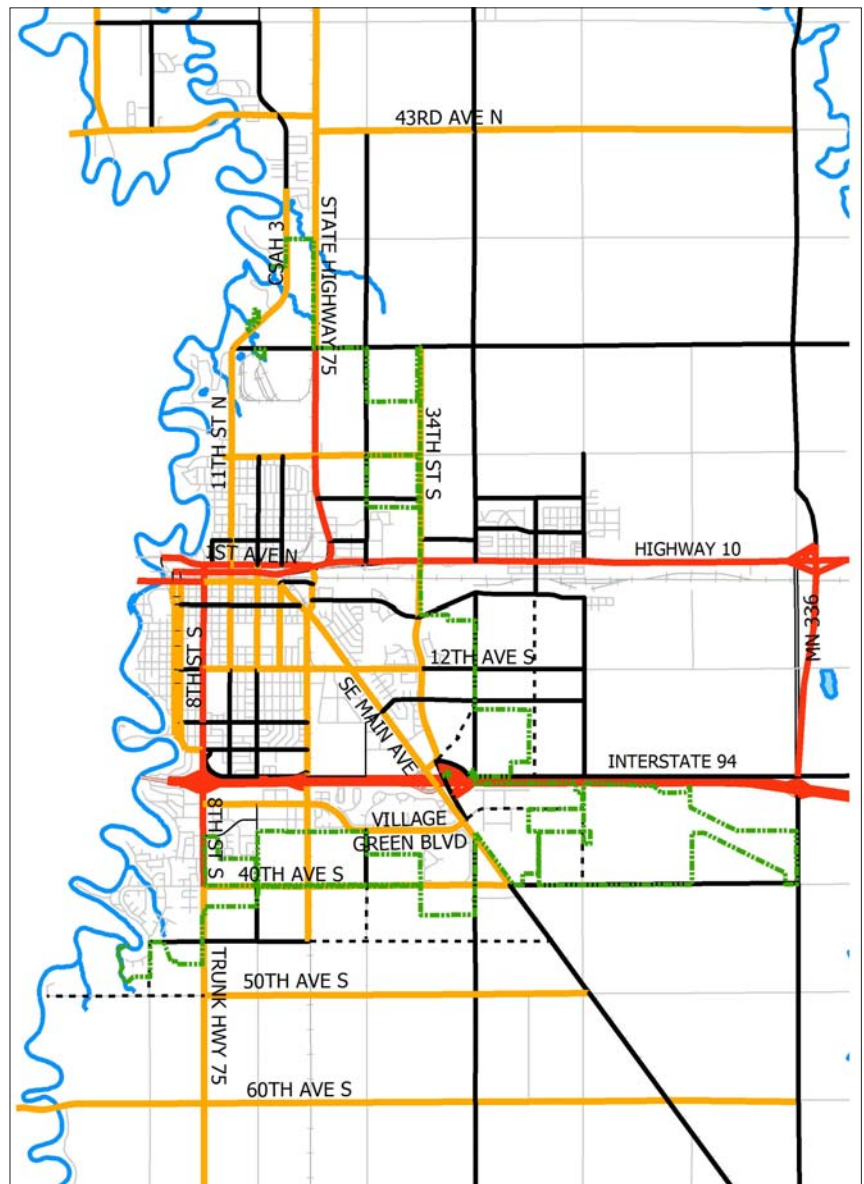
to achieve both goals, one must vary the level of access and mobility along different roadway segments.

The functional classification system for Moorhead is shown in Figure 1-16.

The major functional classes are:

- Principal Arterials provide limited access to move relatively large volumes of traffic in an expedient manner. They generally serve major activity centers and are the major connectors between urban areas and rural centers. Most Principal Arterials are controlled access roadways such as interstates, expressways and freeways. Principal Arterials rarely provide direct access to adjacent land. In Moorhead, Principal Arterials include Interstate 94, Highway 10, Highway 75/8th St S north of Interstate 94, Center Ave and Main Ave from the river to Highway 75/8th St S (shown red in Figure 1-16).
- Minor Arterials integrate with the principal arterial system by connecting smaller centers of activity within and between neighboring communities. Minor Arterials offer less traffic mobility and more access to adjacent lands. Some examples of Moorhead's Minor Arterials are S.E Main Ave, 20th St S, Village Green Boulevard, 11th St N, 15th Ave N, 4th St S, and 5th St S (shown orange in Figure 1-16).
- Collectors provide relatively equal amounts of access and mobility. Traffic volumes and speed are generally lower than arterials. In contrast to arterials, collectors exist within residential neighborhoods. Collectors are the primary roadways to gather traffic from residential streets and channel it onto the arterial system. Some examples

Figure 1-16 Functional Classification



*The existing Functional Classification Map illustrates Principal Arterials in red, minor arterials in orange, and collectors in black. Planned road improvements are illustrated by dashed lines.*

of Moorhead's collectors are 4th Ave S, 14th Ave S, 20th Ave S, 24th Ave S, 14th St N, 17th St N, 28th St N, and 4th Ave N (shown thick black in Figure 1-16). Future collectors are identified as black dashed lines.

- Local Roads provide many points of direct access and limited mobility. Speeds and volumes are relatively low and through traffic is often discouraged. Any road not otherwise classified is a local road (shown light black in Figure 1-16).

### Railroads

The City of Moorhead is divided by a number of railroad lines. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad owns all but one of the lines. The BNSF east-west mainline runs through the center of downtown Moorhead, just south of Highway 10. The BNSF also has a north-south line. The line running north of the BNSF mainline, just west of Highway 75, is the Great Northern Line. The line running south from the BNSF mainline, called the Moorhead Subdivision, is located just east of 20th Street. As of the November 2000 Study of the 34th Street/I-94 Interchange and Railroad Relocation Alternatives, the BNSF mainline carried over 60 trains per day and the Moorhead Subdivision carried seven trains per day.

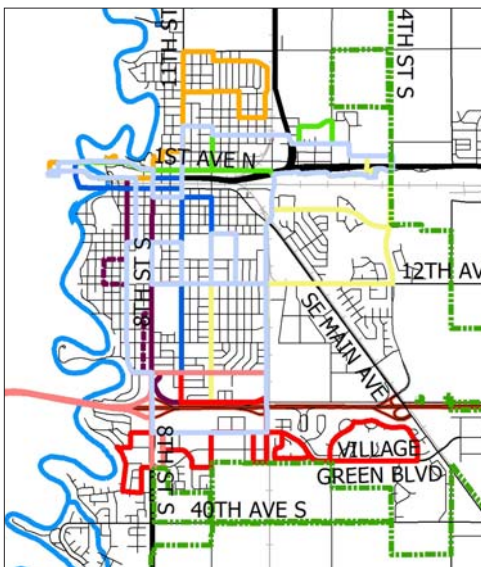
The other railroad line which runs diagonally through the City from the southeast to northwest is owned by Otter Tail Valley (OTV) Railroad, a regional rail carrier. The OTV railroad line merges at a switch located at approximately Fourth Avenue South. The primary businesses served by the OTV include the Otter Tail Power Plant in Fergus Falls, some grain elevators south of Moorhead and businesses in Moorhead's Industrial Parks. Growth of this railroad line is expected as the industrial parks expand. In 2000, the OTV had an average of 1.4 trains per day.

The railroads have a significant impact on traffic movement and safety. The BNSF mainline that runs through downtown Moorhead frequently disrupts traffic since only one underpass exists at the western end of town. In addition, trains that want to go east to the Dilworth yard or intermodal facility from the OTV or Moorhead Subdivision lines must first travel west on the BNSF mainline into downtown Moorhead and then back up to Dilworth. This frequently causes delays. Safety concerns exist throughout Moorhead as collisions have been known to occur between cars and trains as people try and avoid waiting for the trains.

### Transit

Transit in the Fargo-Moorhead area is administered separately by Moorhead and Fargo. Each city contracts with private companies to operate and maintain the buses. Moorhead Metropolitan Area Transit (MAT) provides six regular and two special limited service fixed routes as shown in Figure 1-17. Riders

Figure 1-17 Transit Routes



Each of Moorhead's Transit Routes is shown in a different color.





are able to transfer to the Fargo Metropolitan Area Transit System as well. There is a Ground Transportation Center in Fargo where riders are able to transfer to other Moorhead or Fargo buses. Moorhead riders can also transfer between Moorhead routes at the Holiday Mall transfer site.

The U-Pass Program provides unlimited ride services in Moorhead and Fargo. Students and Faculty at MSUM and Concordia College are able to ride the bus for free with a school I.D. The hope is to reduce commuter parking demand by encouraging the use of transit. There are four departure points throughout MSUM and three around Concordia College.

Fargo and Moorhead jointly operate the complementary paratransit system, MAT Paratransit. MAT Paratransit operates the same hours as the fixed route systems. It provides door to door service throughout the metropolitan area, including Fargo, Moorhead, Dilworth and West Fargo. Reservations can be made one to seven days in advance.

### Airport

Moorhead’s Municipal Airport is located in the southeastern part of the City. It is a general aviation airport with a 4,300 foot runway and 28 hangers. Currently surrounded by agricultural land, the airport is close to Moorhead’s MCCARA Industrial Park. Future development is limited in use and or height based on existing airport zoning regulations as Figure 1-18 illustrates. Throughout the planning process interest was exhibited in considering the development of homes near the airport for hobbyists and enthusiasts.

## Environmental Systems

### Geology

Moorhead’s environmental features were shaped by the glaciers which covered the area over 9,000 years ago. The Red River Valley was once the basin of Lake Agassiz, the largest North American glacial lake, which covered parts of the Dakotas, Minnesota and Manitoba. The silt and clay deposited on the lake bed created the fertile soil of the Red River Valley.

Although difficult to see, Moorhead is located in a valley. Elevations in Clay County range from 1,500 feet above sea level in the east to 900 feet in the west. Slopes around Moorhead are fairly flat, averaging less than one percent.

Former shorelines or beaches are other reminders of Lake Agassiz. These low ridges of sand and gravel were deposited when the lake levels were stable. These areas are important because they serve as recharge areas for the aquifers and are major sources of groundwater.

Figure 1-18 Airport Clear Zones



*Future development around the airport will be limited in use and/or height based on airport zoning regulations. The above diagram illustrates the boundaries of current airport regulations.*



*Moorhead's fertile soil continues to support agriculture.*



*The Red River is the most important natural and recreational amenity for the Moorhead Community.*

### Soils and Vegetation

Soils in the Red River Valley are generally good for agricultural activity. There are relatively few soils which are hydric (wet) or on steep slopes. Most of the soils in the Moorhead area are silty clay in character with some drainage issues. In order to deal with drainage, a system of man-made drainage ditches have been created in the western portion of Clay County. These ditches primarily run east-west to the Red River. The Watershed Districts administer the system.

The native vegetation of the Moorhead area was primarily tall grass prairies with woods along the river and streams. Most of the native prairie was removed by settlers seeking to cultivate the fertile soil. Agriculture continues to be the primary land use outside of the City, with sugar beets, soybeans and small grains as the main crops.

### Water

With few lakes and wetlands in the Moorhead area, rivers play a significant role. The Red River flows along the western boundary of Moorhead. Flowing north 315 miles, the Red River extends from Lake Traverse in the south to Lake Winnipeg in Canada. The Red River is an important natural and recreational amenity for the community.

The Red River is also an important source of drinking water for Moorhead. Thus, preventing pollution from agricultural and urban uses is important. Moorhead's water supply also comes from the Buffalo Aquifer and the Moorhead Aquifer. Moorhead is working with other Clay County governmental units and state agencies to develop Wellhead Management Plans to protect these areas from potential contamination.

### Floodplain

Flooding has been a significant part of the Red River Valley's history. Flooding generally occurs in the spring due to melting snow. However, it can occur at other times when there is significant rainfall. Although flooding occurs along the Red River, the Moorhead area is also prone to overland flooding. Overland flooding occurs when water moves across fields and urban areas because there is not a natural channel. Much of the 1997 flooding in the Moorhead area was due to overland flooding rather than the river flooding.

The City of Moorhead has adopted the Flood Insurance Study and Rate Map for the City as part of its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. This limits the types of uses which are permitted in flood prone areas to reduce loss of property and prevent significant public expenditures. The boundaries of these areas are derived from the 100 year flood line. This boundary is expected to change in the next couple of years as the flood fringe is revised to approximately the 1997 flood level. City staff anticipate that it will be



two feet on the north side of the city and one foot on the south.

### River Keepers

River Keepers is an organization started in 1990 to promote the Red River. The group works to promote awareness and appreciation for the Red River. It also supports riverfront development projects to help encourage economic opportunities along the river corridor. Some of their accomplishments include the construction of a boat ramp and outdoor learning classroom in MB Johnson Park, installation of a floating bicycle/pedestrian bridge, retrofit of the midtown dam, creation of guides and interpretative markers to celebrate the River, and operation of the SS Ruby pontoon tour boat.

## Educational Systems

### Moorhead Public Schools

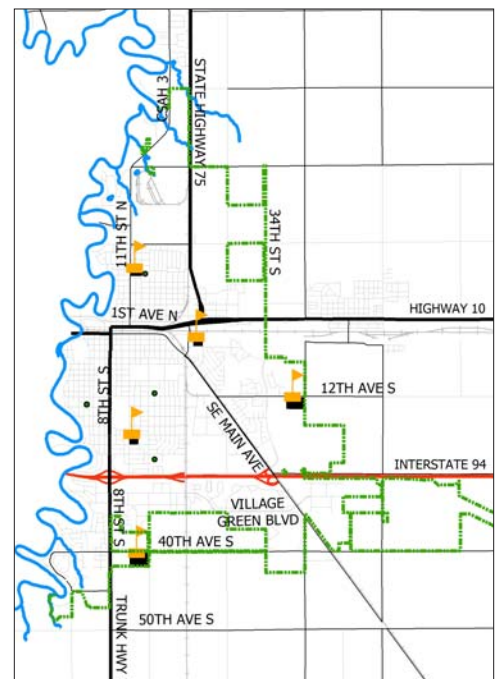
Moorhead Public School District #152 educates approximately 5,500 students from a 216 square mile area along the Red River. The largest cities the district serves are Moorhead, Georgetown and Sabin. In addition to its K-12 instruction, Moorhead School District offers programs such as Early Childhood Family Education, Adult Basic Education, adult enrichment classes, and English as a Second Language.

Similar to other school districts across Minnesota, Moorhead School District has been facing a declining enrollment. The last peak in enrollment occurred in the 1994-1995 school year with just over 6,100 students. Enrollment declines are due to a number of factors, including the decrease in the number of children families are having, parochial schools, home schooling and open enrollment. The 2002 Report of the Moorhead Housing Task Force found that the age of the school district facilities may also be a deterrent in the location of families with school aged children to the area.

With a \$64 million bond referendum approved in March of 2002, the Moorhead School District is completely modernizing its facilities and updating its curriculum delivery. As part of its modernization, a new elementary school and a new middle school are being constructed adjacent to the future growth areas of the community. With these new schools and the conversion of current facilities to new uses, the school district will be able to consolidate into fewer buildings. Figure 1-19 shows current and future school facilities.

The reuse of Riverside and Edison Elementary Schools has been an important topic throughout the planning process. Although having a compatible land

**Figure 1-19 Public School Facilities**



*Moorhead public school facilities include three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one private school.*



*Minnesota State University Moorhead's main entrance on 7th Avenue South emphasizes the University as one of Moorhead's most important assets.*



*Concordia College's bell tower emphasizes the College as another one of Moorhead's most important assets.*

use is vitally important, residents have also recognized that the schools have been focal points for their neighborhoods and want to see their roles as gathering places continue.

In addition to public schools, St. Joseph's Catholic School, an elementary Catholic school, and Park Christian School, a K-12 interdenominational Christian school, are located in Moorhead.

### ***Colleges and Universities***

#### **Minnesota State University Moorhead**

Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) is a four-year liberal arts university with over 130 majors, 18 pre-professional studies and 12 graduate degree programs. Located in a residential area just southeast of Downtown Moorhead, MSUM has 34 buildings on almost 120 acres. With 7,700 students and 700 employees, MSUM is a significant part of the Moorhead community. About 21 percent of students live on-campus.

MSUM has limited expansion space due to its location in a residential area. The surrounding residential area has a limited amount of affordable student rental housing. Students have increasingly moved to Fargo due to the perception of more affordable housing, as well as the convenience of jobs, shopping, dining and entertainment around the West Acres Mall. This increase in students commuting has begun to challenge MSUM to find enough parking. A desire by community members to increase the number of students living in Moorhead requires the construction of additional rental housing. However, concerns about the conversion of single-family homes may make it challenging to create additional student housing opportunities.

MSUM has a Regional Science Center located on 300 acres 15 miles east of campus near the Buffalo River State Park. In addition to an interpretive center, the Regional Science Center has an observatory with a 16 inch reflecting telescope. Year-round programming serves nearly 20,000 K-12 students, special groups and adults annually.

Arts and cultural activities at MSUM add to the quality of life for all residents of Moorhead. The Theatre Department offers four main stage productions, student directed plays and a summer theatre program called Straw Hat Players. The Music Department has four choirs, a wind ensemble, orchestra and a number of jazz ensembles.

#### **Concordia College**

Concordia College is a four-year, private liberal arts college offering nearly

100 majors and preprofessional programs. Concordia has 2,775 students and over 600 employees.

Situated on 120 acres in a residential neighborhood south of Downtown, Concordia faces similar challenges as MSUM. Currently about 60 percent of students live on campus, in part, due to a requirement that students live on campus for their first two years. Concordia leadership would like to see an increase in the number of students able to live around campus.

Concordia also contributes to the arts and cultural events in Moorhead. Concordia offers its students the opportunity to participate in one or more of its five voice choirs, two bell choirs, two bands, two orchestras, two jazz ensembles, marimba choir or percussion ensemble.

### Minnesota State Community and Technical College – Moorhead Campus

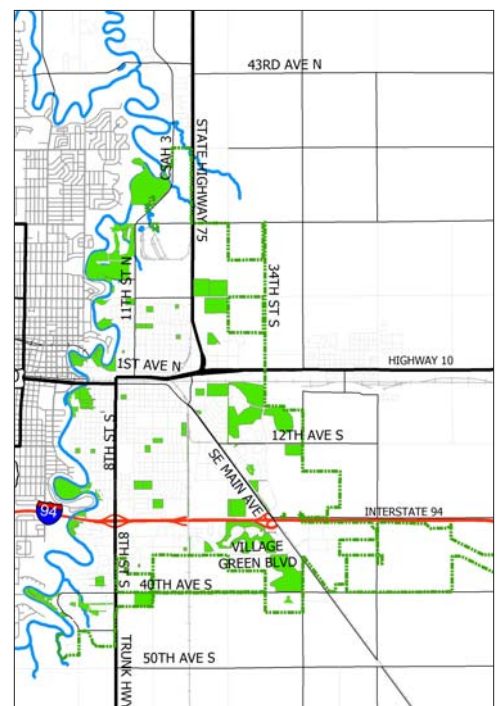
Moorhead is also home to one of four campuses of the Minnesota State Community and Technical College. The Moorhead Campus offers over 30 hands-on programs for almost 1,600 students. In contrast to Concordia College and MSUM, there is no on-campus housing for students. The campus' location along Interstate 94 and 20th Street provides convenient linkages to all areas of the region.

### Parks/Recreation

Moorhead's parks, trails, recreational facilities and open spaces are important elements of the community. As Moorhead developed, the City established an extensive network of park and recreational facilities. In order to examine existing parks and project future park needs, the following classification system has been established:

- Neighborhood Parks are the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational focus of the neighborhood. They are intended to serve populations residing in a ¼ to ½ mile radius uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers. Neighborhood parks offer a variety of active and passive recreation.
- Regional Parks are designed to serve a broader need within the community. In addition to active recreation, they often also preserve open space. The location is generally determined by the quality and character of the site. Although they are generally 30 to 50 acres in size, they can be smaller to serve special functions.
- Park Facilities are primarily designed to meet the need of a specific recreational activity, such as soccer, baseball, swimming or golf. They

Figure 1-20 Moorhead Park System



## Community Context

Table 1-5 Moorhead Parks System Matrix

			Acres	Ball Field	Basketball Courts	Electricity	Grill	Hockey Rinks	Recreation Center	Picnic Tables	Play Equipment	Pleasure Rinks	Restrooms	Shelter Fee	Soccer Nets	Tennis Courts	Wading Pools	Water
1. Davy/Memorial/Riverfront	210 N. 8th St.	33.0		X	X				X	X		X			X			X
2. M.B. Johnson Park	3601 N. 11th St.	106.6							X	X								
3. Gooseberry Mound Park	100 22nd Ave. S.	51.5			X	X			X	X		X	X					X
4. Woodlawn Park	400 Woodlawn Dr.	27.0	X	X	X				X	X		X	X			X	X	
5. Viking Ship Park	202 1st Ave. N.	12.0	X		X				X									

### Regional Parks

6. Centennial Athletic Complex	2600 15th Ave. N.	56.0	X		X	X			X			X						X
7. Matson Memorial Field	1010 13th Ave. N.	6.0	X		X				X	X								X
8. Moorview Soccer Complex	3001 24th Ave. S.	48.92			X				X						X			X
9. Moorhead Sports Center	324 24th St. S.	2.8			X		X					X	X					X
10. Moorhead Municipal Pool	800 19th St. S.	2.6			X				X			X	X				X	X
11. Village Green Public Golf Course	3420 Village Green Blvd.	187.78			X				X			X						X
12. The Meadows Public Golf Course	401 34th St. S.	177.2			X				X			X						X

### Neighborhood Parks

13. Allyson Parkway	4320 3rd St. S.	4.09								X					X			
14. Alm Park	1300 S. Elm St.	2.35	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
15. Angelas Park	4121 2nd St. S.	1.99								X								
16. Arbor Park	530 30 St. N.																	
17. Arrowhead Park	2600 6th Ave. N.	0.55		X				X	X	X			X					
18. Belsly Park	3500 12th St. S.	0.68		X						X								X
19. Bennett Park	302 17th St. S.	1.84		X		X		X	X	X			X	X				
20. Buland Park	1801 13th Ave. N.	1.47		X										X				
21. Daily Park	301 3rd Ave. N.	0.013								X								
22. Five Nine Park	412 9th St. N.	0.35							X	X	X							
23. Hansmann Park	1320 12th Ave. N.	4.3	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
24. Horn Park	2800 Rivershore Dr.	8.0																
25. Knapp Park	525 6th St. S.	0.6								X	X							
26. Lamb Park	1325 14th Ave. S.	4.1	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X
27. Morningside Park	455 Oakway	1.0			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X
28. Northeast Park	1817 8th Ave. N.	2.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X
29. Original Holmstead Park	1002 7th St. N.	13.07																
30. Queens Park	3201 20th St. S.	1.0		X					X	X								
31. Ridgewood Park	1818 31st St. S.	7.46	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
32. River Oaks Park	100 River Oaks Point	20.0																
33. Riverview Estates Park	3801 5th St. S.	9.36	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
34. Romkey Park	900 19 St. S.	7.0	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
35. South Park	2102 14th St. S.	1.5		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
36. The Meadows	801 34th St. S.	7.86																
37. Townsite Park	311 10 th St. S.	1.0	X				X		X	X	X							
38. Village Green East	75 Village Green Dr.	1.73																
39. Village Green Park	2600 Village Green Blvd.	6.91	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
40. Voll Park	2600 Fairway Dr. N.	1.96	X						X	X	X					X		

### School Parks & Non-Park Facilities

A. Armony	1002 15th Ave. N.			X	X							X						X
B. George Washington School	901 14th St. N.			X	X					X		X						X
C. Log Cabin Folk Art Center	315 4th S. S.			X	X													X
D. Moorhead Junior High	2020 11th St. S.		X	X	X							X						X
E. MSUM Athletic Complex	1711 6th Ave. S.			X	X							X						X
F. Probstfield School	2410 14th St. S.		X	X	X							X			X			X
G. Riverside School	310 4th Ave. S.			X	X					X		X						X
H. Robert Asp	910 11th St. N.		X	X	X							X						X
I. Senior High School	2300 4th Ave. S.		X	X	X							X			X			X
J. Thomas Edison School	1110 14th St. S.			X	X					X		X			X			X



Source: Moorhead Parks & Recreation

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

range in size and location based on the particular needs of the activity.

- School Parks fulfill the needs of the surrounding neighborhood by the co-location of school and park facilities. Size and location is generally dependent on the public or private school property.

The matrix on the preceding page provides an overview of Moorhead Park System’s facilities shown in Figure 1-20.

Discussions at the public workshops in October and December 2003 explored community needs and desires for the park system. A complete summary of the discussions can be found in Appendix A.

Public meeting participants overwhelmingly agreed that there should be a park within walking distance of each home. Participants also expressed a desire for a linear park system which would connect Moorhead park system, neighborhoods and major centers of activity. Another preference expressed was the design of necessary infrastructure features, like stormwater ponds, as natural amenities.

## Historic Structures

A community’s historic buildings can be an important identity builder and link to its past. The buildings are an important representation of the area’s culture, people and architecture. Moorhead has a number of landmarks which are eligible for nomination or are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- John Berquist House – 719 10th Ave N.
- Burnham Building – 420 Main Ave
- Solomon G Comstock House – 5th Ave and 8th St
- Fairmont Creamery (site of Eventide Lutheran Home) – 801 2nd Ave N.
- Federal Courthouse and Post Office – 521 Main Ave
- Lew A Huntoon President’s House, Concordia College – 709 8th St S.
- Old Main Building, Concordia College – 8th St and 12th Ave S.
- Park Elementary School – 121 6th Ave N.
- St. John the Divine Episcopal Church – 120 8th St S.
- Randolph M. Probstfield House – County Highway 96, Oakport Township

Listing on the National Register does not prevent buildings from falling into disrepair, being renovated or even demolished. With mitigation measures, such as photographing or preservation of important features, the owner of a



*Solomon G. Comstock House*



historic building may alter or demolish it. Community awareness and initiatives are needed to ensure these landmarks survive and do not fall into disrepair.

Moorhead has many other historic buildings which may be significant to the community. Although they are not on the National Register, these buildings may also be important to maintain the character of a neighborhood.

## Infrastructure Systems

### **Water**

Moorhead Public Services (MPS) is Moorhead's water utility and has been in existence since 1896. Moorhead's Water Treatment Plant was first built in 1960 and expanded in 1995. The total current capacity is 16 million gallons a day while current usage is 4 million gallons a day. There are 154 miles in the water distribution system – which extends into Oakport Township as well. Eighty-five percent of Moorhead's water comes from the Red River. In addition, the community has seven wells, five located on the Buffalo Aquifer and two on the Moorhead Aquifer. The wells serve as a back-up for the community in times of drought or in case of contamination. Other than security improvements and on-going maintenance, no new improvements are planned to the system.

### **Electricity**

MPS is also Moorhead's electric utility. Sixty-one percent of the power comes from the Western Area Power Administration, 38 percent from the Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) and 1 percent from two wind powered turbines. The first wind turbine produced electricity in 1999. Wind generated electricity is available for consumers who participate in their Capture the Wind program. The community also has a 10 megawatt gas turbine at the Moorhead Power Plant. The gas turbine is leased to MRES and provides emergency reserves.

Moorhead currently has 5 substations located around the community. The southeast substation will be upgraded in 2004. Other major improvements to the system include distribution automation in 2006 and a new distribution feeder in 2008. Long term transmission plans include the installation of a new line. The exact route depends on future growth in the southeast area of the city.

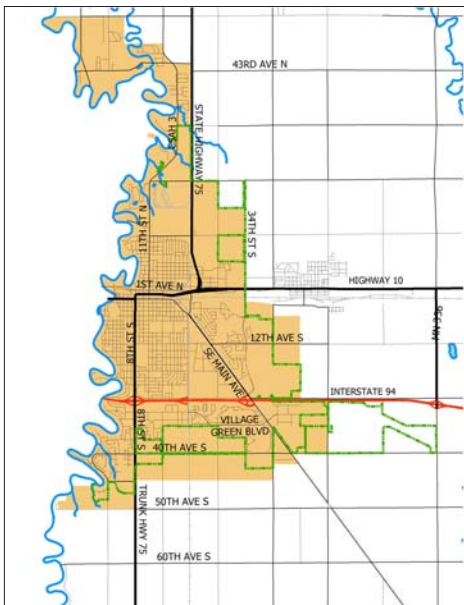


Figure 1-21 The shaded area is serviceable by Moorhead's Sanitary Sewer system.

## ***Sanitary Sewer***

Moorhead's sanitary sewer system includes 112 miles of collector systems, 42 lift stations and a wastewater treatment plant built in 1983. The plant is designed for a maximum capacity of 6 million gallons a day. Existing flows are at 4 million gallons a day.

A Sanitary Sewer Interceptor project has been initiated because the existing east side system was at or nearing capacity. The last major improvement was in the mid-1960s. The expansion of the sanitary sewer will provide service to approximately 3,150 acres, which should accommodate 40 to 50 years of growth. The project will be financed by bonds using revenues from special assessments, connection charges, wastewater treatment service charges and reserves. The project was developed assuming about 50 acres or 150 lots of single-family residential growth and 5 acres per year for commercial and industrial growth.

## ***Storm Water***

Moorhead is located in the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District, a sub-watershed of the Red River of the North. Moorhead partners with the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District in planning for the management of water resources. Storm water management is a challenge in the district because of the flat topography and lack of natural wetlands that may serve as catch basins to help filter storm water before it outlets to the Red River.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has identified the reach of the Red River that runs through Moorhead as an "impaired water" because of turbidity and fecal coliform levels. This designation could result in stricter standards imposed on storm water treatment within the City of Moorhead. These requirements could create a competitive disadvantage for Moorhead should they not apply equally to cities in North Dakota, or other rural cities in the valley.

The natural topography of the Moorhead area makes construction of storm water systems a costly endeavor. The lack of geographic relief means pumping stations and larger pipe sizes are required to convey the runoff and more excavation is necessary to construct detention ponds. The State of Minnesota requires implementation of best management practices for storm water management which carry costly construction implications. The flat topography of the community also presents spring time problems with overland flooding.



Currently, storm water is collected through a system of storm sewers, pumping stations, ponds and ditches that outlet to the Red River. New housing developments are constructed with retention ponds to manage storm water runoff. Recent planning initiatives have included the City partnering with the development community to help build storm water features as amenities integrated into neighborhood planning.



The City of Moorhead also assists developers with the permitting process for storm water management. This assistance includes the writing of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) and obtaining a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Permit. The City also implements erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) during utility and street construction. The City SWPPP and BMPs can be used by developers during home construction and for MPCA required subdivision registration.

### ***Fire Protection***

Moorhead's Fire Department has two stations with 30 full-time professional firefighters. The Fire Department serves all of Moorhead and Georgetown, as well as provides mutual aid to Dilworth, Fargo, Sabin, Felton, Hawley, Barnesville, Glyndon and Wolverton. It also has been named the Northwestern Minnesota Regional Hazardous Material Team serving a twenty-two county region in northwest Minnesota. The main station is located on 1120 First Avenue North and the south fire station is located at 2413 20th Street South. Response times average between two to four minutes. Although there are no immediate plans for expansion, continued development in Moorhead may require an additional substation to meet response time goals.



### ***Community Facilities***

#### **City Hall**

Moorhead's City Hall was built in the 1970s as part of the Moorhead Center Mall redevelopment, which was part of the Urban Renewal Program. It is a five story structure with about 45,000 square feet.



#### **Public Works**

Moorhead's Public Works facility was built in 1973. A major remodeling and addition occurred in 1988.

#### **Library**

The Moorhead Public Library is part of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) system. LARL is made up of 13 branch libraries, a mobile library

and a regional office serving the residents of seven counties in Northwest Minnesota. The current Moorhead Public Library facility was built in 1961 and extensively remodeled in 1988. General technological improvements continue in order to meet the needs of residents.

### **Clay County Campus**

As the county seat, Moorhead is home to the major county facilities, many of which are located on the Clay County Courthouse campus around 11th St N and 8th Ave N. The Clay County Courthouse, built in 1953 and remodeled in the late 1980s and again in 2003, houses a variety of services including administration, courts and planning. Adjacent to the Courthouse is the Law Enforcement Center which houses the Sheriff's Department and jail. Across the street, the Family Services Center houses Health and Human Services in the former St. Ansgar Hospital building, converted in 1992. Also on the campus is the West Central Regional Juvenile Center.

## **CONCLUSION**

This Setting the Stage section has focused on capturing the essence of Moorhead. Developing an understanding of Moorhead's history and current conditions was an important first step in the planning process by revealing the factors and trends which have and may influence development patterns. Most importantly, the information gathering process confirmed what was demonstrated at the public meetings. Moorhead is a proactive, engaged community that has the potential to be an even better, stronger place than it already is.

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# Chapter Two

# Planning For the Future

## Setting the Stage

### Planning for the Future

#### Strategic Initiatives

Moorhead’s Comprehensive Plan has been divided into three parts: Setting the Stage, Planning for the Future, and Strategic Initiatives. This second section, Planning for the Future, is focused on capturing what the community envisions for the future and how the community has agreed it wants to accomplish that Vision. The development of this section was based on the background information and community discussions summarized in the first section, Setting the Stage. Recommendations for public and private actions to achieve the community’s Vision are identified in the final section, Strategic Initiatives.

The Plan is based around three key themes. The first is the community Vision statement and its key elements. As the Comprehensive Plan is implemented, the Vision provides a benchmark against which future private and public projects can be evaluated. The second theme is the land use map and its associated land use categories. These categories and designations describe the type and form of land use desired for future development. This section encompasses the Official Future Land Use Map of Moorhead. The third element includes a series of focus areas that contain general plan directions and specific public policy associated with each area. The policies are intended to be flexible in their use. While they are organized around specific focus areas, certain policies should be viewed as community-wide policies in their application.

*Vision: Broad statement describing the desired state of the future.*

*Land Use Map: The Official Future Land Use Map for the City of Moorhead describing the form and location of development.*

*Policy: Statements of direction intended to lead one towards a desired state.*

#### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Throughout this section of the plan, a yellow box will periodically appear in the margin. The intent is to identify the Vision Elements that the text is currently addressing.

#### ***Strategic Initiative***

#. Throughout this section of the plan, a blue box will periodically appear in the margin to reference the reader to a specific Strategic Initiative that is intended to provide a public action necessary to carry out the Plan’s direction.

**Strategic Initiative**

- 11. Conduct Annual Reviews of the Comprehensive Plan

# VISION

In order to effectively plan, a community must define its aspirations for the future. A “Vision” statement captures those aspirations and provides a basis from which the plan and strategic initiatives can be identified. From time to time, the community may want to review its Vision to ensure that it continues to describe what the community wants to be.

Some might suggest that the wording of Moorhead’s Vision could reflect any community. While it is true that almost every community aspires to be a great place, Moorhead’s Vision is based on what is desired by the people of Moorhead. The Vision’s “Key Elements” provide more insight into what makes Moorhead different from other communities.

In defining its Vision, the people of Moorhead see their community as “A Unique and Progressive Community.” The Vision Moorhead defines for its future is:

*Located in the heart of the Red River Valley, Moorhead is a community rich in history, tradition, and diversity. Building upon its past, Moorhead has capitalized on opportunities to create a caring community where people are proud to live, work, learn, play and grow. As part of a growing metropolitan region, Moorhead is defined by colleges with a liberal arts based emphasis, educational excellence, plentiful parks and distinct and diverse neighborhoods.*

## Key Elements

The combination and strength of the Vision’s Key Elements is what makes Moorhead “a unique and progressive community.” Not all communities have the same qualities or choose to focus on strengthening these areas. In developing its Vision for the future, the community emphasized that preserving and strengthening the following 12 areas will make the community a place where people will want to live, learn, work and play.

### Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods in Moorhead provide a strong sense of identity through distinctive combinations of housing, retail, businesses and recreation. Neighborhoods are diverse with a variety of ages and ethnicities represented. Members of our community know one another, work cooperatively to address concerns and are active in neighborhood organizations. Strong neighborhoods are sustainable yet connected to the greater community.



*Neighborhood block parties are one way to support strong and diverse neighborhoods.*

### Housing Variety and Adequacy

Moorhead has maintained its existing housing stock and increased new housing opportunities, enabling residents to remain in the community over their entire life-cycle. By promoting new residential neighborhoods on the edge, encouraging redevelopment at the core and preserving existing neighborhoods, Moorhead provides a range of housing types, styles and affordability.

### Educational Excellence

Moorhead’s tradition of educational excellence is a life long experience. Models of collaboration, Moorhead’s educational institutions work together to enhance learning at all levels and foster partnerships in the greater community. Public support of education remains strong with continued investment in quality instruction and school facilities. The integration of school facilities into surrounding neighborhoods ensures their continued viability.

### Park and Recreation Opportunities

Moorhead’s diverse park and recreational facilities provide year-round opportunities for people of all ages. With locations and connections throughout the community, individuals and families are able to conveniently access facilities and opportunities throughout the system.

### Plentiful Arts and Culture

Arts and cultural activities abound in Moorhead. The university, colleges, schools and community organizations offer residents and visitors the opportunity to be both spectators and participants. Cultural activities showcase the diversity in the community and assist in building positive relationships. The strength of Moorhead’s arts and cultural venues gives residents and businesses reason for being part of Moorhead.

### Vibrant Downtown

Downtown is a gathering place for the community. Its architectural character, inviting landscape, connections to the Red River, mix of uses and pedestrian feel make it a great place to live, work, shop, dine or just gather. Downtown Moorhead’s identity draws people from the community and the region to visit just for the experience while satisfying a retail, economic, recreational or entertainment need.

### Retail Variety and Abundance

Retail continues to expand and diversify to meet community needs and preferences. Our emergence as a unique community has fostered local entrepreneurs as well as drawn new regional retail services. The successful



*Parks offer a mixture of activities for residents of all ages.*



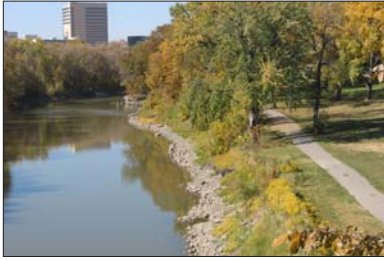
*People come to Downtown to live, work, shop, and dine.*



*The college neighborhoods offer a place for students and residents to interact and gather.*







*Environmental features like the Red River are preserved, maintained and enhanced.*



*Public infrastructure, facilities and services are designed to meet the needs of the community.*



*Trails, streets, transit, and technology provide connections within Moorhead and to the global community.*

integration of retail into select neighborhoods provides convenient shopping, dining and entertainment experiences.

### **College Atmosphere**

The neighborhoods around Moorhead's university and colleges serve as a gathering place and identity builder for the entire community. The mix of housing, dining, shopping and entertainment provide a place for students and residents alike to interact in a common environment.

### **Enhanced Environment**

Natural areas are preserved, maintained and/or enhanced for the benefit of the community. Our community celebrates, learns from and respects its most visible environmental element, the Red River. Beyond the river, Moorhead has enhanced the built environment using natural features and native landscaping to serve as both infrastructure and amenities.

### **Economic Opportunities**

Moorhead's businesses offer a variety of quality job opportunities which provide livable wages. Students are able to find employment close to their home and school. Graduates are able to find job opportunities so they can remain in Moorhead. Local entrepreneurs are successful because of an educated and skilled workforce in combination with a supportive business and investment climate. Strong relationships between the civic community and the business community foster new economic development opportunities, job growth and business retention.

### **Quality Public Facilities and Services**

Careful planning and broad community involvement ensures that public infrastructure, facilities and services meet the current and future needs of the community. Governmental and community organizations provide quality and friendly customer service responsive to the concerns of all community members.

### **Connectivity**

Moorhead's roads, transit, trails and sidewalks provide recognizable linkages among neighborhoods and to surrounding communities. Attention to street design and the built environment surrounding major corridors helps strengthen Moorhead's identity and contributes to strong neighborhoods. Moorhead's technological infrastructure connects the community to the world. The digital age has continued to evolve and increasingly helps the community remain connected and informed.



# LAND USE PLAN

The Vision and its Key Elements provide the foundation for the creation of the community’s Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan provides the framework for the development and redevelopment of the community. Every parcel in Moorhead’s city limits and planned growth area is placed into a specific land use category. The Land Use Plan serves to reinforce desirable land use patterns, identify places where change is needed, and guide the form and location for future growth within Moorhead’s city limits and anticipated future growth areas.

The Land Use Plan consists of three components:

- The “Official Land Use Map” on the following page, see Figure 2-2, shows the land uses assigned to each parcel of land. It provides a basis for establishing zoning district boundaries and regulatory tools.
- The “Categories” section highlights some of the new land use categories and provides a general description of all the land use categories.
- The “Focus Areas” detail the characteristics and policies for specific areas of the community. These focus areas were developed based on their common land use and development characteristics.

To assist in the planning process, the community was divided into twenty Planning Districts (see Figure 2-1). These Districts were named based on some identifier within each district, such as a school. These Districts were useful at the community meetings to help community members focus on every area of the community. The Planning Districts are likewise helpful in the Land Use Plan to identify and describe key policy directions for each of the focus areas. The boundaries of the Planning Districts were defined by major features, including:

- Physical Features (rivers, freeways, railroads or other barriers)
- Political Boundaries (corporate limits or areas covered by annexation/ other agreements)
- Land Use/Character Elements (downtown, colleges, country club, commercial strip)

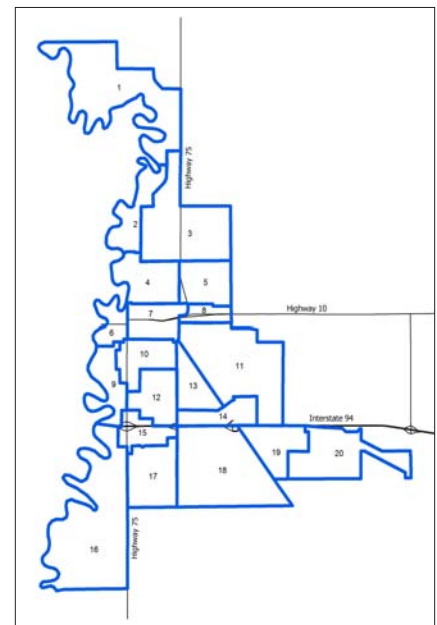


Figure 2-1 Planning Districts  
Twenty Planning Districts were created to help with the planning process.

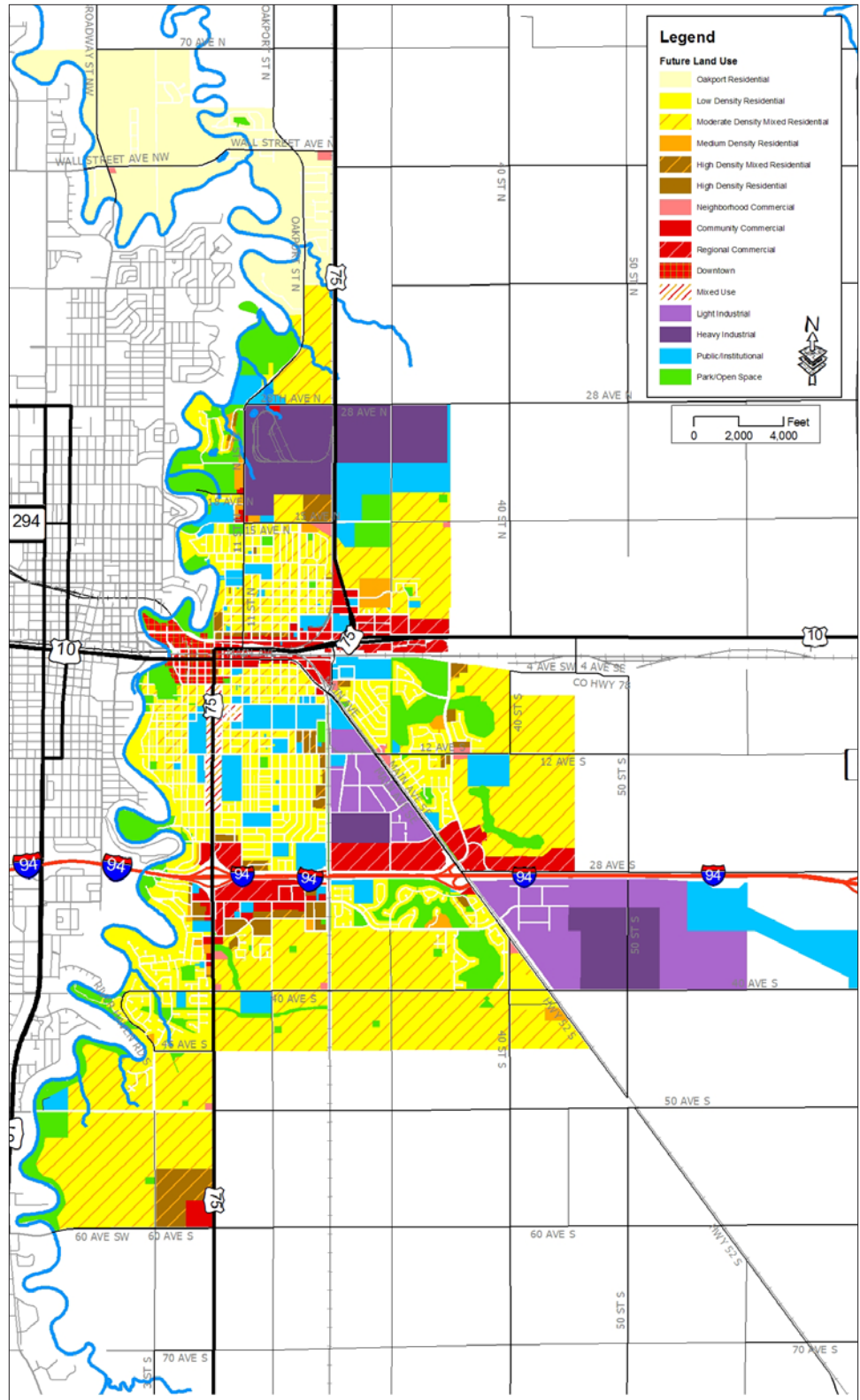
- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Oakport      | 11. Horizon       |
| 2. Country Club | 12. Center        |
| 3. Centennial   | 13. MIP           |
| 4. Robert Asp   | 14. Fields        |
| 5. Northeast    | 15. Holiday       |
| 6. Downtown     | 16. Rivers Edge   |
| 7. Midtown      | 17. Reinertson    |
| 8. EasTen       | 18. Village Green |
| 9. Riverside    | 19. MCCARA        |
| 10. Camtown     | 20. Airport       |



# Land Use Plan

Figure 2-1 The Official Land Use Map

Please note that the map is available in a larger more readable format.



## Land Use Categories

In addition to standard land use categories such as commercial, industrial, low, medium, or high density residential, the Land Use Plan introduces some new categories for Moorhead. The new categories are intended to address community desires and support alternative models for development.

The “Moderate Density Mixed Residential” and “High Density Mixed Residential” categories establish a degree of flexibility in order to encourage creativity and diversity in existing and future neighborhoods. The categories establish a desired “average” density and could be accompanied by setting percentages for desired mixes of single family and multi family housing. These mixtures of housing create more sustainable neighborhoods by ensuring housing opportunities for people of all incomes and life-style needs.

A mixed residential district would provide developers the right to create a neighborhood of mixed lot sizes and housing types. The overall density of the district would strive for an average of 5 units per acre for the moderate density mixed residential areas and 12 units per acre for the high density mixed residential areas. In general, it is understood that development projects will range in density. Whether development achieves the desired average density should be measured across a larger area. This will enable some lower density projects, maybe as low as 1.5 units per acre (e.g. Tessa Terrace or Rose Creek), to coexist with a higher density project at 10 units per acre (e.g. Prairie Sun or Village Green 18<sup>th</sup> Fairway). Over a larger area, the gross densities would average out to around 5 units per gross acre.

The land use category would need to cover a whole neighborhood so that a variety in lot sizes and housing types (e.g. rowhouses, apartments, small houses, large houses, and even big estates) could be accommodated. Developers would have flexibility to mix unit types and lot sizes provided they remain within the overall density established for the neighborhood, and that multi-family buildings are designed to be compatible with single-family units. In order to be fair to all property owners, the neighborhood would have to be based on an area plan that established more specific land use and zoning designations ensuring *all* property owners the right to build at a permitted *baseline level*. The neighborhood plans should be based on a minimum area of 160 acres. At a moderate density, mixed residential designation for example, the neighborhood could develop at 800 units (5 units per acre on 160 acres.). In order to achieve an average density of 5 units per acre, development incentives may need to be considered.

This land use category could be applied to existing neighborhoods in order to replace the typical patchwork of different residential districts. The degree of future development permitted, such as the subdivision of larger lots, would be determined by the overall density designation. Once the

*Mixed Residential is intended to encourage creative design patterns that integrate a variety of housing types, styles, and price ranges.*

### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Housing Variety and Adequacy

*An ideal neighborhood is defined as at least 160 acres.*

### ***Strategic Initiative***

2. Update Official Tools and Regulations
6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.

## Land Use Plan

*Mixed use is intended to create a more cohesive development pattern along 8th Street that provides uses to support major institutions, and helps foster a connection to downtown Moorhead.*


### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- College Atmosphere
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity

*Downtown is guided by the Downtown Moorhead Redevelopment Framework Plan.*

### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Arts & Culture



### **0.5 FAR**

*Floor Area Ratio (FAR) describes how much of the site is covered for commercial or industrial development. As the illustration shows, sites can have the same floor area ratio but actually use a smaller amount of the site if it is vertical instead of horizontal.*



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

neighborhood reached the density, it would be built out.

Due to its rural character, the area in Oakport Township to be annexed has its own land use designation, “Oakport Residential.” The intent is to permit a lower density pattern that preserves a rural environment. While the extension of services to this area will lead to pressures to develop at higher densities, the ability to preserve a rural character rests with policy and zoning that supports such patterns and protects them from urbanization.

The “Mixed Use” designation is intended to support a mixture of residential, commercial, office, and institutional uses. It is intended to be vertically oriented with predominantly residential uses over street level retail or offices. “Mixed Use” is identified along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street S between 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue S and Downtown, as well as along 7th Avenue S between 8th Street S and Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM). The intent is to create a corridor image through physical structures and a mixed use pattern that ties the MSUM area to Downtown. The Plan also seeks to provide needed housing and services for student and faculty of Concordia College and Minnesota State University Moorhead. A critical component of the evolution of this corridor into mixed use is the future “edge” condition between existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to new mixed use development. The focus areas and policies will provide direction as to how mixed use may develop along the corridor.

As with Oakport, Downtown Moorhead has its own land use category to reflect its unique nature. “Downtown” is intended to be a mixture of businesses, housing, entertainment, civic and public/park uses. As this mixture is achieved, Downtown should evolve into the retail, entertainment and cultural destination residents envision. The downtown area is guided by the Downtown Moorhead Redevelopment Framework Plan.

## Land Demand

An integral part of the planning process is to identify areas for future growth of the community. The amount of land needed to accommodate future growth can vary based on several factors including:

- Projected growth in housing units, as well as commercial and industrial square footage. The recent Housing Market Study, historical building permit data, and absorption rate of commercial/industrial development provide a basis for understanding future development demands.
- Density or intensity of development. Density is represented in terms of units per acre for residential development, and floor area ratios (FAR) for commercial and industrial uses. The greater the overall density of development, the less land area that is needed to accommodate the growth demand. A proper balance in density results in an efficient use of public funds to provide quality infrastructure services. For this Plan

density is determined on a gross density basis. Land that is designated for right-of-way and parkland should be buildable land and, as such, should be included in determining how many lots a developer would need to construct.

- Capacity and availability of municipal infrastructure to provide services to future growth. The capacity of a waste water treatment plant, sanitary sewer collection system, or even a water supply source such as an aquifer, river or lake must be present. Moorhead has recently completed significant planning to ensure adequate capacity to handle future growth well into the future. However, land use planning must be done in a manner to protect their long term sustainability.
- Aggressiveness towards redevelopment. A community that aggressively promotes redevelopment of underutilized sites in the core or downtown area lessens demand for consumption of raw land on the edge of the community.

Table 2-1 illustrates how various density levels would impact residential land demand in Moorhead. The example projects out 20 years using the Housing Market Study’s estimate that Moorhead will have an annual demand of 250 housing units per year. The following pages represent more detailed descriptions and illustrations for the land use types. Density, Floor Area Ratios (FARs), and development mixes are identified in the “Description” column. All of the acres in the Future Land Use Plan have been summarized by land use category in Table 2-2. The table also tabulates how many acres are within and outside of Moorhead’s current municipal boundaries, as well as how many acres are available for development.

**Strategic Initiative:**

- Review land absorption rates and future demand every few years to determine if there is a sufficient supply and whether discussions about annexation need to be pursued.

Table 2-1

Land Use Demand Example

Density Assumed (units/acre)	Land Demand (acres)
3	1,670
4	1,250
5	1,000
6	833
7	714

*This table identifies how many acres would be needed to accommodate a projected 250 units a year for 20 years at various density levels. This Plan strives to achieve a density of 5 units per acre.*

Table 2-2 Land Use Category Allocation

Land Use Category	Total Acres	Current Corporate Limits		Gross Developable Acres
		Acres Within	Acres Outside	
Oakport Residential	1,508	0	1,508	808
Low Density Residential	1,521	1,460	61	19
Medium Density Residential	124	107	17	3
Moderate Density Mixed Residential	4,393	1,670	2,723	3,761
High Density Residential	101	95	6	11
High Density Mixed Residential	243	116	127	176
Neighborhood Commercial	46	22	24	32
Community Commercial	255	215	40	54
Regional Commercial	479	454	25	296
Downtown	93	93	0	0
Mixed Use	83	83	0	0
Light Industrial	926	916	10	672
Heavy Industrial	1,054	841	213	382
Public/Institutional	1,170	1,150	20	0
Parks/Open Space	1,245	1,012	233	0
Railroad	174	160	14	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,414</b>	<b>8,393</b>	<b>5,019</b>	<b>6,213</b>





# Land Use Plan

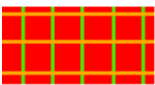














## Land Use Categories

Type	Description	Examples	
Oakport Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum density of 3 units per acre</li> <li>All single-family detached</li> <li>Municipal sanitary sewer services required</li> </ul>		
Low Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum density of 4 units per acre</li> <li>Mixture of single-family detached and attached units such as duplexes and twinhomes</li> <li>Accessory units</li> </ul>		
Medium Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum density of 12 units per acre</li> <li>Predominantly townhomes or condos</li> <li>Can include smaller lot detached and attached single-family developments</li> </ul>		
Moderate Density Mixed Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strive for average density of 5 units per acre</li> <li>Encourage a mixture of single-family (attached and detached) and multi-family</li> <li>Multi-family buildings are designed to be compatible with lower density neighborhoods</li> <li>No greater than 3 stories</li> </ul>		
High Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum density of 30 units per acre</li> <li>Multi-unit and multi-building apartment complexes</li> <li>Higher density townhome developments</li> <li>No greater than 4 stories</li> </ul>		
High Density Mixed Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strive for average density of 12 units per acre</li> <li>Mix of single-family and multi-family with multi-family units the predominant type</li> <li>No greater than 4 stories</li> </ul>		









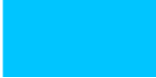







### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use Categories

Type	Description	Examples	
Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of Uses</li> <li>40% residential - primarily higher density developments</li> <li>40% retail/services/entertainment</li> <li>10% public/institutional</li> <li>10% open space</li> </ul>		
Mixed Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix of housing with convenience retail and offices at street level</li> <li>Multi-family and live-work (e.g. artist studio) housing</li> <li>No greater than 4 stories</li> <li>Institutional uses, such as educational facilities</li> </ul>		
Neighborhood Commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 acres or less in size</li> <li>Floor Area Ratio of 0.25 to 0.30</li> <li>Convenience retail like corner store or coffee shop</li> <li>Services such as tax, real estate, salons, insurance, banking, etc.</li> </ul>		
Community Commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 to 15 acres in size</li> <li>Floor Area Ratio of 0.20 to 0.25</li> <li>Neighborhood Centers</li> <li>Neighborhood Commercial uses, as well as larger users such as grocery store or sit-down restaurant</li> <li>Service oriented retail uses</li> </ul>		
Regional Commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater than 15 acres</li> <li>Floor Area Ratio of 0.15 to 0.20</li> <li>Shopping and entertainment centers</li> <li>Parking intensive</li> <li>Regionally oriented</li> <li>Neighborhood and Community Commercial uses, but also big box retailers.</li> </ul>		



**Land Use Categories**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Examples</i>	
Light Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Office/Showroom</li> <li>• Warehousing</li> <li>• Distribution</li> </ul>		
Heavy Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Agri-processing</li> <li>• Outdoor Storage</li> </ul>		
Public/ Institutional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Non-profit</li> <li>• Religious</li> <li>• Arts/Culture</li> </ul>		
Parks/Open Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public recreation areas</li> <li>• Private recreation areas such as golf courses</li> <li>• Passive and active areas</li> <li>• Natural areas such as flood plains, wetlands, utility easements and ditches</li> </ul>		
Railroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Railroad Tracks</li> <li>• Right-of-way</li> <li>• Rail yards and spurs</li> </ul>		

# FOCUS AREAS

Achieving the community’s Vision is more than simply guiding the types of acceptable land uses. It also involves ensuring that the character and qualities sought by the community are a part of future development. The community has been divided into a series of focus areas based on common land use and development issues. The five focus areas are Neighborhoods, Activity Centers, Business and Employment, Public Realm, and Infrastructure. Within each focus area, a set of policies has been developed to help articulate the desirable features of future development and redevelopment. Policies are preceded by a general descriptive paragraph(s) that articulates over-arching objectives and directions.

## Neighborhoods

Throughout the planning process, one of the community’s most noted features was its quality residential neighborhoods. In the community’s Vision, residents desire to see unique, vibrant neighborhoods where people know one another and feel a sense of belonging. Neighborhoods are filled with a diversity of housing options, thus encouraging the integration of households with differing needs driven by age, income or other socio-economic factors. Creating and maintaining these strong neighborhoods involves careful consideration of how neighborhoods should be designed and supported.

## Built Environment

The basic building block of any neighborhood is the housing unit. Like any community, Moorhead’s housing is diverse, ranging from two-story homes built in the late 1800s, to the multilevel apartment buildings currently being built. The character of housing changes over time due to consumer preferences, architectural styles, construction techniques and financial consideration.



An older, two story home.



A newer, single level home

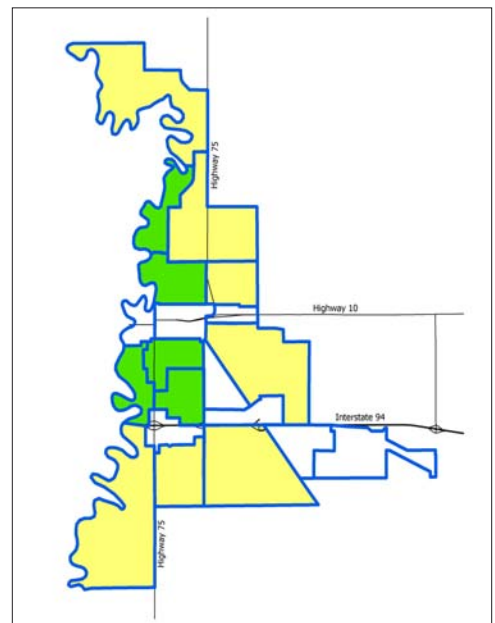


A multi-level apartment building.

Moorhead’s desire to create new neighborhoods which are vibrant and accessible to all types of people requires an integrated approach to development. Many residential developments are created with houses of the same type and style. To achieve Moorhead’s Vision, new residential

### Focus Areas:

- Neighborhoods
- Activity Centers
- Business and Employment
- Public Realm
- Infrastructure



Moorhead’s existing neighborhoods are primarily in the Planning Districts shaded green while new and emerging neighborhoods are in the Districts shaded yellow. The districts shaded yellow also include some areas already developed but impacted by new development.



## Focus Areas - Neighborhoods



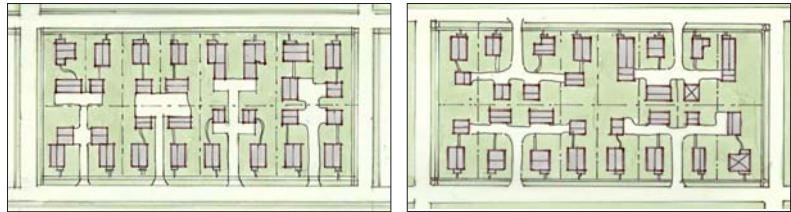
*A mix of housing types, like here in Minneapolis's Portland Place, serve a diversity of residents.*



*Houses on two streets share driveways in Hillsboro, Oregon. The shared driveways reduce the number of driveways to only one or two per block.*

developments should be encouraged to incorporate a mixture of housing types and styles. This mixture will provide for the life-cycle housing mentioned in Moorhead's Vision. Life-cycle housing describes the different housing needs at the various stages of life, such as rental housing for young adults, single family homes for families with children, and maintenance free townhomes for empty nesters. The land use category of "Moderate Density Mixed Residential" is intended to foster this type of development pattern.

New neighborhoods should be designed to be visually appealing from the street and encourage residents to interact. One way to accomplish this is to move garages and driveways from the front of lots. This creates a more welcoming curb appeal as architectural elements and landscaping features dominate instead of asphalt. Safety is increased as pedestrians on the sidewalks along the front of the house do not have to be as concerned about automobiles. Garages can be moved to the back of the lot through alleys or shared driveways. Through shared driveways several homes share a driveway leading to garages placed at the back of the lots.



*Shared driveways can be designed multiple ways and include both detached and attached garages.*

Shaping design is also important in redevelopment that may occur in Moorhead's existing neighborhoods. Redevelopment is important because it removes blighted and/or deteriorating properties and fills in where there may be vacant properties. However, redevelopment should maintain a similar character (relative to scale and design) to the surrounding neighborhood. These design elements can include the size of the home, placement of the home on the lot, building material or architectural features which tie it to nearby homes. Although some would maintain the new home needs to be of a similar type and style, in some areas it may be necessary to change the housing type or increase the density to make redevelopment more economically feasible. Changing from detached to attached homes, or increasing the densities, may be appropriate if the new homes still maintain architectural detailing similar to the surrounding area.

Maintenance and upkeep is a key in sustaining the quality of residential neighborhoods. Maintenance can be influenced by the economic situation of

### *Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity

the owner. The greater the portion of income devoted to basic housing costs (mortgage/rent, taxes, utilities), the less is available for maintenance activities. Over time, the lack of maintenance results in building deterioration which may produce health and safety risks for occupants. The outward appearance of home deterioration can discourage adjacent property owners from investing in needed maintenance. Communities often support home owners with maintenance through financial and volunteer assistance programs. Community support and public improvements often benefit an entire block, as other home owners tend to improve their homes if one close by is fixed or renovated.

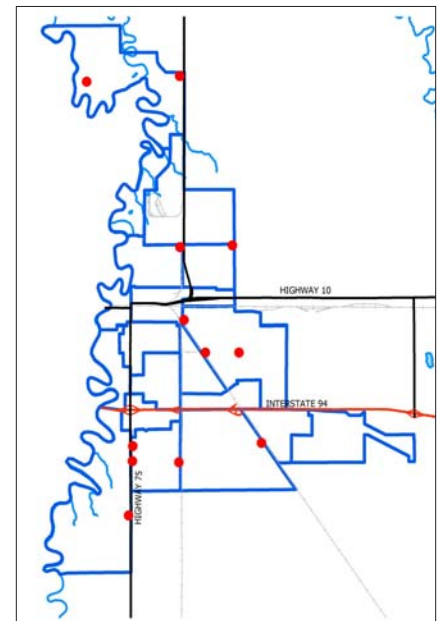
In some of Moorhead's existing neighborhoods, the conversion of single family homes has become an issue. Economics and the need for additional rental housing has resulted in the conversion from single family to multi family occupancy. One issue with housing conversion can be a lack of maintenance and upkeep. Another common problem is a lack of parking. Most conversions do not provide the needed additional off street parking. This lack of parking can result in streets becoming crowded with unintended levels of on-street parking or other parts of the lot being used which were not designed appropriately for parking. The conversion of single family homes can also reduce ownership opportunities. New construction which replaces lost single family homes are often more expensive.

Simply discouraging single family home conversions does not address the underlying issue. Moorhead has a need for additional, affordable rental housing, particularly near MSUM and Concordia College and near retail employment areas. One method is to support the creation of housing units in accessory structures on owner-occupied, single-family residential lots. Typically these units are created above garages and maintain the general character of the neighborhood. Many issues are apparent with the allowance of accessory structures, most notably issues of code enforcement, parking, and maintenance/upkeep. These critical issues must be carefully examined in advance of proceeding with modifications to the Zoning Ordinance.

Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are located throughout the community to provide convenience retail and services to area residents. Generally, neighborhood commercial nodes should be less than 5 acres in size. Often they are spread on one or more corners of a major intersection. Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are appropriate locations for retail businesses, like coffee shops and corner stores, or professional services, like dry cleaners, real estate agents, and insurance agencies. A small amount of off-street parking should be available in the rear of the lot in addition to a limited amount of on-street parking. Even though they are small in size, care should be taken to ensure lots are appropriately buffered from adjacent residential uses through the use of landscaping or fences.



*Housing units in accessory structures, like in this garage above, offer an opportunity for increasing housing opportunities without compromising single family neighborhoods..*



*Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, shown as red dots, provide convenience retail and services for surrounding neighborhoods.*





Gas stations can be an appropriate land use in Neighborhood Commercial Nodes depending upon the configuration of the streets and adjacent neighborhoods. Careful site planning is important to ensure that gas stations do not significantly impact the surrounding neighborhoods. This includes lighting which is directed downward and away from adjacent homes. Noise generators, such as car washes, should be located away from homes and significantly buffered if included at all.



The area a park serves is about a half mile or up to a physical barrier difficult to cross such as a major roadway or railroad tracks.

### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- College Atmosphere
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity

## **Parks and Open Space**

Neighborhoods are more than just a collection of houses. Features such as parks, streets, and sidewalks, are also integral components of successful neighborhoods. Parks provide a place for recreational activities, neighborhood events and informal interaction among residents. Parks and open spaces also provide residents with a connection to the natural environment. Neighborhood parks vary in size up to 8 acres, depending on the types of uses and environmental features.

Participants of the public workshops agreed that parks should be located within walking distance. Walking distance is generally defined as about a half-mile, an average 10 minute walk, as long as there are no physical barriers like railroad tracks or major highways. Parks should be designed so they are visible and accessible, with public street frontage and a connection to the community's system of trails and sidewalks.



*Neighborhood parks should have a mixture of active and passive recreational opportunities.*

It is also important that parks are designed for all ages with both active and passive opportunities. Active uses include play structures, court games, informal play fields, wading pools, and ice skating rinks. Passive uses include trails (paved or unpaved), picnic areas, benches, and attractive landscaped areas (gardens, ponds, stormwater features). Neighborhood parks often have facilities such as a drinking fountain and rest rooms. Most parking can be accommodated by on-street parking. Additional direction on parks and open space is in the Public Realm Focus Area.

## **Circulation**

Desirable neighborhoods offer residents a sense of connectedness to their neighbors and the greater community. For automobile travel this means

having a traffic system that allows one to easily and conveniently get to work, school, shopping and recreational activities. This is best achieved by designing neighborhoods with streets that connect to one another, rather than with a series of dead-ends or cul-de-sacs. With streets that connect in all directions, every resident of a neighborhood does not have to go to the same street and intersection to reach a destination or to access a major road. These connecting streets do not necessarily have to use a rectangular, grid pattern but can also be curvilinear to add design interest or address the natural environment, such as the river.

Street design is an important factor in the character of a neighborhood. For example, residential lots fronting streets which connect to collectors often have greater traffic volumes. These traffic volumes cause increases in noise and safety concerns. One method to alleviate these concerns is to limit the number of homes which front onto these streets. Another is to create amenities, like landscaping, which buffer the adjacent developments.

An important aspect of “Strong Neighborhoods” is walkability. Neighborhoods should also have sidewalks or trails so residents can safely and conveniently move throughout, and between, neighborhoods. This is important for children, seniors, others who may not have an automobile, and to foster a more healthy, walkable community. Trails and sidewalks encourage residents to meet and interact with one another. Sidewalks and trails also allow people to experience the community and environment in a way not possible from inside a car. Trails and/or sidewalks should be located on both sides of streets and buffered from the physical street. Rainwater gardens can be used to provide a greater separation between the street and the sidewalk, create an inviting streetscape, and manage stormwater.

Neighborhood Commercial Nodes should be located at the intersection of major roadways to facilitate traffic movement, as well as provide maximum accessibility and visibility. Trails and/or sidewalks should connect these areas to the adjacent residential neighborhoods to provide a safe and convenient way for pedestrians, like children or seniors, to reach the businesses.

Neighborhoods should be connected to the transit system. Buses will be limited to running on major roadways so a sidewalk/trail system should seek to connect the neighborhood to transit stops.

**Neighborhood Policies**

The premise of the mixed residential land use pattern is to encourage a unique design pattern with a neighborhood focus. Recognizing that many of the design ideas represented here are not proven in the Moorhead market, mixed residential allows flexibility in design and density allowances to



Diagram from “Redesigning Cities” by J. Barnett

*Neighborhoods should be designed with connected streets and trails to facilitate movement of both pedestrians and automobiles.*

*Rainwater gardens utilize natural or native plant species to help absorb and infiltrate water into the ground.*





make up for the perceived developer risk. This pattern will result in stronger neighborhoods, integrated parks and open spaces, and an efficient, safe, and logical circulation system for pedestrians and automobiles.

Applying this land use designation to existing neighborhoods will encourage reinvestment. Neighborhoods will be improved through scattered site redevelopment and the influence improvements have on the surrounding homes.

### ***Built Environment***

- 1.1 Support the development of neighborhoods with a mixture of housing types.
- 1.2 Encourage the design of neighborhoods such that the relationship between differing housing types is compatible
- 1.3 Encourage designs which create an appealing transition between existing and new neighborhoods.
- 1.4 Encourage designs that minimize curb cuts and the visual dominance of the garage from the street.
- 1.5 Encourage maintenance and upkeep of properties.
- 1.6 Encourage redevelopment of underutilized or blighted residential areas.
- 1.7 Support residential infill and redevelopment, provided it is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
- 1.8 Encourage redevelopment to maintain the historical integrity of the existing neighborhood.
- 1.9 Support accessory structures as living units on owner-occupied, single-family residential lots.
- 1.10 Neighborhood Commercial Nodes should be developed to provide convenience retail and services to the surrounding neighborhood.
- 1.11 Support the development of churches and schools within neighborhoods provided they are appropriately sited and designed to minimize negative impacts.

### ***Parks and Open Space***

- 1.12 Ensure neighborhood parks are located within walking distance of every resident, which is within about a 1/2 mile radius of barrier free travel.
- 1.13 Make sure neighborhood parks have a mixture of active and passive recreational opportunities for people of all ages.
- 1.14 Ensure parks are designed with public right-of-way as street frontage whenever possible.
- 1.15 Support the development of a linear park system to serve as connections between neighborhoods and walking/biking destinations, such as schools, churches, and activity centers.

- 1.16 Encourage needed infrastructure features, like stormwater ponds and ditches, to be designed as natural amenities for the surrounding neighborhoods.

***Circulation***

- 1.17 Encourage neighborhoods to be designed with a connected street system, minimizing dead-ends and cul-de-sacs.
- 1.18 Require new developments to have a sidewalk or trail on both sides of residential streets.
- 1.19 Support the development of sidewalks and trails for existing neighborhoods.
- 1.20 Trails and sidewalks should not simply end, but connect to a destination, such as a school, park or activity center.
- 1.21 Streets should be designed to enhance the image and experience for both pedestrians and automobiles.
- 1.22 Neighborhood Commercial Nodes should be located at the intersection of major roadways.
- 1.23 Trails and/or sidewalks should connect Neighborhood Commercial Nodes to the adjacent residential areas or areas of activities, such as a school.
- 1.24 Trails and/or sidewalks should connect the neighborhood to transit stops on major roadways.

***Strategic Initiatives***

- 1. Use the Comprehensive Plan for Day to Day Uses.
- 2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
- 3. Update Orderly Annexation Agreements.
- 4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards.
- 5. Create a Redevelopment Plan for the Mixed-Use Area Along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
- 7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods.
- 8. Prepare a Park and Open Space Master Plan.
- 9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
- 10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
- 11. Conduct Annual Review of Comprehensive Plans.
- 12. Economic Development Initiatives.
- 13. Housing Initiatives.
- 14. Capital Improvement Programming.



## Activity Centers

Activity Centers are locations in the community where large numbers of people are drawn together. Activity Centers include areas where commercial, educational, or a mix of land uses are concentrated. Activity Centers also provide gathering places where people can casually or formally interact. When these centers are tied together aesthetically to the surrounding area, the entire Activity Center creates a sense of place.

Moorhead's current Activity Centers include Downtown, EasTen, Midtown, Holiday, and the neighborhood around Concordia College and Minnesota State University Moorhead. A future Activity Center is anticipated at the intersection of Interstate 94 and 34<sup>th</sup> Street as the interchange is reconfigured and the area develops. Although there are many similarities among the Activity Centers, their differences require that they be discussed individually.

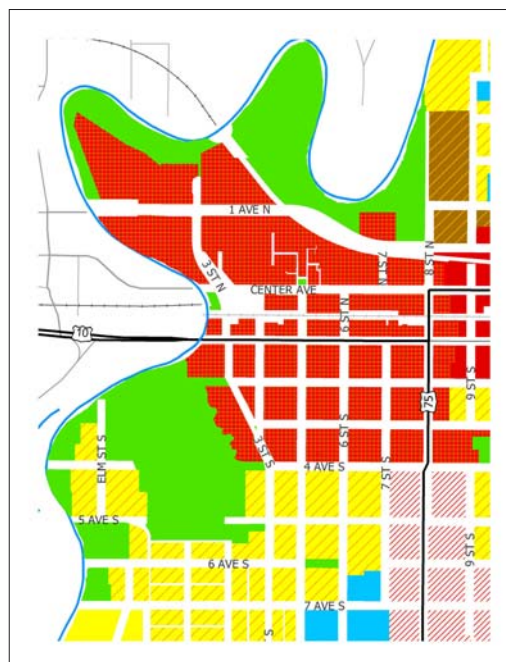
### Downtown

Historically, Downtown Moorhead was the economic and social heart of the community. Over the last half century, Downtown Moorhead has become one of many commercial areas in the region and is challenged by more modern commercial centers in Fargo and east Moorhead. Redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown continues to be a focus of the community. Participants in the planning process saw the creation of an identifiable Downtown as an important element of the community's Vision. In addition to this Plan, the "Strategic Action Plan" and the "Plan for Revitalization and Reinvestment--Downtown Redevelopment Framework Plan" should serve as guiding tools in Downtown's redevelopment.



*Downtown draws people from within and outside of the community to live, work, dine, shop and recreate.*

**Figure 2-3 Downtown Land Use Plan**



## Built Environment

Downtown is primarily a mix of businesses and civic uses developed over the last fifty years. Many of the buildings are single story structures with parking lots located at the front or side of the lot. A few of the historic, main street buildings remain. Wherever possible it is important to preserve or restore these buildings to maintain the area's historic character.

In order to attain the Downtown character described by residents, future development will need to be more oriented towards creating a pedestrian friendly environment. This involves moving building facades to the front of the lot with doors, windows and awnings facing the sidewalk. It also involves moving parking to the rear or to shared parking lots that allow shoppers to park once and walk from store to store. New development should primarily be in multistory buildings that can maximize the available space and create a more pedestrian character. Many of these projects should be mixed use in character with retail or offices at street level and housing above.

As was recommended in the Strategic Plan, development in Downtown should be guided by a set of design standards that facilitates a consistent design and creates an identifiable character for the Downtown. The standards can be used for new projects and by existing businesses to enhance their facades. Design standards would address such elements as building and floor height, setbacks, building materials, parking, signage, and landscaping.

Residential housing choices are currently very limited in Downtown. Most are located in the adjacent neighborhoods rather than as a part of the central core. The creation of additional housing would increase the customer base for retail establishments and create a place which is active both day and night. Housing should be both a part of vertical mixed use developments and stand-alone residential projects. Housing should also provide opportunities for seniors needing various amounts of unassisted or assisted living options. To promote a variety of housing options, Downtown should have a mixture of rental and owner occupied housing.

Moorhead City Mall was developed during the urban renewal program of the 1970s. This mall serves as an important anchor to Downtown Moorhead. Its use as a regional retail center competes with other regional centers in Fargo and Moorhead that have greater capacities to meet modern shopping needs. Efforts to keep the mall as a strong anchor in Downtown should be supported.

## Parks and Open Space

Most park and green space areas in Downtown are located in the flood plain along the Red River. In order to capture the qualities of the Red River, a greater connection needs to be made through trails and public spaces leading

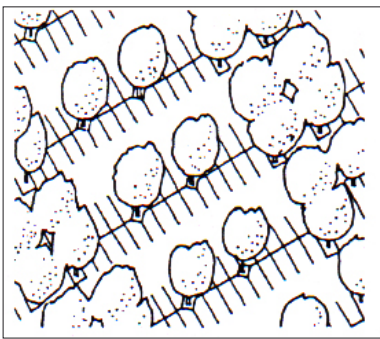


*Creation of a pedestrian friendly environment in downtown includes design patterns with attractive building facades, street lighting, sidewalks and architectural treatments.*

to the River. Coordinated landscaping and streetscape improvements can help establish this connection and create an identity for the area. Although the parks along the Red River are important, creating small gardens or gathering spaces throughout Downtown would also help to create an inviting space. These spaces would allow residents, workers and visitors a welcome respite from the activity around them. Although the spaces can be small, they should use a combination of landscaping, lighting, art, and furniture to create a place that feels separated from the adjacent public uses.

The Red River presents a tremendous asset to the downtown area. The ability of future development to embrace the River will result in high amenity housing products near downtown. This is important in fulfilling the vision that Moorhead offers a diversity of housing styles and types at varying price ranges and lifestyles. Future development that overlooks the river should be carefully designed so that other portions of the community do not become walled off or isolated from the river. A balance of riverfront development and public space should be preserved.

Parking is a necessity within Downtown. While decked or underground parking is encouraged, surface parking will continue to be the preferred method of providing parking in today's marketplace. Parking is a form of open space when not in a structure. The concept of "orchard parking" suggests that surface lots should be heavily landscaped with overstory trees and "soft" edges where pedestrian movements occur.



*Orchard parking uses trees and landscaping to enhance parking lots.*

### Circulation

Movement in Downtown has primarily been designed for the automobile. Main, Center and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenues have been designed to effectively move traffic with multiple, wide lanes in each direction. This type of roadway design discourages pedestrian movement. Some streetscape design improvements will enhance walkability. Street trees help buffer pedestrians from the adjacent roadway, as well as calm traffic movement. Several strategies can be implemented to help calm traffic in the downtown area and enhance the district's walkability. These strategies include raised walkways at key intersections, changing pavement patterns at pedestrian crossings, narrowing streets or intersections, adding landscape features between parked cars and sidewalks without blocking access to street front commercial uses, or altering traffic signal timing devices in favor of the pedestrian.

Downtown Moorhead is also impacted by the railroad tracks. Trains on these tracks cause traffic congestion and safety concerns. Moorhead should continue to work with the railroads to use technology and equipment that helps increase safety and movement in the Downtown.

Another strategy that impacts circulation is the design of transit services. Development patterns that support efficient and convenient boarding of buses increases the success of the transit system, which then supports the ability of the transit system to increase service frequency and routing. Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, is a term used to describe a land use pattern consisting of higher intensity development with employment, stores, and housing located within walking distance to a transit stop. Design of streets and sidewalks to integrate transit stops and make them convenient, accessible, clean and safe will support transit use. The principles and vision for Downtown Moorhead are consistent with TOD objectives.



*More recent streetscape improvements in downtown have enhanced the district's walkability.*

## Downtown Policies

### ***Built Environment***

- 2.1 Facilitate redevelopment of dilapidated or underutilized parcels.
- 2.2 Encourage higher density housing as a component of redevelopment or reuse projects.
- 2.3 Promote the creation of design standards which would create a consistent feel for the Downtown and ensure an enduring built environment.
- 2.4 Encourage buildings to be located at the front of lots to support comfortable pedestrian movement.
- 2.5 Encourage compatible uses which allow activity to occur both day and night.
- 2.6 Encourage vertical mixed use projects with residential units over street level retail, offices or cultural uses.
- 2.7 Encourage redevelopment at an FAR of 1.0 or greater with parking underground or in shared structures.

### ***Parks and Open Space***

- 2.9 Encourage the creation of a few small parks or areas throughout the Downtown.
- 2.10 Encourage pedestrian oriented riverfront parks and activities
- 2.11 Use landscaping and a trail along the railroad tracks to ease pedestrian movement and enhance the view.
- 2.12 Encourage surface parking lots to use overstory trees and landscaping to create "soft" edges for pedestrian movement.

### ***Circulation***

- 2.13 Support the use of traffic calming techniques which would reduce traffic speeds and increase safety.
- 2.14 Support the creation of a trail or walkway leading from Downtown to the parks along the Red River.

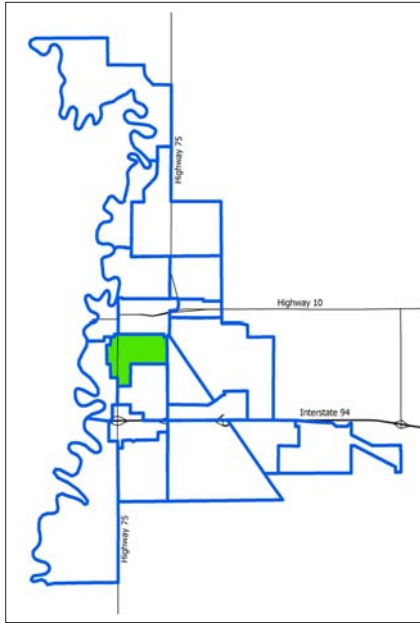
### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Vibrant Downtown
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Economic Opportunities
- Enhanced Environment

### ***Strategic Initiatives***

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan for Day to Day Uses.
2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
11. Conduct Annual Review of Comprehensive Plans.
14. Capital Improvement Programming.





Camtown encompasses the neighborhoods around Concordia College and Minnesota State University Moorhead.

The mix of uses and significance of the Camtown area to the identity and Vision of Moorhead suggests that a high degree of performance standards should apply to this area. These standards should address both site design and building design.

## Camtown

### Built Environment

Camtown describes the neighborhoods where Concordia College and Minnesota State University Moorhead are located. With over 11,500 students and employees, these neighborhoods are a major housing and job center for the community. Participants throughout the planning process expressed an interest in creating a corridor which would establish a stronger connection to Downtown, and would evolve into a land use pattern that lends support to the activities associated with the major institutions. This land use pattern helps create that connection through design and physical use of property.

Figure 2-4 Camtown Land Use Plan



To facilitate this type of redevelopment, the Land Use Plan designates a number of blocks along 8<sup>th</sup> Street S and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue S as Mixed Use. The Mixed Use area is intended to be a mixture of housing, retail, dining and entertainment. To create the atmosphere residents and students desire, the mixed use should be vertical in nature with the ground floor as businesses and upper floors as housing. It also should allow the conversion of single-family homes into commercial uses. Any new development should be no more than four stories high. Design standards should be developed to help create a cohesive feeling for the area. These standards would include such elements as setbacks, materials, signage, parking, and lighting. Shared parking arrangements should be encouraged and parking lots located behind buildings or on side streets. Redevelopment should be done carefully to prevent vacant lots and the surrounding of one or two single family homes on a block.

The transition between the mixed use and adjacent residential neighborhoods is important. Nonresidential uses with high vehicle traffic generation should

not be permitted to extend into the residential neighborhoods. A definable edge between these land uses should be created through building and site design. Performance standards should be established to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The college population benefits from a strong transit system. The idea of transit-oriented development, discussed in the downtown section, should be supported along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue as it connects the two colleges. Nodes nearest transit stops should be the most intensely developed nodes.

Most of the neighborhoods surrounding the campuses are single family residential in character. This residential location is challenging for both educational institutions because there is a need for more student housing in close proximity to the campuses and expansion space for their facilities. Community members would like to see additional rental housing while maintaining the integrity of the existing neighborhoods. In addition, the community desires to provide a variety of senior housing options so those who currently live in the area can remain.

Where necessary, blighted single family homes could be redeveloped into slightly higher density housing. Similar to the mixed use designation, development should not leave one or two homes on a block while converting the rest. As identified in the Neighborhoods section, encouraging the creation of residential units in accessory structures of owner-occupied, single family homes may help alleviate the rental housing need and maintain the single family character. This is especially possible in the area west of Concordia College, where there are existing alleys. Requiring the principle structure to be owner occupied would be necessary to ensure property upkeep.

### **Parks and Open Space**

Even though there are a number of parks and recreational facilities located in this area, a lack of parks was noted in the public participation process. This may be an indication that the current park facilities do not meet the needs of area residents. The park needs for this area would be best addressed as part of a park master planning effort. In addition to public park facilities, the increased residential densities in this area should include some small gathering spots and open spaces to soften the impact on the surrounding residential areas.

### **Circulation**

Movement through the Camtown area is impacted by the presence of a large number of residents, students and employees. In addition, 8<sup>th</sup> Street S (Highway 75) is a major roadway connecting Interstate 94 to Downtown Moorhead. Participants in the public workshops noted both traffic congestion

and safety concerns. One way that traffic movement could be improved along 8th Street S would be to minimize the number of individual driveways which have access to the street. This would be achieved by requiring redevelopment to design accesses towards side streets or alleys or by limiting curb cuts and designing circulation internal to the site. Shared parking arrangements would also be beneficial so the amount of parking can be minimized.

Facilitating pedestrian movement is also needed through the use of sidewalks and trails. Sidewalks should logically connect both Concordia College and Minnesota State University Moorhead to the Mixed-Use area. Raised sidewalks or other methods of clearly identifying crossings will be important for safety. Medians would provide a place to stop when crossing the street.

***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- College Atmosphere
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Vibrant Downtown
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Economic Opportunities

***Strategic Initiatives***

2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets and Boulevards.
5. Create a Redevelopment Plan for the Mixed-Use Area Along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
14. Capital Improvement Programming

**Camtown Policies**

***Built Environment***

- 3.1 Promote vertical mixed use as a design pattern connecting the Camtown area to Downtown and linking the college campuses along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- 3.2 Encourage design that complements the look of the educational institutions and transitions to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- 3.3 Promote the construction of high quality, higher density housing to accommodate specialty population groups such as students, faculty and seniors.
- 3.4 Discourage conversion of single family homes into apartments or multifamily dwellings.
- 3.5 Promote the rehabilitation or redevelopment of dilapidated structures.
- 3.6 Support the use of accessory structures on owner occupied single family lots as a means of providing additional student housing opportunities.
- 3.7 Performance standards should be established to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

***Parks and Open Space***

- 3.8 Encourage the creation of public plazas and pocket parks as part of future redevelopment efforts.

***Circulation***

- 3.9 Support design patterns that minimize vehicular access onto arterial and collector streets.
- 3.10 Encourage the use of landscaping and streetscaping to calm traffic movement and enhance the pedestrian environment.
- 3.11 Encourage street design which clearly identifies sidewalks and walkways for pedestrians, especially at street crossings.



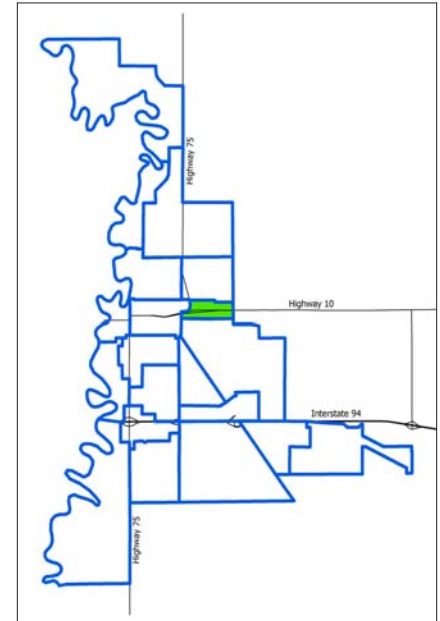
- 3.12 Require redevelopment projects to illustrate pedestrian circulation systems in redevelopment proposals.

## EasTen

### Built Environment

The EasTen Planning District primarily encompasses the regional shopping center that serves Moorhead, Dilworth and the surrounding rural area. Commercial development along this stretch of Highway 10 is a series of strip centers and big box stores. Most are one story structures located behind large parking lots. These commercial uses are important because the stores employ local residents, generate tax revenues, and provide the goods and services residents need. To be successful, the area needs to be a good and convenient place to shop. Blighted or underused parcels should be redeveloped to maintain a feeling of vitality and quality. Commercial uses should remain oriented toward Highway 10 rather than on adjacent roadways to maximize visibility and accessibility.

Figure 2-5 EasTen Land Use Plan

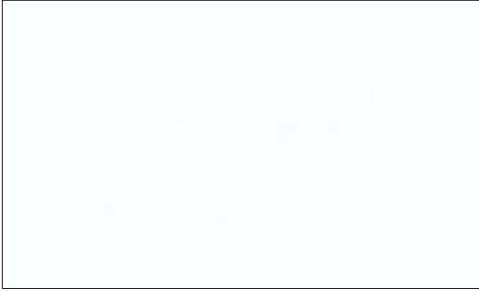


EasTen is a regional shopping destination.

Providing parking is a necessity for the modern shopping center. However, parking lots generate a significant amount of rainwater runoff that can be detrimental to the environment if not treated or controlled. Alternative methods to reduce the amount of hard surface coverage should be supported. Shared parking opportunities should be explored to reduce the amount of parking and facilitate additional area for development. Through shared parking, land uses with different peak demand times can share parking infrastructure. One example is an office which has peak parking demand during the day and a restaurant or movie theater with peak parking demand in the evenings or weekends. Another opportunity to reduce the amount of asphalt is the use of proof of parking. With proof of parking a developer

## Focus Areas - Activity Centers

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*Regional retail centers or big box stores should be designed with good pedestrian circulation, access to major roadways, incorporation of environmental amenities and buffers to adjacent residential uses.*

identifies on the plan where parking could be built but leaves the space as green space until such parking is needed.

Shopping centers across the country are seeing a resurgence in efficient utilization of land. While this concept may be well into the future in Moorhead, major shopping centers should be designed with land use efficiency in mind. Land use efficiency suggests that future development should strive to achieve a perfect balance of parking needs with leasable square feet. Too often, commercial uses demand parking to fill the two peak days of the year and the rest of the year that parking sits vacant. In Moorhead, there are few locations that are well suited to regional commercial development because of the presence of Fargo and major retail centers already well established; so these locations should be well used.

Retail establishments also require lower wage employment base. Many of these employees are or could be college students. Transportation to and from college housing is important to foster this connection. Transit becomes a viable mode to fulfill this need. This suggests that commercial sites should be better designed to support pedestrian circulation between transit stops and retail store fronts. Because transit also requires attention to travel times, routes are not likely to be routed through congested areas, so transit stops are often located on outskirts of parking areas or along adjacent road corridors. The principles of transit-oriented design should be considered when redesigning or developing new regional commercial uses.

### **Parks and Open Space**

Natural features are limited in this environment. Most land is needed to provide adequate parking and circulation to ease movement. However, enhancing the built environment with some landscaping or natural features can create a more appealing environment. One way this can be achieved is by installing needed infrastructure systems, such as stormwater ponds, as a landscaped amenity. It also may involve the designing of islands or other landscape features in parking lots to break up the large amounts of asphalt and provide safe havens for pedestrians navigating parking lots.

### **Circulation**

Accessibility is a key factor in any retail store's success. Making a store accessible involves ensuring buildings and parking lots are situated to create a logical traffic circulation pattern. Easing pedestrian movement is also important to accommodate those arriving on transit and those who may prefer to walk between stores. Pedestrian movement can be helped through the development of sidewalks and marked walkways that connect stores and shopping areas. Access to major shopping centers should be provided to major arterial and collector roads and should not be directed through residential neighborhoods.



EasTen Policies

**Built Environment**

- 4.1 Facilitate redevelopment and renovation of underutilized or deteriorated commercial uses.
- 4.2 Discourage uses which do not need the visibility and accessibility of a regional shopping center.
- 4.3 Promote a diversity of commercial establishments in order to meet the varied needs of residents and businesses.
- 4.4 Encourage development to create a buffer and/or transition between adjacent residential land uses.
- 4.5 Encourage alternative parking strategies and designs to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces.

**Parks and Open Space**

- 4.6 Encourage the design of infrastructure features, such as stormwater ponds, as landscape amenities.
- 4.7 Encourage islands of landscaping in larger parking lots (orchard parking concept described in Downtown).

**Circulation**

- 4.8 Ensure that the location of buildings and parking lots supports a logical traffic pattern and encourages pedestrian movement within larger commercial centers.
- 4.9 Encourage pedestrian circulation systems connecting storefronts, adjacent shopping areas, and transit stops.
- 4.10 Require that access to major shopping centers be directed to arterial or collector streets and not through residential areas.

*Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- College Atmosphere
- Enhanced Environment
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Economic Opportunities

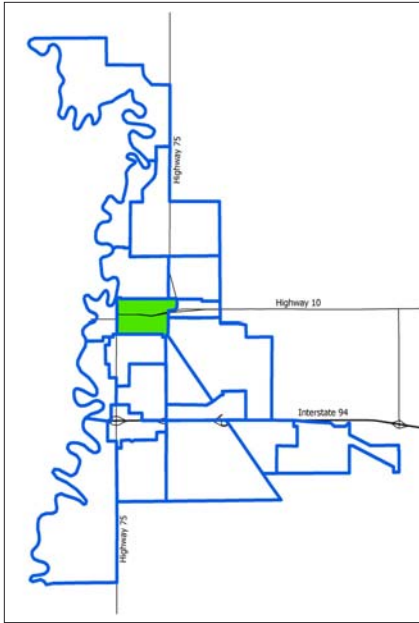
*Strategic Initiatives*

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan for Day to Day Uses.
2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
12. Economic Development Initiatives.

*EasTen's location along an approach corridor into Moorhead suggests a moderate to high degree of performance standards. Such standards would address elements such as:*

- *Building orientation, scale/height, design and materials*
- *Landscape design*
- *Site and building signage*
- *Pedestrian and vehicle circulation*





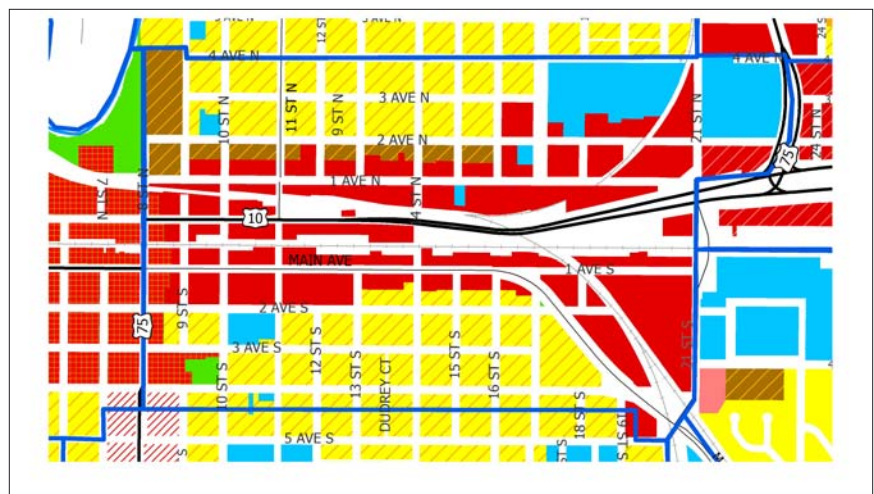
*Midtown transitions from the character of Downtown to the suburban shopping of EasTen.*

## Midtown

### Built Environment

Moorhead’s Midtown Planning District is in the midst of change. Midtown serves as the transition between the urban character of Downtown to the suburban shopping center environment in EasTen. Much of the area is small retail businesses which serve Downtown workers and neighboring residents. Others are offices and service businesses which originally located here because Highway 10 was the predominant transportation route. In addition to the commercial development, there are some industrial businesses located along the railroad and Highway 75.

Figure 2-6 Midtown Land Use



In the future, this area will continue to be a transition between Downtown, the surrounding neighborhoods and the regional shopping center in EasTen. As Downtown redevelops, its boundary may continue to shift east to encompass more of the Midtown Planning District. This expansion should be supported when redevelopment has begun to be successful and a sufficient critical mass has been achieved.

Commercial land uses are primarily guided for the areas adjacent and between 1<sup>st</sup>, Main and Center Avenues. Parcels along 1<sup>st</sup> and Main Avenues should have commercial establishments, while parcels along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue N and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue S should be residential. These residential units may be slightly higher in density than the surrounding area but should use individual entrances, setbacks of upper floors, landscaping, and alley parking to blend in with the character of the adjacent single family neighborhoods. Redevelopment in these areas should be of a design and use that reinforces the transition from commercial to residential. This transition would help define an edge, establish a limit for commercial expansion, and preserve the adjacent neighborhood’s residential character.

Commercial uses are also guided for the areas located off of Highway 10 to the north. With less visibility and accessibility, these are not prime areas for retail development. However, the area would be appropriate for a mix of office and professional service businesses. The existing light industrial uses with significant outside storage and dilapidated, metal buildings are better located in industrial parks than adjacent to residential areas. Some light industrial uses could be supported in this area provided uses can be contained within the buildings and heavy traffic is routed to commercial streets. Redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, or blighted properties should be encouraged to create a more inviting corridor between Downtown and Easten. These areas should be designed to create an attractive view of some of Moorhead's major roadways.

Another area of Community Commercial which is intended to be mostly office and professional services is located west of 20th Street S, just northeast of SE Main Avenue. Limited accessibility to this area and its location between a railroad and major thoroughfare suggest nonresidential land uses. Any redevelopment of this area should ensure the replacement of affordable housing in other areas of the community.

### **Parks and Open Space**

As with other commercial areas, natural features and parks are limited in this environment. Most of the area is devoted to buildings, parking and roadways to ease movement. Softening the appearance of the district through landscaping would be beneficial for the area. This may include streetscape enhancements and the creation of smaller plazas or open space areas (pocket parks) along the roadways. It also might include designing any needed infrastructure, like a stormwater pond or basin, as an amenity.

### **Circulation**

Movement in the Midtown Area is impacted by the crossing of multiple railroad lines. The track configurations in this area often result in trains using the main Burlington-Northern Santa Fe line to change directions. As trains back up, traffic is stopped since there are not separated crossings. Waiting times are the greatest in this area because this is where trains start and stop, thus blocking traffic. To ease movement and increase safety it is important that the City of Moorhead continue to work with the railroads to explore a grade separated crossing.

Traffic in the Midtown Area should be heavily encouraged to use the major roadways rather than adjacent neighborhood streets to move through the District. This is important in maintaining quality residential neighborhoods immediately adjacent to a busy commercial district. One way this can be done is by designing the adjacent residential streets with a park-like quality. With overstory trees, landscaping and increased setbacks, one can visually

## Focus Areas - Activity Centers

### *Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Economic Opportunities

### *Strategic Initiatives*

2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
12. Economic Development Initiatives.
14. Capital Improvement Programming.

*The arrangement of uses and the character of the Midtown area is unique in Moorhead. Performance standards in this area are not as critical because uses tend to coexist and redevelopment projects will likely be much smaller in scale. A lower degree of performance standards might be established in Midtown to guide redevelopment and ensure compatibility between different land use patterns.*

see the change in use and is discouraged from using those streets as major thoroughfares.

## Midtown Policies

### ***Built Environment***

- 5.1 Facilitate redevelopment and renovation of underutilized or deteriorated commercial uses.
- 5.2 Encourage industrial businesses to relocate in one of the two industrial parks.
- 5.3 Require quality building materials and architectural design through the establishment and use of clear performance standards or design guidelines.
- 5.4 Encourage development occurring on the edge of Downtown to follow a similar pattern of buildings being closer to the street and more vertically oriented.
- 5.5 Use streetscape design to create a continuous connection between Downtown and EasTen.
- 5.6 Prohibit the expansion of the commercial uses into surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 5.7 Encourage residential developments that provide transitions between commercial and residential areas to use individual entrances, setbacks, step-back design and landscaping through the development and implementation of performance standards and design guidelines.

### ***Parks and Open Space***

- 5.8 Pocket parks or plazas should be developed in conjunction with future redevelopment to provide rest/break areas for employees and to offer visual relief.
- 5.9 Encourage the design of infrastructure features, such as stormwater ponds, as landscape amenities.
- 5.10 Encourage islands of landscaping in larger parking lots (orchard parking concept described in Downtown).

### ***Circulation***

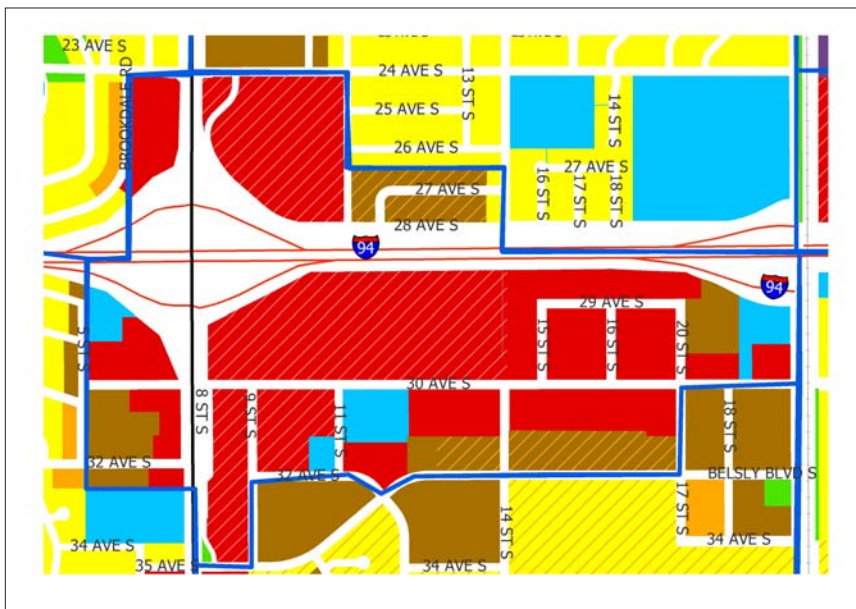
- 5.11 Support the construction of grade separation over or under railroad tracks for vehicle and pedestrian circulation.
- 5.12 Use streetscape features to discourage traffic from using the adjacent residential streets to move through the Midtown District.
- 5.13 Access to commercial uses should be directed to major roads and not through residential neighborhoods.
- 5.14 Trail and sidewalk connections should be made to connect businesses and employment opportunities with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

## Holiday

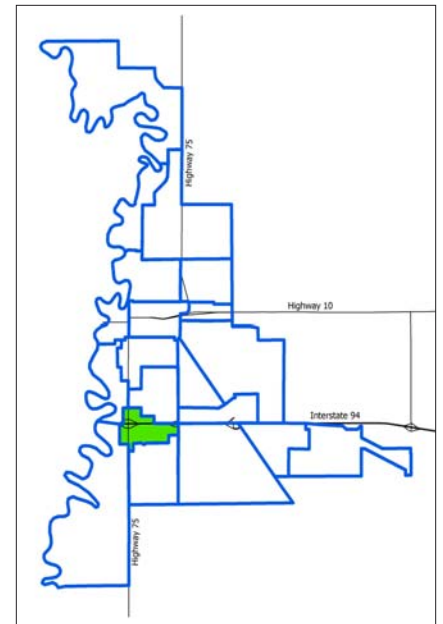
### Built Environment

Holiday encompasses the area around Interstate 94 between Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street S and 20<sup>th</sup> Street S. One of the first commercial areas to develop after Downtown, Holiday is currently a mixture of retail and office uses. With good visibility and accessibility from Interstate 94, the area immediately adjacent to the interchange is a prime location for commercial development. The area on the west side of Highway 75 is guided community commercial to reflect the smaller size and more community nature of the retail establishments. In contrast, the area east of Highway 75 is guided regional commercial due to its large size and ability to draw larger retailers with a regional focus. A challenge this area faces is its proximity to West Acres, home to a critical mass of regional commercial uses.

Figure 2-7 Holiday Land Use Plan



I-94 is a high volume traffic corridor. The nature of high volume traffic corridors suggests a more commercial oriented land use pattern. The Holiday district and the Fields district are both suited to unique patterns along this corridor. The regional commercial designation is illustrated as the primary land use pattern south of I-94 and east of Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street. However, because of the significance of the freeway corridor and the long term prospect of regional commercial development occurring in Holiday and Fields, other office intensive employment uses should be encouraged. The uses that do occur along the I-94 corridor should be employment intensive and should be designed to a high architectural standard that creates a desirable gateway image into Moorhead.



*Holiday presents opportunity for additional regional commercial and high end office development with its proximity to major transportation corridors.*

*Proximity to I-94 and the probability of attracting development with larger structures merits a higher degree of performance standards for the Holiday area. These standards should address:*

- *Building orientation, scale/height, design and materials*
- *Site and Landscape design*
- *Site and building signage*
- *Pedestrian and vehicle circulation*

***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Economic Opportunity
- Housing Variety and Adequacy

***Strategic Initiatives***

2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards.
6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
12. Economic Development Initiatives.
14. Capital Improvement Programming.



**Parks and Open Space**

Throughout the planning process, community participants expressed an interest in seeing more natural features in the Holiday area. Opportunities to enhance the environment through design of infrastructure features like ponding or landscaped median areas should be encouraged. Many regional shopping centers have found that incorporating water and landscaped plazas is an important element in creating a pleasing shopping experience. Similar principles described in the EasTen district are also applicable in Holiday.

**Circulation**

Movement through the Holiday area is geared toward the automobile. New developments should be designed for logical traffic circulation patterns. Shared parking and driveways would provide safer traffic movement within and among developments. Pedestrian movement should be encouraged through the use of sidewalks or trails along the major roadways, both within the developments themselves and between developments. As an employment and shopping center, transit should be provided which links to residential areas. Transit stops should be safe places where people will feel comfortable waiting and are easy to get to from the surrounding businesses.

**Holiday Policies**

***Built Environment***

- 6.1 Encourage quality design and construction, especially adjacent to Interstate 94.
- 6.2 Encourage site design which minimizes traffic accesses onto Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 6.3 Encourage office/business park uses which have densities of 25 employees or greater per acre.
- 6.4 Encourage the use of shared parking strategies.

***Parks and Open Space***

- 6.5 Encourage the design of infrastructure features, such as stormwater ponds, as landscape amenities.
- 6.6 Encourage islands of landscaping in larger parking lots (orchard parking concept described in Downtown).

***Circulation***

- 6.7 Ensure the location of buildings and parking lots to support a logical traffic pattern and encourage pedestrian movement within larger commercial centers.
- 6.8 Encourage the pedestrian circulation systems connecting storefronts, adjacent shopping areas, and transit stops.
- 6.9 Require access to major shopping centers to be directed to arterial or collector streets and not through residential areas.
- 6.10 Encourage site design which minimizes traffic accesses onto Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street.



## Fields

### Built Environment

An Activity Center which will be created within the next decade is Fields. The area is expected to develop as a regional commercial businesses with some housing near the commercial uses. Its location would be convenient for travelers to the community as well as residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. An alternative form of development along the interstate corridor that would be an acceptable land use is an office or business use, particularly one with quality architecture that presents a good image from I-94.

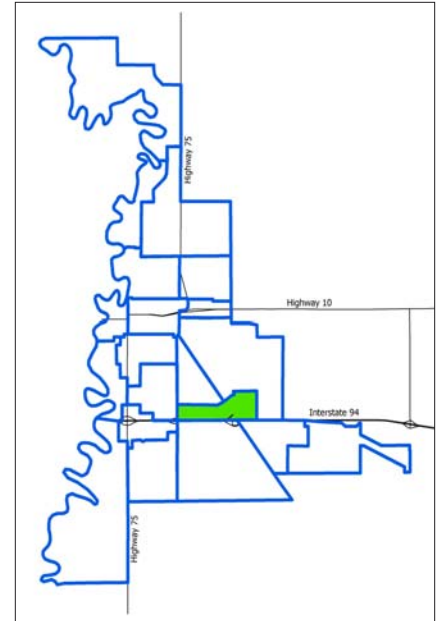
Figure 2-8 Fields Land Use Plan



Several challenges and opportunities face future development within the Fields district. Transportation improvements are scheduled for the interchange at I-94 with 34<sup>th</sup> Street. However, significant transportation barriers remain associated with railroad crossings. Much of the land area is flat vacant land owned by a limited number of parties, well suited to future master planned development. Industrial owners are located north of Fields, some of whom own land or have facilities within Fields and see vacant land as a buffer to their use. Future development on these sites would need to be compatible with existing industrial uses suggesting a nonresidential land use pattern. Currently, soccer fields are located in Fields which serve as a key regional soccer athletic complex. This low intensity use would need to be replaced somewhere else in the community or region. A better use along the I-94 corridor would be a regional commercial or high amenity office/corporate campus user.

### Parks and Open Space

Park and open space within the Fields area would be focused on the residential area east of 34<sup>th</sup> Street. Because the district is largely vacant, opportunity exists to design a park system that helps integrate the commercial and



*Fields has similar characteristics to Holiday, however, Fields is largely undeveloped.*

## Focus Areas -Activity Centers

*Proximity to I-94, the probability of attracting development with larger structures, and the availability of raw land merits a higher degree of performance standards for the Fields area. These standards should address:*

- *Building orientation, scale/height, design and materials*
- *Site and Landscape design*
- *Site and building signage*
- *Pedestrian and vehicle circulation*

### ***Vision Elements Addressed***

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- College Atmosphere
- Enhanced Environment
- Quality Public Facilities and Services
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Vibrant Downtown
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Economic Opportunities

### ***Strategic Initiatives***

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan for Day to Day Uses.
2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets and Boulevards.
6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
12. Economic Development Initiatives.
14. Capital Improvement Programming.

residential development with storm water management infrastructure and transportation improvements. Other park features west of Main Avenue should be designed as part of commercial or corporate campus type development similar to what has been described in Holiday and East Ten. A linear system of park features should be central to the design of park and open space in Fields.

## **Circulation**

Traffic and pedestrian circulation is critical to the Fields district as it is the confluence of several regionally significant transportation corridors: I-94, Main Avenue and 34th Street. Connections to these corridors should be limited to collector streets (or major neighborhood streets) so as to minimize traffic congestion. Traffic access across railroad tracks will be a limiting factor in attracting future development. Access to major roads should be clearly designed and signed to limit cut through traffic through residential neighborhoods.

## **Fields Policies**

### ***Built Environment***

- 7.1 Encourage master planning of large tracts of land east of Main Avenue to integrate land uses and storm water infrastructure features.
- 7.2 Encourage a design pattern that supports transit uses (TOD) so that transit services can be efficiently provided to the Fields district.
- 7.3 Encourage an acceptable level of performance standards to achieve a desired quality of design and development.

### ***Parks and Open Space***

- 7.4 Encourage the design of infrastructure features, such as stormwater ponds, as landscape and development amenities.
- 7.5 Encourage islands of landscaping in larger parking lots (orchard parking concept described in Downtown).

### ***Circulation***

- 7.6 Ensure that the location of buildings and parking lots supports a logical traffic pattern and encourages pedestrian movement within larger commercial centers.
- 7.7 Encourage pedestrian circulation systems connecting storefronts, adjacent shopping areas, and transit stops.
- 7.8 Require access to major shopping centers to be directed to arterial or collector streets and not through residential areas.
- 7.9 Require sidewalk and trail connections that link neighborhoods to adjacent districts especially to parks and school facilities.

## Business and Employment

### Built Environment

Moorhead's businesses and employment centers are located throughout the community. Many of these areas have already been discussed as part of the Activities Center Section.

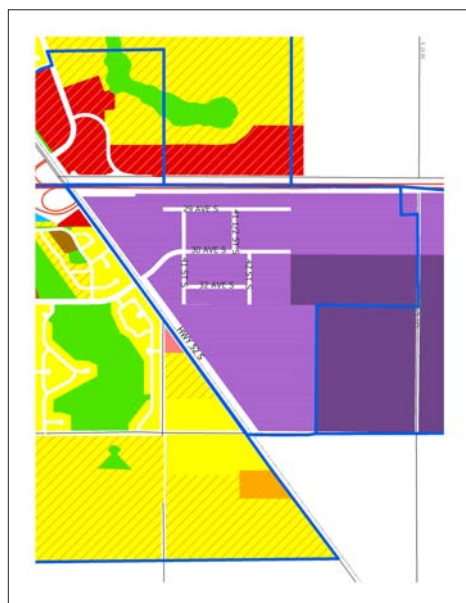
Figure 2-9 MIP Land Use Plan



Two remaining areas to examine are the Moorhead and MCCARA Industrial Parks. Both industrial parks are the ideal locations for manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, agri-processing, and other industrial businesses. The Industrial Parks are also areas where businesses needing outdoor storage of equipment and vehicles are most appropriate. A limited amount of commercial development is acceptable in Industrial Parks as long as it primarily serves the needs of the adjacent businesses.

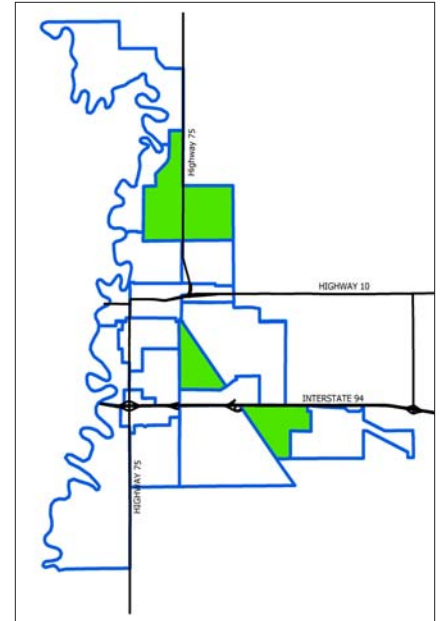
Design and maintenance of properties is important in industrial parks to maintain their long-term viability. Oftentimes, buildings and landscaping will remain long after a particular business has left the community. Although flexibility is needed to accommodate the unique needs of a business, care should be taken so the site in the future can be reused rather than remain vacant. It is therefore necessary to have a set of minimum standards to ensure that building design, site layout and landscaping are in the best interest of the community. These standards should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis to ensure new technologies and trends are accommodated.

Figure 2-10 MCCARA Land Use Plan



### Open Space

Parks and open space are fairly limited in both of the industrial parks. To be cost efficient, businesses try and maximize their use of their lots for buildings and parking. Open space and small parks can provide a welcome amenity



Two districts outside of Downtown comprise the bulk of Moorhead's business and employment. MCCARA and MIP.

for employees. As with the Activity Centers, landscaping necessary infrastructure systems, such as a stormwater pond, can provide a cost-effective amenity. Another method is to aggregate open spaces from a variety of businesses together into a common passive open space (pocket park) that can be used for employee break times or potential meeting spaces outside of the office.

### **Circulation**

Transportation access can be an important factor in choosing a site for a business. Both Moorhead and MCCARA Industrial Parks have good transportation access with a major interstate, railroad, and airport within a short distance. Improvements should continue to be made in MCCARA Industrial Park so there is more than one access out of the Park. This is beneficial because it distributes traffic so one intersection does not become overly congested and provides an alternative if the other route is blocked by a train or accident.

Both parks benefit from rail access with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe's Moorhead Subdivision Line serving Moorhead Industrial Park, and the Otter Valley Railroad serving MCCARA Industrial Park. Rail access should be maintained to provide another option for the movement of supplies and goods.

Another transportation option is the Moorhead Municipal Airport. With its location just a few miles east of MCCARA Industrial Park, it is conveniently located for both industrial areas. Discussions throughout the planning process focused on expanding the industrial designation east to the airport to facilitate businesses who would benefit from having their own or a shared plane.

Pedestrian and bicycle movement should be facilitated in industrial areas through the use of trails and/or sidewalks. Having pedestrians or bicycles share the roadway with trucks does create safety issues. In addition, transit users need a way to safely and easily move from their transit stop to their place of employment.

*Vision Elements Addressed*

- Economic Opportunities
- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Quality Public Facilities and Services

### **Business and Employment Policies**

#### ***Built Environment***

- 8.1 Facilitate development of a business park environment west of Highway 52 along Interstate 94.
- 8.2 Support the establishment of commercial businesses near the industrial and business parks.
- 8.3 Require architectural and site controls for business park/light industrial development along Interstate 94 in order to present a quality image.

***Open Space***

8.4 Encourage trail and open space development within the business/industrial parks to offer a quality work environment.

***Circulation***

8.5 Ensure areas of high employment have direct access to the transportation network to minimize impact on residential areas.

8.6 Require site design principles that encourage the use of public transit (i.e. on street sidewalks and trails, parking lots at side or rear of buildings, sidewalks from street to building entrances).

***Strategic Initiatives***

- 3. Update Orderly Annexation Agreements.
- 6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
- 9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
- 10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
- 12. Economic Development Initiatives.
- 14. Capital Improvement Programming.







*Elements of the public realm--street right-of-way, parks and schools.*

## Public Realm

The Public Realm represents those spaces that are common to the community, such as streets, trails, parks and natural features (floodways, wetlands, rivers, storm ponds). These spaces are generally the responsibility of Government, whether it be local, state or federal. In the case of public schools, the facilities and grounds are part of the public realm. In the case of religious institutions and private schools, the distinction between public and private becomes more blurred and less so a part of the public realm. The notion that the public realm is a community responsibility suggests that the Comprehensive Plan provide some direction on how these spaces should contribute to attaining the community vision.

The Land Use Plan identifies areas of the public realm in several ways. The plan identifies “public/institutional” as a land use classification, grouping such uses as government facilities, schools and churches. The plan identifies “park and open space” as a land use classification grouping existing public and private park facilities and natural open spaces. Finally the plan identifies street right-of-way, also a part of the public realm in addition to providing a system for public mobility. The design of streets, including the actual street and the boulevard area (landscaping, sidewalks, trails and signage), is a critical component of the public realm that provides a lasting image of the community and sets the bar for community investment. Sidewalks, trails and transit facilities are also parts of the public realm discussed in this section of the plan.

## Park and Recreation

A matrix and map identifying existing park facilities is included in the first section of the Comprehensive Plan “Setting the Stage” (see pages 1-31 and 1-32.)

A common tool for analyzing a local park system is the application of a population ratio standard. This standard, expressed as the number of acres of parkland per one thousand people, provides a general guideline for the assessment of existing and future park needs. Applying a standard of 10 acres of municipal parkland per 1,000 people is a common benchmark for planning purposes used by other communities in comprehensive planning efforts. In more detailed park master planning initiatives, this standard can be further broken down to identify needs for the neighborhood park, the community park and the regional park. For the purpose of the Moorhead Comprehensive Plan, an analysis of parkland needs based on 10 acres per 1,000 people is used as a benchmark. This ratio suggests that to meet the park needs of the community with an estimated 2004 population of 33,000 people, 330 acres of parkland would be needed. Moorhead currently falls

within this standard with an estimated 460 acres of public parkland (excluding schools and golf courses.)

Based on projected household growth, Moorhead could add between 8,000 to 10,000 new people by the year 2025, or a population of nearly 40,000. This would suggest that the City needs to add additional parkland in the amount of 100 acres over the next 20 years if applying the standard to future growth. This type of standard should be used as a broad benchmark for future park needs. Parkland dedication of approximately 10% would generally achieve this benchmark.

Parks serve many purposes. They provide a focal point for a neighborhood, where neighbors get to know one another in a safe and comfortable environment. The presence of a park in a neighborhood serves as an identity builder, similar in nature to how a school becomes a neighborhood identity element. Many people refer to a park when describing the qualities of their neighborhood or community. Parks also provide a recreational resource and in the case of major athletic complexes, parks become regional draws which in turn lends support to local retail businesses. Parks also provide relief from the urban environment. Especially in the case of the downtown area or other hardscaped (paved or built up) areas, small pocket parks can bring remnants of the natural environment into the urban environment positively contributing to a healthy social atmosphere. Passive parks can soften less than desirable but necessary infrastructure facilities such as lift stations, storm water ponds and ditches, or utility corridors. Use and design of these areas as landscaped open spaces rather than utilitarian public facilities will enhance the community's image.

Park facilities should continue to serve in their existing capacity as neighborhood and regional parks, including active recreational facilities such as softball fields, soccer fields, hockey rinks, frisbee golf, basketball and tennis.

The community dialogue regarding the park system indicated the desire to have parks serve a greater diversity of needs from young children through adults and seniors. This desire needs to be supported by a park system that encompasses active play areas and structures, active ball fields for youth and adults, and passive areas for walking or informal gathering. A linear park system was expressed

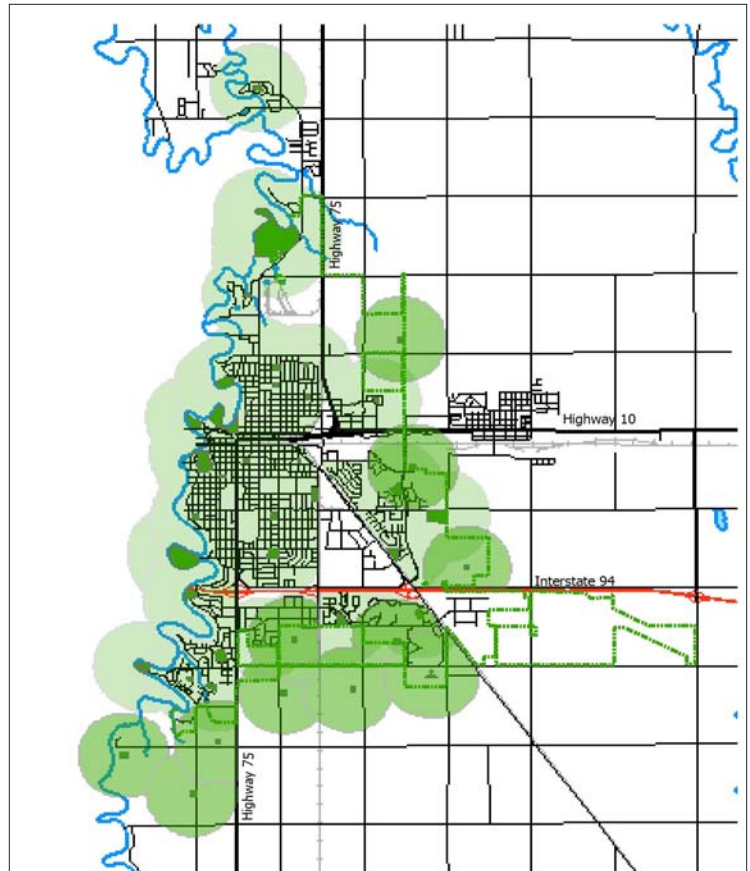
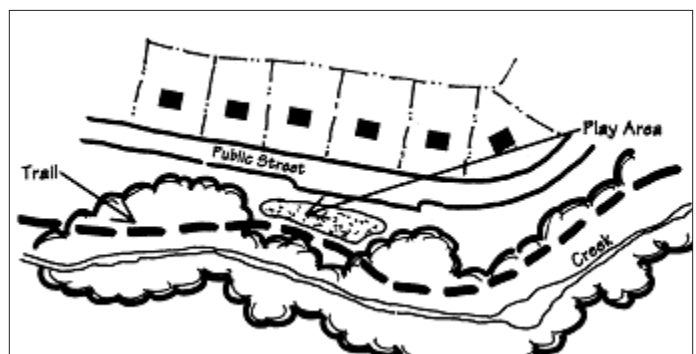
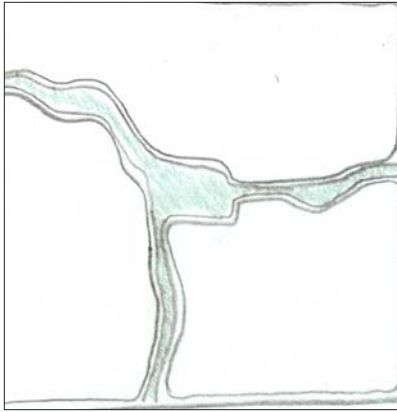


Figure 2-11 Based on a policy that suggests parks should be located within a 1/2 mile barrier free walking distance, the above figure illustrates existing park service areas (lighter shaded polygons) and areas in need of future parks to serve anticipated growth areas (darker shaded polygons).



Linear park system integrating passive and active park features.





*Future parks in growth areas, as illustrated on the previous page, should consist of neighborhood parks and a system of linear parks or “greenways” consisting of passive open space with a trail corridor approximately 100 to 150 feet wide.*

**Vision Elements Addressed**

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Enhanced Environment
- Quality Public Facilities and Services
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Connectivity

**Strategic Initiatives**

2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards.
6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
8. Prepare a Park and Open Space Master Plan.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
14. Capital Improvement Programming.

as a desired means of interconnecting the various neighborhood parks with larger park facilities and other destinations. Like the notion of life-cycle-housing, parks must be designed to fulfill a life-cycle of recreational needs on a year-round basis.

A strong community asset identified during the community workshops, were Moorhead’s regional parks and the Red River. Currently, regional park facilities are located in northern Moorhead and in central Moorhead. Opportunities to maintain a portion of the Red River frontage as a regional park facility south of 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue would seem to be an important community directive.

**Parks and Recreation Policy**

- 9.1 Encourage the receipt of buildable land for parkland dedication with 10% of the land set aside for park space. When it is determined that all or a portion of the parkland dedication is not necessary, a cash payment in lieu of dedication may be considered, if such payment is used to benefit a local and/or regional park facility. Because the parkland dedicated is considered “buildable,” it should be included in calculating development rights. The development rights on the parkland would be transferred to other parts of the site.
- 9.2 Support efforts to construct park facilities concurrently with housing development in new neighborhoods.
- 9.3 Encourage placement of neighborhood parks so that all residential housing units are within 1/2 mile (average 10 minute walk) without having to cross a major highway or railroad.
- 9.4 Encourage the co-location of park and recreation facilities with school facilities and those of other willing partners to capitalize on usage and fiscal efficiency with building and maintaining facilities.
- 9.5 Encourage the location of parks as central parts of a neighborhood, rather than isolated in back yards or as buffers to undesirable land uses.
- 9.6 Ensure there is a balance of active and passive park areas to serve the community’s life-cycle recreational uses on a year-round basis.
- 9.7 Create a system of trails to link parks and major activity areas of the community.
- 9.8 Promote the use of infrastructure features like ditches and stormwater ponds as natural amenities. These can become part of the park system, but should not be part of the park dedication if these features are considered un-buildable areas, such as wetlands or floodways.
- 9.9 Encourage community volunteer organizations to participate in park and recreation development whenever appropriate.

- 9.10 Ensure natural resource open space areas planned in conjunction with future development be coordinated with, and contiguous to, the open space areas of the existing adjacent development.
- 9.11 Use and design of park and open space areas should be landscaped to enhance the community’s image.

**Sidewalks and Trails**

As part of the Public Realm, sidewalks and trails are key components to establishing “connectivity” within neighborhoods and to the broader community. Within neighborhoods, sidewalks create a safe place for people to walk or for children to play. A safe and comfortable sidewalk free from vehicle conflicts helps tie a neighborhood together both socially as a place to gather and physically as a link to the neighborhood park or convenience retail.

Trails play a similar role to sidewalks as a social and physical linkage to the community. However, trails also serve a stronger role as part of the community’s recreational system. Trails should be constructed separate from streets whenever possible and should accommodate the various modes of pedestrian mobility including, walking, in-line skating and bicycling.

A key feature of trails and sidewalks in Moorhead should be that they all go someplace. A broad network of trails and sidewalks should connect neighborhoods to places like Downtown, Concordia College and MSUM, larger park facilities, a network of open spaces, public school facilities, transit stops, arts and cultural centers, and neighborhood retail areas.

**Sidewalk and Trail Policy**

- 10.1 Require sidewalks on both sides of all streets.
- 10.2 Sidewalks and trails should be developed to connect to neighborhood attractions such as parks, schools, churches or neighborhood retail nodes.
- 10.3 New sidewalks and trails should connect to a regional sidewalk and trail system.
- 10.4 Encourage innovative subdivision design to minimize conflicts between residential driveways and sidewalks.
- 10.5 Encourage trails to be designed through linear parks.
- 10.6 Trails should be designed to accommodate multiple recreational activities including walking, jogging, biking, in-line skating or cross-country skiing. Physical separation of walking and jogging with biking or in-line skating should be encouraged.
- 10.7 Require sidewalk or trail connections to public transit facilities.

*Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Enhanced Environment
- Quality Public Facilities and Services
- Connectivity

*Strategic Initiatives*

- 2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
- 4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards.
- 9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
- 10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
- 14. Capital Improvement Programming.





## ***Schools and Institutions***

It used to be that schools and institutions, particularly religious institutions, were key components of a neighborhood's identity. These facilities were often small facilities that relied heavily on the walking public for patronage. However, as times have changed, so have the economic conditions that heavily impact institutional designs and location factors. Larger facilities are needed to achieve economic efficiencies and growing participation. Along with larger facilities comes a design pattern that often conflicts with adjacent residential development. For the most part, schools and institutions remain a desired part of the Public Realm, and as such, their designs and integration into future neighborhoods should be carefully considered. These facilities should locate on the edge of neighborhoods adjacent to major roadways (collector or arterial streets). Designs of schools and institutions should use the architecture of the building and the site design to serve as a transition between the residential neighborhood to the larger surface parking lots and major road corridors. Even though these facilities draw from a larger region, they should still be an important part of the neighborhood. Trails, sidewalks and linear parks should provide connections to these facilities. Larger recreational open spaces and park facilities should be designed in conjunction with the neighborhood park system.

Moorhead maintains several schools within existing neighborhoods. Often these schools are located on the edge or near the edge of a neighborhood. The ability of a neighborhood to provide places for families with children to live dictates, to a degree, the success of the neighborhood school. Efforts should be made to preserve existing neighborhood schools as a service to the neighborhood and as an identity builder. The evolution of housing types in Moorhead plays an important role in achieving this goal. If there are limited opportunities for homes in existing neighborhoods to turn over, there are limited opportunities for new young families to move in.

### *Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- College Atmosphere
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Economic Opportunities

## **Schools and Institutions Policy**

- 11.1 Encourage schools and institutions to locate on the edge of neighborhoods, adjacent to major roadways (collector or arterials).
- 11.2 Encourage the location of schools and institutions adjacent to community parks and open spaces. Trails and sidewalks should be designed to foster walking between schools, institutions and the adjacent neighborhood.
- 11.3 Adequate off-street (on-site) parking should be provided for new schools and institutions to prevent parking from spilling into adjacent neighborhoods.
- 11.4 Encourage alternative parking strategies for schools and



institutions within existing older neighborhoods that balance parking needs with neighborhood issues and concerns.

- 11.5 Encourage site design of new institutions and schools that use the building and its architecture to transition to adjacent residential development.
- 11.6 Encourage schools and institutions to coordinate their facilities plans with land-use decisions made by the City of Moorhead.
- 11.7 Encourage the combining of community and neighborhood uses with school and institutional uses to support smaller school and institutional facilities.

### ***Streets and Transportation System***

Arguably, the largest part of the Public Realm is the street system. In terms of land area, the public right-of-way consumes a significant percentage of the City’s land area (generally 20%). Streets serve many functions beyond the obvious function of moving vehicles. The regional nature of the roadway system requires a broader level of decision making and governance in order to maintain a coherent street system. However, when it comes to the local street system, the City of Moorhead should take the lead in arranging street patterns and designs, but should coordinate closely with FM-COG, Clay County and MnDOT on broader regional transportation initiatives.

The following sections provide an overview of key plan objectives relative to streets:

Movement of people: Streets move people within and through the community. A hierarchy of connected streets should be maintained and expanded into new growth areas. These streets should move people seeking more regional destinations through the community, and provide connections between neighborhoods and key destinations or activity centers. Key streets should have a trail system adjacent to or within the right-of-way to provide direct non-vehicular connections. Streets should be designed according to their role within the hierarchy. Design of neighborhoods and new subdivisions should encompass a street system that connects to street systems of adjacent neighborhoods and does not result in multiple dead ends or cul-de-sacs. While this may create the potential for more ‘cut-through’ traffic, it will provide a much greater coherency for the overall traffic system, which will limit cut-through traffic in itself. Safety is critical to the success of a transportation system, especially in high pedestrian traffic areas such as residential neighborhoods, near schools, in shopping centers or downtown. Traffic calming techniques should be employed within these areas to ensure a comfortable pedestrian environment.

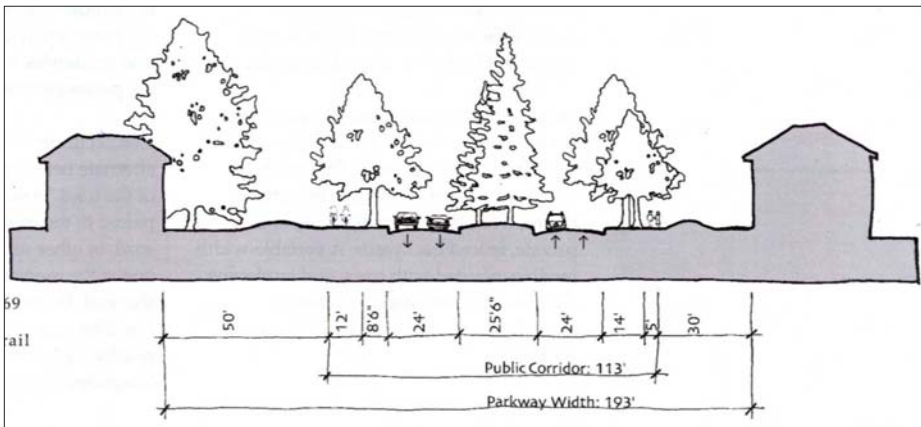
#### ***Strategic Initiatives***

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan for Day to Day Uses.
6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods.
8. Prepare a Park and Open Space Master Plan.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
11. Conduct Annual Review of Comprehensive Plans.

*See illustration on top of page 17 for a depiction of street connectivity.*



## Focus Areas - Public Realm



*Boulevards can be used to enhance the notion of connectivity and contribute to a strong positive identity. Boulevards could be used for design of prominent streets that lead to major activity centers (or approach corridors). They can come with a landscaped median as illustrated above or with wider side yard; however, they generally require significant right-of-way and suggest deeper setbacks for development that fronts the boulevard. Source: Community Parkways: Design Center for the American Urban Landscape.*



Figure 2-12 Potential approach corridors that could be evaluated for a boulevard design include Highway 75, Highway 10, 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Avenue SE.

Identity builder: The design of street corridors plays a significant role in establishing a community or district identity. Elements that build identity include the physical design of the street (traffic lanes, median design, shoulder design, traffic signals, etc...), landscaping, signage, and adjacent land uses (building setbacks). The public realm includes that area within the right-of-way. Major streets that provide a “gateway” to the community

could be landscaped with a common theme or identity to signify entrance into Moorhead. A unique gateway feature could include an entry monument sign at key entrances to Moorhead which will not change as a result of annexation or growth. Gateways also could signify the entrance to a particular district. An example that is currently functioning in this capacity is Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street near Concordia and MSUM. A streetscape pattern with banners and landscaping signifies the district. Streets should serve as part of the “connectivity” theme, connecting park and open space areas. These streets should emphasize landscaping and street trees to create a stronger “green” corridor consistent with a park and open space theme. A boulevard street pattern could fulfill this identity feature; however, challenges to securing sufficient right-of-way must be overcome.

Promotion of business and commerce: Streets are critical to the success of business and employment opportunities. Businesses require a safe and efficient street system to get employees to and from places of work and to get goods and services to their respective market. Access becomes a critical part of a business’ decision to grow or expand in a market place. A key advantage for Moorhead is a direct connection to I-94. The use of land areas adjacent to I-94, and particularly near current and future access points, should be strategically guided for uses that generate employment and business opportunities. Roads should provide adequate access to such uses without compromising the integrity of the roadway corridor. Access onto arterials and collectors should be focused to strategic locations by using frontage/backage roads or shared driveway arrangements in order to preserve the ability of the road to move traffic freely, safely and quickly.

Provider of transit services: Some streets must accommodate the Moorhead transit service and facilities. Streets with transit services should be well lit and designed to accommodate bus traffic. Transit stops need to be accommodated for within the right-of-way, and consideration should be

given to long term improvements that incorporate transit advantages into roadway construction. Transit services should be extended to future growth areas, particularly high density residential and employment nodes. Alternative servicing options should be evaluated for areas of the community where densities may not support a fixed route system, but that may benefit from availability of transit. These areas might include Oakport Township or the Industrial Parks. As discussed within the dialogue about neighborhoods and activity centers, land use decisions are essential to a successful transit system. Low density, sprawling design patterns are not conducive to efficient transit service. The land use patterns identified in the land use plan will foster the ability to create higher density, mixed-use nodes along transit routes within close proximity to transit stops. A good example of this pattern is the mixed-use corridor along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Other examples include areas of moderate density mixed-residential along major roadway corridors, such as 34th Street north of I-94.

Figure 2-13 Future Functional Class Map

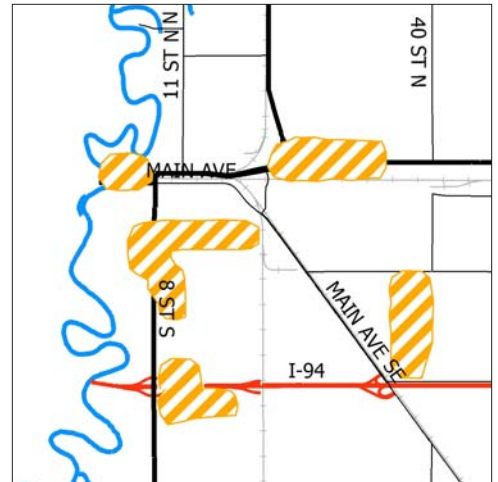
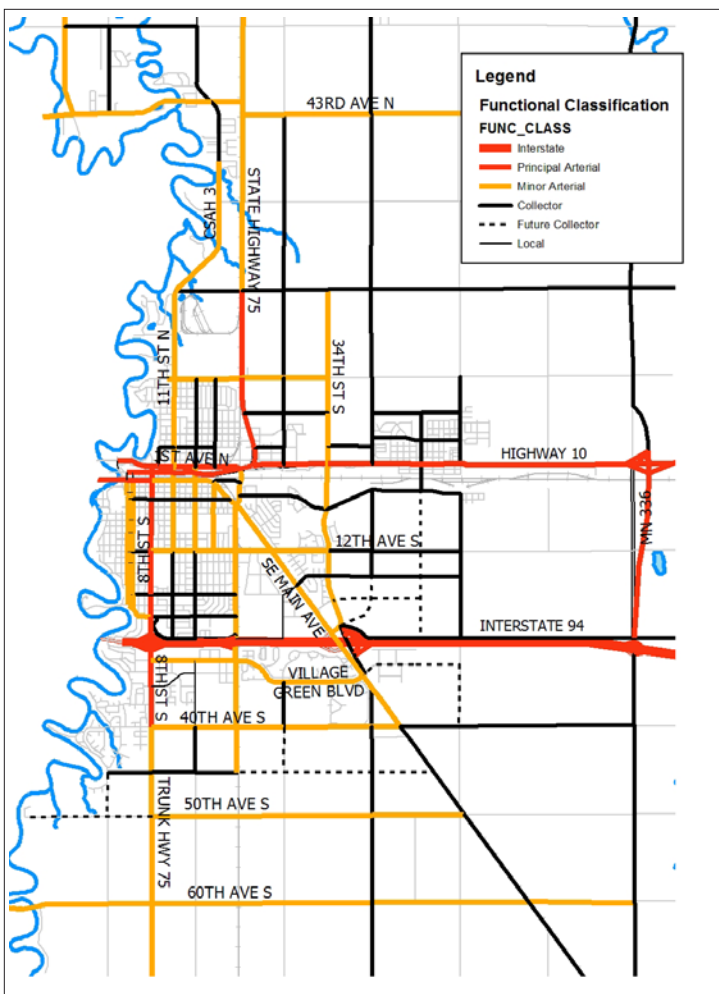
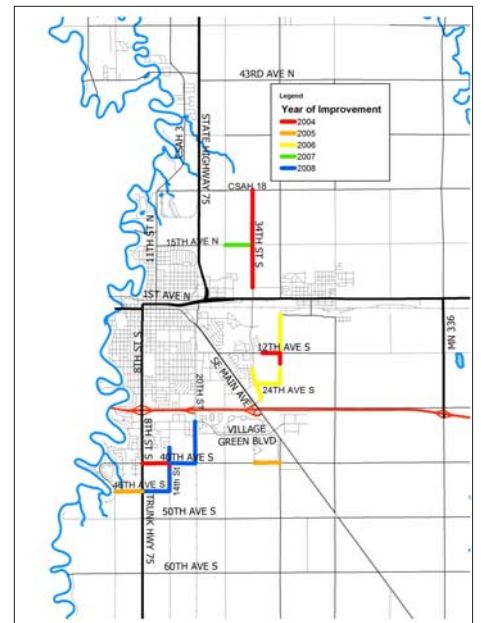


Figure 2-14 Key activity centers that include (or will include) a mix of uses at a density that supports transit services are illustrated above: Downtown Moorhead, Camtown, Holiday, Fields and EasTen planning districts.



New Roadways being planned for construction in 2004 to 2008.



## Focus Areas - Infrastructure

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### *Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinct and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Quality Public Facilities and Services
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity
- Economic Opportunities

### *Strategic Initiatives*

2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
3. Update Orderly Annexation Agreements.
4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards.
5. Create a Redevelopment Plan for the Mixed-Use Area Along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods.
9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
10. Advocate for Creative Community Design.
12. Economic Development Initiatives.
14. Capital Improvement Programming.

## Streets and Transportation System Policies

- 12.1 Work with the local railroads, MnDOT and the F-M COG to improve safety and reduce traffic congestion caused by the at-grade railroad crossings located throughout the City.
- 12.2 Support and encourage the use and continued development of the Moorhead Airport.
- 12.3 Consider opportunities for complementary recreational uses in the design, improvement and management of local roads.
- 12.4 Require new developments to connect with the existing street grid and layout of adjacent neighborhoods.
- 12.5 Explore and evaluate alternative street designs in instances where unique traffic problems are present and where the opportunity exists to provide character and identity to a neighborhood.
- 12.6 Require future development or redevelopment plans to incorporate trail and sidewalk plans that encourage bicycling and walking as a means of travel.
- 12.7 Provide a functional classification system of existing and future roads to promote orderly development and convenient access for people and goods.
- 12.8 Manage vehicular access onto collector and arterial roadways with adequate distance between intersections and appropriate traffic control methods.
- 12.9 Encourage the incorporation of transit facilities and services into the design of new neighborhoods and subdivisions.

## Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes the physical systems that support development within the community. These systems include Sanitary Sewer, Public Water, Municipal Electric and Storm Water Management. Each of these infrastructure systems is guided by a more focused master plan maintained by either the City Engineering Department or the Moorhead Public Service Commission.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance and significance of a sound infrastructure system. Virtually every element of Moorhead’s Vision relies upon a sound infrastructure system. The key Vision element that gets at the heart of the infrastructure system is “Responsive Community Facilities and Services.” This statement refers not only to the availability of infrastructure, but to the continued delivery of service by the entities that provide it, including staff and elected leaders.

Moorhead’s infrastructure systems are inventoried in the first part of the Comprehensive Plan, “Setting the Stage.” This part of “Planning for the Future” sets forth the broad land use patterns to guide future development, and establishes policy statements to shape the form of that development. The Infrastructure Section of the Plan establishes general direction on the delivery of the infrastructure systems. More detailed information on each infrastructure system can be found in the individual master plans maintained by the City Engineering Department and the Moorhead Public Service Commission.

A consistent theme across all infrastructure systems is the need to continually monitor existing systems that have aged. Redevelopment initiatives may require upgrades to existing distribution systems to handle additional capacity demand. As redevelopment warrants system upgrades, the City should evaluate related or connected infrastructure improvement needs to realize maintenance and construction efficiencies.

Except for electricity, which is largely already accommodated, the Oakport area is a challenge from an infrastructure delivery standpoint. The current development pattern is one of a more rural character (large lot, outbuildings, limited livestock) and is difficult to cost effectively serve with municipal infrastructure. Vacant parcels of land in the Oakport area will be required to connect to services upon future development. It will be difficult for the Oakport Area to maintain its rural pattern without developing at higher densities to spread the costs for sanitary sewer service over a larger number of housing units.

Major recent investment in infrastructure services (particularly sanitary and

### Guiding Infrastructure Master Plans

- Sanitary Sewer 2002
- Storm Water Management 2003/4
- Public Water Supply 2000
- Well-Head Protection Plan 2003
- Municipal Electric 1995



*Development patterns in Oakport consist of a mixture of very low density suburban residential development and large lot rural patterns. This pattern creates inefficiencies in the delivery of public infrastructure.*





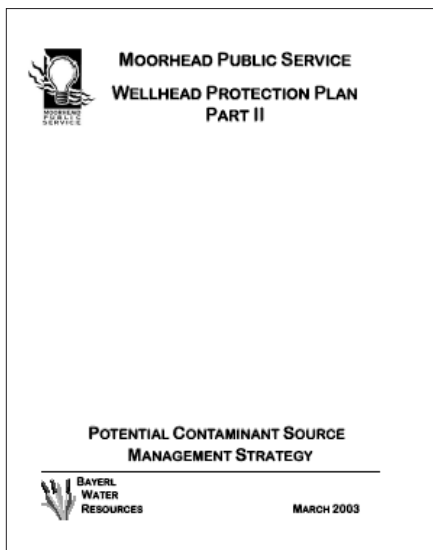
Figure 2-15 Infrastructure improvements are currently being constructed to serve southerly and easterly growth areas in the general direction of 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and east of 34<sup>th</sup> Street. The area shaded above represents the future infrastructure service area.

storm sewer systems) are currently underway to serve development growth in the east and south of Moorhead. New development needs to occur in these areas to recover costs associated with infrastructure investments. The City should use the extension of public infrastructure as a mechanism to ensure orderly growth in a cost effective and land use efficient manner.

The following is a more focused discussion on Sanitary Sewer, Public Water, Municipal Electric and Storm Sewer systems:

### Sanitary Sewer Systems

Recent improvements to the sanitary sewer system include modifications to the wastewater treatment plant and the collection system to serve at least the next 25 years of growth in Moorhead. The plant capacity is not adequate to serve the entire new service area. A capacity expansion will be required some time in the future. A projection of 25 years of capacity assumes a development projection of roughly 200 to 250 new housing units per year in addition to projected commercial and industrial developments. Originally, plans estimated that the expansion of the system would accommodate 50 years of growth at 125 to 150 units per year and roughly 5 acres per year of commercial and industrial growth; however, recent development activity has exceeded these assumptions. The planned improvements to the collection system provide trunk sewer services to the Fields and Horizon Planning Districts and growing areas south of I-94.



See the Moorhead Public Service Wellhead Protection Plan (completed in 2003) for detailed measures on protecting Moorhead's public water supply resources.

### Public Water Systems

Moorhead's public water supply system is administered by the Moorhead Public Service Commission. Future water supply is a larger issue on the regional scale (North Dakota) due to draw down of aquifers and drought conditions. The Moorhead Public Service Commission stays attuned to these regional issues. However, Moorhead is well positioned with its primary source of water from the Red River and a backup source from wells drawing from the Moorhead Aquifer and the Buffalo Aquifer located east of Moorhead. These wells are used for backup supply during drought periods or should the Red River exceed acceptable contamination levels. Future needs for Moorhead's water system are focused on delivery of clean and safe drinking water and a system that delivers adequate water pressure to serve fire protection needs. A key to this objective is the protection of the City's water sources, the Red River and nearby aquifers. To this end Moorhead Public Service has drafted and is in the stages of seeking approvals of a well-head protection program consistent with Minnesota Rules that establish measures for the protection of key well fields in Moorhead and the Buffalo aquifer. A collaborative effort between the Moorhead Public Service, Clay County, the cities of Moorhead and Dilworth, Glyndon Township, and the

Buffalo-Red River Watershed District is necessary to establish coordinated protective regulation within the Buffalo Aquifer.

### Electric Utility System

Delivery of electric utility is administered by the Moorhead Public Service Commission. The primary objective of the electric utility system is to deliver cost effective and reliable electric service to the Moorhead community. The electric utility system requires substation and distribution system infrastructure. The distribution system infrastructure generally requires right-of-way for above ground or below ground power lines. Beyond providing reliable and cost effective electric utility, a common issue surrounding electric utility is the presence of power lines on the landscape. The community desire is for power lines to become less visible if not invisible. High costs and technical challenges are prohibitive to placing major transmission lines underground. However, as a design principle relating to enhancing community image, powerlines should be located underground when possible. New transmission lines that are required to be above ground should occur with a significant enough buffer of green space to keep residential development a comfortable distance from powerline infrastructure. Integration of powerlines as part of the linear park and open space system may provide a cost effective approach to preserving right-of-way for future above ground power lines.

Alternative (clean) forms of electricity generation are an important part of creating sustainable communities. Moorhead has a good reputation for exploration and implementation of a wind turbine system of energy. An objective of the electric utility system is to continue to explore the feasibility of wind generated energy and other alternative sources of energy. Partnering with Moorhead's colleges and universities is a valuable asset in this exploration. Planning efforts should ensure a land use pattern that provides the opportunity to continue operations and potentially expand operations of the wind farm located east of Centennial Park and the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

### Stormwater Management Systems

The City Engineering Department is responsible for planning and implementing a storm water management system. The topography and sub-surface geology in Moorhead are key influences to how surface water runoff is managed. The City is committed to protecting the environment and particularly its precious water resources. To that end, the City initiates planning and design efforts to accommodate future storm water runoff treatment through regional stormwater ponding, as opposed to a subdivision by subdivision approach. The City has evaluated the needs for stormwater



Figure 2-16 Future planning for growth in the Reinertson, Village Green, MCCARA, and Airport Planning Districts should reserve right-of-way for an electric transmission line. This line should be coordinated with park and open space planning efforts in this area.

## Focus Areas - Infrastructure



Future development projects should design storm water ponding as an amenity to the entire development project. The above Master Plan illustrates such an example in Apple Valley, Minnesota.

### *Vision Elements Addressed*

- Distinctive and Diverse Neighborhoods
- Enhanced Environment
- Quality Public Facilities and Services
- Housing Variety and Adequacy
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Economic Opportunities

runoff on a regional ponding basis (a regional system for each ¼ section or 160 acres.) These regional ponds correspond with the notion of the neighborhood size being 160 acres. The ability to create strong neighborhoods hinges in part on an environment that is not purely hard surface, lawns and rooftops. The integration of regional stormwater treatment ponds as part of the neighborhood amenity system is a core objective of building strong neighborhoods. Other strategies such as rainwater gardens or drainage swales that naturally infiltrate water into the ground should be encouraged. These systems are not as effective at handling large storm events due to the soil conditions of Moorhead. The total volume of runoff can also be minimized by reducing the amount of hard surface coverage through such means as narrowing street width requirements, allowing permeable surfaces for parking areas (although this technique may not be practical), requiring more green space in parking areas, encouraging more vertical building patterns and encouraging green building techniques including rooftop gardens or cistern barrels.

### Infrastructure System Policies

- 13.1 Promote infill development and redevelopment of the existing urbanized area to maximize efficiency of existing sewer collection and water distribution infrastructure systems.
- 13.2 Continue infrastructure replacement in conjunction with potential redevelopment projects.
- 13.3 Finance public utility extensions that reinforce the City's growth and redevelopment policies through methods that address legal limitations, fairness, property benefits, and responsible use of public funds.
- 13.4 Recommend new developments to locate in areas that are contiguous to existing development in the City for orderly expansion of public services.
- 13.5 Provide the full range of infrastructure services to subdivisions at the time of development, including storm sewer, sanitary sewer, public water and electricity.
- 13.6 Require easements for future service connections to adjacent land areas that will eventually develop with urban services.
- 13.7 Encourage, or require where practical, use of energy and water conservation practices (such as water saver faucets, yard watering bans, strategic landscaping, solar energy design).
- 13.8 Utilize BMPs (Best Management Practices) to reduce surface water runoff and control sediments and erosion. BMPs should also be used during the construction of public infrastructure.
- 13.9 Work with Clay County and surrounding public agencies to implement a coordinated well-head protection program that preserves the quality of water and well-fields in the Buffalo

- Aquifer.
- 13.10 Use regional stormwater ponds as opposed to individual on-site detention to reduce flooding hazard, control discharge rates, and provide necessary storage volumes and treatment where appropriate.
  - 13.11 Encourage creative solutions to stormwater management in future developments that utilize natural drainage and infiltration systems in conjunction with storm water piping.
  - 13.12 Evaluate and encourage alternative strategies for parking and street design in new developments that seek to minimize surface runoff.
  - 13.13 Support alternative street designs (pavement widths, use of alternative curb and gutters) that minimize surface water runoff in areas near the Red River.
  - 13.14 Carefully evaluate the costs and benefits of new industry that places a high demand on the wastewater treatment system and public water supply and distribution system.
  - 13.15 Collaborate with private utility providers to share easements for public and private utilities including telecommunication and high speed internet technologies.
  - 13.16 Participate with research entities and energy providers in exploring the application of alternative energy sources.

**Strategic Initiatives**

- 2. Update Official Tools and Regulations.
- 5. Create a Redevelopment Plan for the Mixed-Use Area Along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 6. Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas.
- 7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods.
- 8. Prepare a Park and Open Space Master Plan.
- 9. Update Infrastructure Master Plans.
- 12. Economic Development Initiatives.
- 14. Capital Improvement Programming.



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# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

*Setting the Stage*  
*Planning for the Future*  
**Strategic Initiatives**

## Introduction

Strategic Initiatives is the third of three parts that comprise the Moorhead Comprehensive Plan. The first part, Setting the Stage, took a snap shot of the community in 2003 and analyzed the forces that have made Moorhead what it is today. The second part, Planning for the Future, outlines a Vision for the community and establishes a broad pattern of land use and supporting infrastructure systems to move the community towards its Vision. The third part, Strategic Initiatives, identifies how the Plan is to be implemented by posing recommendations for public and private actions to achieve the community's Vision.

The community has dedicated a great deal of time and energy to the assembly of this plan. The Plan contains a series of policies and strategies that are collectively intended to help the community attain the Vision elements that were identified at the beginning of the planning process using a broad range of community input.

The direction in this Comprehensive Plan has been to establish a land use pattern that allows greater flexibility and a stronger partnership role between the public and private sectors in determining the type, form, character, location, and intensity of future development.

## Understand Available Financial Resources

In order to be effective, comprehensive plans need to be implemented. This section contains an extensive listing of strategic initiatives intended to guide implementation. Focusing on strategies allows the use of various tools over a period of time to achieve desired objectives. However, the tools of today may become outdated in the next decade or even before and should be reviewed on a regular basis. City staff and decision makers will need to retain a current working knowledge of all of the tools that can be used to implement specific implementation strategies. To help serve as a resource, a Financial Toolbox is included in the Appendix of this plan to identify available financial tools. It is the responsibility of City Staff to fully understand financial resources and apply those resources to the appropriate strategy. The Plan attempts to identify possible financial tools as a starting point.

### *Vision Elements*

- Distinctive and Diverse Neighborhoods
- College Atmosphere
- Enhanced Environment
- Responsive Community Facilities and Services
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Educational Excellence
- Vibrant Downtown
- Housing Adequacy and Diversity
- Retail Variety and Abundance
- Connectivity
- Plentiful Arts and Culture
- Economic Opportunities

### **Maintain Flexibility**

Over the next 20 years, Moorhead will experience a number of changes, some of which are foreseen in the Plan and some of which will be entirely unanticipated. Adapting to these changes will require flexibility. Since not all ideas and proposals will conform to the Plan, how can they be assessed and measured? The fundamental answer to this question lies in the Vision statement and its associated elements. The stated Vision and key elements should be used as “yardsticks” to assess ideas and proposals that are not specifically addressed in or conforming to the Plan.

### **Public/Private Sector Involvement**

Implementation of a comprehensive plan involves both the public and private sectors. Within this Plan, Moorhead has articulated a plan for future growth. Realization of the Plan will require both public and private sector investments. For example, in order for housing to be built in a growth area, the private sector needs to acquire the land and construct the housing product. Depending on the circumstances, infrastructure to support the housing such as streets and utilities is a public sector role or the joint responsibility of both the public and private sectors. The public has a role in zoning the property and ensuring that the housing development conforms to required standards through various types of required reviews.

### **Initiatives**

The following are the key Strategic Initiatives for implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **1. *Use the Comprehensive Plan for Day-to-Day Uses***

An effective Comprehensive Plan is one that suffers from excessive use as demonstrated by worn edges, notes in the margins, and numerous post it notes marking frequently referred to pages in the Plan. The following outlines key day-to-day uses of the Plan:

##### **a) The Plan as a Guide and Educational Tool to the Moorhead Community, Builders and Developers**

The growth and evolution of Moorhead is facilitated by many community interests such as the School District, the business community, developers, educational institutions and other special interest groups. The Plan should be promoted to these groups, not as a marketing tool but as a demonstration of good planning, so that as they proceed with their own plans, they do so with

the community's Vision in mind. Residents of the community may also use the Plan as a resource to understand the community's direction and Vision.

**b) The Plan as a City Staff Resource**

Arguably, the Plan should be used most often by the City Staff. The Plan should be used to guide staff recommendations and should be used to direct responses to inquiries from the community about development and redevelopment concepts. It is the responsibility of City Staff to ensure that the Plan is kept up to date, and when inconsistencies arise, to facilitate resolution through a community forum.

**c) The Plan as a Policy Guide to Decision Makers and Advisors**

Advisory boards and City Council members are charged with making recommendations and, subsequently, key decisions affecting the development and growth of the community. The Vision and Key Elements are the "yardstick" to measure innovative ideas. The policy statements within the Plan are intended to support informed decision making.

**d) The Plan as a Basis for Setting Annual Goals and Work Programs**

As advisory boards, commissions and the Council establish annual goals and work programs, the Comprehensive Plan, and particularly the Strategic Initiatives, should serve as a basis for identifying future projects and directives.

**e) The Plan as a Guide to Ongoing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Changes**

Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, an update to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances will commence to bring the official tools into consistency with new directions outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Inevitably, future requests to amend official tools will be brought forth. The Plan should be used to evaluate the merits of such change requests.

**2. Update Official Tools and Regulations**

The Zoning Ordinance is the official regulatory tool to implement the Official Land Use Plan and its associated policies. By law, the Zoning Ordinance must be consistent with the Land Use Plan. The Judiciary system has often cited inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance when siding against a community in a zoning dispute. The Zoning Map and its supporting text are the primary sources for implementing the Land Use Plan. In general, the Zoning Ordinance Map and the new Land Use Plan should be thoroughly reviewed for inconsistencies. Those

*A key objective of the Zoning Ordinance should be to establish clear standards for development and redevelopment and uses allowed under certain zoning classifications so as to facilitate development consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.*



## Strategic Initiatives

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*A mixed-use zoning district should clearly articulate a wide range of permitted uses consistent with the desired character of the mixed-use designation. Standards should be established for:*

- *building height (3 or 4 stories encouraged-- taller structures should emphasize a design that fits with the scale of the surrounding development pattern)*
- *facade treatments*
- *setbacks (at street level and upper floors)*
- *parking forms and locations*
- *pedestrian and vehicle circulation*
- *landscaping*
- *other site and building features*

*For mixed residential areas, clear standards should be established for:*

- *building setbacks (differentiating between garage and home)*
- *accommodations of alleys*
- *transition between low and high density or single family and multifamily unit types*
- *lot size including lot frontage and lot depth*
- *targeted percentages for single family vs. multifamily structure types with incentives built in for achieving the targets.*

inconsistencies should be corrected through a zoning amendment. The following topics should help focus revisions to the Zoning Ordinance:

- **Mixed-Use District:** The Mixed-Use District could take the form of a separate new zoning district or it could serve as an overlay district. The process of updating the Zoning Ordinance should explore the most appropriate form of zoning to achieve the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Redevelopment of the Mixed-Use area is a priority of the City and will be supported by tax incentives and the Economic Development Authority. Mapping of this district along 8<sup>th</sup> Street, connecting to the colleges following the Land Use Plan, and defining the structure of the Ordinance should be priorities. Future redevelopment planning for the mixed-use area should confirm the boundaries of the zoning district or overlay. A clear set of standards should be identified that articulates desired site and building standards such as façade treatments, fenestration, building ingress and egress points, setback standards, lot coverage, building heights, parking and circulation patterns, lighting and signage, and others. In addition, permitted uses should be established appropriate to the district so as to minimize future rezoning requests.
- **Mixed Residential District:** A variety of zoning options for implementing the Mixed Residential land use pattern could be explored. The Mixed Residential Districts may be implemented through the use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process or may be implemented through the application of existing districts through the Growth Area Planning process defined in initiative #6. A third alternative might include establishing a new zoning district altogether. In each case, performance standards will need to be established or modified to ensure adequate design transitions between higher density development and lower density development typologies. Other performance related standards relating to more traditional neighborhood design patterns should be explored as part of the Zoning Ordinance update.
- **Urban Reserve District:** An Urban Reserve District should be considered as a long term holding zone to prevent premature development from complicating orderly expansion of urban growth. The use of the Urban Reserve District should coincide with updated Orderly Annexation Agreements (see initiative #3) and should follow application of extraterritorial review authorities of the City. The Urban Reserve District should establish guidelines and standards for such features as future platting and phasing of urban development, lot size, building placement and setbacks, on-site sanitary sewer

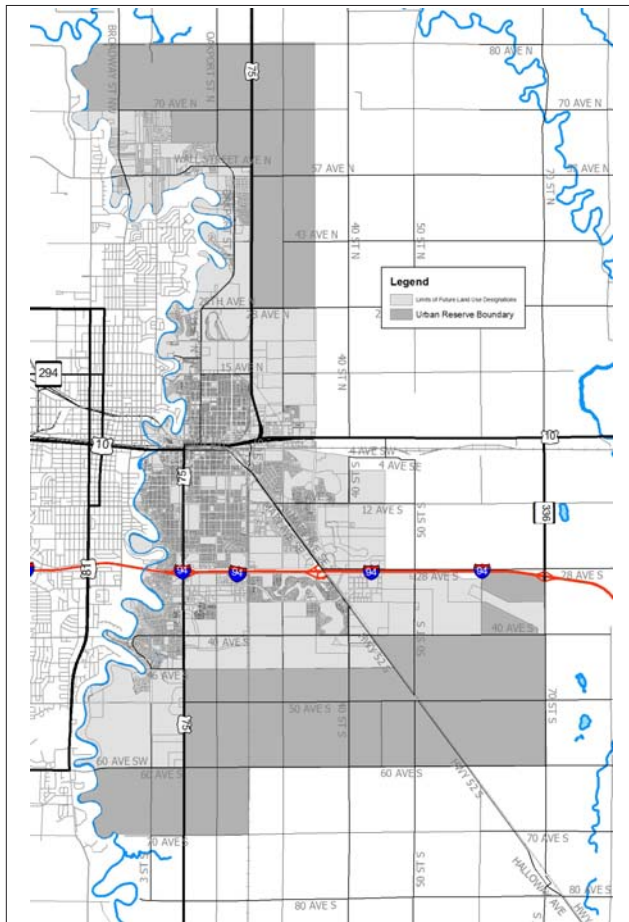


Figure 3-1 illustrating Urban Reserve District Boundaries

systems, private well systems and density limits. Areas that are outside of the areas designated for urban services by the Sanitary Sewer Master Plan and that are not given a land use designation in this plan should be given the Urban Reserve District designation.

- o **Performance Standards and Design Guidelines:** Performance standards or design guidelines address such elements as landscaping standards, parking standards, lighting standards, pedestrian enhancements, urban design, signage, outside storage, and transitions between varying densities of residential development or residential and non-residential developments. A general issue confronted by anyone drafting zoning regulations is the degree to which regulations should prescribe specific development characteristics, as opposed to offering designers greater flexibility. Amendments to Moorhead’s zoning regulations will require a range of performance standards to address various needs based on the overall significance of the district being addressed. Amendments to Moorhead’s zoning regulations should identify performance standards that are essential for success



## Strategic Initiatives

Clear standards should be established for the provisions of accessory structures including:

- limits on the size of an accessory unit
- limits on the occupancy of the unit
- requirement of principal structure being owner occupied
- consistency with principle structure design and materials
- parking accommodations
- ongoing enforcement provisions

and feasible from a market perspective. Regulations should focus on these without sacrificing opportunities for creative and original design.

- **Accessory Structures:** The use of accessory structures as a residential dwelling has become a more favorable trend in urban development. However, several challenges associated with neighborhood “fit” and upkeep must be overcome for this concept to be an acceptable strategy. Through the zoning process, various restrictions could be researched in order to prove accessory structures as a viable housing form. Zoning standards would address appropriate building materials and relationship to principle structure; identifying appropriate districts for such uses; setting restrictions on unit size or bedrooms; establishing requirements for maintenance; occupancy restrictions; and associated performance standards. A significant challenge and impact of allowing Accessory Structures is the associated definitions and enforcement of the rules and regulations. In times of tight budgets, hiring additional staff to enforce new rules and regulations can be challenging. A mechanism for ongoing enforcement should be part of the provisions defined in the ordinance.



Figure 3-2 Key transportation corridors that merit consideration for special zoning overlays.

- **Subdivision Ordinance:** The Subdivision Ordinance provides detailed standards for subdivision platting procedures including such features as landscaping requirements, park dedication policies, street designs, etc. The Subdivision Ordinance should be reviewed against the policies established in the Land Use Plan and modified where inconsistencies exist. Modifications to the Subdivision Ordinance will address development procedures, street design, alley design, block sizes, park dedication, landscaping, and other infrastructure design standards.
- **Special Zoning Overlay District:** A subject of discussion at many meetings throughout the planning process was community image. In this case, a Special Zoning Overlay district could be used to guide the design and appearance of uses along key transportation corridors that warrant a higher than usual design aesthetic. This overlay district would not alter the intended use of the corridor but would instead shape the corridor’s appearance. The use of an overlay district along key transportation corridors can provide additional standards as to the height, size, illumination and location of signage; landscaping quantities, plant types and placement; façade treatments; utility placement and design; or other design features that tend to contribute to a community’s identity and image.

### 3. Update Orderly Annexation Agreements

The City of Moorhead has a history of planning beyond its borders and working with adjacent government entities. As the City continues to experience growth pressures at the edges of its boundaries, annexation discussions with adjacent townships and the City of Dilworth should remain a step ahead of development. In order to provide public infrastructure to future growth areas in a cost effective manner, land areas need to be carefully protected from large lot residential development that may not be compatible with the extension of urban services sometime in the future. The use of Orderly Annexation Agreements to outline incremental annexation phases agreeable to land owners and government entities is encouraged to continue and should be commenced following adoption of this Comprehensive Plan and all future map amendments affecting edge conditions.

### 4. Redesign/Reconstruct Key Streets as Boulevards

The “image” of the community was raised as a key issue at various public meetings during the planning process. One feature that contributes to a strong community image is the appearance of transportation corridors or streetscapes along heavily traveled roadways. A boulevard appearance can go a long way toward enhancing a community’s image and can function as a “gateway” into the community or a specific district. Boulevards can come in a wide variety of designs; however, they all maintain several key aspects including enhanced landscaping and tree canopy, unique lighting, banners and pedestrian/bicycle paths. Key streets that may be candidates for a boulevard appearance include:

- **8<sup>th</sup> Street/Highway 75:** The entire corridor may be a good candidate for a boulevard design, however the type of design will need to vary between the edges of the community and the mixed-use corridor leading into downtown from the south.
- **34<sup>th</sup> Street:** This street has or will become a major north-south corridor connecting two important activity nodes at I-94 and East Highway 10.
- **Main Avenue SE:** This diagonal street represents an entrance to Moorhead and eventually an entrance into the Downtown District. Much of it is already designed with a concrete median that could be replaced by plantings.

*Specific annexation discussions that should be initiated include:*

- *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Dilworth: The MOU should be revisited based on more current growth and planning directions to determine the extent of future urban growth south of Dilworth and east of Moorhead. This may include the Highway 336 Corridor.*
- *Current Annexation Agreement with Oakport. Oakport is experiencing stronger pressures to grow than what was allocated for in the 1990 annexation agreement. This suggests the potential demand for acceleration of annexation prior to what was agreed to in the 1990 agreement.*
- *The City of Moorhead should continue to discuss future governance issues with Clay County and adjacent townships to facilitate orderly urban growth.*



*Figure 3-3 Key corridors that could be evaluated for boulevard designs when reconstructed.*

## Strategic Initiatives

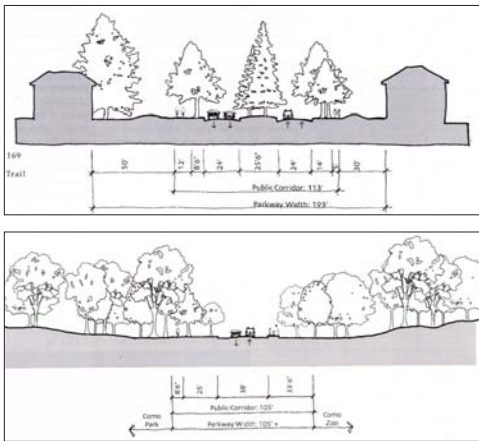


Figure 3-4 Example cross sections of boulevard types showing a median design and one showing boulevards on the side. Source: Design Center for the American Urban Landscape.

- **Highway 10:** This street, vital to Moorhead's Vision, is a major corridor that is cluttered with business signage and commercial activity. It also is another entrance into Moorhead and the Downtown District. A boulevard character along Highway 10 may focus more on low level plantings to preserve sight lines to commercial establishments.

The initiative of creating boulevards along key corridors is a long-term initiative. This strategy should be employed in conjunction with street reconstruction planning efforts at the local, County, State and Federal levels. Future Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) should account for boulevard design schemes.

### 5. Create a Redevelopment Plan for the Mixed-Use Area along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Mixed-use is a relatively new land use designation to Moorhead; although one could argue that Downtown is a prime example. Its application along Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue connecting MSUM, suggests a willingness to consider redevelopment proposals for property along the corridor. There are many property owners who would be potentially impacted by redevelopment both within the corridor and adjacent to it. Establishing a clear and understandable set of rules and expectations will help alleviate concerns over potential impacts and will help define acceptable redevelopment scenarios. Because the corridor is an important tie or link between the Downtown Planning District and the Camtown Planning District, establishing a cohesive Vision for the corridor will provide greater direction and support for the review of redevelopment proposals.

As part of this initiative, creation of a Design Advisory Board should be considered. This board may serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council or Planning Commission. The board could consist of community representatives with technical expertise in architecture, landscape architecture and site design. Such a board could be used for other challenging projects that require a unique degree of community design.

A redevelopment planning effort for the Highway 75/8<sup>th</sup> Street corridor should include at least the following components:

- **Public process** focusing on the surrounding neighborhood that may be most impacted but also involving community wide interests in a meaningful way

- **Land use and massing analysis** to ensure the proper balance of uses given the limited site capacity and infrastructure capacity (traffic generation specifically)
- **Site design** to ensure a desirable and coherent image/identity is achieved along the corridor
- **Fiscal analysis** to understand the site specific financial challenges to redevelopment, to ensure the proper financial tool is used based on statutory limitations, and to provide direction on where public resources are best allocated
- **Design guidelines** to clearly illustrate how design can soften potential transitions to adjacent residential neighborhoods and how new developments can foster an identity linking the colleges with downtown
- **Zoning Change** to accommodate a mixed-use designation either through PUD, zoning overlay or a separate zoning district

Redevelopment planning will require a commitment of staff resources and potential financial resources for professional planning and design services.

## 6. **Conduct Growth Area Plans for Emerging Areas**

As growth continues to push outward towards the edges of the community, a more detailed planning process will enhance the coherency of development patterns, and will present the greatest likelihood of guiding development consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Growth Area Plans are essential to the successful and equitable implementation of the Mixed Residential land use pattern. Key objectives to be achieved through Growth Area Plans are to ensure a strong public infrastructure system (transportation, parks and storm water management) as a neighborhood’s foundation, and a more defined land use pattern to inform and guide re-zoning decisions. Growth Area Plans should be focused around a minimum of 160 acre areas (1/4 section) and should include the following components:

- **A street network:** Except for major arterial or collector roadways, planning for local streets historically has been the responsibility of the development community with limited direction from City Staff. This often results in a street network disconnected from subdivision to subdivision forcing traffic onto few streets and causing traffic

*Growth area plans should be sure to provide enough direction for establishing zoning district boundaries and performance related standards.*



congestion. Accessibility to neighborhoods and the design of the street system to safely and efficiently handle traffic is a core building block of the neighborhood. The ability for the City Engineers and Planners to play a stronger role in street network design beyond arterial and collector streets ensures better connectivity.

- **Regionalized stormwater infrastructure:** Stormwater systems have the ability to function as amenities, if integrated with development, as opposed to serving merely as utilitarian pieces of infrastructure. Stormwater needs can be accommodated over a larger area if planned in the context of the neighborhood scale (160 acres) as opposed to with each individual plat or subdivision.
- **Connected park and open space systems:** Park land dedication on a subdivision by subdivision approach often results in numerous parks that lack the space and programming efficiency to establish identity. Establishing a park system that serves the neighborhood scale (160 acres or more) ensures the ability to integrate a linear park system that connects to the overall community park system. This approach to planning also enables the City to play a proactive roll in determining where future park needs should be accommodated.
- **Detailed land use plan:** With the notion of mixed residential spread across a large area, it is important to have a way of defining a more detailed land use pattern that guides zoning and demonstrates land use relationships at the neighborhood level. The Growth Area Plan will identify a rational and equitable means of allocating land use consistent with the Plan and the objectives of individual land owners and developers.

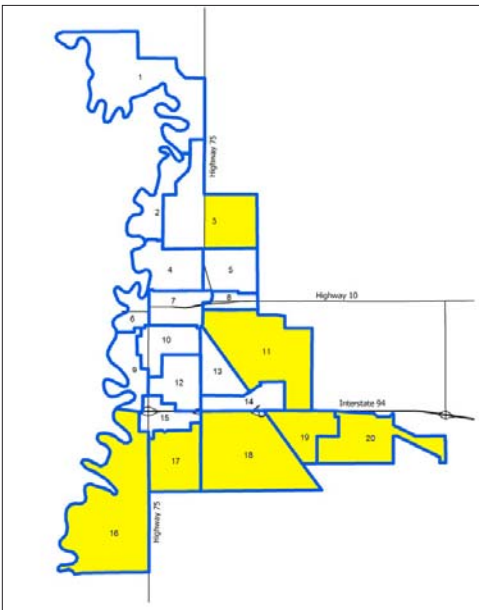


Figure 3-5 Growth Area Plans should be initiated in neighborhoods on the edge of the community where future urban growth is expected to occur.

Completion of a Growth Area Plan would be triggered by one of two events. One option would be through a community decision as an effort to direct growth to a certain area of the community where a public need supports extension of infrastructure. A public need could be associated with economic development, transportation, environmental, schools, or health related enhancements. A second option that would trigger a Growth Area Plan would be for a developer or land owner who wishes to plan a development project.

Each Growth Area Plan would be completed under the direction of the City Planner with technical assistance from other City Staff. The Growth Area Plans would also equally involve developers (or developer representatives) and land owners (or landowner representatives) within the defined neighborhood.



As preliminary and final plats are submitted to the City, they would be checked for consistency with not only the Comprehensive Plan, but the Growth Area Plan as well. Progress of development within the neighborhood(s) subject to the Growth Area Plan would be tracked through the City's GIS system. Infrastructure improvements (including detailed design) would be made in accordance with the Growth Area Plan.

Projects that meet the statutory requirements for environmental review, or that choose to conduct a discretionary review, may follow the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) approach to environmental documentation as outlined in Minnesota Rules 4410.3610. The AUAR approach could serve as the Growth Area Plan provided it included a master planning approach to identify street patterns and park locations.

Growth Area Plans could be funded by the City, carrying the costs until such time that development occurs. As development occurs, City costs would be re-captured through public improvement assessments. Sharing costs with land owners and developers could offset the public cost. Depending upon the total size of the project area, the Growth Area Plans are anticipated to cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 (2004 dollars) per plan. Exceptions to the Area Plan process should be considered for parcels of land that are less than 20 acres and are in an area heavily constrained by pre-existing development patterns.

## **7. Conduct Neighborhood Plans for Mature Neighborhoods**

This initiative is intended to focus on existing neighborhoods that are guided for Moderate Density Mixed-Residential. Neighborhoods may consist entirely of a Planning District or may be more narrowly defined by the community. Many of the neighborhoods guided for mixed residential density generally consist of a solid base of well maintained single-family homes. However, in some locations housing has a greater likelihood for deterioration or differed maintenance. These areas typically occur where land uses transition from residential to non-residential or from lower density (predominantly owner-occupied housing) to higher density (predominantly renter-occupied housing). Other areas have a lot configuration that may support accessory units better than others (deep lots served by alleys.) The Comprehensive Plan process does not allow a micro scale review of these areas to determine where efforts should be focused at strengthening neighborhoods. Neighborhood Plans should focus on identifying projects that will strengthen the neighborhood by preventing and correcting deteriorated structures, filling in vacant lots, maximizing the efficiency of existing park facilities, making sure that park facilities respond to the neighborhood demographic and ensuring safe and

efficient circulation (both traffic and pedestrian). Housing strategies could be focused based on directions from the Neighborhood Plans. Neighborhood Plans should include the following:

- **A public process:** Planning within existing neighborhoods must be facilitated through a process that directly involves the neighborhood.
- **A “quantitative” analysis of the neighborhood:** Much of this information is available through City databases and can be analyzed efficiently through the use of the City’s Geographic Information System. This information includes property data (unit types, property values, age of structures, building permits), traffic data (volumes, accidents, etc.), park lands and systems, and existing infrastructure systems. Mapping of this information provides a snapshot of the neighborhood and can indicate patterns and trends.
- **A “qualitative” analysis of the neighborhood:** Looking at quantitative data can reveal a variety of patterns. The ability to “observe” these patterns is just as important in truly understanding the great and not so great characteristics of strong neighborhoods. Qualitative analysis can be done through visual surveys of existing building stock, observation of traffic movements and patterns, and observation of park usage. Mapping these observations for comparison to the quantitative information provides the foundation for understanding neighborhood strengths and problems.
- **Identification of improvement projects:** Based on the findings and public review of the findings, projects that enhance the neighborhood should be identified and solutions should be explored.
- **Design policy:** A clear design policy should be established that ensures that redevelopment within a neighborhood contributes to the strengths and character of the neighborhood.
- **Financial review:** A detailed review of specific projects should be conducted to determine what financial resources are needed and what tools are best suited for these improvements

A Neighborhood Plan may be triggered by three different mechanisms. A neighborhood might petition to have a plan completed, a developer wishing to do a redevelopment project, or the City may initiate the process as a catalyst to redevelopment.

Conducting Neighborhood Plans can be a costly endeavor depending upon the degree of analysis and the complexity of the area. For example, a neighborhood plan within the Camtown Planning District area may require greater attention to redevelopment and traffic circulation challenges associated with the colleges than would a Neighborhood Plan for portions of the Robert Asp District.

A key to successful implementation of the Neighborhood Plan is support at the neighborhood level. Moorhead has a public that is eager to discuss and envision the future of its community. Finding a passionate advocate within a neighborhood to lead a planning effort enhances the value of the Neighborhood Plan.

## **8. *Park and Open Space Master Plan***

Through the Comprehensive Plan, some broad policy direction was established for the park and open space system. The importance of parks and open space to the establishment and preservation of existing strong neighborhoods suggests that planning for a community-wide system should be conducted under the general directions of the Comprehensive Plan, but as a separate more focused process. Such a process should be facilitated through the Park Advisory Board, and should establish guidelines for new parks, linear parks and renovations to existing parks. It also should revisit the park dedication policies and ensure a policy that will deliver the desired resources to build and maintain the Moorhead park system. The Park and Open Space Master Plan would help facilitate park planning efforts through the Growth Area Plans and Neighborhood Plans, identifying a logical system of connected linear parks. The process of completing the Plan should identify underutilized parks and determine if they should be redesigned or taken out of the park system to be replaced by other more desirable park lands. A detailed Capital Improvement Program and an ongoing strategy for maintenance would be an outcome of this initiative.

## **9. *Update Infrastructure Master Plans***

The City and Moorhead Public Service currently maintain master plans for its infrastructure systems including Sanitary Sewer Systems, Storm Sewer Systems, Public Water Supply and Distribution System, and Electric Utility. The City has a successful history of coordinating infrastructure system improvements with land use planning and growth projections. This coordination should continue with a cursory review of the growth directions established in this plan and the conduct of updates to the master plans as necessary. Future CIPs should be adjusted to identify improvements necessary

to accommodate future growth. Staff from Moorhead Public Service and the City Engineering Department should be involved in the development of the Growth Area Plans.

## **10. Advocate for Creative Community Design**

Advocacy is an important first step in improving the design of the community (neighborhoods, corridors, parks, buildings, etc.) The direction for good design is inherently embedded within the Vision and Key Elements. The City should establish a grassroots citizen group, or add to an existing advisory board or commission, the responsibility to explore examples around the country where creative design approaches have helped build the kind of neighborhoods and places that Moorhead envisions. This group might be responsible for circulating books, articles, and videotapes that present successful case studies. It may also be responsible for facilitating lectures or meetings to help make the development community, real estate community and general citizenry aware of alternative development and design patterns. Access to the educational institutions in Moorhead and Fargo may be a good avenue for the establishment of an Advocacy Group for Creative Community Design. This group could lend support to Neighborhood Plan and Growth Area Plan initiatives. Depending upon demand, organization of the group could be left as a voluntary group; however, should demand be high and the volume of information become over burdening, the need to shape the group into a more formal organization should be understood.

## **11. Conduct Annual Reviews of the Comprehensive Plan**

If Moorhead wants to preserve its distinction as a unique and progressive community it is going to need to consider the interconnectedness of all of the elements of this Comprehensive Plan. It will require adherence to the Vision elements and the policies identified in the Plan, and it will require further consideration of the relationships between various strategic initiatives. For example, providing opportunities for student housing near the college campuses will require redevelopment in adjacent or nearby neighborhoods, which in turn will require reconstruction of infrastructure systems, streets and sidewalks.

A “Future of the City” forum could be established to meet on an annual basis to assess progress on attaining the Vision and Key Elements of this Plan. The forum should focus on both the success and failures, if any, of the Plan. The results of this dialogue, should lead to potential modifications or amendments of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Council should initiate the “Future of

the City” forum including widespread community participation. Participants should include members of the City’s boards and commissions, civic leaders, representatives from the colleges and the public schools, residents, business owners and other interested parties.

## **12. Economic Development Initiatives**

Expanding the commercial and industrial base of the City is an ongoing effort. Moorhead’s history of successful economic development (i.e. downtown redevelopment and securing JOBZ status) suggests that most of its initiatives should continue. Identifying new, effective strategies for Moorhead will most likely come in response to the needs articulated by existing and prospective businesses. Thus, listening and establishing relationships with existing businesses, and even business prospects, is the best initial step. Initiatives which do and can benefit economic development efforts include:

- a) **Establish a Business Call Program** or a system of regular meetings with existing businesses to explore needs and future opportunities through individual meetings and group forums. City staff currently performs these activities on a one-on-one basis. These meetings and forums should be primarily focused on listening, and if resources already exist, understanding why these existing resources are not meeting the needs of businesses. Using the information from these meetings, Moorhead should work with local partners, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Center, colleges, university, FM-COG, Clay County and the school district to address the needs identified.
  
- b) **Meet with local commercial realtors and site selectors** to promote the community and its resources, as well as understand business needs and possible impediments to locating in Moorhead.
  
- c) **Acknowledge and promote local businesses, and their employees** for their contribution to the community through press releases, newsletter articles, and recognitions for anniversaries or notable expansions.
  
- d) **Identify and market to industry businesses** which would complement and/or benefit from close proximity to existing Moorhead businesses, student labor pool and/or existing labor force which graduates every year from the area’s colleges and universities.



- e) **Create a supportive business and entrepreneurial environment** through connections to local resources, business networks, start-up financing, and business incubation opportunities.
- f) **Work with businesses and residents to promote buying locally.** If necessary, identify barriers to buying locally (i.e. hours of operation) and work with the business community to address these impediments.
- g) **Support additional legislative efforts** to level the playing field for businesses in Moorhead as compared to those in North Dakota.

### **13. Housing Initiatives**

A diverse and adequate housing supply is one of the Key Elements of Moorhead's Vision. Housing is addressed by various policies throughout the Land Use Plan section and the Neighborhood Focus Area section. Achieving the Vision requires more than simply providing a land use pattern and identifying policies that support a diverse and adequate supply of housing. The City currently provides a variety of housing programs and services through the Community Services Department and through the Moorhead Public Housing Agency. The Comprehensive Plan encourages the continuation of those programs and offers the following initiatives:

- a) **Housing programs:** The City should continue to offer first-time home buyer programs and home improvement programs through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) and the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds. Because these programs are limited in their eligibility criteria, the City should monitor the effectiveness of these programs and explore other programs to meet the needs of those demographic groups that do not meet the criteria to be served by MHFA and CDBG programs. For example, seniors on fixed incomes who have previously owned a home or who have tied up assets and little incentive to improve their homes are currently ineligible for MHFA and CDBG funds. Home improvement funding should also be considered for those homes that are student housing.
- b) **New development patterns and alternative housing products:** Developers, contractors and builders will often build a housing product that has been proven in the market place and will tend to duplicate the same house model throughout the community.

In striving to achieve a diversity of housing styles and types, the City may need to facilitate design experiments or explorations of alternative housing types and styles. Initiative # 10 calls for establishing an advocacy group for creative design. A specific focus of this group could be to demonstrate alternative housing designs and types to the development and home building community. The Home Builders Association and the Association of Realtors could also serve as a catalyst to this type of program or ongoing event.

- c) **Redevelopment and reuse:** A major reason for living in the City of Moorhead is the strength of its neighborhoods including the colleges and the small town downtown atmospheres. The historical pattern of development in Moorhead has reached a point where older institutional uses such as schools and churches are expanding and leaving the developed portion of the City for new facilities at the edge of the community. Facilities left should be studied for redevelopment or reuse as a unique form of housing. A quick search will find many successful examples of conversion of school facilities to senior housing or apartment complexes. Older churches often possess a unique character that could be marketed for artist or theater studios which house the artists and actors as well.
  
- d) **Implement the recommendations from the Moorhead Housing Task Force Report of March 2002:** This report thoroughly documented the issues and challenges facing the Moorhead community relating to housing development.

## **14. Capital Improvement Program**

The City of Moorhead should establish a 5 year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that prioritizes public improvement projects and identifies funding amounts and sources. Currently, the City maintains a CIP for street improvements. The CIP should be updated following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

