

Integration with Ongoing Community Efforts

The Renaissance Zone Development Plan complements the existing community plans and initiatives that have been formally adopted by the City Commission or are simply taking place in the City of Fargo.

Comprehensive Policy Plan

The Comprehensive Policy Plan outlines the City's overall approach to land use and general community development and redevelopment. It consists of a series of "policy letters" that articulate development guidelines for decision makers to use as they review projects and policies. The vision and goals of the Renaissance Zone Development Plan reinforce and supplement the ideas set forth in the Comprehensive Policy Plan. The following summary statements highlight the policy letters that are most relevant to the downtown area and the Renaissance Zone. (Full plan included in Appendix I)

Policy Letter 108: Downtown Future Use and Development.

The City of Fargo should encourage downtown development of all types to include general merchandise retailers, financial institutions, office developments, full range residential housing, and social, cultural and entertainment facilities. The Central Business District should be the mixed-use center of the city.

Policy Letter 109: Critical Stability.

The City of Fargo should encourage programs, activities and systems that enhance the Central Business District and draw visitors and residents.

Policy Letter 110: Good Convenience and Amenities.

The City of Fargo should support the development of neighborhood and convenience commercial areas to serve residential needs. Development projects for high-density residential use should include adequate conveniences and amenities.

Policy Letter 111: Downtown Traffic Access and Flow.

The City of Fargo should promote and support transportation improvement strategies for downtown Fargo.

Policy Letter 112: Downtown Parking.

Public parking should be planned for by a broad based representation of civic and public entities, and provided in the Central Business District at strategic locations to ensure the interests of all entities are met. Convenient and desirable parking should be available to persons using the downtown and be linked to the overall pedestrian system of walkways and skyways to attract the public.

Policy Letter 113: Condition of the Periphery of Downtown.

The City of Fargo should define redevelopment areas in and around the Central Business District and categorize those areas based on the needs of the neighborhood. (redevelopment, conversion or preservation).

Policy Letter 114: Beautification Standards for Downtown.

The City of Fargo should insist upon a positive image both aesthetically and functionally on public and private development and redevelopment in the downtown

area through proper design of landscaping, tree planting, parking, architecture, street furniture and signage. Standards should be adopted in a development plan that is compatible with the historic image of this area.

Policy Letter 115: Historic Preservation.

A list of historic buildings and structures should be established by the Historic Preservation Commission. Any public project affecting those buildings will be subject to review and comment by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Policy Letter 215: Public Land or Facility Development

The City of Fargo should require governmental and public entities to uphold similar standards and practices in the process for public land and public facilities development or redevelopment. Special consideration may be given to projects of limited scale and public impact to best serve the public interests.

Policy Letter 218: Balancing of Housing Needs.

The City of Fargo, through coordinated interjurisdictional efforts, should ensure a fair, equitable, and rational distribution of housing to meet the needs of several population groups. Siting of special needs housing should be consistent throughout the community.

Policy Letter 219: Mixed Use Design Standards

The City of Fargo should achieve a higher degree of integration of various housing types in residential areas through mixed-use design standards.

Policy Letter 401: Use of Assets

The City of Fargo should evaluate the citywide street maintenance and renovation program, and develop strategies to improve operating systems to ensure that street conditions are not a contributing factor to the deterioration of existing neighborhoods.

Policy Letter 403: Downtown Plan.

The City of Fargo should facilitate an Area Plan that draws on the many plans in existence for the downtown. The Area Plan will include appropriate details and information necessary to guide the Planning Commission in land use development decisions.

Policy Letter 404: Maintenance of the City Core

The City of Fargo should target the City Core with incentives to ensure that development of this area is economically feasible. A balanced targeting of incentives is required between the City Core and the fringe areas of Fargo.

Policy Letter 609: Beautification Standards for Corridors

The City of Fargo should encourage the development and implementation of beautification standards to improve the aesthetics of transportation corridors and protect the image of the City.

Policy Letter 701: Riverfront Coordination

The City of Fargo should ensure proposed land use development will not negatively impact the river. Efforts to improve the quality of the river and prevent the degradation of the river system must be enhanced.

Policy Letter 703: Riverfront.

The City of Fargo should encourage development projects within the Central Business District that support and are compatible with riverfront plans and utilization strategies. Riverfront property should be protected from disruptive uses.

Fargo Blight Study

The Department of Planning and Development completed a survey of the community's most blighted areas, as part of the city's community development program. Fargo's study area encompassed a large portion of downtown Fargo, and consequently, the proposed Renaissance Zone (see map in Appendix C). The far edge of the survey area is defined by 6th Avenue on the north, 2nd Street on the east, 1st Avenue S on the south, and 10th Street on the west.

The Study identified a number of action items that could be undertaken by the city to develop commercial or industrial properties, or to encourage the elimination and prevention of the spread of slums and blight.

*"In keeping with state standards, the City of Fargo proposes to **implement** a renewal program that focuses on the physical deterioration of the four designated Deteriorated Areas. The city's renewal program will include, but is not limited to, the following activities:*

- Reconstruction of the Broadway and Broadway Streetscape
- 1st Avenue Streetscape Improvements
- Development of areawide streetscape and design standards
- Storefront rehabilitation grant program, to renovate deteriorated storefronts
- Grants and loans for Handicap Accessibility improvements
- Tax incentives (including the Historic Preservation tax credit) to redevelop older buildings
- Downtown job creation activities
- Incentives to develop new housing downtown
- Improved security downtown
- Staff time to promote redevelopment and offer technical assistance"¹¹

Again, the Renaissance Zone Development Plan helps to achieve the goals outlined in the Blight Study, and to address the conditions described therein.

¹¹ Fargo Blight Study (1998), 24.

Downtown Area Plan

Part of the city's land use planning process involves the development of neighborhood and area plans. These plans bring the ideals of the Comprehensive Policy Plan to a specific geographic area of the city by applying them in a manner that is deemed appropriate by city staff and by the residents of the affected area.

The Department of Planning and Development completed the Downtown Area Plan in 1996. It established the boundary of the downtown area (see map on page 37) and then divided the downtown into five separate districts, for planning and evaluation purposes.

The majority of the Renaissance Zone is contained in the Broadway, Riverfront and Island Park Districts. The Plan outlined specific recommendations for each of these areas (listed below). (Full plan included in Appendix H)

Broadway District

1. **Mixed use** of commercial businesses and housing should be encouraged in this district. Housing should be encouraged in vacant second and third floor space in this district. The existing industrial district should be rezoned to a commercial/multi-family housing zone. The zoning ordinance should also be amended to allow housing in the commercially zoned areas of the district.
2. This district should be the priority area for the use of CDBG funds available for **storefront renovation loans** available from the City of Fargo.
3. **Preservation of the historic district** is important to the economic base of the downtown. There should be design standards in this district to protect the historic areas of this district as noted on the map showing the historic preservation/design standard areas. Design standards should include the requirement that building demolition include repair of the scars on the remaining buildings.
4. Heavy industrial **land uses** and adult entertainment should be discouraged in this district.
5. Additional social service offices and facilities should be discouraged from locating on Broadway, Main Avenue, and South 8th Street. Those social service offices and facilities in need of a downtown location should find locations in the Westside District of the Downtown.
6. The **mall structure**/format of Broadway should be removed. The Broadway mall area should be returned to the way Broadway is to the north of the mall.
7. Several areas have been identified for **redevelopment or reinvestment**. These include a vacant building at 10 Broadway which should be preserved, the Lark Theatre site on 1st Avenue North which could be cleared or converted, the Fargo Theatre parking lot where there are plans for a theater expansion, property to the east of the
8. Great Northern Depot site which could be cleared or converted, and the block of property north of the Ground Transportation Center which could be cleared. Redevelopment of the building at 10 Broadway should preserve the building. It is acceptable to clear the site for parking or new buildings on all of the other redevelopment areas in this district. The City should not invest community development resources in low density housing in identified redevelopment areas.

Riverfront District Plan and Recommendations

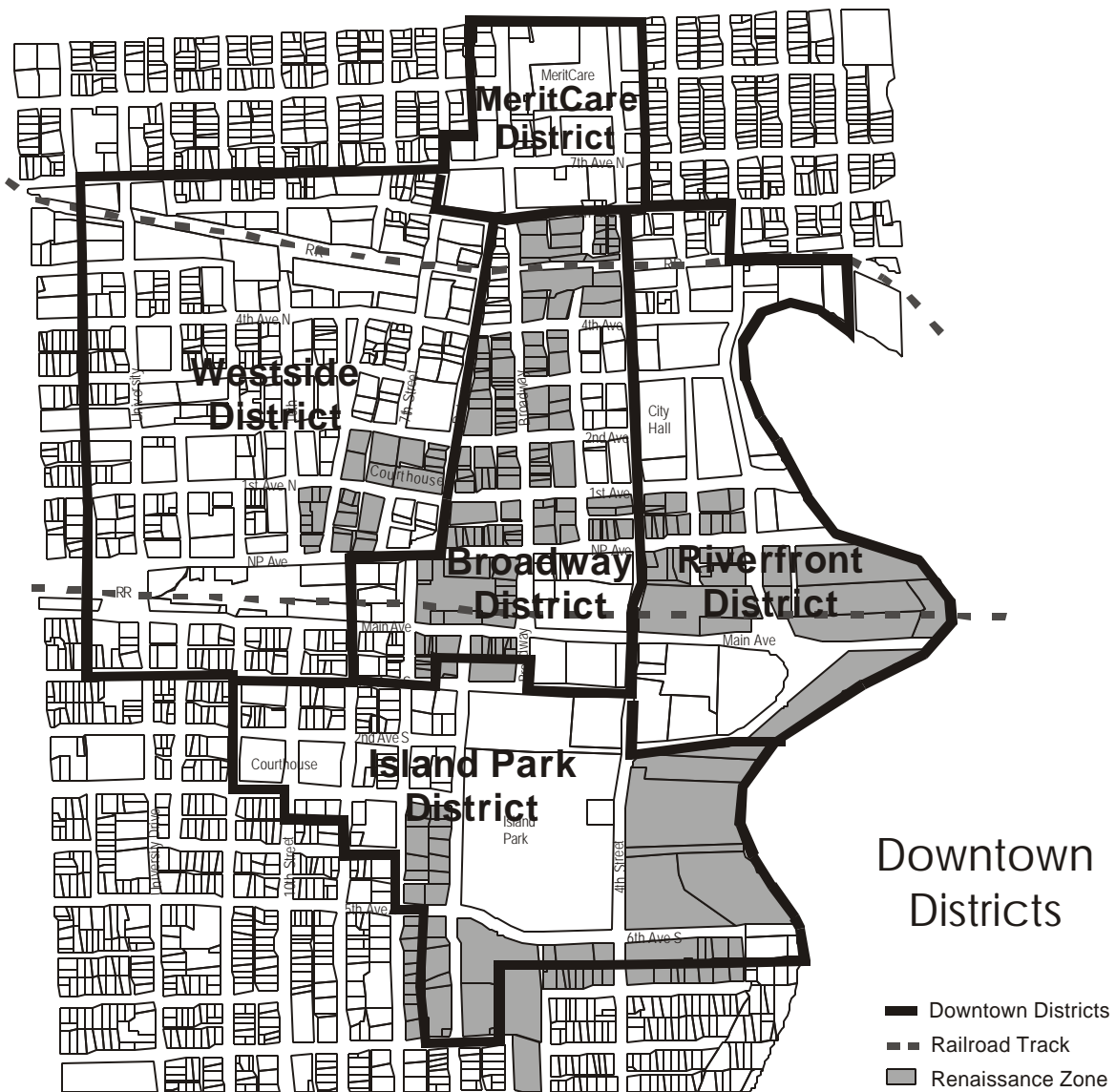
1. Offices, housing, and other commercial businesses that are compatible with existing **land uses**, and sensitive to the river, should be encouraged in this district.
2. This district should not be promoted as a major shopping district.
3. It is important to maintain the motel in this district.
4. It is important to preserve the **historic district** along N.P. Avenue in this district. This should be done by preserving the old warehouses in the district for existing land uses or by conversion to other land uses compatible with this district. Design standards should include the requirement that any building demolition include repair of the scars on the remaining buildings.
5. The existing green space along the river is important. There should be **design standards**, particularly for height, for new development along the river.
6. Development along the river should be consistent with proper **floodplain management** techniques. There should be no development in the floodway that might increase flooding. Development in the floodplain should be limited to land uses that will not be subject to damage from flooding.
7. The land adjacent to Main Avenue should be rezoned to commercial or multi-family housing, and other **zoning** classifications in this district should be reviewed.
8. Additional heavy industrial and adult entertainment land uses should be discouraged in this district.
9. If **industrial land uses** in this district cease operation in the future, that land should be converted to a mix of offices, residential, commercial, and public land uses.

Island Park District

1. Any **expansion of commercial businesses** and/or public facilities should be sensitive to the residential neighborhoods that surround their facilities. Expansion of commercial businesses should not extend beyond the district boundaries outlined in this plan.
2. Allow low density professional offices and day care centers to be developed within the district boundaries.
3. Preserve the **historical** residential neighborhood that is just beyond the district boundary.
4. Preserve the natural, geographic, and historic integrity of **Island Park** and preserve the park facilities. The encroachment of additional buildings and parking into the park should be prevented.
5. Encourage a **mixed use** of housing and commercial land uses in the redevelopment of the Heartland Medical property.
6. Heavy industrial and adult entertainment land uses should not be allowed in this district.

- Expansion of County offices and facilities should be sensitive to the adjacent residential neighborhood, particularly parking. Any additional parking needed by the County should be done with a parking deck on the block with the Juvenile Detention Center in connection with the campus plan.

Since the Renaissance Zone does not completely encompass any of these three areas, not all of the recommendations apply to the Renaissance Zone directly. However, the overall approach to redevelopment within each of these areas is consistent with that which is proposed in the Renaissance Zone Development Plan.



Downtown Action Team Report

In the fall of 1998, the Mayor called together a group of city officials to put together the city's blueprint for downtown initiatives. The Downtown Action Team identified the condition of infrastructure in the area, as well as other perceived development needs. They then put together a list of recommended action items.

Transportation and Parking

- Create a Parking Authority
- Construct a Main Avenue Parking Ramp (TIF)
- Upgrade the University Drive Underpass
- Consider a Downtown Shuttle Bus and transit route changes
- Make improvements to the 1st Avenue/NP Avenue Corridor

Image and Appearance

- Upgrade pedestrian corridors
- Reconstruct Broadway
- Enhance Building Inspections
- Pursue train whistle abatement
- Promote Historic Preservation
- Enhance Security Coordination
- Establish private litter control

Land Use and Redevelopment

- Promote redevelopment and reinvestment
- Eliminate and clear blighted structures
- Improve property between Main and NP Avenues
- Create a new Entertainment Anchor

While the Renaissance Zone Plan doesn't directly address each of these items, it is consistent with the overall intent of the plan.

Other community efforts

In addition to the formal planning processes that have been initiated by the City, there are numerous community efforts that affect downtown Fargo and the Renaissance Zone.

River Keepers is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting awareness and greater utilization of the Red River. They not only plan a number of riverfront activities in the downtown area each year, but are also very involved in all the city's downtown planning

efforts. They also have a role in the growing move to coordinate efforts between downtown groups in Fargo and in Moorhead.

The *Downtown Community Partnership* is an association of downtown businesses and other downtown interests. This group is very involved in downtown event planning and in the overall promotion of this part of the city. The board and staff has been instrumental in the creation of the Renaissance Zone Plan and will continue to be in its implementation.

Project Tomorrow is a metropolitan visioning initiative that began in 1998 and is just now entering the implementation phase. The community goals outlined by the Project Tomorrow process fit perfectly with what the Renaissance Zone plan is trying to do. Their effort encourages the creation of place-based attractions and districts, the coordination of efforts within and between communities, a renewed and vital downtown district, and more coordinated and varied transportation options, to name just a few.

Historic Preservation efforts are also gaining momentum in the community. The Fargo Heritage Society, the city's Historic Preservation Commission, and some neighborhood-based interests are all working together to raise the community's awareness of its historic assets and resources, and to provide greater technical assistance to people who are interested in doing historic preservation work (whether it is through preservation, rehabilitation, renovation or restoration).

All of these efforts represent a portion of the plan for development in the Renaissance Zone. All of these organizations must (and will) also have a part in its implementation if the initiative is to be a success.