

Vision and Goals

No plan can be successful without a collective vision that reflects the many needs and interests of the community. This plan will focus only on the vision and goals that apply to the Renaissance Zone in Fargo. The people and organizations that are involved in the implementation of this plan will develop the exact objectives that accompany the vision and goals over time.¹⁰

Vision

Local ideas about downtown revitalization do not appear to be transitory. The vision for the Renaissance Zone is entirely consistent with the vision for downtown that has been articulated in a number of recent planning efforts. The Vision for the Renaissance Zone, as defined by the Renaissance Zone Advisory Committee, follows:

Downtown Fargo's Renaissance Zone is an economically vital, culturally rich mixed-use district where there are well-designed public and private spaces for residents, visitors, employees, and employers, and where an appreciation for the district's historic character and natural amenities is paramount.

Economic Vitality.

Provide an environment that will both strengthen current businesses and attract new commercial enterprises in order to build a sound economic base that is marked by sustainability and diversity.

Housing Diversity.

Encourage sustainability in the downtown residential market by promoting the development of upscale, market-rate housing options, enhancing the sense of community and neighborhood in the downtown area, and in general, increasing the area's attractiveness as a place to live, work and play.

Vibrant City Center.

Make downtown Fargo a desirable destination by creating a physical environment that is aesthetically pleasing and sensitive to the historic significance of the area, while also encouraging programs, activities and investments that will draw visitors and residents downtown.

¹⁰ The terms used to describe the planning process can sometimes be confusing, but the general idea underlying each of them is clear. A "Vision" is a forward-looking statement that describes a desired future -- "What do we want downtown Fargo to be in the future?" Goals state what it is we mean to do, although not yet in detail. They provide general direction and describe the issues that were identified in the vision (the desired future). Objectives are achievable, measurable steps taken to achieve one or more goals. They specify a single key result and explain concisely the "what", "when", "how much" and/or "how many".

Goals

Fargo's Renaissance Zone program goals and those of the State of North Dakota both focus on the need for renewal, investment and redevelopment. The Renaissance Zone Advisory Committee tried to determine what it would take to encourage the type of downtown revitalization that is in keeping with these ideas and with the tenets of the vision statement. The following list of goals helps to define the direction that should be followed as the Zone Authority reviews and approves Renaissance Zone projects.

Above all else, putting vitality back in the downtown means getting people to go there and to use it. It is imperative that we work together to make the downtown Renaissance Zone a place people not only need to go, but a place people want to go.

- Activity Generators. Develop activity generating enterprises along the Renaissance Zone's major commercial corridors: Broadway/Roberts Street and NP/1st Avenues.
- Walkable Districts. Create "walkable districts" (10 minute walk from one end to the other) that integrate a wide range of activities and land uses, including cultural attractions; thus encouraging on-street activity and interaction while discouraging unnecessary auto traffic, parking problems, and congestion.
- Ground Floor Uses. Reserve ground floor land uses to those that will encourage streets to come to life -- shops, offices, cafes, restaurants and other "public" facilities.
- Neighborhood Center. Make "Broadway" Fargo's "Main Street" -- a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use magnet that anchors downtown neighborhoods. It is a natural neighborhood center because it is a connection between the MeritCare and Island Park areas, as well as between the west side and riverfront districts.
- Transportation Issues. Manage downtown transportation, accessibility and parking issues in a manner that will allow for further commercial development and will make the entire area more user-friendly.
- Safe Streets – Safe Neighborhoods. Encourage safe streets and safe neighborhoods by relying on and utilizing the "natural surveillance" of lively and active streets.
- User Needs. Encourage projects that consider the needs of their users, in addition to the needs of downtown users in general.
- High Quality Housing. Stimulate the production of unique high quality housing that is developed in areas targeted for residential development or as a component of a mixed use project.
- Housing Amenities. Integrate quality housing with public open space and neighborhood amenities, requiring the enhancement of existing amenities in conjunction with the creation of new ones.
- Downtown Entryways. Enhance auto entry experiences with landscaping improvements to all major corridors (Broadway/Roberts, 1st/NP Avenues, Main Avenue) and gateway statements at Broadway/Main Avenue, Broadway/6th Avenue N, 1st Avenue/River, Main Avenue/River, and Main Avenue/10th Street.
- The Place to Be. Make downtown the entertainment/cultural/recreational center of the city: "If you're looking for something to do - downtown is the place to be." Make downtown a key destination for visitors/conventioneers and a key destination for residents.

- A Place Like No Other. Highlight the unique historic character of the Renaissance Zone by placing a high value on historic preservation and overall awareness of the history of the area.
- Riverfront Open Space. Provide additional riverfront parks and open spaces for downtown resident and visitor recreation and for riverfront image enhancement.
- Spruce up the area. Encourage artists to use place-based artwork (ex. river-themed or historic-themed murals) to spruce up buildings and the entire area in a way that brings a sense of community pride and excitement to downtown Fargo.
- Riverfront as an Asset. Recognize and utilize the riverfront as one of the city's greatest assets while respecting its role as a powerful and active river. Make the downtown riverfront a source of pride and enjoyment for local residents.
- 24 hours a day – 7 days a week – 365 days a year. Design spaces, facilities and features that will attract people to the area both day and night, on weekdays and weekends, and during all seasons of the year.
- Connections and Coordination. Coordinate public and private efforts to ensure that projects enhance, rather than detract from the connectivity of the area. Strong connections between people, places and things to do are vital to creating a strong sense of community.