PLAN PREVIEW

City of Fargo
CORE NEIGHBORHOODS MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2020

THE CITY OF Fargo FAR MORE

Prepared by czb

Plan Preview

This Plan Preview of the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan has been developed (1) to provide an update on the status of plan components that have been in the works during Phases 1 and 2 of the project and (2) to demonstrate how those parts might be sequenced and organized as the plan gets drafted during October and November. While the different parts of the plan are beginning to take shape, guidance from committee members, City staff, and other stakeholders remains critical in shaping the final document that will be delivered in December.

Proposed Document Structure

The table of contents for this Plan Preview, as outlined on this page, reflects the proposed structure of the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan, including the compilation of implementation briefs for each neighborhood in Part 5.

3 Introduction

4 **PART 1**
Key Issues, Conditions, and Trends

6 **PART 2**
Critical Concepts for Neighborhood Planning in Fargo

8 **PART 3**
Vision, Values, and Planning Principles for the Core Neighborhoods

10 **PART 4**
Core Neighborhoods Toolkit

18 **PART 5**
Neighborhood-by-Neighborhood Implementation Briefs

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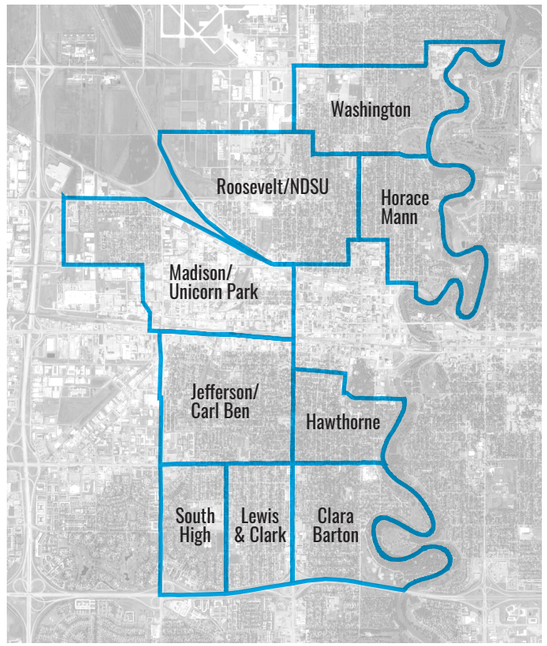
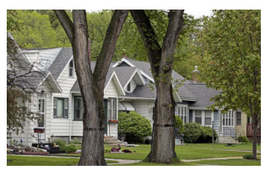
INTRODUCTION





The Core Neighborhoods Master Plan will begin with a short introduction that provides the necessary background for any reader/user to know why the plan was developed, the role it plays in the broader picture of Fargo planning and development, how it was created, and how to make use of its different parts.

The Plan's Purpose and Context

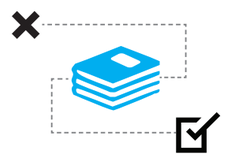
An overview of why the plan was produced when it was, how it relates to a wider planning framework for Fargo (including the Go2030 comprehensive plan and Downtown InFocus plan, among other related plans), and the place of core neighborhoods in Fargo's past, present, and future.

Overview of the Planning Process

A summary of the process behind the plan's development, including the project timeline and phases, neighborhood and housing analysis, committee structure and representation, and public engagement activities.

How to Use the Plan

A "how-to" guide that helps the reader navigate the document and understand the purpose and use of each part. This will include guidance on which parts have core-wide currency, which are more neighborhood-specific, and which are potentially both.



PART 1

KEY ISSUES, CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Part 1 of the plan document will summarize findings from the first two phases of the planning process, including takeaways on trends and conditions from the Neighborhood and Housing Market Analysis in June and issues identified through committee discussions and public surveys.

For the September Virtual Open House, similar information was organized by (1) identifying major issues voiced by committee members and the wider public during the planning process and (2) describing what was known about each issue based on data and policy analysis. If that same approach is used for this section of the final plan, it could be structured as follows (but with more detail than provided in this Plan Preview):

Top Issues Voiced During the Planning Process

Homes in need of repair or updating

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

1 in 6 residential properties in the core neighborhoods (or just over 1,500 properties) is considered to be 'slipping' according to a spring 2020 field survey of residential conditions, with deferred maintenance plainly visible.

Single-family homes of less than 1,250 square feet are the dominant housing type on most blocks within the core neighborhoods. The smallest of these are less likely to be owner-occupied and more **likely to be showing signs of deferred maintenance than larger homes,** revealing marketability issues that threaten the long-term prospects of small houses.

This issue has been expressed throughout the core neighborhoods, though concentrations of distressed homes vary significantly across the core.

Condition and quality of life impacts of rental housing

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Of the 286 apartment buildings in the core, **20% are slipping in condition**. These tend to be smaller and older properties (86% built before 1980) than those in better condition, and rents may be too low in Fargo to motivate major improvements to these properties without intervention.

16% of single-family homes in the core are absentee-owned. These properties, on average, are 10% smaller, worth 17% less, and in noticeably worse condition than their owner-occupied counterparts.

Concerns about rental conditions have been expressed throughout the core. **Concentrations of distressed rentals vary**, and the prevalence of absentee-owned single-family homes is greatest near NDSU.

Safety, quality of life, and land use impacts of traffic and major roadways

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In most core neighborhoods, **major roadways have been voiced as an issue from a variety of angles**, including their impact on safety (speeding, dangerous for walkers/bikers), quality of life (noise pollution, diminishment of neighborhood ambience), and marketability or use of properties along these corridors. Speeding and parking congestion on side streets have also been flagged as issues in specific neighborhoods.

Traffic counts from NDDOT show **several corridors in the core with at least 10,000 and upwards of 20,000 vehicles** per day.

Modern **traffic calming techniques** (especially those using physical design to influence driver behavior) **are generally absent along major corridors in the core, though current reconstruction work on Main Avenue is presenting a new and beneficial model for corridor design in Fargo.**

Incompatible development and uncertainty in transitional areas

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Concerns about new development have been raised in several core neighborhoods, from concerns about design compatibility, to commercial encroachment on mostly residential streets, to the density and scale of new projects.

Land Development Code (LDC) analysis now being performed for the City is finding **multiple incompatibilities** between goals expressed in plans and current development regulations.

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) have been used on several occasions in recent years to negotiate the details of development projects—this adds flexibility to the development process but **poses a risk of ad hoc and unpredictable decision-making.**

Other Key Issues

Uneven levels of resident leadership capacity and engagement

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Some areas appear to have relatively high levels of resident leadership and organization. **Others have much smaller levels or no readily apparent capacity** to mobilize neighbors.

This **unevenness is not unusua**l and likely derives from a combination of factors, including the perceived need to organize (or lack thereof), levels of owner-occupancy, and resident turnover rates, among others.

Concerns about the long-term status of schools as neighborhood anchors

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

While schools are viewed as assets in the core, **concerns have also been raised that their schools have been falling behind newer schools in newer neighborhoods**. If schools in the core (and the neighborhoods themselves) have a harder time competing for young families, there are fears that certain facilities may not be viable in the long-term.

Crime and public safety —reality and perceptions

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Public safety and crime have been brought up as key concerns in a few core neighborhoods. In some cases, crime has been raised as an issue that influences neighborhood quality of life. In other cases, it has been raised as more of a perception problem, with the external image of crime does not aligning with reality.

Housing costs and taxes

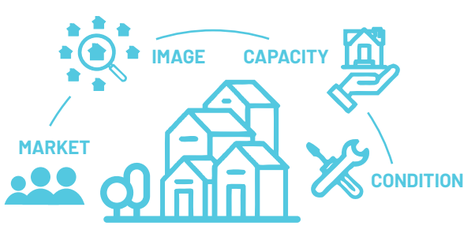
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THIS ISSUE

While the affordability of the core neighborhoods has often been mentioned as an asset, concerns about housing costs and taxes have also been raised. Rather than concerns about housing prices, those raising this issue have tended to **focus on the maintenance and repair costs related to older housing and Fargo's practice of placing special assessments on properties** to pay for infrastructure improvements.

PART 2

CRITICAL CONCEPTS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING IN FARGO

In addition to providing an understanding of the issues that have been raised during the planning process and what has been learned about those issues (their nature, scale, and distribution), the plan will also provide an overview of important concepts for neighborhood planning that should have an influence on plan implementation and decision-making in Fargo going forward. The four concepts summarized here are among those proposed for the plan and will be developed in greater detail.



A "healthy neighborhood" is...

A well-functioning, healthy neighborhood in Fargo is one characterized by four traits that reinforce each other:

MARKET
Demand for housing in the neighborhood is in balance with the supply of housing (chronic vacancies are very rare)

IMAGE
The neighborhood has a positive self-image and outsiders also have a good impression

CAPACITY
Residents have capacity to manage everyday circumstances and communicate effectively with City agencies when problems need solving

CONDITION
The condition of public and private property is characterized by on-schedule maintenance and routine upgrades

Distribution of housing opportunities matters

In any city, older and underimproved residential properties are a naturally occurring repository of affordable housing, and this is certainly the case in Fargo—especially in the core neighborhoods. But this can be destabilizing when properties with mounting levels of deferred maintenance are concentrated in a few areas, leading to blocks with unhealthy levels of blight and poverty. It is very difficult for a neighborhood to thrive when its poverty rate is above 25% (as a reference point, Fargo's current citywide rate is 16%). Therefore, managing the distribution of existing or new affordable housing at the city and regional levels—and having a well-distributed supply of housing opportunities in general—is an important objective to pursue that directly impacts neighborhood health.

Owner-occupancy and household stability affect neighborhood health

Neighborhood health and stability become harder and harder to sustain as owner-occupancy drops and absentee-ownership rises. As a rule of thumb, a 50% owner-occupancy rate for residential properties in a neighborhood is an important threshold to stay above, ensuring that a critical mass of residents have a significant stake in the neighborhood's health and a strong incentive to invest both socially and financially. It is harder for an owner-occupant to get up and leave, therefore giving them extra motivation to actively address issues as they arise.

Owner-occupancy is also correlated with household stability (as measured by things as length of tenure, earning potential, and education) and a critical mass of stable households is another contributor to neighborhood health.

Importantly, this does not mean that renters are problems or that they cannot contribute to neighborhood health. What matters is balance and having enough households with a strong sense of ownership.

Municipal fiscal strength is imperative

A City cannot operate sustainably and invest in what is important to its residents without a strong and stable tax base. Therefore, maintaining or growing the City's fiscal capacity is an important consideration for any neighborhood policy decision. When property taxes are an important source of revenue, as they are in Fargo, the mil rate and taxable base have to be able to generate revenue sufficient for a municipality to keep pace with inflation on capital equipment and services, and keep pace with negotiated agreements regarding contracts.

PART 3

VISION, VALUES, AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES
FOR THE CORE NEIGHBORHOODS

Each of the core neighborhoods will have their individualized vision and desired outcomes described in the implementation briefs that will appear in Part 5 of the plan. But universal themes have emerged during the planning process that express a **core-wide vision** driven by **specific values**. These can be translated into a set of **planning principles to guide decision-making** in the core neighborhoods on any manner of foreseen or unforeseen issues going forward.

DRAFT **VISION**

Fargo's core neighborhoods all have a strong and distinct sense of place that reflects their history and their role in Fargo's collective story.

Their homes, parks, schools, and trees are points of pride that contribute to a high and improving quality of life that attracts residents looking for character and community.

There is a strong commitment to investment and stewardship as well as equity and diversity, ensuring that high-quality residential environments are neighborly and accessible.

DRAFT **VALUES**

The overall vision for Fargo's core neighborhoods speaks to a set of durable values that shape how the community plans and makes decisions.

We are committed to...

Character

Our neighborhoods have character that reflects where we've come from and who we are in Fargo—we value it and it contributes value to our neighborhoods. We believe in preserving local character whenever possible and being thoughtful about new additions to the built environment.

Sustainability

As a community, we are responsible with our resources and assets—this means we are careful about what we invest in as a community, but we are not cheap. We recognize that building and maintaining desirable places (public or private) requires investment, far-sightedness, and stewardship to achieve durability and lasting benefit.

Inclusion

Fargo has never been a place where extreme wealth and poverty exist side-by-side. While we have room to improve on matters of inclusion, a sense of fairness and common interest have long shaped our civic culture. We recognize that moving forward as a community is something that happens when all feel included as contributors to and beneficiaries of our success.

DRAFT **PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

Planning principles are a way to translate values into action. As decisions are made in the core neighborhoods—or as citywide decisions are made that impact the core neighborhoods—these principles serve as a basis for ensuring that policies, projects, and programs are aligned with the values and vision.

Housing is balanced, diverse, and of high quality

Having a wide range of housing types and price points—from strong and well-preserved single-family stock to a range of appealing rental options—will keep our housing market resilient and responsive to housing demand and need. We will strive to ensure that the core neighborhoods collectively provide this range of opportunities and that housing diversity is thoughtfully integrated within individual neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods are amenity-rich

High-quality parks and other amenities contribute to quality of life for all residents and the desirability of our core neighborhoods. We will preserve, invest responsibly in, and add strategically to the amenities we have. Whenever possible, we will make an extra effort to turn underutilized or one-dimensional public spaces—including streets—into stronger quality of life assets.

Settlement patterns do not inhibit economic mobility

Our actions promote the maintenance and emergence of well-balanced, mixed-income neighborhoods citywide and in the core. If a project or policy is likely to directly or indirectly concentrate poverty and disinvestment into small areas or specific neighborhoods, we will reject or rethink it.

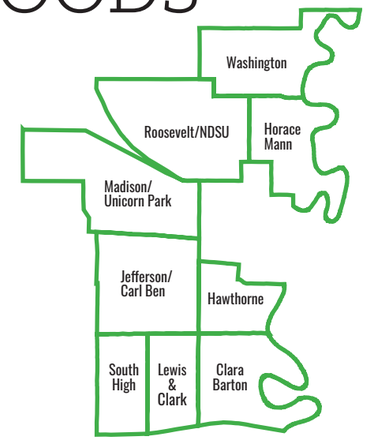
Growth pays for itself *(including negative externalities)*

Growth comes with direct costs, such as infrastructure construction and expansion. But it also comes with externalities, such as diminished demand for older neighborhoods and older public facilities. In addition to paying its own way, growth must contribute to solving its indirect consequences.

PART 4

CORE NEIGHBORHOODS TOOLKIT

A core-wide toolkit will be presented in the plan representing the full range of strategies that are likely to address problems and opportunities that have been identified during the planning process.



The toolkit on the following pages of this Plan Preview represents a "2.0" version based on feedback and suggestions made by committee members and City staff in response to the preliminary toolkit presented in August. Rather than using specific issues as a means of organizing tools (as was the case in August) this latest version uses five categories of tools as a means of grouping problems that need solving. This updated toolkit is still a draft and will continue to evolve and gather more detail as feedback is provided in October and November.

In the draft plan, maps will be included to show the geographic relevance of different tools in order to demonstrate how some tools will have core-wide applicability while others will be more localized.

1. Development Regulation Tools
2. Neighborhood Leadership & Engagement Tools
3. Housing Reinvestment Tools
4. Public Infrastructure Investment Tools
5. Public Health & Safety Tools

1

Development Regulation Tools

"Problems to Solve" in Core Neighborhoods Related to this Category of Tool

Too much **uncertainty about what can go where and what infill development will look like**, which can contribute to current or potential owners hesitating to invest in existing properties.

Uneven distribution of affordable housing options across Fargo, with higher-than-optimal concentrations of low-cost options (and therefore poverty) in some core neighborhood areas where the housing stock is older and outdated.

What is the status quo?

A Land Development Code that, according to a separate LDC Diagnostics project, is outdated and not a good reflection of goals stated in the Go2030 Comprehensive Plan or other more recent plans. This includes the absence of design standards in base zoning districts as well as zones close to downtown that permit a broad range of uses and densities (perhaps too broad given existing, desired, or foreseeable land use patterns).

Routine use of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) by developers to negotiate the details of core neighborhood infill projects, including use and density—which leads to decisions that can seem ad hoc and unpredictable to neighborhood stakeholders.

Aging housing stock in the core neighborhoods serving as Fargo's default supply of affordable housing, with no policies in place to require or encourage a more even and equitable distribution of affordable housing.

What changes to the status quo would substantially address the "Problems to Solve"?

Updated Land Development Code that includes:

- Zoning districts that codify goals and directions expressed in current plans.
- Clearer rules for transitions between predominately low-density, single-family blocks and areas where multi-family infill development is allowed or encouraged.
- Design standards built into base zoning districts to regulate building form (but not to dictate architectural style).
- Mechanisms in the Land Development Code that would reward/require the inclusion of affordable units in new housing developments and/or in lieu payments to support affordable housing development that adheres to the Planning Principles in Part 3.

What would our next steps be?

☑ **In the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan itself:**

Create a **Future Land Use Map** for the core neighborhoods that provides guidance on land use and form, especially in transitional areas. This would be a non-binding map that expresses neighborhood vision and guides updates to the Land Development Code.

Develop **principles to help guide the Land Development Code** update and decision-making on development more generally.

☑ **Initiate an update to the Land Development Code in 2021–2022, guided in part by the Future Land Use Map and principles in the Core Neighborhoods Master plan.**

Within the updated Land Development Code, **incorporate inclusionary housing** features that reward/require affordable housing units within new developments or in lieu payments to a housing trust fund (with a focus on stronger incentives where the existing shares of affordable units are lowest).

2

Neighborhood Leadership & Engagement Tools

"Problems to Solve" in Core Neighborhoods Related to this Category of Tool

Cultivating greater resident leadership capacity where it is low and maintaining it where it is high in order to successfully manage issues at the neighborhood level.

What is the status quo?

A few core neighborhoods have well-established neighborhood associations that interact with residents and City officials, though maintaining and growing their volunteer base is an ongoing challenge. Most areas in the core neighborhoods do not have anything so formal, and any informal leadership structure that exists is often hard for the City to interact routinely with.

The City of Fargo used to employ an individual who helped to facilitate the development and operation of neighborhood associations and the cultivation of neighborhood leaders, but such a position has not existed for at least a decade.

The Fargo Neighborhood Coalition exists to connect neighborhood leaders and amplify neighborhood issues but has limited, volunteer-driven capacity.

What changes to the status quo would substantially address the "Problems to Solve"?

Dedicated capacity within City Hall to cultivate and connect residential leadership, and to oversee programming that stimulates neighbor-to-neighbor engagement. Examples of programming could include:

- Support for block activities and small beautification/improvement projects for motivated groups of neighbors.
- Organizing an annual 'neighborhood improvement summit' that brings neighborhood leaders together to engage with City departments and each other, supplemented by routine, topical workshops.
- Technical assistance and/or small grants to aid in the implementation of activities that reinforce neighborhood brand and vision (as identified through the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan process).

What would our next steps be?

☑ **Create a dedicated "Neighborhood Coordinator"** position located within City government (or, if a private-public funding partnership can be devised, at an appropriate not-for-profit). Depending on where this position is housed, this individual could also serve as the plan implementation coordinator.

☑ **Allocate resources to initiate programming** in alignment with the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan.

3

Housing Reinvestment Tools

"Problems to Solve" in Core Neighborhoods Related to this Category of Tool

Overcoming owner hesitancy and/or inability to make large improvements to older homes that are in need of repairs/updates to maintain the health and marketability of core neighborhood housing stock.

Addressing isolated examples of blight that threaten stable areas.

Limited financial motivation to upgrade aging apartment complexes that also serve as a source of affordable housing.

Making single-family homes that are currently slipping less appealing targets for rental investors and more appealing for potential homeowners.

What is the status quo?

The City of Fargo has two longstanding Community Development programs in this category of tool that are too limited in size and impact to address these problems at the proper scale.

- **Housing Rehabilitation Program:** A program funded with federal dollars for income-eligible homeowners that currently rehabs 5 to 7 properties per year due to limited resource availability and limited contractor capacity to do the rehab work (due in part to regulations tied to the funding source).
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program:** The City of Fargo and Gate City Bank partner on a low-interest loan program that serves 10 homeowners per year on average; $2 million in loan capital is allocated annually; the program provides an attractive home improvement financing option for those who use it, but it does not appear to stimulate work that would not have happened otherwise.

What changes to the status quo would substantially address the "Problems to Solve"?

Design new programs that utilize flexible local resources to dramatically improve between 200 and 250 properties over a ten-year period:

1. Partner with homeowners in strategic locations, with a focus on making improvements that bolster confidence and marketability on the block where investment occurs. Have capacity to manage projects from start to completion.
2. Purchase slipping properties that are salvageable, perform model improvements to those properties, and then sell them to owner-occupants.
3. Purchase distressed properties that are unsalvageable, demolish the properties, and manage the disposition of the vacant lot.
4. Partner with owners of aging apartment complexes to revitalize their properties while maintaining the affordability of some improved units.

Redesign or reconstitute existing rehab and reinvestment programs to respond more efficiently to emergent needs and address problems that make the existing programs hard to use.

What would our next steps be?

☑ **Identify the right "home" for new programs** (within City Hall, or in a new entity), finalize funding needs and sources, and design the programs.

☑ **Initiate a start-from-scratch redesign of existing community development tools** to maximize the use of available federal funds.

4

Public Infrastructure Investment Tools

"Problems to Solve" in Core Neighborhoods Related to this Category of Tool

Streets

The design and function of arterial streets, most of which reflect an outdated auto-centric approach to street design.

Speeding on residential side streets.

Overparking on residential streets near busy institutions (namely NDSU).

Noise from Interstates is a problem to solve in some areas.

Trees

Trees are a recognized asset that need continued stewardship and investment to remain so, especially as mature trees die off and need replacement.

Parks

Parks are a recognized asset and have the potential to be greater quality of life assets.

Schools

Schools are a recognized asset, but some core neighborhood stakeholders fear that facilities and programming is or could soon fall behind newer schools in newer neighborhoods.

What is the status quo?

Streets	The City of Fargo has already implemented 'low-hanging fruit' bike infrastructure throughout much of the core. Main Avenue is being rebuilt now between the river and University Drive in a manner that serves as a model for 'complete streets' design. Previous efforts to redesign streets to better accommodate all users have run into opposition from property owners, especially when on-street parking spaces are threatened. A system of sound barriers exists along parts of the Interstates bordering the core neighborhoods, but it is incomplete. A Safe Routes to School study was completed in 2020 and identified areas that pose the greatest risks for pedestrians in general and children specifically.
Trees	Fargo has a well-established Forestry Department that tracks the health and size of 57,000 trees in public rights-of-way and oversees maintenance and replanting efforts.
Parks	Fargo parks are managed by a special-purpose government (the Fargo Parks District) that collects revenue through a tax levy, facility fees, and a fundraising foundation. Matching parks planning and neighborhood interests/needs could be stronger, and long-range planning for the overall system of spaces within the core (and citywide) could also be stronger and more closely tied to neighborhood visions and goals.
Schools	Development of new housing in the City of Fargo and school facility planning are not currently coordinated. Impacts on the latter are figured-out in the aftermath of the former through redistricting and facility expansion that tries to balance a range of competing interests. Currently, many facilities in the core are well under capacity, while facilities in fast-growing southern areas of Fargo are facing pressures to expand.

What changes to the status quo would substantially address the "Problems to Solve"?

Streets	Apply complete streets principles to arterial roadways (from small-scale tactical changes like striping in the short-term to full-scale corridor reconstruction in the long-term). Whenever possible, use elements of street infrastructure to reinforce neighborhood character and atmosphere, including opportunities for public art and branding. Implement traffic calming measures on residential side streets that have issues with speeding. Implement residential parking permit policies in areas of need (and where property owners are in agreement on need). Install highway noise barriers where they are currently missing but required under FHWA guidelines due to noise impact (study of noise impact and mitigation work is required as federally-funded construction projects occur along I-94 and I-29).
Trees	Maintain the current commitment to tree maintenance and replanting
Parks	Establish processes to better link neighborhood vision/goals with plans for park facilities; develop a long-range system master plan that pays special attention to needs in core neighborhoods and the integration of existing spaces into a coherent network that reinforces core walkability, bikability, and connectivity.
Schools	Establish processes to better coordinate housing development and school facility planning, with special attention to the principle of having growth pay for itself, including externalities.

What would our next steps be?

☑ **Streets**

NDDOT study of two-way conversion potential for University Drive and 10th Street corridor.

Fargo/West Fargo/COG traffic calming study (currently under consideration) to pinpoint areas where traffic calming measures should be prioritized and the best options for those measures.

- Within core neighborhoods, focus on arterials and problem areas pinpointed by Safe Routes to School research

Initiate Fargo Transportation Study in partnership with COG (scope of study currently in development and to be shaped by this plan)

☑ **Trees, Parks, and School**

Next steps still under consideration

5

Public Health & Safety Tools

"Problems to Solve" in Core Neighborhoods Related to this Category of Tool

Overcoming owner hesitancy to make large improvements to older homes that are in need of repairs/updates—especially hesitancy stemming from lack of confidence in neighborhood direction.

Overcoming owner inability (financial, physical, or otherwise) to make basic repairs to bring their properties up to code.

Making single-family homes that are currently slipping less appealing targets for rental investors and more appealing for potential homeowners.

Alleys that are unkempt (road condition, presence of junk/debris, condition of adjoining private property and yards).

What is the status quo?

Fargo's Inspections Department interacts with residential property conditions in the core neighborhoods in two primary ways:

- Complaint-based enforcement of the property maintenance code—an approach that is poorly understood by many neighborhood stakeholders who assume that more proactive enforcement is (or should) take place.
- Active public safety inspections of rental properties through a rental inspection program (a program that is not communicated clearly to the wider public and that gives considerable discretion to code inspectors to determine when inspections are needed and when to follow-up).

A Code Enforcement Task Force exists that brings together Inspections, Law, Planning, Fire, and Police for coordination. But an integrated problem-solving approach that addresses physical disorder before it becomes a more serious social problem does not yet exist.

Rebuilding Together has an active Fargo/Moorhead chapter that assists homeowners in need with critical home repairs and improvements.

The City has limited resources to assist low-income owners with acute "Code Compliance Assistance" activities.

What changes to the status quo would substantially address the "Problems to Solve"?

A closer working relationship between Inspections, the Police Department, and social service providers that:

- Identifies root problems behind physical disorder and applies tools appropriate for those problems (compliance assistance for matters of financial need, community policing where disorder is affecting safety and quality of life, etc.)

A more systematized approach to rental inspections that establishes licensing procedures, license duration, inspection fees as a cost-recovery mechanism, and a system of rewards for landlords in good standing (such as less frequent inspections).

A more proactive model for code enforcement in general, including periodic and strategic sweeps.

Use of alley maintenance and cleanup efforts to improve alley conditions and create greater sense of ownership/responsibility for conditions by adjacent owners and residents.

- Beyond alleys, develop other partnerships between neighbors, Public Works, Forestry, and Solid Waste in activities that would improve resident engagement while improving neighborhood conditions.

What would our next steps be?

- ☑ **Build on the Code Enforcement Task Force model currently in place**

  Create a plan to shift from the periodic coordinating meetings that currently take place to a truly integrated model where Inspections, Law, Fire, Police, and Planning work together on a regular basis and devise strategies together.

- ☑ Design the new Rental Licensing and Inspection system and begin a phased introduction.

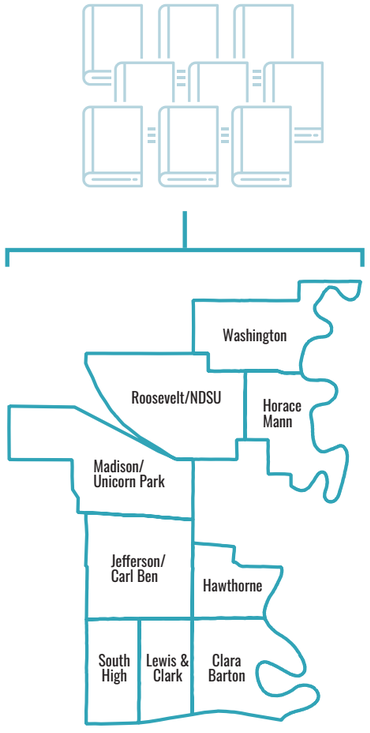
- ☑ Identify staffing needs to administer new systems and secure commitments from the City Commission .

- ☑ Identify and design specific partnership opportunities between neighborhoods, Public Works, Forestry, and Solid Waste (starting on a pilot basis).

PART 5

NEIGHBORHOOD-BY-NEIGHBORHOOD IMPLEMENTATION BRIEFS

The plan will conclude with implementation briefs for each of the core neighborhoods—briefs that will also be formatted as standalone documents for ease of use by stakeholders in each neighborhood. Each brief will follow the same format and contain neighborhood-specific information gathered from throughout the planning process, including:



Assets, Trends, and Key Issues

A review of the assets and strengths of the neighborhood.

A description of how relevant core-wide issues are expressed within the neighborhood, as well as more localized issues and concerns.

Overview of relevant housing and demographic trends/ characteristics found during Phase 1.

Vision and Outcomes

Presentation of the vision for the neighborhood as expressed by the brand statement, core brand attributes, and target markets.

Identification of specific outcomes to achieve and measurable baselines and targets for measuring progress.

Customized Implementation Strategy

Outline of the toolkit parts that are most relevant to the neighborhood and most important for achieving its outcomes.

Implementation guidance for the most relevant tools, including responsible parties and timelines.

- Include guidance on maintaining or building resident leadership capacity based on where the neighborhood is starting from, with a listing of brand-aligned activities to pursue.
- Include maps to show block-level implementation guidance where appropriate.

Questions for Committee Discussion

During project committee meetings in early October, we will present and discuss the content of this Plan Preview to get feedback that will shape the development of a draft plan during October and November.

Feedback on all elements of the Plan Preview are welcome, but particular attention during the meetings will be paid to the following questions:

1. The core-wide vision, values, and principles statements **(see Part 3)** will ultimately serve as a decision-making framework for the City of Fargo—a basis for evaluating foreseeable and unforeseeable choices. **Do the draft statements in this Plan Preview seem like good fits?**

2. The reorganized toolkit summarized in **Part 4** is still very much in draft form. As it develops with more detail and precision in coming weeks, it will be essential for the planning team to understand what Fargo is able and willing to "give" for the tools to be implemented and provide solutions to identified problems. **Consider the "gives" outlined in the table below and think about the degree to which the community is in a position to do the work that implementation requires. Are any of these "gives" non-starters?"**

What does Fargo (including elected officials, appointed officials, and residents) need to "give" for these tools to work?

Development Regulation Tools

- **Willingness to say "no" to a project** that doesn't jibe with planning principles or neighborhood vision.
- **Willingness to really work through the tension created by competing interests** rather than letting unresolved arguments carry over to future flash points.
- **Willingness to fairly distribute affordable housing opportunities** in the city and region.

Neighborhood Leadership & Engagement Tools

- **Dedicate City staff and resources** to this less tangible component of healthy neighborhoods, and do so for the long-term.
- **Willingness of residents to stick their necks out more often** and engage with neighbors when there isn't a controversy to rally around.

Housing Reinvestment Tools

- **Willingness to take a much more proactive approach** to seeking out and partnering with property owners on strategically important rehab projects.
- **Dedicate local capital** for maximum flexibility on how work gets done.
- **Have a comfort level with setting high standards** and not being cheap with reinvestment activities.

Public Infrastructure Investment Tools

- **Willingness by City, School District, and Parks District to coordinate** closely on planning activities, and to be guided by similar/compatible principles.
- **Willingness by all stakeholders along major corridors to take risks** and do things differently with regard to roadway function and use.
- **Dedicate resources to take public amenities a step or two beyond existing standards** when it comes time to build new ones or reinvest in existing ones.

Public Health and Safety Tools

- **Dedicate more resources and staff** to building inspection activities and public outreach.
- **Willingness to work more closely across departments and disciplines** to address problems that are expressed by physical disorder and ultimately lead to social disorder.

OCTOBER 2020

PLAN PREVIEW

City of Fargo

CORE NEIGHBORHOODS MASTER PLAN

Prepared by czbLLC for the City of Fargo, ND