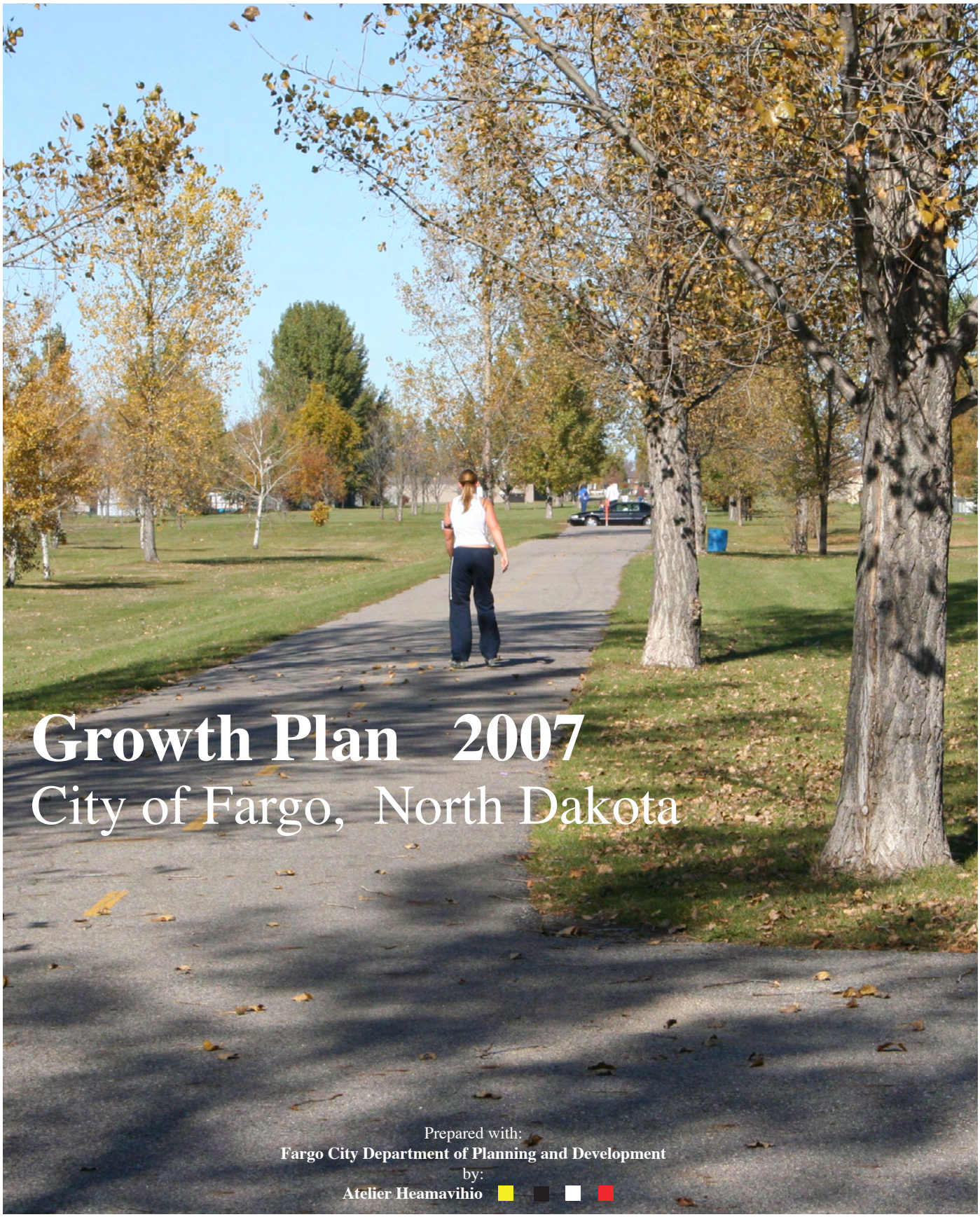

Growth Plan 2007

City of Fargo, North Dakota

Prepared with:
Fargo City Department of Planning and Development
by:
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The preparation of this document was funded in part by the United States Department of Transportation with funding administered through the North Dakota and Minnesota Departments of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. Additional funding was provided by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and through local contributions from the governments of Fargo, West Fargo, and Cass county in North Dakota; and Moorhead, Dilworth, and Clay County in Minnesota. The United States Government and the States of North Dakota and Minnesota assume no liability for the contents or use thereof.

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The contents of this document reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the policies of the state and federal Departments of Transportation.

Published by the Fargo Department of Planning and Development, 2007
with assistance by Atelier Heamavihio, Fargo, North Dakota

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Acknowledgements

The following groups of people were essential to the development and direction of this update for the growth plan of Fargo. Their involvement and insight have been critical to this project and for the future of the City of Fargo.

Fargo City Commission
Dennis Walaker, Mayor
Tim Mahoney
Linda Coates
Mike Williams
Brad Wimmer
Bruce Furness, Mayor, 1992-2006
John Cosgriff, 1994-2006

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Ann Cichy, 2000-2006
Tom Martin, 2001-2006

Fargo Department of Planning and Development
Jim Gilmour, Director
Jim Hinderaker, Senior Planner
Bill Mahar
Mark Williams

The following groups of people gave freely of their time and talents to provide information, input and comments to the development of this growth plan update. Our thanks to them for their involvement.

Fargo City Staff
Pat Zavoral, City Administrator
Mark Bittner, City Engineer
Bruce Grubb, Enterprise Director

Fargo Parks District
Roger Gress, Director
Dave Leker

Fargo Public School District #1
Dan Huffman, Assistant Superintendent

West Fargo Public Schools
Mark Lemer, Business Manager

North Dakota State University
Joseph Chapman, President
Keith Bjerke, Vice President for University Relations

North Dakota State University Research Park
Tony Grindberg, Director

Municipal Airport Authority - Hector International Airport
Shawn A. Dobberstein, Executive Director

Reile's Acres City Council
Scott Anderson, Mayor
Josh Amundson
Jefferson Bay
Joann Czerwinski
Mike Volk

Metropolitan Council of Governments
Wade Kline
Brian Gibson

We also wish to acknowledge the participation of the many property owners within the extraterritorial areas of the city for their input and comments.

The Fargo Growth Plan Update was produced in collaboration with the staff of the Fargo City Planning and Development office by:

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Sarah Fedor
Ron Randell
Holly Samuelson
Garrett Dressler

Introduction

Why do a Growth Plan Update for the City of Fargo?

In 1999, the City of Fargo began the important process of establishing the vision for the growing areas of the city. That work resulted in the "Growth Plan for the Urban Fringe and Extraterritorial Area of the City of Fargo" adopted and published in 2001. This work set in place a comprehensive land-use plan for the developing areas of Fargo as well as its four mile extraterritorial area. Today, in 2006, the city has continued to grow, to annex additional land, and to extend its extraterritorial area. The work completed in 2001 has been extremely helpful in directing that growth but much of the projected growth has already occurred and it is time to update the "Growth Plan" again. For this "Growth Plan" we will again look at the current extraterritorial area of Fargo to extend and expand on the vision established in 2001. We are trying to look a little further out into the city's future, 50 years, to set the patterns, approaches, strategy, and vision for our community.

Planning, as shown in the original growth plan, can help a city to identify issues that are important to citizens and help to formulate policies and procedures that are equitable and fair to all citizens. It is our intent that the update of the growth plan will ensure a quality future for the community and keep the city focused on the current needs of the citizens.

The City of Fargo has excellent plans addressing the existing portions of the city so the Growth Plan Update will concentrate on the extraterritorial area of the city. Please refer to the section on "Fargo 2006" for a definition of the extraterritorial area and for a discussion on the anticipated growth of the city.

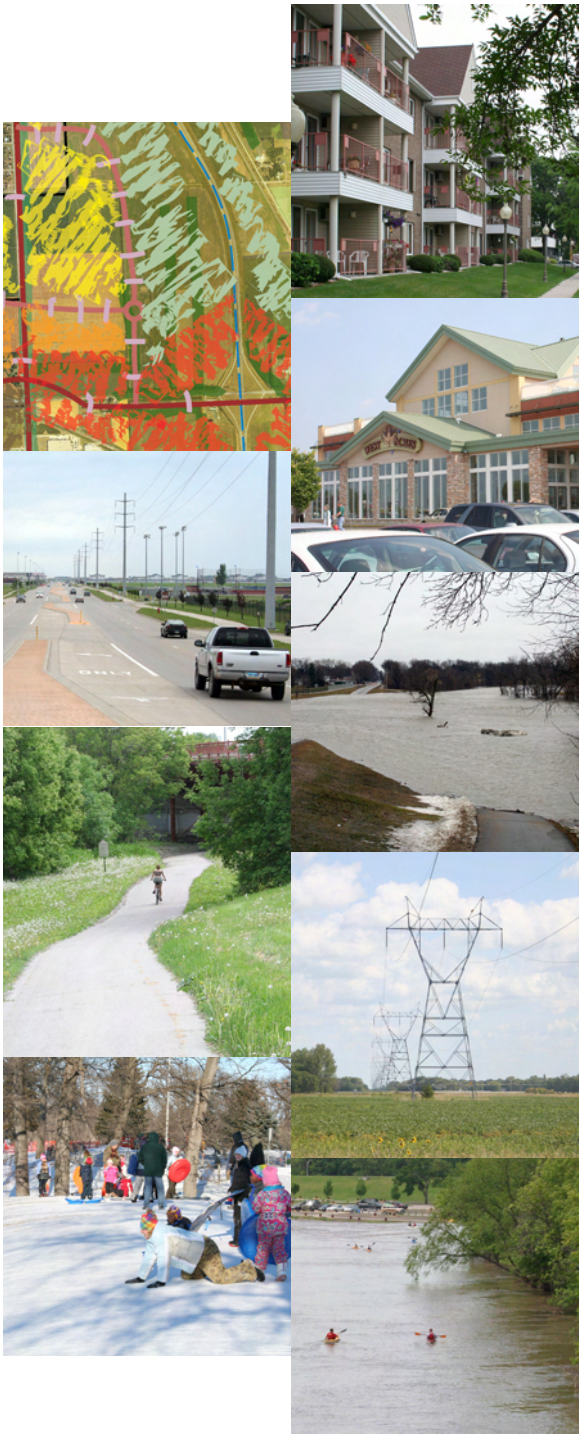
Cover of the 2001 growth plan

The Update Process and Public Engagement

The Growth Plan Update was undertaken by the staff of the Fargo Department of Planning and Development with the assistance of Atelier Heamavihio, a local consultant in urban and community design. The plan was begun in October of 2005 and was adopted in February of 2007.

At its best the city planning process engages the citizens of the community to determine their collective image of their city and its future. In developing this Growth Plan, we met with hundreds of Fargo's citizens, institutions and elected officials. Public meetings were held with property owners in the extraterritorial areas as well as private meetings with major land owners to discuss their desires and the desires of the city planning staff. Proposed plans were shared with potential land developers for their input. Plans were also shared with area governmental bodies such as the park district, the airport authority, the city engineers, the Metropolitan Council of Governments, the West Fargo School District, the Fargo Public School District, and the Fargo City Enterprise division for their review and analysis. Area institutions such as North Dakota State University, the NDSU Research Park, and the FM area home builders association were also consulted for their input. We worked closely with the Fargo Planning Commission throughout the process to keep in touch with the long range concerns as well as the daily issues being confronted by the Planning Commission.

Discussions at a public review meeting.



Residents of Fargo have also provided input to this process through their participation with Fargo Park District research and Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments research into housing, transportation, and recreation needs for the future. Two factors have sprung to the forefront in these discussions; the excellent quality of life that we enjoy in the Fargo/Moorhead area and our desire for increased connectivity to each other. Each of these issues has become a driving force for the Growth Plan Update. These areas of focus for the Growth Plan Update reinforce the desires for increased beautification, community character, open spaces and greenways that were identified as significant issues for the original Fargo Growth Plan.

Local government is also involved in the approval process of this Growth Plan Update. The completed plan has been reviewed and adopted by the Fargo City Planning Commission and forwarded to the Fargo City Commission for their review and adoption. Each of these governing bodies allowed for public input prior to their action on the plan update.

Public involvement does not stop here. We encourage any interested people to become familiar with this document and continue to provide input to the Fargo City Planning and Development Office as they implement this plan and as it is inevitably updated again. We hope that in your review of this update, you will embrace the vision for our future that is outlined here. It is an exciting time for the City of Fargo.

Purpose and Intent of the Growth Plan Update

Fargo, in the past several years, has evolved from a community that reacted to development proposals and pressures into a community that proactively plans for and guides future development. The Growth Plan Update will continue this philosophy, adopted in the original Growth Plan, and will seek to define even further issues of quality, image and vision for the future of the city. The purposes and intent of this Growth Plan Update is to:

- Identify the types of land uses that are appropriate throughout the growth areas
- Plan land uses based on a realistic balance of residential and non-residential land use categories
- Provide guidance to property owners, developers, and future residents and businesses that will allow them to make decisions based on an adopted land use and street plan
- Establish realistic expectations for the amount, types and sizes of multiple family and commercial developments
- Address issues associated with the expansion of utilities into the growth areas
- Identify barriers to certain types of growth and development
- Plan for an arterial and collector street system that has good continuity and connectivity
- Plan for preservation of open spaces that can be enhanced by natural or man-made amenities
- Plan for establishment of aesthetic qualities throughout the growth areas

- Build on established plans and expand plans for bicycle and pedestrian linkages that take advantage of existing and future corridors
- Focus attention on the unique development opportunities inherent in a four season community
- Establish policies and procedures for acceptable development in our extraterritorial areas

Livable Communities

The City of Fargo is blessed with a quality of life that is the envy of many communities throughout the country. We have a vibrant, growing city with engaged citizens and a true sense of community. We have excellent educational institutions from pre-school through graduate school that provide opportunities for children pretty much unprecedented in the rest of the country. This is a safe community with many opportunities for recreation and an excellent park system. This is a city very much a part of the Mid-West. Fargo is a city that values hard work, that values people from every walk of life and that values our connection to the natural environment and the vastness of the surrounding prairie.

Fargo is a very livable community, but not unlike other communities it is facing pressures to grow and change. In the late Twentieth Century this pressure to grow led to sprawl, an over reliance on the automobile, segregation of populations, disenfranchisement and flight from the cities. Fortunately, Fargo has not suffered too badly from these urban ills and has the opportunity to direct future growth in positive ways. The first Growth Plan for the City of Fargo focused on creating a livable community. This update will continue in that same direction; reinforcing the existing livability of Fargo and seeking to ensure the livability of our newly developing areas.

The term "livable community" is often used by planners and urban designers to focus our attention on the quality of life issues that help create great cities. Some of the core principles of a livable community (also commonly called "smart growth" principles) are very different from the fringe area development patterns of the late 20th Century. It is difficult to balance the characteristics of the Livable Community concept with the homogenous, auto-oriented development patterns to which most communities have become accustomed. Since the publication of the original Fargo Growth Plan, livability concepts have become more accepted by the public. The Growth Plan Update has been conducted with the following goals for Fargo:

- A livable city with an unmatched quality of life
- A city respectful of its unique place in the natural world and in history
- A city where beauty and efficiency are both paramount
- A city whose essence is community

Each of these goals will be explored more fully in the chapter on goals and objectives. The chapter on goals and objectives will be followed by a chapter outlining the strategies for meeting these goals.