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JANUARY 2021

MADISON/ UNICORN PARK

Neighborhood Implementation Brief

Welcome to the
**MADISON/
UNICORN PARK**
— NEIGHBORHOOD —

City of Fargo

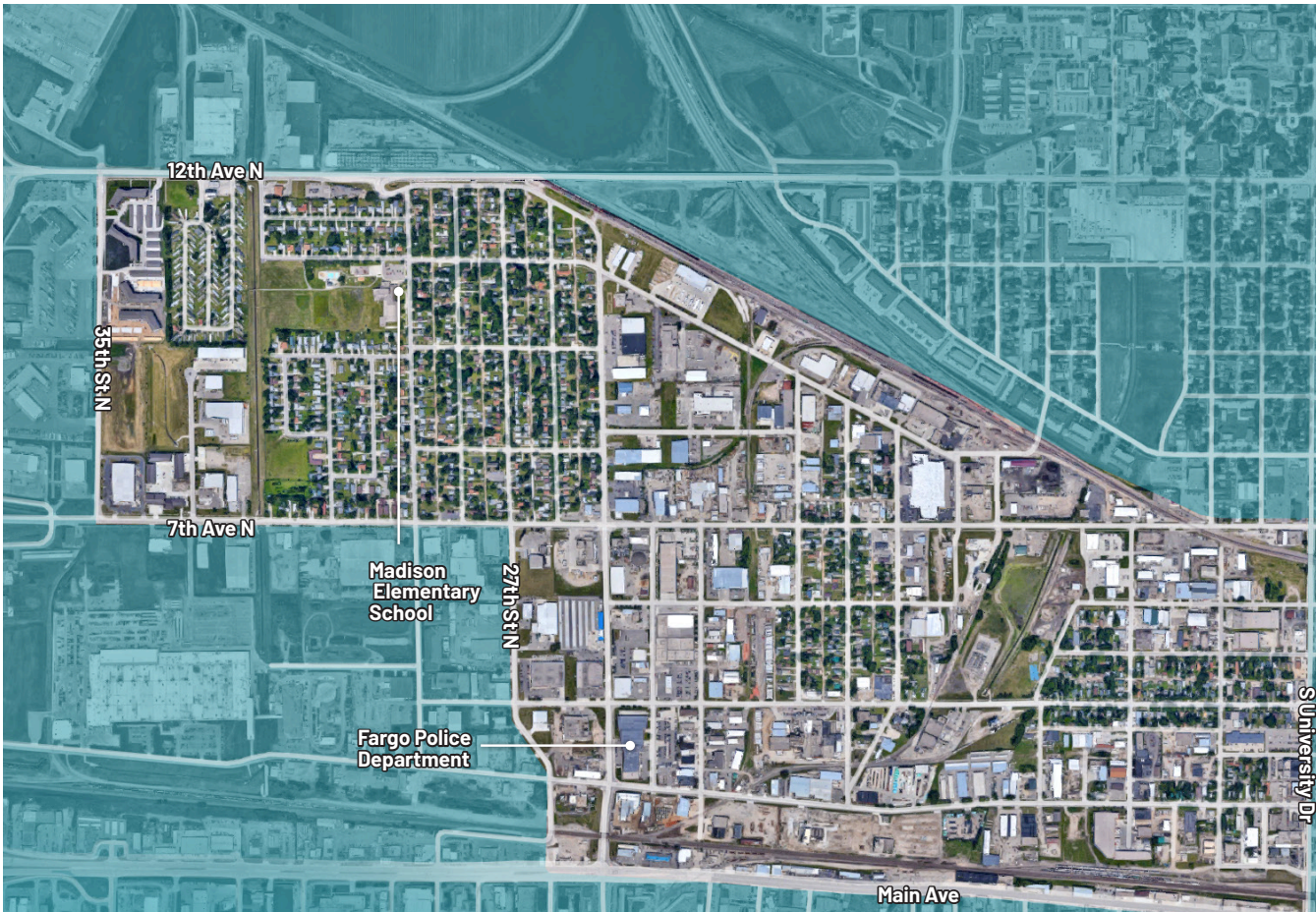


CORE NEIGHBORHOODS MASTER PLAN

THE CITY OF
Fargo
FAR MORE

Prepared by czbLLC

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NEIGHBORHOOD IMPLEMENTATION BRIEF

MADISON / UNICORN PARK

What are Madison/Unicorn Park's strongest assets? Its most important trends? The vision that residents have for its future? The characteristics that will influence how the Core Neighborhoods Toolkit is implemented at the local level?

This Implementation Brief provides answers and guidance to these and other questions based on community feedback and neighborhood analysis from the 2020 core neighborhoods planning process.

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Assets to Build Upon



A range of assets in the Madison/ Unicorn Park neighborhood were identified during the planning process by asking the following:

What is **working well** in the neighborhood today?

What are the neighborhood's **top selling points** to potential residents?

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These assets represent strengths to preserve and to build a vision for the future around.

- Good examples of adaptive reuse of older buildings
- Good sidewalks and sidewalk network make the neighborhoods walkable
- Convenient location with easy access to downtown and NDSU
- Madison Elementary School
- Sense of neighborliness



Issues to Address



Issues or problems to address in Madison/ Unicorn Park were identified during the planning process by asking the following:

What is **not working well** in the neighborhood today?

What are the neighborhood's **turn-offs** to potential residents?

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These issues should be addressed to reinforce the neighborhood's assets and promote the quality of life of existing and future residents.

- **Sense of identity not yet strong**
- **Disinvestment in residential properties is noticeable**
- **Unightly junk piles at commercial and residential properties**
- **Poorly maintained or unpaved alleys**
- **Parks with potential but could use some work**
- **Traffic and vehicle noise due to presence of major arteries**



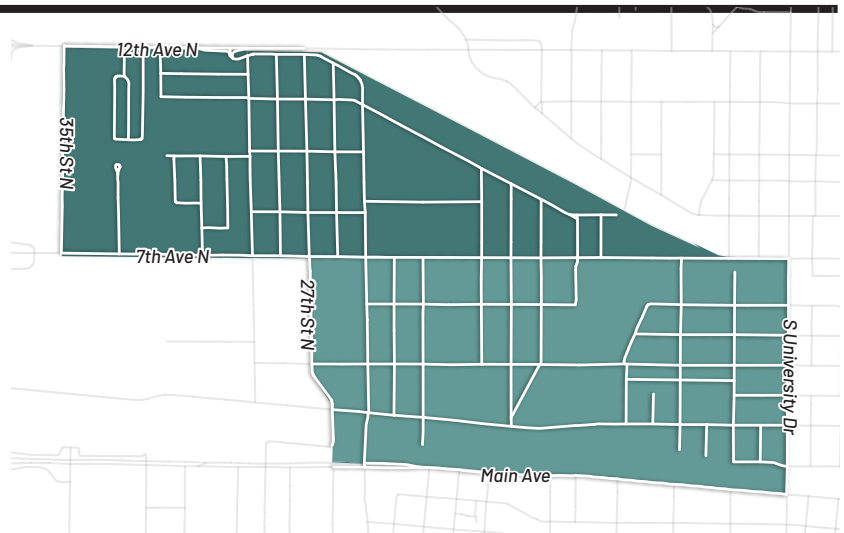
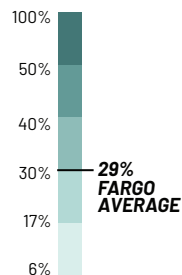
MADISON / UNICORN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Conditions and Trends

A Concentration of Long-term Homeowners

While 29% of Fargo homeowners have been in their homes since before 2000, that rate is between 40% and 50% in Unicorn Park and well over 50% in Madison. Demographic data suggests that many of these owners are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s now and moved into their homes as relatively young adults.

Share of Homeowners Who Moved In Before 2000

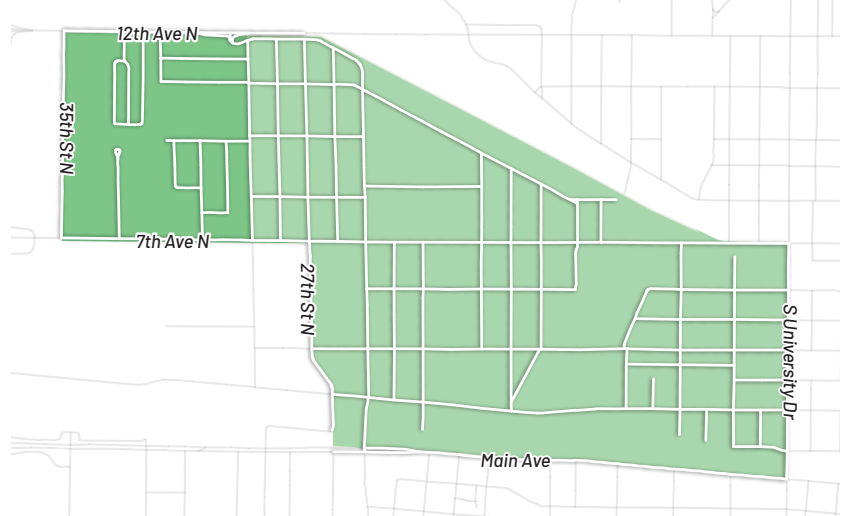
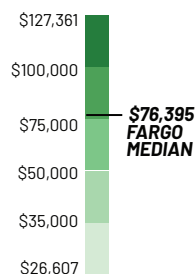


Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Families with modest incomes

The incomes of families in Madison and Unicorn Park (households with at least two related persons) are generally below the Fargo median and below levels in other core neighborhoods. Typical family incomes in Unicorn Park fall in the \$35,000 to \$50,000 range while incomes in the western parts of Madison are between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

Median Income of Family Households



Small, affordable homes predominate

The housing stock in Madison and Unicorn Park—the least expensive housing in the core neighborhoods and of any neighborhood in Fargo—mirrors the financial capacity of resident households. Small, modest homes dominate the residential landscape and are generally priced well within the price range of households making at or below Fargo's median income. In both Madison and Unicorn Park, homes with less than two full bathrooms have a high propensity for absentee ownership.

Dominant Home Configurations

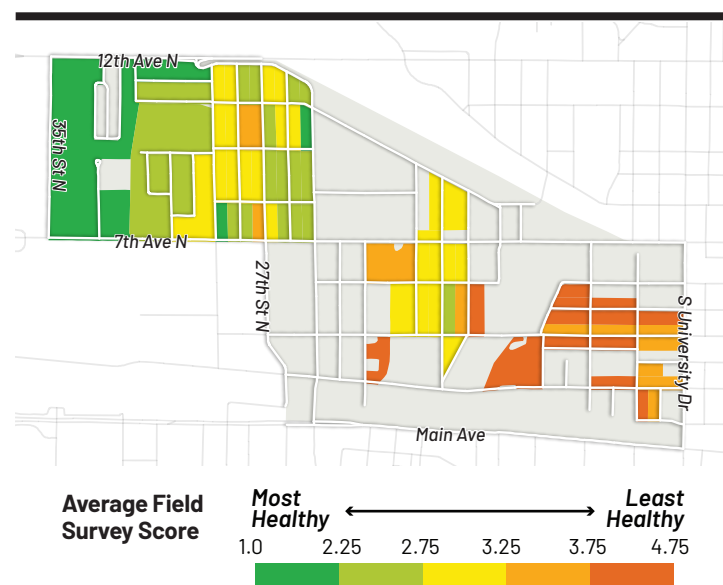
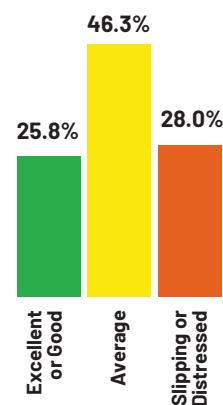
	Madison Neighborhood					Unicorn Park Neighborhood				
	3 beds / 1.75 or 2 baths	2 beds / 1 bath	3 beds / 1 bath	2 beds / 1.75 or 2 baths	3 beds / 1.5 baths	2 beds / 1 bath	2 beds / 1.75 or 2 baths	3 beds / 1.75 or 2 baths	3 beds / 1 bath	3 beds / 1.5 baths
# of Properties	104	87	64	39	19	51	39	29	23	12
% Owner-Occupied	92%	57%	73%	87%	53%	63%	72%	86%	57%	92%
Average Field Survey Condition Score	2.464	2.799	2.633	2.474	2.684	3.574	3.622	3.448	2.176	3.188
Average Assessed Value, 2019	\$160,172	\$113,160	\$139,736	\$150,662	\$148,342	\$101,845	\$132,621	\$146,876	\$113,552	\$127,208
Average Sales Price, 2017-2019	\$171,814	\$107,580	\$148,150	\$138,225	N/A	\$112,500	\$136,900	\$145,800	N/A	\$170,475
Total Sales, 2017-2019	14	10	6	8	0	5	5	3	0	4
Approximate Income Needed to Affordably Purchase at Recent Average Sales Price	\$57,000	\$36,000	\$49,000	\$46,000	N/A	\$38,000	\$46,000	\$49,000	N/A	\$57,000

Signs of disinvestment are common on most blocks

In Madison, where the housing stock is younger and mostly built after the 1957 tornado, conditions tend to be stronger regardless of the housing type. According to the 2020 field survey of housing conditions, the average home on blocks in central and western Madison is in excellent or good condition with few signs of deferred maintenance. The likelihood of finding visible signs of distress increases in eastern Madison and is high on most blocks with residences in Unicorn Park.

With more than a quarter of all homes in Madison / Unicorn Park showing moderate or severe signs of distress—coupled with below-average levels of market demand in the neighborhoods—significant improvements in housing conditions are unlikely without intervention to stimulate investment and modernization.

Exterior Condition Survey of Homes (Field Survey)





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Vision for Madison / Unicorn Park

Separate visions for Madison and Unicorn Park emerged during the planning process in the form of brand statements based (1) on the characteristics or attributes that are at the core of each neighborhood's image and (2) on the target homebuyer markets that are most likely to find each neighborhood's attributes and housing stock appealing.

The resulting statements describe the neighborhoods in 2030 as places that have reinforced their intrinsic assets and are neighborhoods of choice for their respective target markets. The statements and their components can be used in a variety of ways, such as guiding the development of events and activities that express the visions, as the basis for developing marketing materials, and to clarify the missions of existing or new neighborhood organizations.

Core Neighborhood Attributes

Neighborhood assets were distilled and prioritized into a set of core attributes that are most important to each neighborhood's brand

Target Markets

Neighborhood attributes and existing housing stock were used to identify target homebuyer markets that are primed to see each neighborhood as a good fit. In Unicorn Park's case, a small business profile was also identified.

UNICORN PARK	Personality	We are a "yes-in-my-back-yard" neighborhood with interesting mixed land uses and a creative, open-minded attitude. You can be yourself in Unicorn Park, and be celebrated for it.	Homebuyer Profile Young singles or couples that embrace individuality and are intentional in their desire to live near downtown knowing a bit of grit makes them more interesting. They might walk to work downtown or cycle to work in downtown or elsewhere Appreciate the affordable options Perfection is not their aim in terms of housing quality Off-Broadway vibe	Small Business Profile Great startup location for a variety of small businesses because of availability and affordability of space and proximity to the energy of downtown. The area also provides easy access to everywhere else. Recent businesses locating here include Drekker's Baker, Interoffice Furniture, new co-working space, Icehouse Crossfit, Ivy and Rose Event Center, Brew Bird Restaurant, Adrian's Automotive, Logo-Promo-Graphics, Legacy Construction Company, Jade Presents, Livewire, Craig property Management and Development, and Square One Commercial Kitchen.
	Eclectic Business District	Our businesses are a fun mix of services and entertainment for residents, and the commercial and industrial building stock also provides affordable, accessible spaces scaled to startups and adaptive reuses of interesting buildings.		
	First-Time-Buyer Friendly	We have homes that are a great value for first time buyers, for both move-in ready and DIY-ready preferences.		
	First-Time-Buyer Friendly	Walkable and bikeable to downtown.		
MADISON	Small Town Feel	Safe, rural feeling, on the edge of town across from NDSU Ag School fields.	Profile 1 People with young children Larger Homes: New Americans are one part of our homebuying community, and they often seek our larger homes to accommodate extended family. However, most of the larger homes are still owned by long-term, retirement-age households. Smaller Homes: People of modest means looking for a family-friendly neighborhood and an affordable home. Some may choose the trailer park in our neighborhood, while other may be able to buy a home in the lower price points – the 2 bed, 1 bath homes for example.	Profile 2 High-quality landlords renting to students Proximity to NDSU draws landlords to neighborhood for student rental opportunities. Other landlords are renting a number of the duplexes previously owned by City when they were built post-tornado. There are many great landlords and renters, and some not so great. They will likely always be part of the community due to affordable prices on smaller housing stock and the proximity of NDSU. Would be great to have a strategy shaping the landlord community in Madison toward better, more responsible landlords.
	Family-Friendly	Madison school, parks (one with small swimming pool and wading pool), many sports fields/courts, kids often play together in the streets because we are so safe and low-traffic. Homes that are affordable to families starting out. Two daycares are located here, as well as the Legacy Children's Foundation, which offers tutoring for international kids and kids from lower-income households.		
	Great Location	Easy access to anywhere in Fargo and beyond, just around the corner to major streets and I-29. Nearby grocery, bus stops in the neighborhood, convenience store at the truck stop, several other businesses nearby. Cycle to downtown attractions, including parades, Farmer's Market, Street Fair and Art Museum.		

Vision and Brand Statement

People living in the Madison neighborhood love it for its small-town feeling. Located at the edge of town near the NDSU School of Agriculture fields, Madison feels safe, compact, and even rural. Family-friendliness is evident in our small Madison Elementary, daycares, parks that include swimming and wading pools, and the Legacy Children's Foundation.

Our homes are a good value for young families starting out, and you can see our kids playing in our safe, low-traffic streets. Nonetheless, our central location gives us quick access to major streets and I-29, and we can take the bus or ride a bike to NDSU or downtown attractions such as the Farmer's Market.

For a small-town feeling with big-town amenities just around the corner, Madison is the place to be.

Welcome to the
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For people seeking a creative, independent and surprising neighborhood, Unicorn Park is a unique mix of first-time-buyer-friendly homes, quirky local business startups, and industrial building stock ready for adaptive reuse – all within walking distance to downtown. Our businesses are a fun mix of services and entertainment for residents, and the commercial and industrial building stock also provides interesting, affordable spaces scaled to startups and adaptive reuse.

We are a “yes-in-my-back-yard” neighborhood with a creative, open-minded attitude. Whether you are a resident or a business owner, you can be yourself in Unicorn Park, and be celebrated for it.

Welcome to the
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Outcomes to Strive For

To complement the vision and brand statements and provide a basis for measuring progress toward neighborhood goals, specific neighborhood outcomes have been identified and translated into metrics for neighborhood stakeholder to track over time.



Households of a variety of incomes and backgrounds live here and are safe and welcome

MEASUREMENT

Share of households making less than and more than City median income



BASELINE → TARGET

Across Madison/Unicorn Park, between 50% and 75% of households made less than the city median income (~\$50,000) in 2018

Existing levels of income diversity are largely maintained, but a growing share of households earn at least the city's median income

MEASUREMENT

Number of neighborhood events designed to connect diverse neighbors



BASELINE → TARGET

2 in Madison in 2019
(church potlucks and community picnic)

at least 3 in Madison by 2024

0 in Unicorn Park in 2019

at least 1 in Unicorn Park by 2024
that reinforces the 'YIMBY' and 'Eclectic Biz District' brand attributes



Parks have been improved and updated to reflect local needs

MEASUREMENT

Presence of updated, collaboratively developed plan for Unicorn Park



TARGET

Updated plan in place by 2024



Mixed-use projects, including adaptive reuse of older buildings, are common and reinforce the neighborhood's character

MEASUREMENT

Number of commercial remodeling permits issued, representing improvements to commercial or mixed-use properties



BASELINE → TARGET

38
during 2017-2019
more than any other core
neighborhood

at least 45
during 2023-2025,
averaging 15 per year



Private and public property are cared for and show pride

MEASUREMENT

Share of properties in excellent or good condition



BASELINE → TARGET

26% in 2020

at least 35% in 2030

✓ **Properties are being improved and economic activity is growing**

MEASUREMENT

Total building and improvement permits issued (new construction or renovation) for all building types



BASELINE → TARGET

295
during 2017-2019
averaging close to
100 per year

at least **330**
during 2023-2025,
averaging 110 per year

MEASUREMENT

Presence of organized effort to promote small businesses in the neighborhood and build supportive partnerships between residents and business owners.



TARGET

Through activities and communications platforms, neighborhood residents have a broad awareness of retail and service opportunities available to them and have opportunities to develop relationships with business owners

✓ **People feel safe and want to walk around the neighborhood**

MEASUREMENT

Share of residents who indicate "safety" or "crime" as a priority in a survey of priority issues



BASELINE → TARGET

25% of
Madison/Unicorn Park
respondents to a 2020
survey identified crime or
safety as a priority problem
to address

Fewer than **15%**
of respondents identify crime or
safety as priority problems on
future surveys



MADISON / UNICORN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Implementation Guidance



The Core Neighborhoods Toolkit outlined in Part 4 of the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan contains five components with recommendations that are collectively designed to address issues and seize opportunities that surfaced during the planning process core-wide. The following pages of this brief provide guidance on the implementation of each component at the neighborhood-level.

1 Development Regulation and Incentive Tools



2 Neighborhood Leadership & Engagement Tools



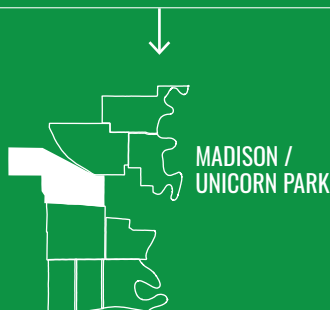
3 Housing Reinvestment Tools



4 Public Infrastructure Investment Tools



5 Public Health & Safety Tools



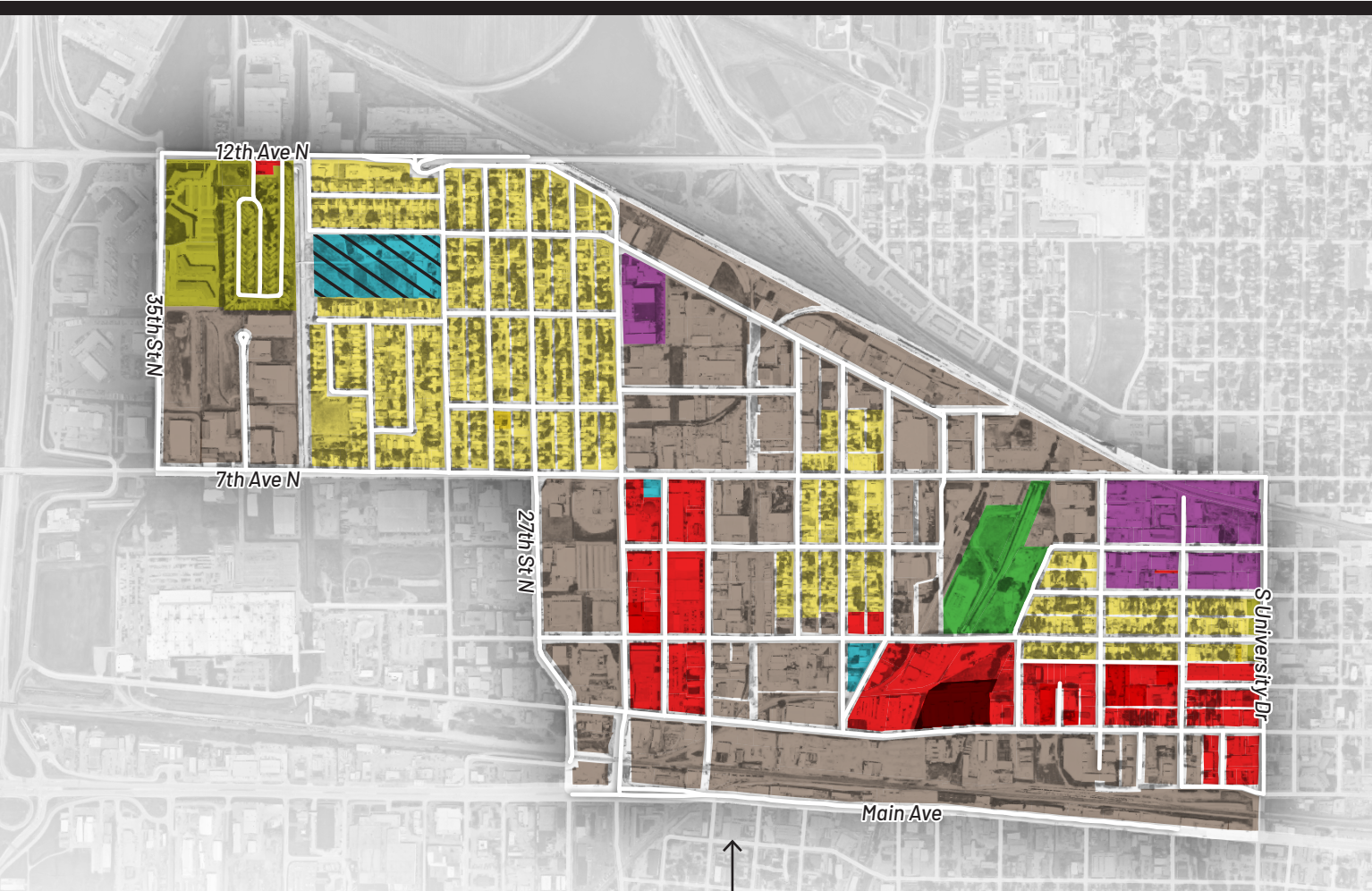
Development Regulation and Incentive Tools



The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is the neighborhood's visual guide to future planning efforts and illustrates how land is intended to be used—what the neighborhood wants to have happen. It is not an official City map nor is it a zoning map; rather it should be used to inform any updates to a new zoning map with associated revisions to the Land Development Code (LDC).

The FLUM portrayed on the following page generally depicts land uses that currently exist in the Madison / Unicorn Park neighborhood but also includes recommended changes to areas that demonstrate locational or design characteristics representing opportunities to evolve and become something that better serves the nearby residents in the future. The following list of recommended land uses includes those areas that should be considered for possible rezoning and/or economic incentives that would allow them to transform over the next decade and become enhanced neighborhood assets. Beyond those areas recommended for change, the FLUM also visually represents land uses that should be preserved to protect existing neighborhood character, specifically the single-family residential land use designation.

- The Madison / Unicorn Park neighborhood is the most diverse neighborhood in terms of existing land uses and zoning district designations. The proposed FLUM recommends the preservation of the three primarily single-family residential areas—the area surrounding Madison Elementary School and the residential blocks directly east, and west, of Unicorn Park.
- The blocks west of North University Drive to Unicorn Park, between 4th Avenue North and 7th Avenue North, currently have a mix of commercial uses and are designated for mixed-use development in the future given their proximity to the Downtown and opportunities for multi-family residential development.
- The vacant commercial structures at the southeast corner of 25th Street North and Great Northern Drive provide mixed-use development opportunities that could be beneficial for the neighborhood that exists to the west of 25th Street North.

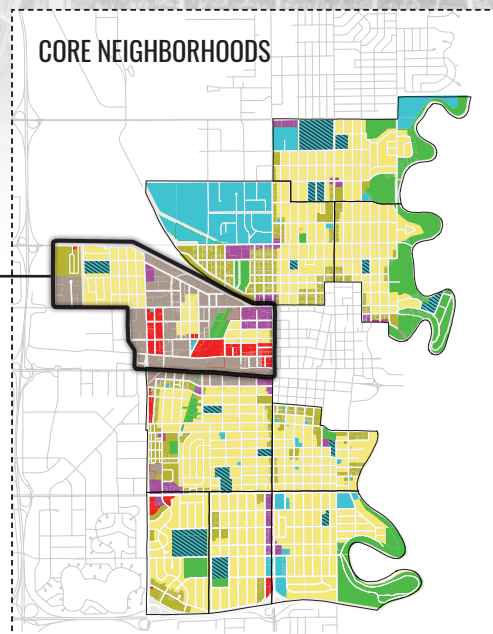


MADISON / UNICORN PARK FUTURE LAND USE MAP

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Single-Family Residential | Industrial/Warehousing |
| Multi-Family Residential | Park, Open Space and Trails |
| Institutional | Commercial |
| Schools with recreational amenities | Mixed Use Neighborhood Commercial |

For full descriptions of these land use categories, see page 45 of the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan

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2

Neighborhood Leadership & Engagement Tools



Madison Neighborhood



ACTIVITY

Small
Town
Feel

Family
Friendly

Great
Location

Golden Ridge Lutheran monthly potlucks (Pastor Jessica in charge of the building)



International/ interdenominational services at Golden Ridge Lutheran



Community Picnic, sponsored by Police and Pepsi, held at Madison School



Ag School Flower Garden across the bridge from neighborhood.



Neighborhood Garden at Madison School



Harvest Festival – garden potluck; maybe involve ag school somehow



Red Hawks Baseball Minor League Baseball – neighborhood night



EXISTING ACTIVITY

POTENTIAL ACTIVITY

Unicorn Park Neighborhood



ACTIVITY

YIMBY
Personality

Eclectic
Biz
District

1st-Time
Buyer
Friendly

Location-
Close to
DT

Ice Cream Social featuring neighborhood businesses (this could include beer floats from Drekker, some little bites from Brew Bird, hop-in quick make and take cooking class at Square One, lift some heavy things at Crossfit Icehouse)



Block Party

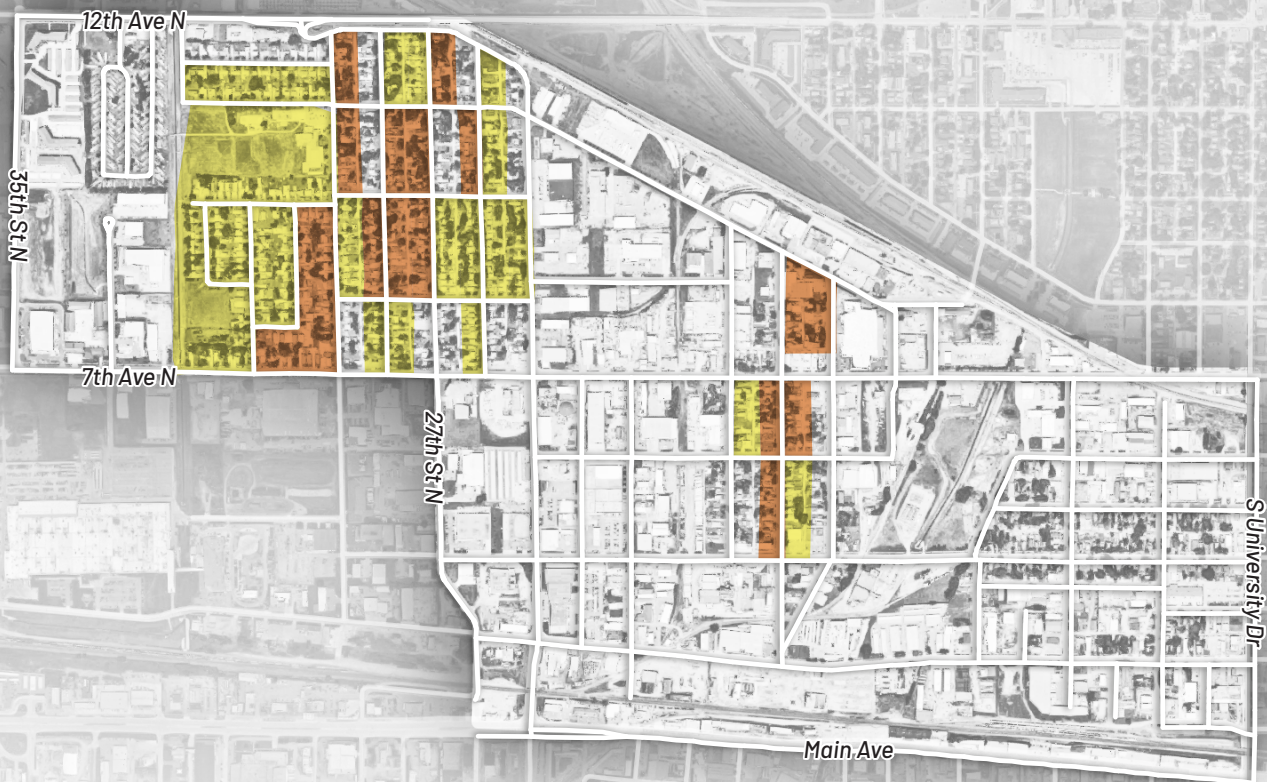


While the Madison / Unicorn Park neighborhood does not currently have an active neighborhood association or any formal means of organizing neighbors and local business owners and employees, an ad hoc neighborhood organization did exist in 2010 but only lasted a few years. An opportunity now exists to create a neighborhood association that not only includes the residential community but the business community as well. Madison / Unicorn Park is unique among Fargo's core neighborhoods with greater than 50% of the land area dedicated to commercial and warehouse uses. This mix of land uses provides an opportunity for the residents, business owners and employees to partner in the creation of a neighborhood and/or business organization that serves the diverse needs of the area.

It is also noteworthy that the diversity of Madison / Unicorn Park extends beyond the residential and business sectors. The commercial and industrial uses that separate Madison from Unicorn Park create an artificial barrier between the two, a divide that the new neighborhood organization will have to bridge. Finding new ways to coalesce the varied components of this unique neighborhood should be endeavored with the assistance of the proposed Neighborhood Coordinator.

3

Housing Reinvestment Tools



Promising Areas for Reinvestment Resources

- Core Reinvestment "A" Blocks
- Core Reinvestment "B" Blocks

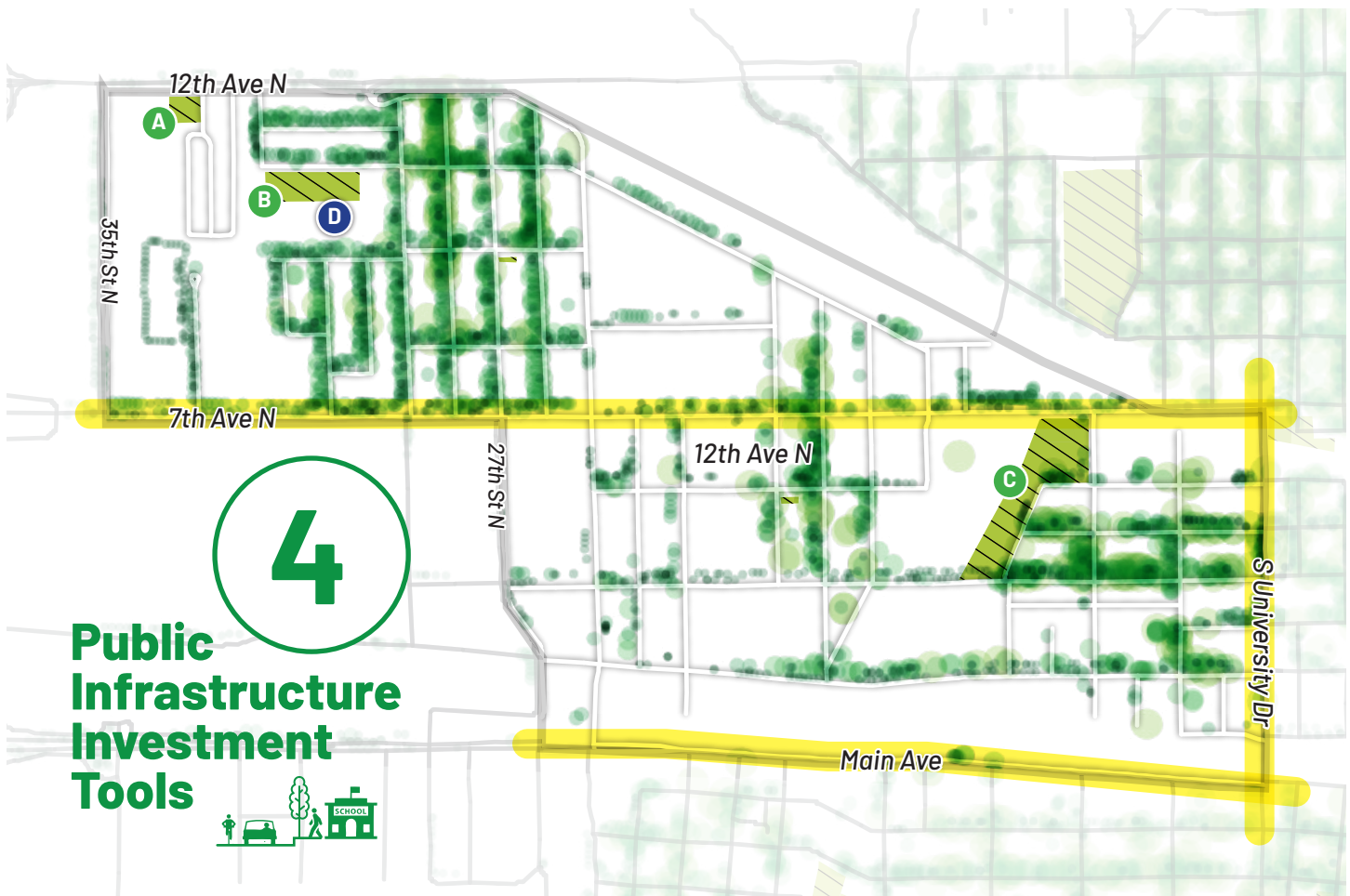
The new housing reinvestment tools proposed in the Core Neighborhoods Toolkit are intended to meet a need for programs that proactively target and turn around troubled properties, as well as programs that partner with owners who are able to invest in improvements and updates but are hesitating due to uncertainty about the neighborhood or their return on investment.

Potential target areas for these programs have been identified for planning purposes. Blocks with a combination of strong properties and some weaker properties are prioritized as areas where targeting resources is likely to bolster confidence and stimulate similar investments by other owners. On this map, "A" blocks are somewhat stronger than "B" blocks, but both types are especially strong candidates for reinvestment resources in Madison / Unicorn Park.

For maximum impact, new reinvestment programs should be actively promoted and paired with existing incentives, such as the remodeling tax exemption.



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SCHOOLS & PARKS

Invest in the parks and recreational facilities in the neighborhood—including upgrades that make them as useful as possible to nearby residents—to support Madison / Unicorn Park's long-term residential appeal. Plan all such investments in collaboration with neighborhood residents.

Invest in Madison Elementary School, and the park area that surrounds it, to keep it on-par and competitive with facilities in newer parts of Fargo.

Neighborhood residents: Use parks and schools as locations for neighborhood activities and as selling points in efforts to encourage current and potential residents to invest in the neighborhood.

- A** Meadow Park
- B** Madison Park / Madison Pool
- C** Unicorn Park
- D** Madison Elementary School

CORRIDORS

Include highlighted corridors in efforts to plan and implement "complete street" designs that better serve all modes of transportation. View all future investments along corridors as opportunities to strengthen neighborhood character and identity.

Special attention should be given to creating an improved pedestrian experience from the Madison residential blocks to the Unicorn Park residential blocks and then continuing this pedestrian connection to downtown.

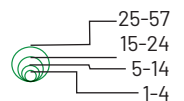
- 7th Ave N**
- S University Dr**
- Main Ave**

TREES

The tree canopy contributes significantly to the neighborhood's appeal and quality of life. It is especially dense on some of the streets in the northwestern corner of the neighborhood – the Madison residential area—but is weak in much of the remaining areas. Coordinating a tree planting program with the business community in this neighborhood would help to mitigate light, sound and noise issues and create the appearance of improved connectivity throughout the neighborhood.

- Continue strong management of existing public trees on streets and in parks
- Replant aggressively as older trees come down
- Cultivate a stronger canopy in areas where it is relatively thin, specifically the area between the two predominately residential sections

Public Trees by Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) in inches



5

Public Health & Safety Tools

More so than with other tools in the Core Neighborhoods Toolkit, partnerships between the City and neighborhood residents will be critical to the success of tools that seek that to uphold basic standards of property maintenance.

The resident side of this equation should include:



Active participation in complaint-based code enforcement

Complaint-based code enforcement is now and will remain a central tool for enforcing Fargo's property maintenance code. For this to work, it is important that residents understand how to submit complaints (online or by phone) and the process the City follows to verify and abate code violations. Stepped-up communications by the City will play a role, but so must proactive communication by groups of residents.



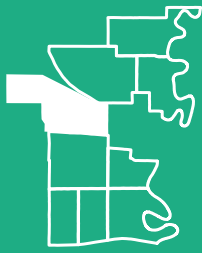
Help neighbors in need with compliance assistance

While partnerships between the City and non-profits can play a role in helping property owners who lack the financial or physical ability to fix basic code issues, neighborhood residents and faith-based organizations have the potential to play the leading role in a manner that also builds the neighborhood's capacity to organize and act.



Organize alley clean-ups and maintenance

Identify opportunities to partner with the City on special clean-up events in neighborhood alleys to improve conditions and engage residents in a manner that builds connections and capacity to solve problems.

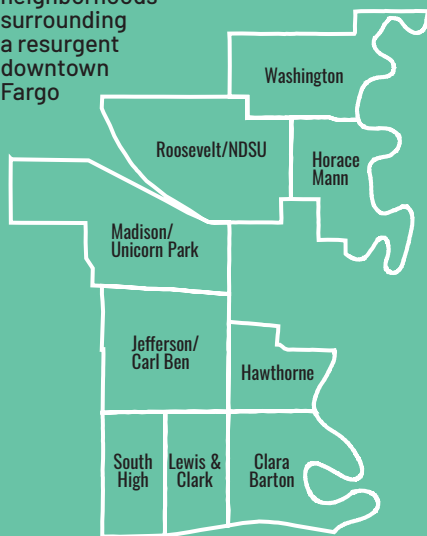


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Neighborhood Implementation Brief

What is the Core Neighborhoods Master Plan, and why was it developed?

Nine neighborhoods surrounding a resurgent downtown Fargo



Fargo's core neighborhoods are a vital part of the city's past, present, and future. As Fargo's original neighborhoods, they house many of its most important assets and offer a wide range of residential and economic opportunities to a growing and increasingly diverse region.

Appreciation of the roles that these neighborhoods play in the life of Fargo—and the issues that inevitably affect neighborhoods as they age and evolve—is the impetus for this plan. In the wake of the Downtown InFocus plan from 2018 and the earlier Go2030 Comprehensive Plan, the need for renewed and focused attention to the core neighborhoods has become broadly recognized.

Rather than a piecemeal approach to planning for the future of the core neighborhoods, a process was designed for residents and other stakeholders to come together and create a unified plan for the core that also responds to the opportunities and challenges in each neighborhood.

The result is a Core Neighborhoods Master Plan that achieves both a core-wide perspective for long-term policymaking and a neighborhood-level focus on desired outcomes and implementation.

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