JANUARY 2021

SOUTH HIGH Neighborhood Implementation Brief

City of Fargo

CORE NEIGHBORHOODS MASTER PLAN

Prepared by czbLLC

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NEIGHBORHOOD IMPLEMENTATION BRIEF

SOUTH HIGH

What are South High'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.

Welcome to the
SOUTH HIGH
— NEIGHBORHOOD —

Assets to Build Upon

A range of assets in the South High 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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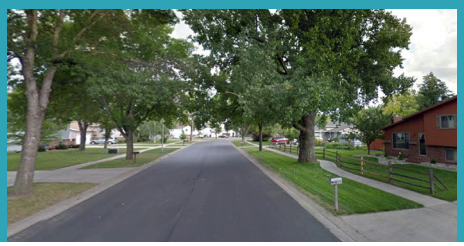
These assets represent strengths to preserve and to build a vision for the future around.

- **Homes are well-maintained and express pride**
- **South High School and the recreational facilities surrounding the school**
- **Convenient location**
- **Neighborliness, including presence of Little Libraries**
- **Nearby retail and services**
- **City services that are reliable and of high quality**
- **Street trees**



Issues to Address

Issues or problems to address in South High 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.

- **Noise from busy roads, especially I-94**
- **Pedestrian safety on busy roads, especially near recreation facilities**
- **Some distressed looking homes**
- **Older apartment buildings that are looking rundown and are sources of nuisance complaints**
- **Sidewalk conditions in the winter**

SOUTH HIGH NEIGHBORHOOD

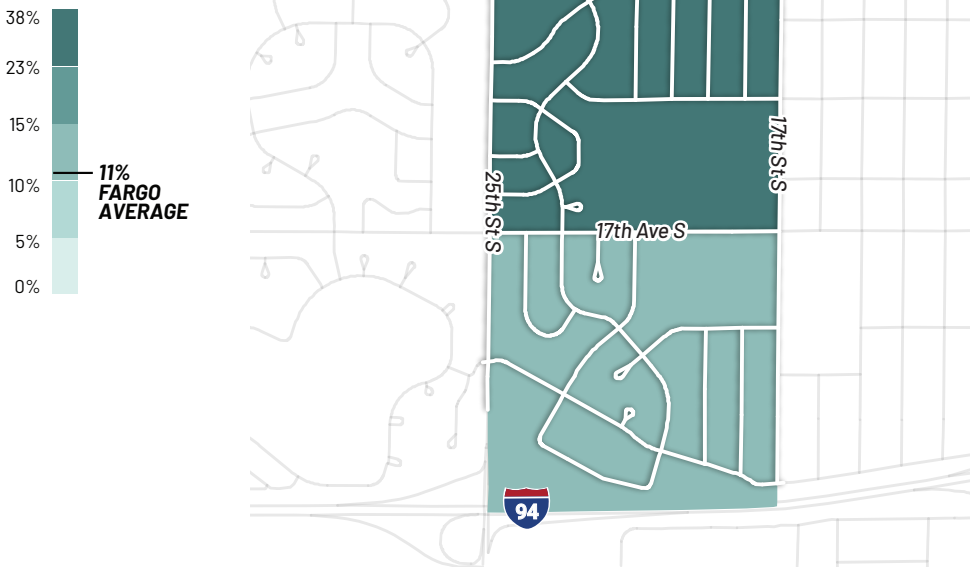
Conditions and Trends

A neighborhood of long-time homeowners entering a period of transition

While 29% of Fargo homeowners have been in their current home since before 2000, the same can be said of more than 40% of South High's homeowner.

In the neighborhood's northern half, this translates to a high share of residents over age 65—more than 25%, compared to 11% citywide. This also means that a demographic transition is underway and likely to accelerate over the next few years. Already, more than 25% of residents in the neighborhood's northern half are school-age children, a sign that younger families are replacing older residents at a rapid pace.

Share of residents 65 and over



Share of residents under 18

Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Relatively large and newer homes with healthy demand

Among Fargo's core neighborhoods, South High's housing stock is the youngest, with most homes having been built between 1960 and 1979. The combination of relatively modern and large homes with easy access to downtown make South High uniquely competitive with newer neighborhoods in the Fargo-Moorhead region. Recent average sale prices of above $200,000 for most of the neighborhood's dominant home configurations is evidence of strong demand, as are owner-occupancy rates of near 100%.

Smaller homes affordable to households making close to Fargo's median income are also available in South High, especially on northern blocks.

Dominant Home Configurations

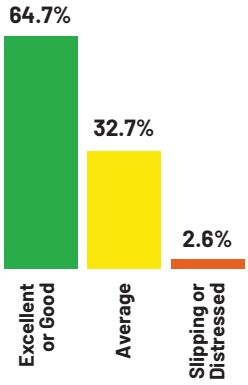
	3 beds / 2 baths	4 beds / 2 baths	3 beds / 1 bath	2 beds / 2 baths	3 beds / 3 baths
# of Properties	174	76	49	44	39
% Owner-Occupied	96%	96%	96%	98%	100%
Average Field Survey Condition Score	2.193	2.069	2.327	2.176	1.814
Average Assessed Value, 2019	*$197,465*	*$203,316*	*$166,376*	*$189,298*	*$257,069*
Average Sales Price, 2017-2019	*$210,920*	*$218,830*	*$180,000*	*$192,657*	*$267,967*
Total Sales, 2017-2019	26	10	1	14	3
Approximate Income Needed to Affordably Purchase at Recent Average Sales Price	$70,000	$73,000	$60,000	$64,000	$89,000

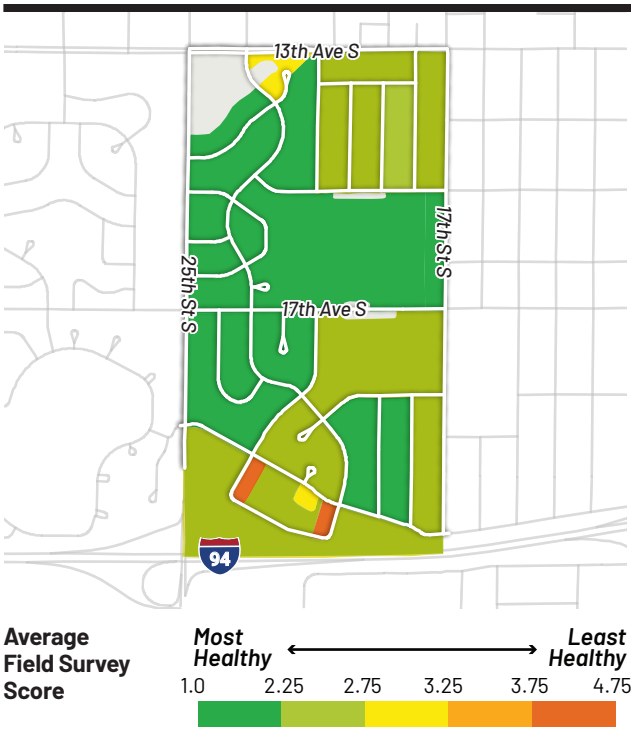
Strong levels of residential upkeep, with a few signs of vulnerability

According to the 2020 field survey of residential conditions, almost all blocks in South High feature consistently high levels of maintenance, with nearly two out of three homes rated as excellent or good—a designation for properties showing pride of ownership and no visible signs of deferred maintenance.

Only a few blocks had overt signs of disinvestment, and these were often related to rental complexes where neglect stands out against a backdrop of well-maintained homes.

Exterior Condition Survey of Homes (Field Survey)





SOUTH HIGH NEIGHBORHOOD

Vision for South High

A vision for South High emerged during the planning process in the form of a brand statement based (1) on the characteristics or attributes that are at the core of the neighborhood's image and (2) on the target homebuyer markets that are most likely to find the neighborhood's attributes and housing stock appealing.

The result is a statement describing the neighborhood in 2030 as a place that has reinforced its intrinsic assets and is a neighborhood of choice for its target markets. The statement and its components can be used in a variety of ways, such as guiding the development of events and activities that express this vision, as the basis for developing marketing materials, and to clarify the mission 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 the South High brand.

Location

The convenience, character and fun of an in-town neighborhood where kids can walk to school, but just minutes from I-94, the airport and downtown attractions.

Neighborliness

Our beautiful, tree-lined streets and parks make it easy to walk your dog around what we call "Bark Boulevard" and chat with neighbors along the way.

Family-friendly

Move-in ready, well-kept homes with yards, a safe, relaxing environment, and great schools that kids can walk to, plus a public pool for summer fun.

Target Markets

The neighborhood attributes and existing housing stock were used to identify target homebuyer markets that are primed to see the neighborhood as a good fit.

Profile 1

Young families, buying homes in the $200,000 to $300,000 range.

- People who want a newer home in good condition (they don't want to or don't have time to renovate), but are turned off by the sterility and spotty quality of Fargo's newer subdivisions.
- People who appreciate the post-war neighborhood atmosphere of tidy homes and spacious yards; meeting neighbors while dog-walking.
- People who like having neighbors with similar pride in homeownership and attention to upkeep.
- Value our larger than average yards (but not too big)
- People who feel energized by the activity around the schools in the neighborhood – lots of school sports and young people.

Vision and Brand Statement

Neighbors in the South High neighborhood enjoy the best aspects of a suburban location – move-in ready, well-kept homes with yards, a public pool, and a safe, relaxing environment – combined with the convenience, character and fun of an in-town neighborhood where kids can walk to great schools.

Our beautiful, tree-lined streets and parks make it easy to walk our dogs around what we call "Bark Boulevard" and chat with neighbors along the way. And we're just minutes from I-94, the airport and downtown businesses.

The South High neighborhood is popular with health care professionals, teachers, people in the trades and others who work hard and take pride in their homes and neighborhood.

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Outcomes to Strive For

To complement the vision and brand statement 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.

Homes and public areas show pride and help promote a positive image for neighborhoods

MEASUREMENT

Share of properties in excellent or good condition

BASELINE	TARGET
65% in 2020	at least 71% in 2030

Strong buyers choose to live here, including families with children

MEASUREMENT

Average time on market for homes sold in neighborhood

BASELINE	TARGET
96 days in 2017-19	Below 90 days by 2024

Strong buyers choose to live here, including families with children

MEASUREMENT

Share of households with children under 18 compared to citywide average

BASELINE	TARGET
In 2018, the share of households with kids under 18 was similar to the citywide average of 25%, but slightly below average in the southern half of South High	Remain close to the city average going forward

Neighbors enjoy a walkable community

MEASUREMENT

Number of scheduled activities that promote walking or being outdoors in South High

BASELINE	TARGET
0 in 2019	at least 2 by 2024 that include outdoor activity to highlight neighborhood walkability and recreation assets

Schools are thriving, and schools and residential areas reinforce each other's success

MEASUREMENT

Number of students residing in Lewis & Clark Elementary zone compared to school capacity

BASELINE	TARGET
486 in 2019/20 with capacity of 528	Maintain a student residency figure of 475 or above going forward

Neighborhoods are known for being neighborly and people feel safe

MEASUREMENT

Number of scheduled activities that help neighbors meet and connect with each other

BASELINE → **TARGET**

0 in 2019

at least 2 by 2024 that reinforce the 'Neighborly' brand attribute

MEASUREMENT

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

BASELINE → **TARGET**

0% of South High respondents to a 2020 survey identified crime or safety as a priority problem to address

Maintain a very low indication of crime or safety as a priority problem on future surveys

There are a wide variety of people and housing types/price ranges

MEASUREMENT

Share of residents who are non-white compared to citywide average

BASELINE → **TARGET**

In 2018, 16% of Fargo residents were non-white. In South High, the share of non-white residents in the southern half of the neighborhood was just above 16%. In the northern half it was closer to 10%.

The share of non-white residents in South High remains near, or moves closer to, the citywide average.

MEASUREMENT

Share of homes priced below citywide average

BASELINE → **TARGET**

91% of single-family home sales in 2019 were below the citywide average price

This figure moves toward 50% indicating both an ability to compete in the regional marketplace and a supply of more affordable options

SOUTH HIGH 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

1 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 well-established South High 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.

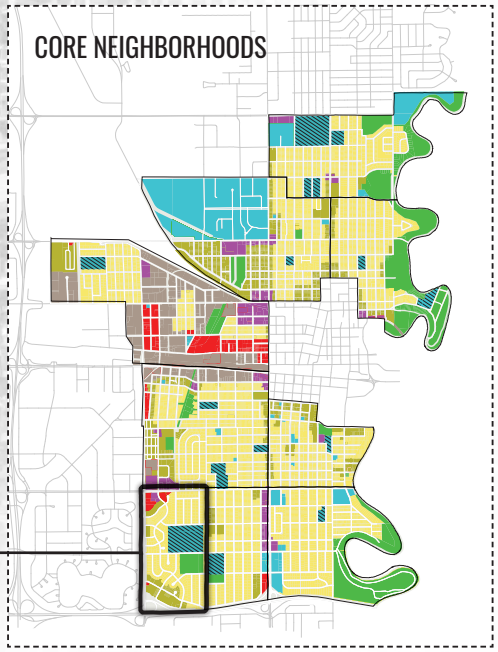
- The majority of the land use designations for the South High neighborhood are single-family residential and should be protected from multi-family encroachment.
- The southeast corner of 13th Avenue South and 25th Street South is currently a mix of commercial retail and office buildings and a combination of commercial and mixed-use land uses are recommended for these blocks. Commercial development along South 25th Street will likely address the needs of those who use South 25th Street as a transit corridor but the area set back further to the east and almost contiguous to the existing residential fabric offers opportunities for mixed-use development—possibly neighborhood commercial development on the ground floor and residential development on the upper floors.

SOUTH HIGH

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Institutional
- *Schools with recreational amenities*
- Industrial/Warehousing
- Park, Open Space and Trails
- Commercial
- 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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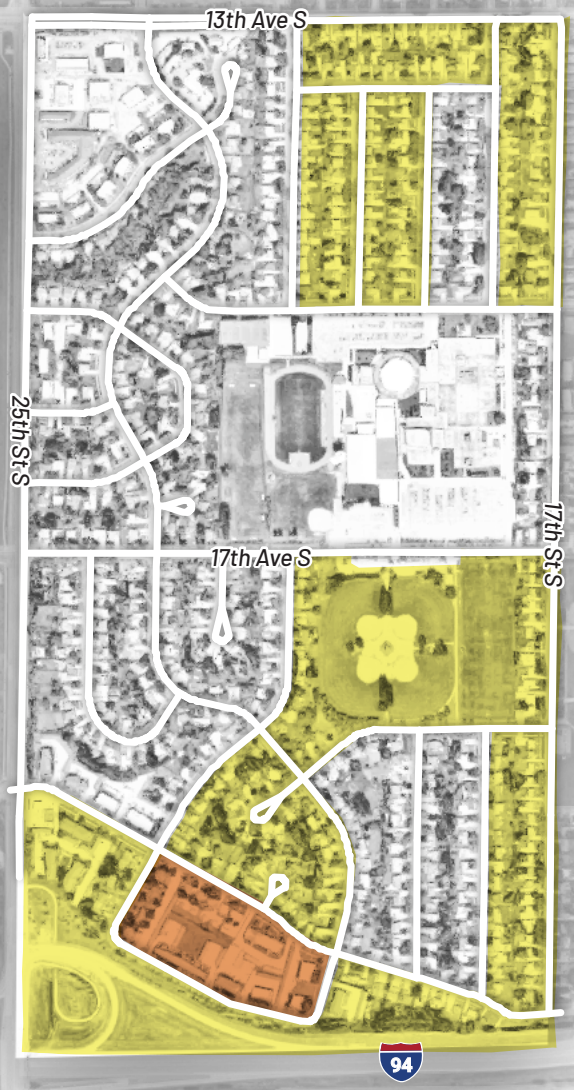
2 Neighborhood Leadership & Engagement Tools

ACTIVITY	CORE BRAND ATTRIBUTE		
	Great Location	Neighborly	Family-Friendly
Welcome activity/package for new homeowners		✔	✔
Homecoming Week "Bruin Pride" activities, such as decorations and yard signs	✔	✔	✔
Doggy meet and greet at one of the neighborhood parks		✔	✔
South High pool and grill day for the neighborhood, using the parking lot outside of the pool to gather and grill	✔	✔	✔
Holiday lights tour	✔	✔	✔
Special activities around bike-to-school days	✔	✔	✔
Pet parade at one of the high school parking lots for people to show off their pets		✔	✔

The South High neighborhood does not currently have a neighborhood association or any other formal means of organizing neighbors. Therefore, taking small steps over the next few years to gradually build a stronger sense of neighborhood identity and a larger base of engaged and connected neighbors will be an important starting point for South High.

Residents and the proposed Neighborhood Coordinator should use the brand statement and the list of potential activities generated during the planning process to begin the process of cultivating higher levels of resident engagement and leadership. Getting started on just one of the activities in 2021 and 2022 would represent an important start to this work.

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 South High.

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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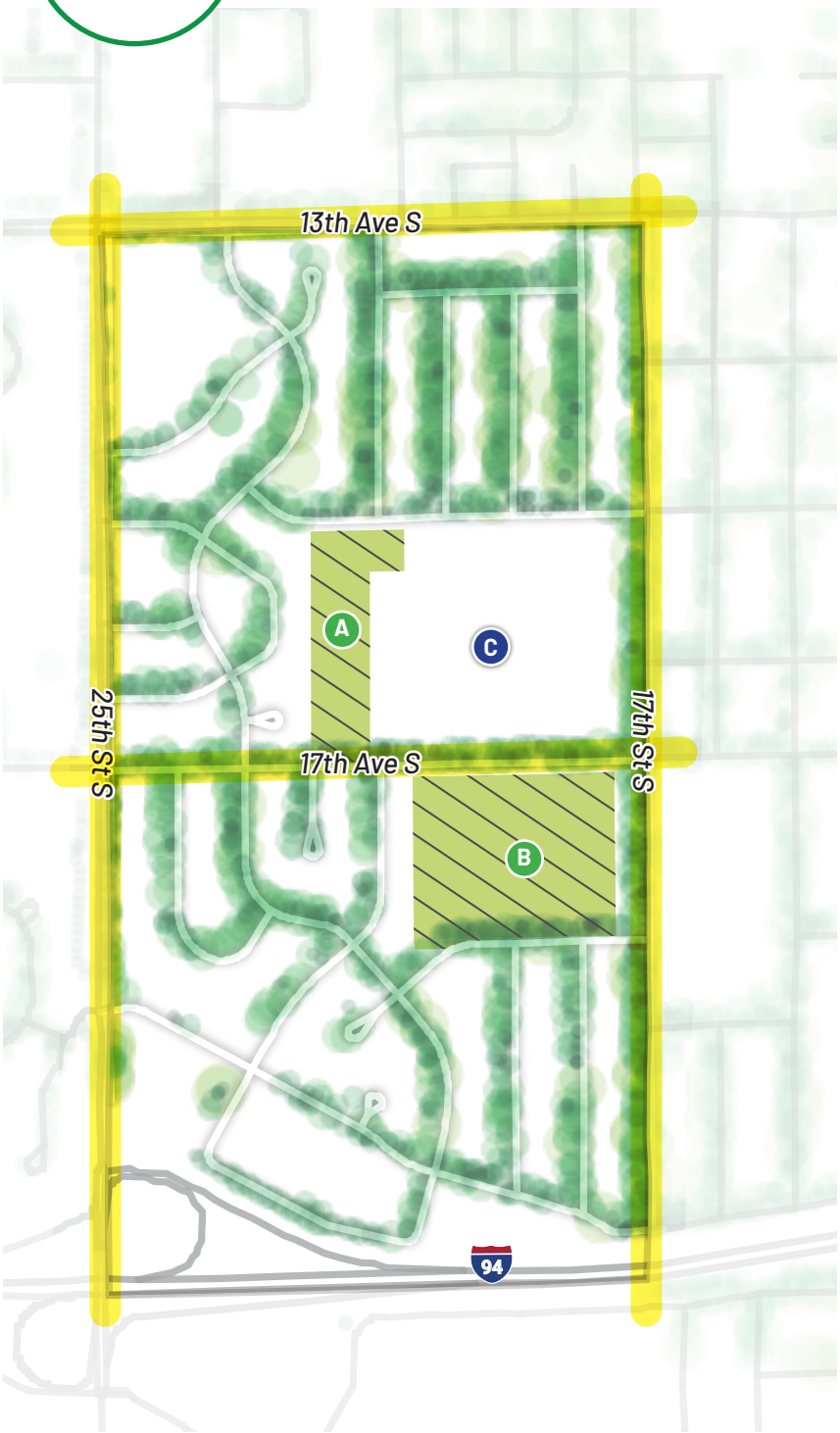
4 Public Infrastructure Investment Tools



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 South High's long-term residential appeal. Plan all such investments in collaboration with South High residents.

Invest in South High School, and the elementary and middle schools that feed into it, to keep them 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** South High Athletic Fields and Southwest Recreation Pool
- **B** Southwest Park and Theraldson Little League Complex
- **C** South High 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.

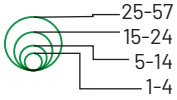
- 13th Ave S
- 17th Ave S
- 25th St S
- 17th St S

TREES

The tree canopy contributes significantly to the neighborhood's appeal and quality of life. It is especially dense on some of the older streets in the northeastern corner of 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, such as the southwest corner of South High

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.

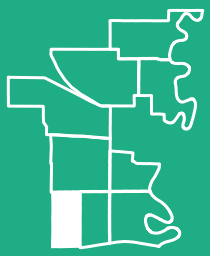
The resident side of this equation should include:

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

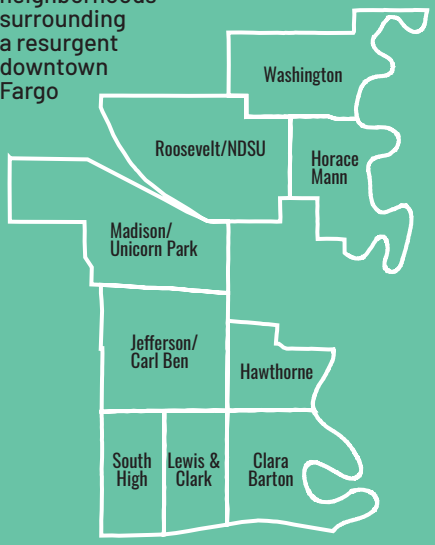
While partnerships between the City and non-profits can play a role in helping property owners who lack the financial or physical ability to fix basic code issues, neighborhood residents and faith-based organizations have the potential to play the leading role in a manner that also builds the neighborhood's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



SOUTH HIGH
Neighborhood Implementation Brief

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

Nine neighborhoods surrounding a resurgent downtown Fargo



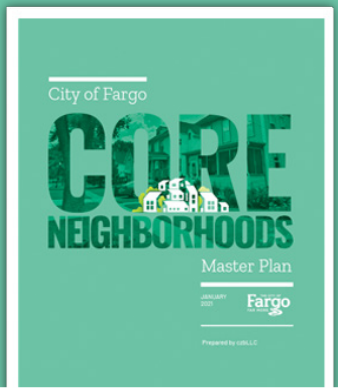
Fargo's core neighborhoods are a vital part of the city's past, present, and future. As Fargo's original neighborhoods, they house many of its most important assets and offer a wide range of residential and economic opportunities to a growing and increasingly diverse region.

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.

READ THE FULL CORE NEIGHBORHOODS MASTER PLAN



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