



RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT
Master Plan

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Introduction

Fargo is where Fargo is because of the Red River of the North. The strong but unpredictable relationship between the Red River of the North and the Fargo-Moorhead community has endured since the area was settled in 1875. The relationship has been punctuated with issues such as commerce, river boats, water supply, safety, bridges, water quality, recreation, and floods. Much of our history is tied to the Red River; and undoubtedly much of our future will also turn on issues that are directly or indirectly related to this unpredictable resource.

In recent years, interest in renewing positive activities and development on the Red River has significantly increased. The experience of cities such as San Antonio, St Paul, Winnipeg, Sioux Falls, and a host of others has demonstrated undeniably that riverfront development can generate economic, social, and cultural benefits to improve the economy and quality of life for an entire region. The intent of this document is to provide a Master Plan for Fargo's riverfront development in an area between Oak Grove Park and Dike East. The Plan recognizes the riverfront as one of the greatest assets within Fargo and Moorhead. It will help the City of Fargo ensure that enhancements to the riverfront will protect the river's unique ecosystem, enhance urban redevelopment, and contribute to expanded recreational opportunities. The Plan will provide a coordinated strategy for improvements to the corridor that will increase its value to the citizens of the community; ensure that development is complementary to and compatible with development in Moorhead; and ensure that the Red River becomes a vital and valued component of the urban landscape.

“Riverfront development can generate economic, social, and cultural benefits to improve the economy and quality of life for an entire region.”



Photo courtesy of: www.riverwatchonline.org



River Trails bike path.

Red River Action Plan

The 1989 Red River Action Plan was undertaken to develop an action plan that addressed existing development projects and identified the need for future activities and actions within the corridor. The plan identified a variety of ongoing and planned projects, and immediate, short range, medium range, and long range actions to meet the identified needs. The actions recommended in the immediate timeframe primarily dealt with policies, maintenance, safety, and facilities. The short range actions addressed programming and facilities. The medium range actions related to dams, programming and facilities. The long range actions addressed water supply, flood control, maintenance, land use, and transportation.

Overall, the Plan was weak on identifying financing sources, however it was indicative of the situation that there was no single entity responsible for action relating to the Red River in all jurisdictions. The Plan increased awareness of the importance of the River and related issues. Fifteen years after publication of the Plan, the primary issues that are still relevant are the following:

- the need for site specific plans for river development;
- low-head dam modification and adjacent development;
- development of pedestrian and bike trails;
- development of a sustainable maintenance program; and handicapped accessibility.

Regional Urban/Design Assistance Team

The 1989 Red River Visions Study was conducted by the Regional Urban/Design Assistance Team of the American Institute of Architects. It reaffirmed the commonly agreed position that the Red River was an under-utilized and under-appreciated natural resource that should be the signature identity of Fargo-Moorhead. The Study provided recommendations relating to three specific areas: a comprehensive vision for development and management of activities on the Red River; recommendations for specific programs and activities; and a strategy for rediscovering the riverfront that included an economic development strategy and development concepts. Underlying all of the recommendations was the need to change attitudes and perceptions regarding the Red River. Key to the success of the vision was the establishment of the River Keepers organization to focus resources, work to change attitudes, and coordinate riverfront activities.

“Management, safety, recreation, fish and wildlife, water quality, and natural environment have one thing in common. They all represent the Fargo-Moorhead communities’ goals for enhancement of their common resource—the Red River corridor.”

~Red River Action Plan

Downtown Area Plan

Downtown Area Plan: The Downtown Area Plan designated the area east of 4th Street between 5th Avenue North and St John’s Hospital as the Riverfront District. Specific recommendations were made regarding appropriate land uses such as office and housing. One of the recommendations was that if industrial land uses cease in the district, office, residential, and public uses should be encouraged. This was in direct reference to the site of Mid America Steel.



View of the Red River and Downtown Fargo from Moorhead.

Vision for Downtown Fargo

The Vision For Downtown Fargo presented an evaluation of the current condition of Downtown Fargo and a series of recommendations to effect positive change. Flood protection was noted as a concern in regard to any development that may occur in the Downtown. The foremost reference to riverfront development was included in the Recommended Action Items in reference to a new entertainment anchor:

“Consider and evaluate the feasibility of constructing a new Civic Center in the heart of downtown Fargo. The multi-use facility would serve as the anchor to a newly emerging downtown cultural and entertainment district. It would also be the center of a riverfront utilization strategy, where the goal is to re-integrate the downtown with the Red River.”

“Use the River...celebrate it by acknowledging its history, use it to unify the community and utilize the identity to promote the community.”

~R/UDAT

Renaissance Zone Plan

The Fargo Renaissance Development Zone Plan was approved in 1999 following the passage of the Renaissance Zone enabling legislation. Although the plan focused primarily on the 20-block Renaissance Zone, recommendations of the Downtown Area Plan relating to the Riverfront District were incorporated into the document. Additionally, it was noted in the Land Use Issues section that riverfront development was a key to attracting residential development and attracting a variety of visitors to the Downtown.

Downtown Fargo Redevelopment Framework Plan

The Downtown Framework Plan built on existing Downtown plans and Moorhead's development plans to provide a physical framework for future development in Downtown Fargo. A key element of the Plan was to establish a strong connection on 2nd Avenue North to the River. This was considered the primary east/west connection between the Downtown, Civic Center Plaza, and the Red River. The Plan recommended a more intense streetscape design and strong visual connection that would draw people to the River. Figure 1 presents a long-term development alternative and Figure 2 presents a section drawing of the plaza and terrace concept.

Upon review of this concept, the consultant was asked to further define development possibilities on the River in an area from Oak Grove Park to dike east. The Red River Park Corridor Plan that was produced reasserted the Red River as the prime shared asset between Fargo and Moorhead, and strengthened its role as a cultural, recreational, and natural resource. Recommendations included the following: improve the riverfront as an amenity and link the core of Downtown to the River; work cooperatively with Moorhead to maximize the potential for combined downtowns; and explore historical connections, the relation to the River, and the urban form to foster a sense of identity and place. Both short-term and long-term redevelopment proposals were developed. The Red River Corridor Plan, presented in Figure 3 was the starting point for the Riverfront Development Master Plan effort.

Figure 1

Long-term Plan for 2nd Avenue and 2nd Street

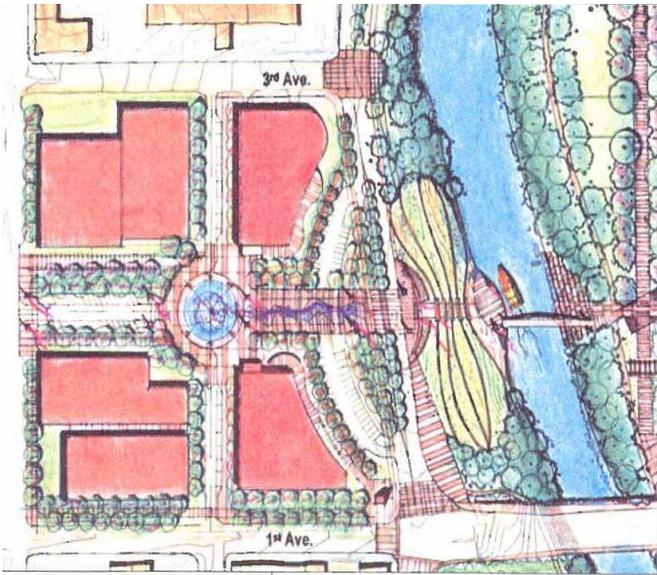


Figure 2

Plaza and Terrace Section Drawing

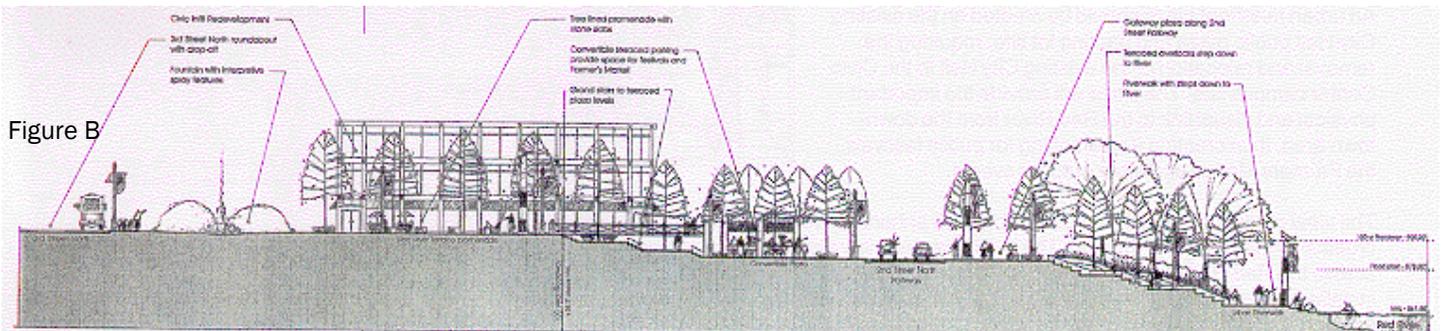
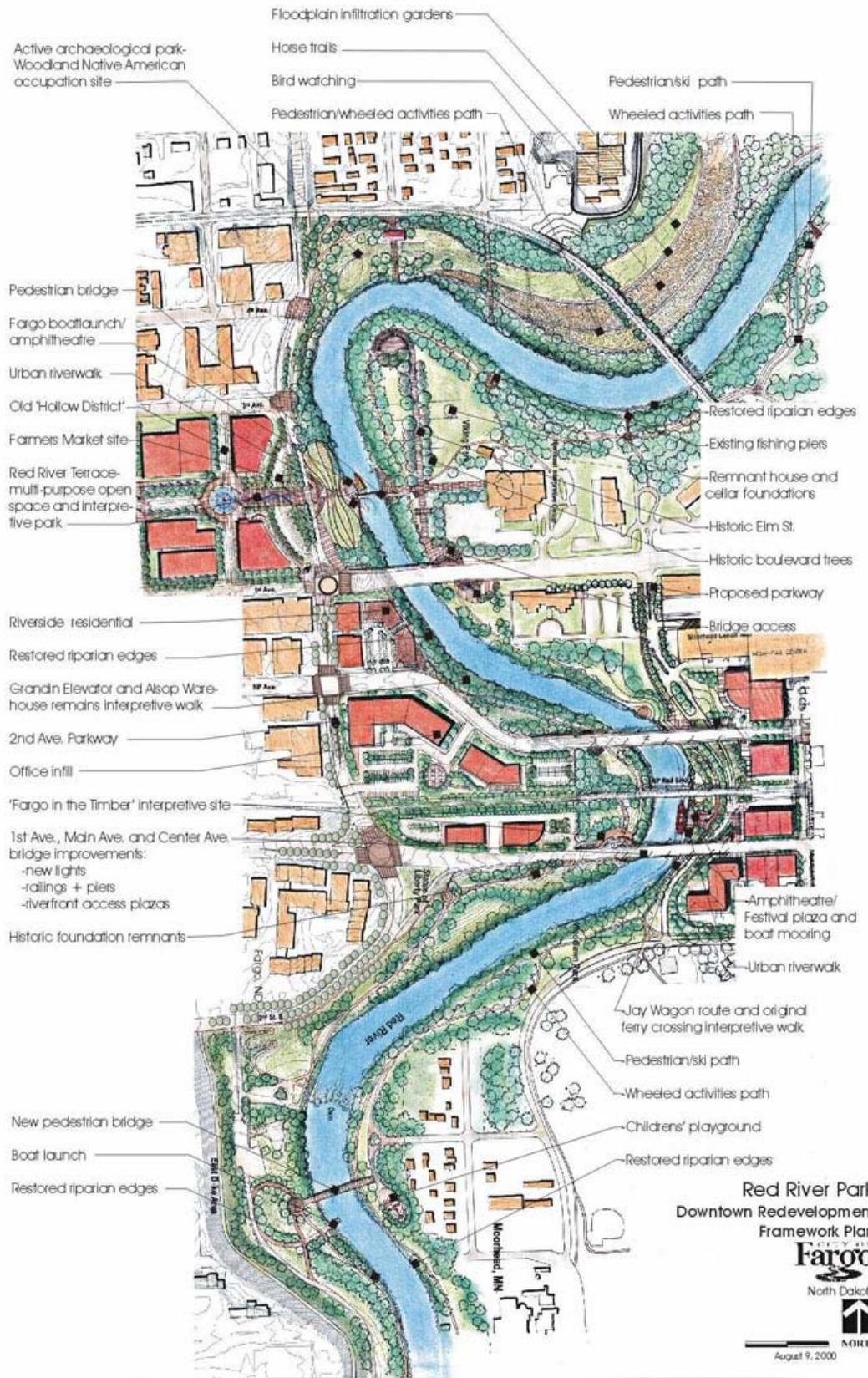


Figure B

Figure 3
Red River Park Corridor Plan



Red River Park
Downtown Redevelopment
Framework Plan
Fargo
North Dakota
NORTH
August 9, 2000

Broadway Streetscape Study



View of Broadway looking south from First Avenue North.

The Broadway Streetscape Study was primarily concerned with developing a new design for Broadway. Figure 4 illustrates several elements of the design. One of the key elements of the study was the designation of 2nd Avenue between Broadway and the riverfront as the Festival Street. Figure 5 illustrates the design concept to strengthen the physical and visual connection. It was suggested that 2nd Avenue could become the new home for the Street Fair and similar events. The importance of this connection was underscored by public input and the final plan recommendations.

Figure 4
Broadway Streetscape Design

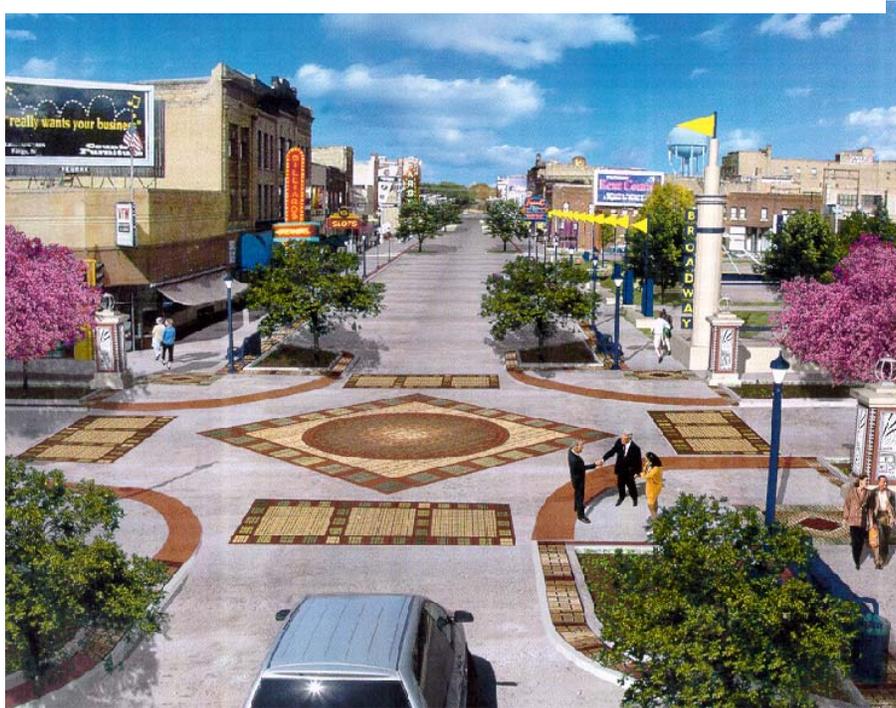


Figure 5
2nd Avenue Festival Street



Moorhead Riverfront Activities

The City of Moorhead constructed an accessible dock facility under the 1st Avenue North Bridge. Other significant improvements were made to the riverfront in Viking Ship, Riverfront, and Memorial Parks by adding lights, electrical service, picnic tables and rebuilding the multi-use path. Land adjacent to the multi-use path was cleared of brush and debris. Five overlooks were constructed at prime viewing locations. A bank stabilization project was completed in the Memorial/Riverfront Park area. The Red Bear, a bar/restaurant opened for business in a historic building along the River.

Pontoon

River Keepers initiated a pontoon tour service in August, 2001. In 2002, a canoe and kayak rental service was added adjacent to the docking facility and Moorhead constructed a ticket/informational booth. The pontoon dock is also for public use. In 2003 more than 3,500 people rode on the pontoon.

Midtown Dam and North Dam

The Midtown was modified with a 5% rock slope in 1998. This improvement mitigated the dangerous condition that was present due to the re-circulating current at the face of the dam. A similar modification was installed in 2002 to improve safety at the North Dam. Another project is planned at the South Dam for the winter of 2003-4.

Festivals

River Keepers, Downtown Community Partnership, Fargo Park District, and other organizations have staged concerts, festivals, canoe/kayaking/fishing clinics, fireworks displays, and other recreational activities at riverfront venues.



Viking Ship Park in Moorhead.



Photo courtesy of: www.fmriver/recreation/ssruby.html

Tour the Red River of the North on the pontoon, SS Ruby.



Midtown Dam area including the Metro Trails bike path.



Photo courtesy of: www.riverwatchonline.org

Canoes under walk bridge during River Splash.

Study Area

The Study Area for this Master Plan was determined to be the same as the Red River Corridor Plan. The Study Area is presented in Figure 6.

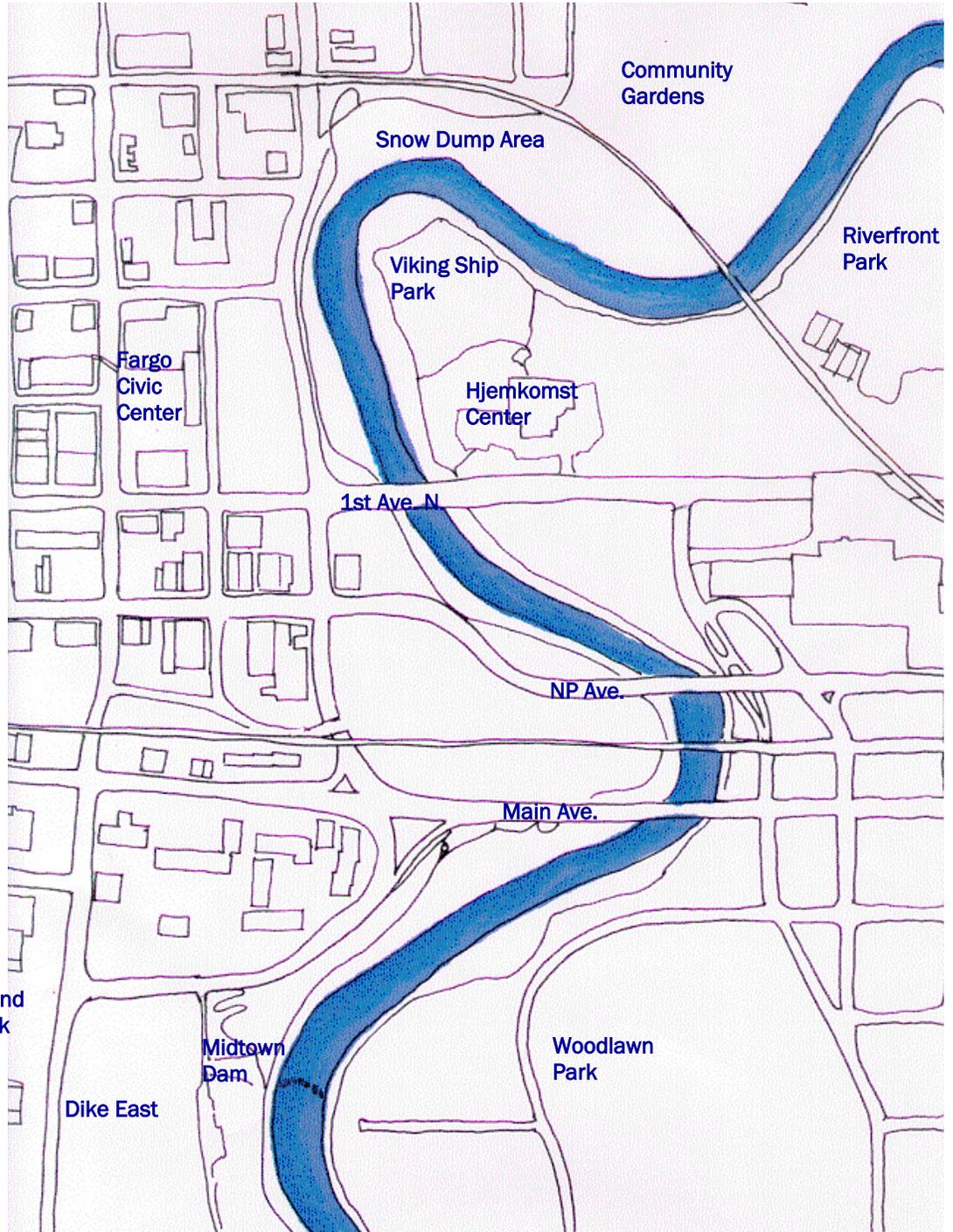


Stave Church at the Hjemkomst Center

“A healthy City Center sets the tone for a community by creating a sense of place and ownership among citizens. It becomes an area to use, share, and treasure.”

~Riverfront Beloit 2000

Figure 6
Riverfront Master Plan Study Area



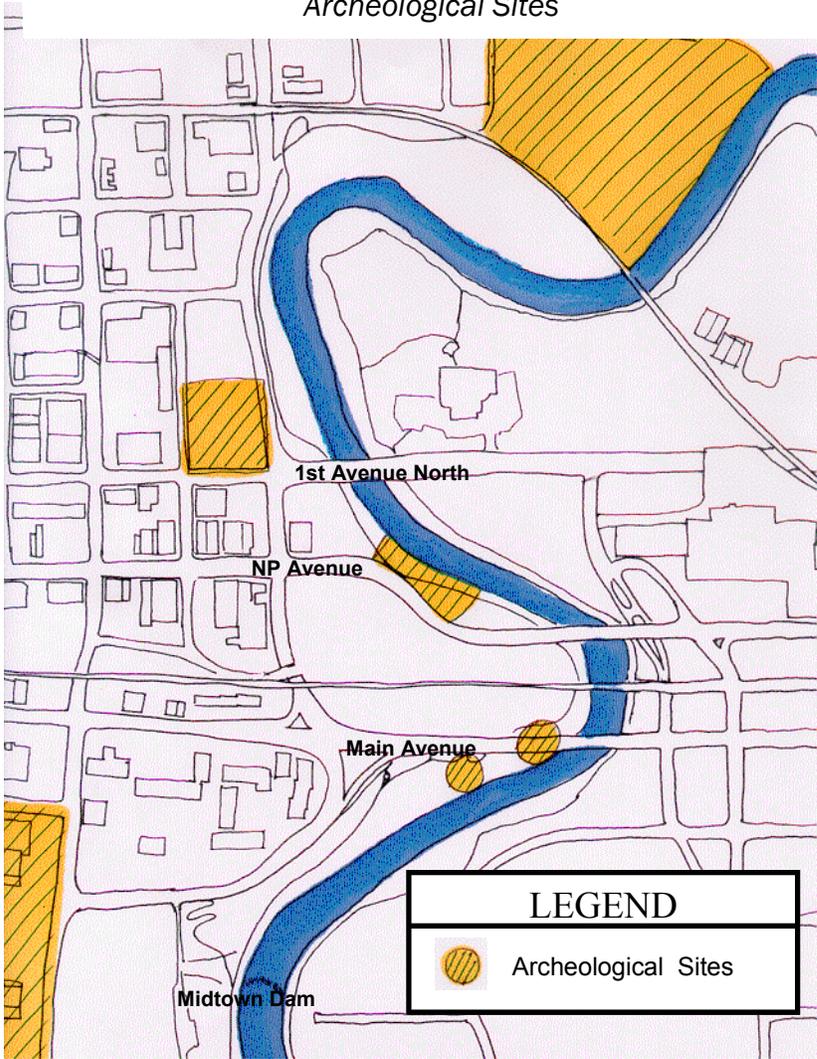
History

Much of the history of Fargo and Moorhead is located in the Study Area along the river. Figure 7 identifies six area where archeological studies have occurred adjacent to the Red River. The recorded history of this area spans a period from the 1850s to the present. Commercial activity on the Red was highlighted by 50 years of riverboat traffic in the late 1800s that transported trade goods and passengers up and down the valley. The first platted settlement, "Fargo in the Timber" was located near the river between the existing Main Avenue and NP Avenue Bridges. There are many historic sites that can still be easily identified by historical records, ruins, or actual structures still in use. Several historical highlights are highlighted in Figure 8 on the following page.



View of the Red River and NP/Center Avenue bridge.

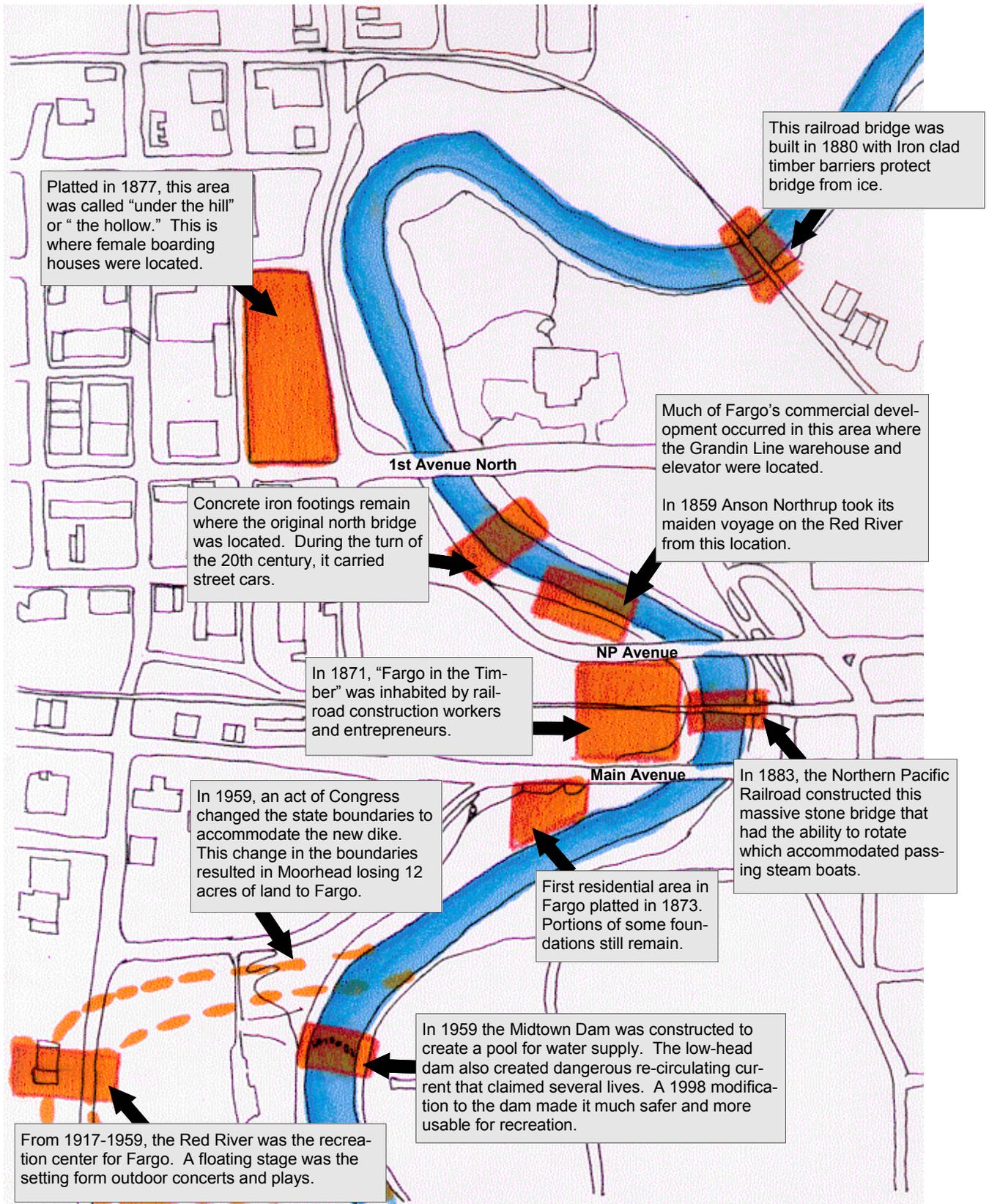
Figure 7
Archeological Sites



"The River mirrors our past and guides our hope for the future."

~Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

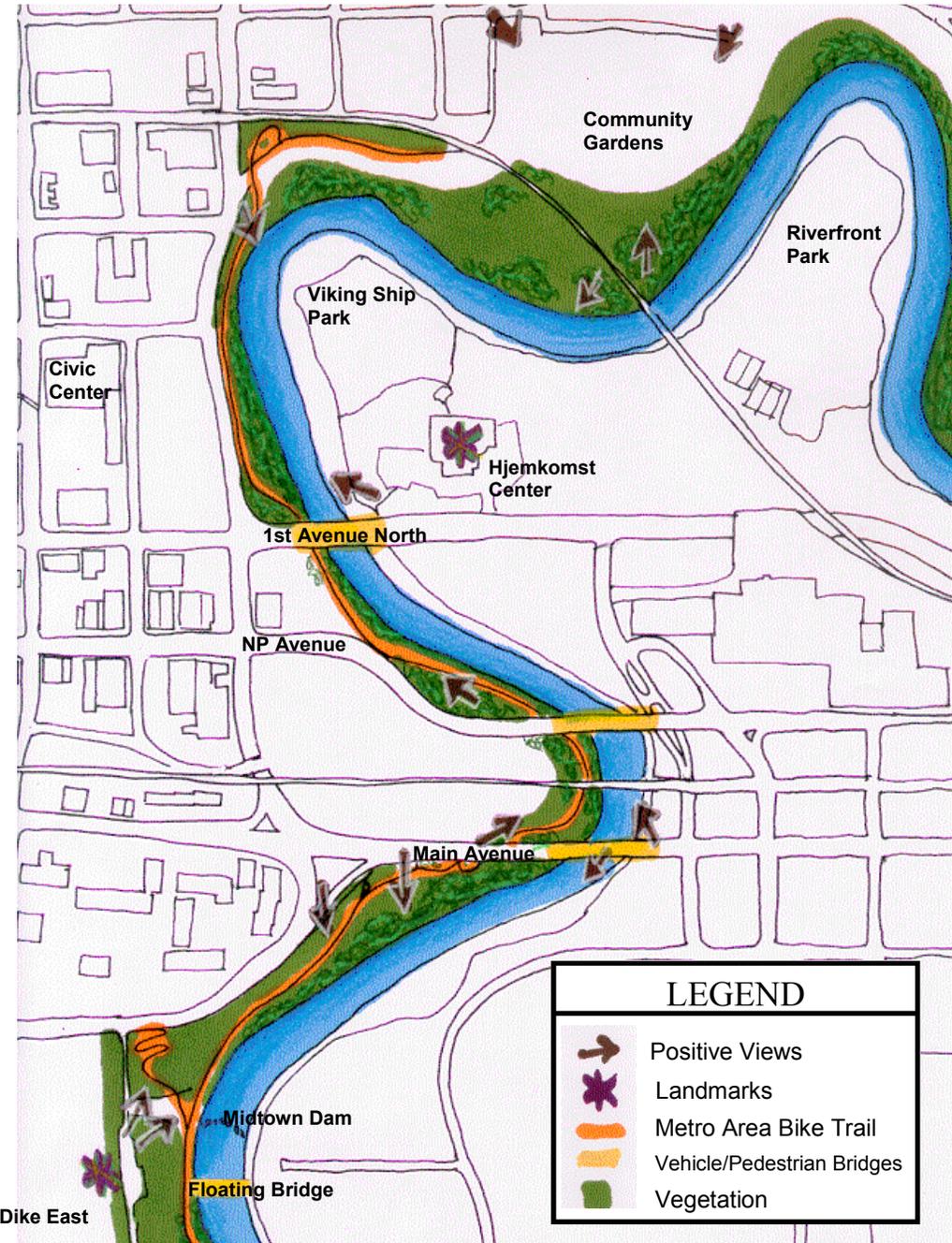
Figure 8
Historical Sites



Environmental Context

There are several natural and built features in the Study Area that effect potential development. Figure 9 provides an overview of existing facilities, vegetation, landmarks, and scenic views that need to be considered in riverfront development.

Figure 9
Development Factors



“The riverfront illustrates our ability to provide stewardship of our environment, confirms our ability to connect and care for our people, and channels sustainable economic development for the benefit of all.”
~Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

Riverfront Development Committee

Although riverfront development has long been a point of discussion, there has not been a concerted effort by the City of Fargo to focus time and resources on this issue. Following the development of the Framework Plan, and based on its recommendations, a joint meeting of the Fargo City Commission and the Fargo Park Board was convened on December 22, 2000 to determine the proper course of action. The Riverfront Development Committee was appointed and charged with the responsibility of refining the Downtown Redevelopment Framework Plan into a Master Plan for riverfront development.

“The vision is clear. It is up to all of us to make it a reality.”

~Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

Membership

The following persons were appointed to serve on the Committee:

Jean Rayl	Fargo City Commission
Rob Lynch	Fargo City Commission
Pat Zavoral	Fargo City Administrator
Barb Johnson	Fargo Park District
Brad Wimmer	Fargo Park District
Roger Gress	Fargo Park District
Dave Leker	Fargo Park District
Vic Pellerano	Fargo Park District
Bob Backman (Chair)	River Keepers
Christine Holland	River Keepers
Bill Mahar	Fargo Planning
Bob Stein	Fargo Planning
Brian Gibson	F-M Metropolitan Council of Government
Dave Anderson	Downtown Community Partnership

Meeting Summaries

January 30, 2001 Meeting: The Committee’s first order of business was to establish its mission:

“The mission of the Riverfront Development Committee is to refine the Downtown Fargo Redevelopment Framework Plan into a Master Plan for development of the Riverfront between Oak Grove Park and Dike East.”

While there were many ideas regarding Riverfront development, the Committee decided to focus on a long-range, achievable plan that included imaginative features that would excite the public. The Committee identified 4 nodes within the Study Area that had different characteristics. Each node would be evaluated separately and within the context of the corridor, and receive a design unique to its physical characteristics and spatial relationships.

February 27, 2001 Meeting: The Committee received a physical inventory of the Study Area and discussed issues associated with these characteristics. The plans to reconstruct the Main Avenue Bridge became a central point of discussion as the anticipated design would include extensive improvements to the bridge head and the adjacent riverfront.

June 15, 2001: The Committee toured the Study Area in order to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and constraints.

July 31, 2001 Meeting: The Committee reviewed the proposed outline for the Draft Plan. Additionally, there were several recommendations for specific uses and facilities in each of the nodes.

August 28 – 29, 2002: The Committee hosted a Riverfront Tour to Sioux City and Sioux Falls. In attendance were approximately 40 elected leaders, staff, private business and non-profit representatives. The Draft Riverfront Plan was presented to the group, and the overwhelming sentiment was to proceed with the Plan as presented, and to select a “bulls-eye” project that would be the focus of short term attention, and would generate excitement and momentum for the long

“Like a stone cast into the water, welcoming, well designed waterfronts create a vitality that can ripple throughout an entire community.”

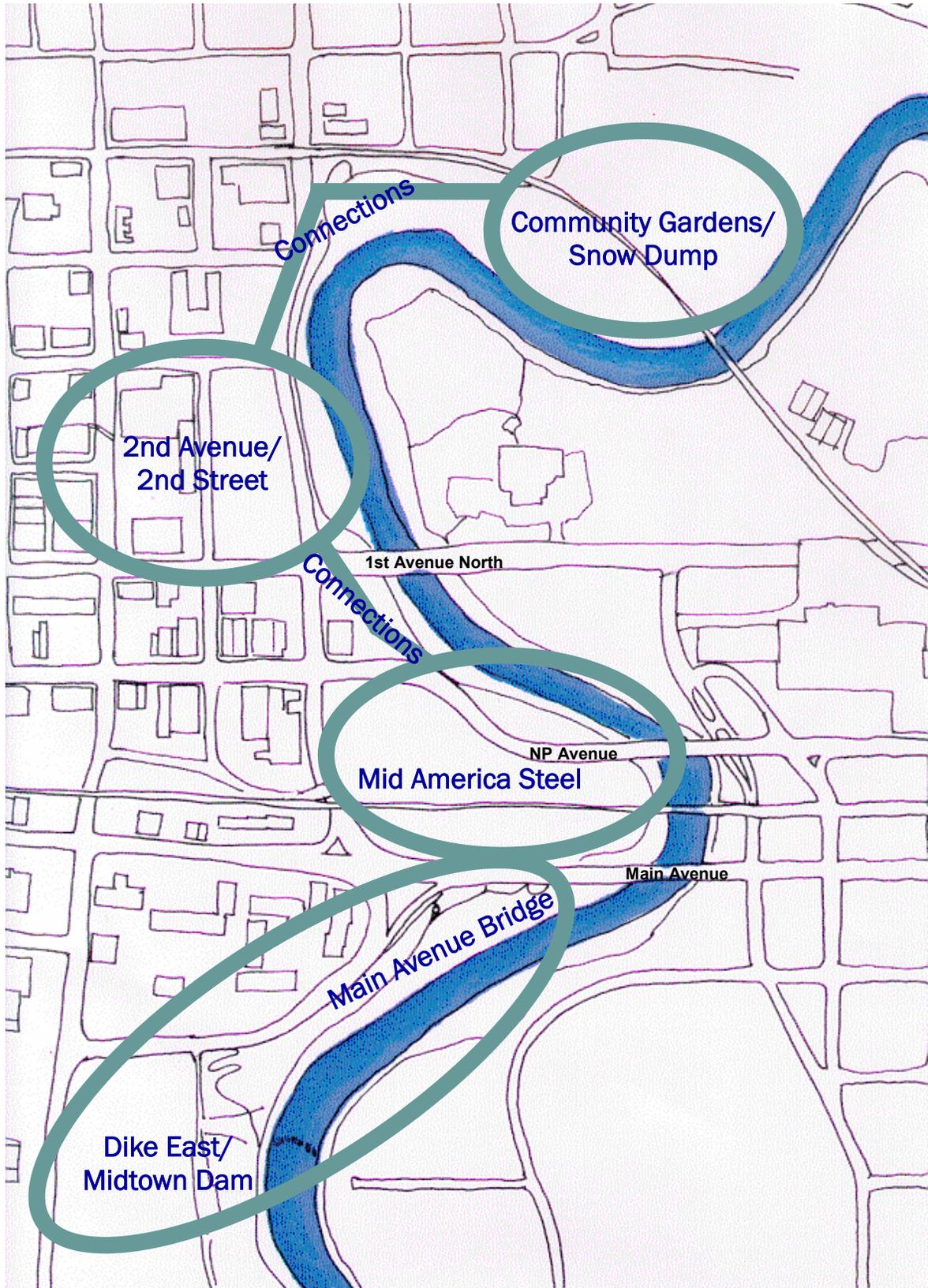
~Smith Group JJR

Identification of Nodes

As previously noted, 4 nodes were identified within the focus area. The nodes, as presented in Figure 10 on the following page, were defined by the existing uses and development, natural features, access, adjacent development, and planned improvements. It was realized at this time that connections between the nodes and other features were critical to the success of any of the planned improvements. “Connections” was treated as a focus area of equal importance to the nodes. Following is a description of the nodes, existing amenities, and natural features.

IDENTIFICATION OF NODES

Figure 10
Study Area - Nodes



Dike East/Midtown Dam and Main Avenue Bridge

This node is located between the Midtown Dam and the Main Avenue Bridge. The area adjacent to the dam is owned by the Fargo Park District, and is commonly referred to as Dike East. It is currently the most heavily used portion of the urban river corridor. It is also the most highly developed stretch on the River and has attracted a diverse group of uses and users. It is a very popular spot for active and passive activities. It contains approximately 14 acres of usable space. Its most common use is as a meeting place and a farmer's market. Fishing has increased at the Midtown Dam since safety modifications were made in 1998. Canoeing and kayaking have also increased in recent years with the easy access and the rapids created by the rock slope. Concerts and festivals have been staged in this area. This area is highly visible and has access off of 2nd Street. There are approximately 200 parking spaces and easy drive-up access to the River. There are wood duck houses, interpretive plaques, and a multiple use trail in this area. Boat ramps were constructed upstream and downstream from the dam, and there is a floating bridge that is installed seasonally immediately upstream from the dam. River Keepers, in cooperation with Fargo Public Works, installed a flood gauge on the southern end of this site. The adjacent Dike West provides a variety of summer and winter recreational activities, and has 327 on-site parking spaces (83 Park District and 244 private). A skate board park is also part of this site.



Sledding at Dike East.



Midtown Dam.

The Main Avenue Bridge is located on the north end of this node. Replacement of this structure is planned in 2003-2004. In addition to the construction of a higher capacity, more aesthetically pleasing bridge structure, there are plans to significantly upgrade the bridgeheads in both Fargo and Moorhead.

Mid-America Steel

This is the area bounded by the Main Avenue Bridge on the south and NP Avenue corridor on the north. It is predominately used as a steel foundry. It is approximately 7.8 acres in size, and it is one of the highest points along the river in the Downtown Fargo. This area provides very positive views of Moorhead, the River corridor, and the other nearby bridges. There are many historic features located in this area. Except for the trail that runs through the area, there are few facilities or amenities in this segment of the riverfront. Its elevation makes it one of the few places in the urban riverfront that



Mid America Steel site.

IDENTIFICATION OF NODES

is near the river, but not in the flood plain. The planned replacement of the Main Avenue Bridge has provided an opportunity to improve the aesthetics of the bridge and adjacent area, and also upgrade the access. There are no immediate plans for relocation of the existing business (Mid America Steel) at this location.

2nd Avenue/2nd Street



Civic Center Lot looking east toward Red River.

This area is bounded by 1st Avenue North on the south and 3rd Avenue North on the north. There is also a strong visual connection between Downtown Fargo and Moorhead via the 2nd Avenue corridor. Although the bank is steep and the space between 2nd Street and the River is narrow, there is a dense stand of quality vegetation on the river edge and the bank. Moorhead’s Viking Ship Park has been highly developed, and is directly across the River, as is the Heritage Hjemkomst Center and the pontoon dock. The major existing feature is the bike trail that traverses the entire stretch. The area is positioned to provide the most convenient point of access to the River from Downtown Fargo via 2nd Avenue. The area is prone to flooding and a temporary earthen dike is routinely constructed on 2nd Street at this point.

Community Gardens/Snow Dump



Community Gardens area.

This area is bounded by 3rd Avenue (extended) on the south and the Oak Grove neighborhood on the north. Consisting of 24.25 acres, this represents the largest node in the Study Area. It provides positive views of the River, and shares common landscape characteristics with Moorhead. This area is home to privately maintained garden plots referred to as Community Gardens. The area is divided by a railroad track with the north segment being significantly larger than the south. The area north of the railroad is quite level, contains quality stands of vegetation and wetlands, and a large meadow. There is vehicular access from 6th Avenue North through a residential neighborhood. Much of this land is flooded in the spring and during high water conditions throughout the year. The area south of the tracks, commonly referred to as the “snow dump area”, is also level and contains quality stands of native vegetation. Its elevation is mostly higher than the northern segment; however there is a low area that provides good access to the river. During 2002 the Fargo Park District, City of Fargo, and River Keepers

trimmed trees in this area to increase visibility and improve safety. It appears this has reduced the use of this area as a transient camp. There is excellent vehicular access from 2nd Street North. The rail corridor is commonly used by transients and homeless persons to travel between Fargo and Moorhead. There is an ongoing study to extend the bike path through this area to connect the only gap in the river bike trail.

Connections

The length of the River in the Study area is approximately 7,804 feet, or 1.5 miles in length. Currently the River bike trail runs continuously through the focus area with the exception of the interruption at the Oak Grove area. Connections with Moorhead and access to the newly improved park facilities and the Downtown are critical. There are currently vehicle/non-motorized crossings at Main Avenue, NP Avenue, and at 1st Avenue North. There is a floating bridge immediately south of the Midtown Dam that allows seasonal crossing, however flood conditions inhibit use of this facility. There is also pedestrian/bike bridge located in Oak Grove Park that provides a connection between the Fargo and Moorhead trails. The successful redevelopment of the Riverfront is contingent upon access, continuity, and connectivity. Many times the uses along the River will require easy movement between nodes or events, or simply the ability to get to a destination. Much of the activity will be pedestrian oriented. The ease, comfort, and safety of these activities will promote further usage.



Multiple use trail.



Riverfront Development Master Plan

The Riverfront Development Master Plan was developed through a committee process that included meetings, observations, exploration and the experiences of other cities.

It was also guided by widely accepted general goals and principles. The Waterfront Center, a non-profit education and planning organization, was founded in 1991 to produce waterfront planning goals. There goals were set forth in the Urban Waterfront Manifesto. Although not formally adopted as the goals of this Plan, the Manifesto sets forth solid planning principles for guiding riverfront development in Downtown Fargo.

“It is essential to keep in mind the inherent public interest in the riverfront which is reflected in the public ownership and management of the water.

Waterfront planning should be long-range, comprehensive and holistic and should encompass all relevant disciplines. It should use all appropriate technologies and encourage a system of sustainable growth and operation.

Meaningful community involvement is integral to valid waterfront planning and development. It should begin early and be continuous.

Waterfront work is not just about economic development, is not simply a design question or only about environmental issues. Rather it is a fusion of these and related disciplines that should be sought.

We encourage communities to think long-term in waterfront work. Many conversions take 10, 15, or 25 years. The understandable desire to achieve instant results should be resisted in all except the smallest steps. Development over time allows a richness of character vs. the sameness of a one-time “Big Bang” approach.

It should be remembered that every waterfront is an integral part of a watershed consisting of creeks, rivers, estuaries or bays.”

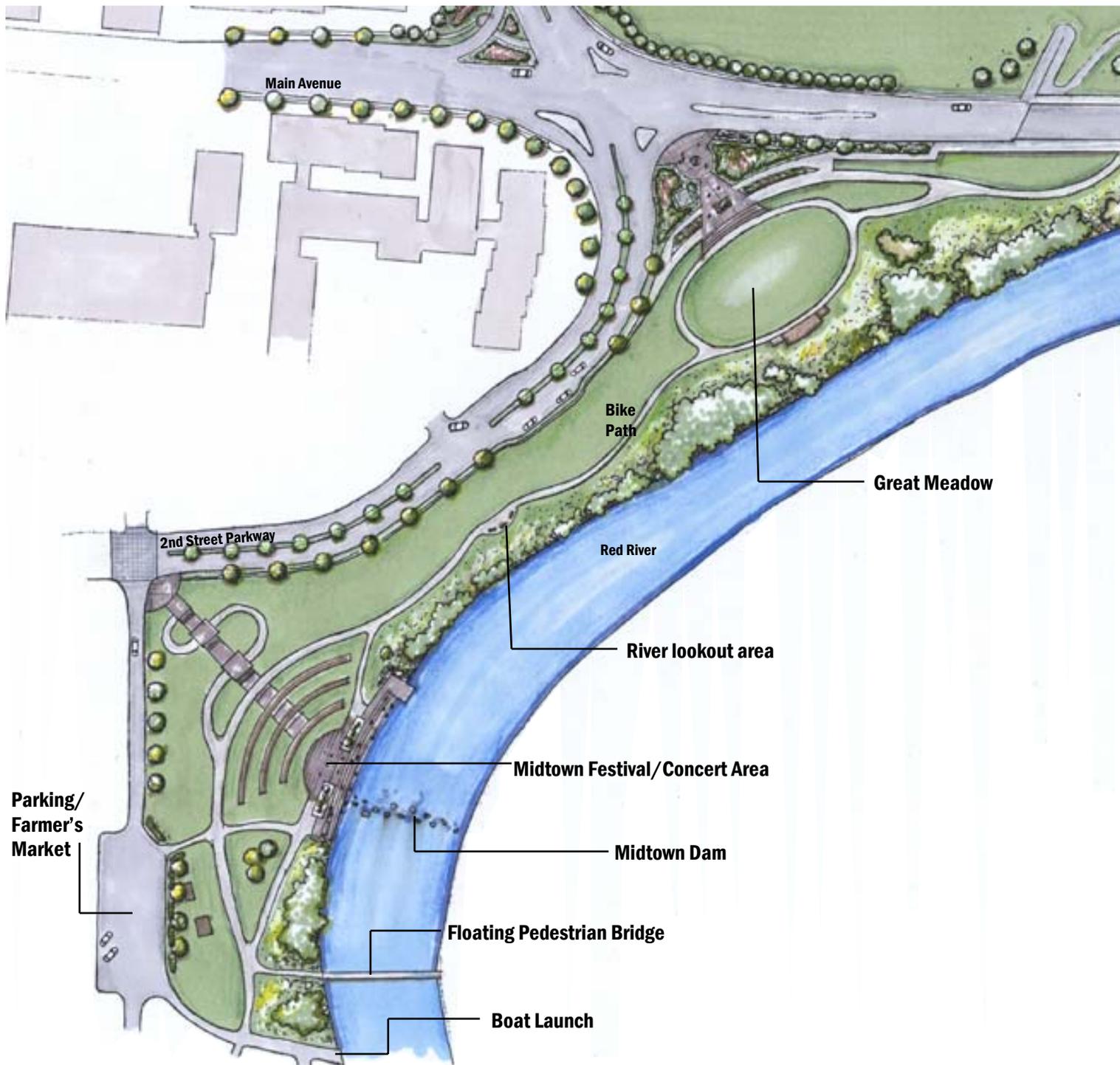
(Astone, Ed, Crystal Barriscale, et.al. “The Waterfront Center: Urban Waterfront Manifesto.” *The Waterfront Center*. 10 July 1999. <http://www.waterfrontcenter.org/manifesto.html> (23 Sept 2003).)

The Riverfront Development Master Plan is presented in its graphic form in Figure 11 on the facing page. The following narrative provides further detail and rationale for the Master Plan recommendations. Opportunities, constraints, and then the suggested uses for each of the nodes are presented. This narrative complements the graphic Master Plan that was developed by the Riverfront Development Committee throughout this process.

RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

Dike East/ Midtown Dam and Main Avenue Bridge

Opportunities: The Dike East area presented perhaps the most opportunities for short term development. Easy visual and physical access to the water was perhaps the most easily identified opportunity. The rock slope at the



dam provides an attractive visual and sound backdrop for passive and active events. The proximity of this space to the River and the existing dam with the rock slope and adjacent access facilitates an opportunity for interaction with the river. There is a relatively high level of development that has already occurred, and could be expanded upon since many people are accustomed to



**Main Avenue Bridge
Overlook Plaza**

coming to this location for a variety of reasons. There are also good visual and physical connections to Moorhead from this location. Moorhead is currently exploring the development of a demonstration plot of native vegetation in the area immediately adjacent to the floating bridge. The view across the River to Woodlawn Park provides a pleasant reflection of similar activities across the River. The floating bridge provides a convenient pedestrian and bicycle connection of the trails. Due to the high visibility and easy access, this is a common starting point for riverfront activities.

“The technical problems posed by a riverine environment are understood. They must be carefully and competently handled but these are technical problems that can be solved, have been solved elsewhere, and will be solved here.”

~R/UDAT

One of the greatest opportunities in this area is the planned replacement of the Main Avenue Bridge. This is a multi-jurisdictional project that will provide an opportunity to greatly enhance one of the major gateways to Downtown Fargo and provide an amenity for the entire community.

Constraints: Along with being the most accessible area along the riverfront, this is also one of the areas most prone to flooding. Recurrent flooding limits the types of vegetation that will thrive at this location. The Farmer’s Market (while a success) has gained a reputation as a closed market and it was agreed that the community could support and benefit from a larger selection of market products. The asphalt parking surface covers a large area and detracts from programming such as concerts and festivals. However, removal of on-site parking would also remove participants from event parking. Access to the site, particularly during events, is constrained by the narrow road off of 2nd Street South. Ingress and egress can be particularly difficult for left turn movements due to fast moving traffic and site distance limitations on 2nd Street.

Suggested Uses: The atmosphere created by the modification to the Midtown Dam has presented opportunities to safely bring people closer to the river at this location. The nearby open space could be redeveloped to accommodate festivals and concerts and a variety of other program innovations. More winter uses should be promoted. This may necessitate the reconfiguration and reduction of existing parking to approximately 80 spaces on the south end of the site. However, parking needs could be met at nearby off-street lots, and if needed for specific events, a shuttle service could be provided.

The Farmers' Market should be significantly expanded and relocated to a site that is more visible and accessible. The connection to Moorhead should be strengthened and exploited in terms of facilities and programming. There is pull-out streetside parking proposed on 2nd Street that will provide a scenic view of the entire riverfront in this area.

This area currently is comfortable for a diverse group of users; the community should capitalize on this appeal and strive to make this a meeting place and activity center for a broad cross-section of the population. The boat launch immediately downstream from the Dam should be considered for removal. On the short-term, a dock should be located adjacent to the ramp which would allow for boats/canoes to approach and access the area via the water. Downstream boat launch activities should be redirected to a potential new ramp in Viking Ship Park.

The recommendations for the Main Avenue Bridge area are to continue to develop amenities on the Main Avenue Bridge and proceed with bridgehead improvements. These improvements will vastly improve access to the river, expand the active and passive uses at the Midtown Dam, and enhance the river corridor connections. Pedestrian and bike movement will be improved under and over the bridge and accessibility will be enhanced for persons with disabilities. The enhanced bridge design has the potential to become a spectacular gateway to Fargo and Moorhead, and a tourist and cultural attraction that will draw interest locally, regionally, and nationally. The current plans for the development of the bridgehead are critical to the overall improvement of the corridor. The recommendation is to endorse the bridge and bridgehead plan that was developed by the consultant (SRF Consulting). There has been a high level of interest by the private sector in the construction of a bridge to showcase the River and attract visitors to the site. Moorhead has plans to

invest a substantial amount for improvements to the east side of the river, and the proximity of the two river banks provides a unique opportunity for visual connections. The current plan for the mid-span plaza is presented Figures 12 and 13.

Figure 12
Main Avenue Bridge - Plaza Plan

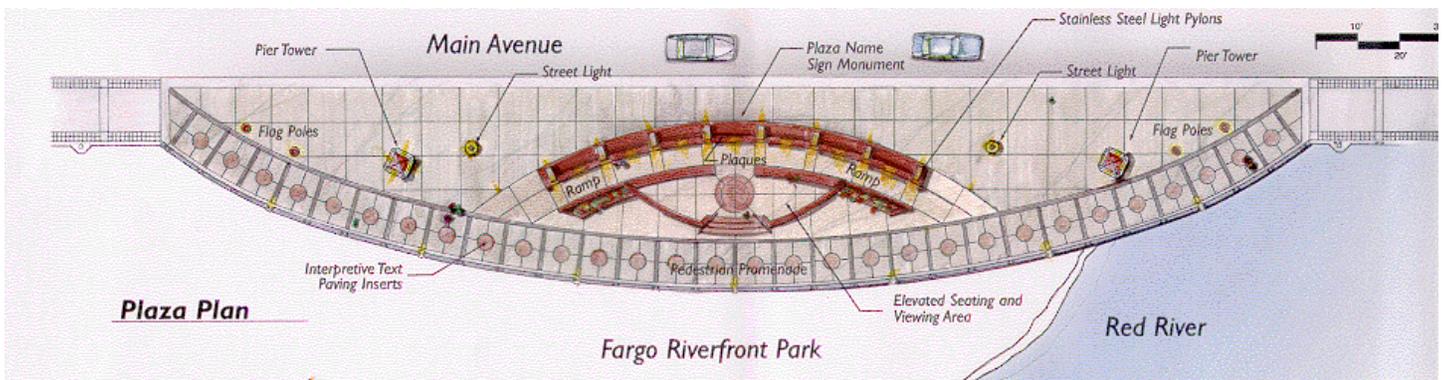
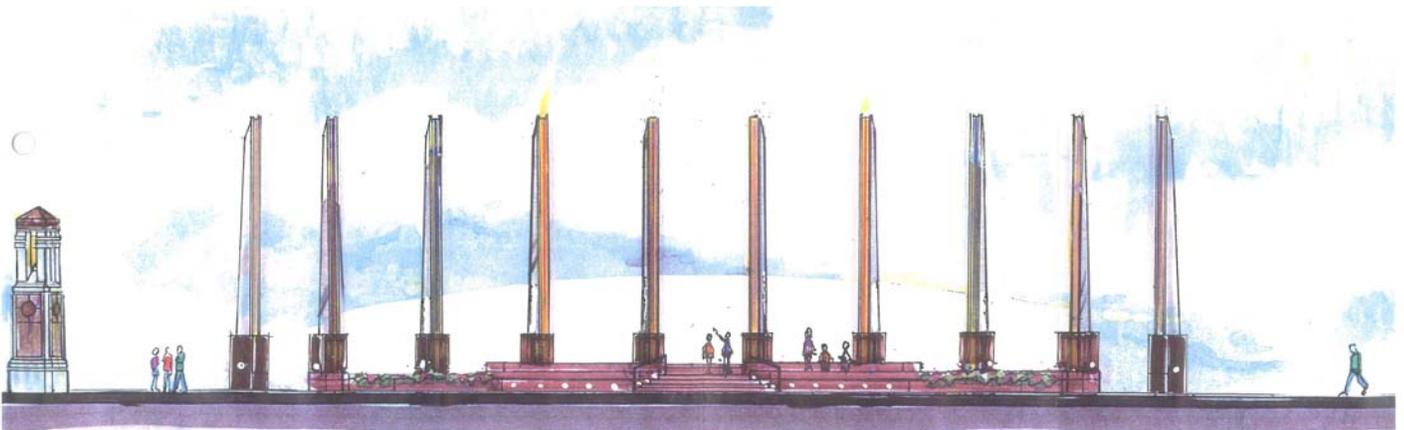


Figure 13
Main Avenue Bridge - Plaza Elevation



Mid America Steel

Opportunities: Much of this area lies outside of the flood plain and affords grand views and opportunities for future development of recreational facilities, corporate headquarters, or residential structures. This node is located between two of the Downtown bridges, and is easily accessible from NP Avenue. This site has historical significance with the presence of archeological



digs, Fargo in the Timbers, and remains from the 1870-1880 shanty town. As other nearby development occurs, the value of this site will increase proportionally and its value as an industrial site may decrease.

Constraints: Mid America Steel has been a good industrial neighbor in the midst of an urban area, however the current use is not appropriate to the location.

Private ownership has prevented alternative development at this location. Currently the funding for the Main Avenue Bridge and bridgehead improvements has been approved, however some of the bridgehead improvements will need additional funds for full implementation. The area on the south side of the railroad tracks is currently accessible only by a private, at-grade crossing.

“Revitalize your shores and waterways and you will bring life to the city core because that’s where cities started to live.”

~Ann Breen

Suggested Uses: This area is home to several sites of historic/archaeological significance and these sites should be identified and developed into tourist and demonstration sites. Strong redevelopment efforts on the NP Avenue corridor could be extended to link prime riverfront location with the core of the Downtown. Corporate office or residential uses have been suggested for this location. Access from the south and/or the west should be improved in order to fully develop this site.



2nd Avenue/2nd Street

Opportunities: This segment of the River and 2nd Avenue North has been identified by several studies as the most desirable physical connection between Downtown Fargo and the River. Plans for the replacement of City Hall,



and the possibility of housing, performing arts center or other development in the Civic Center campus could greatly enhance this corridor and the connection to the River. The steep slope of the bank would provide an ideal site for an overlook feature, and possibly a pedestrian connection to Moorhead. This high profile, highly visible, central location could be developed into the primary pedestrian connection and plaza that would link the Downtown with the River and with Moorhead.

Constraints: 2nd Street runs parallel to the river along most of this node, and is frequently the site of a temporary earthen dike during flood events. Any development should incorporate permanent flood protection. The steepness of the bank, the narrow width of the bank, the density of the trees and underbrush in the supralittoral zone, and the proximity to 2nd Street limit the potential uses.

Suggested Uses: There was a strong feeling by the Committee that was further re-enforced by the Sioux City/Sioux Falls tour group that this node was the prime location for the “bulls-eye” that could excite the public and generate future riverfront development. An urban plaza, complete with public art, cultural/interpretive features, and flexible space should be located on the bank. The signature feature of this site should be an attractive, well-designed icon that would attract visitors and residents alike. Something akin to the Oodena Celebration Circle at The Forks in Winnipeg would be appropriate. This may necessitate a westward relocation of 2nd Street and traffic calming techniques to provide safe pedestrian crossing. Some trees may have to be removed, but the overall appearance would be upgraded to that of a true urban riverfront. Flood protection should be incorporated into the design of a parking deck or other development that would occur on the site of the Civic Center Parking Lot. The strong connection between Downtown and the river on this corridor should be further strengthened by promoting year-round commercial activities. A pedestrian bridge to Viking Ship Park would allow for greatly improved access and joint programming.



Oodena Celebration Circle,
The Forks in Winnipeg.

Community Gardens/Snow Dump

Opportunities: The large size of this node is one of its most attractive features. The relative flatness of the north area, with its molded contours around the east and south sides create a natural concert, festival, or recreation venue. The historic rail track and bridge create a scenic divider between



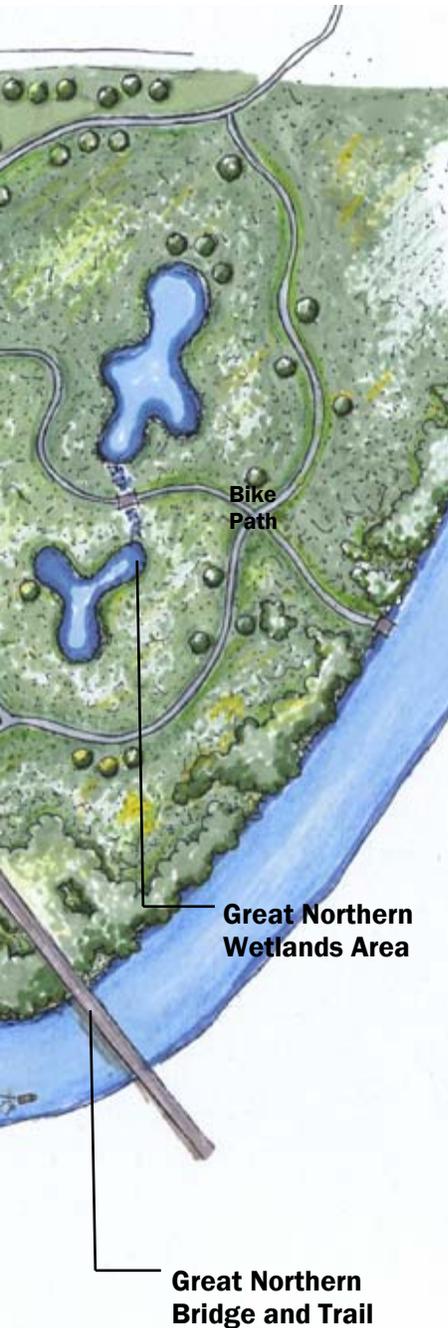
parking and an activity area that could serve as a control point for activities on the north side. The flat river edge on both the south and east side of the site could provide a launch area, fishing spot, or a dock location. The proximity to Downtown Fargo, ease of access, and the possibility of parking on the adjacent south side enhance this concept. There are plans to extend the pedestrian/bike trail through this area and to its connection with the trail at

Mickelson Park. There have been plans for relocation of the BNSF tracks that intersect this area. Should that ever take place, the possibilities for reuse of the bridge, the rail corridor, and the entire area would open a new realm of exciting possibilities.

Constraints: The Community Gardens have existed for some time, and relocation of this use would be opposed by some. Flooding is an issue at this site, particularly on the north side of the tracks. Flood plain restrictions and the effects of flood waters on facilities would have to be thoroughly considered in any use move into this area. Low-lying ground and the frequency of flooding maintain saturated soil conditions in the center of the space. Vehicular access from the north is limited by the concentration of single family residences and narrow local streets. There is on-street parking available; however its usefulness is diminished by current residential use. Traffic circulation in the area is currently difficult when there are events at Oak Grove, and a major festival would likely make circulation very difficult. The peace and quiet of the residential neighborhood on the north side would be infringed upon should this area be used for concerts or large festivals of any kind. Effects could be mitigated; however public notice and input would be necessary. The space on the south side of the tracks has long been used to dump snow in the winter. An alternative dump site would have to be located, and required site mitigation completed.

“The seasons have a profound effect on this community. Nowhere is this more evident than along the river.”

~R/UDAT



“The record of similar redevelopment around the world documents the value and attraction of well conceived water and river settings for commercial, office and residential uses.”
~R/UDAT

Suggested Uses: There were two primary suggested uses for this location. First, it was felt that the large open space would adapt well to use as a concert and festival venue. There is good pedestrian, and bicycle access, however vehicle access is limited by the neighborhood on the north. The possibility exists to use the south side of the tracks for parking and a south entrance, however, fast-moving traffic and potential passive uses on the south conflict with this type of use. The railroad track could serve as a control point for the activities taking place on the north side. 6th Avenue on the north could also provide an access and control point; however, large events would negatively impact the surrounding residential neighborhood. Floodable facilities could be built to accommodate electrical power needs, and the stage(s) and sanitary facilities could be portable. Performance stages and other focused activities would need to be oriented in a manner that would be the least intrusive on the neighborhood. Construction of all of the aforementioned facilities would be contingent upon mitigating adverse soil conditions.

The preferred use proposed for this site was for more passive activities such as picnicking, biking, rollerblading, and the like. It was proposed that a plaza be located on the north side that would include picnic tables, benches, a large circular concrete pad with roller blade, skate board, and other recreational uses. Since the use would not be as intensive as the first alternative, parking could be incorporated in the design on the north side near the recreational facilities. The slope of the bank on the south side of the track would also provide an attractive sled run, toboggan site, or fishing dock. The middle of the area could contain demonstration wetlands or infiltration gardens. The vegetation could either be allowed to go back to native conditions, or a managed riparian meadow could be planned. The proximity to Oak Grove, Moorhead parks, the metro trail system, and the proposed 2nd Avenue plaza would place this site at a crossroads for access from all directions. It is a large physical space with several access options and development plans should match that scale of the space. Parking could be integrated into the design on either the north or south side of the tracks. A new pedestrian bridge would accommodate joint programming and pedestrian/bicycle access to Moorhead’s Viking Ship and Riverfront Parks.

Connections

Opportunities: The bridges provide architectural views on the trails that can not be viewed and appreciated from any other locations. Once the trail through the Community Gardens area is completed, the looped Downtown trail will be complete. Should the BNSF rail bed ever be abandoned, the existing corridor could connect the entire riverfront with an express route from the outlying areas or a direct bus/shuttle service.

Constraints: The inability to maintain a year round pedestrian bridge has severely limited the opportunities for a looped winter trail or other joint activities. Maintenance in the summer has been quite good, however maintaining trails for winter use has proven to be a greater challenge. There are currently no warming facilities in the Study area. The trail in many sections is dark and sometimes threatening to the casual user.

Suggested Uses: 2nd Street should be marked to communicate its relationship to the river. Columns at each of the key intersections (3rd Avenue, 1st Avenue, NP Avenue, Main Avenue, and 2nd Avenue) would notify the public that the river was near by, and there was a convenient access. Appropriate signs would then direct visitors to the access points. The large staging areas at Dike East and Community Gardens lend the trail in between to atypical and entertaining uses such as horse drawn carriage rides, skijoring, or snowshoeing. Lighting, cleaning, and more visible security would improve the conditions under the bridges and make them more suitable for year round activities. A variety of recreational opportunities on the trail will attract a greater variety of users to the trail system and the entire corridor. Accessibility for persons with disabilities should be incorporated into all facilities.

“There are the more fundamental celebrations of life beyond the scheduled festivals, beautiful neighborhoods, safe streets, children at play in the parks, walks through autumn trees, indian summer skies, crisp air on ski trails.”

~R/UDAT

Implementation of the Riverfront Development Master Plan

The following matrix provides an implementation schedule, and potential funding sources for the improvements recommended in the Master Plan. Short range improvements were those that should be implemented within the next 5 years; medium range implementations should be implemented in years 5-10, and long range improvements will occur beyond the 10 year time frame.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RIVERFRONT PLAN

Suggested Use	Schedule	Estimated cost/potential funding sources	Comments
Dike East Node			
Reconfigure space to accommodate festivals and concerts near the dam to include the relocation of parking	Short range	Fargo Park District (FPD), ND Parks & Recreation	Need to develop a comprehensive design plan for this area to accommodate the suggested uses; Clarify policies for users; develop remote parking and shuttle routes.
Install infrastructure to support event concessions	Medium range	FPD, Fees, Capital Campaign	Current infrastructure needs to be expanded to meet parking and access needs.
Relocate Farmer's Market to a site that is more visible and expand the market	Short range	City of Fargo, Foundation grants, Private Sources	This activity needs to be larger, more accessible, and more diversified in product.
Remove the boat launch from the downstream location and replace with a dock. Relocate launch in Viking Ship Park.	Medium range	FPD, ND Game and Fish, City of Moorhead, MN DNR	Need this space for development of festival and concert space.
Improve programming at this site to promote diversity, year-round uses, and interaction with the river	Ongoing	FPD, River Keepers, Downtown Community Partnership (DCP), Non-Profits	Need to establish permanent steering committee to program events.
Complete recommended Main Avenue Bridge and bridgehead improvements	Short range	DOT, City of Fargo, FPD	Currently under construction.
MidAmerica Steel			
Promote development on the NP and Main Avenue corridors to link this area to the Downtown	Ongoing	City of Fargo, Private investors	
When this area is redeveloped, capitalize on its archaeological and historical significance	Long range	Foundation grants, State Historic Preservation Organization	Should significant historical and archeological resources be found, environmental review would likely be required.
Explore the possibilities of a mutually beneficial relocation of the current industrial business at this site	Short range	City of Fargo, Private sources, EPA	

IMPLEMENTATION OF RIVERFRONT PLAN

Suggested Use	Schedule	Estimated cost/potential funding sources	Comments
2nd Avenue/2nd Street			
Define and work to construct the “bullseye” at this location	Short range	City of Fargo, ISTE A, FEMA	All committee discussions and visits to other successful riverfront developments verified the importance of a signature project to the overall success of riverfront development and revitalization.
Continue to design and promote 2 nd Avenue as the primary connection to the river and the festival street	Ongoing	City of Fargo, DCP, Private interests	This was a strong recommendation of several previous Downtown Plans.
Promote the redevelopment of the civic campus to include a new city hall, housing, parking, and a strong connection between the Downtown to the river	Short range	City of Fargo, Private interests	
Construct a pedestrian connection between the civic plaza and Moorhead’s Viking Ship Park	Long range	City of Fargo, City of Moorhead, FPD, ISTE A	
Community Gardens			
Develop a passive park with playground and picnic facilities near the residential neighborhood. Other possible features could be demonstration wetlands, infiltration gardens, maintain the gardens, multi-use path, and adjacent parking	Short range	City of Fargo, Foundation grants, Federal conservation agencies	The wetlands and gardens could interest NDSU, as well as federal and state conservation agencies.
Consider another pedestrian bridge to connect the facilities and programming on both sides of the river	Long range	City of Fargo, City of Moorhead, FPD, ISTE A	The bridge in Oak Grove is subject to seasonal removal due to flooding.
Connections			
Place markers and monuments along 2 nd Street to draw attention and direct people to the river	Medium range	River Keepers, City of Fargo, Private interests	The ongoing improvements to the 2nd Avenue corridor should incorporate markers and informational features as constructed.
Strengthen programming between Dike East and Community Gardens	Medium range	FPD, River Keepers, Private interests	Suggested programming included carriage rides, concessions, races, etc.
Incorporate accessibility in facilities and programming for persons with disabilities	Ongoing	City of Fargo, FPD, Foundation grants	