

Sustainability and Resiliency Committee Meeting

December 9, 2025 – 3:00pm

City Commission Chambers

Agenda

- 1. Roll Call (5 min.)**
- 2. Approval of Agenda (5 min.)**
- 3. Approval of Minutes from September 9, 2025, Meeting (5 min.)**
- 4. Overview of Fargo Park District Sustainability Initiatives (20 min.)**
Sam DeMarais and Alec Miller – Fargo Park District
- 5. Overview of City of Fargo Maintenance Management Program (20 min.)**
Bekki Majerus – Director of Facilities Management, City of Fargo
- 6. Public Comment (10 min.)**
2.5 minutes per speaker
- 7. Thank You to Members for Serving on the SRC (5 min.)**
Commissioner John Strand – SRC Chair

**Sustainability and Resiliency Committee
City Commission Chambers
Tuesday September 9, 2025
3:00 p.m.**

The meeting of the Sustainability and Resiliency Committee was held in the City Commission Chambers at Fargo City Hall at 3:00 o'clock p.m., Tuesday, September 9, 2025.

Present:

John Strand (chair), Fargo City Commissioner
Dr. Tim Mahoney, Fargo Mayor
Brenda Derrig, Assistant Fargo City Administrator
Bruce Grubb, Fargo City Administration
Ben Dow, Fargo Public Works Director
Shawn Ouradnik, City of Fargo Inspections Director
Mark Williams, City of Fargo Assistant Planning Director
Shawn Paschke, Xcel Energy Representative (Ex-officio)
Chad Brousseau, Cass County Electric Cooperative Representative (Ex-officio)
Dave Bietz, Fargo Park District Representative (Ex-officio)
James Hand, Fargo School District Representative (Ex-officio)
Mike Williams, At-Large Member of the Public
Greta Gramig, At-Large Member of the Public
Setiya Hamidi, Fargo Youth Initiative

Absent:

Bekki Majerus, Director of Facilities Management City of Fargo
Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo Transit Director
Nicole Crutchfield, City of Fargo Planning Director
Jennifer Sweatman, At-Large Member of the Public
Casey Steele, At-Large Member of the Public

Approval of the Agenda:

Mr. Grubb moved, second by Mr. Dow that the agenda be approved as read. There was unanimous approval by all members present.

Approval of the Minutes from - Meeting:

Mr. Grubb moved, second by Mr. Dow that the Minutes from the June 10, 2025 meeting be approved as read. There was unanimous approval by all members present.

Fargo School District Representative James Hand gave a presentation:

- **Facilities Overview:** The district manages nearly 3 million square feet across 27 buildings. An energy audit and a comprehensive facility condition assessment were completed in 2023.
- **Energy Use & Cost:** The district spends approximately \$3.5 million annually on utilities (\$2.8 million on electricity and \$860,000 on natural gas). The audit identified opportunities for efficiency improvements, especially in older buildings. The audit

results showed the energy cost index (ECI) and energy use index (EUI) for each building. High schools and middle schools account for the largest portion of the energy spend.

- Geothermal Systems: Buildings with geothermal systems (Davies, Discovery, Bennett, and Kennedy) were highlighted for their lower energy consumption per square foot.
- Recommendations from the energy audit, including:
 - Replacing old lamps with LED lighting, particularly for athletic fields and parking lots.
 - Updating plumbing with low-flow fixtures and implementing smart irrigation controls.
 - Improving the building envelope through better weatherization, insulation, and window replacements.
 - Upgrading and leveraging existing building automation systems to better manage heating, cooling, and ventilation schedules.
 - Replacing old, inefficient equipment.
 - Sealing air ducts to prevent energy loss.
- Implementation & Priorities: The district is using a computerized maintenance and management system to track and prioritize approximately 6,000 action items from the assessment. The primary priorities are avoiding unplanned disruptions and ensuring safety, with energy performance as a significant consideration.
- Future Vision & Standards: The district has established facilities design standards and an energy and sustainability vision. A committee, including representatives from Xcel Energy and Cass County Electric, prioritized key factors for future projects.
 - Health and wellness of occupants (e.g. air quality) is the top priority.
 - Energy efficiency and building life cycle are also key.
 - The group agreed to support higher upfront costs for building materials to ensure facilities last at least 80 years.
- Renewable Energy: The district is monitoring the viability of adding solar panels to buildings, although a cost-benefit analysis at the time of the report did not justify immediate large-scale investment.

Questions and Discussion:

- Computerized Maintenance System: Bruce Grubb confirmed that the district uses a system similar to what Becky (a previous speaker) discussed. Mr. Hand noted that the system is a powerful tool for asset management, as long as it is consistently maintained.

- **Geothermal:** Mr. Williams inquired why new schools don't consistently use geothermal systems, given their efficiency. Mr. Hand explained that while geothermal systems save on energy costs, they have higher upfront and maintenance costs, which are considered in a life cycle cost analysis. The size of the site is also a factor.
- **UV in HVAC Systems:** Mike Williams asked if Fargo Public Schools use UV light in their HVAC systems for air quality. Mr. Hand confirmed that the district added this technology to most, if not all, buildings during the COVID-19 pandemic using federal funding. He noted it is now part of the district's standard for improving air quality and that they believe it has had a positive impact.
- **Student Involvement:** A committee member asked if the district would consider adding student representatives to their sustainability advisory groups. Mr. Hand responded that while the group was a one-time committee for a specific purpose, they are always open to hearing from students or student groups. He mentioned that one of the survey's top priorities was "opportunities for student learning and projects," and that they have happily accommodated one-off student initiatives in the past.
- **Georgetown Energy Prize:** Mike Williams shared that Fargo won the National Georgetown Energy Prize in 2018, beating 52 other cities. He noted that students, particularly at Roosevelt, were instrumental in the victory by reducing their power usage by 30%. He emphasized the importance of making these initiatives fun and tracking progress to inspire students. Mike suggested Mr. Hand consider having Ms. Hamidi present to the school board, as her passion could be inspiring.

Fargo Youth Initiative Representative Setiya Hamidi gave a presentation on the Sustainability Efforts at Fargo Davies High School:

- **Project Goal:** The initiative aims to expose and educate students on the importance of environmental awareness and make it easier for them to take actions toward a more sustainable future.
- **Problem & Solution:** The project addresses two main issues: inaccessible recycling and a lack of awareness among students.
 - The inaccessibility problem was identified when Ms. Hamidi noticed recycling bins were not available in all classrooms and hallways, leading students to choose convenience over sustainability. She said the solution is to provide visible, specialized recycling bins in every classroom and increase the number of bins in hallways.
 - The lack of awareness leads to apathy and confusion about what can be recycled. The solution is to use frequent communication through TV announcements in the commons and posters throughout the building to share recycling tips and facts.
- **Project Phases:** The project is planned in four phases with a conclusion period in May to analyze data and effectiveness.

- Phase 1 (October-November): Analyze last year's teacher survey data, send a new, more refined survey to teachers who did not respond, and launch a shorter student survey to an experimental group (one team center) to ensure higher participation. The education portion of the project will also begin with weekly TV announcements and posters.
- Phase 2 (November-January): Begin preparing the customized recycling bins based on survey responses. Ms. Hamidi's plans to involve various student organizations, not just the environmental club. The idea of establishing plastic bag recycling sites at the school and having a monthly collection has also been proposed.
- Phase 3 (January-February): Distribute the prepared recycling bins and monitor how students react to them. A new page will also be added to the Fargo Davies High School website with recycling and sustainability resources for students.
- Phase 4 & Conclusion (May): A follow-up survey will be conducted with students to measure the project's impact on their awareness and involvement. If possible, the project will also track contamination rates in the recycling bins to see if the initiative has been successful in changing behavior.
- Challenges: The two main concerns are student participation and apathy. The project addresses these by focusing on a smaller experimental group for the survey and by making recycling so accessible that convenience is no longer a barrier.

Questions and Discussion:

- Long-Term Impact: A committee member asked if the initiative would continue at Davies after Ms. Hamidi graduates and if it could expand to other schools. Ms. Hamidi responded that she hopes the project will be passed on to the environmental club and future students. She also expressed her desire for the project to spread to other Fargo high schools.

The time at adjournment was 3:56 o'clock p.m.



FARGO PARK DISTRICT

SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS THROUGHOUT FARGO

Presented by Sam DeMarais, Forester

FARGO PARK DISTRICT CONSERVATION AT A GLANCE



222 acres of
prairie restoration



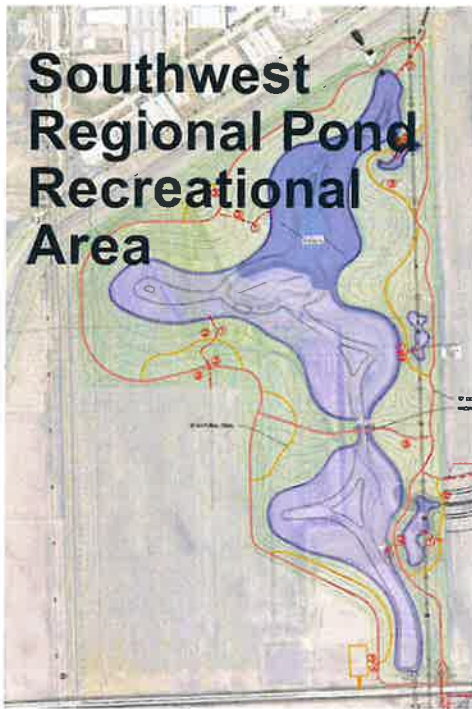
23 restored
park
properties



10 site with
pollinator gardens



29 individual
pollinator gardens



\$521,000 Grant Award (OHF)

80 acres of native prairie plantings

3000ft of dry creek bed

3000ft of six-foot wide gravel trails

Interpretive signage for outdoor learning

Urban Plains Park



12 ACRES OF RESTORED PRAIRIE & WETLAND



EDUCATIONAL PRAIRIE TRAIL
FUNDED BY FPD, CGSCD,
CITY OF FARGO



EVENTS & EDUCATION
• MONARCH TAGGING
• PAINT THE PRAIRIE





Heritage Hills Park



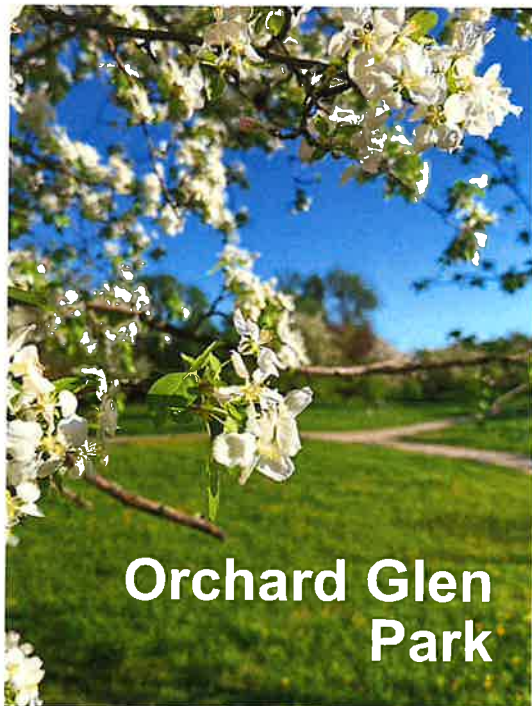
45 acres of park



Gravel hiking trails



Mix of upland & riparian habitat



Orchard Glen Park



Neighborhood Orchard

26 VARIETIES OF FRUIT TREES

apple, pear, cherry, plum, mulberry and various fruiting shrubs such as honeyberry

- Provides the public fruit harvesting opportunities
- 2 pollinator gardens with an expansion planned in the orchard center
- Gravel hiking trails double as groomed ski trails in winter

Forest River Park

- 9 ACRES OF PRAIRIE RESTORATION
- MIX OF UPLAND, WETLAND & RIPARIAN HABITAT
- GRAVEL TRAILS DOUBLE AS SKI TRAILS IN WINTER
- POPULAR DESTINATION IN ALL SEASONS FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF RECREATION
- WINTER & SPRING BIRDING FESTIVAL IN COLLAB WITH AUDOBON GREAT PLAINS



Volunteer Opportunities & Community Engagement



- Monarch Tagging Event
 - 300+ attendees
- Winter & Spring Birding Festivals with Audubon Great Plains
- National Public Lands Day
- Reforest the Red
 - River Keepers
 - City of Fargo
 - 400+ volunteers from local businesses & schools
- Apple Tree Pruning Workshop
- Arbor Day



Urban Woods & Prairies Urban Pollinator Plots

- UWP started in 2014 by Audubon Great Plains
- Integrate native landscapes back into urban landscapes
- 14 Park Sites
- UPP FPD partners with Audubon Great Plains, NDSU, United Prairie Foundation & ND Outdoor Heritage Fund
- Establish and restore more than 50 acres of high diversity, forb-rich native prairie plantings in urban parks

