

A. 2024 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Update



To: Planning Commission
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Subject: 2024 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Update

MEMORANDUM

INTRODUCTION

Details outlined in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Update will provide a brief overview of 2023-2024 projects meeting goals of the [2022 Onward Moorhead! Comprehensive Plan](#) update.

While a small portion of projects happening within the city are identified through requests made to the Planning Commission, staff wanted to share a summary of Plan successes in the greater community that the Commission may not be aware of.

ONWARD MOORHEAD! COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Onward Moorhead's top priorities are encompassed in Five Big Ideas. These ideas reflect actions the City of Moorhead and its partners should take in the next five years to make substantial headway to implementing the vision of this comprehensive plan. They require both small and significant steps to meet the needs of a resilient Moorhead.

Five Big Ideas in Five Years

Transform Downtown Moorhead into the 'heart of the community' by incorporating a range of housing and retail options, cultural amenities, parks, and public services.

Integrate a mix of mutually supportive land uses and experiences in redevelopment areas by building upon and strengthening existing retail centers and utilizing experience-based marketing.

Connect neighborhoods to parks and trails and provide multimodal access to downtown, the Red River, and community amenities.

Embrace resilient environmental and equitable solutions, planning for infrastructure, building development, energy, and climate adaptation while building a greener community.

Build and nurture local businesses as key partners in building and maintaining a prosperous community.

Land Use and Community Design

Land use is the foundation of any Comprehensive Plan. It shows where people are choosing to live and how dense that development is, where new businesses are locating, and whether there is a consistent distribution of amenities – like parks – throughout the city. More than that, though, it reflects how the City has directed these uses through previous planning and regulatory initiatives. This planning process is an opportunity to evaluate the location and health of existing land uses, compared to market realities. It may also reveal how existing conditions and policies may be unknowingly impacting disparities in the community.

- Residential Districts Update – Ordinance 2024-01
 - Zoning code modernized to improve flexibility and support residential property improvement projects with related code changes to definitions, use regulations and official zoning map
- Accessory Structures, Buildings, Equipment and Uses Update – Ordinance 2024-04
 - Zoning code modernized and made complimentary changes to the recent Residential District changes
- Cannabis & Cannabinoid Regulations – Ordinance 2024-02
 - Changes to Use Regulations, Provisional and Conditional Use Requirements related to Minnesota’s 2023 Cannabis Law
- Religious Institutions Micro-Dwelling Unit Sacred Community - Ordinance 2023-09
 - Changes to Use Regulations related to 2023 State Law allowing micro-dwelling units on religious institution property to house the chronically homeless.
- Moorhead Community Center and Library – Construction Begins
 - Groundbreaking ceremony held in June 2024 for 450 Center Avenue to celebrate planning and project efforts which support the transformation of downtown into the ‘heart of the community’
- Residential Zoning Reviews: To date, staff has completed 172 reviews for projects like fences, decks, sheds, garages, additions, driveways, patios, pools, chicken permits, etc. Staff completed 197 in 2023.
- New Sign Permits: 16
- 2 Administrative and 8 Minor Subdivisions – Administrative subdivisions are approved by staff and Minor Subdivisions go directly to City Council for approval because they do not require new utilities, roads or easements like standard plats that come before the Commission.
- Provisional Use Permits
 - 4 Home Occupations
 - 5 Auto-related (sales-rental-service-repair)
- [2022-2023 FM Metro Housing Needs and Market Analysis](#) completed with MetroCOG
- [2022-2023 FM Metro Baseline 2050 Demographic Forecast](#) completed with MetroCOG
- 2024 Building Permits for projects that do not come before the Planning Commission
 - 600 8th St S – State Farm Expansion
 - 800 sf office expansion for existing tenant in Comstock Commons
 - 801 Center Ave – Moorhead Drug
 - 3,417 sf building remodel for pharmacy and retail space
 - 2525 Hwy 10 E – Apex Fitness – 2nd location
 - 5,864 sf gym within a 12,800 sf existing building
 - 2951 11th St S – Red River Triumph Expansion
 - 320 sf permanent storage container installation
 - 817 Center Ave – Starbird Lounge
 - 1,890 sf cocktail lounge in existing building
 - 855 37th Ave S – Moorhead Vision Associates
 - 13,642 sf building with an eye clinic and 2 future tenant spaces
 - 450 Center Ave – [Moorhead Community Center and Library](#)
 - 25,100 sf 2-story building with meeting and community rooms, center for entrepreneurship, indoor playground, walking track, library and administrative spaces

- 300 17th St N – Park Christian School Expansion Phase III
 - 4,393 sf addition including 4 new classrooms and a connecting corridor
- 2601 Village Green Blvd – Neighborhood Recreation Center
 - 1,600 sf reconstruction due to fire and water damage
- 111 12th St N – Moorhead Fire Station No. 1
 - 8,156 sf remodel and 1,522 sf storage addition with associated site improvements including access reconfiguration due to 11th St Underpass Project
- 3300 15th Ave N – Clay County Department of Motor Vehicles
 - 9,726 sf office building.
- 4111 34th Ave S – Minko Construction Office and Shop
 - 18,475 sf building including office space on two levels and shop with storage space
- 650 Center Ave – Sterling Development Mixed Use Building
 - 62,289 sf 5-story building with commercial space and enclosed parking on first floor and 153 residential units on remaining four floors above
- 220 Hwy 75 N – Women’s Care Center
 - Demolition of existing structure
 - 7,512 sf 2-story building with office space
- 2300 4th Ave S – Moorhead High School Athletic Field Improvements
 - Adding long jump, triple jump and pole vault to field area

Economic Competitiveness

Moorhead has a solid economic foundation. It is a growing city in terms of population, jobs, and new development. It is integrated within an economically diverse region with a strong set of base industries, higher education being a strong economic contribution from the Moorhead side of the river. The presence of college educators and students also contributes to the city’s youthful energy, its creative economy, and its innovation economy. Moorhead has natural and recreational amenities with a long riverfront and strong park system. It has a downtown center and the collective will to build on its identity and vibrancy.

- **Renaissance Zone**

- 650 Center Ave – Sterling Development Mixed Use Building
 - 2024 incentive approved & construction underway

- **Property Tax Exemptions**

- 4111 34th Ave S - MinKo Construction Office and Shop
 - 2023 incentive approved
 - 2024 building permit

- 855 37th Ave S - Moorhead Vision Associates Eye Clinic
 - 2023 incentive approved
 - 2024 construction underway

- 1601 23rd St S – Hedgemasters Landscaping Shop
 - 2023 incentive approved and 2023 building permit (construction completed)

824 Center Ave – Armory Event Center Annex

- 2023 incentive approved & construction underway

4117 32nd St S – Valley Green Addition

- 2023 incentive & building permit approved

2410-2416 2nd Ave N – Odin 2nd Ave Shop Condos

- 2023 incentive & 2023 building permit (construction completed)

- **TIF Districts**

- Downtown Moorhead Development Project – 31

- 2024 incentive approved & development has commenced with the Sterling Development Mixed Use Building

Mobility

Mobility is the ability to move safely, freely, and easily throughout the transportation network, and it also includes characteristics and amenities that make moving around more comfortable, safe, and enjoyable. As the city of Moorhead is forecasted to grow over the next several decades, enhanced mobility and comfort of residents to be able to walk, bike, and use other modes of transportation will be increasingly important to the city's quality of life, safety, and economy.

The city's transportation network includes the system of streets, sidewalks, paths, bicycle routes, railroads, and the airport that get people and goods from one place to another. The comprehensive planning process evaluated the overall effectiveness of Moorhead's existing transportation system and analyzed trends in improving mobility to help make Moorhead more resilient in the future.

- [11th Street Underpass Project](#) – Construction Underway
 - March 2024 groundbreaking ceremony kicked off site work and construction activities.
 - Storm sewer is being installed along 1st Ave N
 - Demolition of underpass impacted structures along 11th St and 1st Ave N
- [2024 Moorhead Safe Routes to School Study](#) underway with MetroCOG
- [2023-2024 20th St S/I-94 Interchange Study](#) underway with MetroCOG
- [2024 Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2050](#) underway with MetroCOG
- [2024 FM Region Comprehensive Safety Action Plan](#) underway with MetroCOG
- [2019-2023 Interstate 94 Operations Study](#) completed with MetroCOG
- [2022-2023 FM Metro Bike & Pedestrian Plan](#) completed with MetroCOG
- [2021-2025 MATBUS Transit Development Plan](#) completed with MetroCOG

Parks and Open Space

The pandemic has emphasized the importance of access to parks and open space for physical and mental health. Opportunities for outdoor physical activity increase fitness and lower levels of obesity while enabling people to connect with nature to enhance well-being and mental health. Parks and trails also create opportunities for social interactions, connect people to major destinations through walking and biking, and can be both free and accessible ways to recreate.

- [Discovery Walk on the Red River Corridor Trail](#)
 - 17 interpretive signs installed detailing ecological and historical information
- Southside Regional Park
 - Inclusive Playground ribbon cutting May 30, 2024

- All donation and grant funded
- 5 new park benches donated by PartnerSHIP 4 Health have been installed
- Alm, Hansmann, and Village Green Parks – tennis courts converted for pickleball
- [Reimagine Romkey Park](#)
 - Plan for reconstruction of 1958 Moorhead Pool and pre-1990 park amenities. Redeveloped park will feature basketball and pickleball courts, splash pad, food forest and skatepark
 - \$5 million grant from National Park Service
 - Construction to commence after 2024 pool season
 - Park closed 2025 and re-opens in 2026
- [Rotary Natural Play Hill and Bike Park](#)– Riverfront Park
 - Ribbon cutting June 20, 2024
 - [The 1.26-acre Play Hill project](#), led by the 5 Fargo-Moorhead Rotary Clubs and FM Rotary Foundation, raised over \$1.1 million with the generous support of over 300 donors, including major donors the Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau, the FM Area Foundation, Scheels Foundation and Sanford Health Foundation.
- [2023-2024 Heartland Trail Study](#) with MetroCOG
 - Studying proposed routes for the Heartland Trail connecting Moorhead to Becker County segment.

Sustainability and Resilience

Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present generation, without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In the context of community planning, a sustainable plan is viewed as one that balances the natural environment, economic vitality, and community health.

Resilience and sustainability are often discussed together. Strategies that are deployed to achieve resilience are those that increase the ability to adapt to changing conditions and recover rapidly when disruptions or events occur. In relation to major weather events, resilience is often discussed as a system that is designed to better withstand the impact and recover more readily after a major event occurs.

- [GreenStep Cities](#)
 - Step 5 status - 2024 & 2023
- Backyard Chickens
 - 2024 - 8 permits to date
 - 2023 - 11 permits issued
- Community Garden Grants
 - 2024 - 3 recipients - \$500 each (New Roots Farm Incubator, MSUM/PRAIRIE and 1st Presbyterian Church/Grateful Garden)
 - 2023 – 3 recipients - \$500 each (1st Presbyterian Church/Grateful Garden, Salem Church Community Garden, Brookdale Baptist Church Community Garden)
 - Organizations hosted community cook-outs and events
 - Donated food to organizations/individuals in need.
 - More than 1,200 lbs of food produced
- Natural Lawn Guide (for code compliance)
- Pollinator Guide in process
- 2024 & 2023 Mayor’s Monarch Pledge
- [2024 FM Metro Electric Vehicle Readiness Study](#) underway with MetroCOG
- 2024 MPCA Pollinators Grant application submitted
 - To convert City properties to pollinator areas vs. mowed areas

- 2023-2024 Carbon Reduction Program underway with MetroCOG
 - Converting streetlights in high-trip corridors to LEDs

Arts, Culture and Placemaking

The arts and culture scene in Moorhead is part of what makes the city a great place to live, work and play. The City has intentionally fostered partnerships and organizations that enhance the vibrancy of Moorhead. The sections below describe the efforts the City has taken to build on its strong cultural resources.

- 2024 Enchanted River Walk – January 12 to February 24
 - Half mile of Midtown Trail lit by a mix of solar and electric lights illuminated temporary art installations. Moorhead Mural, house village, trees, and Gaga Ball created placemaking nodes along the path for people to gather and interact.
- 2024 Winter Art Walk – February 24
 - Along 4th Street S, businesses opened their doors to host this new event with pop-up art galleries, cozy fire pits and refreshments to meet local artists and entrepreneurs.
- 2024 RiverArts at the Moorhead Farmer’s Market – June 11 & 25 and 3 events in July and August
 - RiverArts events joins the Farmer’s Market at the Hjemkomst Heritage Center. Live music, cultural performances, artistic demonstrations/activities, refreshments, lawn games, local vendors and business participation creates a community gathering space like no other.