ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRAND FORKS, EAST GRAND FORKS & REGION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

0.0 STUDY BACKGROUND
Executive Summary
Comprehensive Plan
Project Approach
Survey Results
Site Analysis

1.0 ENHANCE CORRIDOR SAFETY
Implement a Consistent Lighting Plan
Reduce Traffic Speed to 25 MPH
Pilot Low-cost Pedestrian Enhancements
Prioritize Pedestrian Enhancements for Adjacent Schools
Improve Typical Intersections
Improve Washington Street Barrier
Create Caution at Mill Spur

2.0 INTEGRATE ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION
Pilot Short-term Bicycle Infrastructure
Plan for Inclusive Bicycle Infrastructure
Encourage Bike Share
Connect Bike Paths to Existing Infrastructure
Give Bus Stops & Shelters a Sense-of-Place
Plan for Future Opportunities

3.0 BOOST CORRIDOR ACTIVITY
Prioritize Anchor Development Lots
Redevelop Opportunity Lots
Modify Parking Restrictions to Encourage Development
Remove Center-of-street Zoning Boundaries
Establish a Residential Improvement District
Encourage Neighborhood Shops
Emphasize Community Engagement

4.0 CELEBRATE NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY
Make University Avenue a “Signature Street”
Brand Corridor Districts
Create Neighborhood Pride Through Public Art
Make Bus Shelters Neighborhood Placemakers
Protect Tree Canopy
Maintain University Park as a Community Hub

5.0 ACTION PLAN

6.0 WORKS CITED
7.0 APPENDIX
The University Avenue Corridor is one of the most unique connecting streets in all of North Dakota. A historic street connecting the University of North Dakota campus with downtown Grand Forks, the street and its surrounding neighborhoods make University Avenue a critical roadway for the Grand Forks region and many of its residents. The street is comprised of a mix of houses and uses, including commercial properties, single-family homes, rental properties, churches, apartment buildings, and the most dynamic park in the region. The corridor serves as the driveway for people entering campus and for people entering downtown. In addition to the unique mix on the corridor itself, there are several nearby schools.

Over the past two years, both downtown and the University of North Dakota have undergone extensive master planning processes. Those processes have aligned with and complemented each other and have positioned the two bookend neighborhoods of University Avenue for continued, smart, and meaningful growth. Because of this, it became important that the main physical connector of the two neighborhoods also underwent a visioning process to ensure that the two can become more interconnected and related.

In the spring of 2019, the Community Foundation of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks, & Region, in partnership with the Knight Foundation, commissioned a study of the University Avenue Corridor. The results of this study are outlined herein. Throughout the community engagement process, there were a few themes that continued to rise to the top of the community’s list of priorities. Those themes became the themes of our recommendations.

The first theme is “Enhance Corridor Safety”. In this section, you will find recommendations focused on improving lighting, intersections, streets, and sidewalks. There are a few nearby schools along the corridor, which means that there are many children who walk and bike along and across University Avenue daily. During the study process, we engaged with numerous stakeholders wishing to improve safety along the street, including the Grand Forks Public Schools, Safe Kids Grand Forks, and the University of North Dakota. Our recommendations will help to ensure University Avenue is a safe street to walk, bike, and drive throughout the year.

Our second theme is “Integrate All Forms of Transportation”. In this section, you’ll find recommendations geared towards improving and implementing bicycle infrastructure, improving and enhancing public transportation stops and overall ridership, and considerations for future multimodal opportunities. As evidenced by the results of the online survey, citizens from throughout the community felt making the corridor safer for cyclists was a priority. In our stakeholder engagement, we also discovered a desire from Cities Area Transit to enhance bus stops and shelters. Our recommendations in this section provide opportunities to pilot new infrastructure and also consider long-term, permanent enhancements for bicyclists and public transportation users. It should be noted that all of our recommendations for this section fall within the guidelines of the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Street Design Guide (USDG). The USDG, or “Green Book”, is a manual published by NACTO that is growing in popularity across the country. The manual has a people-first approach and takes multi-modal transportation changes into account much stronger than the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices). The board of directors of NACTO is full of some of the most respected transportation officials in the country, and the Green Book does an excellent job of pulling away from a bias toward highway designs that simply don’t meet the complex needs of cities.

Our third theme is “Boost Corridor Activity”. Here, you’ll find recommendations ranging from policy and regulation updates and changes, to emphasizing community events, to real estate and business development opportunities. During our public forums and engagement events, we challenged the community to think of ways to incorporate commercial activity along the corridor while preserving the qualities of the historic neighborhood. Our recommendations are ways that can accomplish just that. In this section, we’ve identified opportunity lots for future development, and also identified challenges and barriers to development that must be overcome to accomplish smart growth. Overall, the citizens of Grand Forks really liked the idea of a house becoming a coffee shop, or an ice cream parlor, or another type of unique public space. Our recommendations in this section encourage ways to make that happen by putting the right policies in place to spur new development.

Our fourth and final theme is “Celebrate Neighborhood Identity”. In this section, you’ll find recommendations that enhance and celebrate all of the existing great things about the corridor, and also, reengaging some things that have begun to lose momentum as the neighborhood has changed over the past few decades. Throughout the public process, we heard from the residents of the corridor that they are very proud of their street and neighborhood. This pride also came with concerns that any significant changes would be at the expense of the existing charm of the district. It became clear to us that preserving that charm, and highlighting it, was important. This section also recommends the preservation and celebration of University Park, Grand Forks’ greatest and most used public park. To complete the study findings, you will find an Action Plan on page 65. At the top of mind throughout the study, we wanted to be sure that we were making recommendations that could excite the citizens of Grand Forks, and we knew that the actions needed to be implementable. The Action Plan diagrams how (and when) some of this can and should happen.

University Avenue is full of potential and has the chance to be Grand Forks’ signature street. We feel that the outlined recommendations will keep this corridor moving forward, improving and enhancing it while maintaining it’s history and charm.
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PROJECT APPROACH

OUR APPROACH

With so many different stakeholders for this project, it was critical that our team focused heavily on engaging the community and having a diverse group represented in our discussions and planning efforts. We invited a group of stakeholders to the table, and they formed a steering committee that met multiple times to help us develop recommendations. The steering committee members served as representatives in a number of areas of study, and served as important voices for us as we worked to balance the needs and wants of many citizens and users of University Avenue. In addition to regular steering committee meetings, we also held multiple community open houses. These forums allowed the general public to weigh in on their thoughts on specific items, but also to give us their general feedback on what’s happening currently on the corridor, and what they hope for in the future of University Avenue. In addition to these engagements, we also held several individual stakeholder meetings. These meetings were with groups such as Cities Area Transit, the City of Grand Forks Planning and Community Development Department, Safe Kids Grand Forks, school leadership from West, Winship, Valley, and Grand Forks Central, individual residents, city councilors, city leaders, business leaders, and many more.

In addition to the unique mix of uses on the corridor and varying stakeholders, there are also a number of significant factors that came into play during the planning process. This corridor will be undergoing a mill and overlay project in the summer of 2020. Because of that, there are limitations to physical changes that can be made on the street in the next seven years. With the large quantity of residential properties on the corridor, comes a high volume of cars. Because of this, the residents of University Avenue rely heavily on the on-street parking. This is one of many examples of challenges that are presented when planning for a transportation corridor that is also an established residential neighborhood with much historic character and charm. All of these factors must be considered, and many of these examples trump what might otherwise be considered planning and development best practices.

Our approach put the residents and the neighborhood first. Throughout the process, we were reminded by residents of the pride they have in their neighborhood. Protecting the historic integrity was a clear priority of the long-time residents. Although this can create planning challenges, it also presented opportunities to strengthen the identity of the corridor through public art, neighborhood branding, wayfinding, and lighting and streetscape features.

SURVEY RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

To begin the planning process and to reach as many people as possible, we began by launching an online survey. This survey covered a variety of topics, including but not limited to; how people currently use the corridor, asking how easy or difficult it is to travel the corridor, how safe is the corridor, what type of improvements people would like to see, what type of new developments may be possible on University Avenue, and what factors should be considered and prioritized when planning for the street and neighborhood. We were very pleased with the response level and participation from residents throughout the community. Anything over 500 responses would’ve been an excellent data set to use as a foundation, and we received nearly 1,200 responses! This provided us a great start to developing recommendations for the community to consider.
IMPROVING THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR IS A WORTHWHILE PUBLIC INVESTMENT - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- NEUTRAL
- SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE

SOMEWHAT AGREE

RESPONSES

THERE IS ENOUGH LIGHTING AT NIGHT ON UNIVERSITY AVENUE - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- NEUTRAL
- SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE

SOMEWHAT AGREE

RESPONSES

WHAT TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE NEAR THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR IN THE FUTURE?

- PARKS & OPEN SPACE
- RETAIL SHOPS
- CLOTHING/GIFTS
- RESTAURANTS/COFFEE SHOPS
- SMALL APARTMENT BUILDINGS
- SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

RESPONSES

IMPROVING THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR IS A WORTHWHILE PUBLIC INVESTMENT - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- NEUTRAL
- SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE

SOMEWHAT AGREE

RESPONSES

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

OUTSIDE THE REGION

IN THE REGION but outside GF/EGF

EAST GRAND FORKS

UNIVERSITY AVE. between Columbia Rd. & Downtown

WITHIN 3 BLOCKS of University Ave.

GRAND FORKS more than 3 blocks away

RESPONSES

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MADE IN THE FUTURE?

OTHER

BANNERS to identify the neighborhood

SIGNAGE pointing out places to go

A GATEWAY FEATURE

ACCESS TO BUS TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC ART

LIGHTING

PLACES TO SIT

PLANTS/GREENERY LANDSCAPING

OPEN SPACE

RESPONSES

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN ORDER TO MAKE THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR THE BEST IT CAN BE?

SAFETY for walking/biking

RECREATIONAL FEATURES

BUS TRANSIT ACCESS

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

COST

REduced SPEED

ADEQUATE PARKING

IMPROVE BEAUTY & FEELING

RESPONSES
IT IS IMPORTANT TO IMPROVE AESTHETICS AND BEAUTY OF THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS FOR BICYCLISTS IN THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS IN THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS FOR BICYCLISTS IN THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR IS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE IT EASIER TO TRAVEL BETWEEN UND AND DOWNTOWN - AGREE OR DISAGREE?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE UNIVERSITY PARK - AGREE OR DISAGREE?
CONCLUSIONS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

DEMographics
- 36% of respondents work on the UND campus
- 36% of the respondents work outside of campus but in the Grand Forks area
- Nearly 7% (77 people) of the respondents live on the corridor, and another 16% (189 people) live within three blocks of the corridor
- 22% (260 people) of respondents are students
- 67% of respondents own their own home vs. rent

Corridor Usage (Respondents Could Identify Multiple Uses)
- 59% of respondents use the corridor to drive to work or school
- 72% of respondents use the corridor to drive to daily activities, shopping, errands, or recreation
- 32% drive the corridor for enjoyment
- 18% of respondents bike the corridor for enjoyment or exercise
- 21% of respondents walk the corridor for enjoyment or exercise
- 20% of respondents walk the corridor to get to work or to do their daily activities

Ease of Uses
- 45% of respondents felt the corridor was easy to use when driving a car, vs. 36% feeling that it was difficult
- 20% of respondents felt it was easy to bike the corridor; 39% felt it was difficult to bike the corridor
- 17% felt that parking was easy on the corridor; 60% felt it was difficult

Safety
- In general, respondents were split regarding the safety for pedestrians on the corridor
- 57% of respondents felt that the corridor was not safe for biking, as opposed to only 26% feeling that it was safe
- Over 64% of respondents felt the corridor was safe for drivers
- 56% of respondents felt there was not enough lighting on the corridor, vs. 21% feeling that the lighting was adequate

Corridor Improvements
The top choices for improvements to be made to the corridor were:
- Lighting
- Plants, greenery, and other landscaping
- Signage and wayfinding
- Places to sit

Types of Development
The top choices for types of development along the corridor:
- Restaurants or coffee shops
- Parks and open spaces
- Specialty retail shops

Other Important Notes
- 84% of respondents felt that the corridor was important to the community
- 83% of respondents felt that improving the corridor was a worthwhile public investment
- 82% of respondents felt that it is important to make it easier to travel between UND and downtown
- 95% of respondents felt that it is important to preserve University Park
- 82% of respondents felt that it is important to improve the aesthetics and beauty of the corridor
- 82% of respondents felt that it is important to make improvements for pedestrians in the University Avenue Corridor
- 80% of respondents felt that it is important to make improvements for bicyclists in the corridor

Decision-Making and Planning Factors
Respondents ranked the following factors the highest when considering the planning and decision-making process for the corridor:
- Safety for walking and biking
- Improving the beauty and feel of the region
- Maintaining adequate parking
- Creating opportunities for commercial development that fits with the context of the neighborhood

Summary
Overall, the online survey respondents felt strongly the University Avenue Corridor is important to the community and is worthy of public investment. Respondents felt that safety for walking and biking could and should be improved. The survey respondents also felt that the aesthetics, beauty, and historic charm of the neighborhood should be highlighted, celebrated, and improved. One continuous area of concern for survey respondents was the quality of the roadway, and that will be addressed with the mill and overlay project that will take place in 2020.
Planning projects like the University Avenue Corridor Study always begin with an inventory and data gathering phase that help inform future decisions and priorities. Site Analysis is the critical phase that takes inventory and starts to identify common land uses, nodes, connections, and other placemaking areas along the corridor. Above is a sample of the inventory and analysis taken during the University Avenue Corridor Study. Tangible information such as traffic counts and rental property counts are valuable information found in databases or derived analytically, but other information such as critical nodes or connections can only be obtained through observation and familiarity with the area.
1.0 ENHANCE CORRIDOR SAFETY
ENHANCE CORRIDOR SAFETY
LIGHTING DESIGN, INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS, PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

Throughout the engagement process, citizens brought up their concerns for enhanced safety all along the corridor. With the unique number of uses and makeup of the neighborhood, the corridor is one with high traffic volume of cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of public transportation. In addition to this, the corridor neighbors several schools - Winship Elementary, West Elementary, Valley Middle School, St. Michael’s School, and Grand Forks Central High School. In the online survey, when we asked the public to weigh in on the most important factors that we should consider when developing recommendations, safety was ranked the highest. Taking this into consideration, we have developed the following recommendations.
1. IMPLEMENT A CONSISTENT LIGHTING PLAN

Lighting was continually mentioned as a barrier to both real and perceived safety throughout the community engagement process. This is especially true in the winter months when daylight is limited, so children walking to and from school may be walking in the dark. Having a consistent lighting plan throughout the corridor not only improves safety, but it also improves aesthetics and can boost neighborhood pride.

- Integrate consistent, pedestrian scaled lighting along the entire corridor.
- Lighting should be complimentary to the new lighting on the UND campus.
- Fixtures should accommodate and incorporate opportunities for banners, flower baskets, plantings, etc.

2. REDUCE TRAFFIC SPEED TO 25 MPH

There is plenty of data that shows that traffic and pedestrian crashes are significantly minimized when traffic speeds are reduced by just 5 mph. Additionally, the fatality rates in such crashes dramatically reduce when speeds are lowered below 30 mph. Reducing the posted speed by 5 mph greatly enhances the safety along the corridor. Additionally, this reduction does not add much travel time to automobile commute times, and it has no effect on traffic volumes in the corridor.

An ideal sidewalk condition on University Avenue would integrate site elements shown above: neighborhood/district gateway markers, consistent lighting, and integrated bicycle infrastructure. Additionally, amenities like a neighborhood shop, adaptive reuse in single-family home would bring vibrancy and activate the corridor.
3. PILOT LOW-COST PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS

With the mill and overlay project on the calendar in 2020, we are limited in what we can do within the current construct of the street for pedestrian enhancements. However, there are a number of low-cost, high impact things that can be done to improve pedestrian safety and improve the overall pedestrian experience along the corridor.

- Crosswalk paint, temporary bulb-outs (cones, pylons, bollards, straw sleeves)
- Provide crosswalks at bus stop/shelter locations
- Document, survey, and review pilot results

4. IMPLEMENT PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS FOR ADJACENT SCHOOLS

In addition to the low-cost, high-impact initiatives listed above, permanent pedestrian enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience for students should be prioritized. These initiatives will encourage more students to walk to and from school, creating a more vibrant and healthier neighborhood and corridor.

- See crosswalk options above
- Bolstering the school crossing guard program to extend across University Avenue

5. IMPROVE TYPICAL INTERSECTIONS

University Avenue experiences high traffic volumes, ranging from 7,000-10,000 vehicles daily on some portions of the corridor. This puts University Avenue in the same conversations as 42nd Street in terms of traffic volume. With the nature of the corridor being heavily residential, the University of North Dakota student population, and the adjacent neighborhood schools, the need for the corridor to accommodate pedestrians is without question. Lowering the speed limit to 25 MPH along the corridor is a good step to increasing pedestrian safety, but other design elements can greatly enhance pedestrian safety when dealing with such large traffic volumes. University Avenue has very generous traffic lanes, which naturally encourage traffic speeds higher than the posted speed limit. Pedestrian islands and curb extensions at intersections help to narrow the traffic lane, which

- "Fire-up your feet" Friday informational days, which trains young students how to be safe pedestrians.
- Change the crossing beacons from a scheduled flash to a push-button activation. The current schedule desensitizes drivers because of the inaccuracy of the schedule.
- Children are not able to comprehend crossing times and traffic distance until they are ten years old. (Source: Safe Kids Grand Forks)

6. IMPROVE WASHINGTON STREET BARRIER

The Washington Street and University Avenue intersection is designed with only vehicles in mind. Improvements can be made so the intersection is not as intimidating for pedestrians and bicyclists.
7. CREATE CAUTION AT MILL SPUR

An empty lots sits just west of the Red Pepper on University Avenue. Previously, there was a single-family home on the lot, but it was hit by a vehicle that lost control turning the corner on University Avenue at the Mill Spur. Large traffic lanes naturally give way to high traffic speeds. Additionally, the curve in the street creates blind spots for customers going to the Red Pepper. For those reasons, creating increased caution at the Mill Spur curve is necessary for the safety of pedestrians and the built environment. Narrowing the traffic lanes with a center median, whereby naturally slowing down speeds, also provides a barrier for cars who lose control around the curve. Additional consideration should be given to providing crossing arms at the Mill Spur. See the drawing exhibit on page 33, showing a diagram of proposed design features.
2.0 INTEGRATE ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION
INTEGRATE ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE, BUS INFRASTRUCTURE

For the majority of people in Grand Forks, traveling by car is second nature, deemed to be a right, rather than the privilege it should be considered. Many people choose to ride bicycles for leisure. Some people have to ride bicycles to get where they need to go. Some people rely on the bus to get them to work in the morning or for their children to get to school. Providing multi-modal transportation in American cities is necessary, and when we can create communities that accommodate all forms of transportation, rather than designing our cities to be exclusively accessible by vehicle, we create enduring communities and environments designed for healthy personal forms of transportation like bicycling or walking, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and attract and retain young talent who value these important factors.
1. PILOT SHORT-TERM BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

In Grand Forks, the perception is that there are not a lot of “bicyclists”, so why is bicycle infrastructure important? An even larger opinion is that investing in bicycle infrastructure would be a “waste of money” because of the perception that there are not bicyclists to make infrastructure worth while. Proof that investment in bicycle infrastructure is worth it in Grand Forks can be no more apparent than a typical summer evening on the Greenway where bicyclists, roller bladers, walkers, and runners can be seen using our great asset. The benefits of piloting short-term bicycle infrastructure is being able to see how use increases without investing a lot of time or money into the installation. There are many different ways to test separating the dedicated bicycle lane from the vehicular lane including, duct tape, temporary paint, cones or bollards, or raised rumble discs that are periodically fastened to the road. Along University Avenue, preserving on-street parking is vital to homeowners and business owners, particularly between Columbia and the Mill Spur where the presence of off-street parking lots is minimal, so piloting projects for on-street bicycle infrastructure should allow for vehicles to cross the bicycle lane and use the parking lane. Short-term bicycle infrastructure answers a couple of critical questions for a community. Does the presence of separated or exclusive bicycle infrastructure encourage more cyclists? Does vehicular traffic change with the presence of bicycle infrastructure? These factors can be measured and calculated through observations when pilot projects are deployed. Another critical question that can be surveyed, rather than tracked, is; “Does the presence of bicycle infrastructure make drivers feel safer on University Avenue?” Pilot projects should also be installed long enough to see true results of its impact. Awareness and use of pilot projects are not immediate and the necessary time to advertise, allow for use, and track and document impacts, should be allowed in order to truly understand the impacts and use. Short-term piloting projects are not meant to be perfect installations. Certain barriers might seem as deterrents to trying out pilot projects: “Who will manage and maintain the temporary lane?” “What happens if the duct tape doesn’t stick or the cones fall over?”

2. PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

According to a recent PeopleForBikes U.S. Bicycling Participation study and report, 50% of American’s would like to bike more but worry about getting hit by a car. Bicycle infrastructure on roads can be controversial when many believe roadways are reserved for vehicle transportation. Currently, Grand Forks city code requires all roads to be shared by both bicycles and vehicles, with no on-street dedicated bicycle lanes. As the PeopleForBikes study suggests, those individuals who have the desire to bicycle more for commuting or leisure have concerns and barriers because sharing roads with vehicles can be dangerous and uncomfortable for some. Currently, University Avenue is one of a few streets in Grand Forks with a “sharrow”, a painted bicycle graphic on the roadway that indicates the street is to be shared by bicycles and vehicles. The idea of a sharrow promotes the use of bicycling as a form of commuting, but the downfall is that sharrows are less effective on busy streets, like University Avenue with 7,000-10,000 daily vehicles. Sharrows only attract aggressive and seasoned bicyclists and are not safe for children, elderly, or even less experienced, leisurely bicyclists. For this reason, dedicated or separate bicycle lanes provide more of a physical separation that give less experienced cyclists piece of mind while traveling on...
3. **ENCOURAGE BIKE SHARE**

Bicycle Share started in the Fall of 2019 for Grand Forks. Bike Share allows anyone to rent a bicycle through their phone app at a docking station and use at their leisure. Docking stations have been strategically placed throughout town, but appropriately concentrated on the campus of UND and Downtown. As mentioned, University Avenue is the direct and celebrated connection between UND and downtown, and the presence of bicycle infrastructure on University Avenue will encourage Grand Forks Bike Share and vice-versa. Encouraging Bike Share means providing safe infrastructure, but it also means creating partnerships with companies, entities, and groups committed to the University Avenue Corridor to advertise and celebrate the program. As Bike Share grows and the corridor realizes its full potential, the need to add Bike Share docking stations will be in demand. Positioning these docking stations around future anchor developments and other complimentary means of transportation, such as bus stops and shelters, would be the most strategic placement.

4. **CONNECT BIKE PATHS TO EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

As Grand Forks continues to add bicycle and multi-use paths throughout our community, linking these together to make an interconnected system of paths will encourage bicycle use for not only leisure, but also commuting. The easier, and more intuitive, it is for someone to get from point A to point B through the interconnected bicycle infrastructure, the more people will use it regularly and find multi-model transportation convenient. A few specific examples include, providing a direct connection from University Avenue to the Greenway by providing an opening in the flood wall at the University Avenue termination point at North 3rd Street. Also, the University of North Dakota in its recent reconstruction of University Avenue on campus has provided on-street bicycle and bus lanes. Clearly connecting future University Avenue bicycle infrastructure to this existing bicycle network is critical in order to transition and maintain corridor continuity. The third example of connecting future bicycle paths to existing infrastructure is providing the opportunity for someone to use bicycles and bus transit in the same trip. Cities Area Transit in Grand Forks has bicycle racks on all full-sized buses. Providing Bike Share docking stations at bus stops or shelters is another example of providing convenience for bicycle and bus users.

5. **GIVE BUS STOPS & SHELTERS A SENSE-OF-PLACE**

A sense-of-place is a unique and exciting environment. For bus stops, this means providing benches or unique installations, rather than just a sign. Instead of benches at bus stops, unique installations like playground swings have been used in many cities as a fun alternative. Flowers, vegetation, trash, and recycling, all
help give a bus stop a unique sense-of-place. Bus shelters along the corridor should also be more than the standard glass and aluminum enclosure. Using materials that highlight the architecture of the neighborhood or providing the opportunity for groups or organizations to design and build their own neighborhood shelters should be encouraged and assisted in order to ensure quality and longevity. For example, Central High School is an important occupant on the corridor. As a part of a collaborative school project, students with interests in art and design could come together with building trades students to participate in a start-to-finish design-build of a bus shelter that could be put up on the corridor. This kind of community generated bus shelter would not only bring variety to the types of bus shelters in the community, but also bring awareness to students on what an amenity the bus system is for our community. Finally, small additions such as Wi-Fi capabilities, digital mapping, and digital advertising to bus stops, provide convenience for users.

6. PLAN FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Discussions about rerouting the Mill Spur have circulated throughout the study process, and, whether or not this is a long-term possibility or not, the route of the Mill Spur could be an amenity to the community. In the long-term, if rerouting of the Mill Spur is determined, the discussion to make it a part of the multi-use path system in Grand Forks should be seriously considered and studied. In the short-term, future discussions related to the idea of “Rails and Trails,” as proposed by the MPO, should be revisited. The ability to integrate a multi-use path next to the existing Mill Spur is an intriguing concept that other communities, like Cedar Rapids Iowa, have integrated in their downtown. Similarly, at Washington Avenue the existing rail bridge a couple of blocks south of University Avenue is soon undergoing a study to evaluate its longevity to support rail traffic. If a future rail bridge is needed at this location, the existing bridge should be preserved and adapted to be used as a pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-use bridge to further strengthen all connections from UND to Downtown.
2.0 INTEGRATE ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION

Long-term multi-use path option from N 20TH STREET to MILL SPUR

Short-term option from N 20TH STREET to MILL SPUR

Long-term option from MILL SPUR to N 3RD STREET

Short-term option from MILL SPUR to N 3RD STREET
3.0 BOOST CORRIDOR ACTIVITY
Quality connections between places aren’t just about short distances, or ease of travel between point A and point B. A quality connection and strong corridor is a product of an aesthetically pleasing trip, one that is sprinkled with many options for stoppage points, mixed uses, and encourages travelers to interact with the many pieces of the corridor, rather than passing through it as soon as possible. There are very few of these places along University Avenue between campus and downtown. The following recommendations could significantly increase the activity along the corridor, and make it a more enjoyable stretch that more strongly connects the UND campus and community with Downtown Grand Forks.
1. PRIORITIZE ANCHOR DEVELOPMENTS

See section map on page 48-49 for "Anchor Development" locations.
- UND parking lot across from Greek Row.
- Properties on the corner of University Avenue and Washington Street.
- Mill Spur warehouse node.
- Downtown gateway block at University Avenue & N 3rd Street.

When traveling the corridor, especially during winter months, anchor developments that can serve as gateway nodes to "districts", stoppage points for passersby, and destinations could significantly improve the corridor vibrancy. The above outlined lots are highlighted as potential opportunities for larger-scale corridor developments that could compliment both the University community and the Downtown district. The corner of Washington and University is currently in Grand Forks’ Renaissance Zone, which adds an incentive for developers. The mill spur could develop into a dynamic, mixed-use district in itself with ample housing units placed near newly developed walking and biking paths adjacent to Downtown Grand Forks.

2. REDEVELOP OPPORTUNITY LOTS

In addition to anchor developments, there are a number of opportunity lots along and nearby University Avenue. Specifically, there is a large amount of surface parking that could become development. These lots should be explored and highlighted in the development community. The sites highlighted on the map on pages 48-49 do not encourage immediate demolition of the existing properties highlighted, but rather call attention to sites that would benefit from uses that

The Budge & Eshelman Warehouse node at the curve on University Avenue has potential to be a distinct gateway development entering the Downtown District.
would better activate the site. If these sites become available in the future, they should be heavily considered for redevelopment. In addition to highlighting these lots, there are a few policy changes that would go a long way toward spurring new activity.

3. MODIFY PARKING RESTRICTIONS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT
   • Modify city parking requirements for infill projects, taking into account existing parking infrastructure, multi-modal transportation options, and adjacencies to business/residential
   • Allow shared parking between different zoning uses without penalty

There are a couple of policy changes that could go a long way towards encouraging development along the corridor. Specifically, the existing parking requirements for new, smaller, infill developments are antiquated and prohibitive. Changing these requirements to take into account infill development, shared parking opportunities, and nearby adjacencies will open the door for new, unique uses of development.

2. REDEVELOP OPPORTUNITY LOTS

Mixed use neighborhoods can rely on other forms of transportation besides vehicle access like walking, busing, and bicycling for patrons to get to stores and shops.

3. MODIFY PARKING RESTRICTIONS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT

4. REMOVE CENTER-OF-STREET ZONING BOUNDARIES

Allowing adaptive reuse of single-family residences along the corridor can be encouraged in the short-term through evaluating zoning boundary locations.

4. REMOVE CENTER-OF-STREET ZONING BOUNDARIES
   • N. 3rd St. to YMCA is B-4 on the south and R-4 on the north. Modify north side of street to become B-4.
   • Since residential properties are allowed in B-4, no changes would be made on day 1. This change would simply encourage development of commercial properties in the future and eliminate barriers.

The section map on pages 48-49 illustrates the current zoning separation boundary between the B-4 on the north side and R-4 on the south side. Moving this boundary so that the zoning on the north side of the street matches the zoning on the south side of the street will encourage developers to look at this area as a whole, therefore allowing better planning for the entire district rather than one plot at a time.

5. ESTABLISH A RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
   • Consider increasing yearly rental license fees within this district that could be used for neighborhood and corridor improvements.
     • Maintenance
     • Public Art
     • Wayfinding
   • Consider capping total number of rental properties allowed within the district (examples include Winona, MN, West St. Paul, MN, and East Lansing, MI).

We heard a lot from the residents of the corridor that they are genuinely concerned with the upkeep of the neighborhood due to a high number of rental properties. Rental property owners and tenants simply do not take the same level of pride in the neighborhood as the owners of single-family homes. Because of
5. ESTABLISH A RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The existing single-family homes along University Avenue bring character-defining qualities to the Corridor.

This, the city/neighborhood should consider exploring a residential overlay district. Identifying a district like this, and potentially increasing rental property fees for the property owners, and then taking those fees to invest back in the neighborhood, could be a solution to improving the neighborhood. These additional fees could be used toward maintenance, corridor branding and identity, public art, or a host of other items that simply make the neighborhood more aesthetically pleasing and vibrant.

6. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS

The existing single-family homes along University Avenue bring character-defining qualities to the Corridor.

Throughout the engagement process, we heard a few strong thoughts from the residents of the corridor and the community as a whole, regarding types of development along the street. Specifically, the residents were not interested in larger-scale developments along the corridor that didn’t fit within the context of the existing neighborhoods. However, they were genuinely interested in smaller, unique shops that fit within the neighborhood context. This successfully looks like adaptive reuse of select houses along the corridor to become small coffee shops, ice cream shops, or unique boutiques. Locations of these neighborhood shops should be strategically placed along the corridor to encourage synergy with multi-modal transportation options and site context.

6. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS

“Joy”, a coffee and gifts shop in Dickinson, North Dakota exists in a nearside downtown residential neighborhood.

6. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS

• Allow and encourage new developments between UND and downtown that fit within the neighborhood construct, such as:
  • Coffee shops
  • Ice cream shops
  • Small grocery/convenience/drug stores
  • Remove parking restrictions for businesses

7. EMPHASIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7. EMPHASIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The University Avenue Corridor Study 3.0 BOOST CORRIDOR ACTIVITY

Events like “The Longest Table,” which happened along the University Avenue Corridor in 2019, help bring vibrancy to the neighborhood.

Events like “The Longest Table,” which happened along the University Avenue Corridor in 2019, help bring vibrancy to the neighborhood.

7. EMPHASIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

• Parades
• Special Events
• The Longest Table
• Streets Alive (Winter Open Streets)

The University Avenue Corridor serves as an excellent public space host for community events, as been evidenced by the many community events that have been hosted there over time. It has been home to the UND homecoming parade, the Potato Bowl parade, and recently, the Longest Table event. With its adjacency to University Park, the corridor provides unique opportunities for community engagement. This should be highlighted and increased to boost larger-scale activities that celebrate the community and the district.
4.0 CELEBRATE NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY
CELEBRATE NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY
CHARACTER-DEFINING PLACES, STREETSCAPE, NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE

Traveling along University Avenue is an experience of traveling through several different places, each unique and rich with history. These distinct districts have a story to tell, and combined provide a great cross section of what makes Grand Forks unique to North Dakota and the region.
CELEBRATE NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY
CHARACTER-DEFINING PLACES, STREETSCAPE, NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE

University Avenue has the DNA to become a corridor that celebrates community pride and the strong relationship between Grand Forks and the University of North Dakota. Unlike other major institutions in North Dakota, this corridor happens to be the primary circulation route through the UND campus, and some of its most prominent buildings face this street. The University of North Dakota has already invested in major improvements to infrastructure, lighting, landscaping, and transportation on University Avenue between 42nd Avenue and Columbia Road. The prominence of campus is further extended to the east with Greek Row and the well-loved University Park. Throughout University Avenue, there are several other distinct ‘districts’ that are defined by the street scale, the tree line, historic houses, and urban density. It has the makings to be a “Signature Street”, a distinguished street in the community that includes a mix of amenities, residential, programming, and targeted uses.

1. MAKE UNIVERSITY AVENUE A “SIGNATURE STREET”

2. BRAND CORRIDOR DISTRICTS

The University Avenue Corridor is defined by three unique zones or districts as indicated in the diagram on page 58-59. The three dominant districts are the Downtown Grand Forks Historic District, the University Avenue Neighborhood District, and the University of North Dakota. They are unique to Grand Forks and should be celebrated and identified graphically.

Bordering these districts are supporting districts to the University Avenue Corridor including the South Washington Street commercial district, the Riverside Neighborhood Historic District, and the Dyke Avenue Industrial District. Why are districts important? Similar uses feed, support, and grow one another. They create momentum which creates further pride and development. Grouping like functions and celebrating history and character creates synergy and leverages the community’s resources.
2. BRAND CORRIDOR DISTRICTS

Understanding the districts is also important in determining future growth and change, and how the seams between these zones should be treated. Seams can be either vibrant transitions or deteriorating edges depending on the district’s growth patterns. Three important seams or gateways along the corridor are:

- Downtown Grand Forks Historic District gateway at North 3rd Street and the Mill Spur Node.
- Historic University Avenue neighborhood at 14th Street and North 23rd Street.
- University of North Dakota at 14th Street and North 23rd Street.

As previously mentioned, improvement of lighting is one recommendation to address safety along the corridor. The addition of consistent lighting and light poles along the corridor will also provide a great opportunity to incorporate banners that can identify these unique districts. These banners can also be interchangeable to highlight events at UND and similarly major events in Grand Forks. This will help to encourage fun interaction, support, celebration, and awareness to all of the community partners and visitors along the corridor.

3. CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE THROUGH PUBLIC ART

Since 2014, the Public Arts Commission of Grand Forks has been in the process of implementing public art throughout Downtown Grand Forks and 42nd Avenue with the goal of showcasing more public art in the community to enhance cultural life and bring a sense of place. There is a great opportunity along University Avenue to further extend this mission, physically connecting these two areas through the University of North Dakota and the University Avenue Neighborhood District. Opportunity areas for public art along the corridor include some of the medians, the Mill spur corner at the east open lot, University Park, and locations at UND. Each one of these locations can be an opportunity to work with each district along the corridor to make customized landmarks.

This accomplishes two goals:

- Through thoughtful collaboration with Cities Area Transit and bus users, safety and security are maintained and enhanced at each location.
- Through thoughtful collaboration with Cities Area Transit and the neighborhoods and districts, brings a sense of pride to the areas they serve. They become representative landmarks on the corridor.

4. MAKE BUS SHELTERS NEIGHBORHOOD PLACEMAKERS

Bus shelters are a very much welcomed amenity for riders to wait in a protected environment. However, if not properly designed or taken care of, they can be a detriment and security concern for the people that use them. A good bus shelter is one that addresses safety, transparency, protection, and highlights the places in which they are located.

Currently, there are three bus shelters along University Avenue that are highlighted on the map on pages 58-59. In the future, there is an opportunity to design and rebuild these structures, potentially through federal funding, that would enhance these shelters as unique places that reflect their neighborhoods or districts.

This accomplishes two goals:

- Through thoughtful collaboration with Cities Area Transit and bus users, safety and security are maintained and enhanced at each location.
- The design of the shelters, through collaboration with Cities Area Transit and the neighborhoods and districts, brings a sense of pride to the areas they serve. They become representative landmarks on the corridor.
Input and buy-in from the neighborhoods is extremely important to develop creative yet simple solutions that allow these structures to be functional, beautiful, and something that the neighborhoods will want to preserve. A neighborhoods sense of pride and ownership goes a long way in making these structures successful. The bus shelter at St. Anne’s on 6th Avenue and 16th Street is a great example of this.

5. PROTECT THE TREE CANOPY

Grand Forks can proudly say that it has one of the most robust tree and Greenway networks in all of the state. The beauty and benefit of these trees is showcased on the University Avenue Corridor. The elegant composition of the tree canopy distinguishes this historic corridor from most other primary roadways in town. It is arguably one of the most important features to make University Avenue beautiful, and the great thing is that it is already established. Other benefits of the street tree canopy include slowing traffic speeds, reduction in the size and need of drainage infrastructure, shade and cooling in the summer months, more traffic to businesses, and enhanced property values.

The protection of the tree canopy should be a top priority when developing any plans for roadway repairs, corridor improvements, and long-term reconstruction. Any future implementation plans should come with heavy involvement and feedback from the local Forestry Department.

6. MAINTAIN UNIVERSITY PARK AS A COMMUNITY HUB

Over 1,200 people responded to the online community survey, where an astounding 95% of the respondents felt that it is important to preserve University Park. While there are some opportunities for incorporation of public art, landscaping, and connections, this park is a gem in the community and should always be preserved as a park! Roughly 900 people also participated in the Longest Table Event on September 4th, 2019 that was located on University Avenue right across from the park.

In a survey that was given at this community gathering, “park events” was the top choice for programming activities that people would like to see along the corridor. In addition to preserving the park, finding ways to program and use the park more frequently for events should also be explored.
Below is a summary of all the University Avenue Corridor priorities arranged in an “Action Plan”. Priorities are categorized from ability to complete in a 0-10+ year timeline on the x-axis. Within each column, priorities are arranged along the y-axis in terms of approximate cost. The top of each column is assumed to be the lowest cost, with the bottom of the column assumed to be the highest cost.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST</th>
<th>NOW</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0 - 2 YEARS</strong> (Policy Changes, Public Awareness, &amp; Pilot Projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. UNIVERSITY PARK AS A COMMUNITY HUB (Page 65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. EMPHASIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Page 53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. REDUCE TRAFFIC SPEEDS TO 25 MPH (Page 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. MODIFY PARKING RESTRICTIONS (Page 52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. REMOVE CENTER OF STREET ZONING BOUNDARIES (Page 53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. ENCOURAGE BIKE SHARE (Page 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. CREATE PRIDE THROUGH PUBLIC ART (Page 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. PROTECT THE TREE CANOPY (Page 64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. PILOT LOW-COST PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS (Page 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. PILOT BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE (Page 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3 - 6 YEARS</strong> (Physical Improvements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. BRAND CORRIDOR DISTRICTS (Page 62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. UNIVERSITY AVENUE AS A “SIGNATURE STREET” (Page 61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPS (Page 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. BUS SHELTERS AS NEIGHBORHOOD PLACEMAKERS (Page 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. GIVE BUS SHELTERS A SENSE OF PLACE (Page 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. PRIORITIZE PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS FOR ADJACENT SCHOOLS (Page 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. CONNECT BICYCLE PATHS TO EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE (Page 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. PRIORITIZE ANCHOR LOT DEVELOPMENTS (Page 51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. PILOT LOW-COST PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS (Page 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. PILOT BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE (Page 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7 - 10+ YEARS</strong> (Physical Improvements &amp; Big Investments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. ESTABLISH A “RESIDENTIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT” (Page 54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. IMPROVE WASHINGTON STREET BARRIER (Page 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. CREATE CAUTION AT THE MLL SPUR (Page 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. IMPLEMENT CONSISTENT LIGHTING PLAN (Page 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. IMPROVE TYPICAL INTERSECTIONS (Page 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE (Page 33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. REDEVELOP OPPORTUNITY LOTS (Page 52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. PLAN FOR FUTURE MULTIMODAL OPPORTUNITIES (Page 42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKS CITED

Study Background: JLG Architects

1.0 Enhance Corridor Safety


Implement Pedestrian Enhancements for Adjacent Schools: Improve Typical Intersections: JLG Architects.

2.0 Integrate All Forms of Transportation

Pilot Short-Term Bicycle Infrastructure: walkBoston, Walnut Street is transformed for a day in springfield, https://walkboston.org/2018/05/14/walnut-street-is-transformed-for-a-day-in-springfield/.


Connect Bike Paths to Existing Infrastructure: JLG Architects.


Plan for Multi-Modal Opportunities: JLG Architects.

3.0 Boost Corridor Activity

Prioritize Anchor Developments: JLG Architects.

Redevelop Opportunity Lots: JLG Architects.


Establish a Residential Improvement District: JLG Architects.


4.0 Boost Corridor Activity

Make University Avenue a “Signature Street”:


Create Neighborhood Pride through Public Art:

Make Bus Shelters Neighborhood Placemakers:

University of Kentucky, Bus stop transformed to garden oasis, <https://uknow.uky.edu/arts-culture/bus-stop-transformed-garden-oasis>.

Protect the Tree Canopy:

Maintain University Avenue as a Community Hub:


5.0 Action Plan
Cover Image: JLG Architects.