

## PUBLIC PARTICIPTION PLAN OVERVEIW

A successful Land Use Plan works to provide opportunities for participation from residents and stakeholders throughout the Plan development process to ensure a final Plan is built from community input. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) describes the process that has been designed to share information and gather input from stakeholders and residents during all phases of the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan.

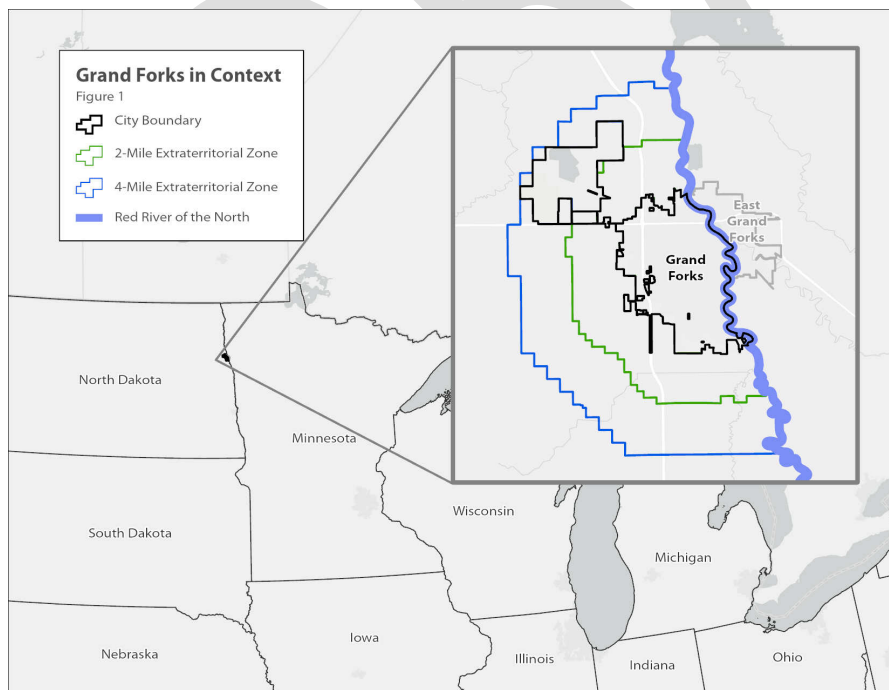
The PPP aligns with guidance provided in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks 2019 Public Participation Plan, and identifies roles, responsibilities, and actions for each engagement task. The PPP also identifies specific outreach efforts and opportunities that will be used to promote the engagement activities including social media, a project website, printed material, and traditional media promotion.

## COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING

### GRAND FORKS IN CONTEXT

To effectively plan for the future of Grand Forks, it is essential to understand the current community profile as well as the anticipated trends that will shape the direction of growth and change. Grand Forks is the county seat of Grand Forks County, North Dakota. With a population of 56,500 in 2019, it is the third largest city in North Dakota. The city contains approximately 28 square miles of land area. Located on the western banks of the Red River of the North, Grand Forks and its neighbor East Grand Forks, Minnesota, form the center of the Grand Forks ND-MN Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is often called “Greater Grand Forks”.

The City of Grand Forks and the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will collaborate to develop the 2050 Land Use Plan with support and guidance from the, NDDOT, FHWA and the consultant team. The MPO is a cross-jurisdictional agency that is responsible for regional planning and programming. One of the MPO’s major roles is to prioritize and administer federal funding for transportation projects.

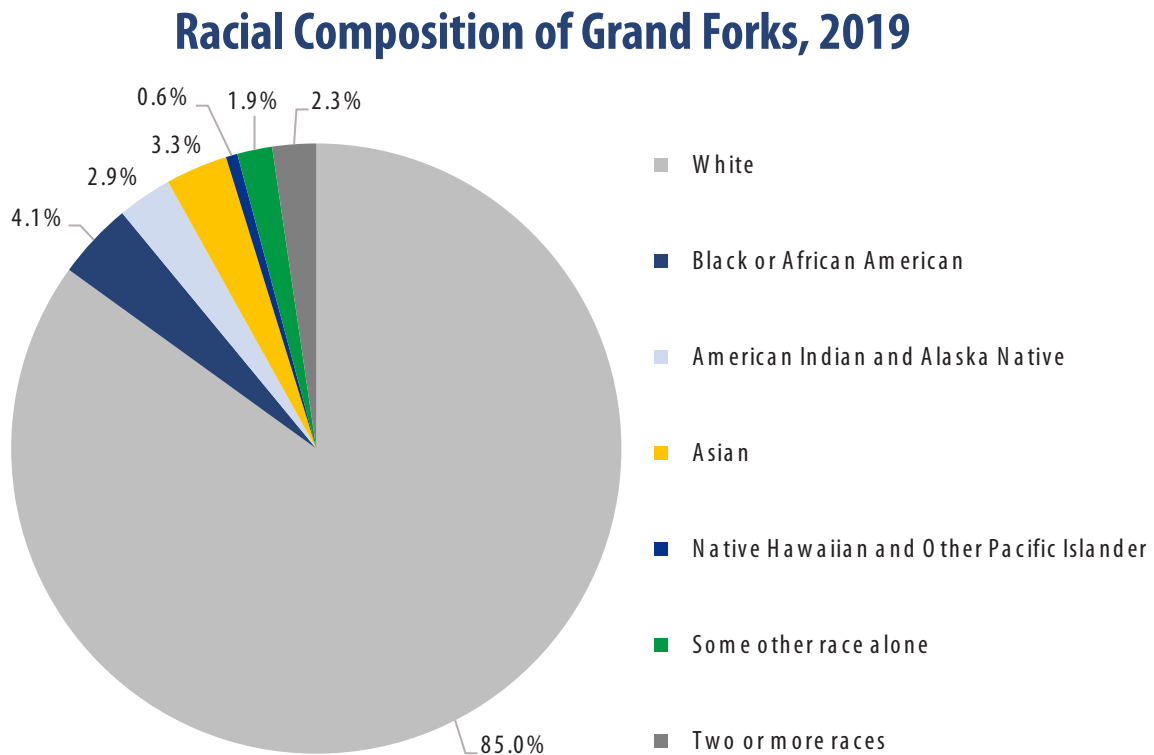


## SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

American Community Survey (ACS) data estimates indicate that Grand Forks population was 56,500 in 2019, and has experienced approximately a 7% population increase since 2010.

The population of Grand Forks is aging, but this trend is occurring at slower rate than state and national averages due to the presence of the University of North Dakota (UND). Additionally, the 2019 ACS shows that approximately 85% of the population of Grand Forks identifies as White. The remaining population consists of minority races, including Black or African American (4.1%), Asian (3.3%), American Indian and Alaska Native (2.9%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.6%). Approximately 1.9% of the population identified with some other race and 2.3% indicated they were or two or more races.

Figure 1. Racial Composition of Grand Forks



Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## ENGAGEMENT DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we interact, and all engagement efforts should continue to align with North Dakota and City of Grand Forks social distancing guidelines and respond to the current state of the pandemic. Community engagement typically includes a combination of in-person and virtual input opportunities, and this Public Participation Plan provides options to implement a hybrid approach to engagement. Although in-person engagement activities are described below, it is assumed the project team will continue to monitor state and local guidelines, prioritize opportunities for virtual engagement and when/where appropriate offer opportunities to gather again in-person with the proper social distancing protocols in place.

All virtual meetings will be held using the Zoom platform. The Zoom Meeting platform will be used to hold many of the project meetings, including Land Use Subcommittee meetings. The Zoom Webinar platform may also be

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used for open houses and other events. The SRF team will host each meeting and distribute connection information.

To successfully engage stakeholders, project partners and the engagement team should strive to take advantage of the “virtual community” by working with local industry leaders, K-12 and University leaders, Downtown leadership, the Chamber, and other well-connected community liaisons to get in touch with the community at-large through social media and email communication. Excitingly, recent planning efforts have demonstrated the opportunity for a greater level of participation for both virtual and hybrid engagement processes than previous engagement efforts that relied solely on in-person outreach strategies.



## AUDIENCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Over the duration of the Land Use Plan development process, engagement opportunities will be designed to involve and engage with two specific audiences:

- **Plan Development Stakeholders:** which include City staff, Plan Steering Committee members, internal working group members, external working group members as well as agency/organizational partners who will be directly involved in the oversight, management, and development of the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan.
- **Community Stakeholders:** which include community organizations, focus group participants, Grand Forks residents and the general public who will have opportunities to stay informed, participate and provide input at key phases during the development of the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan.



## PLAN DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS

Plan development stakeholders include City staff, Land Use Subcommittee members, internal working group members, external working group members and agency/organizational partners who will be directly involved in the oversight, management, and development of the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan.

### Land Use Subcommittee (LUS)

The Land Use Subcommittee (LUS) will meet at five key intervals during the planning process. The LUS will provide decision-making guidance, help communicate with community stakeholders, review key items prior to distribution, support data gathering and ensure the 2050 Land Use Plan is compatible with existing plans and policies.

The consultant team will facilitate each LUS meeting through a combination of in-person and virtual settings. The consultant team will facilitate three of the meetings in person and two virtually, as allowed. Meeting agendas and materials will be distributed to the LUS members ahead of each meeting by the consultant team. Additionally, the consultant team will distribute meeting summaries following each meeting.

Public comments will be heard during each LUS meeting. Members of the public wishing to make a comment shall submit their comment in writing and comments will be considered part of the record of the meeting as if personally presented. Notation of this process will be included on each agenda of the LUS. The meeting will also be recorded and posted on the project website for later viewing.



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The LUS will be comprised of seven members representing the City Council and Planning Commission, along with the NDDOT and FWHA. Supporting staff will also be included in LUS activities to support the planning efforts. Membership for both groups is identified below.

## ***Plan Steering Committee members include:***

- Planning Commissioner Jamie Lunski
- Planning Commissioner Alex Reichert
- Planning Commissioner Steven Wasvick
- Council Member Ken Vein
- Mayor Brandon Bochenski
- Wayne Zacher (NDDOT)
- Kristen Sperry (FHWA North Dakota)

## ***Supporting Staff Members include:***

- Grand Forks Planning Department
- MPO Staff
- Engineering Department
- Inspections Department
- City Attorney
- City Administrator
- City Public Health

## ***Steering Committee #1***

The first meeting of the Steering Committee will be used to kick off the planning process. This meeting will be held using a hybrid format allowing for both in-person and virtual attendance. Prior to the meeting the SRF Team will provide technical memorandum #1 (market profile and population/employment forecasts) and the PPP for committee review. This meeting will cover the following elements:

- Review the overall scope and timeline of the planning effort.
- Discuss roles and responsibilities.
- Provide an overview of the technical memorandum and request comments and questions from the committee, especially concerning the draft of the revised goals and objectives.

## ***Steering Committee #2***

The second meeting of the Steering Committee will be virtual and focus on review of the draft community survey, which will ask for community input regarding land use challenges and opportunities. A draft community survey will be provided to the committee ahead of the meeting. This meeting will also discuss an approach to the first public workshop.

## ***Steering Committee #3***

At the third LUS meeting, alternative growth tiers and accompanying future land use alternatives will be presented for input. LUS participants will be asked to identify advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives and responses will be outlined to assist with review. If possible, this meeting will be held in-person to accommodate large maps and materials for alternative growth tiers and land use alternatives.

## ***Steering Committee #4***

LUS members will discuss implementation at the fourth meeting. Topics for discussion will include recommended ordinance updates, how the Plan should be monitored, tools and incentives, as well as who will be responsible for implementation. This will be a virtual meeting.

This point in the development of the Plan is also a good time to revisit the goals and objectives. Community input has been provided on community challenges and opportunities, growth tiers, and future land use alternatives and goals and objectives will likely need to be modified based on this new information.

## ***Steering Committee #5***

At this juncture, the first draft of the Land Use Plan will be available. The draft will be provided in advance of the meeting for committee review. The fifth and final LUS meeting is anticipated to be a virtual meeting.



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## Internal Working Group

The internal working group membership will include City Departments, Public Safety, Public Works (water, streets, transit), Public Information. This group will be called upon at various stages of the planning process to review information, provide input, and support the planning process. The planning team will provide a Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan Status Update email every other month to highlight upcoming engagement opportunities, deliverables, and opportunities to engage in the process. When appropriate, the planning team may utilize a portion of the City's department head meeting to provide updates to the Internal Working Group.

## External Working Group

The External Working Group will be used to share project updates and gather feedback from external stakeholders and project partners. External members include Altru, UND, EDC, Airport, County Planning, Townships, Chamber, DDA, Parks, and School Districts. Similarly to the Internal Working Group, this group will be engaged at various stages of the planning process to review information, provide input, and support the planning process. The External Working Group members will receive a Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan status update every other month to identify upcoming events and ways to engage in the process.

## Planning & Zoning Commission

According to City ordinance the Planning Commission will provide a recommendation of adoption of the final Land Use Plan to the City Council. Planning Commission members will play an active role in the Plan Steering Committee and the full Planning & Zoning Commission will receive regular project updates from project team and Commission members participating in the LUS.

## City Council and Mayor

The Mayor and City Council will be informed of Plan progress and involved throughout the process. Mayor Brandon Bochenski and City Councilmember Ken Vein will serve as members of the LUS and will serve as liaisons between the Mayor's Office, City Council and the project team. The project team may provide virtual updates to the City Council as needed.

## Other City Boards and Committees

Additional councils, boards, commissions, and community organizations may be invited to participate in the Plan development process and/or have opportunities to provide comments at key milestones.

### External Stakeholder Engagement Activities



External stakeholder engagement activities will seek to involve residents, businesses, community organizations, educational institutions, and the broader public. External stakeholders will be engaged throughout the Plan development process using a variety of virtual and in-person approaches. The input received during the engagement process will be documented and summarized throughout the plan development and included as a component of the Plan. Community input will be summarized periodically to inform Plan Development Stakeholders and shared with public via the project website.

Community outreach and input opportunities will occur in three phases, with opportunities throughout the process for residents to stay informed and participate in fun, meaningful and accessible ways. Specific engagement tools and strategies include:

- In-person and virtual public workshops
- Community surveys and convenient input opportunities
- Two rounds of focus group meetings
- Project website and email updates



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## Phase One Engagement: Goals and Opportunities

Phase One of engagement will include three activities to engage the public and stakeholders on desired goals and opportunities for the future of Grand Forks. These activities include a public information and work session, community survey, and four focus groups.

To engage the public early in the process, the team will host a public information and work session dedicated to understanding current challenges and opportunities experienced by community members and stakeholders. We will plan to host this work session in Grand Forks but also provide a virtual meeting platform that provides an opportunity for the project team to share information about the Land Use Plan Update and gather initial feedback.

Various facilitation tools will be used during the in-person event and online open house to ask questions and gather feedback during the engagement activity. The presentation and activities will also be available after the meeting for those that could not attend. Engagement activities will be tailored to understand what topics are of most concern for the future and what existing opportunities need to be built upon. A community survey that has been reviewed and approved by the LUS will be available in-person and online during phase one engagement.

With all engagement events held throughout the planning process, the team will provide an overall timeline and comment period for each event. This comment period will clearly identify when feedback and additional comments will be accepted for inclusion in the planning process. For example, surveys may be open for a 30-day period, with a specific closing date identified.

### **Phase One: Focus Group Meetings, Round 1**

Key stakeholders will be invited to participate in focus group discussions and engaged at multiple points in the Plan development process. The team will host an initial round of four focus group meetings with key stakeholders representing the following topic areas:

- Housing
- Assets
- Public Infrastructure
- Economic Development

Focus group participants and core questions will be determined with guidance from the LUS. Since some of these groups may be somewhat large, our team will consider the use of tools such as Mentimeter or Poll Everywhere to pose questions and provide real time input and results

In phase three of engagement, we will come back together with focus group participants to discuss the Plan development process and gather initial input on a draft Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan.

## Phase Two Engagement: Explore Alternatives

Phase Two of engagement will include a public workshop and community survey to engage the public on the alternatives being explored for the future of Grand Forks.

The second phase of public engagement will include a public workshop to gather input on Plan strategies and alternative growth tiers and future land use maps. This in-person and virtual open house type format will provide an overview of the planning process and status and a range of engagement activities to gather feedback specific to the issues and opportunities for each of the four strategy areas (housing, tools for the new economy, transportation choices, and assets to build from).

The second community survey and in-person input opportunities could include a growth priority “spending” activity that provides the public with the experience of prioritizing growth areas and allocating funding for necessary (or unnecessary) service upgrades/extensions.

Hard copy and online maps will solicit feedback on alternative growth tier and future land use arrangements.





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Like the initial workshop, the public workshop and activities will be recorded and available for later viewing and participation from those who cannot attend the meeting via the project website Public Engagement tab.

## Phase Three Engagement: Review Draft Plan

To engage the public and stakeholders on the draft Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan, a workshop and focus group meetings will be held.

A final in-person workshop and online engagement opportunity will provide an overview of the draft plan for the community and allow for comments to be received prior to finalization. During this process, SRF will identify how the challenges and opportunities identified from the early public engagement were used to guide the development of the draft plan element. This helps to build a consensus with the public and stakeholders and provide validation that their input was heard and used to inform the process.

Like the other online engagement efforts, live discussion will occur during the meeting and a recording will be available via the project website for later viewing. A public comment period will remain open following the open house to gather additional feed-back prior to adoption.

## Phase Three: Focus Group Meetings, Round 2

Our final visit with each of the four focus group will be to review and receive feedback on the draft land use plan document. We will also work with the focus groups to gain comments on the implementation plan. The team will work with the LUS to determine questions and appropriate engagement tools. SRF will prepare a record of each meeting.



Image of Signage along the Grand Forks / East Grand Forks Greenway

## OUTREACH TOOLS

Sharing project information and reaching the wide range of project audiences will require the project to utilize a wide range of communications and outreach strategies. In general, opportunities to promote input opportunities include social media channels, newspaper ads, email blasts, utility mailings, public access TV opportunities, and passive engagement at popular community locations. Plan Development stakeholders will be aware of the planning process and can help to spread the word. Specific tools include:

- Project Website
- Email Updates

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- Social Media
- Traditional Media and Press Release
- Stakeholder Coordination
- Traditional Mailers

The consultant team will be responsible for creating promotional materials and will coordinate with Stephanie Halford, Senior Planner, for the distribution of materials to appropriate entities.

## Project Website and Online Resources

A standalone project website will be used to disseminate information about the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan and public input opportunities, including surveys, public meetings, and email updates about the planning process. Website content will include a home page with a Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan summary, project materials tab, public engagement tab, timeline, email sign-up and project contact information.

Throughout the planning process, the team will ensure that relevant and timely information is available to the public. This includes information about upcoming engagement opportunities, past planning activities, and documents for review and comment. Additionally, all LUS agendas and materials will be posted on the project website.

The following website will be used: [www.gf2050plan.org](http://www.gf2050plan.org)

The project website will be maintained by the consultant team throughout the planning process. The website will be transferred to the MPO and City following the completion of the plan for future use.

## Social Media

The city's existing social media platforms will be used to share project updates and engagement opportunities. The project team will work directly with city staff to share Plan updates, including engagement events or opportunities. Additionally, Facebook Ads may be used to promote planning activities beyond the city's existing followers.

Additionally, the project team will work with local partners to share project updates through their social media channels. The MPO will share information on their platforms, similar to the information shared on the City's platforms. Collaboration with community groups and organizations, such as the Chamber, will be used to share information on their platforms to broaden the exposure of materials.

## Distribution of Physical Materials

Printed promotional materials may be created throughout the planning process to encourage participation from various population groups. The SRF team will create all materials and will work with MPO and city staff for the distribution of these materials throughout the community.

## INFORMATION AND MEETING ACCESSIBILITY

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The project team will provide convenient engagement opportunities to the maximum extent practicable. Any in-person engagement activities will be hosted at locations with ADA accessible facilities. Virtual engagement activities and live virtual meetings will include opportunities to participate for those without broadband access. Meeting materials and presentations will be presented in clear and accessible language.

## INFORMATION AVAILABILITY

Information about the plan development will be available throughout the planning process via the plan webpage on the Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Update website as well as via updates on the city's social media platforms.



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Contact information for city and SRF staff will also be available for additional questions and comments from stakeholders and residents.

## Pre-approved Notifications for Project Communications

The following notations will be added to meeting agendas regarding meeting protocols or request for access.

- City Hall is now open to the public. However due to the on-going COVID-19 public health concerns, members of the Land Use Subcommittee and staff may be attending this meeting in person while abiding by social distancing guidelines set by the CDC, attending electronically or attending by phone. Limiting in person opportunity will exist. Any member of the public seeking to submit comments should submit their comments to Scott Harmstead, project manager, at [sharmstead@srfconuslting.com](mailto:sharmstead@srfconuslting.com) or call 701-354-2400 for further information. All online comments received will be considered part of the record of the meeting as if personally presented.
- Any individual requiring a special accommodation to allow access or participation at any Grand Forks 2050 Land Use Plan Update meeting is asked to notify please call the Human Resources Department at (701) 746-2665. You may also contact us by emailing [human\\_resources@grandforksgov.com](mailto:human_resources@grandforksgov.com) to request accommodations five (5) days prior to the meeting. Materials can be provided in alternative formats: large print, braille, cassette tape, or on computer disk for people with disabilities or with limited English proficiency (LEP).

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## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE TIMELINE

The following graphic provides a general timeline for the four phases of engagement. These engagement activities align with the other project development activities included in each phase.

