DOWNTOWN GATEWAY + GREENWAY

Renovation Master Plan // Grand Forks, ND



JANUARY 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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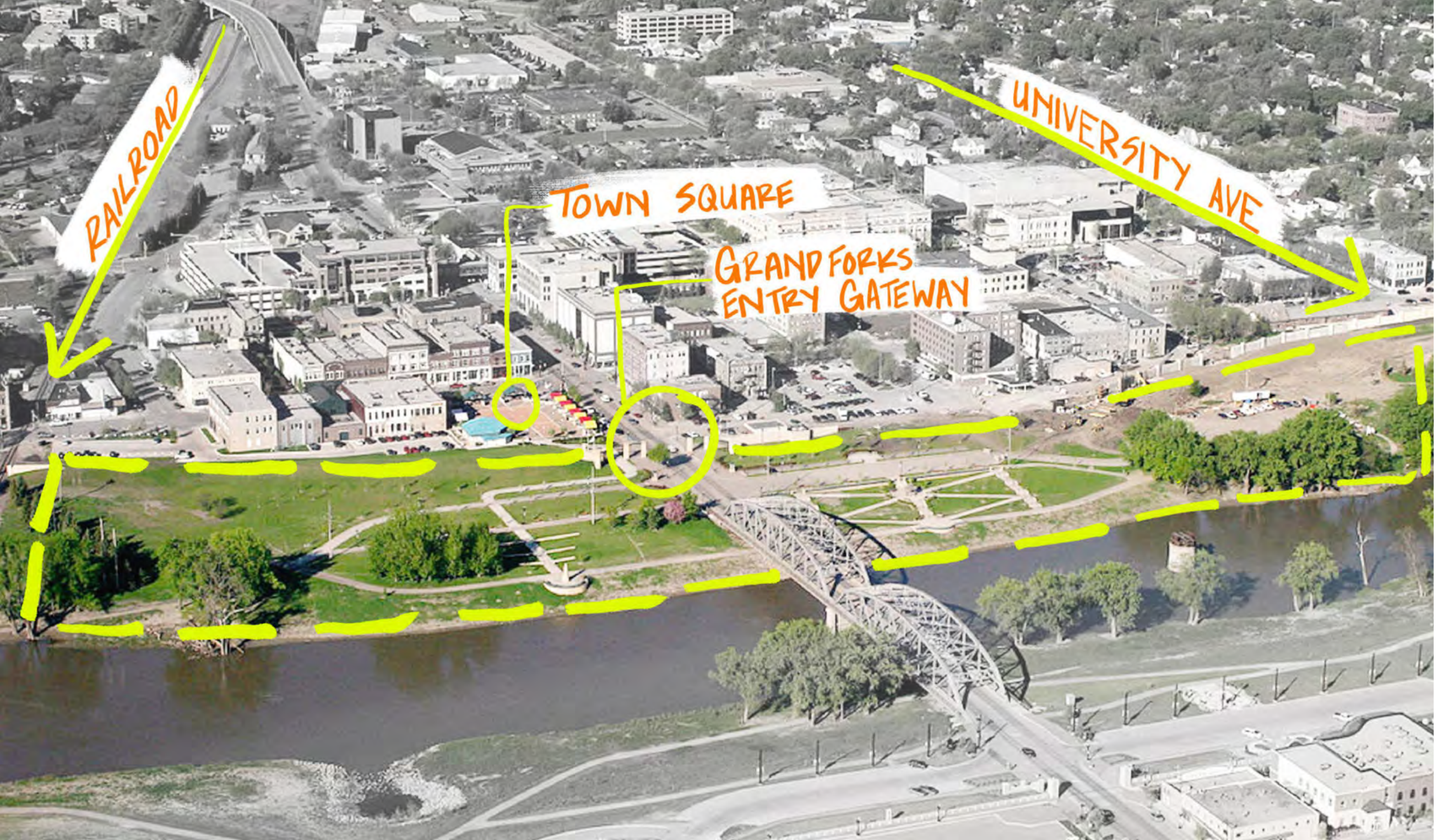
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01

introduction

The floodwall entrance is located along Demers Avenue in downtown Grand Forks. It was installed as an integral part of the flood protection system after the flood of 1997. The structure is used to protect the community from the river during a flood. Over 25 years after the installation of the floodwall, it is now time to re-envision this Grand Forks entry experience including creating a master plan for what the surrounding greenway can become in the future.



02

public engagement

Engagement with the community of Grand Forks was an important tenet of this master planning process. Upon the onset of the project, the public was invited to participate in-person and virtually to provide guidance to the City's steering committee and design consultant team. The following pages describe initial engagement results, which influenced the resulting documentation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - OUTDOOR EVENT

Community members were invited to Town Square at the beginning of the project to engage with the project team and provide input to guide the design process. The photos on this page are from that process. Following this in-person event, an online survey was created based on the same questions asked during the event at Town Square. The information gathered from the in-person event and the online survey are synthesized on the following pages.

In addition to the direct questions and answers included, the public was asked to choose their preferred imagery based on a series of photos provided. This process is called, "Visual Listening" and relates to the phrase, "an image is worth a thousand words." Votes per image can be seen on the following pages.

Collectively, this guidance from the public helped to shape the initial conceptualization of design solutions for the project areas.

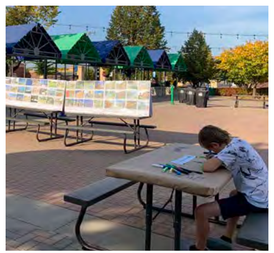


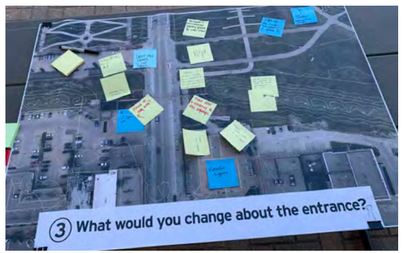






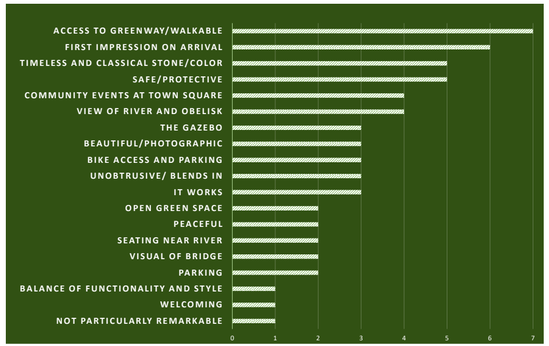




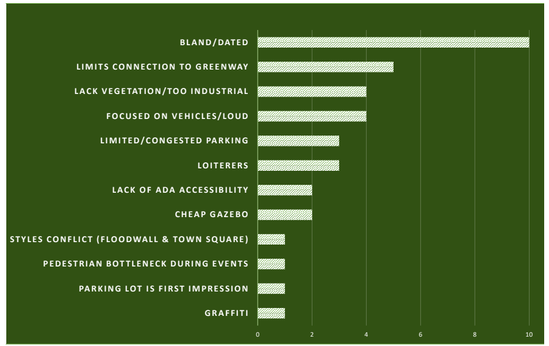


PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q: WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT THE GRAND FORKS FLOODWALL ENTRANCE ALONG DEMERS AVE?

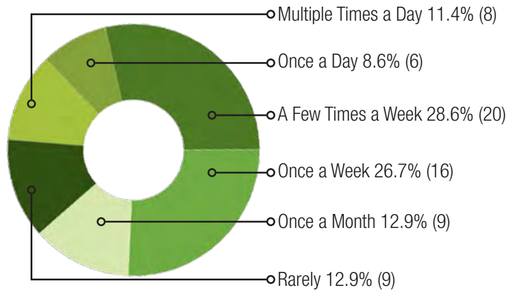


Q: WHAT DO YOU NOT ENJOY ABOUT THE GRAND FORKS FLOODWALL ENTRANCE ALONG DEMERS AVE?



Q: HOW OFTEN DO YOU SPEND TIME AROUND THE GRAND FORKS FLOODWALL ENTRANCE ALONG DEMERS AVE?

(Walking to the greenway, being in Town Square, Driving through, etc.)



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - VISUAL LISTENING

GATEWAY ENTRANCE



36



26


26


21


16


10


9



9

WATERFRONT & EVENTS


28


26


20


20


18


15


15


8

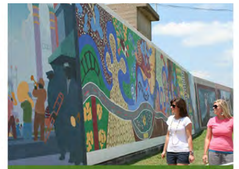
NUMBERS PROVIDED INDICATE VOTES OF SUPPORT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - VISUAL LISTENING

FLOODWALL


30


24

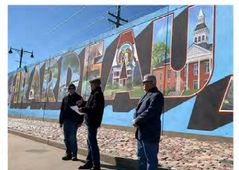

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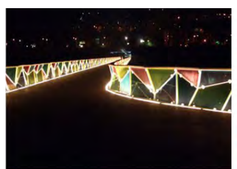

14


13


13


12

BRIDGE & LIGHTING


25


20


17


15


14


13


13


10

NUMBERS PROVIDED INDICATE VOTES OF SUPPORT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - VISUAL LISTENING

FURNISHINGS


41


40


20


17


12

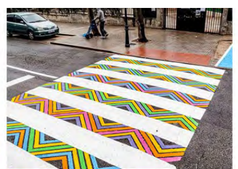

9


9


6

PUBLIC ART


32

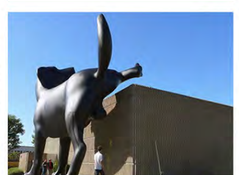

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NUMBERS PROVIDED INDICATE VOTES OF SUPPORT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - VISUAL LISTENING

WAYFINDING


28


23



20


18

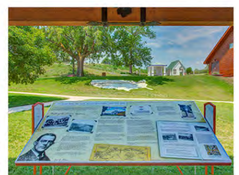


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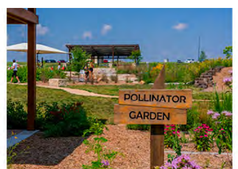
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12


12

PLAY


31



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23


16


15


14


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12

NUMBERS PROVIDED INDICATE VOTES OF SUPPORT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q:WHAT SHOULD THE DESIGN TEAM KNOW TO BEST IMPROVE THE ENTRANCE?

- Think about the young adults in GF
- Keep the natural look of the river
- Murals are not enough
- Timeless
- Improve family friendliness
- GF residents may find this wasteful spending
- Incorporate history
- Maps of features along greenway
- More flood preventative plants
- Improve downtown tree quality
- Keep main features simple enough to be appreciated at 25mph
- The safety of the floodwall
- Furniture options given will attract homeless
- Not everything needs to look modern
- Make it big, inviting, and fun
- Avoid water features due to maintenance
- Minimal maintenance

Q: WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE FLOODWALL?

- Deferred maintenance
- If it's too modern/not timeless
- It will ONLY focus on younger kids
- Funding / Smart spending
- It won't embrace the river
- It will look dated in 25 years
- It will be surface lots and ugly features
- The changes can withstand flooding
- It will be a silly parody of modern architecture
- ADA issues
- That it won't provide sufficient protection
- Lack of safety
- Graffiti / It becoming trashy
- Stability and structural integrity
- Sustainability
- Pedestrian-first landscapes
- The limitations of the floodwall with wanting to embrace the river
- It's bland and uninviting

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q: WHAT ARE SOME FEATURES THAT YOU WISH TO SEE AT THE GRAND FORKS FLOODWALL ENTRANCE?





Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY BIG IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GRAND FORKS FLOODWALL ENTRANCE?



03

concept development

After initial engagement with the public, completion of site assessments, and investigation of historical and recent documentation regarding the project elements and site, the design team worked with the project steering committee to develop a variety of design solutions for consideration.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT - OVERVIEW

Concept development begins with a thorough understanding of existing conditions and guiding principles. The Greenway's Vision Statement serves as general guidance for any improvements planned within the Greenway. Investigation of the project site helped to create a foundation of understanding for improvement opportunities. Important issues to be addressed include better connectivity to downtown, pavement settling, concerns about ADA accessibility, scale of architectural features, deferred maintenance, pedestrian comfort/ safety, general unremarkable character, and lack of amenities to draw people to the area.

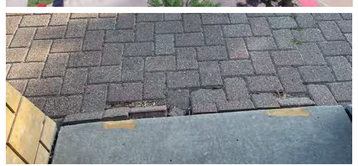
GREENWAY VISION STATEMENT

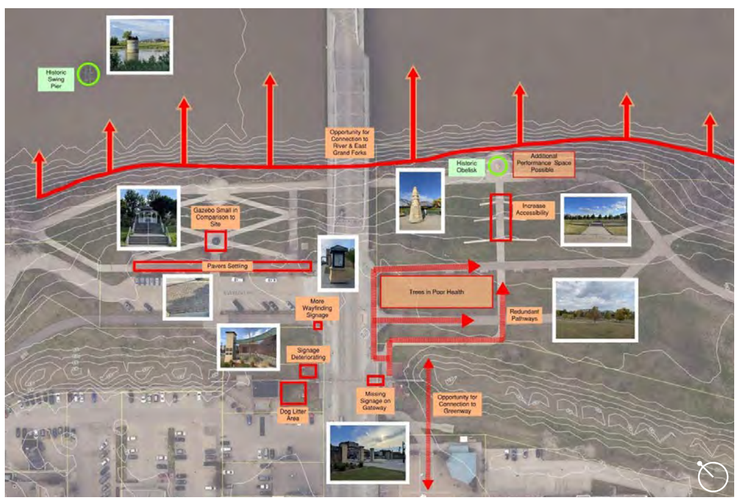
The Red and Red Lake Rivers Greenway will protect residents of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks from flooding, provide opportunities for economic growth, improve and restore ecological stability of the river corridor, link residents and tourists to four seasons of recreation and transportation facilities, provide linkage between the cities, preserve and promote the history and culture of the region through education, and improve the quality of life for future generations.

Written by workshop participants (residents of Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN) and prepared by Greenways, Inc. and the US Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Greenway Plan of September 2001.



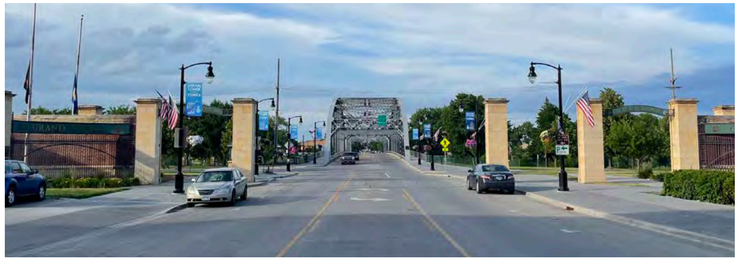






CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT - GATEWAY

The existing floodwall gateway along Demers Avenue in downtown Grand Forks is a key focus area of this planning study. The aging structures are in need of a facelift to align with improvements within downtown and have a larger impact on passersby. Concepts were developed by hand and using three-dimensional modeling to build upon contextual relationships with the structures as well as the existing style of this urban edge environment. The conceptual development of these improvements are shown below.



CONCEPT 01







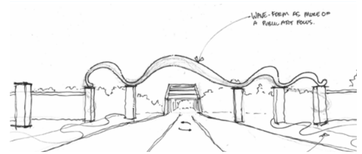
CONCEPT 02







CONCEPT 03







CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT - GREENWAY

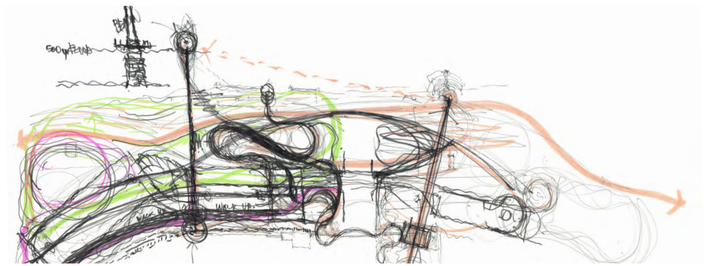
Concept development for Greenway improvements has the ability to move in many different directions due to the large scale of the area being studied (see image to the right). The conceptual development began with a design charrette hosted near the Greenway to ensure collaborative iteration of design solutions. Early sketching was vetted by steering committee members to provide direction, ideas, and confirmation for considered solutions.

After the initial design charrette, a series of review meetings were conducted to establish two concepts that would be shared with the public. Review of precedent projects and other successful greenway/park spaces was helpful in advancing these conceptual plans. Key components of these design interactions include organization of parking, inclusion of flexible space for programming, respect for pedestrian safety and circulation, inclusion of new amenities, integration with the downtown urban fabric, celebration of the site's natural characteristics, and the reality that the Greenway needs to continue to serve as a space that protects Grand Forks from common seasonal flooding.



Design Charrette





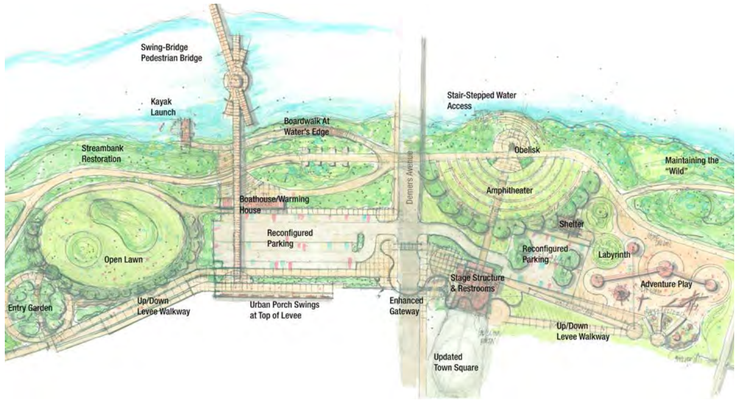


Conceptual Plan Sketches

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT - GREENWAY

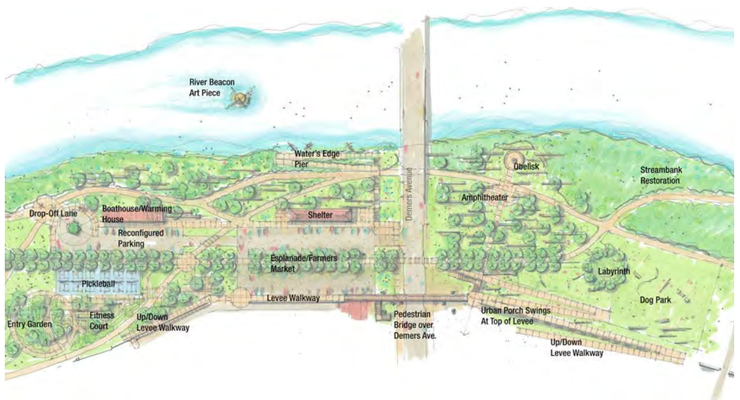
Concept Plan A

Concept A increases the connection between downtown and the greenway. By utilizing the stage structure from a previous Town Square redesign to cut through the floodwall levee, there is a direct connection between Town Square and the Obelisk. There is a large focus on creating spaces for the larger community, both young and old. Incorporating garden spaces, open lawn, adventure play, and maintaining the current labyrinth, there are spaces for everyone in the community to utilize. The connection to the river plays a role in concept 1 with the kayak launch, a boardwalk at water's edge, and a stair-stepped water access point next to the obelisk. To highlight some of the history in Grand Forks, the old swing bridge is re-purposed into a pedestrian bridge to access East Grand Forks. This not only highlights the history of the swing bridge, but also gives pedestrians a much safer way to cross the river.



Concept Plan B

Concept B creates a connection from downtown to the greenway through pedestrian paths going over the floodwall berm, creating a levee walkway. A proposed pedestrian art bridge going over Demers Avenue will allow for pedestrians to safely cross while avoiding the heavily commuter-trafficked Demers Avenue. This also releases some congestion that has happened during past greenway events. By adding a dog park, Pickleball courts, a fitness court, and garden spaces, there are areas for every person in the community. For events, the parking lots can be used to host farmers markets and the seat walls near the obelisk can be utilized for public events. With a pier at the water's edge, there is some access to the river while also creating the perfect lookout to the old swing bridge structure that will be added onto to create a piece of art.





04

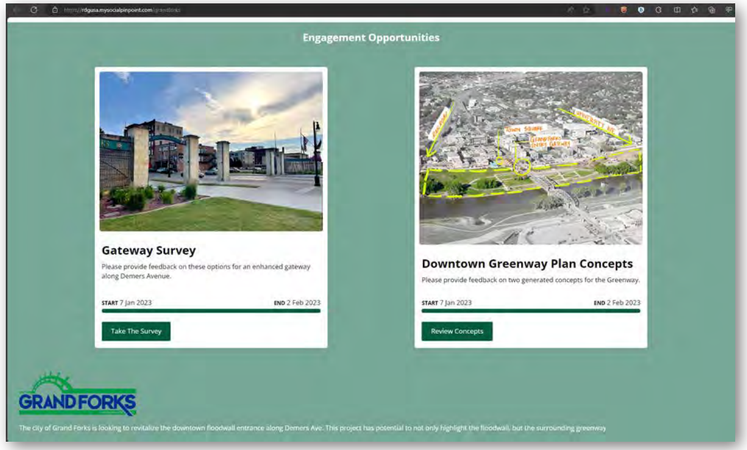
public feedback

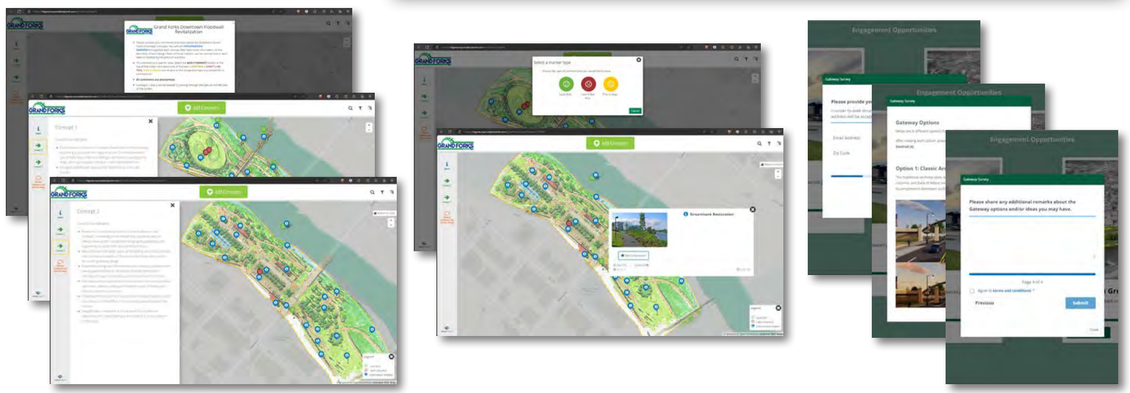
Additional public feedback was gathered after the three floodwall gateway refinement concepts and two Greenway conceptual plans were prepared. This feedback was gathered through an interactive website with information received helping to guide the master plan finalization.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK - PROCESS

A website was developed through Social Pinpoint, an online engagement platform. This website offered an overview of the project and asked for feedback in the form of two participatory surveys: one for Gateway concepts and one for Greenway concepts. The surveys included conceptual renderings, precedent project imagery, interactive mapping, and a variety of comment opportunities, including the ability to support the feedback provided by others. Many of these interactive opportunities are showcased in the screen grabs at the bottom of this page.

The surveys were open for approximately one month, were advertised by City staff and other local businesses and non-profits, and were completed by over 100 households, resulting in the feedback provided on the following pages.





PUBLIC FEEDBACK - GATEWAY CONCEPTS

Survey participants were asked to rank their preferences for gateway designs from 1-4, with 1 being their favorite. The quantity of #1 votes and the average ranking can be seen to the right with the lower average ranking being most popular. Comments received about these concepts are summarized below.

Classic Archway: Those in favor see it as a reflection of historic downtown and have a preference towards the classic, uniform style rather than some of the other less traditional designs. Although some find this style to be too traditional and lacking creativity, it is overall rated highly for its simplistic signage and representation of Grand Forks.

Pedestrian Bridge: Rated highly for practicality and function, and could become a signature destination point that incorporates flags, monuments, or historic components for visitors. Despite a large interest in this style, others are concerned with the location and placement due to weather, safety, or realistic foot traffic, and could see a pedestrian bridge idea being implemented more successfully elsewhere.

Welcoming Wave: The design speaks to those with a creative eye. Its attractive colors, unique movement, and the potential for integrating interactive elements, such as a waterfall illusion, could provide a signature moment for visitors. Several respondents were strongly against the colors and lack of signage, finding these characteristics to be strong deterrents towards implementing this design, and would prefer to see something more timeless.

Sorlie Style: The industrial look and complementing elements of the Sorlie Bridge are noted to be repetitive for Grand Forks and not necessary. Most respondents didn't note great support for this design.

CLASSIC ARCHWAY



#1 Votes	Average Ranking
39	2

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



#1 Votes	Average Ranking
34	1.9

WELCOMING WAVE



#1 Votes	Average Ranking
18	2.7

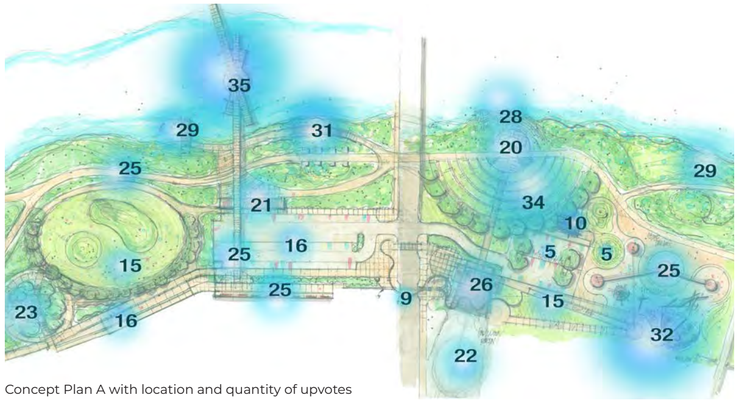
SORLIE STYLE



#1 Votes	Average Ranking
4	3

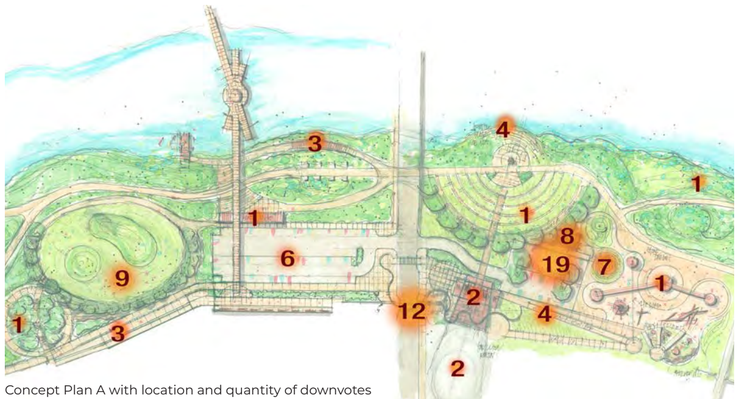
PUBLIC FEEDBACK - GREENWAY CONCEPT A

Concept A Upvotes (Liked Elements):
The Red River pedestrian bridge, adventure play, and amphitheater are up-voted with little opposition in Concept A. More obviously connecting Downtown Grand Forks and East Grand Forks to provide a day and night full of activity, without driving, and providing more space and entertainment for families with kids are significant benefits identified within this concept. Not only would kids benefit from a playground, adult workout equipment could be provided to enhance the usage of space. An amphitheater would be beneficial after the loss of other live music venues in Grand Forks.



Concept Plan A with location and quantity of upvotes

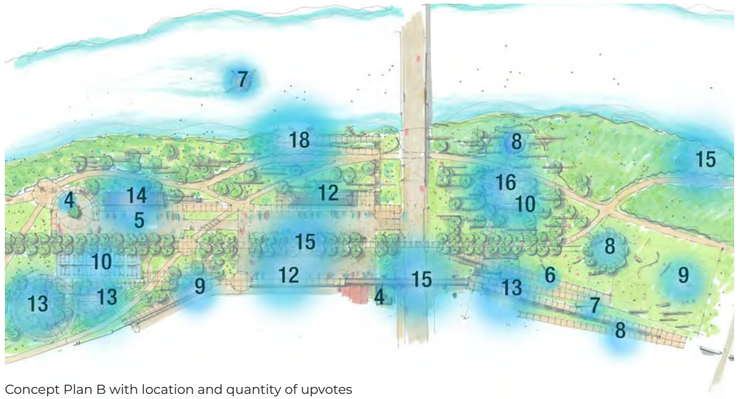
Concept A Downvotes (Disliked Elements):
Within Concept A, additional parking is down-voted, as it is not needed and would remove much-desired green space. An enhanced gateway and open lawn spaces are not viewed as a priority. Residents would prefer to see more activity and options for things to do; although if a pedestrian walkway over Demers Avenue is implemented, it may be beneficial to consider an enhanced gateway to address safety concerns regarding vehicular conflicts.



Concept Plan A with location and quantity of downvotes

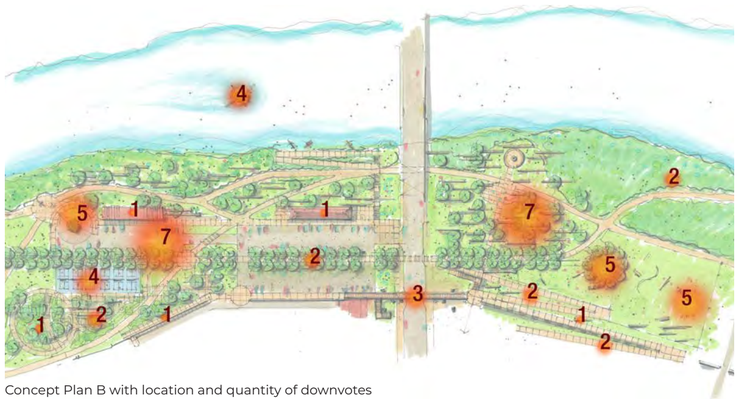
PUBLIC FEEDBACK - GREENWAY CONCEPT B

Concept B Upvotes (Liked Elements):
The gateway pedestrian bridge, amphitheater, and water's edge pier are up-voted ideas within concept B. Again, encouraging greater usage and safety of the space for bikers, pedestrians, and those interested in views of the river. It is specifically noted that the water's edge pier could be successful, similar to one available in Winnipeg, north of Grand Forks. Other support is noted for more naturalized areas along the Red River, pavilions and gathering spaces, and activity areas that can facilitate pickleball courts and other exercise opportunities.



Concept Plan B with location and quantity of upvotes

Concept B Downvotes (Disliked Elements):
Similar to Concept A, additional parking is down-voted for not being needed at this time. It would be preferred to move parking away from the river to restore the riverbank space and allow more accessibility and visibility of potential food truck space/areas for activation. Extensive seatwalls are down-voted due to concerns of possible topographic limitations. To allow more room for family and children-orientated spaces, a dog park does not feel necessary within this specific area.



Concept Plan B with location and quantity of downvotes



05

master plan

This Master Plan is a vision for the future of the Greenway and the Floodwall Gateway experience in Grand Forks. While the concepts have been developed through a robust planning process, they are intended to be malleable and offer flexibility for modifications, adjustments, and/or phased implementation over time.

MASTER PLAN - GATEWAY MONUMENTS

Responses from the online survey indicated some concerns about gateway improvements extending above Demers Avenue. Additionally, meetings with Grand Forks City staff led to the determination that the gateway improvements should be restricted to adjacent open space to ensure no potential conflicts with maintenance and long-term use of the floodwall structures.

With this updated guidance, additional research was conducted with concepts developed, shared with the steering committee, and validated with feedback already received from the public. Other elements that factored into these design updates include studies of Grand Forks and Red River history, recent streetscape improvements in downtown Grand Forks, a desire for more interactive features, and the opportunity to focus on story-telling with the resulting structures.

All images to the right were factored into the updated design for gateway monuments that focus on placemaking and propose the telling of a deeper story about the project site.

















MASTER PLAN - GATEWAY MONUMENTS

Additional considerations for gateway monument updates included an increased focus on interactive features and representation of history/stories within the public realm.

The images on this page are case study examples of story-telling and interactive opportunities in a variety of physical forms. From traditional/historic to contemporary and technology-infused, there are myriad opportunities to have static and/or programmable and ever-changing information on display for passersby to interact with.

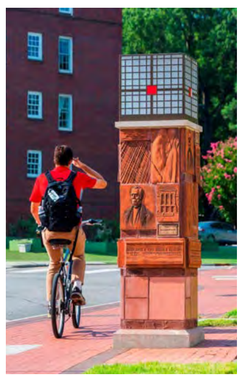
Lighting is also a key component of the final design concepts. Appropriate illumination helps to demarcate the gateway experience as one of importance. Additionally, Grand Forks' long hours of darkness through the winter months necessitate an increased respect for how appropriate lighting can improve a space.

















MASTER PLAN - GATEWAY MONUMENTS

GFK Gateway Monument

The history of the Greenway and the Red River are robust and deserve representation, honor, and celebration within the built environment. The GFK Gateway Monument, as shown by the images to the right, creates an opportunity to display imagery associated with the history of the site and contextual environment. This imagery could be displayed through the use of integrated digital LED panels. The integration of technology in this manner would allow for the imagery to be modified over time in order to showcase a variety of storylines. It is important to note that use of LED paneling along Demers Avenue will require review by North Dakota Department of Transportation officials. There are strict regulations around what digital signage can and cannot display along certain roadways, which should be understood fully before moving forward with this implementation.

In lieu of digital signage, the GFK Gateway Monument could be built to include static imagery that showcases key moments of history or graphics that are developed specifically for Grand Forks and the Greenway. This static solution is recommended to be created with perforated metal paneling and would benefit from internal illumination so the imagery is visible no matter the time of day. The simplicity of this material, which is anticipated to be steel, aluminum, or a similar product with great durability, would ensure avoidance of issues such as colors fading over the life of the monument.

The base of this monument is envisioned to be built with a concrete and/or masonry core atop a substantial underground footing. This core is intended to be wrapped in terra cotta panels created with custom molds that illustrate additional historical elements tied to the site and city. A variety of names, recalling historic items associated with the Red River, are shown in theses images. The material choice of terra cotta references the well-known clay harvesting and brick production past of the Red River Valley. The tactile nature of this material along with it's durability make it a valuable base for this monument. Along with the messaging and imagery that can be implemented within the custom terra cotta paneling, this concept also envisions space for a greenway map and wayfinding elements to assist passersby with identification of local assets and amenities.

The merging of these materials on this monument recall the importance of Grand Forks' history while also embracing the future with innovative use of materiality and technology. Integrated LED lighting will allow the included lettering to glow while also providing appropriate recognition of all design elements included on the monument.

While the images provided indicate a refined and thoughtful solution for this gateway feature, it is important to understand that final design and construction documentation is still required. This monument is proposed on the dry side of the levee in order to better protect any integrated technology, but the exact location will need to be confirmed based on a site utilities survey and coordination with local regulatory agencies. Plus, the final selection of imagery and historic elements represented on this monument must be confirmed locally by city staff and local residents.



MASTER PLAN - GATEWAY MONUMENTS



MASTER PLAN - GATEWAY MONUMENTS

"The Red" Gateway Monument
The imagery to the right indicates the style of gateway monument anticipated on the northeast side of the floodwall. This is considered the wet side of the floodwall and the design of this gateway element offers a slightly more resilient solution when considering how it could interact with a flood event after it's installed.

This monument feature is a bold representation of the area with a focus on placemaking by translating the nickname of the area, "THE RED," into a large scale, three-dimensional structure. The words, "THE RED" are intended to be constructed with stainless steel or aluminum, depending on the recommendation from a structural engineer, with a high performance coating and integration of durable polycarbonate surfaces to allow for internal illumination. The structure is meant to attract interaction from residents and visitors of all ages while demarcating this area as a special place, worth recognition. For this reason, it can be expected that people may lean on, or climb on this type of structure to take a unique photo, and that anticipated interaction should be planned for with the structural design of this system.

The rendered images provided to the right show two options for how the lettering can be represented within the public realm. One option (page 37) shows a simple stacked lettering scenario, while the other option (page 36) offers a more playful relationship of letters that could also entice more interaction by passersby. Other similar interplay between lettering can be investigated as this design concept is finalized, but ensuring legibility of



the lettering is key. If delivered appropriately, this monument could become one of the most frequently photographed elements of the Downtown and Greenway area, leading to attraction of more individuals to the area and influencing economic development.

With this monument being proposed on the wet side of the levee, it may be valuable to consider it as a movable structure or multiple movable structures that may be relocated during a flood event. The two images to the right show examples of how steel platforms can be used as strong bases for these systems and not deter from the value and intent of the system. No matter if it's a permanent or movable installation, a paved, inhabitable surface should be created for this monument to feel connected to the site. This will help with long-term maintenance and recognition of this monument's importance.





MASTER PLAN - GATEWAY MONUMENTS



MASTER PLAN - GREENWAY

The diverse range of feedback received from stakeholders, the project steering committee, and the general public was synthesized and used to generate the final Greenway Master Plan as shown here. There are many existing components within the Greenway that are appreciated, including the open greenspace, views of the Red River, connectivity to downtown, and programming opportunities. More pragmatically, the importance of the floodwall cannot be understated. However, making adjustments to allow the floodwall system to be less of a barrier between downtown and the Greenway is desired. Perhaps most prominently, there is a demand for the space to become more attractive and user-friendly for a multi-generational audience. Residents want to be sure the Greenway remains a destination for everyone, allowing for interaction between a diverse range of people.

In describing the proposed improvements represented within the Greenway Master Plan graphics, it is clearest to compartmentalize them into categories as described by the headings listed below.

Removals: A number of items on site have aged to a point that they need updated or removed completely. A few existing components of the Floodwall Gateway are part of this group. This report recommends deconstructing the four stone columns at the gateway that don't serve a structural purpose for the floodwall system. Stone from these columns may be salvaged for current and future repair of the columns that are integrated within the wall. Similarly, the curving metal fence panels and associated "Grand Forks" demarcation may be removed at this time to allow a reinvigorated focus on the newly proposed monument features. With these removals, a simplified, yet structured planting arrangement can be implemented along the floodwall at highly visible areas, such as along the pedestrian walkway. Simplified planting and removal of acute angles in the landscape from the curvilinear fence elements will reduce current maintenance issues for this area. The bronze plaques that exist on columns to be removed should be relocated on columns or portions of wall that will remain. Similarly, the two archways that are integrated in the Gateway and note "Welcome" and "Greenway" when viewed from the west may be removed, as they are not structurally significant for the floodwall system and are in noticeable disrepair. Other anticipated removals include a large amount of aged or redundant pavement, existing trees that are in poor health and any other components that are already beyond their expected lifespan.

Parking: While there is plenty of parking within the Greenway today, its location and orientation doesn't offer great access for connectivity and expansion of existing downtown events, such as the Downtown Farmers Market, currently hosted in Town Square. For this reason, parking is reconfigured in this plan to provide an organized and adaptable parking lot space, near the flood wall, north of Demers Avenue. This upper reconfigured parking can shift use to become a location for events while maintaining a strong pedestrian-accessible connection to downtown and throughout the parking areas. The lower riverfront parking lot is reduced in size and a drop-off circle is added at its northwestern edge to allow for ease of vehicular circulation and vehicular access near the river. If desired, the lower (northern-most) parking lot can be closed for an event while the upper lot allows for proper vehicular circulation with no dead-end scenario. Potential future parking is indicated southeast of Demers Avenue, but the initial goal is to only have parking on the north side of Demers until a larger demand is confirmed.



Existing Conditions, Rotary Park pavement settling



Existing Conditions, Floodwall Gateway at Demers


Project Precedent: Example Farmers Market

MASTER PLAN - GREENWAY

Connectivity: A series of trails and sidewalks are shown to provide improved access to/from downtown as well as ease of connections to a variety of proposed destinations within the Greenway. This improved connectivity also facilitates strong connections for shared parking between the Greenway and Downtown, with the intent to allow these environments to feel more cohesive. These walkable and bikable routes also connect with a proposed Boardwalk/Pier just northwest of the Sorlie Bridge. The intent of this pier and the Stormwater Treatment Terraces (plan keynote 14) is to foster a stronger connection with and understanding of the Red River. Also fostering this connection to the river and, more significantly, to East Grand Forks is one of the most grand opportunities of the Greenway Master Plan; a pedestrian bridge across the Red River. This pedestrian bridge is envisioned to reach from the North Dakota levee to the Minnesota levee, using the historic Swing Bridge foundation within the Red River as one of its support structures. The pedestrian bridge is proposed to be approximately 15-feet wide and has a total length of about 1200-feet. Assuming the Swing Bridge foundation can help in supporting the center of the pedestrian bridge, the largest span of a portion of the bridge would be approximately 160-feet. Establishing such a pedestrian bridge would be a significant multi-year effort with many jurisdictional reviews and important collaboration between a variety of partners, but the final result could become not only an important piece of infrastructure, but a destination for the region.

Entertainment: Events and gatherings are key to creating thriving destinations. The adaptability of the reconfigured parking areas allows for better event planning within the Greenway. Similarly, adaptation of Town Square, as originally proposed within the Grand Forks Downtown Action Plan in 2019, offers the opportunity to better integrate the Greenway with the Downtown and vice versa. One modification that this Master Plan shows is shifting the proposed Performance Pavilion (plan keynote 26) further northeast, allowing it to engage directly with the levee and flood protection system. The idea represented here is that the Performance Pavilion would be a covered, open-air structure and that the earthen levee would be removed in this location to allow for views from the Paddlewheel Sculpture in Town Square, to the Flood Obelisk along the Red River. This opening would have the ability to be closed off by a removable flood wall/gate system that is integrated into the Performance Pavilion in order to ensure the continuity of the overall flood protection system. The focus on penetrating the levee in this way is in response to a large amount of comments about the significant barrier created between the Greenway and Downtown by the current levee system. This is especially noticeable when comparing Grand Forks' flood protection system to the system in East Grand Forks, which allows much more visual permeability from city to river. Other structures on site that could have an entertainment focus include an optional boathouse/warming house near the northern-most parking area as well as a pavilion/shelter closer to the Sorlie Bridge. It is anticipated that these structures could be reserved for special events or programmed by City of volunteer staff throughout the year. Lastly, an amphitheater has been discussed on site, taking advantage of the natural topography of the site just southwest of the Flood Obelisk. It's important to note that this amphitheater is intended to be casual and more natural in appearance. Some structured seating could be included, but the majority of this space should simply be open lawn area, allowing for use by a variety of groups during


Historic Swing Bridge Foundation in Red River


Town Square Concept, 2019 Downtown Action Plan


Project Precedent: Sloped Lawn/Amphitheater

MASTER PLAN - GREENWAY

a typical week. There is concern within Grand Forks' residents and leaders about capacity of entities willing to orchestrate events, and between plans for Town Square and other improvements within the community, maintaining a more natural green space in this area, with the potential to be used rarely for larger events seems to be appropriate.

Exercise: As with any park space, offering opportunities for people to exercise is key. Common forms of exercise that occurs within the Greenway today includes using trails to walk, bike, run, cross-country ski, snow-shoe, etc. Similarly, open space within the Greenway is used by many for a wide variety of activities as well, from kicking a soccer ball around, to Live Action Role Playing (LARPing), or other creative pursuits. This Master Plan recommends keeping the spaces and amenities that support these activities and improving in a few areas as well. Near the 2nd Avenue Greenway access point, this plan proposes an activity zone offering bocce ball courts, pickleball courts, and outdoor fitness equipment, focused on body-weight exercises. This proposed location is important because of its proximity to downtown, parking, and the existing trail network within the Greenway. The activity zone is likely to attract an older demographic and having ease of access to encourage participation from a variety of ability/comfort levels is important.

Play: Similar to exercise, play can mean different things to different people. However, the absence of a really child-friendly play destination, besides the small playground within Town Square, was an element routinely brought up by the public. Included within the Master Plan is an Adventure Playscape. This play focused area is intended to take advantage of unique site characteristics to create a play environment for people of all ages and abilities. The existing labyrinth is maintained and a series of elevated walkways are a proposed to transition users from the Greenway to the top of the levee while passing over and through stone piers, symbolic of the Swing Bridge Pier within the Red River. From atop the levee, embankment slides and stairs offer secondary routes back to the lower Greenway topography and engage with other unique play elements. Playful molding of topography and landforms around this playscape is intended to reference a river's meander, creation of oxbow lakes and vernal pools, all relating back to the ecosystem of the region. Similar to the stormwater education opportunities noted within the Connectivity descriptions, this playscape has the opportunity to foster science-based learning through play, creating strong connections between Grand Forks youth and the environment.

Respect: With a Master Plan for a space as large as this portion of the Greenway, it is important to understand and honor the characteristics of the site that already make it a great place to recreate and relax. Riverbank restoration, maintenance of areas that feel wild, and respecting the history of this site is key to its success in the future. Architectural character and style represented by the Sorlie Bridge, downtown buildings, the Swing Bridge Pier, and other important elements is anticipated to be complemented, not replicated, with the improvements within the Greenway. The elements of this plan are intended to work together to offer an outcome that is flexible and prepares Grand Forks for the future while honoring the needs and desires of those who call Grand Forks home.



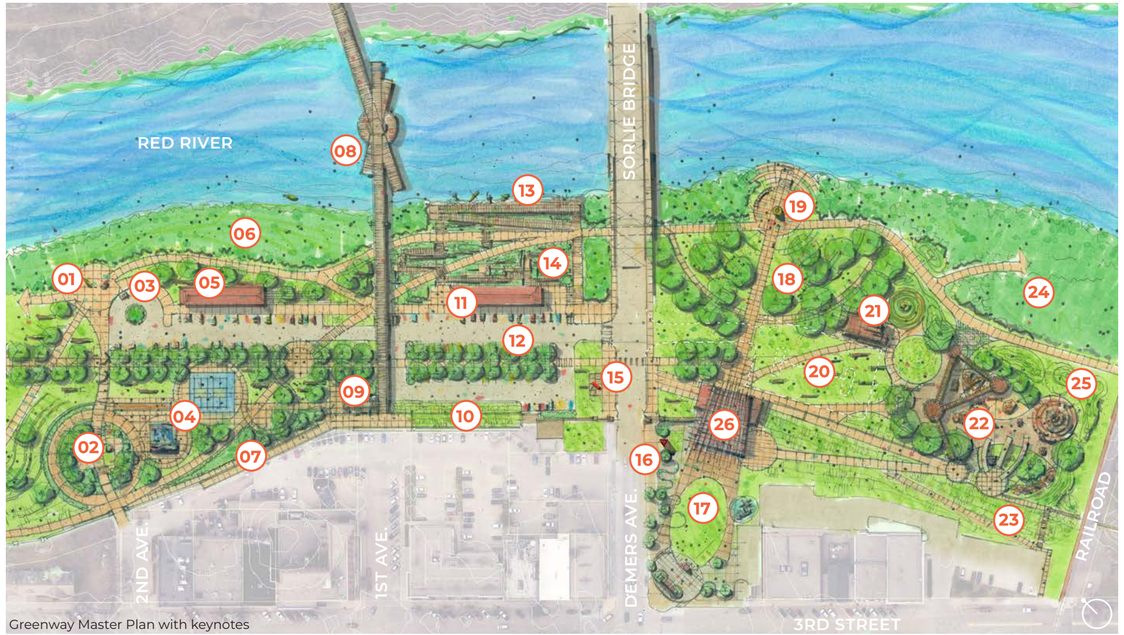
Project Precedent: Outdoor Fitness Equipment



Project Precedent: Adventure Playground



Flood Obelisk



Greenway Master Plan with keynotes

LEGEND

1. SMALL PLAZA SPACE
2. ENTRY GARDEN
3. DROP-OFF LANE
4. BOCCE, FITNESS, PICKLEBALL COURTS
5. WARMING/BOAT HOUSE
6. RIVERBANK RESTORATION
7. ADA ACCESS TO TOP OF LEVEE
8. PEDESTRIAN SWING-BRIDGE + ART
9. STAIRS TO PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
10. LEVEE/FLOODWALL
11. PAVILION/SHELTER
12. RECONFIGURED PARKING
13. BOARDWALK/PIER
14. STORMWATER TREATMENT TERRACES
15. "THE RED" GATEWAY MONUMENT
16. GFK GATEWAY MONUMENT
17. UPDATED TOWN SQUARE
18. SLOPED LAWN/AMPHITHEATER
19. OBELISK TERRACE/RIVER ACCESS
20. POTENTIAL FUTURE PARKING
21. PARK SHELTER
22. ADVENTURE PLAYSCAPE
23. ADA ACCESS TO TOP OF LEVEE
24. STREAMBANK/WILD RESTORATION
25. PLAY LANDFORMS + VERNAL POOLS
26. PERFORMANCE PAVILION W/ RESTROOMS & RETRACTABLE FLOODWALL



Greenway Master Plan Rendering



06

conclusion

Through robust planning, engagement, and conceptual design, the vision and program for the future of the Grand Forks Gateway and Greenway experience has been established. Now, it is time to consider phasing and long-term goals for implementation through a process that meets the needs of Grand Forks while considering the future economic development and stability within the city, state, and region.

CONCLUSION

As noted previously within this report, the implementation of the Greenway Master Plan is intended to be malleable and responsive to the realities, needs, and desires of Grand Forks residents. One easy-to-understand reality is that this process cannot be completed overnight. Rather, there should be thoughtful planning and coordination around which improvements should occur quickly and which will need to be implemented through a longer-term phased approach. Another factor that must be understood is that this master plan establishes a vision for the project area but does not include detailed design, needed for construction. The Master Plan should be used to facilitate additional engagement with engineers, landscape architects, architects, and other design professionals to create construction documentation to be used to engage with qualified contractors to complete the work. A site topographic survey will also need to be completed before the final design work can begin and would be an easy element for the City to facilitate as soon as funding is available.

PHASING

There are a plethora of unique phasing strategies that may be considered in coordinating the implementation of this plan. Below are phasing opportunities for consideration by teams leading the process. While the order of these phases make sense today, the City of Grand Forks has the freedom to adjust implementation plans while still aligning with the intent of this process.

Phase 01: Gateway Monuments

This master planning process was originated with a focus on the Gateway experience at the juncture of Demers Avenue and the Red River Greenway with the understanding that improvements need to be made in the short term to address ongoing maintenance and aesthetic concerns. Therefore, the gateway improvements should be considered as Phase One of this implementation process. The demolition of site elements and limited site disturbance, as well as focused site impact of the proposed gateway monuments allow one or both gateway elements to be implemented relatively soon, assuming funding is available for final design and construction.

Phase 02: Town Square

The 2019 Grand Forks Downtown Action Plan listed reconstruction of Town Square as a *Tier One Priority.* For this reason, the vision for Town Square has been carried through to this master plan with minor adjustments proposed. With past and present support for significant improvements to Town Square, plus its close proximity to planned gateway improvements, it appears to be a valuable candidate for phase two of implementation. The convergence of the existing levee and proposed Performance Pavilion will require significant design review by public agencies including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). During this coordination, it will be important to consider the long-term impact of the Greenway Master Plan rather than treating each phase as an individual project. The USACE's Section 408 Program will need to be utilized to coordinate all construction plans within the Greenway. City of Grand Forks Engineering Staff has experience with this program and will need to lead coordination with USACE. Preliminary review with city engineering staff helped to guide this plan and keep USACE requirements in mind.

Phase 03: Parking Reconfiguration

Reconfiguring parking layouts will help to open up Greenway space for other activity spaces including outdoor fitness, pickleball, and bocce ball courts. Similarly, with parking moving closer to Demers, this improve parking experience could become a new home for the Downtown Farmers Market. For this reason, this phase of work may could potentially jump to phase 02, but there are other locations within downtown that could temporarily host Town Square events during its reconstruction.

Phase 04: Flexible per Funding

Exact sequencing of the remaining project implementation is not overly prescribed. Opportunities for project funding should be followed closely and allowed to influence the extents and timing of phased construction. Executing the work in fewer phases can help reduce costs for contractor mobilization and limit the inflation of project costs, but availability of funding is the reality. With this in mind, additional project characteristics that could impact phasing are provided below.

Adventure Playscape

This space has the potential to create a regional draw for Grand Forks that doesn't exist today. Plus, it has the potential to entice more families to live in downtown. Integration of this play area with the levee and connectivity with the Performance Pavilion, especially with public restrooms in mind, encourages this phase of work to be completed in conjunction with Phase 02 if possible.

Sloped Lawn/Amphitheater

The passive nature of this space allows it to be implemented at any time. With construction efforts being somewhat minimal for this work, it will be best to include this work with another portion of the project rather than a stand-alone phase. Paired with this work should be the new river access and improved Obelisk Terrace.

Pedestrian Swing-Bridge & Art

Available funding is the deciding factor on this portion of the project. Without significant outside funding through grants and/or donations, the pedestrian bridge and integrated public art will not be feasible. If this becomes a later phase of work, prior construction should prepare appropriately and leave space for this structure to be erected without the need for significant portions of new work to be removed.

Bocce, Fitness and Pickleball Courts

Once parking is lower level parking lot is reduced and reconfigured, these elements can take there place. With disturbance of the site during parking reconfiguration, it would be most efficient to complete this work within the same phase.

Riverbank Restoration

With tree removals anticipated along the banks of the Red River, any site disturbance should be seen as an opportunity to provide enhanced native vegetation to improve water quality and erosion control.

Warming/Boat House and Shelters

These structures can be prepared for during early phases of construction, with their erection occurring later if needed. Adjacent site improvements will need to be planned with each independently. The Shelter adjacent to the Stormwater Treatment Terraces should be built at the same time as the Terraces, as they are intended to be interconnected.

Boardwalk/Pier

This structure can happen as part of the very first phase or the very last phase. Its location works with existing infrastructure, but will benefit from the Stormwater Treatment Terraces as well. The importance of this structure providing access to the Red River can be valuable story for securing project funding.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

With this size of project, a fundraising campaign will undoubtedly be required. The City should look to local leaders and organizations to gain support and create a committee of project champions that can help move this project forward. As noted in the Downtown Action Plan, this campaign should be founded in the spirit of what is good for downtown is good for everyone - particularly for recruiting and retaining people in Grand Forks.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

The Greenway and Downtown are well maintained points of pride for Grand Forks. As investment continues in these areas, additional maintenance will be required to continue the standard of care that has come to be expected. Planning ahead for this maintenance is an important part of this process and the establishment of future Capital Improvement Plans. Establishing an endowment and tying it directly to the initial fundraising campaign can alleviate financial burden in the future while allowing donors to rest assured their investments will be taken care of.

OPINION OF PROBABLE COST (OPC)

This cost opinion information is intended for budget planning efforts only and must be updated over time. Anticipated project design and engineering fees are included in the cost opinion. Annual operation and maintenance costs associated with these parks are not included in the cost opinions. More detailed cost opinions will be developed when final design is completed on individual project phases and as funding becomes available. Since these costs have been generated from a Master Plan document, a contingency is included to help prepare for unknowns that will undoubtedly be discovered during future design and construction phases.

OPC TABLE

Site Preparation & Removals	$438,700
GFK Gateway Monument	$400,000
"THE RED" Gateway Monument	$30,000
Town Square	$4,700,000
Parking Reconfiguration	$875,000
Adventure Playscape	$1,500,000
Sloped Lawn/Amphitheater	$170,000
Pedestrian Bridge & Art	$9,000,000
Bocce, Fitness, Pickleball Courts	$215,000
Riverbank Restoration	$270,000
Warming/Boat House & Shelters	$2,070,000
Boardwalk/Pier & Terraces	$962,000
Subtotal Construction Cost	**$20,630,700**
General Cond./Mobilization: 8%	$1,650,500
Design Contingency: 15%	$3,094,700
Survey, Design, Engineering: 12%	$3,045,100
Total Project Cost	**$28,421,000**


RDg...
PLANNING ● DESIGN

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program (ORLP)

Established by Congress in 2014 and administered through the National Park Service, the **Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program** is funded through the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program. ORLP is a nationally competitive grant program that delivers funding to urban areas – jurisdictions of at least 30,000 people – with priority given to projects located in economically disadvantaged areas and lacking in outdoor recreation opportunities. These awards help underserved communities address outdoor recreation deficits by supporting projects in cities and densely populated urbanized areas that create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors.

