Fargo -
The population of Fargo is near 100,000 however when combined with closely adjacent cities the population is closer to 200,000 (City Data, 2010)

The projected growth of Fargo by 2030 is 128,000.

The Site -
The site is between Interstate 29 and Broadway. This segment is almost 3 miles long. Main Avenue was chosen for this thesis because of its lack of aesthetic character and walkability but also for the potential the site can serve for the Fargo-Moorhead communities.
“Walking provides a range of benefits including mobility, consumer cost savings, fitness and health and social interaction.”
- Todd Alander Litman

Benefits of Walkability in a neighborhood and it’s surroundings
- Increases in walkability are connected to increases in community and civic interaction
- Increases in the perception of safety
- Increases in sales per square foot in surrounding businesses
- Increases in surrounding property values (Houses with above average of walkability typically increase the value of a house between 4,000 and 34,000 dollars)
- Provides a safe and affordable travel for those with or without cars
- Improves accessibility for other adults and persons who are challenged

Walkability Interventions
Currently there are very few pedestrians walking on Main Avenue even though it is connected to Broadway which is a popular pedestrian thoroughfare. Establishing walkability ratios or (perception of these ratios) will help a pedestrians feel more secure. The walkability ratio can be described as the enclosure a person feels in relation to building height, as shown right.
Main Avenue, Fargo:
Walkable amenities

Certain amenities can increase walkability and the desire to walk. They include a grocery store, coffee shop, movie theater, bookstore, park, drug store, clothing store, restaurants, bar, school, library, fitness and hardware stores.

Currently the focus area on Main Avenue has
- 4 clothing stores
- 5 restaurants
- 2 fitness centers
- 3 grocery stores
- 4 hardware stores
There are very few pedestrians observed walking along Main Avenue. This survey was made to show the ease of walkability along Main Avenue. The areas that are circled illustrate the areas where the sidewalk is the narrowest and hardest to navigate. In some areas the sidewalk is only three feet wide and is interrupted by a light pole.

- Major improvements to sidewalk
- Difficult to walk
- Major improvements needed
- Somewhat difficult to walk
- Satisfactory sidewalk space
- May need some improvements
- Minimal improvements needed
- Areas where sidewalk is 2.5 feet or narrower
All the buildings were surveyed on Main Avenue and were rated based on their aesthetics. The ranking was based upon appearance, existing condition, and architectural interest. By improving the aesthetics of the buildings, walkability can be improved.
Currently the western portion of the site is heavily industrial. These areas are less desirable for pedestrians since they have a tendency to lack walkable amenities in these areas. The eastern portion consists more of mixed use and commercial which have the potential to attract more pedestrians.
Main Avenue, Fargo:

Project Goals

1. Provide infrastructure to allow for amenities and businesses to relocate to Main Avenue
   - Infill buildings to create more opportunities for economic growth and revenue retention
   - “If you build it they will come” mentality. When the West Acres Mall open in 1972 about 70% of retail left the downtown. When the downtown underwent its revitalization project, most of the business returned.

2. Provide a public realm on Main Avenue that increases pedestrian interest
   - Using site furniture that is inviting to pedestrians
   - Create store fronts in areas that are predicted to have heavy pedestrian traffic to be more glazed
   - Utilize extra sidewalk space for dining and benches

3. Increase the safety of pedestrians
   - Push parking lots off of Main Avenue to behind businesses to decrease the amount of pedestrian / vehicular impact nodes
   - Ensure a buffer or barrier zone between pedestrians and vehicular traffic

4. Support the neighborhood vitality
   - Encourage neighborhood connections to Main Avenue
   - Provide amenities within walking distance from residential zones
   - Houses that are linked to a walkable network see an increase in housing properties
   - Incorporate characteristics from neighboring communities to ensure it’s correspondence with surrounding context
Main Avenue, Fargo:
Overall Master Plan

Unshaded buildings are existing
Shaded buildings are existing

- Gateway District Focus area
- Madison District Focus area
- Downtown West Focus area

- Gateway District
- Madison District
- Downtown West
- Greenspace
Currently the Gateway District lacks the “hometown” feeling Fargo prides itself in. It has become heavily focused on vehicular traffic and has left little planning for pedestrians and cyclists.

In history, Main Avenue was the most prized street in Fargo, ND because it was the gateway to the city. A majority of the warehouses on Main Avenue have been located here for an extended period of time. Therefore displacing them would create aesthetic problems elsewhere. So for this district, focus is given to creating a better entry for the city and pedestrian and bicyclist circulation.
Gateway District: Creating an entrance to the city

The entrance to Fargo on Main Avenue is plagued with wide streets, concrete and little landscaping. The overwhelming amount of hardscape portrays an unwelcoming, dirty and industrial part of town.
Gateway District:
Creating an entrance to the city

This proposed design keeps a majority of existing buildings however, requires them to adhere to the set codes. The naturalistic paths bring people safely from the intersection to the business front.
Gateway District:

Creating an entrance to the city

This portion of the site has an unproportional amount of parking lots to greenspace. This unequal proportion combined with the massive size of the buildings especially the Nash Finch Warehouse, creates an environment that is not pedestrian friendly.
Gateway District:
Creating an entrance to the city

Through the use of berms, landscaping, boulevard plantings, and naturalistic pathways the rigidity of the site is softened. Trees alongside the road will help with traffic calming as well as enhance aesthetics. All parking is moved to the back while still maintaining all parking needs. This creates a more inviting public space.
Gateway District:
Creating an entrance to the city

Before

Gateway District:
Creating an entrance to the city

After

Building path greenspace path berm path & barrier two lane traffic median turn lane two lane traffic barrier path berm path turf building

Parking lot
TNT Fitness
Grass boulevard
Narrow sidewalk

Barrier boulevard
Wider sidewalk
Outdoor gymnastics
TNT Fitness

Before

After
Gateway District:
Creating an entrance to the city

Gateway District Code:

1. Pedestrian guidelines
   - Create a connection from 25th Street bike path to Main Avenue’s pedestrian interstate overpass
   - Bring pedestrians to businesses, while still creating a direct path

2. Landscape guidelines
   - Create a grand entrance to the city with tall canopy trees which also slow traffic
   - Plantings will consist of plants that utilize small qualities of water such as aspen, ornamental crabapple, euonymus, lilac, fescues grass, and ribbon grass

3. Building guidelines
   - All buildings need to have a brick facade, any buildings not currently having a brick facade facing the street will be required to implement a street facing brick facade

4. Street and parking guidelines
   - All parking lots are moved from the front and side of businesses to the rear
   - For every 1,000 square feet of retail space two parking spaces will be provided within 1/4 of a mile of destination
Gateway District:
Creating an entrance to the city

Building Standards
- Maximum 22’ feet (2 story)
- Preferred street facing materials are brick, stone, cast stone, and stucco.
- Minimum of 50% of surface window must be glazed. Door glazing is considered in fulfilling this standard.
- Material selection must consider impacts on surrounding building

Architecture Standards
- Awnings are permitted above commercial uses and have headroom of 6.5 feet.
- Marquee signs, blade signs, and wall signs are permitted. Signs are suggested to match the architectural style of the building.

Landscaping Standards
1. A consistent design pattern for sidewalk through district
2. Benches and seating areas are encouraged
3. Landscaping should contribute to the physical definition of public and private spaces
4. Street exposed parking lots must be screened with planting
5. To soften surface parking, 10% of surface parking shall accommodate landscaping and shade trees
6. Street lights should be located in the tree box zone
7. Street lights should look like example to give light on pedestrian pathway and roadway
8. Tree grates should be used when pedestrian traffic is anticipated
Madison District:  
Connecting to Jefferson West Park and southern residential

The Madison District is located in the Madison - Unicorn Park neighborhood. This portion of the site has a high concentration of minorities and low income housing. Currently this portion of the site has the highest amount of vacant buildings and very low aesthetics. Currently there is a very weak connection from Main Avenue to Jefferson West Park, which is just to the south of the site.

This district is ideal for urban infill and a Jefferson West Park connection. This connection and infill will provide space for basic amenities that the district is currently lacking while increasing the district’s economy.
Madison District:
Connecting to Jefferson West Park and southern residential

A majority of the massive parking lots in this area are under utilized and have potential to serve another purpose. The sidewalks are often times too narrow to navigate and in some places share the three foot width with a street light. Currently the Jefferson West Park connection is ten feet wide and marked by a planter and pine trees. It is very easy for pedestrian and vehicular traffic to pass by without even knowing it existed.
Madison District:
Connecting to Jefferson West Park and southern residential

By limiting access to back parking lots to block corners the amount of pedestrian/vehicular impact points are significantly reduced. The incorporation of multi-use (commercial/office, commercial/residential) offer space for amenities as well as offering residential living space. The Jefferson West connection is widened and strengthened by both active and passive spaces.
Madison District:
Connecting to Jefferson West Park and southern residential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Plaza and sidewalk</th>
<th>Two lane traffic</th>
<th>median &amp; turn lane</th>
<th>Two lane traffic</th>
<th>Sidewalk</th>
<th>Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Before

Narrow sidewalk
No barrier

After

Wide sidewalk
Recommended area for seating
Madison District lamp post
Barrier
Madison District:  
Connecting to Jefferson West Park and southern residential

Madison District Code:

1. Pedestrian guidelines
   - Create an environment that increases safety for pedestrians by limiting the amount of pedestrian and automobile impact points
   - Strengthen connection from Main Avenue to Jefferson West Park and southern apartments

2. Landscape guidelines
   - Establish parks and greenspaces with active and passive spaces
   - Plantings will consists of plants that utilize small qualities of water such as aspen, ornamental crabapple, euonymus, lilac, fescues grass, and ribbon grass
   - Landscaping should contribute to the definition of public and private spaces

3. Building guidelines
   - All buildings need to have a brick facade, any buildings not currently having a brick facade facing the street will be required to implement a street facing brick facade
   - No building to exceed three stories

4. Street and parking guidelines
   - All parking lots are moved from the front and side of businesses to the rear
   - For every 1,000 square feet of retail space two parking spaces will be provided within 1/4 of a mile
Madison District:
Connecting to Jefferson West Park and southern residential

**Building Standards**
- Maximum 34’ feet (3 story)
- Preferred street facing materials are brick, stone, cast stone, and stucco.
- Minimum of 60% of surface window must be glazed. Door glazing is considered in fulfilling this standard.
- Material selection must consider impacts on surrounding building
- Build to line - 14’ (allows for 5’ tree box zone, 13’ sidewalk and seating area and 1’ shy zone)

**Architecture Standards**
- Awnings are permitted above commercial uses must have headroom of 6.5 feet.
- Marquee signs, blade signs, and wall signs are permitted. Signs are suggested to match the architectural style of the building.

**Landscaping Standards**
1. A consistent design pattern for sidewalk through district
2. Benches and seating areas are encouraged
3. Landscaping should contribute to the physical definition of public and private spaces
4. To soften surface parking, 10% of surface parking shall accommodate landscaping and shade trees
5. Plazas to be flush with sidewalk space
6. Street lights should be located in the tree box zone
7. Street lights should look like example
8. Tree grates should be used when pedestrian traffic is anticipated
Downtown West: Connecting to Fargo’s Downtown

Downtown West currently has more mixed use and commercial buildings than any other districts. This district currently has buildings that with slight renovation could be architecturally be a destination. This district serves as a continuation of the downtown atmosphere.
Downtown West:
Connecting to Fargo’s Downtown

Since this area has a lot of front facing parking lots, it creates a lot of impact points between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The sidewalks on the north side are narrow, in some instances three feet between the building and the 35 mph traffic.
Downtown West:
Connecting to Fargo’s Downtown

Downtown West is an extension of Fargo’s downtown atmosphere. This gives the opportunities for businesses such as boutiques, bars and restaurants to expand onto Main Avenue. Residential will be incorporated in the upper level of mixed use buildings.

Diagram:
- Greenspace
- Lamp post
- Boulevard tree
- Designated walkway
- Vegetated median
- Sculpture garden
- Hedge
- Raised turf
- Topiary
- Parking lot

After
Downtown West:
Connecting to Fargo’s Downtown

Before

After

- Parking lot
- Narrow sidewalk
- Main Avenue

- Wide sidewalk
- Boulevard tree
- Downtown West lamp post
- Tree grate
- Barrier
Downtown West:
Connecting to Fargo’s Downtown

Downtown West:

1. **Pedestrian guidelines**
   - Create an environment that increases safety for pedestrians by limiting the amount of pedestrian and automobile impact points
   - Extend Fargo’s downtown character onto Main Avenue
   - Space provided for pedestrian amenities

2. **Landscape guidelines**
   - Utilize locations with little service for greenspaces
   - Plantings will consist of plants that utilize small qualities of water such as aspen, ornamental crabapple, euonymus, lilac, fescues grass, and ribbon grass
   - Landscaping should contribute to the definition of public and private spaces

3. **Building guidelines**
   - Infill a variety of mixed use buildings
   - Groundfloor will consist primarily of window space

4. **Street and parking guidelines**
   - All parking lots are moved from the front and side of businesses to the rear
   - For every 1,000 square feet of retail space two parking spaces will be provided within 1/4 of a mile
Downtown West: Connecting to Fargo’s Downtown

Building Standards
- Maximum 45’ feet (4 story)
- Preferred street facing materials are brick, stone, cast stone, and stucco.
- Minimum of 70% of surface window must be glazed. Door glazing is considered in fulfilling this standard.
- Material selection must consider impacts on surrounding building
- Build to line - 14’ (allows for 5’ tree box zone, 13’ sidewalk and seating area and 1’ shy zone)
- Maximum height of window sills should be 24” from the ground surface

Architecture Standards
- Awnings are permitted above commercial uses must have headroom of 6.5 feet.
- Marquee signs, blade signs, and wall signs are permitted. Signs are suggested to match the architectural style of the building.
- Vertical signs are preferred for walkability enhancement
Landscaping Standards

1. A consistent design pattern for sidewalk through district
2. Benches and seating areas are encouraged
3. Landscaping should contribute to the physical definition of public and private spaces
4. To soften surface parking, 10% of surface parking shall accommodate landscaping and shade trees
5. Canopy trees planted in center median where ever turn lane is not present
6. Entrance to plazas to be flush with sidewalk space
7. Street lights should be located in the tree box zone
8. Street lights should have decorative lamp post with hanging planters
9. Tree grates should be used when pedestrian traffic is anticipated
10. Designated pedestrians crossings should be clearly indicated
My first experience driving into Fargo was on Main Avenue. It’s lack of character, empty feeling and overwhelming amount of concrete made me second guess my decision to come to NDSU. However, as soon as our car turned onto Broadway, my apprehensions were immediately relieved.

This project strives to incorporate Fargo’s prized hometown feeling onto Main Avenue. This giving life to the once thriving neighborhoods and community.