FORMING NEIGHBORHOOD
CREATING COMMUNITY IDENTITY THROUGH CONNECTIVITY, PLACEMAKING, AND FUNCTIONALITY FOR THE URBAN PLAINS DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHWEST FARGO.

THESIS DEFINITION
FARGO'S DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The city of Fargo, ND has been growing steadily in recent years. This has brought up issues of urban sprawl and lack of intentional design because developers are merely just trying to keep up with the demand. It is becoming a popular desire within neighborhoods and cities to create walkable and dense development. Many cities have been increasing density and connecting different uses to follow along with this desire. This is a trend across the country to create walkable neighborhoods, which is known as a Town Center style of suburban development. This style doesn’t attempt to create the public nature and density of downtown throughout entire cities, nor does it solely form the privacy of suburbs, but rather a destination that brings residents and visitors to gather and how community.

TRANSECT SYSTEM

My design intent is to create a mixed-use community that is intentional, seeing the success in how streets, open spaces, and building forms can work together within the Urban Plains neighborhood and its surrounding community.

DEVELOPMENT CODE

Traditional development codes use a system called Euclidean zoning. 'Euclidean zoning, a zone or community is divided into zones in which specific uses of land are permitted, and the regulations for the buildings and property are based on the uses within each zone.' Another development code concept is called Form-Based Code. Form-Based Code is a tool that encourages density and walkable design for developments, and is an evolution to the problems of urban and suburban sprawl.

THESIS RESEARCH:

My research consists of comparative analysis of five town centers in America, that from my observations, have been successful in the eyes of the public. One concept to urban design is known as "The Power of 10." According to the Project for Public Spaces website, "The Power of 10" shows how paying attention to the human experience when building a city's destinations and districts can have immediate and widespread impacts...for generating resilience and innovation." The question to ask for a subject area is, "What reasons does one have to be there?" To apply this principle, I have listed elements each town center has regarding its streets, open spaces, buildings and other elements.

CONNECTIVITY

FUNCTION

PLACEMAKING

TOTAL

22 20 17 18 17 13

Urban Plains falls short in comparison to the other town centers when it comes to "reasons to be there." But this can directly point to why we have to bring this neighborhood into a thriving town center for Fargo, ND. Putting these elements together can develop a picture to how they can interact together, creating unique experiences - depending on how it is put together.

MOVING FORWARD

This research and site analysis can be utilized by developing a transit system of how the streetscapes, open space, and building forms can work together within the Urban Plains neighborhood and its surrounding community.
After reviewing the existing site conditions, I found that much of the existing infrastructure lacks an interaction between the buildings and the streetscapes. Although the Urban Plains neighborhood provides frequent pedestrian connections, there is little engagement between the pedestrian and buildings. Having buildings front the street creates an interest of some sort of physical interaction such as viewing the facade, or actually entering the building. This primarily drove the forms of the new buildings to front the street - allowing for parking needs in the rear - and proposing building additions to some of the existing buildings in order to enhance the interactions and potential connections between the street and building levels.
This area was chosen to be further developed because of the amount of typologies it covers within the transect system. This stretch of Urban Plains covers pieces of all of the typologies except for the Natural Open space and the Community Park. One can take the elements presented here, and fit them in throughout the rest of the neighborhood where applicable according to the master plan.

These single family homes front the greenway, having their front porch set back from the greenway ROW (Right of Way). The Greenway has a 6’ path through the center, and 12’ of landscaped area on each side. This public amenity will be owned and maintained by Urban Plain’s Home Owners Association.

Every intersection off of a Main Street typology requires a roundabout.

Planted islands stretch into parking lot, indicating where pocket parks are located, connecting pedestrians from the rear to the front of the building.

Rear service entry to building.

Trees aligned to draw views across the street from the Wellness Center.

Existing Wellness Center playground.

Utility boxes buffered by landscaping for visual appeal of surrounding residential.

Planted islands stretch into parking lot, indicating where pocket parks are located, connecting pedestrians from the rear to the front of the building.

Up to 10’ building setback from property line.

Up to 5’ fence setback from property line.

Up to 10’ fence and structure setback for mailbox, utilities, and garbage at rear of lot.

SCALE 1:40

SITE SELECTION

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Pergola adds architectural interest and indicates the entrance to pedestrians.

Balcony open to those using the building (i.e. restaurant seating).

Bike lane merges onto sidewalk at intersection by following a designated ramp across the boulevard.

Planted boulevards, medians, and grasses can be an added visual aesthetic in addition to decreasing the need for maintenance of the common turf grass boulevards.

Running track switches directions every other day, so trees in plaza below align up and direct lines of site across the street.

Vegetation buffers storefront and sidewalk circulation.

The front facade orientated towards the roundabout at the center of the intersection to maximize the storefront's attention from the street.

CORNER CONDITIONS

MAIN STREET SECTION (A-A')

SCALE 1/8" = 1'

OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL

OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL

RETAIL/OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL

RETAIL
The Central Urban Plaza is the vertex of the urban core. Serving as a Neighborhood Park, it has active and passive uses to attract the whole neighborhood to spend time here. As the buildings frame a nook for people to gather, paths were designed to flow through the entirety of the plaza, allowing one to observe and explore the surrounding storefronts and open spaces.

Overall, North Dakota is known for its history of agriculture in the Great Plains. This development obviously desired to point to this history, seeing it as a meaningful identity to the people we are surrounded by, as well as the environment we live in. Urban Plains today has created several ordinances upon itself in order to maintain a high standard of “urban” development. This is following trends in architectural style as well as providing a mixture of amenities throughout the neighborhood to meet the variety of needs and desires of its residents. In order to further give stock in the title of Urban Plains, this plaza embodies aspects of the “plains” through its plant palette and planting areas. The boulevard throughout Urban Plains is designed to have its landscaping planted in rows, rather than existing turf.

Paths and plantings run parallel to each other across storefront, but as the path continues it will split and give a different experience through the plaza. Plantings will expand and contract off of these paths to form a web of connections and spaces.

The Central Urban Plaza

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Urban Plains’ PLATISTIC

Central Urban Plains focuses on history of agriculture to the Dakotas. This development design is inspired by the history, utilizing corn and wheat-themed elements to the people we are surrounded by, as well as the environment we live in. Urban Plains has created several ordinances in order to maintain a high standard of “urban” development. This is following trends in architectural style as well as providing a mixture of amenities throughout the neighborhood to meet the variety of needs and desires of its residents. In order to further give stock in the title of Urban Plains, this plaza embodies aspects of the “plains” through its plant palette and planting areas. The boulevard throughout Urban Plains is designed to have its landscaping planted in rows, rather than existing turf.

During the warm months of the year, the Central Urban Plaza provides a splash pad to cool off families on hot days. When winter comes around, it is transformed into an ice rink, yet there are still plenty of warm shops open. Year-round, people can gather here and encounter the community while having fun with an activity or strolling around.

SUMMER-WINTER INTEREST AND ACTIVITY

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