

**Community Development  
2022 Annual Report**



**Prepared by:** The City of North Mankato  
Community Development Department

## **2022 Community Development Annual Report**

We are pleased to provide this report to you about the activities of the North Mankato Community Development Department during 2022. You will find information about the variety of accomplishments, projects, studies and inspections by staff in the areas of community planning, construction permitting & inspection and code compliance. The existing Community Development services are critical for the generation of revenue, proper building construction, community relations, orderly growth and overall appearance of neighborhoods and business districts.

On a daily basis, Community Development staff interacts either in person, by phone or email with citizens, developers, realtors, contractors, attorneys, engineers, business owners, etc. regarding various issues. It is critical that staff is knowledgeable about information given to all and accountable for answers to all questions. Building Inspectors are expected to fully understand and interpret state and local building codes for construction projects and be consistent in enforcement. The department treats every resident, contractor, etc. with the same respect when performing inspections, issuing permits, answering questions or responding to citizen concerns.

The Community Development Department aims to fulfill the goal of ensuring North Mankato continues to be a place of growth and choice for residential, commercial and industrial development through several goals and objectives. Objectives include:

1. Objective 1: Issue permits and licenses according to the State of Minnesota Building Code and North Mankato City Ordinances in a timely manner and perform necessary building inspections.
2. Objective 2: Implement and develop land use plans and transportation plans for North Mankato.
3. Objective 3: Respond to nuisance complaints and city code violations.
4. Objective 4: Promote economic growth of the community through residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The Community Development Department consist of the following personnel:

Community Development Director-Mike Fischer  
City Planner-Matt Lassonde  
Building Official-Larry Wasmund (contracted)  
Building Inspector-Tim Poncin  
Building Inspector-Jordan Wesley  
Permit Technician-Megan Vossen

The department is responsible for the following services:

- Planning/Zoning
- Housing Initiatives
- Transportation Planning
- Economic Development
- City Code Enforcement
- Administration of Wetland Conservation Act
- Issuance of Building Permits
- Issuance of Rental Licenses and Rental Administration
- Building/Plumbing Inspections
- Review of Building Construction Plans
- Staff to Planning Commission and Traffic & Safety Committee
- Assessment Searches
- Computer Mapping
- Preparation of Planning Studies
- Data analysis

Staff participates in the following committees:

- Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA)
- Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO)
- South Central Business Development Network
- City Art
- City Center Partnership (CCP) Board
- Business Development and Retention (CCP)
- Aesthetics and Vitality (CCP)
- SW Chapter of Building Officials
- Bicycle Task Force (CCP)

In 2022, the Community Development Department either prepared or participated in the following plans, initiatives, and policies:

- Housing Study
- Highway 169 Corridor Study
- Comprehensive Plan update
- Lookout Drive Corridor Study
- Lookout Drive Redevelopment Plan (SCC plan)
- Greater Mankato Trail Systems Branding

- Highway 14 Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study

In addition to the general day-to-day operations, other department activities occurring within 2022 included:

Received MHFA funding for first time homebuyers  
 Met with developers regarding future residential development opportunities  
 Conducted wetland mitigation for Caswell property  
 Attended REDA meetings  
 Attended MAPO TAC and Policy Board meetings  
 Annexed Krohn and Burnett properties  
 Attended City Art committee meetings  
 Attended SCBDN meetings  
 Participated in Highway 169 Corridor study  
 Participated in Lookout Drive Corridor study  
 Participated in Lookout Drive Redevelopment study  
 Participated in Hwy 14 Ped Bridge study  
 Attended annual safety training  
 Opened 32 code enforcement cases and closed 29  
 Coordinated inspection of the Norwood Inn for TIF purposes  
 Served on City Art Committee  
 Worked on Envis project  
 Attended State Planning Conference  
 Worked with Twin Rivers on art initiatives including flood wall mural  
 Attended ribbon cuttings for new businesses  
 Preparation of several Requests for Information (RFI) and Request for Proposals (RFP) related to business/industry development  
 Participated in:

- City Council meetings
- Port Authority meetings
- Planning Commission meetings
- Traffic & Safety Committee meetings
- Weekly business meetings
- Weekly department head meetings
- Weekly Community Development meetings

Researched DEED Economic Development Grants  
 Met with Arnolds Implement on transportation issues  
 Attended Bike Task Force meetings  
 Met with MnDOT on potential bridge improvements

Attended REDA annual meeting  
Attended GMG awards meeting  
Attended CCP Board meetings and other CCP sub committee meetings  
Worked on several industrial development leads  
Conducted several KEYC and Free Press interviews  
Participated in GMG Leadership Institute program  
Participated in CGMC annexation/land use committee  
Attended CPR training  
Attended continuing education for building inspection licenses  
Processed Northside Revival applications  
Adopted housing study  
Adopted Highway 14 pedestrian bridge study  
Adopted Highway 169 corridor study  
Adopted Lookout Drive corridor study  
Participated in diversity study with local partners  
Coordinated rental inspections with Fire Department  
Participated in City Administrator job search  
Participated in Public Works Director search  
Served as Interim City Administrator (March-June)  
Worked with Cal Am on tree replacement agreement  
Worked on redevelopment of Norwood Inn  
Presented at Real Estate Summit  
Amended Floodplain ordinance  
Coordinated Belgrade/Nicollet Parklet  
Issued building permits for Starbucks & Chipotle  
Coordinated purchase and sale of 702 Range Street property  
Coordinated MDC purchase agreement amendment  
Coordinated 230 Nicollet Ave. abatement  
Issued building permit for 230 Nicollet apartment  
Coordinated Marvin Boulevard easements  
Worked on Howard/Lor Ray roundabout  
Assisted with Brewing Ideas events and Community Survey  
Issued building permit for Volk addition  
Attracted Gordini to industrial park  
Coordinated listing of 850 Nicollet house  
Coordinated MSU student transportation project  
Conducted as tree mapping for Public Works  
Researched and selected new permitting software  
Researched funding for childcare  
Participated in Transforming Tomorrow Together initiative  
Coordinated review of Haughton Avenue traffic including staging of temporary stop signs

Worked on auto read water meter ordinance  
Worked on Belgrade 3 lane conversion project  
Participated in Mankato Transit Development Plan  
Participated in salary review market study  
Attended GMG legislative forums

**Planning Commission Activities:**

- Platting of Burnett's Ravine Ridge No. 7
- Platting of Belgrade Addition
- Platting of Lor Ray Center
- Zoning classification for Burnett's Ravine Ridge No. 7
- Zoning classification for Belgrade Addition
- Conditional Use Permit for North Town Auto
- Conditional Use Permit amendment for Austin's Auto
- Review and approval of Housing Study
- Review and approve amendment to Future Land Use Map
- Review and approve 7 Comprehensive Plan update chapters

The following is a summary of number of building permits issued, number of inspections conducted, and number of plan reviews conducted by the Department in 2022:

- Issued 1,620 building permits having total value of \$45,924,212
- Conducted 3,261 building inspections
- Conducted 221 construction plan reviews
- Conducted 220 I&I inspections
- Conducted 409 rental inspections
- Issued permits for 23 new single-family homes
- Issued permits for 38 new townhome units
- Issued permit for 9 units of new apartments
- Generated \$564,568 in building permit revenue
- Renewed 635 rental licenses, issued 23 new rental licenses and generated \$79,050 in rental related revenue

Attached is an end-of-year building permit report from 2017 to 2022

**Priorities for 2023:**

- Revise Sign Code
- Research EV charger funding

- Continue to work with housing developers on new residential subdivisions
- Continue to work on opportunities to development/redevelopment on Commerce Drive
- Continue to implement goals/objective of Webster Avenue Area Plan
- Prepare for indoor recreation building at Caswell
- Plan for redevelopment of Arnold's property
- Recruit developers for residential, commercial and industrial development
- Participate in ADA Transition Plan update through the MAPO
- Continue to support other departments for planning, mapping and data analysis
- Implement the goals/objectives of the Housing Study
- Support the Port Authority for new business recruitment, development and redevelopment
- Continue rental inspections utilizing Fire Department
- Work on sale of Norwood Inn
- Sell land in industrial park to Gordini
- Consider TIF for Norwood Inn and Gordini
- Sponsor Gordini State funding applications
- Implement new permitting software
- Participate in Mankato Transit Development Plan
- Continued participation in diversity study with area partners
- Close on sale of 850 Nicollet Avenue house
- Work with Belgrade Township on orderly annexation agreement
- Work with the City of Mankato on vision for Hwy 169 corridor
- Continued work on:
  - Comprehensive Plan update
  - Lookout Drive redevelopment plan

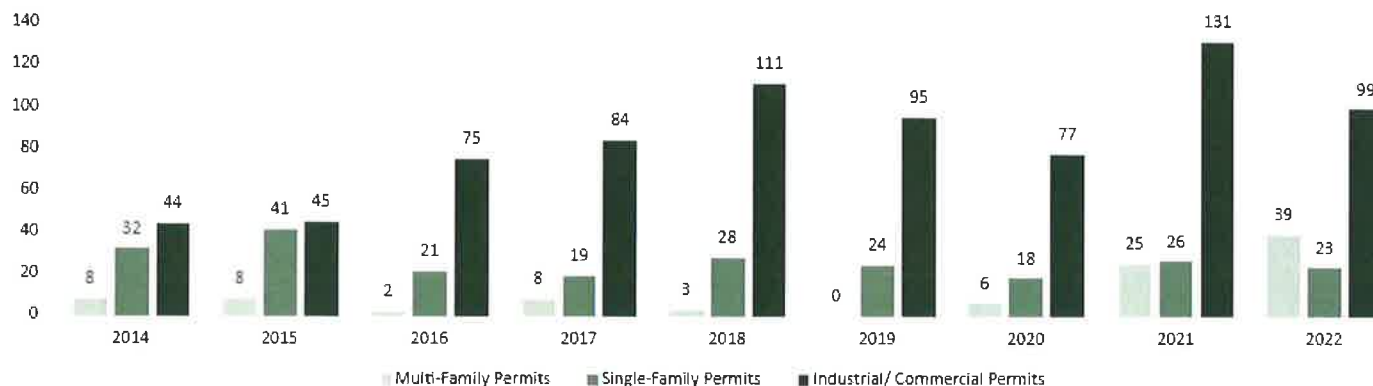
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY						
	YEARLY GOAL	THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	LAST YEAR	YEARLY TOTAL	% YEARLY GOAL
<b>Issued Building Permits</b>						
Multi-Family	17	1	0	2	39	229%
Duplex	0	0	0	1	0	
Town Homes	15	0	0	0	38	
Apt/ Assisted Living	2	1	0	1	1	
Single-Family	25	2	3	3	23	92%
Mobile Homes	25	0	0	0	1	4%
Residential (Garages, Roofing, Siding, Remodel, etc.)	1,400	64	68	63	1,437	103%
Other (Signs, Demolition, etc.)	30	0	4	1	21	70%
Industrial/ Commercial	140	7	7	12	99	71%
<b>Number of Permits</b>	1,625	74	82	81	1,620	100%
<b>Number of Units</b>	134	11	3	9	70	52%
<b>Number of Online Permits</b>	500	15	18	32	371	74%
<b>Number of Structures</b>	30	3	3	6	62	207%
<b>Dollar Value</b>	\$ 40,000,000	\$ 3,207,548	\$ 2,525,173	\$ 4,345,968	\$ 45,565,768	114%
<b>Revenue</b>	\$ 395,350	\$ 36,751	\$ 27,341	\$ 45,507	\$ 564,269	143%
Rental Licenses Issued	650	1	6	0	658	101%
Rental Inspections - Fire Dept.	20	0	0	0	62	
Rental Inspections - Staff	100	26	19	13	347	347%
Inspections Conducted	2,250	412	342	337	3,261	145%
Inflow and Infiltration Inspections	225	5	14	7	220	98%
Plan Reviews Completed	250	12	7	14	221	88%
Code Letters Sent	50	1	1	1	31	62%
Code Cases Closed	50	2	2	0	20	40%
Planning Studies Underway	4	3	3	5	4	100%
Zoning Clanges	3	0	0	1	1	33%
Annexation Requests	2	0	0	1	2	100%
CUP Requests	1	0	0	1	0	0%
PUD Requests	1	0	0	0	0	0%

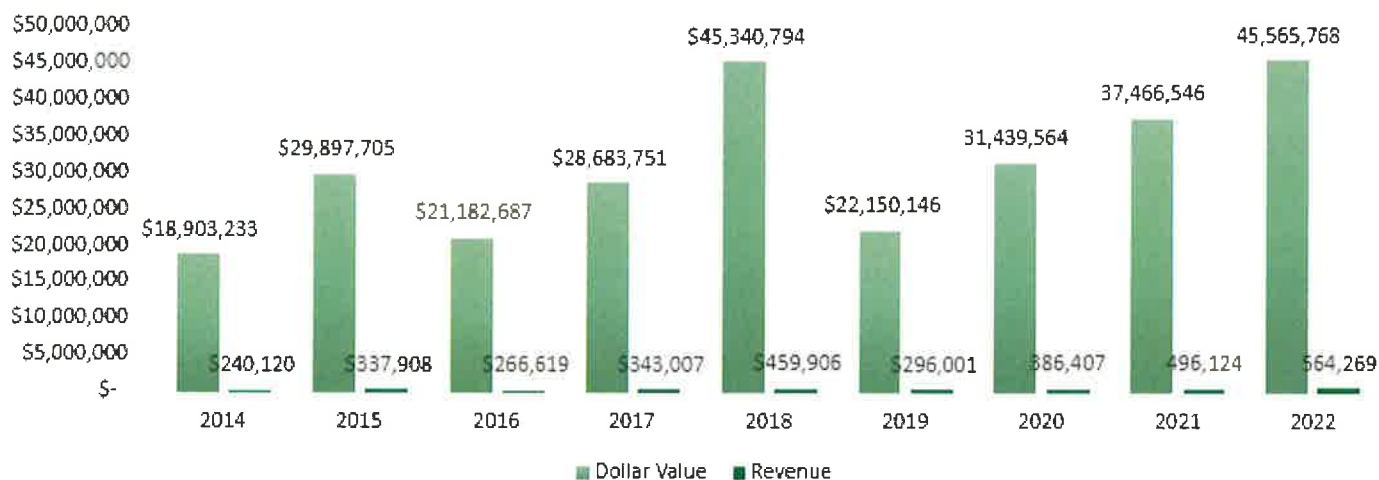


# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Issued Building Permits



## Dollar Value vs. Revenue



### Building Permits

- To date, 1,620 building permits have been issued for remodeling and new construction projects. The following is a summary of the new residential units permitted to date:
  - Single Family Homes – 23
  - Manufactured Homes in Camelot - 1
  - Townhomes – 38 units
  - Duplexes –
  - Apartments – 9 units
  - Assisted Living –

# Issued Building Permits - Year to Date Report

## 2022 - Thru December

	Single Family	Duplex	Townhome Condos	Apt./ Asst. Living	New Industrial / Commercial	Non-Residential Remodel	Mobile Homes	Other	Residential Remodel	Totals
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Number of Permits	23	0	38	1	2	97	1	21	1437	1620
Number of Structures	23	0	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	31
Number of Units	23	0	38	9	2	0	0	0	0	72
Dollar Value	\$ 8,850,560.00	\$ -	\$ 8,550,000.00	\$ 1,589,472.00	\$ 1,260,306.00	\$ 12,962,737.09	\$ 31,450.00	\$ 100,050.00	\$ 12,579,637.74	\$ 45,924,212.83
Revenue	\$ 72,134.40	\$ -	\$ 86,578.44	\$ 14,293.72	\$ 14,621.00	\$ 112,820.90	\$ 523.87	\$ 838.31	\$ 262,757.80	\$ 564,568.44

## 2021

	Single Family	Duplex	Townhome Condos	Apt./ Asst. Living	Industry Commercial	Mobile Homes	Other	Residential Remodel	Totals
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Number of Permits	26	5	19	1	131	73	20	1350	1625
Number of Structures	26	5	3	1	1	0	0	0	36
Number of Units	26	10	19	4	0	0	0	0	59
Dollar Value	\$ 8,920,700.00	\$ 2,700,000.00	\$ 4,615,000.00	\$ 737,000.00	\$ 9,118,919.74	\$ 1,395,600.00	\$ 144,841.36	\$ 9,834,485.96	\$ 37,466,547.06
Revenue	\$ 73,567.63	\$ 21,181.65	\$ 47,408.79	\$ 7,565.93	\$ 112,409.15	\$ 25,739.94	\$ 1,861.54	\$ 206,389.51	\$ 496,124.14

## 2020

	Single Family	Duplex	Townhome Condos	Apt./ Asst. Living	Industry Commercial	Mobile Homes	Other	Residential Remodel	Totals
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Number of Permits	18	0	19	4	76	13	14	1326	1470
Number of Structures	18	0	2	4	2	0	0	0	26
Number of Units	18	0	19	16	0	0	0	0	53
Dollar Value	\$ 6,199,210	\$ -	\$ 3,414,490	\$ 1,672,000	\$ 8,473,790	\$ 248,719	\$ 28,010	\$ 11,405,046	\$ 31,441,265
Revenue	\$ 52,557	\$ -	\$ 39,358	\$ 16,189	\$ 84,849	\$ 4,564	\$ 570	\$ 203,358	\$ 401,445

## 2019

	Single Family	Duplex	Townhome Condos	Apt./ Asst. Living	Industry Commercial	Other	Residential Remodel	Totals
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Number of Permits	24	0	0	2	102	12	1,155	1,295
Number of Units	24	0	0	8	0	0	0	32
Dollar Value	\$ 7,836,395	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 800,000	\$ 7,130,904	\$ 11,300	\$ 6,369,548	\$ 22,148,147
Revenue	\$ 65,941.31	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,752.82	\$ 78,541.92	\$ 556.08	\$ 143,131.13	\$ 295,923.26

## 2018

	Single Family	Duplex	Townhome Condos	Apt./ Asst. Living	Industry Commercial	Other	Residential Remodel	Totals
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Number of Permits	28	0	1	2	111	23	1060	1,225
Number of Units	28	0	6	8	0	0	0	42
Dollar Value	\$ 7,958,580	\$ 0	\$ 1,198,500	\$ 795,000	\$ 29,748,940	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,637,275	\$ 45,340,795
Revenue	\$ 69,184.85	\$ 0.00	\$ 9,241.35	\$ 7,711.83	\$ 241,223.01	\$ 768.00	\$ 131,777.66	\$ 459,906.70

## 2017

	Single Family	Duplex	Townhome Condos	Apt./ Asst. Living	Industry Commercial	Other	Residential Remodel	Totals
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Number of Permits	19	0	6	3	84	21	1035	1,168
Number of Units	19	0	35	32	0	0	0	86
Dollar Value	\$ 5,036,280	\$ 0	\$ 5,749,970	\$ 3,078,733	\$ 9,556,049	\$ 25,500	\$ 5,237,219	\$ 28,683,751
Revenue	\$ 44,392.31	\$ 0.00	\$ 49,420.66	\$ 27,056.19	\$ 94,725.53	\$ 1,072.06	\$ 126,340.38	\$ 343,007.13

## ORDINANCE NO 155

### AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORTH MANKATO, MINNESOTA AMENDING NORTH MANKATO CITY CODE CHAPTER 52 WATER SERVICE

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH MANKATO,  
MINNESOTA, ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE I: Section 52.07 of the Municipal Code of the City of North Mankato is hereby deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

#### Section 52.07 Water Meters.

All water meters installed after January 1, 2019, within the City shall be automatic read meters and be obtained solely through the City. Meters will be installed, replaced, and repaired when necessary by the City at all locations with City water service. The consumer is responsible for paying for the meter, permit, and installation of the meter. Customers not complying with the installation of automatic read meters, or the replacement of standard City meters, will be subject to manual meter reading fees, which the City Council may establish, or if deemed necessary by the City, water service may be shut off.

No person other than an authorized City employee shall use water from the City water system or permit water to be drawn there from unless the water passes through a meter supplied by and approved by the City. After the purchase and installation of an automatic read meter, the property owner becomes the meter owner and shall be held responsible for the care and maintenance of that meter. Meters may be removed and replaced only by the City or a licensed plumber when deemed necessary, at the City's sole discretion. No person not authorized by the City shall connect, disconnect, take apart and in any manner change, interfere or tamper with any water meter or its use.

As part of the new construction of any residential, commercial, or industrial building, the use of two water meters is required. One meter shall meter the inside water usage, and the other meter shall meter the outside water usage. An outside water meter is not required if there are no outside water connections. The outside water meter shall meter water that is not being returned to the City sanitary sewer system.

Authorized City employees and contractors shall be provided access at reasonable hours of the day to every building or property connected with the City water supply to install, inspect and replace meters, obtain meter readings, and maintain meters, as deemed necessary in the City's sole discretion.

If, after reasonable efforts, the City is unable to gain access to a building or property to install, read, maintain, replace or inspect any water meter, irrespective of the reason, the water customer shall be subject to non-compliance fees to account for the City's inability to determine usage and properly maintain its water meters and its overall municipal water system. Said fees may be established by the City Council. If deemed necessary by the City, water service may be shut off.

All properties that are required to obtain a residential rental permit must be in compliance with the provisions of this code section and have installed automatic read meters. If the property does not comply with these provisions, the rental license shall not be issued, and if a rental license has been issued, it shall not be renewed.

All properties in which the property owner or resident initiates a kitchen or bathroom remodel, which remodel will cost \$2,000.00 or more, must obtain and install an automatic read meter. A meter must be installed as part of the remodel if the property does not currently have an automatic read meter. Permit for remodeling will not be issued without the property being in compliance with this code section.

Any property that has a manual read meter in which a meter reading has not been received in 6 months or more will be required to obtain and install an automatic read meter. If deemed necessary by the City, water service may be shut off until the property installs an automatic read meter and the utility account is brought current.

Any property that is sold, and is connected to the City water service, shall be required to install an automatic read meter before the sale can be finalized. Any property not in compliance with this code section may have its water shut off until they are in compliance.

ARTICLE II. This ordinance shall become effective on or after the date following such publication in accordance with the law.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Clerk



## Water Meter Installation Options City Council Study Session February 21, 2023

2.21.23

[NORTHMANKATO.COM](http://NORTHMANKATO.COM)



# Water Meter Refresher

- Purpose
  - Record the amount of water used by a property.
  - Recorded amounts are used to determine monthly bills to users.
  - Meters are the “cash registers” of the water sales system.
- Types
  - Mechanical
    - As water flows through the meter, it mechanically turns a register that accumulates the total gallons through the meter.
    - Very low flows can pass through the meter without providing enough force to turn the mechanical system.
    - Over time the accuracy of the mechanism degrades on average by about 0.34% per year, more for low flow metering.
    - Very long history and well understood reliability.



# Water Meter Refresher

- Types (Continued)
  - Ultrasonic
    - High frequency sound passing through the water detects flow velocity, which lets the unit calculate flow rate.
    - No moving parts to wear or fail, so there is no degradation of accuracy.
    - Low flow accuracy is much better than mechanical meters.
    - Batteries in the register will fail and need to be replaced periodically.





# Water Meter Comparison





# Water Meter Ordinance Discussion Topics

- Already passed an ordinance requiring rental buildings to replace meters.
- New construction is installing new meters.
- Considering an ordinance to add categories to require meter replacement.
  - ✓ Install new meters when a building is sold to a new owner.
  - ✓ Install new meters when a plumbing permit is approved.
  - ✓ Install new meters in properties with 6 months or more with no readings submitted.



## Water Meter Ordinance Topics (Continued)

- Our current staff can install approximately 30 meters per month (6-10 per week) without working overtime or neglecting other necessary tasks. We are currently replacing approximately 15-18 per month, so we have an additional 12-15 per month on average available capacity to install meters.
- Install new meters when a building is sold to a new owner.
  - We had approximately 70 new accounts last year that would be affected by this provision.
  - We can accommodate the 4-9 per month we saw last year with our current staff. We can also allow plumbers to do this work.



# Water Meter Ordinance Topics (Continued)

- Install new meters when a plumbing permit is approved.
- We recommend we require the plumber to install all meters and inspect the installation along with the plumbing inspection for the work being done.
- Plumbing permits are tracked by fixtures, not value, so the ordinance would need to establish the number of fixtures replaced that would trigger a meter replacement.
- We suggest requiring a meter when any plumbing permit is for 3 fixtures or more, or any kitchen or bath remodel. Those account for approximately 90-95 permits per year. This would be challenging but possible with our current staff, but we may not be able to handle peaks in a timely fashion.





## Water Meter Ordinance Topics (Continued)

- Install new meters in properties with 6 months or more without a reading.
- We currently have approximately 160 Accounts that would be affected by this provision.
- We suggest council consider hiring a private contractor to do these meter replacements.
- Getting access to install new meters for these types of accounts is historically difficult. There is typically many of the accounts that have later readings submitted that are also late on payments. Persuading owners who already have large past due amounts to also pay for the new meter and installation will make it more difficult in some cases to accomplish the meter replacement.

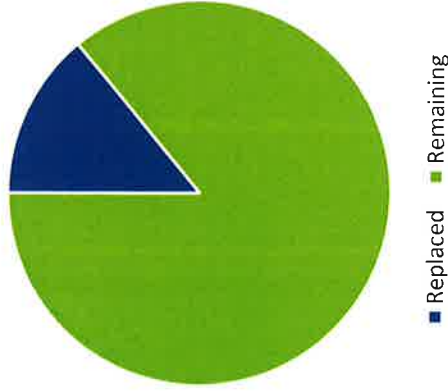




# Water Meter Installation Proposal

- We suggest Council considers hiring a Contractor to replace the remaining manual read meters.
  - Last year we replaced approximately 3% of the meters, Water Department staff accounted for about 197 and a Contractor completed about 50.
  - We are at approximately 14% of the system replaced, so our own staff will take 16 or more years to replace all the meters at the current rate.
  - The methods to install more meters is as follows:
    - Contracting the work out,
    - hiring additional Limited Term Employees to do the meter replacements, or,
    - requiring owners to pay plumbers to do the replacements instead of Water Department staff.

Total Water Meters





## Water Meter Installation Proposal (Continued)

- Ferguson Waterworks has provided a verbal estimate of \$85 per installation to complete all 6400 remaining meters this year.
- Replacing all the meters immediately will result in an estimated \$135,000 or more in additional revenue per year over the next 10 years, just in meter accuracy benefits.
  - When combined with savings on time spent doing water bills by hand and inflation of the installation cost, delaying the installation of the remaining meters just one year is \$200,000 or more.
- The cost of paying a Contractor to install all the meters would be paid back in additional revenue and staff time savings in approximately 3 years.



# Water Meter Ownership Overview

- Currently, building owners own the water meters, and maintain and replace defective or aged meters at the building owner's expense.
  - Cost of purchasing, replacement and maintenance is 100% owner's responsibility at the time it is needed, so no cost to the Water Utility.
  - Typical 5/8" residential meter costs owners \$270 to \$350 to install.
  - Virtually no maintenance done by owners, and requiring replacement needs to be supported by an ordinance spelling out details.
  - No ability to check and calibrate accuracy of meters.
  - Replacing meters can be difficult due to owner reluctance to pay the cost and allow access.





## Water Meter Ownership Overview (Continued)

- The most common alternative is for the Water Utility to own the meters.
  - Owner pays for cost of the meter through either the base water rate or a water meter replacement fee on their monthly water bill, so the cost is spread over many years.
  - Periodic maintenance and calibration is done by the Water Utility.
    - Meters are repaired or replaced reliably when they wear out, keeping the overall accuracy of all the meters very high and minimizing lost revenue.
  - Replacing meters for testing or failure is at no additional cost to owners, so the only barrier to replacement in the future is scheduling an appointment.
  - The need to do large scale replacements in the future is mitigated by a continuous 5% per year maintenance program. Each year 5% of the meters are replaced, tested, then repaired or replaced with new meters, as necessary.
  - Water Utility ownership of the meter provides stronger legal rights to enter property to replace meters.



# Water Meter Ownership Proposal

- Revise Section 52.07 of the City Code to state that all water meters are owned by the Water Utility.
- Change the water rates to add a water meter replacement fee.
  - This can be included in the base rate, but it is more transparent if the meter replacement fee is separate from the base rate.
  - This also provides a mechanism to fund future meter replacements so there is no need to budget additional funds for large scale meter purchases again in the future.
  - Credit owners the monthly fee for a set period if they have already replaced their meter to “buy back” the meter.
- Water account owners pay a small fee every month rather than a large one-time fee, making it more affordable and convenient for users.
  - Fixed income users may struggle with the increase in monthly bills, but they will typically struggle more with the large cost of replacement.



## Where do we go from here?

- Keep private ownership of the meters:
  - Pass the ordinance as presented (or with changes) at the council meeting.
  - Meters are replaced by Water Department staff or a plumber when a new water account is opened for an existing property.
  - Meters are replaced by a plumber when a plumbing permit is applied for.
  - Meters for accounts more than 6 months late with meter readings will be replaced by a Contractor.
- ✓ No additional Council Action needed currently.





## Where do we go from here? (Continued)

- Hire a Contractor to complete meter installations:
  - Table the ordinance as presented.
  - Replacements will be handled entirely through the Contractor, so the ordinance is not needed.
  - Owners maintain the right to have a plumber replace the meter at any time instead of using the Contractor.
  - Delinquent accounts will be high priority but will be difficult to schedule. Cost can be added to water bills, possibly including a payment plan.
- Accept the proposal from Ferguson Waterworks or direct staff to solicit additional proposals for the work.



## Where do we go from here? (Continued)

- Elect to transfer ownership of meters to the Water Utility:
  - Table the ordinance as presented.
  - Replacements will be handled entirely through the Contractor, so the ordinance is not needed.
  - Revise Section 52.07 of the City Code to reflect the changes in ownership and allow access to the Water Department employees to replace meters.
- Accept the proposal from Ferguson Waterworks or direct staff to solicit additional proposals for the work.



Questions?

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Kevin McCann, City Administrator  
**FROM:** Matt Lassonde, City Planner  
**DATE:** February 16, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Brewing New Ideas for North Mankato 2023 Results Summary

### **Background**

In 2016, the City of North Mankato held a series of public engagement sessions to solicit input from residents on big ideas they may have for the future of the City. These sessions allowed the City to garner input on three questions:

1. What is it that makes people feel connected to North Mankato?
2. What are we Noticing?
3. What are opportunities for North Mankato?

Input received identified a strong sense of community with residents valuing the City's neighborly charm, hometown feel, sense of safety, strong recreational resources, and seasonal events. Common themes from discussions included increasing economic development that would bring lodging, restaurants, and other businesses to the community, enhancing citizen communication and engagement, and place-making.

### **Brewing New Ideas 2022-23**

#### Overview

In late summer 2022, new City Administration asked staff to conduct similar engagement in preparation for the 2023 North Mankato Strategic Plan Update. Engagement began in September/October of 2022 with two in-person sessions asking. Questions for this second round of engagement were altered slightly to reflect new values and allow the City to receive more focused input:

1. What makes people feel connected to North Mankato?
2. What are Opportunities for North Mankato?
3. What are Big Ideas for North Mankato?



The following methods were used to solicit resident input on opportunities and Big Ideas:

1. *In-Person Open Houses with Virtual Input Option:* The City held two public engagement meetings for this effort. The first was held in late September at the Mankato Brewery and the second was held in mid-October at the Spring Lake Park warming house. Each meeting was lightly attended, with approximately 21 residents participating alongside elected officials and City staff combined. An option to provide input virtually was offered for those that had ideas but were unable to attend the in-person sessions. There were seven responses from that outreach and input was included in the sessions for consideration. Meeting participants were placed in small groups to discuss each question and report their top ideas to the larger group for consideration. Ideas were listed on the overhead screen to guide discussion.
2. *Online Idea Ranking Survey:* Citizens were invited to rank opportunities and big ideas identified through the in-person open houses via an online survey active from late-January 2022 to early-February 2023. Participants were invited to list any ideas they had that weren't included in lists generated through the Open Houses.

### Summary of Results

#### ***Question 1 - What makes people feel connected to North Mankato?***

Groups were asked to discuss what makes them feel connected to North Mankato. General themes resulting from discussion were mostly in line with themes heard in the 2016 outreach and included:

1. Festivals and events around the community
2. Recreational amenities including parks, trails, and other facilities
3. Smalltown feel
4. Support for businesses
5. History and heritage
6. Engaged local government
7. High quality education
8. Community art & culture
9. Outstanding city maintenance
10. Community emphasis on growth (i.e. amenities, industrial park)

It's clear from the input that citizens value what North Mankato has to offer. Many mentioned the proximity to Mankato provides many large-town benefits while allowing the community to maintain its small-town feel; sort of a "best of both worlds" perspective. It seems, from this input, the City is doing things right.

#### ***Question 2 - What are Opportunities for North Mankato?***

After providing input on what makes them feel connected to North Mankato, participants at the open houses were asked to discuss what they believe to be opportunities in the community that the City should pursue. To prompt discussion, City staff asked that groups consider topics such as housing location and types, recreation and connections, placemaking, new retail locations, redevelopment opportunities, and other topics when considering opportunities. Opportunities considered through the



open houses were presented to the public through the online survey, the results of which can be seen in the graph entitled, "North Mankato Opportunity Ranking" on the next page.

City staff opted to include all ideas collected through input in the process-to-date when developing the online survey. This resulted in the ranking of 29 identified opportunities by the public. Of 141 responses received, participants ranked (1) a grocery store, (2) more food/restaurant options, (3) more business development, (4) encouragement for more redevelopment of underutilized or blighted building, and (5) redevelopment of the site formerly known as the Norwood Inn in the top five. This isn't surprising as staff continues to hear similar requests during small area/business district planning throughout the community.

Opportunities ranked five through 10 include (6) adding more healthy places to eat, (7) improving traffic around schools, (8) adding more gathering spaces such as parks, (9) increasing mental health support for children at Dakota Meadows Middle School, and (10) incentives for Lower North home improvements.

***Question 3 - What are Big Ideas for North Mankato***

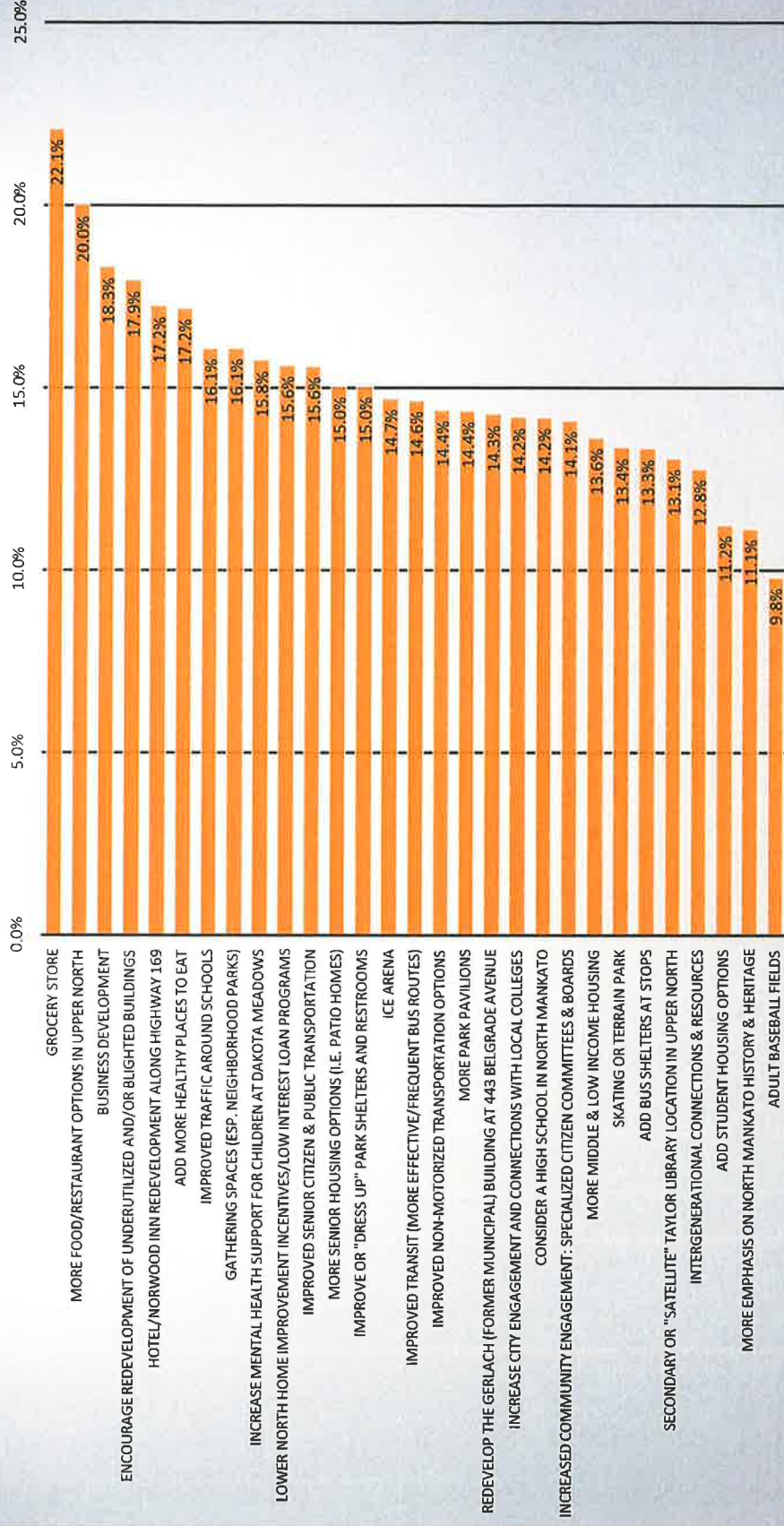
The final task for participants at the open houses was to develop lists of their biggest ideas for North Mankato. When identifying opportunities, the idea was to focus on low-hanging fruit; what exists today that presents an opportunity and has the most potential to easily be implemented in the short term.

When asking participants for big ideas, the aim was to generate out-of-the-box ideas that could make North Mankato unique. Participants were prompted to think about elements of the City they've always imagined as having something big. This could be design, art, recreation, adaptive reuse of buildings, entertainment districts, and/or other ideas seen in other innovative cities. 21 big ideas were included in the survey, generated by open house groups. There were 140 responses received for this question.

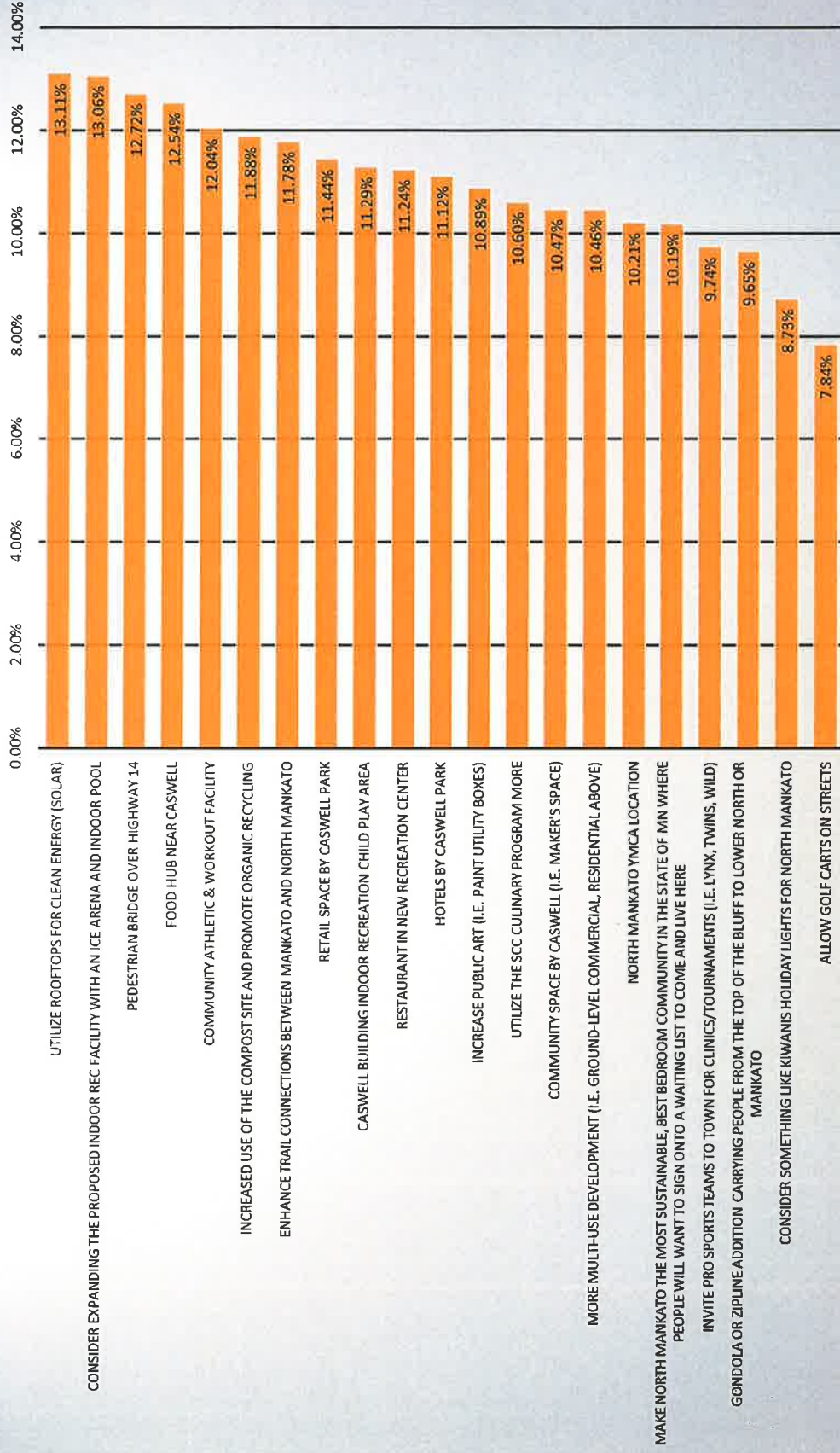
The top five ranked big ideas included (1) utilizing rooftops for solar energy, (2) expanding the proposed indoor rec facility with an ice arena and indoor pool, (3) a pedestrian bridge over Highway 14, (4) a food hub near the Caswell Sports Complex, and (5) a community athletic and workout facility. The City is currently seeking funding for the indoor rec facility and the design isn't finalized to date. The Highway 14 bridge over Highway 14 has been studied and would connect the Commerce Drive business district and locations south of the highway with the Caswell Complex and potential new indoor rec facility.

Other ideas that ranked higher include increasing use of the compost site to promote organic recycling, enhancing intercity trail connections, adding retail space near the Caswell Complex, adding an indoor child play facility, and adding a new restaurant to the proposed indoor recreation facility. Perhaps some of the most out-of-the-box ideas include making zip-line or gondola from Upper North to Lower North and allowing golf carts to share the roads. The rest of the list and ranking can be seen in the graph on the following pages.

## North Mankato Opportunity Ranking



## North Mankato Big Ideas Ranking



### ***Written Comments***

Survey participants were given an opportunity to list ideas they have that weren't generated through the open house sessions. Some used the space to write grievances, venting about things they don't like while others listed new ideas or opportunities.

Identified opportunities include:

1. Add large retail such as Costco to Upper North
2. Widen sidewalks for easier pedestrian access
3. Plan amenities to support housing growth in Upper North
4. Safe bike lanes on Belgrade Avenue and Commerce Drive
5. Pedestrian bridge across river to Sibley Park
6. More affordable housing
7. Improve the Highway 169 corridor as it is unsightly
8. Establish a Heritage Preservation Committee
9. Better collaboration with Mankato
10. Add a distillery
11. Add a Chic-Fil-A

Big ideas considered included:

1. Add a state of the art gun range that teaches gun safety
2. Add a roller skating rink
3. Permit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on large single-family lots
4. Make the City more dog friendly
5. Define what the City wants to be known for then focus efforts on expanding those ideas (i.e. recreation focus with ice rinks, parks, zip line, etc.)
6. Growth focused around walkability and transportation accessible areas

### **Conclusion**

The input makes it clear that residents value the community and have ideas for it. While not the only tool used by the City, this information is intended to provide an indication of citizen values to help guide the development of the Strategic Plan and future City investments. A comprehensive list of comments received is available upon request.