



**CITY OF RAY NORTH DAKOTA**

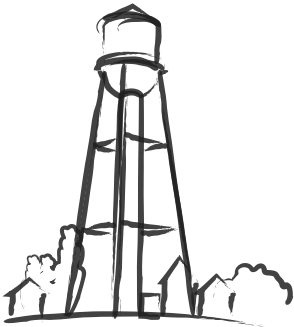
**2015 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan would not have been possible without the incredible feedback, input and expertise provided by the City of Ray's leadership, citizens, city staff and community organizations. We would like to give a special thanks to everyone who freely gave their time and energy in developing this document in the hopes of building a stronger future for Ray.

Ray City Commission  
Ray Planning Board  
Fire and Emergency Services  
City of Ray Staff  
Interstate Engineering  
Chamber of Commerce  
Community Development Board  
Historical Museum  
Senior Citizens Group  
Ray Public School  
Class of 2015



**City of Ray | North Dakota**  
Comprehensive Plan 2014

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Ray, North Dakota as it looks today

# INTRODUCTION

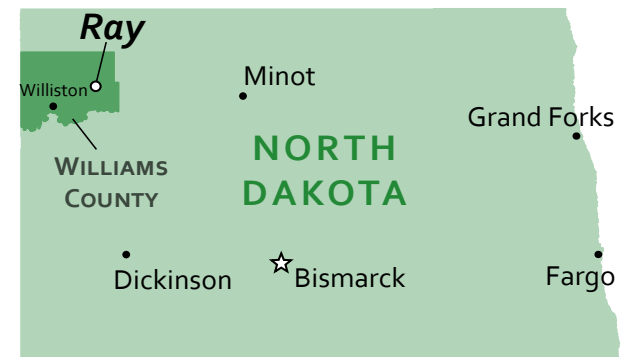
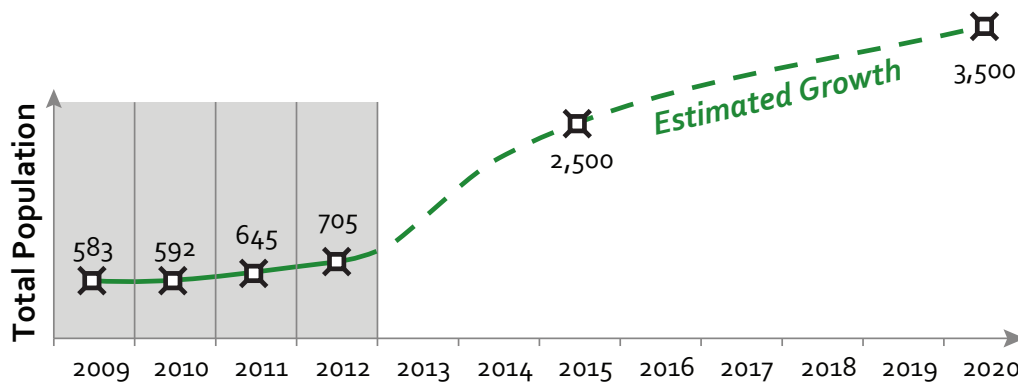
## Ray, North Dakota is growing.

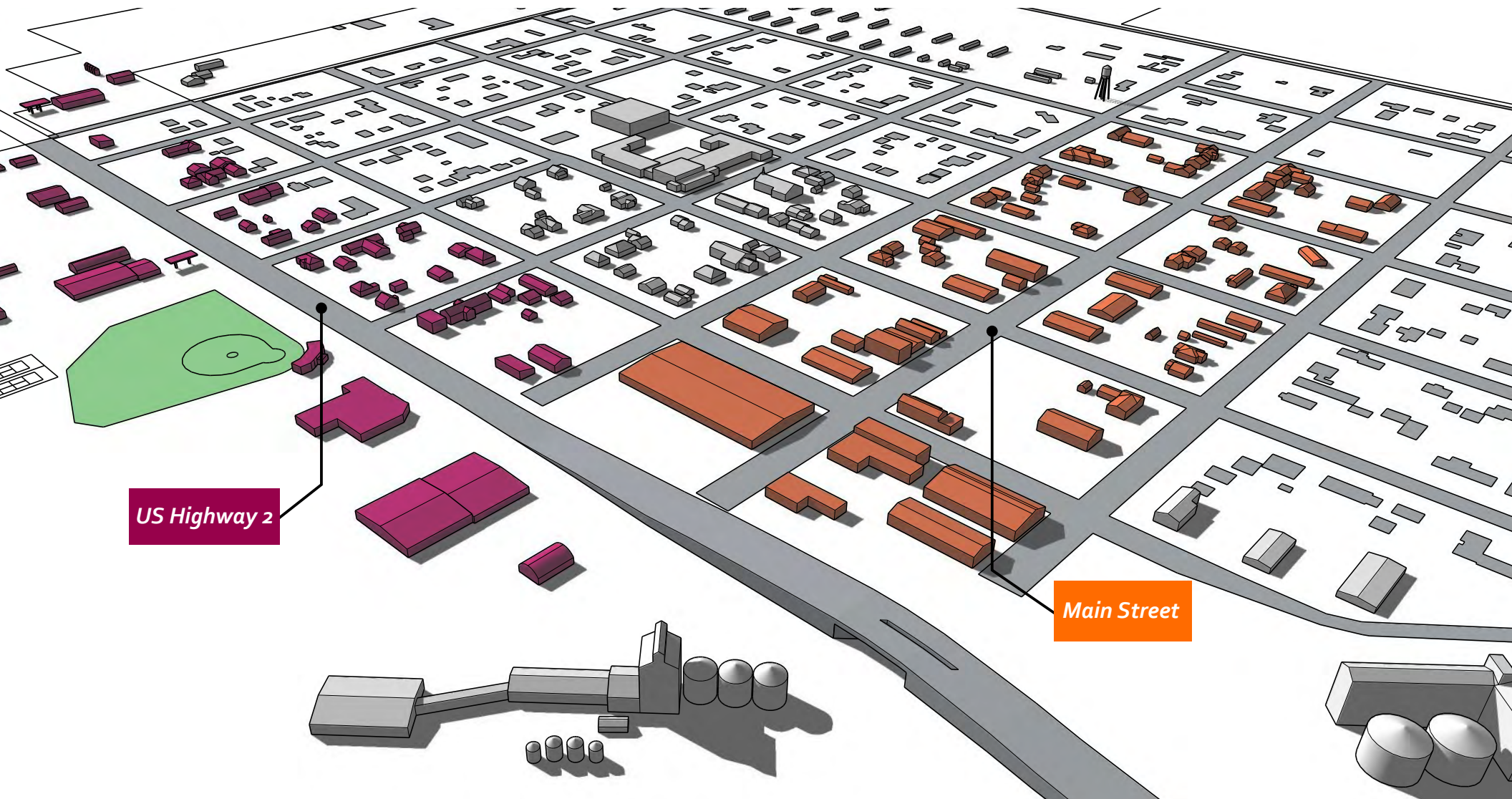
The rural city of about 600 people is going to triple, or possibly quadruple in the coming years from continued development of the Bakken oil field. Ray is ready to grow, and the city has made public infrastructure improvements that will enable added capacity for public services where it currently is lacking.

Because of Ray's ideal position along US Highway 2 in Williams County, it is a choice location for housing and commercial or industrial facilities. This has increased the city's development pressure in recent years as the boom expands. A major concern for the

community is that Ray's small town, agricultural character will be quickly overwhelmed by the oil and gas industry's large-scale facilities and housing needed for its workers.

With this in mind, city leaders have embarked on this comprehensive planning effort to clearly define the *citizens' vision for growth* so developers can more easily advance compatible projects. Specifically focused on the *form and design* rather than the specific use or activity of a building, this Comprehensive Plan is a *guide to the physical development* of the city.





*The US Highway 2 and Main Street Commercial Corridors are the focus of the plan.*

### Plan Structure

This Comprehensive Plan addresses a multitude of topics that apply across all areas of town; but in addition, a great deal of focus is also given to the primary districts where development has historically occurred:

- Main Street
- Highway Two
- Neighborhoods

The city's approach, and backed by resident opinion surveys, in structuring this plan is to direct commercial growth towards the Main Street and Highway Two corridors, since these districts are most suitable and have historic precedence of development. Surrounding these two commercial corridors are Ray's residential neighborhoods.

The objective of this plan is to create a framework for making decisions regarding the physical, social, economic and environmental development of these districts and the broader community. This plan helps proactively address the direction Ray is heading as a community

and helps give confidence to developers regarding project review and land use. It is intended to be long-range, and it anticipates future problems and opportunities.

The Comp Plan is also action-oriented. A summary of implementation strategies is included at the end to provide guidance to

citizens and public officials on decisions of local governance.

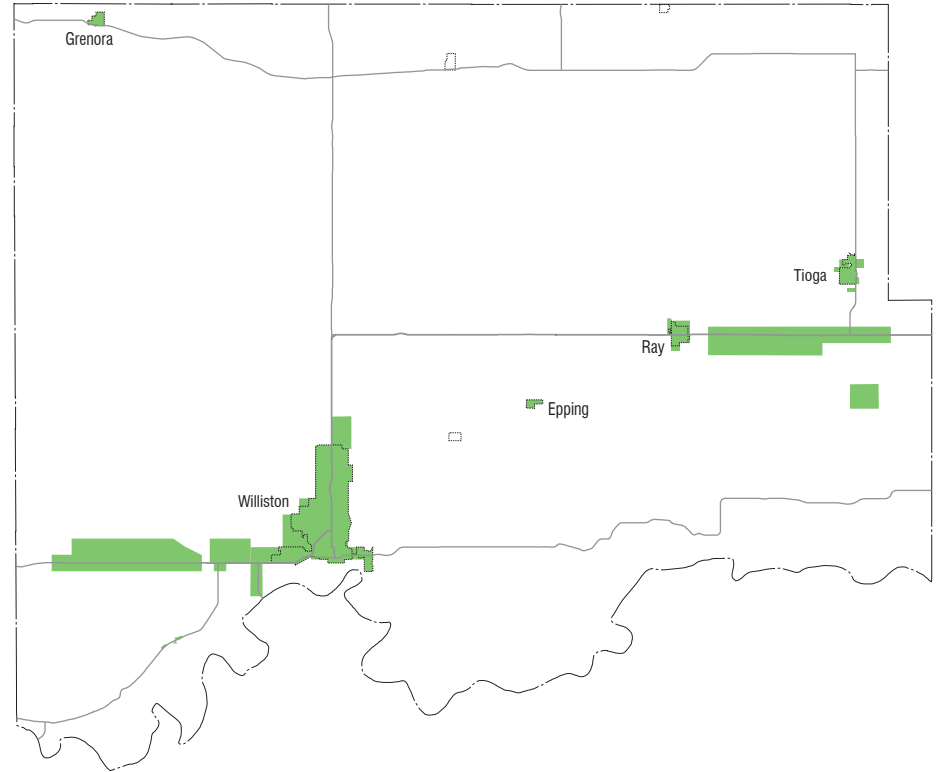
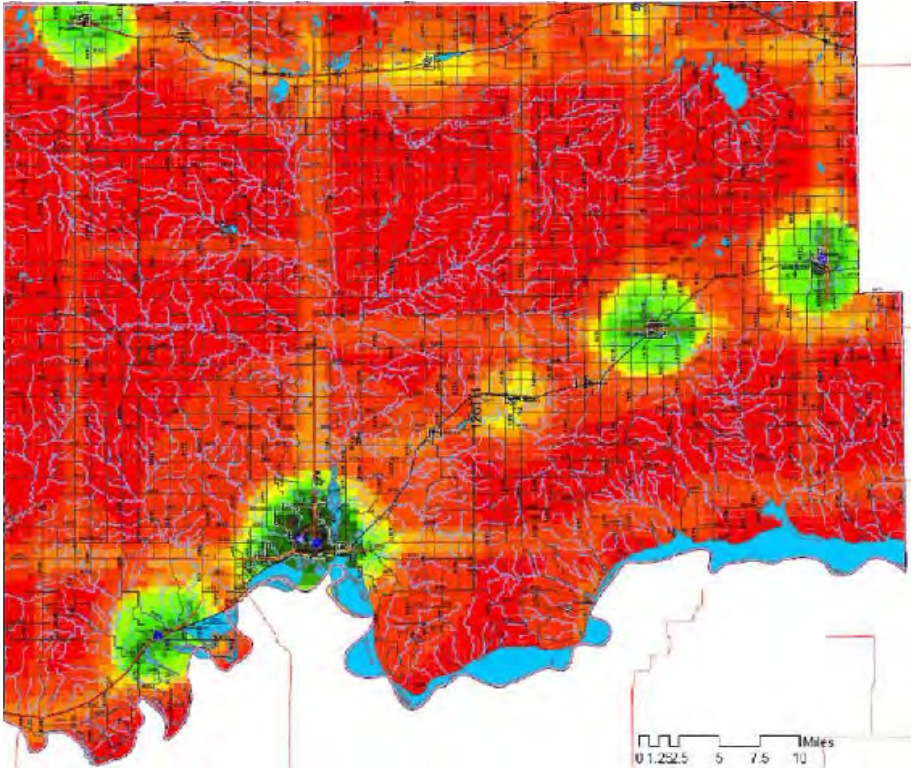
A supplementary tool of this Plan is the design guidelines, which are reflective of Ray's existing and historic building types, projected growth patterns, and most importantly, the community's input.

## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Using the district approach, this plan recommends a specific urban form, building placement and architectural character for all new growth. The Comprehensive Plan is implemented through the Conditional Use Permit process in the Official Zoning Ordinance (Part 7 of the Municipal Ordinance).

- 1 » IDENTIFY THE PROPERTY'S ZONE DISTRICT
- 2 » IDENTIFY THE PROPERTY'S COMP PLAN OVERLAY DISTRICT
- 3 » IDENTIFY THE PROPERTY'S DESIGN STANDARDS
- 4 » COMPLETE CHECKLIST
- 5 » CITY STAFF REVIEWS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH ZONING, COMP PLAN AND DESIGN STANDARDS

If the project is compatible with the intent of the Comp Plan, and in compliance with zoning and design standards, then the conditional use permit process is bypassed. City officials want to create a clear and simple guide for new development. Creating detailed guidelines and clear steps removes ambiguity in the approval process and helps move compatible projects through more quickly.



## Setting the Stage

The most recent oil boom is several years old, and the world now knows about the pace of growth in Williston and Williams County. What is not as well known is how small towns in the region like Ray, Tioga, Stanley or Crosby are targeted to capture a significant portion of the growth, often more than a proportional amount.

The series of maps at left come from regional comprehensive planning efforts in Williams County. The “heat map” at top left is the county’s growth efficiency map that calculates the appropriateness of land for new growth based on existing infrastructure, services and environmental sensitivity. Outside of Williston, Ray, Crosby and Tioga are the best equipped to accommodate growth. However, these places are dealing with overburdened infrastructure issues with wastewater ponds operating past their design capacity. Areas in green on the map at top right are areas dedicated by the county for new growth, which also suggests that

existing towns, not agricultural areas, are the most appropriate.

Ray is in the cross-hairs for new development, and the momentum is increasing. Recent capital projects either in the works or already completed include:

- Reconstruction of water lines
- Wastewater pond expansion
- New water storage tank
- New solid waste facilities

Once completed, these projects make Ray even more suitable for the variety of facilities and amenities that are needed in the oil field, including housing for employees, truck shops, offices, retailers, c-stores, restaurants and gas stations.

# HISTORY

In order to clearly establish Ray's path moving forward, it's essential that we examine what brought the city to this point. Fortunately, Ray has an extremely rich history upon which to draw inspiration. Growing from a simple, tarpaper shack in 1887 that serviced the Great Northern Railroad, Ray has had significant success at leveraging past booms to build a thriving community.

## Cycle of Booms

The first surge occurred in the early 1900's as homesteaders caught word of the remarkable farming conditions that existed in the country surrounding Ray. The city grew rapidly from its establishment in 1902 until around 1920, while it served as the primary supply point for neighboring communities that lacked rail service. The 1910 census listed 673 settlers in Equality Township, the region surrounding the City of Ray.

In 1903, at one year of age, Ray attracted approximately 3,000 people to its first Fourth of July parade (Figure 2). As part of this tradition, the community was awoken at sunrise with gunshots, and

shortly after, the contests would begin. The 1909 celebration even included a diving contest into Lake McLeod. By 1915, state politicians were choosing Ray's Fourth of July festivities as the launching point for their political careers.

The second influx of residents came after the 1938 Nesson test well was drilled sixteen miles south of Ray. Unfortunately, this site never struck oil but it did set off a frenzy of exploration activity. By 1951, success at the Clarence Iverson #1 well



*Main Street in its heyday, 1912 Fourth of July Parade*

site initiated an influx of oil field workers and large lease checks to landowners in the area. Similar to the current boom, school enrollment rose, and several trailer courts and new motels were constructed in town to house to the transient workers.



*Signs of the region's first oil boom*

By the late 1970's, another boom related to increased oil prices had taken hold in the region. A burst of residential development and exploration activities happened once again, and when prices collapsed in 1984, workers and their families left as Main Street businesses began to close.

Today's Bakken oil boom is occurring primarily due to improved drilling technology. The challenge that now faces these cities is how to encourage development patterns that build communities capable of lasting beyond the present boom.

### **Development Patterns**

The first substantial development occurred in 1902 when the Ray Mercantile Company opened its doors just weeks after the town was initially surveyed, platted and registered. Over the next few years, many commercial businesses established a home in Ray: Linwell Bank, Prosser Drug Store (1903), the Community Auditorium (1916), Bijou Theatre (1912), and the Nationally Registered Historic Ray Opera House (1904). More recent structures include the Grain Palace (1984) and the Ray Mall, both of which are currently undergoing substantial updates.

In 1942, Ray's railroad underpass was opened marking the completion of U.S.

Highway Two as a paved road from coast to coast. By 1998, it was replaced with the overpass that exists today.

The City of Ray faces many challenges associated with the Highway Two overpass. It has allowed increased traffic flow and speeds directly through town and cut off access to Main Street. Despite this, though, planning consultants believe there is great opportunity for Main Street redevelopment within this buffered and easily walkable Main Street corridor.



*Main Street circa 1954*

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement process for this Comprehensive Plan was a multi-faceted endeavor created to gather valuable input and discuss Ray's path moving forward. In early April 2014, a three-day series of stakeholder and Town Hall meetings occurred across the community. Planning consultants met with a number of focus groups, including:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Development Board
- High School Students
- Senior Citizens Group
- Historic Museum Representatives
- Fire and Emergency Services



Town Hall Meeting, April 2014

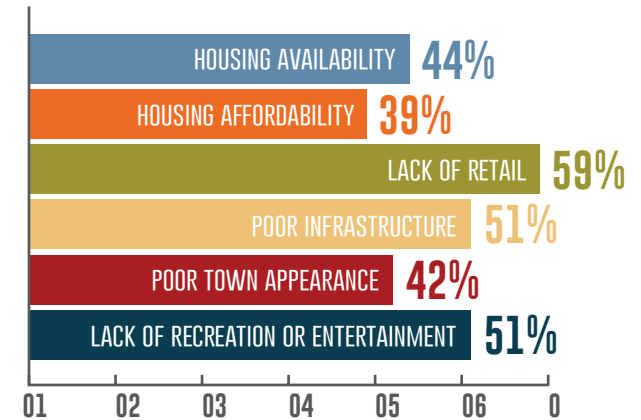
The City of Ray was involved at many levels with several preliminary meetings in advance of the Town Halls that included the Mayor and City Commission, Parks Board and Planning Board. The various stakeholders provided a wide range of perspectives and needs, all of which have been incorporated into the goals and objectives of this Comp Plan.

Discussions primarily centered on existing assets and qualities worth preserving, barriers to growth, proposed changes or improvements, and goals for accomplishing the community's vision.

In August of 2014, the planning team presented a draft version of the plan to the City of Ray Planning Board. Along with input from city officials, the public provided additional feedback and revisions. Adjustments were made as recommended by the board and a final draft was presented in September of 2014. For approval, the plan will be reviewed by city staff and presented to the Ray Commission for final adoption.

## CRITICAL ISSUES

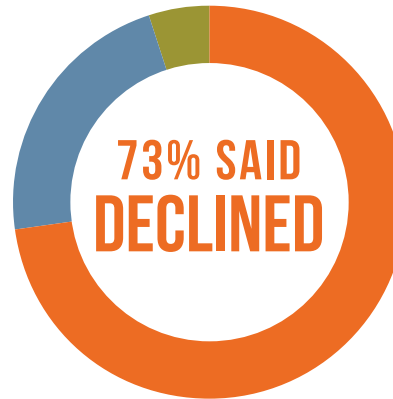
What do you think are the top critical issues facing the City of Ray today?



### Survey and Opinion Poll

During the public meetings in April, over sixty completed surveys were received, representing 8.5% of Ray's population (based on the 2012 estimate of 705 residents). Other direct input came from public polling questions at the second Town Halls.

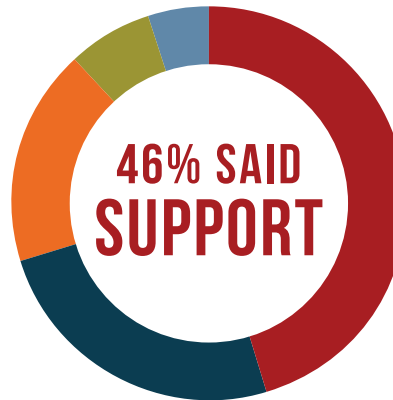
Of the respondents, 78% stated they lived in the City of Ray. 55% were male and 45% were female. Half were either very satisfied or satisfied living in Ray, yet almost three-quarters felt their quality of life had declined over the last five years. Comments concerning the city's decline primarily focused on poor appearance, lack of retail and affordable housing, and deteriorating roads and sidewalks.



### QUALITY OF LIFE

Over the past five years, how do you believe Ray's quality of life has changed?

- 5% Improved
- 22% Stayed the Same
- 73% Declined



### GROWTH POLICIES

How strongly do you support or oppose policies regarding commercial growth in Ray?

- 25% Strongly Support
- 46% Support
- 18% Neutral
- 7% Oppose
- 14% Strongly Oppose



### GROWTH IN TARGETED DISTRICTS

If you support commercial growth, should it be directed to Ray's primary corridors: Highway Two and Main Street?

- 73% Yes
- 18% No, it can go anywhere
- 9% Other Specific Area in Town

"Ray's new water lines have really improved the city's water quality."

"I think that Ray has experienced a wash of positive and negative changes over the past five years."

"Ray has become overcrowded and law enforcement can't keep up. The City's small town character is being affected."



*Town Hall Meeting, April 2014*

"The new addition and remodel of the public school has been great for the community."

"Lack of family housing is a major problem for the community."



Town Hall Meeting, April 2014

"Ray's cleanliness and visual appeal has gone down over the past five years."

"Ray needs more retail, dining and recreation options."

New stop lights and water - sewer infrastructure on Highway Two have had a positive impact.

"The City needs to improve its sidewalks and streets. They're in really bad shape."

"There are too many campers, RVs and mobile homes in Ray's neighborhoods. This takes away from the family appeal."

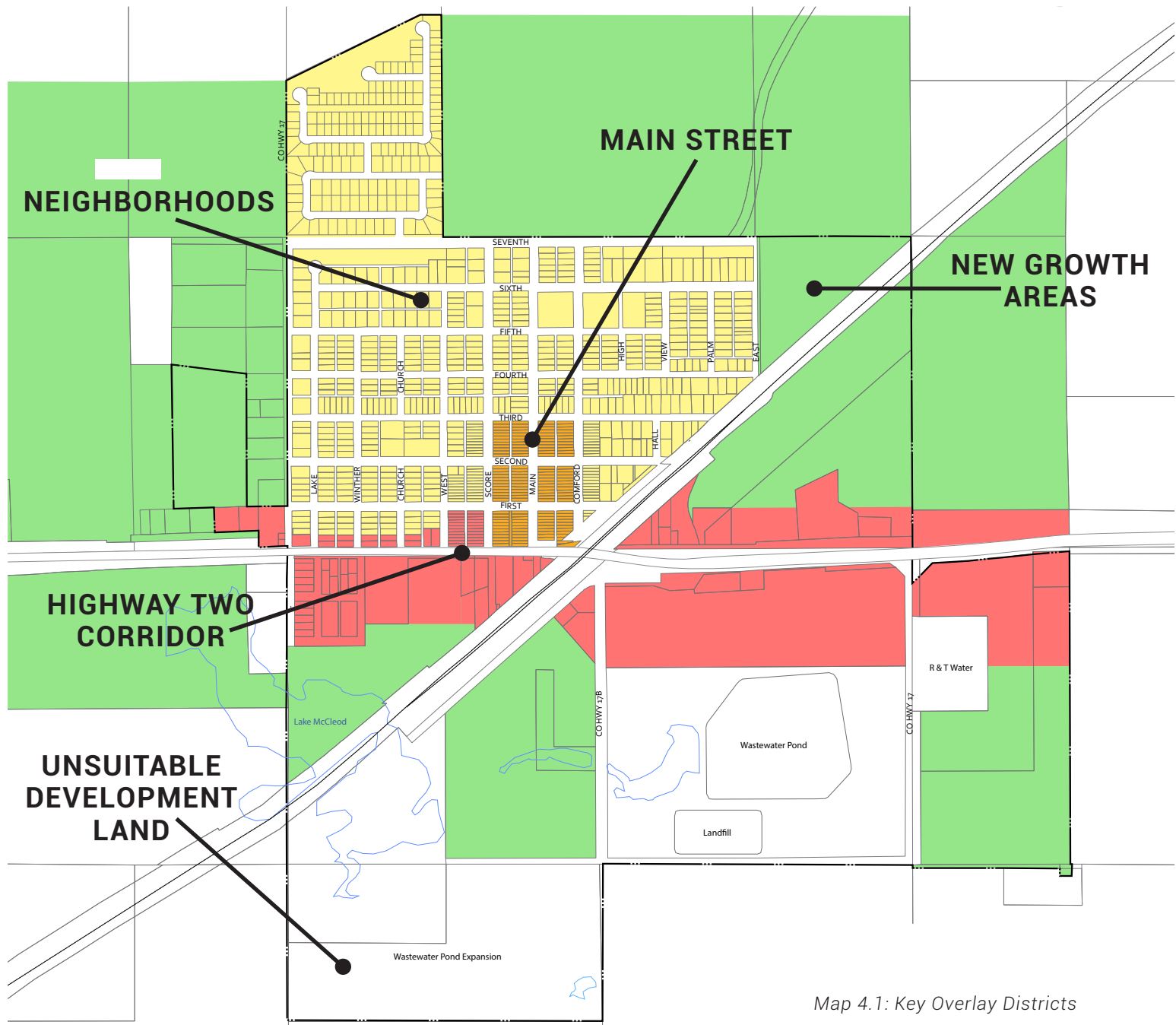
# KEY DISTRICTS

The key overlay districts shown on Map 4.1 illustrate the distinguishing development patterns for the City of Ray. Parcels identified within each district are subject to certain standards that aim for cohesion and compatibility. Each area has its own unique identity generated from its historic pattern of development. Rather than dilute each district's character with an "anything goes" approach, it's important to highlight and promote those features which make each area distinct.

## Transition Zones

Transition zones can help create a sense of separation between the districts. This can include landscaping and other site improvements within the public realm which act as visual queues for those unfamiliar with the area. The addition of community gateway features on each end of Highway Two would provide the necessary signals to vehicular traffic and stand as a welcoming first impression of the City of Ray. Signage would also be useful near the intersection of Score Street and Highway Two to help direct traffic towards Main Street.





Map 4.1: Key Overlay Districts

## Area Profiles

The following sections provide a basic assessment of the environment, characteristics and primary landmarks of each district.

### Highway Two

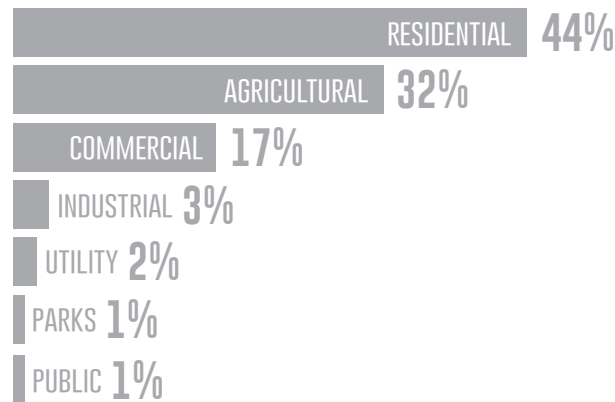
Existing commercial buildings and related uses are dispersed along Highway Two with the surrounding area being predominantly residential. Buildings along the highway benefit from high visibility and easy access, so features like large parking lots, freestanding signs and large setbacks are common.

This district began to take shape mid-century when in 1942, the railroad underpass was finished, marking the completion of Hwy Two as a paved road from coast to coast. The increasingly auto-centric culture arising during this time period helped shape the district's existing layout.

Certain regional businesses such as gas stations and other convenience stores preferred locations along highway corridors. Sports fields, the rodeo

grounds, a campground and other amenities have also located in this area. Some residential uses line the north side of the highway at the west entrance to town.

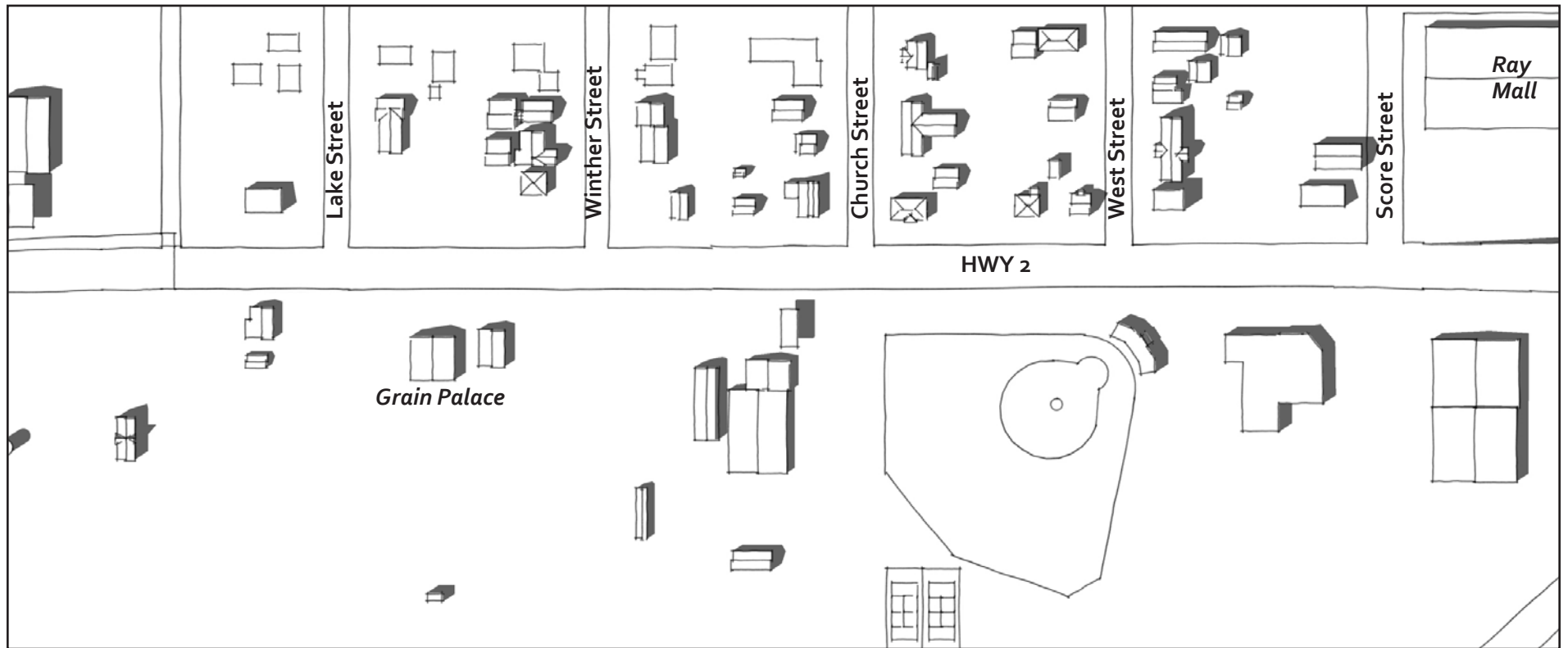
- Characteristics: set back, spread apart, horizontal, vehicle-oriented, traffic signage, accessible
- Building Height: 12 ft. to 80 ft. (tallest buildings are the grain elevators along the railroad)
- Building Size: 1,500 to 40,000 square feet
- Parcel Size: 7,000 sq. ft. to 50 acres
- Landmark Features: Grain elevators, the Grain Palace, Hwy Two overpass
- Estimated Number of Structures: 98



Building Use in Hwy Two District



Views of Highway Two District

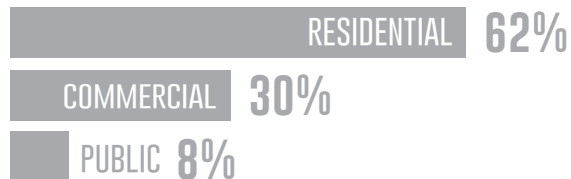


### Main Street

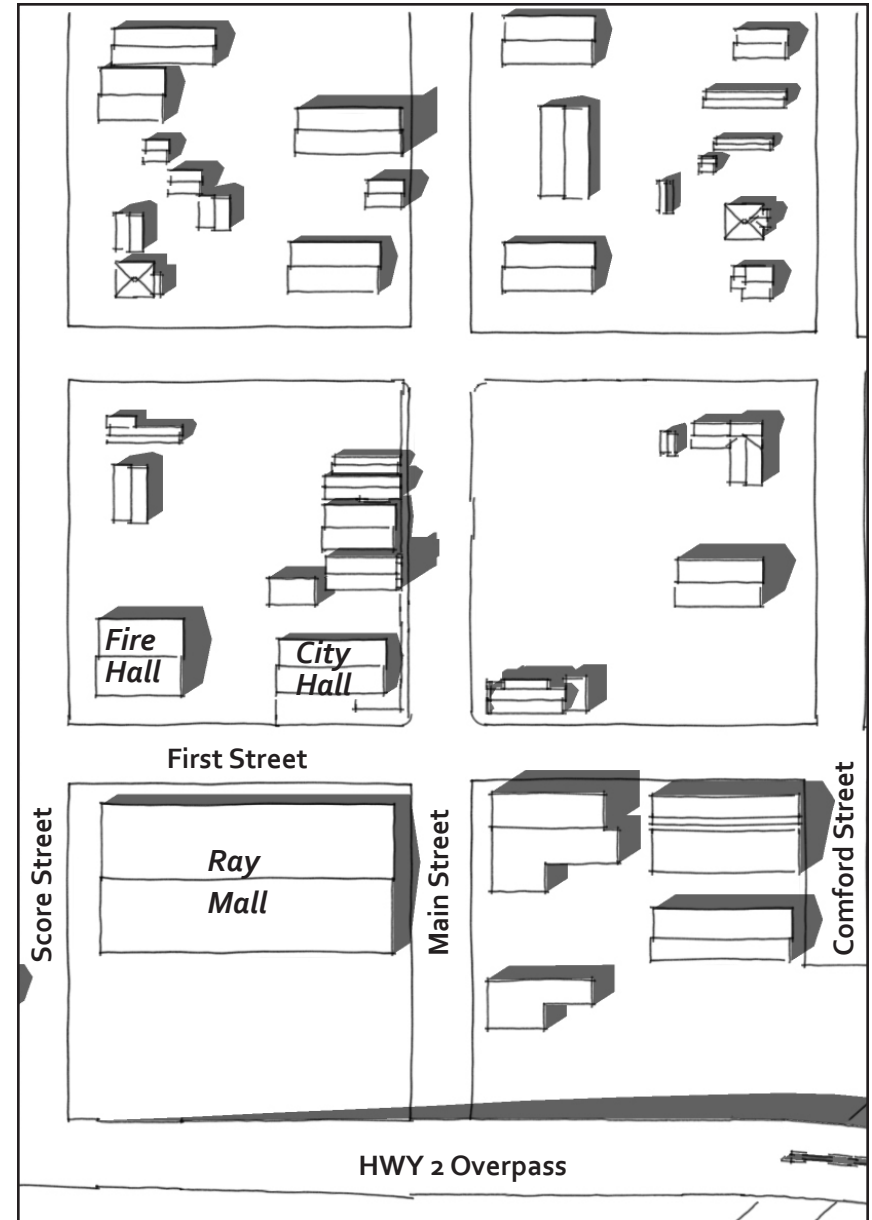
Like many small rural communities, Ray's historic downtown has unfortunately seen a steady decline since its heyday in the early 20th century. Very few structures remain that are historic in character. Traditionally, these would have been tightly spaced, aligned to the street and sidewalks, one or two stories, and exhibit a rhythmic placement of large, display windows. Oftentimes, structures also had false-front facades with elaborate cornices to convey an air of stability and dignity. These elements combined to establish a horizontal emphasis along the streetscape.

Today, the Main Street District consists primarily of newer structures that accommodate local services such as City Hall and the Fire Department, as well as community-serving businesses like the Ray Mall. Most of these buildings do not match the traditional character of Main Street. Residences surrounding the north, east and west side of downtown, while the Highway Two District abuts the south edge.

- Characteristics: commercial, pedestrian-oriented, public, historic
- Building Height: 12 ft. to 30 ft.
- Building Size: 500 to 10,000 square feet
- Parcel Size: 7,000 square feet to 2 acres
- Landmark Features: Historic Opera House & Museum, Auditorium
- Estimated Number of Structures: 37



Building Use in Main Street District





Views of Main Street District



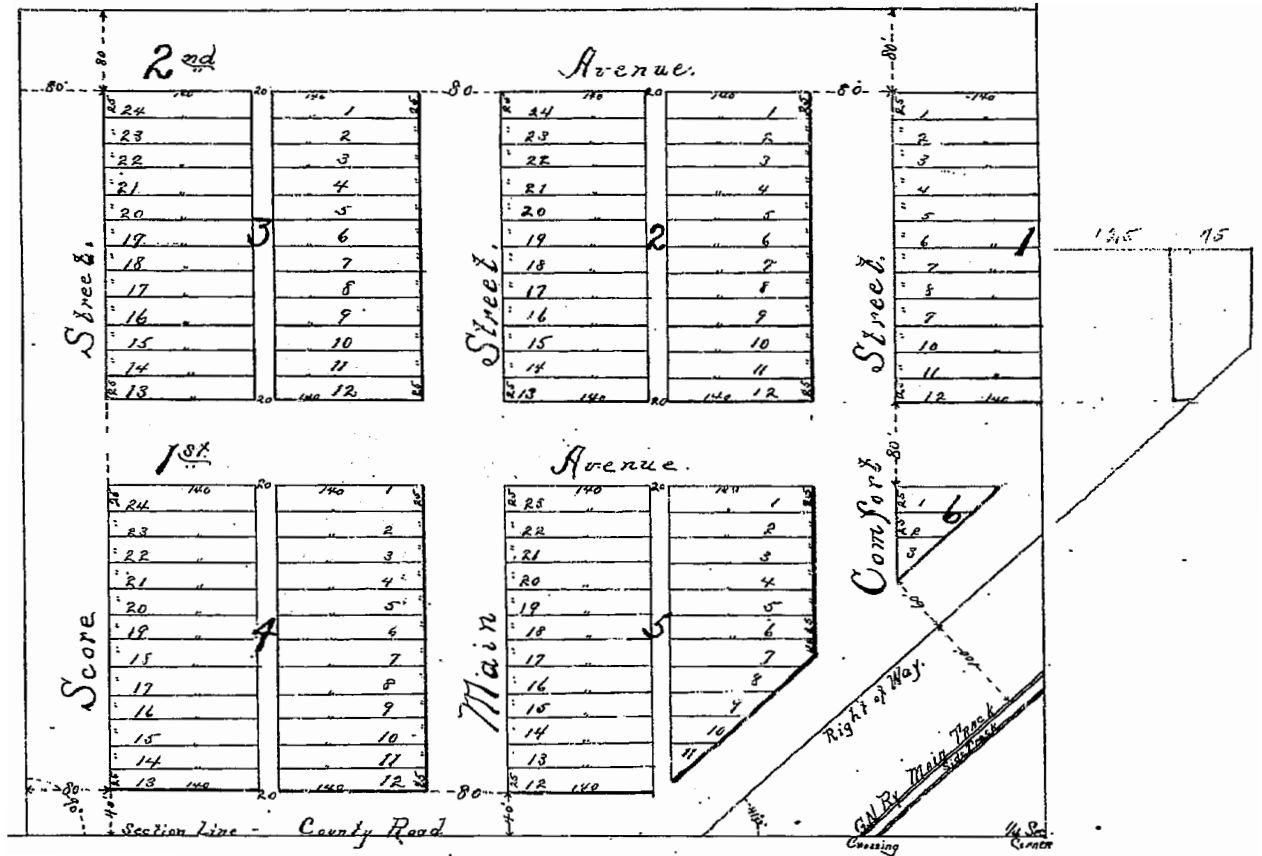
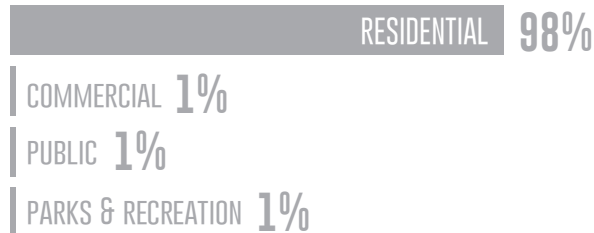
Nationally Registered Historic Ray Opera House (1904) adjacent to a new commercial structure.

### Neighborhoods

Ray's grided network of blocks, streets and alleys grew from the town's original plat completed in 1902. As the city has grown, additions have more-or-less maintained this lattice pattern. Houses are commonly set back from the front property line, and usually modest in scale, allowing for substantial yard space.

Within the primary neighborhoods north of Highway Two, approximately three blocks are designated park space. In 2010, there were about 300 housing units in Ray's neighborhoods, all of them single-family homes or duplexes. Today, because of the influx of oil field workers, mobile homes and RVs are commonly seen amongst the more traditional homes. This is causing a bit of a clash between neighbors as the long-established fabric begins to change.

- Characteristics: residential, landscaped, open space, pedestrian-oriented, detached secondary buildings, steeply pitched roofs, grided street layout with alleys
- Building Height: 10 ft. to 24 ft.
- Building Size: 200 to 5,500 square ft.
- Parcel Size: 10,000 square feet to 1.5 acres
- Landmark Features: Ray water tower, Ray Public School
- Estimated Number of Structures: 417



Building Use in Neighborhood District

1902 Original Ray Town Plat



*Views of Neighborhood District*

### *New Growth Areas*

This district generally encompasses the unplatted lands (e.g. not part of the original townsite, a historical addition or a named subdivision) both within and immediately adjacent to the corporate boundary. These areas can accommodate new growth in the near future and typically share the following characteristics:

- Capable of having municipal services (water, wastewater, roads) extended to the site without causing an unreasonable financial burden to the city or the developer
- Largely vacant or used for agricultural purposes
- Not considered environmentally hazardous land, such as flood zones, unsuitable soils or sensitive wildlife habitat
- Not considered socially or culturally sensitive land, such as cemeteries, historically significant areas, cultural resources as designated by local, state or federal entities

Historically, Ray has annexed land according to the need to accommodate new additions or subdivisions. However, there is considerable undeveloped space within the corporate boundary that could be utilized for new projects. Much of this land is vacant or agricultural, and is zoned General Commercial/Industrial or Residential. The city employs its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) to apply zoning to lands within one-mile of the city. Areas zoned Residential-1, General Commercial Industrial or Highway Commercial are considered the most appropriate for short-term development in the one-mile ETJ area. All other lands within one-mile of the city are zoned Agricultural.

It is the intent of the New Growth Areas district to create a logical pattern of future growth by accommodating a variety of developments that meet the criteria and design guidelines listed in the Growth Framework.



*Vacant land north of Ray suitable for new development*

# KEY ISSUES



## Land Use and Buildings

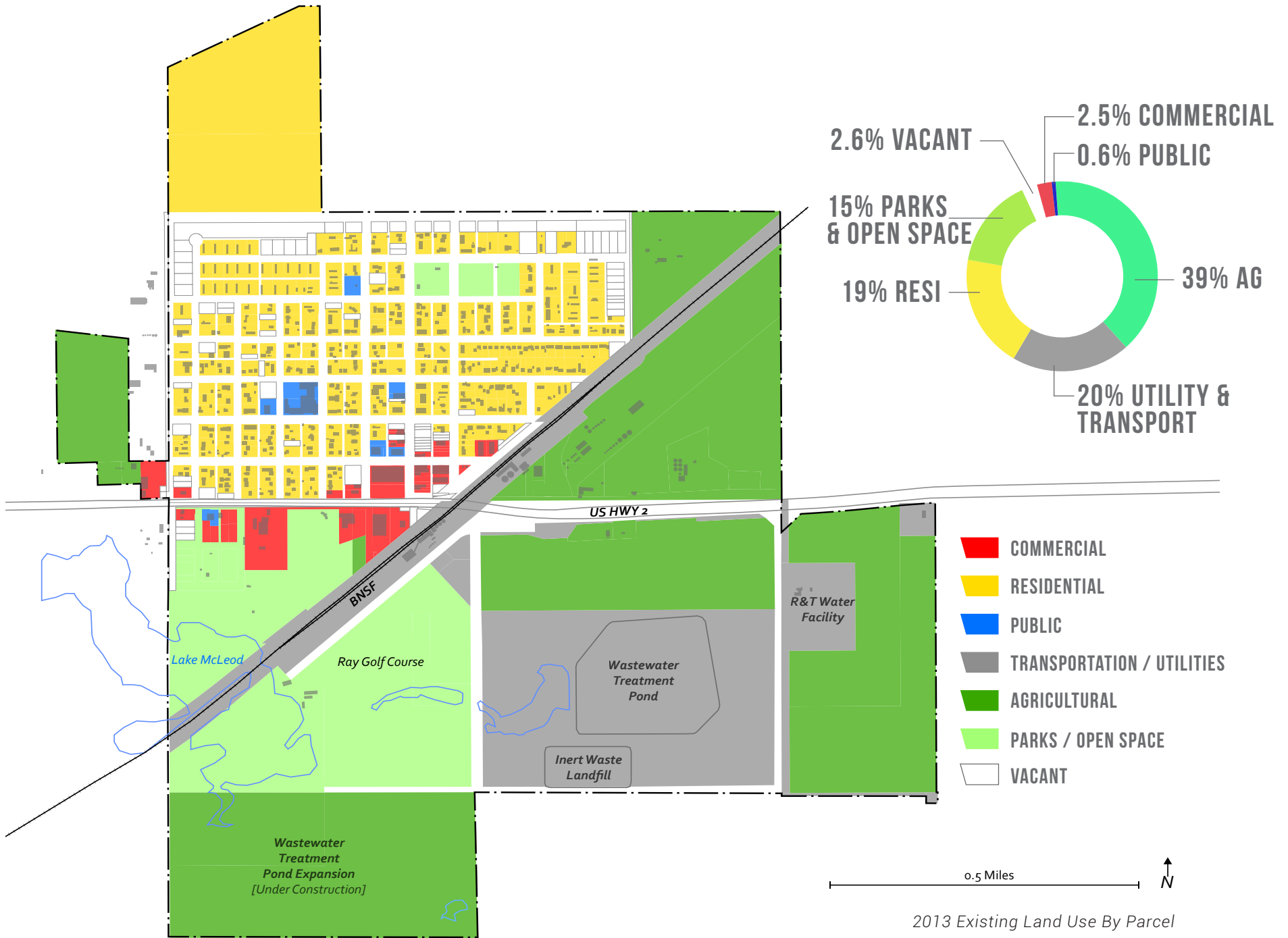
Many towns in northwestern North Dakota are historically agricultural settlements established by pioneering homesteaders. As a result, most of the land outside town is still used for those purposes, and land inside the city is used for homes, businesses and light industries associated with agricultural production.

The city occupies an area of about 1.4 square miles, and a significant portion of this is still used for agriculture. Most homes and businesses are in Ray's northwest quarter, while the south half and east quarter are largely wetlands or farm fields. Presently, land on the fringe of the city is becoming occupied by steel structures that house industrial, commercial or oil and gas uses.

In 2010, during the beginning of the current boom, modular and mobile homes quickly filled vacant land inside the city limits. Once lots became scarce and the population continued to grow, the city annexed additional acreage near

the northwest boundary which was then subdivided into single family parcels and mobile home lots. The city also annexed areas to the west and south to accommodate a hotel, apartment complex, and the wastewater pond expansion project.

Only a small percentage of land inside city boundaries is occupied by the platted town. Agriculture is the largest use by land area at almost 40% of the total. Second is Transportation and Utilities, taking up 20% while Residential uses occupy 15%. Parks and Open Spaces, including the Ray Golf Course and the two large parks account for 15%, or about 260 acres. Currently, there are about 45 acres of vacant land (tracts or lots with no structures) and commercial uses occupy only 2.5%.



### Existing Zoning

In North Dakota, enabling legislation for planning and zoning was first enacted in 1923 for cities (Source: Vision West ND Regional Plan). In conjunction with this, the North Dakota Century Code requires that every city and county that wishes to exercise zoning authority have a Comprehensive Plan in place (NDCC Section 40-47-03).

In August of 2012, Ray revised their zoning code in response to sudden growth. New districts and design standards were derived in response to new goals and emerging development patterns.

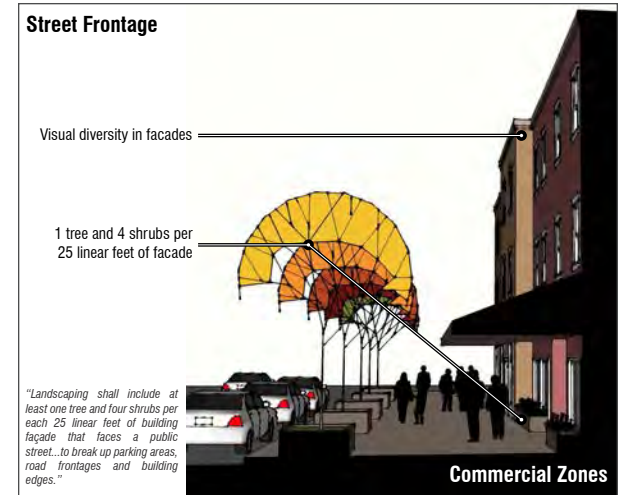
Existing land use generally matches zoning in the developed part of town. The exception is where land is zoned Commercial (specifically General Commercial/Industrial or Highway Commercial) and is instead being used for agricultural or other purposes. The zoning update also included sign regulations and design guidelines. Each zone has specific architectural and landscape features that must be present in new development

as well as varying height restrictions. The design guidelines in the zoning code are an implementation tool for this Comprehensive Plan.

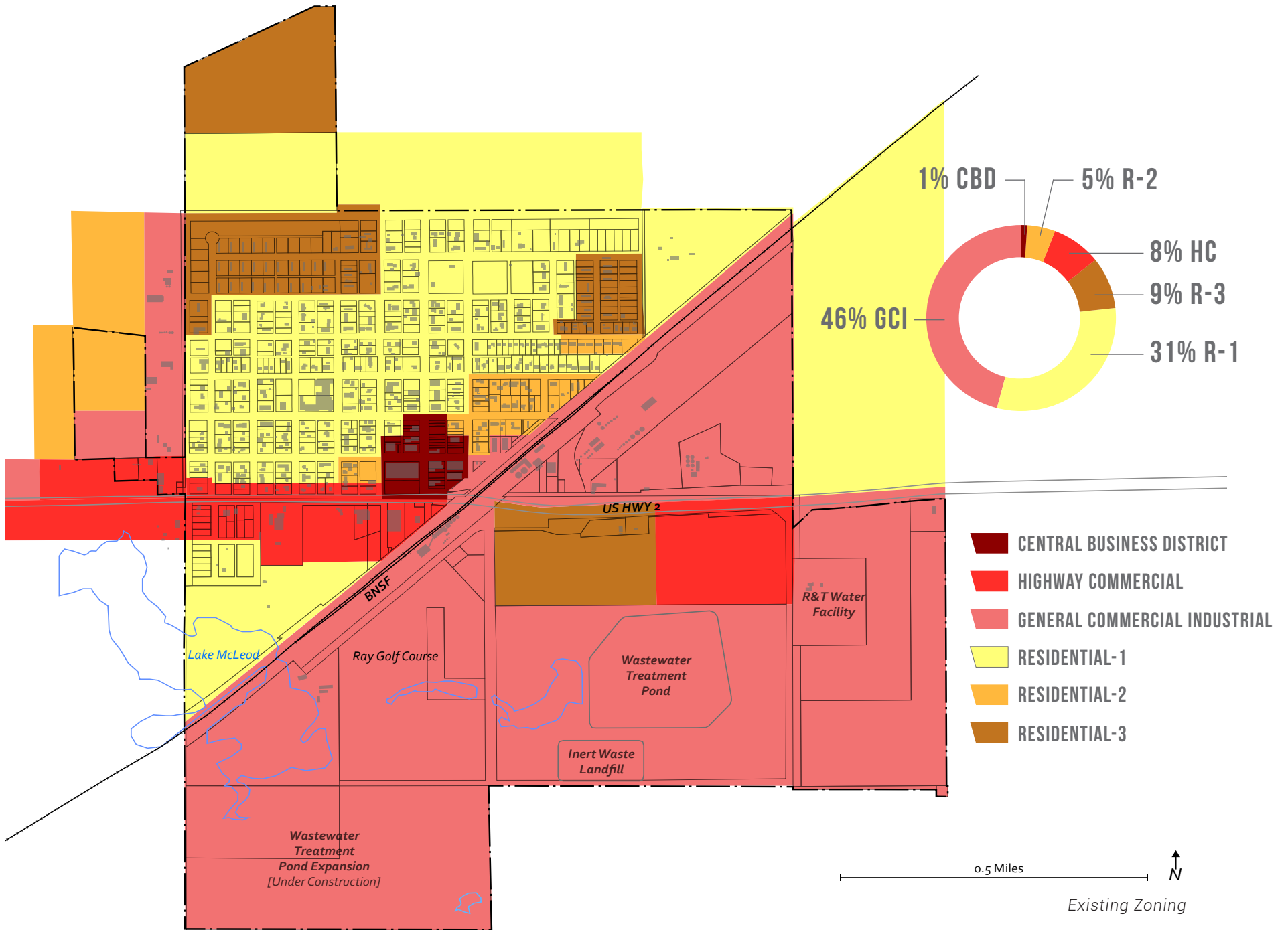
Ray exercises their authority over a one-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) area that is zoned Agricultural. Residential and Commercial zones extend into the ETJ in places where the town believes it can accommodate development in the short term (see Existing Zoning map). Planning for growth in the ETJ will be addressed in the Growth Framework of this plan.

### Key Issues:

1. Locating new industrial growth appropriately.
2. Preserving prime commercial land.
3. Getting sufficient and affordable housing where it's needed.
4. Preserving agricultural land.



Design guidelines for commercial zones in Ray's Subdivision and Zoning Regulations.





## Transportation

Many of the planning issues in Ray are centered on increased traffic, impacts to streets, pedestrian safety, and an increase in collisions.

Increased truck traffic related to oil field development has caused significant damage to local roads and US Highway 2 through Ray. Until recent reconstruction efforts began, County roads had not seen major updates since originally being built in the mid-20th century. Now with the region facing a five-fold increase in traffic, city officials are having to quickly revise their standard maintenance approach.

The following section on Public Infrastructure identifies specific projects either recently completed or slated to begin in the upcoming years. The City of Ray is taking great strides to resolve lingering issues that hinder efficient and safe transportation routes in the community. Successful planning will require mitigating these impacts and planning for all users of the network.



### Key Issues:

1. Traffic volume has increased substantially especially related to heavy oil field trucks.
2. Speeds through the core of town have created hazardous conditions for pedestrians.
3. Highway Two through town lacks safe pedestrian routes.



**Public Infrastructure**

Rapid growth experienced by the city in recent years has stretched public infrastructure - water, sewer, roads - to the limit of their originally designed capacity. In addition, Ray's Public Works Department struggles with staffing and financing issues, not unlike many small communities in the Bakken region.

Currently, infrastructure projects are funded through a mixture of property tax levies, production tax funding (see distribution graph to right), sales taxes and loans. With production tax funding guaranteed only one more year, the department is forced to focus primarily on the city's immediate needs while trying to budget for future improvements.

Despite these limited resources, the city has made significant strides in recent years. Over 19,000 feet of watermain line has been replaced, 4 1/2 blocks of new sidewalks installed, construction of a new wastewater treatment system and implementation of a city-wide street maintenance program.

The 2014 construction season will mark the beginning of a three year, city-wide patch and chip sealing project and the start of an 8,500 square foot Sanitary Sewer Collection and Treatment improvement project. In addition, the View Street utility trench will be patched and the city-owned Ray Mall parking lot will undergo major site improvements. Also under consideration is a shared-use path along 7th Avenue.

The following projects are slated for the 2015 or 2016 construction cycle:

- 750,000 gallon water tank
- Main Street asphalt overlay
- Score Street reconstruction
- 10 blocks of new sidewalk
- Reconstruction of 3rd & 4th Avenue

Key Issues:

1. Ensuring enough capacity for long-term growth.
2. Finding sufficient funding to complete the necessary improvement projects.
3. Securing human resources/personnel to complete all slated projects over the long term.



**5% DISTRIBUTED TO:**

- 1.8% Counties
- 1.4% Schools
- 0.8% Cities
- 0.7% State General Fund
- 0.3% Oil Impact Fund



## Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement

The Williams County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services for the City of Ray. Currently, the County Sheriff has an office in City Hall.

The Ray Ambulance District and Crash Rescue consists of 16 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and 8 additional drivers that respond to calls within a 644 square mile district surrounding the city. They respond primarily to incidents along the district's Highway Two corridor.

Ray's all-volunteer fire department consists of 30 members. The Fire Hall, located at First Avenue and Score Street, houses all fire and EMS equipment, and is currently undergoing a major renovation that will add 4,000 sq. ft. of additional storage, office and sleeping space.

If population projections continue as this plan is predicting, the major hurdles for fire and emergency services will be funding for additional personnel and equipment upgrades. Both departments go to great lengths to maintain a robust



volunteer workforce so they can keep costs down for the community. They also seek out grants on an annual basis, but recognize that these resources are not guaranteed from one year to the next.

Also, the fire department's lack of a fully-equipped ladder truck limits its ability to service structures taller than two stories. This has a substantial impact on development patterns as the city grows.



Key Issues:

1. Ensuring the highest level of public safety to Ray residents and the surrounding community as the population continues to swell.
2. Provide essential personnel training, updated equipment and adequate staffing as the demand increases and funding sources become uncertain.
3. Safely serving an increased amount of mobile homes in poorly arranged neighborhoods with limited access.



## Parks and Recreation

A diverse set of existing parks and recreation facilities exist within city limits including North Park, Veterans Memorial park, the Rodeo Grounds, and the Ray Golf Course. These are all owned and operated by the Ray Parks District.

These outdoor amenities are highly valued by the community, but during public input, some residents expressed concern over safety in poorly lit areas. Park officials admit that it is increasingly more difficult to obtain the necessary funding for maintenance and upgrades.

### Key Issues:

1. Limited funding for upgrades.
2. In-town vacant land is scarce and becoming prohibitively more expensive for new construction or relocation of existing parks.
3. Limited access to walking and jogging facilities that are protected from vehicular traffic and/or are well lit for non-daylight hours.





## Housing

Lack of housing in Ray was the biggest issue identified repeatedly across all interest groups during the public input meetings. Over the next few years, the challenge will be to increase the supply of affordable, family-oriented housing that will build a community of long-term residents. Many citizens expressed concern that the transient-oriented mobile home parks create blight and instability.

City officials recognize this issue and are taking great strides to remedy the situation while also not jeopardizing the community's long-term health. Since 2010, the city has added 103 new mobile homes, 14 single-family homes, 1 tri-plex and 1 4-plex. In addition, almost every older residence is now occupied or has been substantially renovated to accommodate new occupants. Twenty RV spots house transient workers on an annual basis, and several new subdivisions have been approved that could substantially raise Ray's capacity.



## Key Issues:

1. Providing affordable, family-oriented housing.
2. Ensuring residential development continues in a holistic manner so that a variety of housing types are available to existing and new residents.
3. Clarifying and streamlining development regulations so that developers receive approvals in an efficient manner.
4. Removing blight from residential neighborhoods.
5. Requiring smart land use proposals that don't leave the City with a long-term financial burden.
6. Requiring developers install the necessary infrastructure for new subdivisions prior to final approval to help minimize incomplete developments.





## Economic Development

Keeping existing commercial establishments and attracting new businesses to town is a challenge, yet products and services are greatly needed as new people move in.

Ray has two primary organizations that advocate for the local business community: the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Development Board (CDB). The CDB is the managing arm of the Ray Mall which currently provides space for 15 businesses with capacity of up to 18.

The Chamber, CDB and public officials are all working to maintain a stable economic climate in Ray in spite of a lack of affordable housing for employees. The City is committed to continually improving facilities and infrastructure, including signage, lighting and other public amenities, that foster a vibrant community. Officials recognize that investments in the public realm will be beneficial to all of Ray's businesses.



Ray's primary assets are its quality school system, highway access, golf course and Northwest Communications Cooperative (NCC). NCC is the largest employer in the community and is a great telecommunications resource for local and regional businesses.

Key Issues:

1. Filling vacant property and revitalizing downtown after years of decline.
2. Providing affordable housing options to employees across all sectors of the economy.
3. Maintaining a diverse range of businesses that meet all of the community's basic needs.

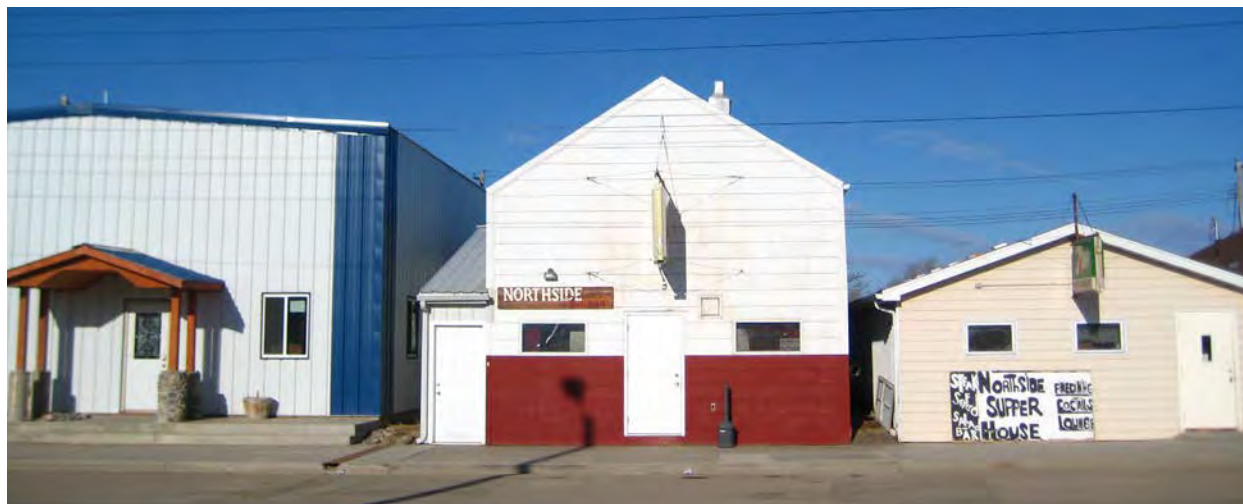


### Town Design

The first commercial structures in Ray were very simple boxes made of shiplap lumber. The tightly-fit, overlapping boards provided excellent weather protection built from inexpensive wood. As the community grew, businesses started to utilize stamped-tin siding to resemble the more ornate sandstone bricks. Today, the Ray Opera House and City Auditorium still exhibit this type of siding.

Ray's Main Street businesses commonly included large display windows to showcase merchandise to passersby. Hand-cranked awnings attached to the building's facade helped with shading. Structures were typically 25 feet wide and stretched almost 100 feet to the alley with loading and refuse in the back. Additionally, corner businesses had angular recessed entries. The majority of downtown establishments followed this development pattern.

By 1915, when Ray experienced an influx of merchants, masons and construction workers, many residents and a few

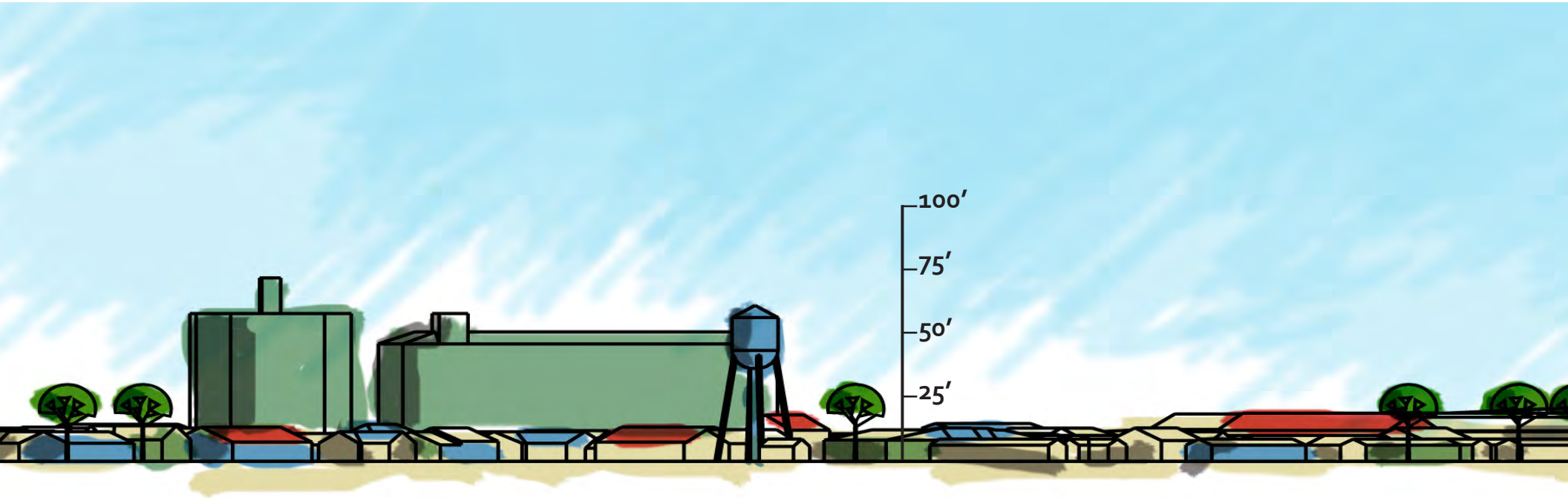


business owners began utilizing brick and quarried stone as their primary materials.

In terms of use, it was common for Main Street commercial establishments to offer residential space above their businesses for additional income. Even as late as the 1950s, when the first oil boom arrived, the demand for housing made these units extremely beneficial to business owners. Furthermore, lighting and landscaping along Main Street and in neighborhoods kept the area vibrant and welcoming.

(Source: Ray North Dakota, The First 100 Years)

Many of these traditional features have slowly disappeared over the last half century or more. In an effort to recapture the historic vibrancy of downtown Ray, new developments should be sensitive to these long-established design practices.



In great contrast from the historic downtown design is the Highway Two Commercial District. Development here occurs in response to the four-lane highway which cuts through the district. Structures tend to be long and flat, taking advantage of large lots and utilizing a significant amount of parking. They also tend to lack ornamentation, landscaping and they more closely resemble warehouses or metal sheds.

Wherever possible, new development should add interest by using a diversity of materials, articulating surfaces and creating pedestrian-scaled facades so that the district is visually appealing. Simple additions to the site, such as benches and landscaping, will create a much more welcoming environment.

#### Key Issues:

1. Requiring historically-compatible designs in all new downtown development.
2. Providing an appropriate mix of uses in the downtown district.
3. Requiring landscaping and other site improvements in new development.
4. Pedestrian safety and beautification of the Highway Two Commercial District.



*Building height and form, looking southwest*

### *Physical Form*

The physical form of Ray is one of contrasts with large, small, tall and flat often in close proximity with one another. Several 60-80 foot tall grain elevators dominate the sky along the rail line, creating a prominent marker of town from miles around. In the city, most buildings are small, one to two story structures. Building footprints often take up most of their small lots, while residences are characterized by pitched roof lines and simple shapes.

One of the greatest challenges for the city's design and aesthetic appeal is creating consistency within the various districts. Although no two structures will be the same and, in actuality, some variation is encouraged, development should be compatible and promote an interactive environment. Adhering to these principles will help create a sense of place for the community.

# GROWTH FRAMEWORK »

The Growth Framework provides policy and design guidance for new growth in the City of Ray.



The *Community Vision* was developed through an assessment of existing conditions and public input. This vision will be achieved through the *Key Principles*. These principles are policy statements that inform land use decisions within each of the *Key Districts*. The *Design Guidelines* are illustrative examples of how the built environment should be constructed and they represent one form of implementation of the community's vision.

## COMMUNITY VISION

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***The City of Ray is a dynamic, friendly and family-oriented community with a rich history and an exceptional quality of life. It embodies the rugged, independent character of the West and beckons those who wish to live a simpler life.***

***Its farms and ranches are productive, its people are ambitious and hard-working, and the community's values are steadfast. Natural resources are a part of the landscape, and will remain so as the community grows. Proud, historic and forward-thinking, Ray leverages its invaluable qualities and resources to set an example of the next generation western town.***

---

This statement expresses the vision of Ray's citizens and leaders, and is the first step in creating standards for the town's physical form.

# KEY PRINCIPLES

## 1. Meet the Growth Demand

Demand for growth driven by the increasing population of oil field workers has put pressure on small towns to accommodate development. As such, this plan intends to attract good projects to town and expedite their progress to meet some of this demand.

## 2. Attract High Quality Projects

A high quality project is one that meets the Design Guidelines in this document. Higher quality development can cost more, however it is known that low quality projects become a burden on the city and its residents over time. The city can only afford to move forward by approving and building the best projects the market will bear.

“High quality” can be an abstract term. To clarify, attempts were made to verbally and visually define a high quality project. Nevertheless, with any large development proposal some level of negotiation will occur between public and private entities. The primary intent is that the project does not become a physical or financial burden on the greater community.

## 3. Grow from the Inside First

Growth should occur in a logical manner. In practice this means public services, such as roads, water, sewer and stormwater facilities as well as community amenities, grow outward from existing development. Most of Ray's existing amenities -- neighborhood businesses, senior services, churches, the school and parks -- are in town near the neighborhoods. As the city grows out, it is important to also plan for the growth of these amenities.

Additionally, growing from the inside reduces costs for providing services and represents the city's commitment to long-term financial stability. It also preserves the agricultural land that gives Ray the pastoral quality cherished by so many of its residents.

#### **4. Build Upon the Historical Town Design**

Ray was platted in 1902 by a townsite locator working for the Great Northern Railroad. The original layout was a simple grid of 300-foot blocks that provided the framework for Ray's cohesive structure seen today. Rapid and irregular development threatens this historic pattern. The Design Guidelines strive to maintain the traditional compact town design that was established by Ray's early pioneers.

Further, new projects can reinforce a sense of local heritage with architecture and materials. Using features that represent the agricultural, Native American or early homesteading heritage can bolster a feeling of pride and history.

#### **5. Provide the Highest Level of Public Services and Facilities**

Growing without subsequently expanding public infrastructure impairs the city's ability to provide a high level of public service to Ray's taxpayers. Within their limits, the city should make decisions based upon the impacts a project has on their ability to provide services such as water, sewer, emergency services, roads and other customer services. Criteria for land use decisions should include the city's ability to provide for the an increase in service by evaluating the financial implications on the city and taxpayers. In order to effectively provide for services, the city should have a long-range strategic plan for capital investments that matches available funding.

#### **6. Safety Between Vehicles and People**

Increased traffic volumes related to oil field development have raised significant concerns about vehicular and pedestrian safety. Public officials and agencies should strive to provide a network of streets that are safe and accessible for all modes of travel, and where possible, implement urban design elements that encourage reduced speeds in high traffic areas.

## **7. Get the Right Type of Development Where the City Wants It**

A city can influence where growth happens by pointing out locations where public services and other environmental factors make the most sense for new development. Once these locations are indicated on a map, the city can make it easier to develop a project with various incentives.

Unlike zoning, designating appropriate areas for growth is flexible and changeable, as the city's vision will vary over time. With design guidelines and streamlined approval process, this Comprehensive Plan provides a way to follow this principle, and it should be revised and updated periodically.

## **8. Development Mostly Pays for Itself**

In order for the city to maintain its financial stability over the long term, new development must pay for the infrastructure and services required to accommodate the new project. Otherwise, the infrastructure maintenance that is required in new projects can cause substantial strain on the city's budget. City officials should require developers to account for their fair share of costs associated with the increased need for public services.

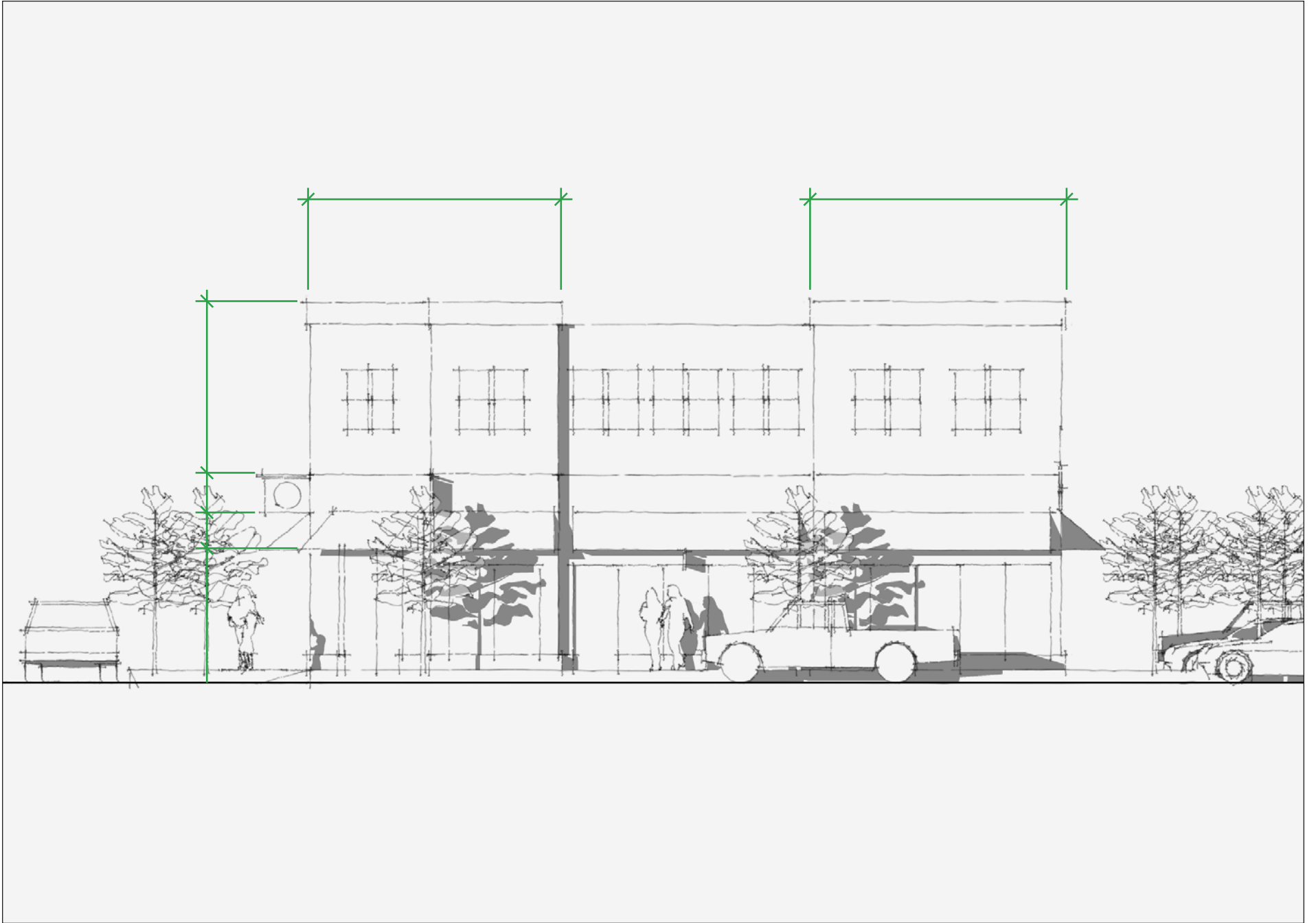
## **9. A City for Everyone**

Ray is home to people of all means. But across the region, rising costs of services, goods, and housing is driving out long-time residents and preventing new residents from moving to town. Supporting developments that provide affordable housing and services is a priority of the city.

## 10. A Sustainable City

A sustainable city is one that is structured to survive a potential bust, and one that considers impacts to the environment as it grows. Economic growth in the region will one day stop, and the city can prepare by making sustainable fiscal and land use decisions now. The city must institute careful planning to avoid overbuilding or overextending infrastructure. Supporting environmentally-sensitive development is also a priority. Encouraging builders to use locally-sourced materials is an example of sustainable development that saves on transportation costs and supports local businesses. Supporting energy efficient homes and businesses through marketing or grant funding is another approach to sustainably developing a city.





# DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design Guidelines are a illustrated set of standards for design and construction that explain how the city should be built in accordance with the community's vision and goals. Along with zoning, these guidelines assist public officials in their review of new development. They indicate an approach to design that will help sustain the character of the community that is appealing to residents and visitors.

Quality building and site design substantially contributes to Ray's appeal to new businesses and residents. By shaping development in the primary commercial districts, these Design Guidelines can help bolster the local economy. They will also promote economic and environmental sustainability by effectively locating compatible new growth inside and outside of the city.

The Design Guidelines were created with the help of citizens, officials, stakeholders, and designers. They were made to work in harmony with the City's Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, and often refer directly to code sections.

Goals:

1. Convey a clear picture of the community's design preferences to residents and developers.
2. Illustrate existing development standards in the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
3. Create a vision for future changes to the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
4. Create a clarified process for project review.
5. Provide a guide for the location of projects on undeveloped land.

# HIGHWAY TWO DESIGN GUIDELINES

All new development in this district shall conform to the Ray Zoning and Subdivision Regulations (ZSR) Section 6.0211 - Highway Commercial (HC).

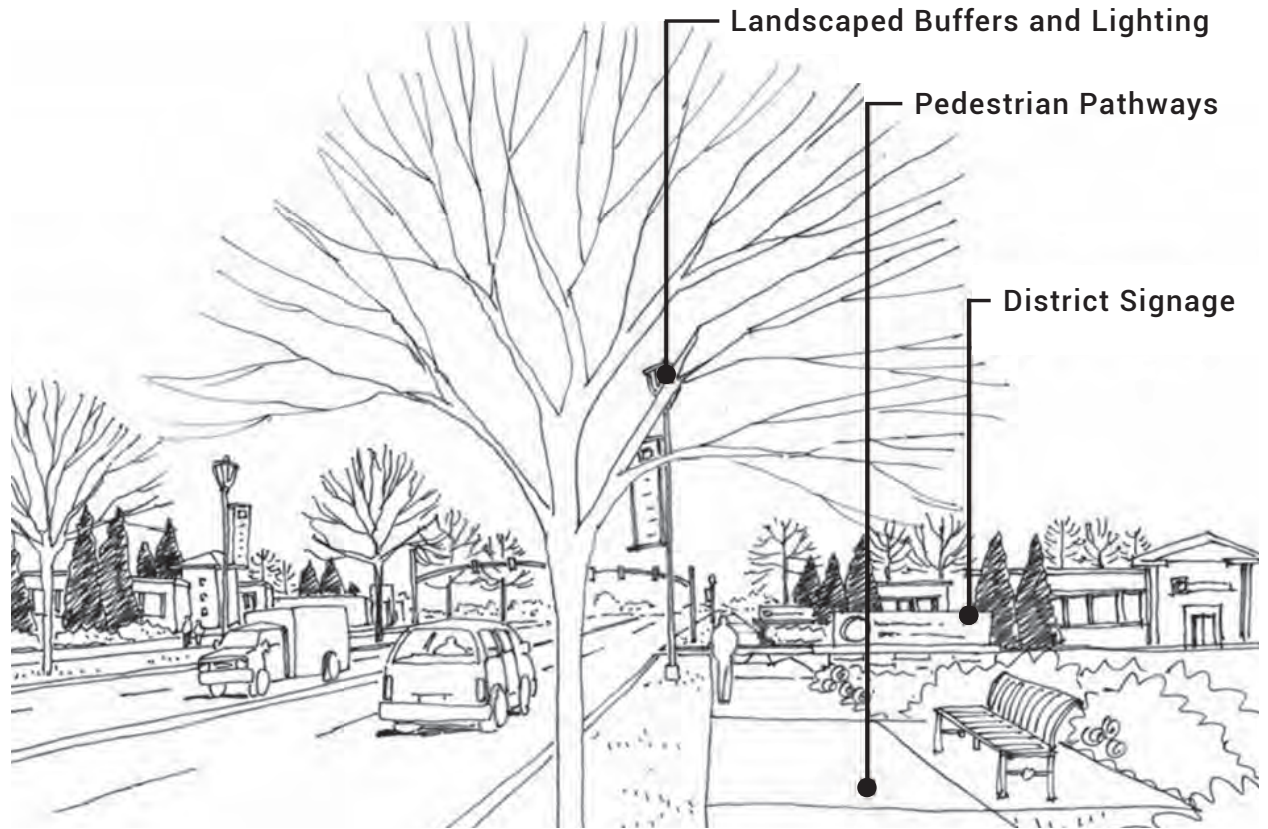
## Overview

The Highway Two Overlay District is designed to promote an urban form that caters to local and regional commercial and industrial uses, as well as other uses that require larger structures. Buildings are designed to benefit from the high visibility, accessibility, and mobility offered by the highway corridor location.

## A | Size, Scale and Streetscape

Existing structures in the Highway Two corridor vary in scale, from small single family residences to large grain elevators. New structures should be compatible for general commercial and light industrial uses. The following characteristics apply to new development in this overlay:

1. Provide large building setbacks from the highway to allow for buffer zones.
2. One to four story building heights are acceptable.



Example of quality Highway Two development features.

3. Buildings should be oriented to the highway frontage primarily and to the sides secondarily.
4. Loading areas, storage, and mechanical equipment *shall* be located at the back of the site.

## B | Landscaping and Site Elements

Native, drought-tolerant landscaping should be used to create continuity among buildings, especially along the highway frontage. It should also be

used to buffer parking areas and screen refuse collection. Landscaped buffers are defined as “berms, trees, stone, shrubs and fences made of natural looking materials.” All signage in this district shall conform to ZSR Section 6.0423.2.

1. New development should provide landscaping along Highway Two, around circulation paths and within parking areas.

2. Buffers *shall* be used between contrasting land uses (e.g. industrial and residential), between open space and developed areas, and to add visual interest in areas dominated by asphalt.
3. Site lighting should not illuminate an entire facade but instead be directed only on signage and towards pedestrian walkways. This reduces spillover to adjacent residential properties or public rights-of-way.
4. Signage *shall* reflect the architectural style of the primary building and freestanding signs *shall* have landscaping at their base. Artistic interpretations should also be considered to add character to the district.



*Landscaped buffer zones between businesses and the highway will help shield pedestrians and add curb appeal to vehicular traffic.*

### **C | Transportation and Parking**

Commercial and industrial development that is designed to accommodate large trucks is best located south of Highway Two. These parcels are much larger and offer better truck ingress and egress, circulation and parking. In contrast, parcels on the north side of the highway are smaller, being originally intended for local businesses and residences. It is the intent of this plan is to limit industrial



*This business effectively combines landscape design and signage.*



*This commercial corridor appropriately positions parking to the side and rear of each property.*



uses and large vehicle activity on the north side of Highway Two until that becomes completely unfeasible. Concentrating both long and short-term parking on the south side of Highway Two will create more pedestrian crossings on the highway as drivers visit amenities in town. Directing pedestrians to a few

highly visible, signaled crosswalks at major intersections will promote safe pedestrian movement.

1. Parking areas *shall* contain a minimum of 10% landscaping.
2. Bicycle parking stands *shall* be provided.

### D | Pedestrian Systems

Safe pedestrian pathways are an important component in this district because of the heavy vehicular traffic associated with the highway. In addition, the Highway Two District benefits from high visibility, and thus a welcoming environment will enhance the district.

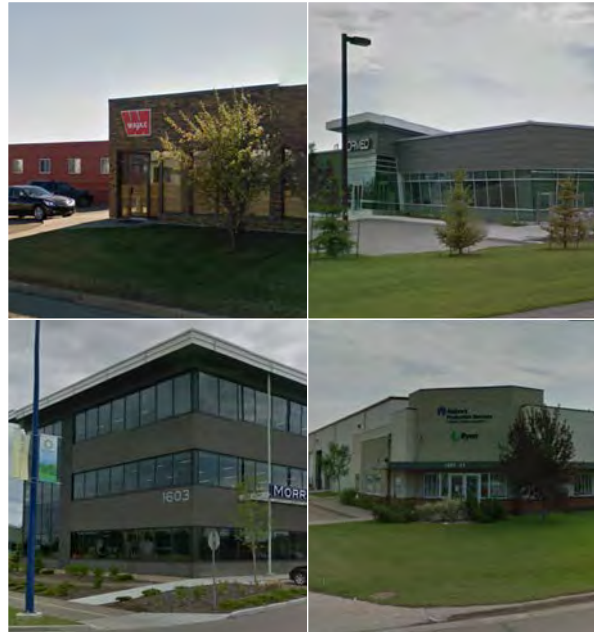
1. Continuous pedestrian pathways *shall* be provided from the property perimeter to the building's primary entrance. They should also be provided along Highway Two.
2. Pedestrian crosswalks *shall* have contrasting pavement color from the surrounding asphalt surface.

### E | Architectural Features and Materials

Commercial or industrial architectural features should reflect the local agricultural/industrial character of the region. Materials such as metal and stone can provide emphasis on street-facing facades. Natural colors and earthtones will help match the structure to the environment. Bright, high-contrast tones or blank, white structures are discouraged.

The official Zoning Ordinance regulates “bland, monolithic architecture that has little connection to the setting, community or history.” Uninterrupted facades must be modulated with varying materials, rooflines, glazing, and massing. Emphasizing building entry points with parapets, bulk, materials, or landscape will elevate the building’s design and aid pedestrian and vehicle navigation.

1. All structures *shall* have a primary pedestrian entrance which faces, is visible from and is directly accessible from the sidewalk.
2. Street-facing facades *shall* utilize articulations and modulations that break up long or tall, flat surfaces to create visual interest and avoid monotony.



High-quality materials, landscaping, and massing set these highway commercial buildings apart.



Pilasters (column projecting from a wall) and reveals (feature that creates an inset edge) create interesting shadows and add variety to a facade.



Modulation breaks up this building’s monolithic scale along the street facade, while landscaped strips provide a buffer zone.



Emphasized entrance points, quality materials and landscaping enhance the design of these businesses.

# MAIN STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES

All new development in this district shall conform to the Ray Zoning and Subdivision Regulations (ZSR) Section 6.0212 - Central Business District (CBD).

## Overview

The Main Street Overlay District is designed to create a pedestrian-oriented district with mixed residential and commercial uses typical of a small downtown. The aim is to design the downtown to attract neighborhood-oriented commercial uses like eateries and retail. Several vacant lots in this district have the potential to develop in the coming years.

### A | Size, Scale and Streetscape

Buildings in this overlay district shall be similar in height, mass, scale and orientation to what was historically seen along Main Street. Proposed designs must have the following characteristics:

1. Provide the minimum setback to the public right-of-way.
2. Only one, two and three story building heights shall be acceptable.



Example of a quality Main Street development.

3. Corner buildings shall be designed to "hold the corner" by utilizing more prominent features such as taller parapets and recessed entrances.
4. Larger buildings should be divided into 'modules' or sections that reflect a more traditional scale along the streetscape.

### B | Landscaping and Site Elements

Landscaping should be used to create continuity among buildings, especially along the primary street edge. It should also be used to buffer parking areas and

screen refuse collection. All signage in this district shall conform to ZSR Section 6.0423.3.

1. New development shall provide one tree or four shrubs per 25 linear feet of facade. Use native, drought-tolerant plantings everywhere possible.
2. Berms are acceptable screening between residential and commercial.
3. Maintenance, rooftop equipment, and trash bins shall be buffered with architectural walls, terracing, landscape features, or similar.



*View looking southeast on Main Street. Buildings are similar in size and scale to historic structures.*



*Variation in facade materials and placement adds interest and curb appeal. Pedestrian crosswalks give clarity and organization. Awnings and landscaping create a human-scaled environment.*



1. Building entrances shall face the street and be directly accessed by sidewalks.
2. Pedestrian-scaled features, including awnings, large display windows, and signage within eye level, shall be incorporated into new designs.
3. Provide uninterrupted pedestrian circulation by connecting everywhere possible with adjacent properties along the public right-of-way.
4. Buildings should express a human-scale through its materials, form and massing.
5. Provide visual interest on all facades which are seen from streets and alleys.

4. Site lighting should not illuminate an entire facade but instead be downlight and oriented towards pedestrian walkways.

### C | Transportation and Parking

Private parking shall be oriented to the side and back of the structure(s) to maintain a continuous wall of building facade.

1. Parking *shall* not be designed on the Main Street side of the building.

### D | Pedestrian Systems

Encouraging pedestrian activity is a major objective for this district and new development should strengthen the appeal by accommodating the pedestrian's needs.

### E | Architectural Features and Materials

Building facades shall provide variety through projections and recessed planes on all street-facing sides to break up monotonous facades. Materials on facades should be finished with subtle, neutral or earth tones in low reflective, varied materials, textures, and colors. Design styles and materials should recognize the region's history and heritage. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations states that design themes

should "...acknowledge the local pioneer, farming, rough-rider, coal/oil industry, Native American heritage or a similar design concept."

1. Windows and glazing *shall* cover at least 15% of the front facade, with more glazing encouraged on ground-floor retail storefronts.
2. Long flat building facades are discouraged. Instead, primary facades should exhibit variation in surfaces.
3. Heavy ornamentation should be used with constraint since that was not a feature common to the community.
4. New construction *shall* be reflective of historic building styles and materials.



*Parking to the side and rear of a building rather than the front allows for a more complete street frontage and an identifiable retail experience.*



*A building in McCall, ID fronts a street with restaurants and shops while offering public amenity space and parking on the building's sides.*

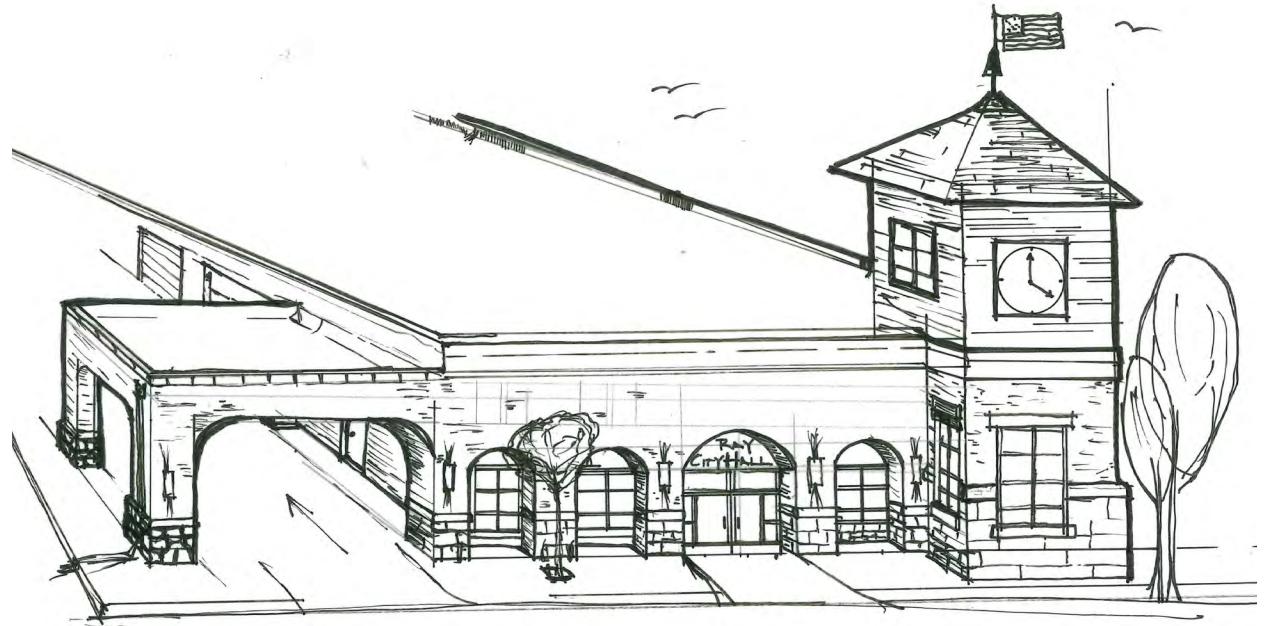


*Matching in scale and height to existing historical structures, this new building provides eateries and retail space on the street front and residences above. Parking and public space amenities are to the sides and rear.*

### Site Specific Improvements

During the public outreach process, Ray's citizens repeatedly emphasized their desire to revitalize the Main Street District and bring businesses back to this essential corridor. Shown to the right are renderings of how this could begin to take shape.

As one of only a few businesses remaining on Main Street, Ray's City Hall is of great importance to this district. Facade improvements, such as those shown in the rendering, can greatly enhance the prominence of the structure and display a sense of civic pride to the community.



*Example of facade enhancements for City Hall*



*Existing City Hall*

Vacant lots like this one are prime locations for catalyst projects such as a Community Center. Located near the Senior Center, this could enhance foot traffic within the district.

Ray's City Hall is located at a primary entry corner within this district, and that status should be reinforced through visual enhancements to the facade.

With current improvements underway at the Ray Mall parking lot, there is great potential to draw in new traffic from the highway and into downtown.



The Main Street District already contains a large affordable housing development. Creating a walkable commercial corridor will be mutually beneficial for residents and businesses.

Rear parking will enable the structures to apply a zero lot-line frontage along Main Street. This technique is consistent with historic building patterns as shown on page 6 of this plan.

Visual cues such as painted or paved crosswalks will help slow the pace of traffic in the Main Street District.

Site improvements for the Main Street District

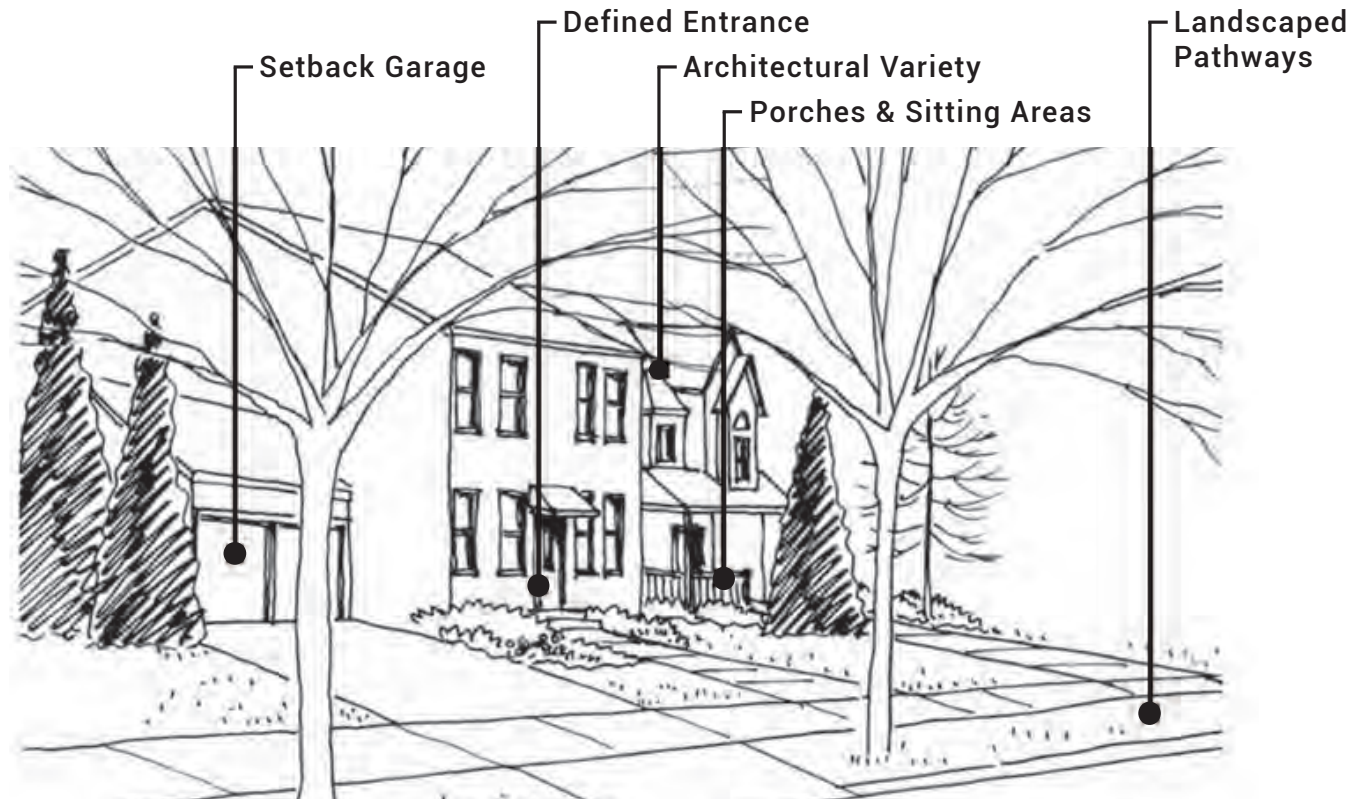
## NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

All new development in this district shall conform to the Ray Zoning and Subdivision Regulations (ZSR) Section 6.0208 through 6.0210 - Residential Districts (R-1, R-2 & R-3).

### Overview

The Neighborhood Overlay District is a traditional residential area surrounding downtown. The prevalent building styles vary, including folk victorian, national, simple prairie, ranch and minimal traditional, all of which commonly utilized the cross gable, foursquare or bungalow building forms. In all instances, there is great restraint in ornamentation and elaborate detailing. The historic ideals of the community still ring true today: simple beauty, utilitarian, and practical.

Common features of the neighborhood district include the grided alley/street network, attached and detached garages, mature trees, manicured lawns, and substantial setbacks. Other uses present here are community-oriented facilities such as the Ray School, churches and parks/ball fields.



*Example of a quality residential development.*

This overlay district is designed to maintain the small-scale, residential character. The Neighborhood District has the fewest vacant lots in town. It is the vision of this plan that current residential densities and building types will be maintained and duplicated in new development.

### A | Size, Scale and Streetscape

New structures must match the size of adjacent residential structures. Institutional structures such as schools or churches may be larger in scale but should still be compatible with the district's design features.

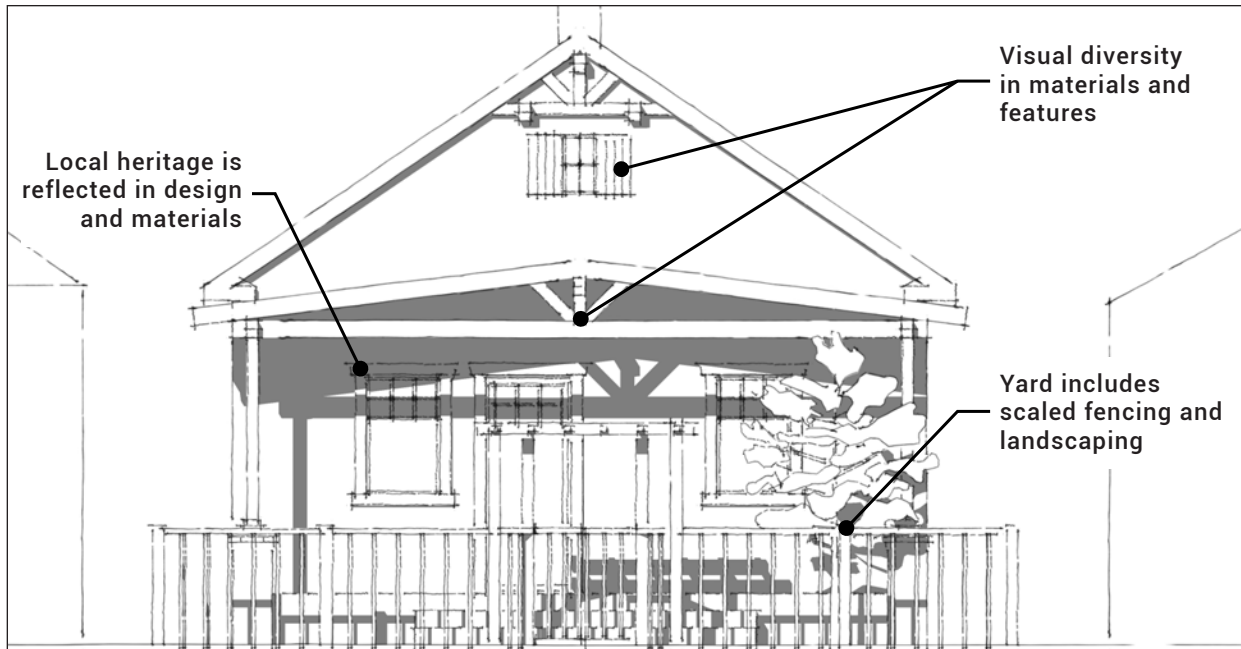
1. New development on an originally platted lot (140' by 50' or 7,000 SF) shall be set back and oriented to the middle of the parcel.



*Shown here is a good example of a multiple family housing unit which mimics the neighborhood's form.*



*Even with conforming setbacks, building heights, and landscape buffers, the multiple family structure shown here is out of scale with the single family home.*



A vision of preferred architectural materials on a small residence.



This example displays proper building scale along a commercial to residential transition.

## B | Landscaping and Site Elements

Trees and other site furnishings create comfortable spaces, soften harsh light, and cool areas in the summer. These features greatly enhance residential neighborhoods, and thus should be incorporated into all new development.

1. Buffers *shall* be used between adjacent, contrasting land uses such as temporary workforce housing or parking lots of 10 or more spaces.

Reference the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulation for fencing and signage standards.

## C | Transportation and Parking

Parking in Ray's single family neighborhoods is traditionally accommodated by on-street parking and off-street detached garages. Garage access is preferred along the alley to reduce disruption to the pedestrian pathways. Large residential projects should reduce visibility of parking through building design features (e.g. parking courts), above and below ground garages, or landscape buffers.

### D | Pedestrian Systems

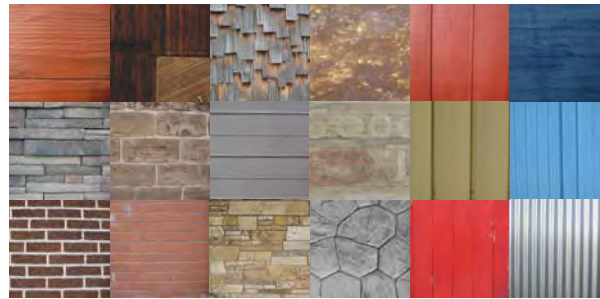
New development in the Neighborhood District should continue or enhance the pedestrian network by replacing damaged or incomplete sidewalks. Everywhere possible, links should be provided to neighborhood parks and other “natural” areas.

### E | Architectural Features and Materials

As with all new construction, residential architectural features should reflect the local agricultural, industrial, pioneer, or western character of the region. Natural materials such as brick, metal, and stone provide emphasis on traditional housing facade materials such as shake shingles, aluminum, wood, porcelain-enameled steel, or composite siding. Colors and materials should resemble those on existing residential structures, avoiding highly-contrasting, highly colorful palettes.

Preferred architectural styles are based on traditional house forms of the Northern Plains. Ranch style, split-level, Victorian, shed style, arts and crafts,

minimal traditional, prairie style, or mid-century modern are common house styles in the region. Larger multi-family apartments and condominiums across the Northern Plains are being built in more contemporary styles.



*Examples of preferred materials and textures. Natural textures such as wood, stone, metal, and brick complement traditional building techniques.*

Additionally, architectural forms should be used to strategically shield group mailboxes and other similar necessities in multiple family developments.

### F | Affordability

Providing adequate affordable housing is a Key Principle of this Comprehensive Plan. Developments that take advantage of federal, state, or local subsidies or incentives to provide affordable housing

will contribute to this goal. Projects that are designed to include a diversity of unit types, sizes, and densities are compliant with the Comprehensive Plan.

### G | Sustainability

To the extent possible, new developments should contribute to sustainability goals. Building with locally-sourced materials, constructing energy efficient homes, and using native, drought-tolerant plants in landscaping promotes a sustainable community.

Buildings should be designed for eventual reuse or recycling. The US Environmental Protection Agency estimated that residential construction and demolition produces about 67 million tons of waste, with just about half of that going to landfills. Building with recycled or reusable materials mitigates the potential impacts of construction and demolition waste.

# NEW GROWTH AREA DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Overview

The New Growth Areas Overlay District comprises the lands inside and outside the corporate boundary that are not part of the original townsite, any additions or platted subdivisions. The official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations currently administer development standards for new construction in this district, and these Design Guidelines illustrate the Comprehensive Plan's vision for new growth. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is included here to identify compatible locations for future subdivisions, annexations, or individual projects.

## A | Size, Scale and Streetscape

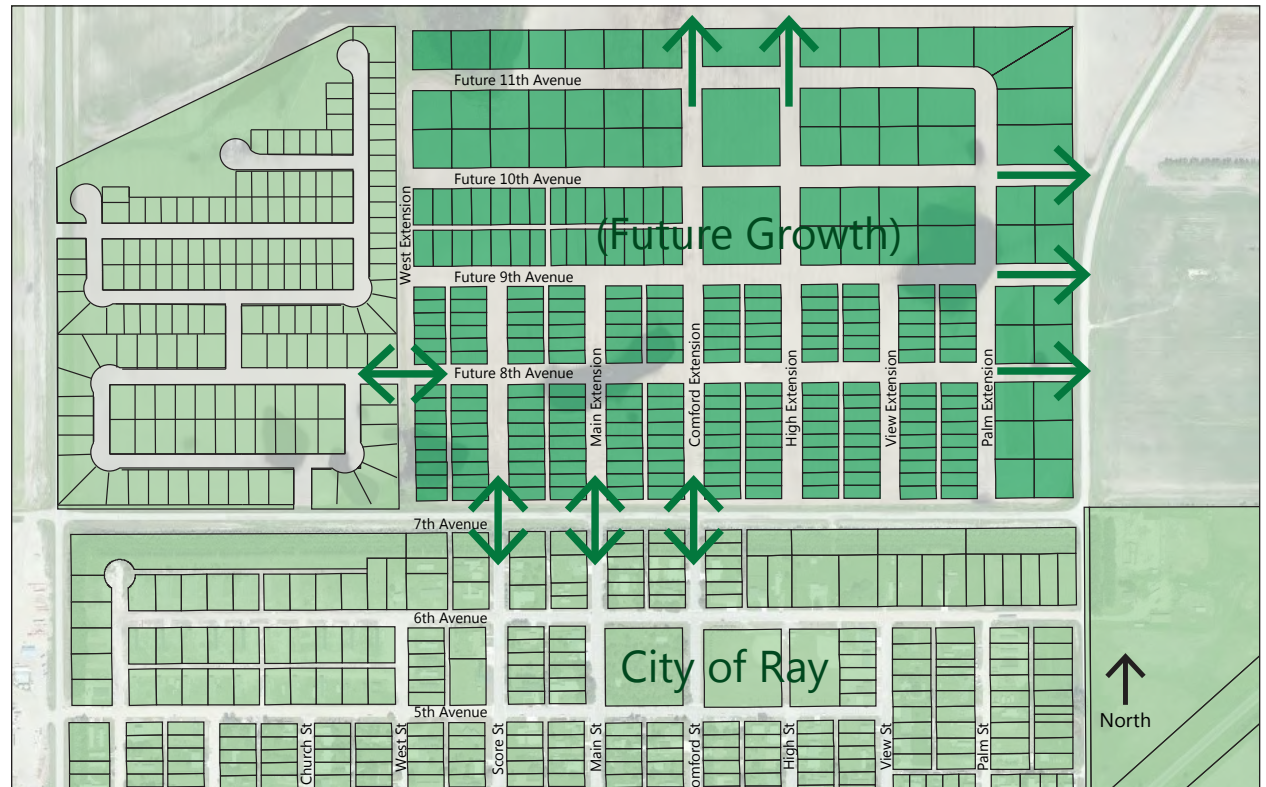
The size and scale of new projects should be compatible with the surrounding uses and structures. In existing industrial areas, for example, a new large-scale structure may be compatible because of existing warehouses or grain elevators, but they are not compatible next to residential areas. Refer to the Future Land Use Map for general development densities.

## B | Landscaping and Site Elements

Streetscape and landscape standards are administered in the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Specific streetscape Design Guidelines for New Growth Areas are not warranted beyond those administered in existing land use regulations.

## C | Transportation and Parking

Subdivisions in New Growth Areas should be designed to follow the historical street grid. New roads, where possible, should extend out from existing roads and should follow the historical naming conventions. Parking should be developed according to the land use that is assigned to the parcel.








Example of how parcel sizes, black layout, and road extensions should be consistent with existing platted areas and should provide access to future development in New Growth Areas

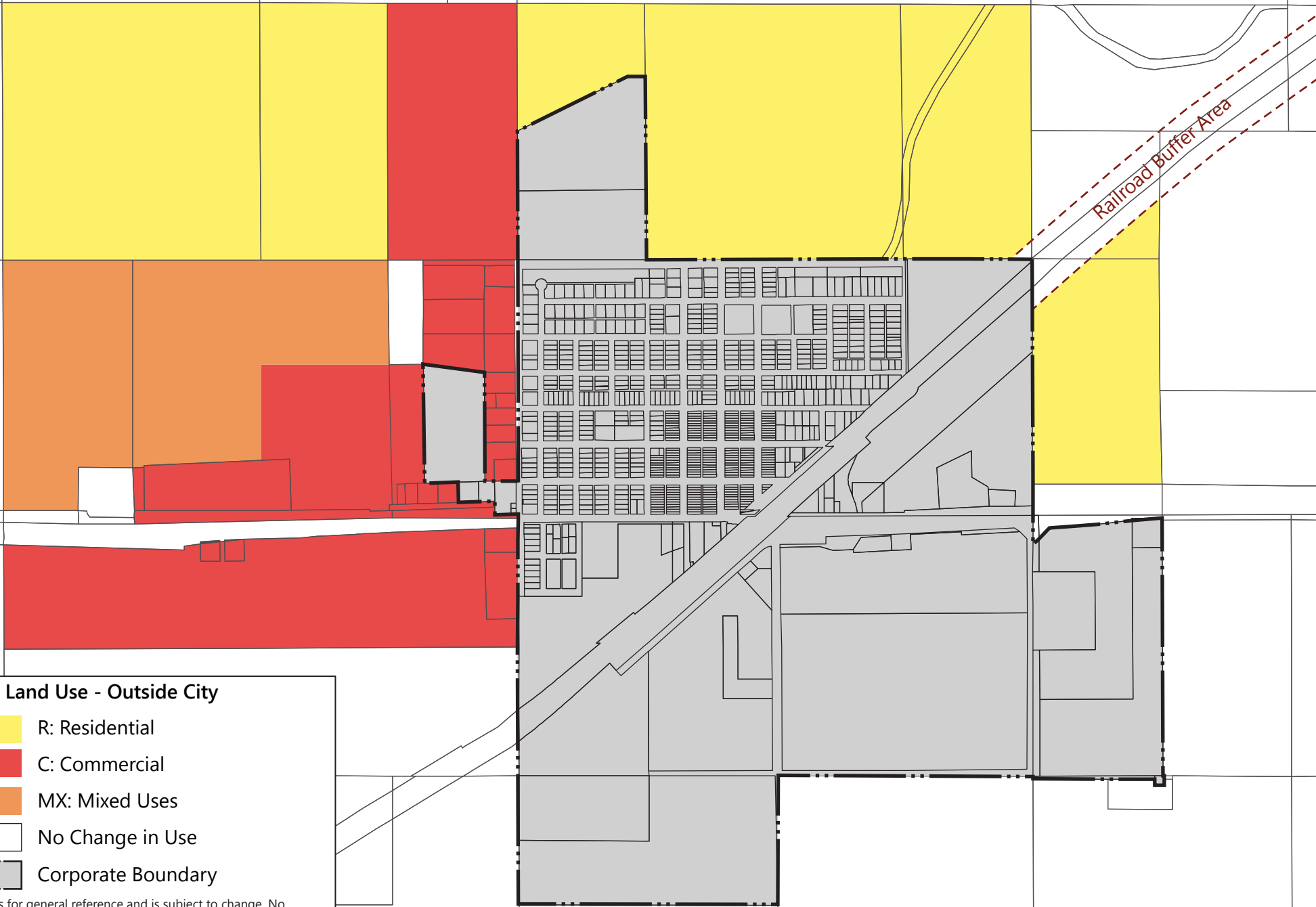


*This example displays proper building scale along a commercial to residential transition.*

**Future Land Use - Outside City**

-  R: Residential
-  C: Commercial
-  MX: Mixed Uses
-  No Change in Use
-  Corporate Boundary

This map is for general reference and is subject to change. No warranty is made by the City of Ray regarding its accuracy or completeness. REVISED 09-24-14



## D | Pedestrian Systems

New Growth Areas should connect to and enhance existing pedestrian pathways in a cohesive network. Everywhere possible, links should be provided to neighborhood parks and other “natural” or recreational areas.

## E | Architectural Features and Materials

Architectural design is administered in the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Specific Design Guidelines for New Growth Areas are not warranted beyond those administered in existing land use regulations.

## F | Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a guide to properly locating new development in this district. The following future land uses for new growth inside the corporate boundary are described as follows:

1. *Residential*: envisioned to be comparable to the Residential Zone Districts (R-1, R-2 and R-3) in the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.
  - a. Structure Type: one family detached, two family, multiple family and institutional uses that are complimentary to the district, such as hospitals, senior/assisted living, and religious establishments. Where areas are adjacent to existing residences in the Neighborhood District, the use should be similar.
  - b. Residential uses are located according to the Future Land Use Map, and should be sited to take advantage of local services, to promote a compact urban form, and to promote housing affordability.
  - c. Design of new subdivisions should comply with the Neighborhood District Design Guidelines.
  - d. Parcel Size: 3,500 sq.ft. to 21,840 sq.ft. (half acre)
  - e. Density (units per acre): 2-25
2. *Commercial*: envisioned to be comparable to the Highway Commercial (HC) and General Commercial/Industrial (GCI) Zoning District in the official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. New commercial and industrial activities in this location will complement similar existing uses.
  - a. Structure Type: any general commercial or light industrial structures.
  - b. Commercial uses should be located at the city’s western gateway (Highway Two and County Road 17) and along Highway Two. This location is the city’s most productive land for commercial development with high visibility, traffic, and accessibility.
  - c. Parcel Size: min 7,000 sq.ft.
  - d. Building Sq.Ft.: max 125,000 sq.ft.
3. *Mixed-Use*: envisioned to be a buffer between future residential and commercial uses. The most appropriate use will be determined as the surrounding area develops. This district extends west from St. Michael’s Cemetery, buffering commercial uses to the south along Highway Two from residential uses to the north.
  - a. Structure Type: any general commercial, light industrial or residential structures.
  - b. Parcel Size: Min 7,000 sq.ft.
  - c. Building Sq.Ft.: Max 125,000 sq.ft.

### **Site Plan Review Process**

Development in a New Growth Area occurs through the Site Plan Review process outlined below:

1. Applicant and City conduct a pre-application meeting to discuss project design, goals, and timelines. The group outlines Site Plan submittal requirements.
2. Applicant submits a Site Plan for preliminary review.
3. City reviews Site Plan for compliance with official Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and this Comprehensive Plan.
4. City provides comments and a final determination to Applicant.
5. If compliant with all land use regulations, project receives Site Plan, Zoning, and Subdivision Approvals.
6. Project acquires building permits and begins construction.

### **Updating and Amending the FLUM**

As the city develops beyond the existing districts and into these identified New Growth Areas, the City's Land Use Map will need to be updated as new areas gain public infrastructure and services. It is recommended that the City Planning Commission review and update the FLUM and text every five years to provide the City Commission with a recommendation.

The City or an affected land owner (or their representative) can amend the FLUM by submitting the Amendment Application attached to this end of this Comprehensive Plan. Once received, the Planning Commission will provide notice and hold one public hearing. The Planning Commission must adopt the amendment by a resolution of the commission carried by the affirmative votes of not less than two-thirds of the its members.



# IMPLEMENTATION

The Growth Framework section provides a model for land use decision making, while the Implementation section consists of task-oriented action items. These actions are designed to achieve the city's vision through specific projects or policies.



## Land Use and Buildings

Growth should occur in a logical pattern that builds off of established areas with similar uses.

- Consider the development of a designated industrial park in a Future Commercial land use area.
- Conduct a building condition assessment.
- Research building rehabilitation funding mechanisms and inform deteriorating building owners of their options.
- Continue to grow from the inside out and review the Future Land Use Map as the city develops into New Growth Areas.



## Transportation

Transportation issues focus on the increase in heavy vehicle traffic through town and safety concerns for pedestrians.

- Work with the Department of Transportation on a truck bypass.
- Explore locations and types of traffic calming devices to determine the best options for high-traffic, city streets.
- Continue to utilize programs such as Safe Routes to School to expand the sidewalk network.
- Complete a CIP that assesses and prioritizes road improvement projects.



## Public Infrastructure

Ensuring the city has adequate public infrastructure capacity to accommodate growth is a key issue moving forward.

- Complete a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to ensure enough capacity exists to handle long-term growth.

- Continue applications for state/federal loan and grant funding for capital projects and personnel hours.



## Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement

Emergency service providers will have to respond to increasing call volumes for fire, crash rescue, and law enforcement. The goal is to ensure adequate levels of service for a growing population.

- Reconsider the feasibility of impact fees to support expanding needs and services.
- Ensure mobile home parks are properly arranged and built to code through inspection and zoning enforcement.
- Perform a needs assessment/CIP to assess the fiscal and human resource needs of emergency response departments.



### **Parks and Recreation**

Quality of life is an important component for attracting new residents; therefore, steps should be taken to increase recreational space in all parts of the community.

- Map areas within or immediately adjacent to the city that are suitable for parks and open space.
- Identify improvements to lighting, safety, sidewalks, or linkages in existing parks in a capital improvements plan.
- Aim for a goal of one acre of additional parkspace for every 100 new residents.



### **Housing**

Providing adequate housing for all income levels has been a challenge. Implementation measures are intended to support diverse housing types in appropriate areas.

- Continue to support developers that take advantage of North Dakota's

Housing Incentive Fund Tax Credit, or other federal incentives to provide affordable housing.

- Encourage different tiers of residential densities in town.
- Perform a housing plan.
- Require developers to install the necessary infrastructure for new housing prior to final approval.



### **Economic Development**

Creating an attractive business environment within the two commercial corridors is a primary goal.

- Maintain public infrastructure such as sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, or paving to provide a clean, attractive environment for new businesses.
- Create marketing materials to convey to developers the infrastructure improvements Ray has completed.
- Compile a list of state and federal tax incentive programs for potential landowners-turned-developer.

- Remain competitive with other cities in the region by researching and increasing outreach to new businesses.
- Develop city-owned lands to provide affordable housing for public employees.



### **Town Design**

These actions are tailored to enhance Ray's compact, agricultural, and small-town character. Moving forward, the city aims to create a community that represents its historic values but provides modern amenities.

- Work closely with developers during project design to clearly convey the vision of the Comprehensive Plan Design Guidelines.
- Follow a straightforward site plan review process during zoning or subdivision approval.
- Consider establishing a design review board to evaluate projects based on design merit.

## GROW RAY

The City of Ray has declared its intent to grow with recently improved infrastructure and expansion of its boundaries. As part of the implementation of this plan, it is recommended that the city consider how it is marketing its assets to visitors, potential residents and new businesses.

- What can the City of Ray offer that people can't get elsewhere?
- How can the City of Ray leverage its resources to attract new businesses?
- What makes the City of Ray special?

### **Primary Vision**

In order to successfully attract newcomers, Ray must identify those elements which set it apart from the surrounding communities. Then, narrow the focus to one or two key aspects. *A successful strategy will be based on the community's commitment to a primary vision.* Ray's primary vision is the thing that will make it stand out from all other small towns in the region.

Based on the research completed in developing this plan, a few primary assets stand out:

- Great school system
- Direct highway access
- Historic Ray Opera House
- Northwest Communications Cooperative (NCC)
- High quality and quantity of commercial land with easy access

Along with a set vision, the implementation measures stated on the previous page will be invaluable information for those considering relocating their homes or businesses.



## RETOOL - REVIVE - REVAMP - REPAY ...The City of Ray.

Just like Ray, things which are durably made can be retooled to function even better, more efficiently, and be re-purposed to work under new and challenging conditions.

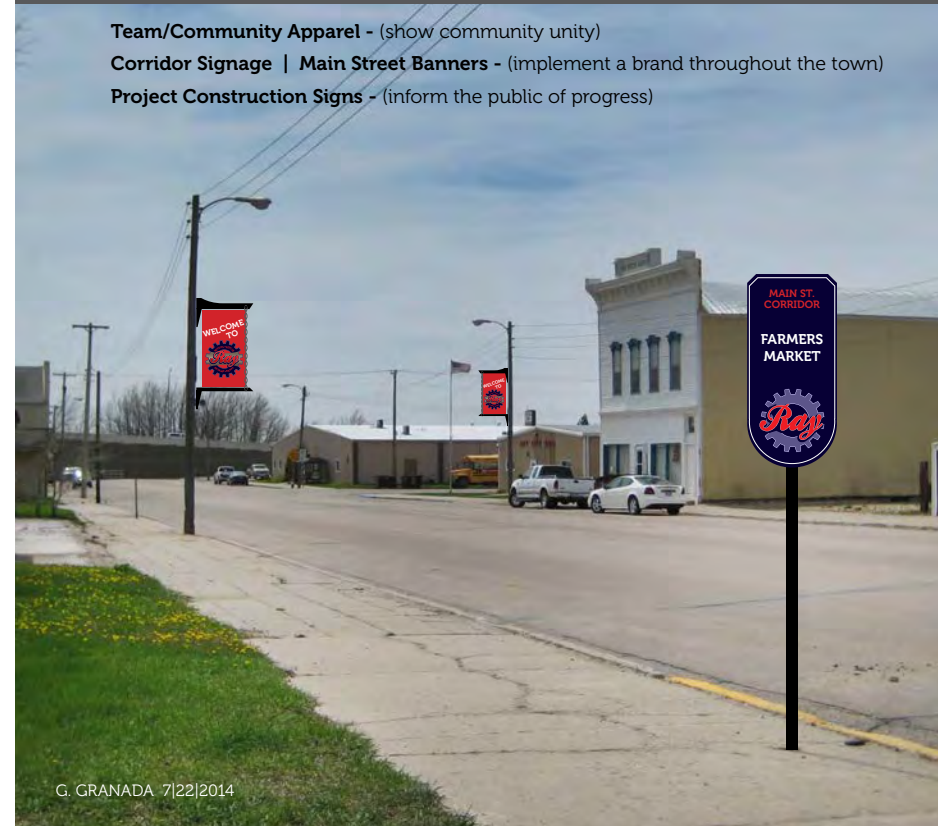
{ restore, renew, refresh, rebuild, reward }

### IMPLEMENTATION & APPLICATION

**Team/Community Apparel** - (show community unity)

**Corridor Signage | Main Street Banners** - (implement a brand throughout the town)

**Project Construction Signs** - (inform the public of progress)



G. GRANADA 7|22|2014

### BRANDING logo / illustration

1



Example branding strategy that creates a clear identity throughout the community.

## AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Periodic review and update of this document is necessary due to the nature and pace of change in the city, and the unpredictability of boom and bust cycles in oil development. Therefore it is recommended that the Comprehensive Plan be reviewed every five years and updated as necessary. The Planning Commission shall be responsible for this process, which in sum is a review of the Comprehensive Plan's effectiveness in carrying out the city's goals.

The review should at minimum undertake the following:

- Identifying what parts or policies work or do not work
- Evaluating the effectiveness of actions in the mitigation of Key Issues
- Evaluating the Future Land Use Map and recommendations
- Revisiting Key Issues and Principles
- Identifying new issues

- Revisiting growth trends and socioeconomic data
- Noting unintended consequences of existing policies or actions
- Evaluating the Comprehensive Plan's correspondence with any planned capital improvements projects

Should the City Planning Commission recognize a need to update the Comprehensive Plan, they shall submit a written report and recommendation to the City Commission. The Planning Commission shall also prepare for the City Commission a scope of work and schedule for completion of the recommended revisions.

A Comprehensive Plan amendment shall be approved if the Planning Commission finds that:

- The proposed amendment corrects or addresses errors in any map, graphic, text, or other information;

- The proposed amendment will result in logical, orderly, and consistent development pattern;
- The proposed amendment will aid in achieving the Vision, Key Principles, Design Guidelines, specific actions, or any other goals listed in the Comprehensive Plan;
- The proposed amendment will not create conditions that will result in undue hardships for city residents.

### **Amendment Procedure**

A application for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan shall follow the following process:

- A pre-application meeting is scheduled with city staff.
- An amendment application is submitted to city staff.
- Staff will evaluate and review the application and shall prepare a Staff Report to address the evaluation.
- Planning Commission shall review the application at a scheduled public hearing. The Planning Commission shall approve or deny, by written resolution, the amendment based on compliance with the conditions listed above. If approved, the Planning Commission shall certify the amended Comprehensive Plan to the City Commission.

### **Amendment Submittal Requirements**

Any submission for an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan should include:

- A cover letter with a detailed narrative that describes the purpose of the proposed amendment.
- A completed Application for Comprehensive Plan Amendment.
- If applicable to a map amendment, a legal description of the real property owned by the applicant in the City of Ray.
- If applicable to a map amendment, a vicinity map showing the parcel(s) location in the city.
- Any attachments as required by the pre-application meeting.

# APPLICATION FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT

## Description of Amendment

Elements of Comprehensive Plan to be Amended:

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Summary of Proposed Amendment:

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## Provide or attach the following in a narrative format with any maps or drawings as needed. Please demonstrate:

- How or where an error was made in the Comprehensive Plan that requires an amendment to preserve a property right or to preserve equal protection under the law:

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- How or where conditions in the city have changed to a degree that requires an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan:

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- How the amendment furthers the visions, goals, or objectives in the Comprehensive Plan:

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- How the proposed amendment will provide clear, community benefit:

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I hereby certify under penalty of perjury and the laws of the State of North Dakota that the information submitted herein, on all other submitted forms, documents, plans or any other information submitted as a part of this application, to be true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Should any information or representation submitted in connection with this application be untrue, I understand that any approval based thereon may be rescinded and other appropriate action taken. The signing of this application signifies approval for City of Ray staff to be present on the property for routine monitoring and inspection during the approval and development process.

**Applicant's Signature**

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**Date**

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**City of Ray | North Dakota**  
Comprehensive Plan 2014



P.O. Box 268  
Red Lodge, MT 59068  
406.896.6285

