

# CITY OF GRAND FORKS

## STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

City Council Approved Nov. 7, 2022

### A. Infrastructure & Transportation Funding

- “Prairie Dog” Infrastructure Funding
- ND Infrastructure Revolving Loan Funding
- Ongoing transportation funding to include regional projects such as:
  - a) Demers Avenue/42<sup>nd</sup> Street Grade Separation
  - b) 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue Interchange

### B. Water Projects Support

- Red River Valley Water Supply Project
- ND Municipal Water Supply Grant and Infrastructure Revolving Loan Funding

### C. Public Safety

- Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN)
- Public Health Programming and Funding Initiatives
- Insurance Premium Tax

### D. NDPERS/Benefits/Fiscal Solubility

- ND Public Employee Retirement System (NDPERS)
- PSAP Employees included as first responders

### E. Community/Economic Development

- Tax Incentive Programs
- Career Impact Academy Capital and Operations Funding for Grand Forks and State of ND
- Highly Skilled Workforce
- Child Care Program Incentives
- Children’s Museum

### F. Municipal Government Matters

- The City of Grand Forks opposes any legislation that would infringement on our Home Rule Authority
- Open Records Laws

### G. Team Grand Forks Priorities (Chamber-Led Group)

- To be determined

## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES - POSITION STATEMENTS

### A. Infrastructure & Transportation Funding

- Grand Forks supports legislation for the continuation of “Prairie Dog” infrastructure funding as it serves as a critical and flexible funding mechanism for municipalities throughout the state. The Grand Forks is asking that the “City” bucket get moved back to before the Strategic Infrastructure Fund bucket as was originally prioritized. *(For more information see Appendix A)*
- Grand Forks supports continued funding for the Bank of ND Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund and amendments in the program’s policy to increase the impact and effectiveness.
- Grand Forks supports funding for a grade separation at the intersection of Demers Avenue and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. This project is the most shovel ready and Grand Forks is working in partnership with the NDDOT, BNSF, and UND to finalize the environmental review, final design concept, and funding strategy. This project is a number one infrastructure priority for BNSF in the State of North Dakota. *(For more information see Appendix B)*
- Grand Forks supports the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Interchange as the best alternative to relieving the current and future traffic congestion on the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South transportation corridor and provides needed and additional transportation corridor for the growing southwest area of Grand Forks. The NDDOT and Grand Forks are partnering on completing environmental document in 2023 and to move forward with the final design concept and funding strategy. *(For more information see Appendix C)*

### B. Water Projects Support

- Grand Forks supports the needed multi-year State of North Dakota funding strategy partnership to move forward with the estimated \$1 billion plus Red River Valley Water Supply Project. *(For more information see Appendix D)*
- Grand Forks supports the continued State of North Dakota funding commitment to the ND State Water Commission Municipal Water Supply Grant Program and the Water Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund.

### C. Public Safety

- Grand Forks supports a sustainable long term funding strategy for the Statewide Interoperable Radio Network (SIRN). As one of the first adopters of SIRN, Grand Forks officials would be open to providing testimony in support of the continued expansion of the SIRN system.

- Grand Forks supports funding and support for a variety of Public Health related priorities including legislative support for expansion of the City's inpatient behavioral health capacity, implementation of the Section 1115 IMD Waiver, and expansion of non-profit outpatient behavioral services through the Certified Community Behavioral Health Center model.
- Grand Forks supports the continued allocation of all Insurance Premium Tax funding that is collected and intended to support fire departments and the communities they serve within the state.

#### **D. NDPERS/Benefits/Fiscal Solubility**

- Grand Forks has supported and continues to support the NDPERS Retirement and Benefit Plan as a strategic workforce attraction and retention tool and its long-term funding solubility with managed cost impacts to employers and employees. If the state decides to end the plan, the city will support a retirement plan that meets or exceeds our current benefits to ensure workforce attraction and retention competitiveness. *(For more information see Appendix E)*
- Grand Forks also supports legislation that would incorporate PSAP dispatchers into the NDPERS Public Safety Plan.

#### **E. Community/Economic Development**

- Grand Forks supports continuing to allow local subdivisions to use proven economic development tools such as the Renaissance Program and Tax Increment Financing to attract, leverage, and maximize the benefit of private sector investments in North Dakota communities.
- Grand Forks supports the allocation of funds for capital and operations of the Career Impact Academy both here in Grand Forks and other communities in the State of North Dakota. Grand Forks will support partners to include the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation, Grand Forks School District, and private industry who will be leading this request. *(For more information see Appendix F)*
- Grand Forks supports efforts to help retain and attract a highly skilled workforce including ongoing internships, innovation and entrepreneurship with programs and policies that leverage federal/state/local public resources, including both the Bank of North Dakota and the ND Department of Commerce. *(For more information see Appendix G)*

- Grand Forks supports legislation that will result in the increased access and affordability of child care in Grand Forks and the State of North Dakota. *(For more information see Appendix H)*
- Grand Forks supports state funding for quality of life amenities in the state as the City and the GF Park District pursue both private and public funds for a Children’s Museum in the community.

**F. Municipal Government Matters**

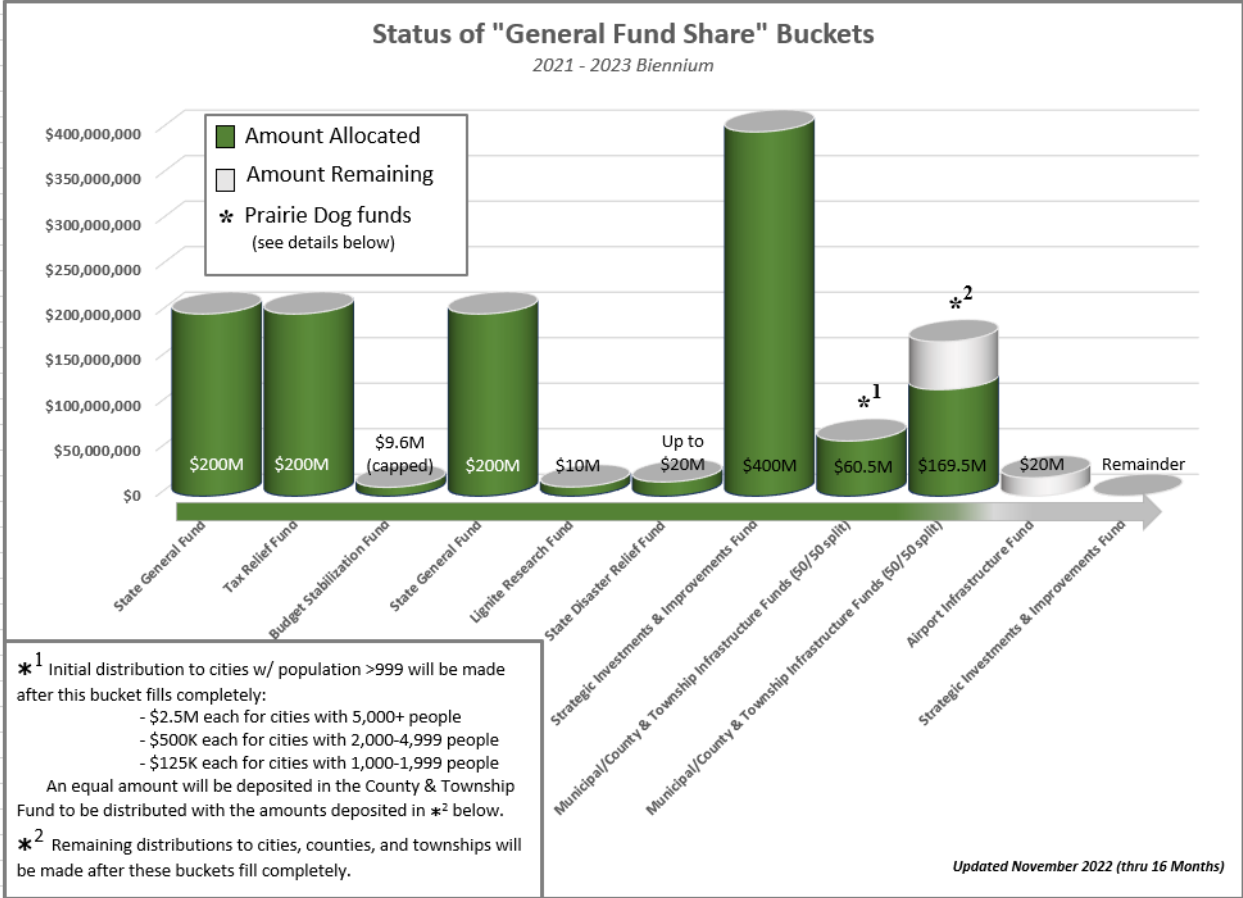
- Grand Forks does not support any legislative action to undermine home rule and thereby undermining the local response to issues such as local budgeting.
- Open Records Laws

**G. Grand Forks Regional Priorities (TBD)**

APPENDIX A

**“Prairie Dog” Infrastructure Funding**

Below you can see the existing order of the allocation of the “Prairie Dog” funding. Our request is to move the \$400 M SIF bucket back behind the initial Municipal bucket. This was how it was ordered prior to the change during the 2021 Legislative Session.



APPENDIX B

**Demers Ave./42<sup>nd</sup> St. Grade Separation**

This project is currently at the ND Department of Transportation Environmental Documentation stage of the project. Selection of an actual alignment alternative will probably take place during the legislative session.

The potential success of a project at this location took a major step forward this year when BNSF made this their #1 project for ND. They are also taking the lead in applying for special federal dollars which recently became available at the national level. Of significance to Grand Forks is that these programs do not provide funding for project development and project design that would coincide with the project schedule. This results in the need for either 100% local funding or finding additional funding sources. Current estimates peg the design fees to be \$6.4 million. This cost would be a major burden for the City to pick up locally. The City has recently proposed a funding formula for the design which would consist of a 50% State/Federal cost share and a 50% city/federal cost share. The City anticipates some need for legislative assistance in getting this request fulfilled, but most of the discussions will need to occur with upper management at the NDDOT.

Estimated cost breakdown:

	Federal Special Funding	Federal Regional	State	City Regional Match	Federal Urban Special*	City Match	BNSF	Total
Design	\$0	\$2,560,000	\$320,000	\$320,000	\$2,560,000	\$640,000		\$6,400,000
Construction	\$30,000,000	\$11,700,000	Combined	\$0	\$0	\$10,400,000	\$1,500,000	\$53,600,000

\*There may some special funding available due to recent program changes. City is asking for anything that may be available so we don't need to reallocate existing programmed funds.

## APPENDIX C

**47<sup>TH</sup> Ave. Interchange**

This project is currently at the ND Department of Transportation Environmental Review stage of project development. We anticipate that a specific design alternative selection will be made during the upcoming legislative session.

It is important to know that the justification for this project is to reduce traffic congestion/potential crashes along the 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. South corridor which is also Business US 81. Adding lanes to the 32<sup>nd</sup> corridor was determined to be ineffective. Therefore, the new interchange acts as a traffic reliever, and is anticipated to reduce traffic on 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave S/Bus US 81 by approximately 40% according to a previous study.

We understand that the NDDOT will be evaluating and prioritizing requests for new interchanges during the upcoming legislative session. It will be important that all segments of ND government understand how important this project is, and hopefully have a top priority in any new interchange ranking priorities. Most of these discussions will need to occur with upper management at the NDDOT.

Estimated cost breakdown:

Federal/State share of standard interchange	<b>\$47 to \$55 Million</b>
City match to interchange	<b>\$5 to \$6 Million</b>
In addition, the City and residents will need to fund local connecting roadways	<b>Est. \$15 Million</b>

## APPENDIX D

### **Red River Valley Water Supply Project**

During the 2023 Legislative Session, the City of Grand Forks supports the request of \$255 million to fully fund the construction for the 2023-25 biennium.

The City of Grand Forks also supports the following regarding Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

#### **Improved Loan Program – 40-year, 2% Loan with ‘Debt Sculpting’:**

- Ability to shape debt repayment (lower payment early, higher payment later) allowing systems to ‘grow’ into project repayment

#### **Proceed w/ Federal ENDAWS portions of the Project:**

- Provides for potential Project capital cost savings of nearly \$270M compared to RRVWSP

#### **Partnership with State on funding economic development capacity:**

- Ability to save existing users significant costs related to future capacity needs

## APPENDIX E

### **ND Public Employees Retirement System (NDPERS)**

Out of the interim committee a bill has been drafted that we will be following. The proposed bill coming out of interim committee plans to close NDPERS Main Defined Benefit Retirement Plan and replace with a defined contribution retirement plan:

- Defined contribution plan for all participating state and political subdivision employees hired after 12/31/2024.
- Defined contribution plan will consist of a base contribution rate of 4% employee contribution with 4% employer contribution match with option to contribute/match up to 7%.
- Employer contribution for employees on the closed Main Defined Benefit plan for employees hired prior to 1/1/2025 will increase by 1%.
- Funding is an initial contribution of \$250 million from the General Fund followed by \$70 million every two years from the Legacy Funds, as necessary.

## APPENDIX F

### **Career Impact Academy**

The City of Grand Forks supports the GF School District as they align their priorities regarding Career and Technical Education centers around with the Department of Career and Technical Education and the Workforce Development Council.

The specific requests for the Career Impact Academy to move forward in Grand Forks are:

#### **\$88,276,228**

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Department of Career and Technical Education was appropriated \$88.3 million for the intent to fund new and expanding CTE Centers. Due to delays in receiving the funds from the US Treasury, the funds have not been distributed. The Department is requesting a continuation of these funds into the 2023-25 Legislative session. It is also requested the Legislature consider a different funding source as the federal Coronavirus Capital Project Funds (\$68,276,228) have not been made available to the Department of Career and Technical Education.

#### **\$40,000,000**

Due to the delay in receipt of the federal Coronavirus Capital Projects funds and inflationary costs, grantees will be unable to deliver what was stated in the applications. The Department is requesting \$40 million, to grant out to awarded applicants, to deliver upon their submitted and approved 2022 applications.

## APPENDIX G

### Highly Skilled Workforce

The City of Grand Forks will be following the Governor's ND Works Investment Plan which hopes to invest \$50 million to help address workforce issues in the State of North Dakota. The key points to the plan are:

- Dedicating \$20 million to a competitive Regional Workforce Impact Grant program for local governments, economic development groups, chambers, regional councils and other workforce entities working to address regional labor demands.
- Providing nearly \$25 million for a strategic marketing and recruitment campaign which will include support for expanding the Find the Good Life talent attraction initiative and Job Service North Dakota virtual job fairs.
- Expanding the state's automation tax credit with a \$5 million Automation Enhancement Workforce Training Grant to support upskilling and advanced training for employers utilizing automation technologies to ease workforce challenges.
- Adding \$2 million to the Technical Skills Training Grant, which since its inception in 2020 has supported the launch or expansion of nearly 30 training programs in health care, information technology, transportation, welding and more.
- Creating a job placement pilot program with nearly \$750,000 to ensure that incarcerated individuals released from North Dakota's correctional facilities are trained and connected to positions where they can succeed.
- Continue working on occupational licensure reform to identify ways to expedite the process for professional licensure in North Dakota.

## APPENDIX H

### **Child Care Program Incentives**

The City of Grand Forks will be following the framework for legislation proposed by the Governor's office and several legislators regarding child care.

The proposal focuses on affordability, availability and quality of childcare services, addressing each area in multiple ways, including:

#### **Affordability**

- Expanding the current Child Care Assistance Program to increase the number of families with children ages 0 to 3 who receive help paying for child care.
- Providing a state child care tax credit, similar to the federal Child and Dependent Care credit, to assist low, moderate and middle income working families cover the cost of child care.
- Expanding the model of public-private partnerships to help more employers offer their employees a child care benefit with matching investment from the state.

#### **Availability**

- Incentivizing providers to deliver child care for infants and toddlers by increasing the rate paid by the state for those families who receive child care assistance.
- Partnering with career and technical education programs, K-12 and higher education to offer students interested in early childhood careers more on-the-job training and certification opportunities in partnership with local child care programs.
- Partnering with employers to identify creative availability solutions for families who work nontypical hours or whose jobs require nontraditional child care solutions.
- Supporting a more sustainable, stable child care sector through grants, incentives, training and shared service resources.
- Providing child care business solutions, facility grants and resources to create environments for children with special needs.

#### **Quality**

- Ensuring every child whose family is interested has access to a "Best in Class" experience the year before kindergarten.
- Expanding parental choice for working families by creating quality-based payment tiers in the Child Care Assistance Program.
- Providing incentives for child care providers who take the necessary steps to meet quality standards.
- Offer scholarships and grants for additional learning/training opportunities to individuals already in the early childhood profession.