COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS:
CREATING A VISION AND REUSE PLAN
FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE

August 2006
COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS:
CREATING A VISION AND REUSE PLAN
FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE

FINAL REPORT
August 2006

PREPARED FOR:
COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS
PREPARED BY:
CENTER FOR RURAL DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Community of the City of Morris:  
Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site

The preparation of this report is funded by the Community Outreach Partnership Centers Program (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) as a component of the Adapting to Change: Managing Urbanization In Rural America Project.

Study Team Members/Roles:
Principal Investigator:
Dewey Thorbeck, Director, Center for Rural Design

Center for Rural Design Team Members:
Steve Roos, Senior Research Fellow, Project Manager
Tracey Sokolski, Research Fellow
Nathan Burt, Research Assistant
Andy Schilling, Research Assistant

Center for Small Towns Team Members:
David Flugel, Community Program Specialist, Project Manager
Joseph Basel, Administrative Assistant

Elementary School Reuse Action Team:
Sue Dieter, Chair
Dave Aronson
Joseph Basel
Sylke Boyd
Laura Carrington
Matthew Carrington
David Flugel
Melanie Fohl
Pat Franey
Sue Granger
Sheila Hemming
Athena Kildegaard
Corrine Kirk
Ed Larson
Dennis Lindor
Sal Monteagudo

Acknowledgements:

This project could not have been accomplished without the cooperation and knowledge of the Morris Citizens’ Steering Committee. In addition, we owe thanks to the City Council of Morris for facilitating the Committee’s work and the community workshop; to Stevens County, for their interest and cooperation in carrying out this project; and to the many individual citizens whose time, ideas, and involvement contributed much to the project.

July 2006
Center for Rural Design
College of Design, and
College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
University of Minnesota
# Table of Contents

**Background to Project**
- Introduction
- Project Approach
- History of Citizen Involvement
- Brief History of the Morris Elementary School Complex and Reuse Planning Activities

**Site Context**
- Site Location
- Connections to the Community
- Housing and Demographics
- Social and Cultural Amenities
- Brief Economic Profile

**Site Design and Redevelopment Issues**
- Public Participation Input
  - Elementary School Reuse Action Team
  - Outcomes of the Community Workshop
- Evaluating the Potential of a Redevelopment Opportunity
- Economic Development and Partnership Opportunities
- Key Issues and Opportunities
MASTER PLANNING AND CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROCESS
SITE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT
PROJECT PROGRAMMING
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT PROGRAMMING DEFINED AND LOCATED - PROJECT PRECINCTS
OVERALL PROJECT PLANNING PRINCIPLES
Vision and Reuse Plan
   Historic Building Complex Precinct
   City Park/Open Space Precinct
   Multi-Generational Housing Precinct
   Cemetery Precinct
Master Plan Alternatives
Phasing Recommendations

APPENDICES
I. SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES
   SUSTAINABLE BUILDING GUIDELINES
   SUSTAINABLE SITE GUIDELINES
   MEASURING SYSTEMS
II. REDEVELOPMENT PRECEDENTS
III. COMPILATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
    PROJECT APPROACH
    PROJECT AND PARTICIPATION PROCESS
    PUBLIC WORKSHOP
IV. MORRIS CITY COUNCIL REPORT RESPONSE
BACKGROUND TO PROJECT
In the fall of 2005 a new elementary school facility was opened adjacent to the Morris Area High School bringing to a close the long history of education at the Morris Elementary School complex. Ending the complex’s traditional role as a school has left the community with a large, empty facility on 17.7 acres of land and the challenging task to determine the future of the site. A member of the Morris Planning Commission pointed out succinctly, the Morris Elementary School complex is one of the best and most centrally located parcels available for development in Morris. The school property would be the single largest redevelopment project within the historic portion of the original Morris town site.

In 2004, the University of Minnesota Morris, led by the Center for Small Towns (CST) and in partnership with the City of Morris, initiated a broad reaching project called Adapting to Change: Managing Urbanization in Rural America, funded by a grant from the Community Outreach Partnership Centers program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Exploring the possibilities for reuse of the Morris Elementary School complex was designed as a component of the Adapting to Change project.

The Center for Rural Design (CRD) at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, developed a proposal to engage with the citizens of Morris to develop a community-based vision for reuse of the Elementary School complex working within the parameters of the Adapting to Change COPC project, Outreach Activity Twelve. The parameters include: identification of potential reuse scenarios and guiding principles for redevelopment; development of a concept plan to demonstrate the principles; implementation strategies; and a final report. In July, 2005, an updated proposal entitled Community of the City of Morris: Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site was submitted by CRD. This proposal and scope of work defined the nature of the project and forms the basis of this report.

One event of note to this project is a visit to Morris by the Minnesota Design Team (MDT) in October, 2005. The three day visit and charrette by MDT was a component of the COPC grant and served the purpose of broadly identifying the social, cultural, and physical character of the city, defining the opportunities and challenges the city faces, and providing a broad look at ways to address those opportunities and challenges. MDT identified reuse of the elementary school site as one of the most significant opportunities facing the City of Morris. A particularly significant outcome of the MDT visit was the creation of a Citizen Action Team specifically focused on reuse of the site.
**Project Approach**

The project approach sought to integrate community input and the planning/design process with the explicit goal of creating a vision and reuse plan for the elementary school site. As such, CRD’s charge was to serve as a facilitator to the citizens of Morris during this planning and participation process.

Over the course of multiple projects CRD has developed a two-tiered approach to community engagement: developing a close working relationship with a steering committee of citizens that are selected from the broadest possible cross section of the community combined with community workshops that engage the rest of the community in problem solving exercises and discussions.

The charge of the steering committee is to guide CRD to a better understanding of the community values defined in the community workshops. The steering committee goes through a simple training exercise and provides feedback related the community workshop exercises.

The community workshops are designed to capture a meaningful set of community values while focusing the attention of the participants on
the specific issues being explored. The intended outcome is to arrive at some level of group consensus on the meaning and application of this set of community values.

In order to represent the public adequately the Morris Elementary School Reuse Action Team was created, evolving out of the Citizen Action Team initiated after the MDT visit. The Action Team provided guidance to CRD in respect to the broader community interest as well as, becoming the “connective tissue” between the community and the project - verifying data, conveying what they have learned to neighbors, and directing CRDs.

The project approach consisted of an integral planning and community participation process.

The planning and participation processes as diagramed in the flow chart on the preceding page consisted of five phases:
- * research and inventory
- * develop alternative scenarios
- * identify and capture community values related to the elementary school site
- * refinement of the alternatives
- * documentation

Throughout the process the Morris Elementary School Reuse Action Team provided guidance and assistance to the project. By approaching the project with community input foremost on the agenda the project and participation processes took similar shape. This means that the relationship of the planning and participation process was inseparable and synergistic.
History of Citizen Involvement in Exploring Reuse of the Morris Elementary School Site

It is important to note that the citizens of Morris have been deeply involved in determining the future of the elementary school and its site over the last five years - ever since the Morris Area School District announced it was time to decide whether to rehabilitate the old school or build anew. This citizen concern led to, drove, and/or strongly supported virtually all subsequent events, to wit:

- school district appointing a 2001 task force
- encouraging the school district to apply for Minnesota Historical Society reuse study and securing funding from MHS, the School District, and the Stevens County Economic Improvement Commission for the study
- listing school on the National Register of Historic Places
- nominating (successfully) to the Preservation Alliance’s Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties
- school district appointing a 2005 advisory committee to assess redevelopment potential
- working with UMM and the City to write the elementary school reuse issue into the 2005 COPC grant application. The COPC project therefore included: applying for a Minnesota Design Team visit, listing the Elementary School among the topics the Minnesota Design Team should look at in 2005, and applying for a Center for Rural Design consultation in 2006
- encouraging the City Council to take ownership of the property to help buy time to develop reuse options and facilitate public input into redevelopment decisions
- forming Elementary Reuse Action Team to respond to the Minnesota Design Team recommendations and to serve as the advisory committee for the CRD consultation

There has been a succession of three formal citizen groups (2001, 2005, 2006), and consultation by three teams of experts: Minnesota Historical Society Reuse Team, Minnesota Design Team, and Center for Rural Design. (A fourth and fifth expert group, Claybaugh Preservation Architecture and Community Partners Inc housing consultants, will be coming soon).

These experts have been funded by contributions from the School District, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Stevens County Economic Improvement Commission, the City, UMM, HUD, and local businesses and individuals, in particular, those who helped make the MDT visit possible.

This activity, expertise, etc. has been drawn here or leveraged by the local citizens. This point is important because it demonstrates public support, involvement, contribution, and commitment to thoughtfully considering the future of this important local asset. The 8 events listed above – included the production of this report - are a response to citizen action.
Brief History of the Morris Elementary School Complex and Reuse Planning Activities

The following is excerpted principally from the Reuse Feasibility Study conducted by the Minnesota Preservation Consultation Team, 2001, and notes of the current Morris Elementary School Reuse Action Group:

• **1914-1915:** the City of Morris acquired the site and erected the first structure, an architecturally significant Craftsman-style building, to house public elementary and high school classes.

• **1934:** an Art Deco-inspired auditorium and gymnasium building was added to the southeast side of the existing building.

• **1949:** a classroom and cafeteria addition was added to the northwest of the original 1914 building; in addition, a bleacher/band room component was added to the back of the auditorium.

• **1956:** a classroom and gymnasium addition was added on the northeast side of the 1949 wing; in addition, the original connecting link between the 1914 and 1934 buildings was enlarged.

• **1975:** a one-story library was built to the northwest of the 1949 building.

• **1995:** an elevator addition was built between the 1949 and the 1956 additions; sprinkler and fire-alarm systems added.

• **1999:** the Morris community began developing a vision for the school district’s long-range plan.

• **2000:** the Prairie Renaissance Administrative Board was established to develop local leadership and economic, recreational, and cultural initiatives.

• **2001**
  
  • the Morris School Board appointed an Elementary Task Force to study options for the district for elementary facilities.
  
  • a structural integrity evaluation of the building complex was completed.
  
  • the 1914, 1934, and 1949 buildings were determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
  
  • Morris School District received a grant for a Minnesota Historical Society reuse study with funding from the Minnesota Historical Society, the School District, and the Stevens County Economic Improvement Commission.
  
  • in its report to the school board the Elementary Task Force recommended constructing a new elementary school facility rather than renovating the existing complex.
  
  • the Minnesota Consultation Team completed its reuse study and determined the best use of the complex is continued use as a school, but noted in its Fall 2001 report that other adaptive reuse is possible; the report stressed preservation of the 1914 and 1934 portions of the complex and identified the need to include the 1949 portion if historic tax credits were sought; stressed developing a broad community partnership to facilitate redevelopment; the Team consulted with ArtSpace.
Projects and MetroPlains, both specialists in reuse of historic properties.

- A bond referendum to build a new elementary school was approved by voters.

2004
- The school and its 17.7 acre site were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, making qualified rehabilitations eligible for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits.
- Reuse of the elementary school complex was identified as a key community revitalization project in a grant application to HUD’s COPC program.
- The Morris Area School board contracted with consultants to gather community input and market the property.
- The HUD COPC grant was approved.

2005
- The Morris City Council offers to purchase the elementary school site for $1 and the school board accepts.
- A bond referendum to construct an outdoor community pool on the site fails.
- A contract proposal (from the Center for Rural Design (CRD), U of M, to explore adaptive reuse of the elementary school site through an interactive, community-based process was accepted; initial phases of the project, Community of the City of Morris: Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site are begun (as outlined in the HUD COPC grant).
- The Minnesota Design Team (MDT) conducts a community visit in Morris and explores issues related to the elementary school site as one component of their effort (as outlined in the HUD COPC grant).
- The City of Morris takes possession of the entire 17.7 acre property.
- The Morris Elementary School Reuse Action Group is created to carry forward on ideas from the MDT visit and to guide the efforts of CRD.

2006
- CRD in conjunction with the Elementary School Reuse Action Group continues work on the project.
Site Location

Morris is a thriving rural community, population 5,128 (est.), located in west-central Minnesota. The city is a historic railroad town founded in 1871 as a service center for the productive agricultural land that surrounds it in Stevens County. The city’s form is classic railroad town, its grid expanding outward from the depot, elevators and businesses along the railroad. Morris continued to grow following the direction of the railroad until the growth intersected with development organized on the Public Land Survey System. The Morris Elementary School site sits at the northeast corner of this intersection (figure 2.1).
The Morris Elementary School site is a 17.7 acre parcel situated in the northeastern section of the city. The site is flanked to the southeast and southwest by residential neighborhoods of single family detached homes. The eastern side, along College Ave., abuts Calvary and Summit Cemeteries. A small section of commercial and service businesses adjoin it to the northwest along 7th Street. These businesses are abutted by additional single family residential further to the northwest. Approach from the center of the city the overall character of the area around the school site is single family residential with well-kept homes and mature tree lined streets possessing a comfortable, rural small town feel. The school buildings are prominent architectural features providing a sense of history and stability to the neighborhood.
The remainder of the site is open space, recreation field (football) and playgrounds that substitute for the park needs of nearby families. The cemeteries across College Avenue reinforce the sense of history and social institution of the neighborhood while providing a buffer to the larger scale and increased activity of the University of Minnesota – Morris campus (UMM). 7th St. forms the northwest boundary of the school site and has one of the highest average daily traffic volumes of all secondary (non-highway) city streets in Morris. The traffic volume is predominantly related to traditional local and regional access to downtown that avoids highway traffic. The businesses along 7th St. across from the school site add to the traffic flow slightly.
Connections to the Community

The street network surrounding the site provides good automobile connections to other parts of the community, in particular, several routes to the downtown business district and government offices, to the new school complex to the southeast along Columbia Ave., and to UMM indirectly from either 7th St. or College Ave. to 4th St. Bicycle connections are adequate along the same routes although there is no official designation of these streets as bicycle routes. Pedestrian connections between the site and downtown are convenient with city sidewalks along tree-lined streets. However, pedestrian connection to the UMM campus is not as well defined.

The Morris Elementary School site sits at the terminus of 6th Street with the historic 1914 building forming the focal point at the end of a tree-lined boulevard that is visible from downtown on Atlantic Avenue 5 blocks to the southwest. Both 5th Street and 7th Street, bordering the site, also provide direct access to downtown. Morris City Hall, the U.S. Post Office, the Morris Senior Citizens Center, and the Morris City Library are located along 6th Street toward downtown. The Stevens County Courthouse is located along 5th Street and Prairie Medical Associates is located on 7th.
Downtown Morris stretches for several blocks along Atlantic Avenue. It is a vibrant collection of retail and service businesses interspersed with professional offices and restaurants. The heritage of Morris as a regional agricultural service center is apparent in downtown with the grain elevators along the rail corridor being the most visually prominent architectural features. Other prominent structures still exist in downtown that reflect the city’s past significance as regional transportation center. A number of regionally significant manufacturing firms are located adjacent to or not very distant from downtown adding to the economic vitality of the city and region.

Morris offers residents several parks of varying sizes the largest being Pomme de Terre Park stretching along the banks of the Pomme de Terre River on the east edge of the city. The park offers connection to nature by preserving semi-natural open space interspersed with hiking and biking trails. Camping is also provided. Many of the other parks focus primarily on active recreation providing ball fields, tennis courts, and other similar facilities. Located within the city are a small number of neighborhood parks providing playgrounds for young children and a quieter setting for passive activities.
Morris is the home of two University of Minnesota facilities – the Morris campus of the University of Minnesota (UMM) and the University’s West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC). UMM is a liberal arts college opened in 1960 with an enrollment of approximately 1,900 students. The campus has historically been dedicated to education starting in 1887 as boarding school for Native Americans and then becoming the West Central School of Agriculture, a high-school level boarding school for the region’s rural students. UMM is nationally recognized for the academic achievement of its students and for the structure of its programs that emphasize faculty/student collaborative research, study abroad, and service learning. WCROC has a long history in agricultural animal research with an environmental emphasis and in horticultural research, demonstration and outreach. More recently, WCROC has become one of the leaders in the UM system in renewable energy research, both wind and biomass produced.

Morris is also the home of USDA’s North Central Soil Conservation Research Lab of the Midwest Area Office of the Agricultural Research Service. The NCSCRL conducts research to develop agricultural systems in the Midwest that are environmentally, economically and socially sustainable including research on agriculture’s role in offsetting global climate change.
Housing and Demographics

A thorough housing study is currently being completed as part of the larger COPC project and those findings will be available in fall 2006. The information that follows is meant to briefly outline what is currently known about demographics and housing within Morris.

The housing stock in the neighborhood surrounding the site is older but generally well maintained. The rest of the city is similar with some pockets of less well-maintained properties. Most new construction currently occurs on the fringes of the city, primarily outside of the corporate limits. Based on the 2000 estimate of housing values half of the homes in Morris are valued between $50,000 and $100,000 with a significant portion valued below $50,000.

Population in Morris declined significantly between the 1990 and 2000 census. However current population estimates show a significant rebound in the last 5 years to a population of approximately 5,128. Demographic changes documented in the 2000 Census indicate that Morris is in transition to lower per-person households representing a possible future shift in need to smaller home sizes.

Single family housing building permits, while

2000 Census: Morris city (Stevens County)
Housing Profiles:
Value for All Owner-occupied Housing Units
SF3 - H084 - Owner-occupied housing units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Pct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1,019 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $24,999</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $34,999</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 to $69,999</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 to $89,999</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $124,999</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$125,000 to $149,999</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 to $174,999</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$175,000 to $199,999</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 to $249,999</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,000 to $299,999</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2000 Census: Morris city (Stevens County)
Housing Profiles: Year Structure Built
SF3 - H034 - Housing units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Pct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>2,034 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1999 to March 2000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1995 to 1998</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1990 to 1994</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1980 to 1989</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1970 to 1979</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1960 to 1969</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1950 to 1959</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1940 to 1949</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built 1939 or earlier</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relatively stable over time, do not reflect a large demand for new homes but may not reflect the potential for interest in life-cycle housing in the city or region.
Ignoring the impact of UMM students, the population pyramid for Morris indicates an aging population. This is true even in comparison to Stevens County and especially to the state. In addition, the 55 and above cohorts show a higher percentage of females which may also represent a need for more Life-cycle housing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000 Census: City-at-a-glance</th>
<th>Morris city (Stevens County)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Population*</td>
<td>5,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 Population*</td>
<td>5,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent change from 1990 population*</td>
<td>-9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 population estimate***</td>
<td>5,085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000 Census: Morris city (Stevens County)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households by Number of Persons per Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-or-more-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-or-more-person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Office of Social and Economic Trend Analysis

Percent of Population by Age and Sex

85 plus
80 to 84
75 to 79
70 to 74
65 to 69
60 to 64
55 to 59
50 to 54
45 to 49
40 to 44
35 to 39
30 to 34
25 to 29
20 to 24
15 to 19
10 to 14
5 to 9
0 to 4
Social and Cultural Amenities

Morris has several existing amenities that serve the needs of the community and the region. Park and recreation opportunities within the city include:

- Regional Fitness Center (RFC)
- Pomme de Terre Park
- Wells Park
- Green River Park
- East Side Park
- The Eagles Ball Park
- Kjenstad Park
- Thedin Park
- Riverside Park

Current cultural venues include:

- Crystal Lanes Bowling & Entertainment Center
- Pomme de Terre Golf and Learning Center
- Stevens County Historical Society Museum
- Prairie Renaissance Cultural Center
- Morris Theater
- University of Minnesota West Central Outreach and Research Horticulture Display Garden
- University of Minnesota, Morris
Community and public services and institutions include:

- Lee Community Center
- Senior Citizen Center
- Assumption Catholic Church
- Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church (CLC)
- Evangelical Free Church
- Faith Lutheran Church (ELCA)
- First Baptist Church
- First Lutheran Church (ELCA)
- Hosanna Worship Center
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
- Morris Community Church
- The Federated Church (United Church of Christ and United Methodist Church)
- St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church (WELS)
- Zion Lutheran Church (LCMS)

City and county offices include:

- City of Morris
- Morris Area Chamber of Commerce
- Stevens County Courthouse, Administration, Social Services, and Extension Service

Morris also is the home of several buildings and site of historic significance. Those properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places include:

- Morris Carnegie Library, 116 W.6th Street
- Morris High School, 600 Columbia Avenue
- Lewis H. Stanton House, 907 Park Avenue
- Morris Industrial School for Indians Dormitory, UMM Campus
- West Central School of Agricultural and Experiment Station Historic District, UMM Campus

Other important historic properties include but are not limited to:

- Assumption Church Complex, 207 E. 3rd St.
- East Side Park, E. 7th St. and California
- Eul’s Hardware, 700 Atlantic Avenue
- First Lutheran Church, 200 E. 5th Street
- Great Northern Railroad Depot, RR Tracks near 10th St.
- Halvorson Building, 626 Atlantic Avenue
- Longfellow School, 801 Nevada Ave.
- Morris Sun and Tribune, 108 E. 6th Street
- Morris Theatre, E. 6th St.
- Pomme de Terre Park, Mill Dam Road and Pomme de Terre River
- Stevens County Courthouse, 400 Colorado Avenue
- Summit and Calvary Cemeteries, College Avenue and 7th Street
- U. S. Post Office, 105 E. 6th Street

Wood framed churches at:

- 707 Columbia Avenue
- E.6th and Colorado
- 301 W. 5th Street

And several historic houses:

- Hoffman House, 309 E. 2nd St.
- Holman House, 302 W. 6th St.
- Park Avenue Houses, Vicinity of 900 through 1100 blocks of Park Avenue
- Tipcke House, 311 W. 7th St.
- Watson House, 114 W. 9th Street
Brief Economic Profile

Morris dominates many of the economic sectors of Stevens County and the region. The major non-agricultural employers and workforce include:

- University of MN - Morris – 449
- Prairie Community Svc – 238
- Stevens Community Medical Ctr – 221
- Superior Industries – 195
- Morris Public Schools – 181
- West Wind Village – 162
- Riley Bros Paving Inc – 140
- Stevens, County of – 140
- Riley Bros. Construction – 130
- WesMor Industries – 116
- Willie’s Super Valu – 100
- Prairie Inn – 63
- Mc Donalds – 50
- USDA Soil Lab – 49
- Morris, City of – 47

Morris is the retail center of Stevens County and attracts consumers from a broader area functioning as a small regional hub. Opportunity for commercial and industrial expansion is further enhanced by the presence of 4 JOBZ subzone parcels in the City of Morris Industrial Park.

Household income in Morris increased significantly between the 1990 and 2000 census indicating increased economic opportunity and an increased level of education in the workforce.

### Retail Sales Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Community Sales</th>
<th>County Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$76,946,815</td>
<td>$109,352,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$77,734,045</td>
<td>$104,970,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$77,724,825</td>
<td>$82,674,066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(http://www.mnpro.com/)

### 2000 Census: Households by Household Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $24,999</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $34,999</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $44,999</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$45,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $74,999</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 to $74,999</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 or more</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $124,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$125,000 to $149,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 or more</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 to $199,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agg household income</td>
<td>48670231</td>
<td>78688900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>18176</td>
<td>31786</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2000 Census: Education Attainment of Persons 25 or Older

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2653</td>
<td>2459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate or equivalency</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3 years college</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more years college</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(http://www.mnpro.com/)
Public Participation Input

The public participation process involved a formal public workshop, a display in the public library, and informal meetings that gathered the values of the community as they relate to the Morris Elementary School Site. An ongoing relationship with the Elementary School Reuse Action Team was also fundamental to the process. The Team reviewed and interpreted the input from the broader community and provided guidance to the planning process. This depth of public participation is crucial to defining a vision for redevelopment that will have broad citizen support.

A thorough discussion of the public participation process and its outcomes will be presented in Appendix III. For the purposes of this section of the report the outcomes of community input will be examined.

Elementary School Reuse Action Team

Early in the process the Action Team assembled a planning document, Local Elementary School Reuse Planning Document, that outlined key issues that guided the exploration of redevelopment. The document is included in Appendix III. These issues examined the potential impact of redevelopment for the City of Morris by outlining site assets, opportunities, constraints, and possible community space needs.

As the Action Team identified, the scale of redevelopment on the school site has the potential to affect the character of a large portion of Morris and impact the daily lives of the residents living in the surrounding neighborhood. The property represents the single largest redevelopment opportunity within the historic core of Morris, encompassing 17.7 acres or approximately six and one half city blocks.

Key assets include the existing structures and facilities; site size and location; and site amenities including existing parking lots, open space, mature landscape plantings, and handsome surroundings.

Key constraints primarily concern the buildings and are related to handicapped access, moisture problems, and building material abatement.

Opportunities include providing space to meet certain identified community space needs. It is recognized that these space needs are varied and could be met elsewhere in the community. Those needs likely to be greatest are for city government, arts/cultural/historical venues, recreation, certain community education programs, and housing. Notes regarding these and other community space needs are included in the original document.

The planning document identified several key points for marketing redevelopment on the site:

- the projected demographic trend in the city and area is senior citizens,
- Morris may have a need for new in-city housing opportunities,
- the state and national trend in popularity of living in small college towns,
- the trend in the Morris area toward environmental research, sustainable energy initiatives,
and related agricultural research,

- redeveloping the site and rehabilitating certain of the buildings as an example of sustainable reuse,
- the excellent location of the site in relationship with downtown, public services, amenities, and UMM.
- the strong local economy and educated workforce,
- existing proposals for reuse of at least part of the available space.

Key physical design principles identified in the document include:

- preservation and reuse of at least the most historically significant portions of the school,
- preservation and enhancement of existing vegetation,
- emphasize residential development with a focus on senior-friendly design,
- design with a strong focus on sustainability,
- include public open/park space, possibly with a pool,
- include effective buffers between land uses
- include pedestrian links to other features in the community.

The Action Team concluded the document with a list of criteria that should be explored in alternative scenarios for site redevelopment:

- historic building preservation of the 1914 and the 1934 structures at a minimum, preferably also including the 1949 structure,
- rehabilitate the preserved structures predominantly for rental or owner-occupied residential housing,
- rehabilitate a smaller portion of the buildings for offices, labs, and small business incubator space including research, arts, government, education, non-profits, and other compatible small businesses,
- explore opportunities with Morris Community Church for adaptive reuse of the 1934 auditorium and portions of the 1914 structure with shared use by the broader community,
- include public park and open space with potential provision for a community pool,
- explore the possible need for expansion with the adjoining cemeteries,
- include new residential development focusing on senior/life-cycle housing that employs sustainable design and building practices, architecturally blends with the surrounding neighborhoods, and fills the needs of a growing niche market
- direct the conceptual design of the entire project toward becoming a demonstration site for the application of sustainable design practices in rural communities.

The Local Elementary School Reuse Planning Document became the framework around which issues and opportunities were identified and explored with the broader community. The Action Team worked closely with CRD to develop exercises and questions to pose to the citizens in the community workshop. They then aided in interpreting the input and provided feedback in developing the final scenario and this document.
Outcomes of the Community Workshop

Based on the combined efforts of the Action Team and CRD, a set of issues and opportunities was identified and three alternative scenarios developed to bring to the citizens of Morris for discussion. The issues were organized into three categories and the scenarios presented as an interactive exercise. The citizens present at the community workshop, through group discussions at tables, were asked to respond to these issues by ranking each in terms of its importance to the community. Then they identified the positive and negative components of the scenarios. Responses were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5; 1 being the highest or best, 5 being the lowest or worst in relative terms. Generally, issues within the categories were not mutually exclusive - the same issue may have been examined more than once to validate the citizens values related to that issue. A complete tabulation of the results of the community workshop, along with significant comments by the participants is included in Appendix III. The scenarios are presented and discussed in the next section of this report. The table below represents the averaged responses from all the tables at the workshop; the number in parenthesis following each issue is its averaged rank.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Range of Values: 1-5 (1=highest)</th>
<th>Mean: 2.57, Median: 2.45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/County Offices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Pool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery Expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Friendly Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-Cycle Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Private Partnership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Adult Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Design/Renewable Energy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/County University Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve and Enhance Green Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserving the 1914/1934/1949 Historic Buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land for Cemetery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersecting Grids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Connections to Downtown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The figures and diagrams include visual representations of the community workshop outcomes and discussion points.
Community of the City of Morris:
Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan
for the Elementary School Site

Category One

The first category of issues identified issues related to major land uses, preservation, connections, and an organizing spatial framework for the design of the site. These issues were described as site design givens (1=highest):

- **Pedestrian Connections to Downtown** - examined connections from UMM through the site to downtown (2.63),
- **Intersecting Grids (PLSS and Morris Street Grid)** - explored the means for physical organization on the site (3.63)
- **Land for Cemetery** - examined community opinions about cemetery expansion as a suitable land use on the site (2.65),
- **Preserving the 1914/1934/1949 Historic School Buildings** - examined the significance to the community of preserving the historic core of the building complex (2.25)
- **Preserve and Enhance Green Space** - examined the desire and need for park space in the neighborhood and city (1.81).

The outcome of response in this category indicate a clear desire on the part of the participants to preserve some green open space on the site most likely in the form of public park. Active recreation could be an acceptable component of the part but it should also include open space and possibly demonstration and community gardens.

Preserving some of the school buildings was next in importance although support was highest for the 1914 and 1934 components. Comments indicated a significant appreciation for the community heritage embodied in the school and site.

Pedestrian connections that connect the site to UMM and downtown ranked moderately high. Comments indicated a strong sense of value for a designated route although it was recognized that people will always take the most direct route without some encouragement. A route passing through the existing cemetery was not seen as feasible.

Reserving land for cemetery expansion was also ranked moderately high with the conditions that it is seen as a part of the community as a whole (some degree of public access), it is adequately buffered to become a visual amenity, it integrates well with the other uses on the site, and the transaction is in the general public good for Morris.

The concept of intersecting grids was not well understood and offered little in providing meaning to the project other than for spatial organization.

Category Two

The second category was designed to confirm the opportunities and a focus appropriate for the site (1=highest):

- **City/County/University Collaboration** - discussed the significance of a collaborative effort to site redevelopment (1.8),
- **Historic Preservation** (1.5)
- **Sustainable Design/Renewable Energy** - discussed the significance of a sustainable approach to redevelopment and energy supply for the site (1.7),
- **Older Adult Opportunities** - examined the potential of the site to meet housing needs of older adults (2.2),
- **Educational Opportunities** - discussed principally community, adult, and special education
opportunities (4),

- **Public/Private Partnerships** - explored the role of partnerships between the city and private sector (profit or non-profit) investors in site redevelopment (2.1)
- **Other** - a category left open for input from the participants.

In this category the significance of historic preservation as an important community value was reaffirmed. The importance of public sector collaboration to define meaningful as well as practical approaches to redevelopment also ranked very high, although it was recognized that partnerships with the private sector is also fundamentally important.

Applying sustainable building guidelines to redevelopment of preserved structures, new structures, and site improvements was considered very important. However, it was noted that the aesthetic character of any new development has to blend well with the surrounding neighborhood and the city in general. Renewable energy is an important part of sustainable development, however, application on the site will probably be limited - perhaps geothermal and photovoltaics but not wind generators.

Older adult opportunities, particularly housing, ranked high but the preference was for multi-generational opportunities that integrated all ages in a neighborhood focusing on accessibility and affordability for young adults and families, new residents, transitional residents related to UMM, downsizers, and retirees.

Providing educational opportunities on site ranked low, in particular, formal education programs, due primarily to the presence of other local venues for these programs. Exceptions could include specialized programs related to adult education, community education, day care, arts, sustainable living, horticulture, and demonstration gardens, among others.

**Category Three**
The third category prioritized programmatic land uses for the site. The citizens were asked to rank specific land use types as being appropriate for the site (1=highest):

- **Town Homes** - typically 2-4 unit (2.64),
- **Apartment Homes** - large building (4.08),
- **Life-Cycle Housing** - young adult through senior (2.19),
- **Eco-Friendly Housing** - built within the framework of sustainable building guidelines (1.71),
- **Cemetery Expansion** (2.95),
- **Community Pool** (2.61)
- **Active Recreation** - recreation that involves active sports such as soccer, baseball, swimming pool, etc. that generate significant noise and activity (2.57),
- **Passive Recreation** - recreation including walking, biking, picnicking, children playgrounds and other activities similarly found in neighborhood parks (2.33),
- **Community Center** - including banquet and meeting facilities (3.75),
- **City/County Offices** (2.21),
- **Center for Sustainability** (3.2)
- **Other** - a category left open for input from the participants.
The responses in this category indicate a clear preference for smaller scale housing units - both in unit size and in units-per-building. Apartment homes ranked as the least desirable of all issues partly due to a lack of need in the community and also to due to a poor fit with the surrounding neighborhood. Town homes designed to be affordable, meet the physical needs of life-cycle housing, and blend with the character of the neighborhood are preferable. Sustainable design and eco-friendly development practices were re-affirmed.

However, comments noted that not all of the site should be dedicated to housing. Public open space is important. Passive recreation in the form of public park ranked the highest in importance as an enhancement to local property values. Opportunities should include paths, open space, and gardens. Active recreation ranked slightly lower due to the potential for more traffic and noise but could be a useful interim use for parts of the site, for example, converting the football field to a soccer field. Playground space for young children was noted as important and possibly a permanent feature on the site to serve the needs of the neighborhood. While a community pool is generally a good idea it may not fit well with housing on the site unless carefully sited and buffered.

This category explored occupancy of part of the site by the public sector. City and county offices were viewed as positive uses on the site, particularly in the preserved buildings, because it retained some degree of public access to and engagement with the site. It was noted that there are existing government offices within the community and the overall need for additional space has to be assessed. It was also noted that the site was not a suitable location for a jail.

A community center with banquet and meeting facilities ranked fairly low due to other existing facilities. However, some form of community center would fit nicely with other potential uses and take advantage of space in the preserved buildings.

While the concept of a Center for Sustainability generated a great deal of discussion the primary concern was competing with similar programs at UMM and WCROC. It was felt that a collaborative effort with UMM that used redevelopment on the elementary school site as a demonstration site was the most feasible.

**Conclusions**

Based on the scores recorded through the various public participation mechanisms issues can be grouped into three categories.

Most Important Issues (scores < 2):
- Historic Preservation (1.5)
- Sustainable Design/Renewable Energy (1.7)
- Eco-Friendly Housing (1.71)
- City/County/University Collaboration (1.8)
- Preserve and Enhance Green Space (1.81)

Moderately Important Issues (scores 2-3):
- Public/Private Partnership (2.1)
- Life-Cycle Housing (2.19)
- Older Adult Opportunities (2.2)
- City/County Offices (2.21)
- Preserving the 1914/1934/1949 Historic School Buildings (2.25)
- Passive Recreation (2.33)
- Active Recreation (2.57)
• Pedestrian Connections to Downtown (2.63)
• Town Homes (2.64)
• Community Pool (2.61)
• Land for Cemetery (2.65)
• Cemetery Expansion (2.95)

Least Important Issues (scores > 3):
• Center for Sustainability (3.2)
• Intersecting Grids (3.63)
• Community Center with Banquet and Meeting Facilities (3.75)
Evaluating the Potential of a Development Opportunity

As part of the assessment process CRD engaged in discussions with a representative of The Staubach Company, a national real estate development and management company. As a result of these discussions Staubach developed a list of factors that a developer and financier would consider in evaluating the potential of a development opportunity:

Assumption: Any proposed development must generate a market rate return on the required investment.

- Define and measure the market
  - Identify potential uses and/or markets
  - Measure market size/demand
    - Population - present and future...daytime...night time
    - Market size and growth forecast
    - Traffic - cars...pedestrian
  - Evaluate potential for creating a market

- Evaluate site
  - Size, configuration, terrain, soils
  - Visibility
  - Access
  - Parking
  - Environmental
  - Zoning
  - Safety

- Evaluate existing improvements
  - Structural, mechanical, electrical, telecom
  - Floor plate size, configuration, usable area
  - Access - ADA, auto, pedestrian

- Identify and evaluate competition
  - Other sites
  - Other buildings
  - Other communities
  - Identify and evaluate obstacles and prerequisites
    - NIMBY factor
    - Environmental
    - Zoning
    - Pre-sales/pre-leasing
    - Potential JOBZ benefits

- Determine development sequence

- Prepare development pro forma
  - Define project
  - Land cost
  - Construction cost
  - Soft costs
  - Marketing
  - Debt service
  - Operating expenses
  - Revenue
  - ROI

- Financing
  - Sources
  - Guarantees
  - Subsidies

These factors are specific to the interests of a real estate developer and help define the marketability and potential profitability of a project. They are presented here only to provide some insight into the private sector development process in preparation for seeking and receiving proposals for projects on the Morris Elementary School Site.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the outlined input, opportunities for development are divided into three groups:

Opportunities for Economic Development
There are primarily two areas for economic development on the Elementary School Site.

The first is housing development. The long-term impact of housing development on the site to the city’s economic activity will likely be minimal, even in terms of jobs, considering that the construction will need to be phased to meet market demand. However, the project will add to the local construction economy and move some of the property back onto the tax roles.

The rate at which residential development occurs will depend on successfully marketing to a small but growing niche market for modest sized, low maintenance, environmentally sensitive housing units with nearby amenities. The units should offer a range of prices, based on finished size and features, to suit a wide range of incomes. Residential redevelopment in the historic 1914 building would be especially appealing to certain markets especially if the second floor and attic were retrofit into upscale, two story loft apartments suitable for active seniors, couples looking to down-size their housing, artists, and others.

The second area for potential economic development would be in the form of a business incubator that supports startup businesses, in particular, professional service businesses. This type of development offers longer term economic benefits to the community in the form of new job creation. While not as likely at the present, discussions have taken place about the possibility of housing research and development facilities in rehabilitated or new construction on the site in collaboration with research activities at UMM, WCROC, and NCSCRL or with the renewable energy facilities in the region. Another form of economic development identified in public input is a small retail and/or restaurant business to fill specific niche needs on the site. It is recognized that any such commercial development needs to be carefully positioned in the market to compliment rather than compete with downtown businesses.

Opportunities for Public/Private/Academic Partnerships
As identified earlier in this report, one of the primary assets of the Elementary School Site is its location - intimate and equidistant to UMM/WCROC, downtown Morris business district, and government offices of both the City of Morris and Stevens County. This spatial relationship offers the opportunity for strong collaborative relationships that meet individual needs and goals while supporting each other and the greater good of the community.

The potential for partnerships includes:

- Physically occupying space on the site in the form of offices and facilities,
- Identifying mutual needs and seeking private sector involvement in filling those needs,
- Developing and supporting programs in sustainable development that lead to applied research and demonstration sites,
• Developing a business incubator that supports research initiatives that could develop on site into alternative energy, technology, biomedical, and environmental startup businesses. These could grow as needed elsewhere in the community,

• Defining an approach for the development of the site that combines the strengths and assets of the partners to attract outside investment while maintaining the rural town character and values of the community of Morris.
**Key Issues and Opportunities**

Based on the combination of input from the Elementary School Reuse Action Team, public participation process, public and academic sectors, and private consultants CRD developed a final scenario for redevelopment of the Elementary School Site based on key identified issues and opportunities. The scenario revolves around the designation of four precincts each containing specific physical components intended to support specific uses. Yet all four precincts are tied together in an intimate relationship through a set of overall planning and design principles.

**Planning Principles:**

- Community Involvement – to involve citizens in the strategic planning process.
- Economic Development – to explore synergistic entrepreneurship and development opportunities capitalizing on the historic site and building, and unique landscape and intellectual potential of the university, city and county.
- Quality of Life – to enhance the reasons why people will choose to live in and visit Morris and the surrounding region.
- Sustainability – to utilize goals and strategies reflecting the highest standards of leadership in environmental design, economic and social development.
- Connect the City, County, and University – to foster cooperation and long-term financial, human and environmental health for the region.
- Due Diligence – to ensure that all planning and development activities are conducted with the highest standards of fairness, integrity and sound business practice.

**Design Principles:**

- preservation and reuse of at least the most historically significant portions of the school,
- preservation and enhancement of existing vegetation,
- emphasize residential development with a focus on senior-friendly design,
- design with a strong focus on sustainability,
- include public open/park space, possibly with a pool,
- include effective buffers between land uses
- include pedestrian links to other features in the community.

The key issues and opportunities addressed in the reuse plan are:

Preservation and reuse of the historic 1914 school building and 1934 auditorium. Redevelopment of the space should be dedicated to a mix of uses including residential, business incubator, public offices, social services, and non-profit organizations.

Preserve and enhance public open space to include uses most compatible with uses on the rest of the site and the surrounding neighborhood. Interim uses could include space for active recreation and organized sports but use should transition over time to suit the character of a quieter neighborhood park. A public pool could be a compatible use with careful siting and adequate buffering.

Develop life-cycle housing that would fill the needs of cross generational, small scale, affordable, quality housing niche market. The development would employ the best in sustainable building practices, provide a high quality of life through
on-site amenities and community connections, and be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and Morris in general.

Reserve open space for cemetery expansion that will reinforce the sense of history and social institution within the neighborhood while providing additional quiet open space on the site. Additionally, including it on site meets several practical purposes for administration and maintenance of the existing cemeteries as well as the public good.

As stated, these issues provided the framework around which the precincts of the Vision and Re-use Plan were developed. The next section of this report offers a complete discussion of the plan.
MASTER PLANNING AND THE CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROCESS
SITE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

The site inventory and analysis explores the individual physical characteristics of the site to gain a better understanding of the complex spatial whole. The physical characteristics relevant to the site inventory and assessment for the Morris Elementary School site are: approximate topography, buildings and other facilities and structures, circulation, and significant vegetation. The following diagrams present the existing physical characteristics of the site and the basis from which the conceptual design development decisions will be made.

APPROXIMATE TOPOGRAPHY

Topography is the change in land elevation with respect to sea level and is shown as a series of lines called contours overlaid on a map. The change in elevation or slope is shown by the number of contours and the distance the contours reside from one another. This means that the closer the contour and the greater number of contours, the greater the slope. Typically the topography is included in an official city plat map. Since the project is in the conceptual design development stages the topography was approximated from Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data.

The Morris Elementary School site topography, as shown in diagram 4.1, has contours of 1 foot intervals, which means that every contour constitutes a change in elevation by 1 foot. The high point is located just north of the intersection of Columbia Avenue and 5th Street East, descends north, northeast and east. Columbia Avenue
and 5th Street descend gradually. The greatest amount of elevation change is due to the football field located directly behind the existing school complex. The existing 1914, 1934, 1956 building additions and Bleachers and Band Room addition of 1949 school buildings are situated level at grade, whereas the rest of the additions negotiate the grade change.

Diagram 4.1 Site Inventory - Approximate Togography
The buildings and other facilities and structures identified in Diagram 4.3 are constructs of significance on the site. The buildings include the Morris Area School building, its additions, football facilities and auxiliary facilities and the playground.

The Morris School building, as shown in plan in Figure 4.2, is a composite of numerous additions. Many of the additions had been constructed in different time periods and by different architects and vary in character and quality. According to the November, 2001 Minnesota Consultation Team Reuse Study the 1914 Morris High School and the 1934 Auditorium shown in Diagram 4.2, appear to have the best reuse potential. The 1914 building features a symmetrical brick facade, terra cotta shingle roof and numerous interior architectural artifacts. According the February, 2001 Elementary School Structural Report the 1914 building is in general good working condition but has need for structural roof repair. There is also water damage to the roof and some of the floors and exterior walls. The 1934 Auditorium shows evidence of water damage, some horizontal cracks on the south wall, and some exterior brick facade rehab. Both buildings will require asbestos abatement, removal of lead based paint and any underground oil tanks. In addition the 1914 will have to be updated to comply with ADA Code. The building complex was updated to Minnesota State Building code in 1995 (e.g. elevator, sprinklers, and asbestos abatement) and, as such, current compliance will need to be updated.

1914 Morris Area School and the 1934 Auditorium

According to the November, 2001 Minnesota Consultation Team Reuse Study, the 1914 Morris Area School and the 1934 Auditorium should be preserved. In addition, the 1949 Bleachers and Band Room addition should also be preserved due to its structural location to the 1934 Auditorium. The 1914 building, a prominent landmark in the Morris area, sits on a hill with a subtle overlook towards the central business district of Morris and it serves as the terminus of 6th Street East. The 1914 building features a symmetrical brick facade, terra cotta shingle roof and numerous interior architectural artifacts. According the February, 2001 Elementary School Structural Report the 1914 building is in general good working condition but has need for structural roof repair. There is also water damage to the roof and some of the floors and exterior walls. The 1934 Auditorium shows evidence of water damage, some horizontal cracks on the south wall, and some exterior brick facade rehab. Both buildings will require asbestos abatement, removal of lead based paint and any underground oil tanks. In addition the 1914 will have to be updated to comply with ADA Code. The building complex was updated to Minnesota State Building code in 1995 (e.g. elevator, sprinklers, and asbestos abatement) and, as such, current compliance will need to be updated.

Football and Auxiliary Facilities

The football facilities and auxiliary facilities shown in Diagram 4.3 consist of public bathrooms, an equipment shed, bleachers, a podium stand, and a secondary equipment shed. The facilities seem to be in working order and functional.

The Playground

The playground located northeast of the 1956 Classroom Addition is of high social value. The quality and safety of the equipment needs to be updated. The playground could be reused and relocated but only after significant inspection of the current equipment.
COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS:
CREATING A VISION AND REUSE PLAN
FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE

Morris Building Complex, Figure 4.2

Diagram 4.3 Site Inventory
- Buildings and other Facilities and Structures
Circulation

The circulation around the Morris Area School Site consists of automobile and pedestrian movement. Existing circulation is an important physical characteristic because it shows the amount and type of traffic and the main routes of movement. Diagram 4.4 shows the major routes of auto circulation in red and major routes of pedestrian circulation in blue.

The auto circulation of significance is on 7th Street East and Columbia Avenue. 7th Street East is a collector street which is made for higher volumes of traffic and is used to move traffic from arterial streets to residential and commercial areas. 7th Street East moves relatively high levels of traffic from Route 59 to the downtown commercial district street, Atlantic Avenue. According to the 2001 Traffic Volumes prepared by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, 7th Street East yields 2300 trips per day from Iowa Avenue to Columbia Avenue. Columbia Avenue is a collector street as well, moving 1700 trips per day from Highway 28 to 5th St. East. The main draw to Columbia Avenue is convenience of movement to the new High School located on Columbia Avenue and Green River Road.

Pedestrian circulation in Morris is highly prevalent and easy to encourage due to the short distances and beautiful scenery. 7th Street East bears some of the pedestrian load that travels from the University of Minnesota, Morris Campus to the Morris downtown commercial district.
Community of the City of Morris:
Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan
for the Elementary School Site

Diagram 4.4 Site Inventory
- Circulation
The Morris Area School Site has vegetation of significance located on the borders of the site as shown in Diagram 4.5. In fact, the entire 17.7 acres is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and eligible for federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits for rehabilitation. The existing vegetation was evaluated on the grounds of species, maturity, health and social value. The mature deciduous tree cluster on the corner of 7th Street East and Columbia Avenue, young boulivard trees on Columbia Ave, the deciduous street trees on 5th Street East, and some of the coniferous trees on the north and north east border are of significance. All of the vegetation on the site is of importance, not necessarily due to age or species but, because their expressed social value to the community.

The mature deciduous tree cluster on the corner of 7th Street East and Columbia Avenue should be of high priority to keep for future generations. These trees are large, have full canopies, provide a lot of shade and create a sense of place. In addition, the young deciduous street trees (which have been planted and maintained by the City) along Columbia Avenue are of high expressed social value to the community.

The mature street trees along 5th Street East (many of which stand on City right-of-way) are of high priority. These trees are somewhat mature, have a full canopy and add to the character of the street. The trees help to provide a sense of human scale which is very helpful for pedestrian security and enjoyment.

The coniferous trees on the north and north east border are of high priority too, because they create a sense of edge or border to the site and are also sturdy and thriving coniferous stock. The trees help to buffer the north corner from the traffic on 7th Street East, as such a vegetative buffer should be replaced if the coniferous trees are relocated on the site.

All of the unmentioned vegetation clusters are of lower priority to preserve in their current location but could be relocated to suit the needs of an overall vision for the site.
Community of the City of Morris:
Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan
for the Elementary School Site

Diagram 4.5 Site Inventory - Significant Vegetation

- Coniferous Trees
  - High Priority for Preservation

- Minor Deciduous Trees

- Minor small trees and shrubs

- Mature Deciduous Tree Cluster - High Priority for Preservation

- Young Street Trees - High Priority for Preservation

- Miscellaneous Shrubs and Small Trees

- Deciduous Street Trees
  - High Priority for Preservation

- Minor Coniferous Trees
SITE ASSESSMENT

The Site Assessment as presented in Diagram 4.7 shows the significant features that resulted from the site inventory. The site inventory explored: approximate topography, buildings and other facilities and structures, Circulation, and vegetation as shown in Diagram 4.6 as the Combined Site Inventory. The following is a summary of the significant features and assessment inferences of each category in the site inventory.

APPROXIMATE TOPOGRAPHY

The high point is located just north of the intersection of Columbia Avenue and 5th Street East. The elevation then descends north, northeast and east. The elevation on Columbia Avenue and 5th Street descends gradually. The greatest amount of elevation change is due to the football field located directly behind the existing school complex.

The potential future buildings should be sited on level ground and the stormwater infiltration basins should be located to reflect the change in topography.

BUILDINGS AND OTHER FACILITIES AND STRUCTURES

The buildings include the Morris Area School building, its additions, football facilities and auxiliary facilities and the playground. Of particular historical, cultural and social significance is the 1914 Morris High School and the 1934 Auditorium.

Preservation efforts should concentrate on the 1914 Morris High School and the 1934 Auditorium and effort should be made to connect the buildings to the site, University of Minnesota, Morris, and downtown Morris.

CIRCULATION

The circulation around the Morris Area School Site consists of automobile and pedestrian movement. 7th Street East moves relatively high levels of traffic from Route 59 to the downtown commercial district street, Atlantic Avenue. Columbia Avenue is a collector street as well, moving 1700 trips per day from Highway 28 to 5th St. East. 7th Street East bears some of the pedestrian load that travels from the University of Minnesota, Morris Campus to the Morris downtown commercial district.

The Circulation patterns inventoried suggests that pedestrian access should be moved from the heavy traffic street of 7th East to the minimal traffic street of 5th Street East and pedestrian entrance to the site should be on the corner of 7th Street East and Columbia Avenue and the corner of 5th Street East and College Avenue.

VEGETATION

The existing vegetation was evaluated on the grounds of species, maturity, health and social value. The mature deciduous tree cluster on the corner of 7th Street East and Columbia Avenue, the deciduous street trees on 5th Street East, and the coniferous trees on the north and north east border are of significance.

All vegetation on the site has social value but may not have species value, this should be taken into consideration when planning for the future.
COMBINED SITE INVENTORY

Site Assessment

Mature Deciduous Tree Cluster - High Priority for Preservation

Pedestrian Entrance Identified

Light Auto Traffic

Reroute Pedestrian Circulation

Preserve Morris Area School Building 1914, 1934, and 1949 Bleachers and Band Room

Diagram 4.7 Site Inventory - Site Assessment

Coniferous Trees - High Priority for Preservation

Approximate Low Point

Heavy Auto Traffic

Diagram 4.6 Site Inventory - Combined Site Inventory

Good View

Water Movement

Steep Slope

Pedestrian Entrance Identified

Deciduous Street Trees - High Priority for Preservation

Approximate High Point
The site inventory and analysis details a snapshot of the current elements that make up and influence the Morris Area School Site. From the site inventory and assessment, conversations with Staubach Company and associated stakeholders CRD created four preliminary scenarios for the site. The four preliminary scenarios began the process of project programming and a workshop with the Elementary School Reuse Action Team was to further define the program elements.

At the workshop, the group worked on a “Kit of Parts” for the Site. This “Kit of Parts,” shown in Appendix 3, lists possible program categories and the elements within them. The categories include: Building, Housing, Park, Institutional, Industrial, Commercial and Business. CRD asked the Elementary School Reuse Action Team to rate appropriateness and priority of each individually and in group conversation. CRD then presented the four preliminary scenarios.

From the four preliminary scenarios the Elementary School Reuse Action Team then produced three scenarios that synthesized and reinterpreted CRD’s preliminary plans. (Shown in the lower right corner of the next three pages.) CRD working in concert with the Reuse Action Team developed three scenarios (shown in the following three pages) that further develop a program. The potential compatible land uses for the Morris School Site were emerging as open green space, cemetery expansion, multi-generational housing, historic preservation, and potential building expansion. The three Scenarios and the Elementary School Reuse Action Team’s Revised Scenarios were then presented to the public at the public workshop to further define the program and its elements.
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

SCENARIO “A” - HOUSING WITH PASSIVE PARK

This scenario blends a mix of multi-family housing and mixed age townhomes on the northern portion of the site, adjacent to easy access on 7th St., with public open space and city park to the south.

Building construction and site development is intended to meet the highest standards of sustainability and energy efficiency possible. The housing is designed to accommodate life-cycle needs providing starter housing for young adults/families and low maintenance housing for the retired. The park space utilizes a network of stormwater wetland to sustainably manage stormwater.

This scenario includes cemetery expansion and civic memorial space on the east side of the site. It also embraces preservation of some of the historic school buildings and indicates the opportunity for future expansion to meet the growing needs of the community.
**Scenario “B” - Active and Passive Park**

This scenario blends a mix of park facilities to preserve much of the site in the public realm and provide public open space within the city. The scenario combines active facilities, such as a championship sized soccer field and a community swimming pool, with public open space and city park including walking trails, display and demonstration gardens, and water features.

The design integrates aesthetics with function utilizing natural systems to meet certain infrastructure needs. Building construction and site development is intended to meet the highest standards of sustainability and energy efficiency possible.

This scenario includes cemetery expansion and civic memorial space on the east side of the site. It also embraces preservation of some of the historic school buildings and indicates the opportunity for future expansion to meet the growing needs of the community.
**Scenario “C” - Housing with Active and Passive Park**

This scenario blends a mix of multi-family housing and mixed age town homes on the southern portion of the site, parallel to 5th St., with public open space, a city park, and a city swimming pool to the northwest.

Building construction and site development is intended to meet the highest standards of sustainability and energy efficiency possible. The housing is designed to accommodate life-cycle needs providing starter housing for young adults/families and low-maintenance housing for the retired. The park space utilizes a network of stormwater wetland to sustainable manage stormwater.

This scenario includes cemetery expansion and civic memorial space on the east side of the site. It also embraces preservation of some of the historic school buildings and indicates the opportunity for future expansion to meet the growing needs of the community.
The results of the Public Workshop detailed in full in Section Two of this report produced the potential compatible land uses for the Morris School Site. The developed project program is:

- Multi-Generational Housing Precinct
- Community Center Precinct
- Cemetery Precinct
- City Park / Open Space Precinct

The Diagram 4.14 to the right describes the Precincts or areas in more detail.

**Multi-Generational Housing Precinct**

The goal of the Multi-Generational Housing Precinct is to provide a diversity of small homes with an emphasis on sustainable design and generation integration. Three groups of generations have been targeted: active seniors, families, and early professionals.

**Cemetery Precinct**

The Cemetery Precinct provides potential expansion space for the existing cemetery across College Avenue. The goal of the Cemetery Precinct is to provide access for the community, more space for the existing cemetery, and an integrative spatial experience with the adjoining Precincts and existing cemetery. The intent is to encourage the link between the cemetery with the other adjoining Precincts to have access to respectful enjoyment of the park-like quality of the cemetery.

**City Park / Open Space Precinct**

The City Park / Open Space Precinct provides spaces for leisurely activity and enjoyment. The permanent ponds are intended to enhance the experience and link to a sinuous rainwater garden. The ponds and rainwater garden are vegetated with typical wet and dry prairie plants in deliberate sculptural character. The paths meander through the site with entrances on the west and east sides. An allée of deciduous trees leads the visitor from the Community Center Plaza to an outdoor gathering space.
OVERALL PROJECT PLANNING PRINCIPLES

GOAL STATEMENT:
The project goal is to create a community-based design concept plan for potential reuse of the historic 17.7 acre old elementary school site and building in Morris. A major focus of the effort is to create linkages between the City of Morris, Stevens County and the University of Minnesota – Morris to enhance the aesthetics, economic development, environmental health, quality of life and tourism of the City of Morris and the region.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES:
- Community Involvement – to involve citizens in the strategic planning process.
- Economic Development – to explore synergetic entrepreneurship and development opportunities capitalizing on the historic site and building, and unique landscape and intellectual potential of the university, city and county.
- Quality of Life – to enhance the reasons why people will choose to live in and visit Morris and the surrounding region.
- Sustainability – to utilize goals and strategies reflecting the highest standards of leadership in environmental design, economic and social development.
- Connect the City, County and University – to foster cooperation and long-term financial, human and environmental health for the region.
- Due Diligence – to ensure that all planning and development activities are conducted with the highest standards of fairness, integrity and sound business practice.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES
- Preserve and reuse at least oldest portions of school.
- Make the site desirable with high-quality landscaping; save existing trees.
- Make all redevelopment visually and functionally compatible with character of surrounding 1920’s - 1940’s residential neighborhoods to enhance neighborhood character.
- Make redevelopment energy-efficient and emphasize “green” or “sustainable” elements, as well as senior-friendly elements.
- Include a public open / park space possibly with a pool.
- Include buffers between land uses.
- Include pedestrian links and other features in the community.

VISION AND REUSE PLAN FOR THE MORRIS AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE

Diagram 4.15 Vision and Reuse Plan
COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS:
CREATING A VISION AND REUSE PLAN FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE
**Historic Building Complex Precinct**

The goal of the Historic Building Complex Precinct is to make Morris a “Center” for: sustainability research and development, county, university and multi-generational community connections. As such, the intent of the conceptual development of the complex is to meet the needs of the community presently and in the future as well as to facilitate a vision for new growth in economic development. The Historic Building Complex includes the restored and redeveloped 1914, 1934 and the 1949 Bleachers and Band Room addition, two new elevator cores, potential community space, potential office space and an interpretive center. The Complex includes a garden and demonstration site for the West Research and Outreach Center from the UMM (WROC) Horticultural Station and a parking lot.

**Garden and Demonstration Site**

The Garden and Demonstration Site, located on the west corner of the site, is envisioned to invite a professional research team such as the WROC to demonstrate, show and maintain new horticulture species and/or technology with special focus on native vegetation, stormwater treatment, other sustainable horticulture techniques and strategies.

**Parking Lot**

The parking lot is intended to serve the redevelopment of the School building. The south park shows 52 spaces and is conceptualized to include rainwater gardens and sun shading applications.

6th Street East in Foreground, Columbia Avenue and Front Entrance to the Morris Area School Building Complex
COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS:
CREATING A VISION AND REUSE PLAN
FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE

Diagram 4.15 Historic Building Complex Precinct
CITY PARK / OPEN SPACE PRECINCT

The goal of the City Park / Open Space is to bring the community together in a common space. The Park intends to attract, inspire, and invite back the community again and again by providing opportunities for passive leisure, environmental and cultural education and places to do what they learn. The City Park and Open Space includes: gathering places, garden pond / stormwater treatment, prairie, oak savanna open lands, demonstration gardens to do and learn, potential for public art and places for community inspired art pieces.

GATHERING PLACES

Formal and informal places proposed in the City Park / Open Space Precinct are intended to inspire unity, democracy and neighborliness. As such the theme of the gathering places are centered around cultural connections. For example each space may showcase a series of cultures or highlight a cultural experience. The main formal gathering place located in the north could be a place of cultural celebration and may embody a theme related to a peace garden.

GARDEN POND / STORMWATER TREATMENT

The Garden Pond / Stormwater Treatment in the City Park / Open Space Precinct was inspired from the Pomme De Terre River that is located on the east of Morris. The Garden Pond / Stormwater Treatment is intended to providing functional stormwater collection, cleansing and infiltration while simultaneously provide a prairie and wetland prairie crafted garden experience.

PRAIRIE / OAK SAVANNA OPEN LANDS

Characteristic of Central Minnesota is its three biomes: coniferous forest, deciduous forest, and prairie grassland. Morris, residing in West Central Minnesota, is embedded in the prairie grassland biome. A biome is a large biological community or land cover. The intent of the Prairie / Oak Savanna Open Lands is to provide opens swaths of lawn with prairie grasses and oaks savanna deciduous tree species to create accent gardens and gathering places.

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

The Demonstration Gardens in the City Park / Open Space Precinct are intended to provide a place to work with sustainable planting concepts and vegetation in and to be introduced to the park. It is envisioned that the Demonstration Gardens are an opportunity for professionals and specialists in sustainability and horticulture to work with the community and provide lectures and exhibits.

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY ART POTENTIAL

Public and Community Art in the City Park / Open Space Precinct is an opportunity for artistic expression focused on cultural unity and interpretation. Public and Community Art could be located at the terminii of major paths, be embedded in gathering places or embody any place in the park.
Community of the City of Morris: Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site

Potential for Public Art and / or Community Inspired Art Pieces

Proposed Demonstration Gardens to “See” and “Do”

Potential Cultural Showcase Inspired Gathering Place

Potential Memorial Gathering Place

Proposed Garden Pond / Stormwater Treatment

Proposed Prairie / Oak Savanna Open Lands

Potential for Public Art and / or Community Inspired Art Pieces

Diagram 4.18 City Park / Open Space Precinct
MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSING PRECINCT

The goal of the Mult-Generational Housing Precinct is to propose a diversity of small homes that are selected and sited with special consideration to sustainable design and planning, niche marketing and generation integration. The intent of the precinct is to create the basis for a rich community environment. Three groups of generations have been targeted: active seniors, young families, and early professionals. Each of these groups have a particular housing typologies to best suit their need and all of the housing could have options for rooftop gardens or photovoltaics.

ACTIVE SENIOR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Active Senior Neighborhood houses seek to propose housing that is amenable to active older adults. The housing is intended to be built sustainably and with sustainable materials. The housing characteristics include a small footprint, small square footage, an easy access single story and a porch in the front. The building typologies in Figure 4.19 show the footprints and character of the envisioned single family housing. However, it is not the intent of the Vision for the majority of the buildings to be free standing. The intent of the Vision is to combine the housing so as to share one bearing wall and to reduce the overall impervious footprint. The Active Senior Neighborhood was located with specific sensitivity to ease of access to the Historic Building Complex Precinct and the City Park / Open Space Precinct. The style of the housing would be considered modern cottages: houses that take inspiration from traditional houses but may have less detail and cleaner lines.


Diagram 4.19 Active Senior Neighborhood Building Typologies
Young Family Neighborhood

The Family Neighborhood houses seek to propose units that are amenable to new or smaller families. The housing is intended to be built sustainably and with sustainable materials. The housing characteristics include a small footprint, small square footage, two stories with two bedrooms and porches in the front and back. The building typologies in Figure 4.20 show the footprints and character of the envisioned single family housing. However, it is not the intent of the Vision for the majority of the buildings to be free standing. The intent of the Vision is to combine the housing so as to share one bearing wall and to reduce the overall impervious footprint. The Family Neighborhood was located with special sensitivity to ease of access to the playground and City Park / Open Space Precinct. The style of the housing would be considered modern cottages: houses that take inspiration from traditional houses but may have less detail and cleaner lines.
EARLY PROFESSIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The Early Professional Neighborhood located on the northeast portion of the Precinct seeks to accommodate teachers or professors, mature students and other adults. The housing, as shown below, is small in scale, with very limited footprints, one bedroom, and upstairs loft areas or office space. The building typologies in Figure 4.21 show the footprints and character of the single family housing envisioned. However, it is not the intent of the Vision for the majority of the buildings to be free standing. The intent of the Vision is to combine the housing so as to share one bearing wall and to reduce the overall impervious footprint. The style of the housing would be considered modern cottages: houses that take inspiration from traditional houses but may have less detail and cleaner lines.


Diagram 4.21 Early Professional Neighborhood Building Typologies
Community of the City of Morris:
Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site

Senior Active Living Neighborhood
Located with Close Proximity to the Historic Building Complex Precinct

Family Neighborhood
Located with Close Proximity to the Playground

Early Professional Neighborhood
Located next to the Cemetery

Covered Parking with Photovoltaics on Roof

Stormwater Treatment - Rain Garden

Playground

Community Garden Plots

Diagram 4.22 Multi-Generational Housing Precinct
Cemetery Precinct

The Cemetery Precinct provides potential expansion space for the existing cemeteries across College Avenue. The goal of the Cemetery Precinct is to provide access for the community, more space for the existing cemetery, and an integrative spatial experience with the adjoining precincts. The intent is to provide an open community atmosphere with the opportunity to link the University with Morris and to allow access for respectful enjoyment of the park-like quality of the cemetery. The Vision for the Cemetery Precinct includes:

Potential Memorial Areas and/or Gathering Areas

The proposed memorial areas and/or gathering areas are meant to be focal points of the cemetery. Located at the ends and center points of paths, these “places” provide ample opportunity for mausoleums, large grave sites, statues, fountains, and memorial gardens.

Proposed Path Connection Between Cemetery Expansion and Existing Cemetery

The proposed path connection between the new cemetery expansion and the existing cemetery provides a continuous spatial extension of the current cemetery organization. Currently the cemetery’s circulation runs from the north to the south with the burial plots located perpendicular to the paths facing east west. The Vision proposes an extension of this current circulation structure.

Continuous Access Between Precincts

Continuous access between Precincts is very important to a sense of community. This can be done by: a proposed sidewalk continuance on College Avenue and 7th Street East, entrance and connection to the Park/Open Space Precinct and a shrub and deciduous tree border to protect and allow views of cemetery.

A sidewalk continuance on College Avenue and 7th Street East is important to connecting to the community. This is because a properly designed sidewalk invites the community to walk in a safe and comfortable fashion next to the Cemetery not in the street.

An entrance from the Park/Open Space Precinct and a shrub/deciduous tree border along the Multi-Generational Housing Precinct is important because it creates a sense of welcome and provides opportunities for education. Although the cemetery is different from a public park (and rightfully so) an entrance and limited edge vegetation allows for granted and restricted community access. Access and connection to the cemetery can provide opportunities for the community to learn about the cemetery and its processes.
Community of the City of Morris: Creating a Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site

Diagram 4.22 Cemetery Precinct
**Master Plan Alternatives**

Master Plan Alternatives for the Vision and Reuse Plan for the Elementary School Site are being proposed because pertinent short and long-term uses have been considered and are suggested to be implemented to gain full potential of the overall Vision. The Master Plan Alternatives section suggests options for each of the before described Precincts.

**The Historic Building Complex Precinct**

The Historic Building Complex Precinct alternatives proposed are to: 1.) obtain short-term leasees as fast as possible and / or 2.) plan for new potential building in the Precinct (Diagram 4.24).

**Short-Term Leases**

The proposed alternative is to obtain short-term leasees to inhabit and to create income to produce fast positive results for the School and its adjoining site. This means that users sought will not have an overall stake in the Vision as a package, but will generate money for the complex in the short-term.

**New Building in the Historic Building Complex Precinct**

The restored and redeveloped 1914 building and the 1934 and 1949 bleachers and band room additions, envisioned to include two new elevator cores, new potential community space and new potential office space, is meant to indicate:

1) that new construction could be acceptable, and

2) the character in terms of scale, location and relationship of new structures to the historic structures.

Additions to the school complex weren’t sensitive to the architectural character of the original structures and this mistake should not be repeated. Any new construction on the site and within close proximity to the historic Morris Area School building must complement the School in terms of scale, position and aesthetic relationship. This means any new structures are secondary in their relationship to the preserved historic buildings, with special sensitivity to scale, position and aesthetic relationship to the elevation along the Columbia Avenue frontage.
In addition, the Morris Area School and any new future construction on the site should strive to be sustainable and/or have sustainable components. As shown in Diagram 4.17, the redeveloped and restored 1934 and 1949 additions may have photovoltaics on the roof. The Proposed Community Space may have sustainable materials and construction techniques, in addition to a skylight and a green roof. The Proposed Office Space may have sustainable materials and construction techniques as well as, a green roof, photovoltaic, and skylights.
**Historic Building Complex Precinct Alternatives Continued**

**Interpretive Center**
The envisioned Interpretive Center complements the Morris Area School Building in terms of a secondary scale, position and aesthetic relationship. The building also may feature sustainable materials and construction, as well as, photovoltaics on the roof. The Interpretive Center focuses on the site’s role in demonstrating sustainable (re)development in a rural community. The center could provide space for classes, seminars, children activities related to the park and sustainability and offer some retail opportunity that focuses on sustainability (e.g. books) as well as refreshments.

**Garden and Demonstration Site**
The Garden and Demonstration Site, located on the west corner of the site, is envisioned to invite a profession research team such as the WROC to demonstrate, show and maintain new horticulture species and/or technology with special focus on native vegetation, stormwater treatment, other sustainable horticulture techniques and strategies.

**Parking Lots**
The parking lots are intended to serve the redevelopment of the School building and potential new buildings. The north parking lot shows 31 spaces and should be designed to include rainwater gardens and sun shading applications. The south parking lot shows 52 spaces and is conceptualized to include rainwater gardens and sun shading ap-
COMMUNITY OF THE CITY OF MORRIS:  
CREATING A VISION AND REUSE PLAN  
FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE

Diagram 4.24 Master Plan Alternatives

Historic Building Complex

Proposed Parking Lot (52 Spaces) Rainwater Gardens and Sun Shading Applications.

Proposed 1934 and 1949 Building Additions to be Restored & Redeveloped

Glass Enclosure with Elevator Core

Proposed 1914 Building Additions to be Restored & Redeveloped

Proposed Garden & Demonstration Horticulture Outreach

Proposed Office Space. Green Roof and Photovoltaics on Roof.

Proposed Community Space with Skylight and Green Roof.

Stormwater Rainwater Gardens

The short term alternative for the City Park / Open Space is to use the existing football field as a championship soccer field as shown in Diagram 4.25. This can be easily accomplished because all of the auxiliary facilities are on site. In addition, the Master Plan Vision path systems compensate for this short term use until funds are available to develop the City Park / Open Space to its fullest extent.
**The Cemetery Precinct**

The short term alternative for the Cemetery is to reduce or eliminate the expansion and extend the Multi-Generational Housing Precinct and the City Park / Open Space Precinct to College Avenue.

**The Multi-Generational Housing Precinct**

A short-term alternative for the Multi-Generational Housing Precinct is to divide the Precinct up into “Neighborhoods” as described in the Precinct Section more fully and find potential developers for the smaller land holdings.

Another alternative is including a Community Pool on the site as shown in Diagram 4.26. In order to do this the Multi-Generation Housing Precinct could be reduced in square footage or could be moved towards College Avenue, reducing the proposed Cemetery Precinct. Please refer to Scenario “B” Active and Passive Park in this Section of the Report for a better understanding of this alternative.
PHASING RECOMMENDATIONS

FIRST STEPS

As a first step, it is highly recommended that the City of Morris appoint a special Elementary School Site Redevelopment Commission or a Port Authority charged with the responsibility to:

1. seek out financing to complete engineering studies of necessary site improvements to facilitate re- and new development on the site such as any necessary demolition, regrading, or infrastructure modifications/additions.

2. seek out financing to facilitate these necessary site improvements.

3. seek out potential private or public partners to engage in and finance redevelopment of the site.

4. act as the proposal review board that issues requests for proposals and screens those proposals.

5. prepare specific plans for redevelopment in collaboration with appropriate partners and make recommendations to the city council for approval.

6. in partnership with the selected developer(s) seek out financing necessary to accomplish the redevelopment projects.

This body would facilitate redevelopment following the directions set forth by the citizens of Morris and the Morris City Council as their representatives.

Each precinct could be phased independently under the oversight of the Redevelopment Commission based on the direction for redevelopment chosen by the City:

• **Historic Building Complex Precinct** – the intent for this precinct is to preserve the 1914 and the 1934 buildings at a minimum and seek out opportunities for reuse/redevelopment. Any appropriate proposals for reuse of other structures that come forward before demolition should be carefully examined.

  1. conduct the necessary engineering studies to facilitate any required demolition and infrastructure improvements.

  2. assess and stabilize building structural integrity and mechanicals in the remaining structures to assure their continued structural integrity while seeking appropriate redevelopment partners.

  3. actively pursue existing and new and proposals to rehabilitate and redevelop the structures for new uses using sustainable practices.

  4. actively pursue partners to reclaim the rest of the precinct, as required, for public open space and demonstration gardens as a means of holding the space for future new development.

  5. issue an RFP to developers to identify the preferred developer.

• **Multi-Generational Housing Precinct** – the intent of this precinct is to encourage the development of multi-generational housing that meets the niche market needs of families and indi-
individuals seeking smaller housing units with strong connections to amenities and institutions in the community. The housing would be built using the best proven sustainable techniques and serve as a model for other rural communities.

1. actively seek out partners interested in developing niche market housing using sustainable practices.

2. issue an RFP to developers to identify the preferred developer.

3. in partnership with the selected developer(s) conduct necessary engineering studies of the site and adjacent infrastructure to facilitate niche market housing development.

• **City Park/Open Space Precinct** – the intent of this precinct is to preserve access to open space for the neighborhood residents as a designated city park and to enhance the marketability of other redevelopment on the site. In light of its intimate relationship to residential homes it ultimately would best be dedicated to passive recreational activities, demonstration gardens in sustainable horticulture and development, and playground for neighborhood children.

   1. in the short term the site could be dedicated to meet identified needs for active recreation, principally, soccer.

   2. actively seek out academic and industry partners to develop plans and implementation strategies to convert the precinct to public park and demonstration gardens.

• **Cemetery Precinct** – the intent of this precinct is to provide space for expansion of either or both Calvary and Summit Cemeteries if desired by these institutions. Adjacency and opportunity make this use seem appropriate and preserves the physical integrity of the cemeteries as significant institutions within the community.

   1. for the short-term preserve and maintain the precinct as open space during a discussion and negotiation period of suitable length.

   2. define a sustainable community cemetery for the 21st century that may be a new paradigm for urban burial grounds.

   3. if cemetery expansion proves unfeasible, for the mid-term integrate the precinct with the City Park/Open Space precinct.

   4. for the long-term pursue opportunities for development in the precinct that is appropriate and compatible with the planning and design principles of the entire site.

**Final Step Leading to Redevelopment**

As a final step leading to redevelopment - issue a RFP for development of each parcel that is intended to be accomplished by the private sector.