

“Our mission is to enrich the quality of life in Argusville for all our citizens...to build an attractive, inviting, and safe community. We pledge to work in partnership with our residents to foster community pride, to plan for the future, and preserve and enhance the small-town values that make Argusville great.”

Argusville Comprehensive Plan

2022

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City of Argusville Comprehensive Plan

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**APPENDIX 1: ARGUSVILLE NEEDS ASSESMENT AND COMMUNITEE SURVEY
NARRATIVE**

Introduction

The Argusville Comprehensive Plan

The Argusville Comprehensive Plan adheres to six (6) guidelines, which are:

- 1) The plan is comprehensive and does not focus on any one thing more than another.
- 2) The plan is long range.
- 3) The plan is general, leaving room for flexibility.
- 4) The plan focuses on physical development of the community.
- 5) The plan relates physical design to overall community goals.
- 6) The plan will be used to guide city policies and as a guide for supporting an enforceable zoning ordinance.

The planning process focused on seven (7) elements that make up the body of the Comprehensive Plan. They are briefly described below.

Community Profile

The Community Profile reviews the current demographics of the City of Argusville, and we get a snapshot of who lives in Argusville. In this section we reviewed data to identify trends in historical data to compare to current conditions and historical trends. Using this data, we got a clear picture of who lives in Argusville, what they do for a living and what age groups they are in. This is “who Argusville is”.

This same data showed us what type of buildings and housing are most prevalent, along with their age, value, and condition.

Using available information, community knowledge and a “boots on the ground” review we were able identify important information.

Issues and Opportunities

This element can be defined as the background information on the City of Argusville. In this element we look at the city's overall goals and policies being used to guide current development. Using data collected we were able to identify current concerns, issues, and/or problems the city is dealing with and look at these in conjunction with opportunities to formulate the future path of the city.

Housing

In this portion of the plan we look at the diversity of housing options available in Argusville. Based on the demographics of a community, the housing options desired changes with stage of life. We look at availability and affordability of housing for groups ranging from new families with children to senior citizens. Using this information, we identified gaps in housing needs that will be used to draft policies that ensure these, and all housing needs are fulfilled in the future.

Utilities and Transportation Facilities

This element identifies the current condition and future needs of local roads, highways, railroads, truck routes, etc. The information gathered on current conditions and uses along with the future goals of the city we developed guidelines for the construction and location of future transportation facilities based on current and future land uses.

While looking at the potential areas for growth and the infrastructure needed to serve these areas, we identified underutilized properties throughout the city that can utilize existing infrastructure. This plan looks at residential, commercial, and industrial areas with the potential for infill development.

Throughout the planning process we utilized the expertise of the city's engineer, Moore Engineering, Inc. Along with Moore Engineering, Inc. who conducted a review of the current and future infrastructure needs of Argusville. This information was used to look at current infrastructure serving current land uses, along with community input to locate desired location of future land uses to identify future infrastructure needs.

Community Facilities and Cultural Resource Analysis

Community facilities include, but are not limited to, those providing or supporting overall community development. We review the existing facilities in the City of Argusville and use demographic data and community comments to evaluate the current level of support and identify any gaps that need to be addressed for the future.

Economic Development

This element will help define the overall future business climate in Argusville. Specifically, this element looks at current city, county, and state ED incentives and how they are administered. Using that information, we can look at ED goals to form policies the city can follow to help expand current businesses and attract new ones.

Land Use

The land use element is the compilation of goals, objectives, policies, and maps to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private land. Using all of the data collected throughout the planning process we are able to analyze trends to create projections of desired the type and location of future land uses. This element includes maps that depict existing and future land use classifications. This may be considered the most important element to promote and control future growth.

Gathering Information

Gathering information for this plan was a process that started much earlier than the comprehensive plan process itself. Prior to the decision of the City of Argusville to create a comprehensive plan, the city conducted a Needs Assessment and a Community Survey to get a handle on the wants and needs of its citizens.

The Needs Assessment was conducted under the discretion of the City Council in an attempt to prioritize limited time and financial resources to projects that reflect the wishes of its citizens.

Throughout the process 17 interviews were completed with 25 Argusville citizens. Every

interview was conducted using the same set of 10 questions. Upon completion the responses were compiled and presented to the city.

Upon completion of the Needs Assessment a Community Survey was created using the Needs Assessment data. The questions asked were created dig further into common responses gathered in the Needs Assessment. This survey provided more precise information to the City of what the citizens of Argusville think about the current state of the city and what they want to see happen in the future.

At the onset of the comprehensive planning process a steering committee comprised of 9 community members was created. The task of the steering committee was to provide a “boots on the ground” level of information throughout the drafting of the plan, and to be community liaisons for the plan.

The steering committee met 5 times throughout the process to review draft documents and propose additions and/or changes to the plan as it evolved as well as conducting a final review prior to presenting it to the City Council.

The steering committee, the Needs Assessment and the Community Survey all provided valuable information that assured the Argusville Comprehensive Plan I a community driven document.

The narrative of the compiled information for both the Needs Assessment and the Community Survey are attached as Appendix 1.

Chapter 1: Community Profile

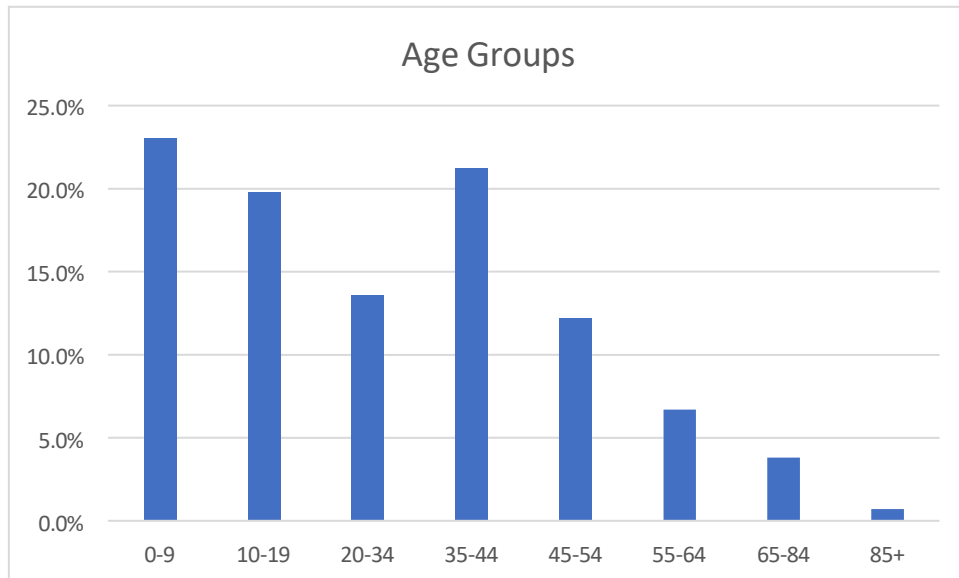
The average age of all Argusville residents is just under 26 years of age. This is significantly lower than both the state (31 yrs.) and county (29 yrs.) averages. These numbers show that Argusville is an attractive place to live and raise a family. The census numbers show that the largest population groups are children (ages 0-9 and 10-19) and parents (ages 35-44).

Chart 1: Argusville Population

Year	Population	% Change
1930	115	N/A
1940	145	26.1
1950	126	-13.1
1960	118	-6.3
1970	118	0.0
1980	147	24.6
1990	161	9.5
2000	147	-8.7
2010	475	223.1
2020	480	1.1

The age distribution of the city shows that there is real opportunity for the city's future growth. Younger individuals between the ages of 20 and 40 are in the stage of life of accumulating assets and starting families. These individuals are often time willing to invest time and resources to create a place they and their families are proud of. It is important to create a community that the younger generation wants to call home.

Chart 2: Age Groups

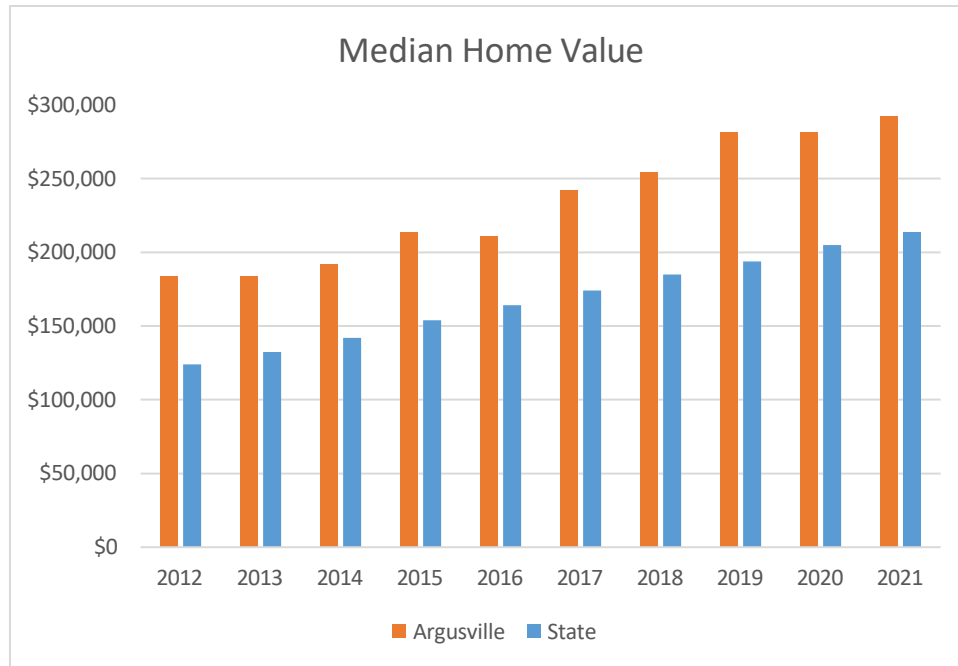


The numbers show that the city of Argusville is well poised for future growth. The growth of the Fargo Metro Area is driving this potential. Every city in metro area has grown significantly over the past two decades and as long as this growth continues the city of Argusville stands to benefit.

Living in Argusville

Residents of Argusville have a higher median household income (MHI) than the average income for the state and Cass County. The MHI for the city is \$117,188. The MHI for the state is \$64,894 and Cass County's MHI is slightly lower at \$64,482. Simple math tells you that residents of Argusville make nearly twice that of the state and county median incomes.

Home prices in Argusville are higher than the average for the state. According to the Cass County Auditor the median home value in the city is \$292,000 compared to \$213,000 at the state level. The average for Cass County is \$189,000. Homes in Argusville have increased in value significantly in the recent past, rising from \$183,000 in 2012 to \$292,000 in 2021. That equates to the median value of homes within the city increasing by 59.4% during that time period.



For decades rural communities have had a difficult time seeing a reasonable return on investment when buying a home, but data shows that buying a home in the city of Argusville could be considered a sound investment.

Argusville’s housing stock is comprised exclusively of single-family homes. There are 149 housing units (structures) in Argusville. Of the total residential structures in the city 93 are located in the Richwood area, with the remaining 56 located in the original townsite. The age of the housing stock is low for a rural community with 80 percent of the housing units being built since 1980.

The housing vacancy rate in Argusville is virtually zero. Also, the average household size and family size is greater than the state averages by more than one person per household.

Argusville’s average household size is 3.4 people per house and the states average is 2.3.

A small amount of land along ND Highway 81 is occupied by commercial uses. There are four churches in Argusville of multiple denominations. The city owns several properties within the city comprised of parks, right-of-way, and the Argusville Community Center.

According to Census 2020, it is cheaper to live in Argusville than it is on average in the rest of the state and Cass County. The Census Bureau compiled data for selected monthly owner

costs of homes with a mortgage and calculated it into selected monthly owner costs as percentage of household income (SMOCAPI). This shows the total cost of owning a home in Argusville is low and affordable.

The Federal government has set a threshold number at 30 percent of your total income may be spent on housing to be considered affordable housing. A vast majority, nearly 95 percent, of Argusville residents spend less than 30 percent of their income on housing and 75 percent spend less than 20 percent. This makes sense with a higher-than-average income and very affordable housing values.

These numbers are significant in that a smaller portion of income spent on housing leaves a greater amount for discretionary spending, which is needed to help a community (and existing businesses) grow and support new businesses.

The development pattern is what can be considered unconventional. The city is separated into multiple “parts” of town and most citizens of Argusville recognize that there are two very separate communities within the city. The original townsite is located in the SW corner of Section 6 and the Richwood development is located in the NW of Section 12. Richwood was developed one mile to the west of the original townsite and created a satellite addition to Argusville. Richwood is connected to the original townsite via 25th St SE/1st St and a bridge over Interstate 29. A survey of the citizens of Argusville shows that most people believe there is a lack of community cohesion created by the separation of these two areas and would like to see something that could create a connection between them.

Future Projections

One of the most important components of a comprehensive plan is the future projections. In the Community Profile we looked at current conditions within the City of Argusville to create base line data which acts as a snapshot of what Argusville is today. Using current and historical data we can identify trends in population, housing, land uses, etc., which will help to paint the picture of what the future will look like for the City of Argusville. These projections will be the basis for the Goals and Objectives spelled out in the plan and the

policies adopted by the city that will help guide Argusville to its desired future.

Scenario 1

The North Dakota Housing Finance Agency published their Statewide Housing Needs Assessment in 2016. This study projects future housing needs and future population for the eight planning regions throughout the state. The regions are then broken down into individual counties. Cass County is part of Souris Basin Region 2.

In the study's base year, 2014, Cass County population was estimated to have been 167,005 people. The study predicted that in 2019 Cass County would have a population of 187,206. Census 2020 counted a total of 184,525 residents, a difference of 2,681, or a 1.4 percent difference. This is not a statistically significant difference, so we can still feel comfortable using this data.

In the year 2029 the projected population is 213,109 residents, an additional 28,584 residents in Cass County. That is an increase of over 15 percent in 9 years.

A majority, 22,268, are projected to be located in the cities of Fargo and West Fargo. That leaves 6,316 people for the rest of the county. The City of Argusville has .0026 percent of the total population in the county. If the population distribution holds true, the population of Argusville will be increased by 16 people in the next 9 years. That is a 3.33 percent increase. That is a slow, yet sustainable, rate of growth.

Scenario 2

Cass County updated their comprehensive plan in 2018. In this document they looked at population trends and made projections for the county as a whole and for cities in the county.

The numbers the plan uses are from the Fargo Metro Council of Government's Demographic Forecast Study. This study used census data and current trends to project the county's population out to the year 2045.

The numbers in the study are similar to the numbers used by the NDHFA's Statewide Housing Needs Assessment. The Cass County Comprehensive Plan goes one step further and

projects populations for all the cities in the county, not just Fargo and West Fargo.

This study shows the estimated 2020 population of Argusville as 503 people. The projected 2045 population is 495 people. A statistically insignificant amount, however, the study shows that Argusville is not expected to grow.

Scenario 3

Data does not fully tell the story of what a community is and what their future potential of growth is. Argusville has not shown the long-term trend of growth but has shown that whenever there has been an opportunity to grow, it has done so.

Since 1881, when Argusville was platted, people have moved to and built in Argusville. When the original townsite was built out, in 1977 the Westrick Addition was platted and has been built out. In 2000 Leonard's Way subdivision was platted and has since been built out.

There is a reason people want to live in Argusville that cannot be shown by data alone. The proximity to Fargo is very advantageous but is not the only reason people choose to live in Argusville.

The city has grown, and people have moved to Argusville whenever there has been an opportunity. If the city plans for growth and is prepared, history shows that it is not only possible but may be consider likely.

This plan will move forward with the firm belief that if the City of Argusville prepares for growth and adopts policies to support future development, it will happen. History shows this to be true.

This plan will focus on current conditions within the city and what needs to be done to maintain and/or improve them. It will also look into the future with the assumption that Argusville will actively plan for growth. In planning for growth, it is advantageous to have a realistic projection of the future population and what needs to be done to serve them.

The city of Argusville has land within its limits that is inside the flood protection levee, adjacent to the original townsite, that the steering committee has identified as a target for

future residential development. There is a total of 36 acres in two parcels of vacant land.

For the purpose of estimating future population, we will look at full build-out of this land into a traditional single family residential development, similar to Richwood, with $\frac{1}{4}$ acre lots.

These numbers will be calculated assuming $\frac{1}{3}$ of an acre will be required for streets and utilities and $\frac{2}{3}$ of an acre will be available for development.

Using these variables this land can accommodate 97 new residential lots. The average household size in Argusville is 3.4 people. Multiplying these two numbers you get a total of 330 additional residents.

Chapter 2: Strategic Issues and Analysis

Throughout the comprehensive planning process information from a Needs Assessment and a steering committee to gather information about the City of Argusville. The purpose of the Needs Assessment and steering committee meetings are to get information about the current conditions in the city and what, if anything, they believe community members would like to see improved and/or changed. Also, there were discussions on future development and the types, location, and densities of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.

The following are the most prevalent issues identified as shared concerns. These will be referred to as strategic issues throughout this plan.

Community Pride

The reason that was given by most people about why they live in Argusville is that it is a small town and feel it is a good place to raise a family. While this is true, the same people felt that unlike many small towns there is little community pride in Argusville. Community pride is not something that can be measured, it's a feeling about what makes you proud to say you live where you do. It is important to have a connection to your community and its members to create a sense of place that residents can feel and are proud of.

There is no roadmap to improved community pride and/or involvement. The goal of the city and its residents to create a community they are proud of and feel compelled to be involved in leadership roles should be a component of all policies adopted for future development.

Land for Development

The current city limits of Argusville encompasses two (2) square miles. While this includes multiple sections of land that are undeveloped, there is only a small amount of land that can reasonably be considered for future development as it sits today. A vast majority, ±93%, of the land within city limits is located within the 100-year floodplain. The only areas that are not within the floodplain are the far east ±130 acres of section 1 north of Richwood and the ±40 acres of undeveloped land located adjacent to the original townsite. The land adjacent

to the original townsite is located within the city's levee system. Conversations with landowners will need to be initiated to assess potential for future development.

Infill Development

It is important that there be an emphasis put on reinvestment and redevelopment within the existing city. Revitalization policies will prove to be critical in keeping the existing neighborhoods attractive to current and future residents of Argusville. Infill development will serve to be an important tool that can help maintain and/or revitalize existing neighborhoods.

Infill development is the development and/or redevelopment of empty and underdeveloped lots and parcels within the city. In many cases this is a cost-effective way of adding new homes and/or businesses and utilizing existing infrastructure. Infill development adds to the tax base by bringing new or improved property to the tax rolls. There are a number of vacant lots, both commercial and residential, that may be utilized for infill development. This relates directly back to community reinvestment and redevelopment.

The abandoned Argusville school building and the elevator property are prime examples of properties that are in need of redevelopment. These buildings have fallen into disrepair and can be considered a public safety concern. Their redevelopment will remove a public nuisance, improve unsightly properties, and become properties poised for cost effective infill development.

Infrastructure

The single largest expenditure most rural communities incur is the maintenance of its water lines, sewer lines and roads. The City of Argusville has been proactive in the maintenance of its infrastructure. Continued growth may put strain on the existing systems.

Prior to approving any new developments, the city must set policies for the timing and financing of major projects and how they will affect the existing infrastructure. This could be accomplished in the form of an updated Capital Improvements Plan that would locate

infrastructure and identify existing conditions to examine what will be required to accommodate projected future growth.

Water and sewer systems will need to be analyzed in detail prior to any new land development to assure systems can accommodate additional users.

New Growth

Based on the population projections in this plan and in other studies, the City of Argusville will grow, if and when it is ready. There is land available within the current flood protection levee. The undeveloped land is privately owned. The city, representatives of the city, or a private developer, must attempt to open a line of communication with the property owners that informs them of the city's wishes to grow.

The projections this plan incorporates shows Argusville being a town of over 800 residents at full buildout of land inside the flood levee. This number may change depending on the density of developments. It is imperative that the city adopt ordinances to assure compatibility of current and future land uses.

Additional development requires additional infrastructure and additional cost. Policies must be created to assure sustainable development to minimize the cost to the city and its citizens. The density and location of a development, along with its street widths and layout are ways to control the cost of a development and to assure its sustainability.

Housing

In conversations with city residents, the school district, and city officials, housing was a paramount issue that needs to be addressed. Housing availability within the city is extremely limited.

That lack of available housing is the main factor driving increased home prices in Argusville. Being a bedroom community people make the decision to live here with cost not being the defining factor of why they live in the city. However, it will have an effect on future growth and whether young families, young teachers, potential business owners, etc., are able to afford a home.

The Needs Assessment also showed that the residents would like to see a variety of new housing options in future developments and that affordability must be a consideration for future housing options.

A mix of housing options such as apartments, townhomes, twin-homes, detached single family homes, etc. must be considered to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Economic Development

Most Needs Assessment respondents would like to see commercial development in the city. There are currently no business that offer day to day services. For Argusville to grow and to attract the type of resident that will invest in the city there will need to be a concerted effort on the city's part to attract and entice new business as well as supporting existing businesses.

Commercial development should be focused in area that have good visibility and higher traffic volumes. Service retail, restaurant, offices, etc. could be concentrated along Highway 81. Convenience commercial, ag services, and typical highway commercial uses should be located South of County Road 4.

The city is currently not enrolled in the states Renaissance Zone Program that includes property and income tax incentives for new construction and renovations and additions to existing structures within a specified zone. These programs are available for both residential and commercial properties and could serve as a useful tool for the city.

The city must develop an economic development strategy that will assist current businesses in growth and attract new businesses to Argusville. Coordination with Souris Basin Planning Council could serve as a useful tool in developing this strategy.

Flood Protection

Flooding has been a major problem in the Red River Valley since before Argusville was settled. It continues to be an issue but has been managed by the City Argusville with the construction of a certified flood levee around the original townsite and a flood protection berm protecting Richwood.

For any future development in or around the city, the city must make flood protection the paramount issue throughout the review process. The Future Land Use Plan must only identify areas for development that are protected from flooding.

Chapter 3: Housing

The predominant current land use in the City of Argusville is residential development. It is very important to focus on what needs to be done to keep the existing housing stock adequate and to assure future residential uses are high quality and desirable developments that suit the needs of the existing and future residents of Argusville.

Argusville is a bedroom community with most working age adults commuting to jobs in the Fargo-Moorhead area. This means that the people who live in the city chose to live there for reasons other than proximity to work.

When looking at the future housing needs it is important to look at who is and who will be living in Argusville. Using the population numbers, we get a picture of who will be living here and the types of housing that are most desirable to the citizens of Argusville to set guidelines and policies for the city to follow in regard to meeting housing needs.

Housing Needs Analysis

As established in the Community Profile nearly 75% of the population of Argusville are between the ages of 0-19 and 35-44. This shows that most of the housing in the city is occupied by families with young children. This trend will continue to hold true for several years due to the high number of young children under the age of 9.

This age group is in the phase of their lives that they are focused on providing for and raising children. With an average of 3.2 people per household this shows that a majority of homes in the city are occupied by families with children. Codes and policies must be created to assure adequate single-family housing options for current and future Argusville residents.

Options

Responses to the Needs Assessment and conversations with the steering committee members made it clear that housing options and availability are extremely limited in Argusville. There are currently no housing options outside of single-family homes available.

This creates a situation that makes it difficult for average income earning young people and families, new teachers, etc. to live in the city. Both rental and for purchase housing options must be available for the city to grow.

Rental housing helps a community deal with transitional populations. It allows people who may not currently have the ability to buy a home to live and work in a community. The concerns heard from the school about lack of affordable housing options for teachers may be eased with addition of this type housing. Rental options such as condominiums, townhomes, and apartment buildings can help to fill the gap for quality transitional housing.

One transitional portion of the population are older individuals who no longer are able to or want to care for a single-family home, but do not want to leave the community. To keep these individuals in the community there must be adequate rental housing available specifically geared towards their lifestyle.

It is important for communities to have a good mix of rental and owner-occupied units. The higher the number of homes that are being rented means there are fewer homes available for sale to new residents. Without multi-family rental units available it will presumably, over time, keep new residence from moving to Argusville.

Affordability

Housing in the City of Argusville is considered affordable, based on the Federal Governments definition of spending thirty (30) percent or less of your income on housing. However, there is a direct correlation between the average income and housing price within the city. People choose to live here, meaning the price and type of housing is not a limiting factor for them. Quality housing that is affordable to individuals who will work in and around Argusville in the future will be an essential component for growth. The city must make it a priority to keep housing affordable by creating codes and policies that allow for a variety of housing options that meet the demands of the market and the desired housing types of its citizens.

Chapter 4: Utilities and Transportation

Maintenance of public utilities and transportation facilities is a constant challenge for communities. These utilities are required services that a city must provide to its citizens and are the life blood that keeps it alive and growing. It is a challenge to keep up with infrastructure needs in both repair and budgeting. It is critical to stay on top of these needs to ensure the long-term growth of Argusville.

Public Utilities

Public utilities that are provided by communities consist of water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer. In the case of Argusville the utilities provided to its citizens are sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and water. The system consists of pipes, two (2) lift stations, a water reservoir, and a 3-cell sewage treatment lagoon.

Potable Water System

Water is supplied to the city through an agreement with Cass Rural Water (CRW). Argusville is tasked with the maintenance of the system within its city limits. Water is supplied from CRW to a reservoir located in the northwest corner of the Richwood area. The original townsite is served by an eight (8) inch transmission line from the reservoir and provides sufficient flow to provide water at peak usage for the current population.

Water mains within the system range in size from 2 inches, 4 inches, 6 inches, up to 8 inches in diameter. Due in part to the size of the lines serving the original townsite the flow is not high enough to provide fire protection volumes. The existing mains do not provide adequate flow for hydrants to be used for fire protection but are still used for maintenance of the water system.

In 2018, Moore Engineering completed a review of the water system in which they looked at the current conditions and estimated maximum capacities. The report showed that the system meets the peak demand for the current population and can support up to an additional 230 people at the average per person usage rate.

As stated in the Community Profile, a full buildout of the land inside the flood protection

levee as single family residential at current average persons per household could add an addition 330 people. This would make the current system undersized to serve the population at full buildout.

Needs Assessment respondents favored future residential, both single and multiple family, and commercial development in the city. Multiple family and commercial developments often times use larger amounts of water, which may require the city to upgrade the water system to meet projected peak demand sooner than if the area were only developed into single family residential. The city will need to review the service agreement with CRW if peak usage numbers begin to increase and/or are projected to surpass the 50 gallons/person/day level of the current agreement.

Sanitary Sewer System

The system consisted of two (2) lift/pump stations, force mains, gravity mains, manholes, individual lot services, gate valves and treatment lagoons.

The sanitary sewer system in Argusville' s original townsite was installed in 1969. The gravity mains for the original townsite were installed in 1969. At this time Argusville installed vitrified clay pipe (VCP) which was the most common material for sewer pipe. VCP has proven to be reliable, but susceptible to cracking and shows deterioration over time. Over time, a portion of the mains in the original townsite have been upgraded to longer lasting plastic (PVC) pipe.

The remaining clay pipe has experienced some deterioration to the point that ground water is infiltrating the system and is reducing the capacity to function as designed. The age of the pipe is the cause of this deterioration. Not only does this infiltration reduce the capacity to convey sewer water, but also prematurely fills sewage lagoon cells.

In 2018 the city made repairs and upgrades to the system to extend its usable life and improve system efficiency. Regular monitoring, maintenance, repairs, and upgrades will be required to ensure the system remains in operable condition into the future.

Leonard's Way Addition, also known as Richwood, was first platted in 2000 and improvements were installed in 2001 with subsequent additions were added through the

year 2016. All of the sanitary sewer mains and services in this development are plastic (PVC) pipe. This portion of the system supports nearly 70% of the total population of Argusville. With all PVC services and mains in this portion of the sewer system will operate as designed as long as regular maintenance and repairs are conducted to ensure its integrity.

The city's wastewater is treated in a lagoon system. There are three lagoon cells fed by two lift stations, one from the original townsite and a second from Richwood. The system was improved and expanded with a third cell in 2007 to accommodate the additional population projected for Richwood. The new cell was sized large enough to only handle the additional wastewater of full buildout.

A review of the sanitary sewer system, conducted by Moore Engineering, found that the lagoon treatment cells are at capacity with the current population. Any development that will add additional wastewater to the system must be reviewed to ensure the system can handle the increase. The city must look at options to improve and/or expand the lagoon system to accommodate future growth.

Storm Water System

The storm water system in Argusville is comprised of ditches, culverts/pipes, gravity mains, force mains, manholes, and lift stations. Like most rural communities, the storm water system is part of the roadway design. A rural section road design has an elevated roadway with ditches, lower than both the road and adjacent properties, to hold and convey water through culverts and pipes to holding ponds and ultimately outside of the city.

The original townsite's storm water system is designed and maintained to the standards of the United States Army Corps of Engineers Public Law 84-99 Program. This program sets standards for cities for flood mitigation, protection, and recovery. The flood levee that protects the original townsite from a 100-year flood event and the interior storm water drainage system are inspected annually under this program to assure functionality.

Storm water in the original townsite is drained to a large detention pond on the west edge of the original townsite. This pond is sized to store a large amount of storm water prior to it being pumped outside the flood levee to Drain 72.

The system is sized to handle storm water for the original townsite. Any development that would change the drainage patterns and/or increase total impervious surfaces that may add to the amount of storm water handled by the system should be reviewed prior to approval. The city should look at options for storm water retention and conveyance for future developments to augment the current system as to not reduce its functionality.

Storm water in Richwood is handled much the same way as the original townsite, a rural section road design with ditches and culverts. The northern portion of Richwood, Leonard's Way 1st and 2nd Additions, drains west to 176th Ave SE and north to 25th St SE (Highway 4) and flows east. The rest of the Richwood area drains west to the 176 Ave SE ditch and flows south.

The stormwater system is currently functioning well. The city inspects the system and its components annually for functionality and integrity. This process should identify potential issues with the system to keep it running efficiently into the future.

Transportation

The transportation network within the city consists almost solely of local residential streets. There are two county roads that are within city limits, County Highways 4 and 81. County Highway 4 connects the original townsite and Richwood, east to west, with a bridge over Interstate 29. County Highway 81, a.k.a Old 81, runs through the city north to south on the east side of the city.

The original townsite has gravel roads that are maintained by the city. Responses gathered via the Needs Assessment show that a majority of residents of Argusville would like to have the streets paved in the future. Street paving is a large and expensive project for a city the size of Argusville, but there are costs to maintaining and improving gravel roadways as well. The cost/benefit should be examined to determine when and if a paving project is feasible. Timing with future development street improvements or projects may help create a more cost-effective project for the original townsite.

The streets in Richwood are paved and are in good condition. Regular maintenance and

improvements will prolong the usable life of the pavement.

Flood Protection Levee

The most important piece of infrastructure for the city is the flood protection levee. The Red River Valley is notorious for overland flooding in the spring. Argusville's history cannot be written without the mention of serious flooding issues.

Due to the flooding issues and safety of its residents a levee system was constructed around the city by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1986. The levee was built to protect the city from a 100-year flood event. Improvements were made to the levee system in 2011 to comply with the changes to FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Map changes. The improvements were certified by FEMA in 2011.

Richwood is not protected by a certified levee but is protected from overland flooding.

The city currently follows a levee maintenance program and will continue to follow requirements set by the Corps.

Chapter 5: Agricultural and Cultural Resource Analysis

Agriculture

With Argusville being a rural community, this element becomes a very important portion of this plan. While short term growth may be accommodated within current city limits, the long-term growth of the city will require additional land that is currently being utilized for production agriculture to accommodate this growth.

It is important that agricultural land only be developed or incumbered if necessary for the city's continued growth. It is important to be good neighbors to agricultural landowners knowing that future growth of the city may rely on their relationship with the city and its residents.

Community Pride and Cohesion

The Needs Assessment pointed out that there is a different belief in the existence of community pride and cohesion between the residents of the Original Townsite and those of Richwood.

The development pattern is what can be considered unconventional. The city is separated into multiple "parts" of town and most citizens of Argusville recognize that there are two very separate communities within the city.

Richwood was developed one mile to the west of the original townsite and created a satellite addition to Argusville. Richwood is connected to the original townsite via 25th St SE/1st St and a bridge over Interstate 29.

The feeling that there are two separate "communities" within the city is very noticeable. The physical distance between the two areas has created a challenge for the city to foster the feeling of community pride and cohesiveness that are prevalent in most active and thriving small communities.

Needs Assessment respondents would like to see a physical connection between the two

areas, i.e., bike/walking path. Crossing Interstate 29 may prove to be a difficult task but is an idea that can be planned and worked towards.

As important as the physical connection, or possibly more, is the emotional connection of the people who live in these areas. Many people who live in the separate areas do not know the people who live in the other. This is rare in a small community. A high priority must be placed on creating places and opportunities for all residents to gather and build relationships that will foster community pride and cohesion. This is especially important for the youth in Argusville.

Education

In 1881, School District #58 was organized in the newly formed City of Argusville. The school began with eight (8) grade levels. In 1921, a high school was opened to expand available schooling for grades 1-12. The first graduating class of Argusville High School was in 1925.

Because of declining enrollment three schools, Grandin, Gardner, and Argusville became one School District, Cass Valley North. The elementary school was located in Grandin and the high school was located in Argusville.

Argusville is currently part of North Dakota School District 97. This school district is a consortium of the Cass Valley North and the Dakota School Districts. They districts were combined in 1996 to form Northern Cass School District #97. The communities this district serves are Argusville, Grandin, Gardner, Hunter, and Arthur.

Park District

The Argusville Park District is an active district that manages and maintains the city's two parks. The park district was organized when Argusville Park was built in the Original Townsite. This park consists of a softball field, playground equipment, a basketball court, and a concession building with bathrooms.

The district offers programs for youth and adult activities throughout the year. With the anticipated population growth, the Park District will have opportunities to expand its programs and activities to serve a wider range of individuals.

Chapter 6: Economic Development

According to the Needs Assessment results most residents of Argusville would like to see some type of commercial development. With very few businesses in the community, the sales tax revenue generated from these businesses is minimal. The city must develop an economic development strategy that will assist current businesses in growth and to attract new businesses to Argusville.

A focused effort to attract retail and service businesses that provide semi-essential services such as groceries, convenience retail, a restaurant/cafe, etc. is what survey respondents would like to see in Argusville.

Argusville's Economic Development Tools

The city has an economic development corporation, Argusville Community Development Corporation (ACDC), that was founded to build a venue for the community to gather and hold events. The ACDC raised funds and built the Argusville Community Center. The current mission of ACDC is to maintain the community center and ensure the community has a venue to gather. While the ACDC is operating as it was intended, it may be beneficial to the city for the organization to look at expanding its mission to include administration of programs that are beneficial to the growth and expanding the tax base of the city.

The establishment of an economic development program focused on enticing new people and/or businesses to locate in Argusville would be a beneficial use of city tax proceeds. Increasing the number of businesses in the city would increase both property tax and sales tax collections. These additional taxes could then be allocated back to both infrastructure maintenance and ED programs, essentially paying for itself by increasing the total tax receipts.

The city is not currently enrolled in the State's Renaissance Zone Program. The Renaissance Zone program is a property and state income tax incentive created to

entice improvements within an established zone. The Renaissance Zone program is multi-faceted in that incentives are available for new construction, building rehabilitation, building purchase, whole or partial building lease, required infrastructure improvements to accommodate a project and any combination of eligible projects within the zone. The property and state income tax incentives are available for a maximum of five years and may be full or partial tax exemption or credit. The City of Argusville could benefit greatly by being enrolled in this program. It is an economic development tool that costs the city little to nothing.

Regional Economic Development Tools

Cass County is located in North Dakota Planning Region 5 and is a member of the Lake Agassiz Planning Council. The planning council administers ED programs available to businesses located in the six (6) county region. The Lake Agassiz Planning Council may serve as a valuable resource for the city to reach its economic development goals.

- **SBA Microloan Program** – provides fixed-rate financing for new and existing small businesses. Can be used for working capital, inventory and equipment needs.
- **Intermediary Relending Program** – was established with a long-term low interest loan from USDA-Rural Development and supports and encourages business development in rural North Dakota. This program is available for a wide range of business activities from feasibility studies to land and building costs and inventory.
- **Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program** – provides funds to boost small business development, create new jobs and strengthen economies in rural communities. Can be used for nearly all expenses of starting and operating a business.
- **EDA Revolving Loan Fund** – began as a grant from the Economic Development Administration in the aftermath of the 1997 flood disaster. Typically used to fund industrial or primary sector projects but are available to retail and service projects as well.
- **Community Development Loan Fund** – is available for projects that will create or

retain jobs. CDLF funding is usually subordinated to bank financing is limited to 50 percent of the total project cost.

- **504 Loan Program** – is a loan program designed to help start-up and expanding small businesses. The program provides long-term, competitively priced fixed rate loans for major fixed assets.

State Economic Development Tools

There are additional programs available through the State of North Dakota that are available almost solely to primary sector businesses. A primary sector business is a business that makes direct use of natural resources. These industries include agriculture and oil and gas extraction and processing. It is important for the city to understand what ED programs are available to capitalize on opportunities. The Bank of North Dakota administers several financing programs geared at these industries.

- **Exemption of Improvements to Buildings** - is a state program (NDCC 57-02.2) that offers property tax exemptions for residential and commercial building improvements. The exemptions are allowed for the value of the improvements only. Exemptions may be for a maximum of five (5) years but is subject to review by local jurisdiction that may reduce the length of time. Buildings must be at least 25 years of age and in need of improvement.
- **The PACE (Partnership in Assisting Community Expansion) Program** - is designed to encourage primary (and related) sector economic activity in North Dakota by providing interest buy downs that reduce the interest rate on borrowed money by up to five (5) percent.
- **The Flex PACE Program** - provides interest buy down to borrowers that do not fit directly into the PACE Program. Under this program, the community determines eligibility and sets accountability standards used to gauge benefit to the community. This program can be used for job retention, retail, and essential community services.
- **The Business Development Loan Program** - is designed to assist new and existing

businesses in obtaining loans with a higher degree of risk that would not be acceptable to traditional lending institutions.

The North Dakota Department of Commerce also administers multiple ED programs.

- **The North Dakota Development Fund** - provides “gap financing” to primary sector businesses through loans and equity investments when they are unable to obtain full financing from traditional lenders.
- **The Regional Rural Revolving Loan Fund** - provides funding to primary sector projects in communities of less than 8,000 in population.
- **The Agricultural Production Utilization Committee (APUC)** - administers a grant program that provides funding to new and expanding uses of North Dakota agricultural products. Grants are available for basic and applied research, marketing and product utilization, farm diversification, and agricultural prototype development.

There are additional tax incentive programs available through the state that are regulated by state law and administered and reviewed by the Tax Commissioner’s office.

These are tax increment financing and PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes). These programs both use property taxes to pay infrastructure improvement costs for new development.

- **Innovation Technology Loan Fund (LIFT)** – is an innovation loan fund to support technology advancement put in place by the 2019 legislative session. Lift was established to provide financing for commercialization of intellectual property in ND. This loan fund are available in multiple industries including software computing/IT, agricultural technology, energy, healthcare, and any others that show innovation that will diversify the state’s economy.
- **Main Street Initiative** – was created to provide a resource for communities looking to improve their community center, or Main Street. The state has created a program that provides communities with direct access to tools and resources to capitalize on their strengths and help them make sound planning decisions. This program

administers three grant programs, Vibrancy Grant Program, Partners in Planning Grant Program, and Artists on Main Street Program.

- **Renaissance Zone Program** – was created to revitalize communities in our state and encourage development through tax incentives. By offering both state and local tax incentives for up to 5 years, both residents and business owners are provided with an incentive to invest in the community. Tax incentives are approved by the city for projects believed to be an asset to the community.

Creating an Economic Development Toolbox

For Argusville to continue growing and to attract the type of resident that will invest in the city there will need to be a concerted effort on the city's part to attract and entice new people and business. Coordination with Lake Agassiz Regional Council could serve as a useful tool in developing this strategy.

A combination of a city ED program, the Renaissance Zone Program is a strong foundation the City of Argusville could utilize to improve the current business climate to support current and future growth.

The City of Argusville needs to prioritize economic development to support the residential growth the city has experienced and is planning for. A redevelopment and reinvestment program should be developed for the city that identifies the types of businesses and buildings the city wants to see in their proposed future commercial areas. The city must amend their zoning ordinance that regulates the types of uses and yard requirements to assure the development is structured to allow land uses that are compatible with the city's plans.

Chapter 7: Land Use

City of Argusville Land Uses

The land use plan is composed of a land use plan map and land use category descriptions. The goal of the land use plan is to provide a general pattern for the location, distribution, and character of future land uses. This plan is a guideline document that sets the type and location of uses that will be allowed within the City of Argusville and identifies areas for future growth.

Agricultural

The agricultural designation identifies areas that are currently being used for agricultural purposes that are not identified in the plan as areas of future development. It is intended for these areas to remain as agricultural uses without interference of future development activities that may affect its operation.

Low Density Residential

This designation identifies areas to be used for single family detached homes and twin homes. These areas will be separated from commercial and industrial uses to promote a safe neighborhood environment. Density for this LDR is up to 8 units per acre for detached units and up to 10 units per acre for attached single family units. Low density residential units must have direct access to an approved public or private right-of-way.

Medium Density Residential

This designation identifies areas to be used for 3+ unit attached single family units such as condominiums, townhouses, and smaller apartment buildings. These structures may have up to 8 units per structure and be up to two stories in height. Density for this use is up to 12 units per acre. Medium density residential units must have direct access to an approved public or private right-of-way.

Commercial

The Commercial designation provides areas for retail, service, and office uses. Commercial

areas are to be located along Highway 81 or County Road #4. New commercial uses along be developed to place the building as close to the road as possible in attempt to create a “downtown” feel.

Heavy Commercial

The heavy commercial designation provides areas for uses that have minimal retail traffic. Uses that buy and sell bulk products and provide off site services are the type of businesses in this designation. It provides for uses in locations which are suitable and appropriate taking into consideration land uses on adjacent or nearby properties, access to a major street or highway, and access to public utilities. There are currently not heavy commercial land uses within the City of Argusville.

Industrial

The industrial designation provides areas for uses that manufacture, assemble, and distribute goods and provide services that require the use of heavy machinery and outdoor storage of materials. These uses may not be compatible with other land uses due to their nature of operation and must be separated from other uses. If this is not possible industrial properties must have a buffer installed to prevent potential nuisances when located adjacent to residential or commercial uses. These uses must have access to Interstate 29, County Road 4, or Highway 81 without driving through the city so not to require heavy traffic on local streets.

There are currently no industrial land uses within the City of Argusville.

Public

Public uses that are developed, built, and/or maintained using public funds. These uses are such things as government buildings and facilities, schools, and parks.

Extraterritorial Land Uses

The City of Argusville has exercised its legal right to adopt extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Extraterritorial jurisdiction is a state approved extension of a city’s land use, subdivision, and or zoning regulations. Cities that have a population of less than five thousand, such as

Argusville, are allowed up to one mile of ETJ in all directions of their city limits. The first half mile falls under sole authority of the city's adopted plans and ordinances. The second half mile falls under the joint control of the city and other political subdivisions that have the land use, subdivision and/or zoning authority.

For the purposes of this plan, we will focus on the first half mile of Argusville's ETJ. It is important for the city to have the ability to review land uses that are adjacent to city limits in order to assure future growth areas are preserved and to assure that no developments are located in flood prone areas without proper protection. It must be the objective of the city to promote agricultural uses in its ETJ until such time that future growth areas are developed.

While the goal of this plan is not to set future land uses for the entirety of the ETJ, it is imperative the city restrict nonconforming uses from being developed in close proximity to the areas designated for future growth and restrict growth in flood prone areas.

Rural Residential

The rural residential designation identifies areas currently developed with residential uses. All residential uses that are not directly farm related fall within this designation. The city should not promote rural residential uses until such time that a zoning and subdivision ordinance is created and adopted that sets minimum standards.

Agriculture

The agricultural designation is reserved for land that is being used for agricultural purposes. All land that is not currently developed should remain agricultural unless otherwise depicted in this plan.

Public

Public uses include land that is developed, built, and/or maintained using public funds to serve the public. These uses are such things as government buildings and facilities, schools, and parks.

Chapter 8: Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The goals, objectives, and policy recommendations provide the basic framework on which all decisions shall be based. A goal is defined as a statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition. An objective is a statement that pertains to the multiple ideals that should guide decision making. to be attained. A policy is a defined course of action or rule of conduct to be used by the city council when making decisions.

The goals, objectives, and policies reflect the ideas, comments and concerns expressed by groups and individuals from the City of Argusville.

The goals, objectives, and policies of this plan have been created to address the Strategic Issues that were identified through public comment and survey responses. The following five (5) elements take into consideration the strategic issues identified in this plan that effect the form, function, and location of future land uses in Argusville.

Housing

Goal: The City of Argusville will provide a variety of well planned, sustainable, and affordable housing options.

Objectives:

- Promote neighborhood revitalization and/or redevelopment and infill development.
- Ensure infill development is consistent with the City's goals and objectives spelled out in this plan.
- Support reinvestment in existing housing stock.
- Encourage reinvestment in and/or redevelopment of properties in disrepair.
- Create an incentive package for infill development and/or redevelopment from state programs and local programs.
- Promote housing that is affordable to median income earners.
- Encourage housing developments to utilize existing infrastructure where possible and expand infrastructure using Capital Improvements Plan.
- Promote housing developments for younger individuals and senior citizens.
- Encourage a mix of housing types that blend with existing housing

Policy 1: Use the City of Argusville Comprehensive Plan as the policy guide for all community development and redevelopment decisions.

Policy 2: Approve development and redevelopment projects only if such projects are consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 3: Coordinate any new housing development with the Capital Improvements Plan.

Table 8.1					
Implementation Action Item(s)	Task Lead	Timeframe			
		On-Going	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	Long-Term
Housing					
Work with landowners to clean up existing properties that do not portray the image of a well maintained and clean community.	City Council, City Engineer	X			
Promote housing types that are affordable to senior citizens and young adults to keep them in the community.	City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission	X			
Adopt the City of Argusville Comprehensive Plan	City Council		X		
Review zoning ordinance to assure that dimensional standards and uses are compatible with development projected in Comprehensive Plan.	Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council		X		
Adopt the Property Tax Exemption for Improvements (NDCC 57-02.2).	City Council		X		
Adopt the Property Tax Exemption for New Single Family Residential Properties (NDCC 57-02-08.42).	City Council		X		
Create and adopt a Renaissance Zone Plan.	City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, ACDC		X		
Create a toolbox of housing incentives to promote residential development in Argusville.	City Council, ACDC			X	

Utilities and Infrastructure

Goal: To provide public utilities and infrastructure to the citizens of Argusville that are reliable, sustainable, and cost effective.

Objectives:

- Improve the quality of the existing utility systems and infrastructure when necessary.
- Extend municipal utilities and infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Provide a safe and well-maintained transportation network for all modes of transportation, including pedestrians.

Policy 1: Budget for and schedule annual infrastructure repair and/or replacement projects.

Policy 2: Review the land use plan projections of future growth to assure the system(s) can accommodate expansion.

Policy 3: Encourage growth in the near term to locate in areas adjacent to existing utilities to minimize the need for improvements.

Policy 4: Do not allow leap-frog development and focus new growth and development in areas adjacent to the original town site and within the certified flood levee.

Table 8.2					
Implementation Action Item(s)	Task Lead	Timeframe			
		On-Going	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	Long-Term
Utilities					
Conduct annual review of water and sewer system operation and capacity changes.	City Council, City Engineer	X			
Coordinate land use plan with Capital Improvements Plan to stage development as cost affectively as possible.	City Council, City Engineer	X			
Update Capital Improvements plan to incorporate areas shown in Land Use Plan as future development.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Review current utilities and create database of improvements needed to accommodate development shown in Land Use Plan.	City Council, City Engineer		X		
Create usage/capacity benchmarks that when reached trigger system improvements.	City Engineer, City Council		X		

Streets					
Continue to maintain streets to insure an extended useable life.	City Engineer, City Council	X			
Estimate cost of continually maintaining gravel vs. the cost of improving to asphalt.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Work with engineer to create an estimate of cost to pave streets in the original townsite.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Review city budget to partially fund a paving project and research other funding opportunities.	City Council		X		
Look for opportunity to "piggyback" paving project with another project in the city or vicinity to help reduce costs.	City Council, City Engineer	X			

Water					
Complete a usage study to determine current maximum daily water usage.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Estimate future usage and water infrastructure required to support future growth areas shown in the Land Use Plan.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Work with City Engineer to keep system maintained and to create usage increase benchmarks for timing of system upgrades.	City Engineer, City Council	X	X		
Start conversation with Cass Rural Water District about ability to support additional water usage and improved water pressure for fire protection.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Create a contingency plan for a water supply in the circumstance CRWD is not able to supply required water and/or improved water pressure.	City Engineer, City Council			X	
Monitor use changes yearly to properly time system upgrades.	City Council, City Engineer	X			

Sanitary Sewer					
Continue current maintenance schedule for current system.	City Engineer, City Council	X			
Complete a capacity study to identify system capacity.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Estimate usage and sewer infrastructure required to support future growth areas shown in the Land Use Plan.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Work with City Engineer to create metrics for timing of system upgrades.	City Engineer, City Council		X		
Research potential funding opportunities for sewer system upgrades.	City Council, City Engineer		X		
Review all new development or redevelopment of property to insure current system has the capacity to service the use(s).	City Engineer, City Council	X			

Agriculture and Cultural Resources

Goal 1: Agricultural land will remain in production until the City of Argusville and landowners reach a mutual agreement to develop land to uses as illustrated in the Land Use Plan.

Goal 2: Provide a wide range of activities and educational opportunities to current and future residents

Objectives:

- Keep land in production agriculture until necessary.
- Support the Park District and School District.
- Support community organizations in attempt to create and plan community activities.

Policy 1: All agricultural land will remain in production until the landowner agrees with development plans or agrees to sell their land.

Policy 2: Work closely with the Park District and community organizations to identify new opportunities for programming and activities to engage community members.

Table 8.3					
Implementation Action Item(s)	Task Lead	Timeframe			
		On-Going	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	Long-Term
Agriculture					
Only accept and review applications for new developments in areas shown in the Future Land Use Plan.	City Council, Park District		X		
Meet yearly with the Park District, ACDC, and/or other community organizations to discuss ways to work together to reach community goals.	City Council, Park District	X	X		
Schedule a community event to kick of the adoption of this plan where residents from the Original Townsite and Richwood can interact.	ACDC, City Council, Community members		X		
Create a group of community members and organizations to plan events to bring people to Argusville .	ACDC, City Council, Community members		X		
Look for ways and funding opportunities to physically connect the Original Townsite and Richwood.	City Engineer, City Council	X			X

Economic Development

Goal: Create a business climate in the City of Argusville.

- Support the development of new businesses by local entrepreneurs.
- Prioritize Economic Development to increase the city’s tax base.
- Identify strategies within the original townsite for commercial and residential reinvestment.
- Promote the City of Argusville.

Policy 1: Promote commercial projects that are located along Hwy 81.

Policy 2: Only approve projects that would be considered retail, service, hospitality, office, or a mix of commercial and residential.

Policy 3: Continually monitor availability of local, regional, state and federal funds for economic development purposes.

Table 8.4					
Implementation Action Item(s)	Task Lead	Timeframe			
		On-Going	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	Long-Term
Economic Development					
Create and adopt a Renaissance Zone Plan.	City Council		X		
Contact Lake Agassiz Regional Council about ED tools available to the city and how to administer them.	City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission		X		
Create a board comprised of citizens to create a list of ED priorities.	City Council		X		
Monitor and update zoning ordinances to adapt to changing needs and development patterns.	Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council		X		
Create a zoning overlay district along Hwy 81 that sets standards for development that help create a "Main Street" feel.	Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council			X	
Establish a long-term marketing plan to brand the City of Argusville as a progressive growing community to attract businesses and residents.	City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission			X	

Land Use and Development

Goal 1: Work with landowners to ensure land is available for projected future city growth.

Goal 2: Promote a variety of residential and commercial uses that are compatible with current use(s).

Goal 3: Grow in a contiguous and orderly manner.

- Work with properties in the city and in future growth areas to ensure land is available for development.
- Ensure any development in and around the city of Argusville is consistent with the City’s goals and objectives for land use and community development.
- Support the development of well planned residential and commercial uses within Argusville.
- Support land uses that are compatible with adjacent uses and consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Policy 1: Ensure through long range planning that there is an adequate supply of development land for future uses.

Policy 2: Use the Land Use Plan as the guide that identifies future development locations.

Policy 3: Coordinate Land Use Plan with Capital Improvements Plan to stage development as cost affectively as possible.

Table 8.5					
Implementation Action Item(s)	Task Lead	Timeframe			
		On-Going	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	Long-Term
Land Use Plan					
Adopt the City of Argusville Comprehensive Plan.	City Council		X		
Identify owners of land that is shown in the Land Use Plan as future growth area.	City Council, City Engineer		X		
Formulate plan to contact land owners of future growth areas about potential land development.	City Council, City Engineer		X		
Review Zoning Ordinance to assure compatability of future land uses.	Planning and Zoning Commission, City		X		
Coordinate land use plan with Capital Improvements Plan to stage development as cost affectively as possible.	City Council, City Engineer		X		
Track progress of the FM Flood Diversion project for changes to the FEMA flood maps.	City Engineer, City Council	X		X	
Review and update Land Use Plan as required.	Planning and Zoning Commission, City				X

Infill Development					
Work with land owners to identify and catalogue properties that are vacant, in disrepair, or underdeveloped.	City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission		X		
Contact property owners of properties about improving or acquiring the property.	City Council		X		
Adopt Property Tax Exemption for Improvements (NDCC 57-02.2).	City Council		X		
Create and adopt Renaissance Zone Plan to incentivize improvements.	City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission		X		
Contact Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad about normalizing railroad right-of-way widths through the city.	City Council, City Engineer		X		
Create a toolbox to clean up properties, incentivize property improvements, and promote an improved community aesthetic.	City Council, City Engineer		X		

Appendix 1: Needs Assessment and Community Survey Narrative



To: Argusville City Council
From: Steven Zimmer, Intelliplanz
RE: Community Needs Assessment
Date: May 3, 2021

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 15 residents of the City of Argusville. They were very open and honest in their responses.

The interviews were all conducted over Zoom and lasted anywhere from a 30 to 90 minutes. There were 10 questions that were asked to all of them and additional questions in circumstances where I felt more information was needed.

Following are the questions, associated answers, and a brief explanation of my overall take from each interview question.

1) How long have you lived in Argusville?

- Answers were anywhere from 3 years to 40 years.
- Most people moved from Fargo metro to get their kids into a smaller school.
- Only one person who considered themselves “from” Argusville.

The purpose for this question was to get a sense of the makeup of who lives in the city and how long they have been there. Depending on when you move into a community your feelings and experiences are most likely quite different from others’. This did end up creating differing views on certain issues, which you will see in some following answers.

2) How have you seen the community change over the time you have lived here?

- New people moving in, long-time residents moving out.
- Demographic shift, more families with kids.
- Dike project stopped city from being habitually flooded.
- Change on feelings about Fargo from being “scary” big city to where almost everyone works.
- School closed, was a huge source of city pride. Best gym in county.

- New development, Richwood Estates.
- Social events have happened very seldom and are often poorly attended, outside of Fire Department pancake feed and steak fry.
- Church attendance has decreased. Almost to the point of having to close church(es).
- Do not see people from community as often, people work in Fargo and go home.
- Elevator closed.
- Community Center was built.

This question showed one of the biggest differences between time of residence. Most people who have lived here fewer than 10 years have not seen a lot of changes. Most noted people moving into and out of town and that there are more families with young children.

Residents who have lived in town for longer than ten years noted more significant changes, both positive and negative. Losing the school was something almost everyone mentioned as being the biggest change. Most stated it changed when and how often people interacted with each other. All mentioned Richwood Estates, mostly positive, as the biggest change. Many mentioned the community center and the dike as positive changes.

3) Do you feel there is a sense of community pride?

- Yes, very noticeable.
- No.
- Kind of.
- Depends on where you live.
- Yes, everyone follows the sports teams.
- Not sure. There are two different communities, the old townsite and Richwood.
- There used to be before the school closed.

The answers to this question also garnered different answers depending on when you moved to Argusville. Along the same lines, answers differed based on where you lived. "Community Pride" is a very general innocuous phrase, that can mean different things to different people. My focus was to see if people believe there exists a sense of pride in saying they live in Argusville.

People who lived in Richwood most often were very emphatic that they believed there was a noticeable sense of community pride. When asked to explain why they believed that to be true, most often they mentioned their neighbors, their neighborhood, etc. Most people mentioned the school and athletics as a sense of community pride. While this is part of a larger community, it is not directly representative of the City of Argusville.

Some respondents stated that they believed there was not a noticeable sense of community pride. Also, multiple individuals stated that there are two separate "towns" in Argusville, those who live in the old town-site and those who live in Richwood and that community pride is not the same for both.

4) Is there a high level of community involvement, volunteering, etc. Why do you feel that is?

- Yes, but its always the same people.
- No, people are too busy.
- Yes, people are very willing to get involved.
- Certain things people are willing to get involved in.
- Sometimes. Many people do not know about need for volunteers.

Most people stated that for most things there are people who are willing to volunteer their time, but most of the time it is the same people.

People mentioned “lack of time” with most people working out of town as a potential reason for limited number of volunteers.

Multiple respondents mentioned some sort of advertising for volunteers may help increase numbers.

5) Are you satisfied with city’s level of service, maintaining infrastructure, keeping you informed, etc? What ways do you think it could improve?

- Overall, yes.
- Yes, they are doing the best they can with limited resources.
- For the most part, but the sewer and water project was a bit of an issue.
- Yes, things will change soon when the TIF in Richwood is closed.
- Yes, but paved roads would be nice, they get very rough in the summer.

People were quite positive about the service they get from the city. Most things they said could be improved are things they understand are “big ticket” items that the city is not able to afford at this time.

Many people said that a website, Facebook page, etc. about things that are happening in the city to keep citizens updated would be nice.

6) Do you feel the city has a clear direction/vision for the future? Why?

- If the city leaders have a clear direction for the future, they most likely are the only ones who know what it is.
- I don’t think so, they are dealing with finalizing old projects and had a bit of a hard time with the water and sewer project, one thing at a time.
- No idea, no way to know, there is no publicly known direction for the future.
- Yes, I feel like there is a sense of moving forward.
- No, but with the TIF ending in Richwood there should be some additional funding resources for improvement projects and future planning.
- No. We need to get the city and ACDC to work together, that is why the ACDC was created.

There seemed to be a sense of hesitancy in answering this question because they did not want to feel like they were being negative towards city leaders. I assured them that their name would not be added, and were honest, not negative.

Most smaller communities do not have the luxury of planning for the future because they are too busy trying to stay alive, this is not the case in Argusville.

Most respondents stated they did not see or know of future planning/direction for the city but were quite vocal that they believed there was a positive outlook. The answers to this question are often identifiers for questions 3 and 4. The clearer direction the city has, the more people feel compelled to get involved, and then become stake holders in the progress.

7) Would you like to see the city grow? In what sense?

- I would love to see the city grow.
- Yes, but there needs to be thought put into where and how much.
- Would love to see more families move into town, but not sure school could handle too many more.
- Of course. A few businesses that you could get everyday essentials would be wonderful.
- Yes. There is land inside the dike that could be developed relatively quickly.
- Yes. If the city has a plan and do not let developer(s) do whatever they want. Housing and maybe some commercial.

Everyone wants the city to grow but are concerned as to the speed and extent. Want to see the city work with ACDC and citizens to figure out how to make this happen.

8) If yes, what types of things would you like to see happen?

- Café.
- Convenience store.
- Boutique stores, maybe a small strip mall.
- Gas station.
- Better streets.
- Things to do, better parks, pool, more softball diamonds, things for kids to do.
- More activities for families.
- Splash pad and/or skating rink.
- Another housing development. Maybe between interstate and Richwood to connect the city. Would feel more "together".
- Bike path over interstate to connect "town" and Richwood.
- Take down old school, develop that lot and area to the west to residential and commercial.
- Truck stop, restaurant, convenience store.
- Office building. Small offices maybe keep a few people in town and not in Fargo.
- Restaurant/Pizza place.
- Housing, some apartments.

- A place for the community to gather outdoors.

There were a lot of things people would love to see in Argusville. Most people mentioned that they understand that if the city would grow that more things would be possible, but many just wanted basic things. The most common response was a convenience store, or a place where people could get some basic items without having to leave town.

Another popular response was a café/restaurant. Improving park facilities was also quite common.

9) Are there concerns you have about the city growing?

- Not really. As long as it is done the right way.
- Yes. Want it to happen, but the city would need to add employees at some point and that costs money.
- Yes. You need to budget for it. Employees, sewer, water, streets, maintenance, etc. it adds up.
- Need to get rid of school, becoming safety issue.
- Yes, would increase tax base.
- Yes, but think the city leadership can plan for it and stop any problems.
- Maybe. People will not like it if they are taxed more just for the city to add more houses.
- No. As long as they do not use the TIF again and collect taxes to pay for improvements.

Everyone wants to see the city grow but understand that most times there are “growing pains”. If the city plans for the growth and can figure out how to make it happen without over burdening the current infrastructure and budget, they will most likely have the support of its citizens.

10) If you could see only one thing happen in Argusville, what would it be?

- IKEA
- Swimming Pool.
- Connection between Richwood and “town”.
- Better bar/restaurant.
- Golf Course. Closer to Fargo than other courses. Could hold tournaments.
- Convenience Store.
- More community togetherness. More opportunities to gather.
- More things to do for kids.
- Old School to be removed and land developed.
- Paved roads.
- New Fire Department Building.
- City improvements, controlled growth, better streets.

Argusville Community Survey

Using the information gathered during the interview process, from a small portion of the city residents, a survey was created to be sent out to the entire community. The questions in the survey focused on the most common comments and concerns received from interview respondents.

The survey questions were drafted to collect information about what the citizens of Argusville felt about:

- 1) Community Pride
- 2) City Infrastructure
- 3) City Services
- 4) Future Development.

The city sent out the link to an online survey with the utility bills and posted the link on the city's Facebook page, with a note that paper surveys were available at City Hall. The survey was active for a total of 29 days, February 10 – March 11.

The survey had a total of 28 questions (survey and results are attached). There was a total of 87 completed surveys, with 82 online and 5 paper responses.

Community

During the interview process the interviewees were asked directly "Do you think there is a sense of community pride" in Argusville. It was a recurring comment that surfaced quite often throughout the interview process, not just this specific question.

The first ten survey questions focus on community pride and what it meant to the survey respondents.

A majority of respondents feel there is a moderate or a little bit of community pride. There were also twice as many people who responded there was "none at all" than "a great deal". This may be as important as the majority responses.

When asked why they are proud to live in Argusville, there were 65 separate responses. Most were related to great neighbors, nice people, small/rural community, quiet, and/or a good school district.

The number of responses were fairly even between the original town-site (39) and Richwood (47). There was however a vast majority (81%) of the respondents felt there was a noticeable difference in the "feeling of community" between those who lived in Richwood and the original town-site.

The following question asked, "what do you think can be done to improve this". The top responses were 1) more opportunities to socialize and 2) Walking/biking path connection. It is not necessarily the city's responsibility to create and/or offer more opportunities for its citizens to get together, but it is important to understand what people want and support those opportunities when they arise. The Walking/bike path connecting the original town-site and Richwood is something that came up quite

often during interviews as well.

The answers to the previous question were similar to the interview answers and assuming this the following questions were asked about participating in community events. When asked if the participate in community events, the majority answered “sometime”, followed by “usually”.

Reasons why people did not participate were multiple. Lack of time was the most common answer, but many people said they did not hear about events, had schedule conflicts, or were not interested.

The types of activities people would like to see in Argusville are varied. Many are seasonal events that are recurring. Such things as park district activities, farmers markets, craft fairs, fitness classes, etc. are all things that normally happen multiple times in a season. Other events that many people wanted to see are one-time scheduled events. These are events like live music/concerts, street dances, parades, fundraising events/feeds, seasonal festivals, etc.

When asked if they would attend community events that majority of respondents answered that they definitely would attend or probably would attend. There were a fair number of responses that noted that it depends on scheduling whether they could/would attend community events.

Most people said they are willing to volunteer to help at community events as their schedules allow.

For a community, especially small communities, to operate efficiently it requires individuals who care about the community to be involved. There are many boards and commissions that operate within the community that require volunteers or willingness to run for elected positions. The survey included a question that asked if people were willing to serve on a board or commission. The responses came in at nearly evenly split, but slightly in favor of yes, they are willing.

Services and Infrastructure

One of the biggest issues in most communities is the maintenance of infrastructure and the quality and efficiency of the services provided to its citizens.

This survey asked the respondents to rate the services that are available in Argusville. Not all services are funded or controlled by the city, but all serve the residents of Argusville.

The services the public was asked to rate were:

- Law enforcement
- Fire protection
- Ambulance/EMT
- Street maintenance
- Snow removal
- Flood protection
- Parks
- Public works.

The ranking options were:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- N/A.

The most common response for all of the services was “good”. This is a positive response that shows residents are satisfied with the level of service, but also that there is room for improvement in some areas.

The second most common response for law enforcement, fire protection, and flood protection was “excellent”. These are three critically important services and says a lot about the dedication of the organizations that operate them.

For ambulance/EMT service, street maintenance, snow removal, parks, and public works, “fair” was the second most common response. While this is still a positive response it does highlight that there may be room for improvement.

Most of the services top three rankings were excellent, good, or fair. However, for street maintenance and parks the third most common ranking was poor. These are things that need to be reviewed to see what citizens believe could improve these services.

The following question asked people to rate the response time of law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance/EMT services. Again, the most common answer was “good” with excellent and acceptable being second and third, respectively. One thing to note is that all three services had votes for “poor”. Fire protection had ± 17.5% of ratings split equally between “below expectations” and “poor”. While all rural fire departments have limitations, it is important for the fire department to identify things that could help improve the response times.

When asked how often respondents visited the public parks, the most popular response was only a few times a year. A total of 63% answered that they only used the park a few times a year or that they do not use the parks.

Most people are not using the parks on a regular basis. The follow-up question that asked what could make them use it more, the responses were:

- 1) More/better programs for adults
- 2) More/better playground equipment
- 3) More/better sport courts/diamonds
- 4) Picnic shelters/grills
- 5) More/better programs for children.

There were also write-in answers that included a skating rink, a dog park, swimming pool, and to clean up litter and weeds.

The Future

One of the reasons for creating this survey was to collect feedback from Argusville residents about what they feel the city should do going forward from where they are. In other words, what is it that people want Argusville to be in the future?

Knowing that allocation of limited funds can be an issue in most smaller communities, the question was asked to have citizens rank what they believe are most important things for the city to focus on in the future. The options and rankings from respondents were:

- 1) Maintaining infrastructure
- 2) Cleaning up blighted properties
- 3) Promoting growth and development
- 4) Paving streets
- 5) Updating city facilities.

When asked if they feel the city has a clear plan for the future, a majority responded that they do not believe that it does. Most respondents think that despite this feeling that the city is holding its own or moving in a positive direction. This is a bit of a vote of confidence for city leadership.

The following questions focused more on the future of Argusville. Almost all, 98%, respondents believe it is important for the city to have a clear plan/vision for the future, with 55% saying it is “extremely important”. Reflecting this, 85% of respondents approved of the city budgeting money to create a Comprehensive/Strategic Plan.

Planning for the future most often looks at the potential for growth and development. When asked if they would like to see the city grow most answered that they would. A majority want to see the city grow but are concerned about how it is done.

This sentiment is reflected directly in the responses to the question of “how would you like the City to approach development”. Half of the respondents feel the city should be slightly more aggressive and focus on small incremental development. The second and third most popular responses were 2) neutral and felt that the city should not push for development, and 3) be aggressive and actively pursue any development. This is the reason for planning. Whether the decision is made to be more or less aggressive it is important to be prepared. Be proactive, not reactive.

Trying to understand what type(s) of development people would like to see, a question was asked with the choices of:

- Single family residential
- Twin-home/apartment
- Commercial
- Mix of residential and commercial
- Industrial.

The responses were (from most to least popular):

- 1) Mix of residential and commercial

- 2) Single family residential
- 3) Commercial
- 4) Twin-home/apartment
- 5) Industrial.

Going a little further into what people would like to see in Argusville they were presented options of some of the businesses and services that were brought up in the interview. Respondents were asked to pick their top three. The rank of the responses (from most popular to least) are:

- 1) Convenience store/gas station
- 2) New park facilities
- 3) Bar/restaurant
- 4) Café/coffee shop
- 5) Daycare facility
- 6) Additional housing
- 7) Develop a “Main Street”
- 8) Truck Stop
- 9) Strip mall.

There was an “other” choice where people could write in their own answers. The responses to this included senior housing, apartments, a wellness center, off leash dog areas, community pool, community garden, and to have natural gas plumbed in.

Going Forward

Now that the city has feedback about important issues they believe were confronting the city, what is the next step?

Looking at the data that was received through the interviews and the survey I believe you can conclude the following:

- 1) People who live in Argusville like that it is a small town,
- 2) Residents are complimentary of public services and how the city is being run,
- 3) Residents believe it is important to plan for the future,

Small Town

Throughout this process it became clear that most people who live in Argusville do so because it is a “small-town”. It is important to understand that this is not necessarily only about the population of Argusville, but just as much about the feel of the community.

You hear a lot of different ways of describing this, but it is a real feeling, whether small town, rural community, “Class B” town, etc. people are attracted to that because that is how many of them grew up. It is important to keep this as the focal point of future plans.

It was also very evident that people want to interact more and understand that they need to be more

active in the community to create the small-town atmosphere. This will help improve community pride and involvement that was identified as an area of focus for this needs assessment.

As was stated previously, it is not solely the city's responsibility to create opportunities for citizens to interact. It is important that the city offer support to individuals and/or organizations who are planning community events. Two of these events have become part of the "pride" of Argusville. The Fireman's breakfast and steak fry are things that people identify as something that helps define what Argusville is.

This creates community pride and supports the small town feel that residents love. Support for community events and opportunities to interact should be a priority for the city.

Public Services

It is often difficult for small communities to deliver public services at a level its citizens feel is adequate. Often time budget, personnel, etc. restrict the ability to deliver these services.

This is not the case in Argusville. In the both the interview and survey portions of this process, citizens were very supportive and positive about city services, fire protection, and law enforcement.

There are a number of things that could be improved, paved streets, park infrastructure, etc., that were identified, but are things that are large budget items and need to be planned for.

The quality of services offered to citizens is a great benefit and a way to promote Argusville to future residents.

Planning for the Future

Possibly the most important take away from this entire process is that a majority of the Argusville residents want to see the city grow.

Argusville is currently serving as a "bedroom" community for Fargo. Almost all people interviewed worked in the Fargo metro area. This is not uncommon for smaller communities to act as bedroom communities for larger cities, but it is apparent that residents would like to see this change.

In both the interviews and survey most responses were supportive of planning for the future and future development. Most were also supportive of budgeting resources for a Comprehensive Plan.

This process shows that the community wants to be more than what it currently is. There is some hesitancy about what development would bring and how it would be done.

The Comprehensive Plan process can alleviate most of that concern. Creating a plan supported by the citizens of Argusville will not only calm those concerns but will create support for the chosen direction for the future of the city.