



Community Development Department

DATE: May 17, 2022

FROM: Ben Ehreth, AICP, Community Development Director

ITEM: Amendments to Renaissance Zone Development Plan

REQUEST:

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority held a public hearing on May 12, 2022 and recommends revisions to the Renaissance Zone Development Plan. The following items are addressed in the amendment:

- The Renaissance Zone boundary would be reduced in size. Three blocks are recommended for removal, one block is proposed to be added.
- The Renaissance Zone Authority would be required to present to all political subdivisions on current status of the Renaissance Zone program at least annually.
- Criteria for future block closures and expansions would be established. The Renaissance Zone Authority is not proposing any additional expansion, including use of a non-contiguous island, at this time.

A draft of the relevant sections with amended language is attached to this report, along with new proposed boundaries of the Renaissance Zone. Additional details will be amended, such as updating dates and names, prior to submittal to the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Renaissance Zone Authority is in the process of seeking a 5-year reauthorization of the program, which is set to expire on July 31, 2022. The City Commission voted unanimously to approve a reauthorization during your March 22, 2022. Required letters of support are currently being requested from other political subdivisions. If support is not received by the deadline, the Bismarck Renaissance Zone program will be discontinued and it may not be reinstated, under current state law.

If support letters are received by the deadline, the acknowledgement of reauthorization and required documentation will also be included in the final Development Plan.

The Renaissance Zone Authority recommends closing Blocks 7, 20, and 22. Letters were mailed to all property owners in six different blocks under consideration for closure in November 2021, and five written comments were received from property owners. The Renaissance Zone Authority elected to keep three of these blocks open and close three, based on that fact that many projects have been completed and the remaining property owners have had sufficient time to make improvements.

The Renaissance Zone Authority also recommends the addition of Block 1F, which is contiguous to the existing boundaries and has potential for significant redevelopment. The amended boundaries would utilize 41.5 of the 47 total blocks allowed by state law.

The Renaissance Zone Development Plan sets the goals, boundaries, and project selection criteria for the program. The full current Renaissance Zone Development is available here: <https://www.bismarcknd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/31954/2020-RZ-Development-Plan?bidId=>

RECOMMENDED CITY COMMISSION ACTION:

Approve amendments to Renaissance Zone Development Plan.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:

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CITY OF BISMARCK RENAISSANCE ZONE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Submitted by the Bismarck
Renaissance Zone Authority

~~December 10, 2020~~

May 12, 2022

City of Bismarck Renaissance Zone Development Plan

Revision History

Revision Type	Date of City Commission Approval
Original Document	November 22, 2000
Revisions	March 30, 2001
Revisions	November 13, 2003
Revisions	September 28, 2004
Revisions	April 10, 2007
Major Revisions	June 12, 2012
Boundary Modification	June 1, 2013
5-Year Extension Request	April 20, 2016
5-Year Extension Request	July 11, 2017
Revisions	August 14, 2018
Boundary Modification	May 28, 2019
Revisions	November 26, 2019
Revisions	December 22, 2020
<u>5-Year Extension Request and Boundary Modification</u>	<u>May 24, 2022</u>

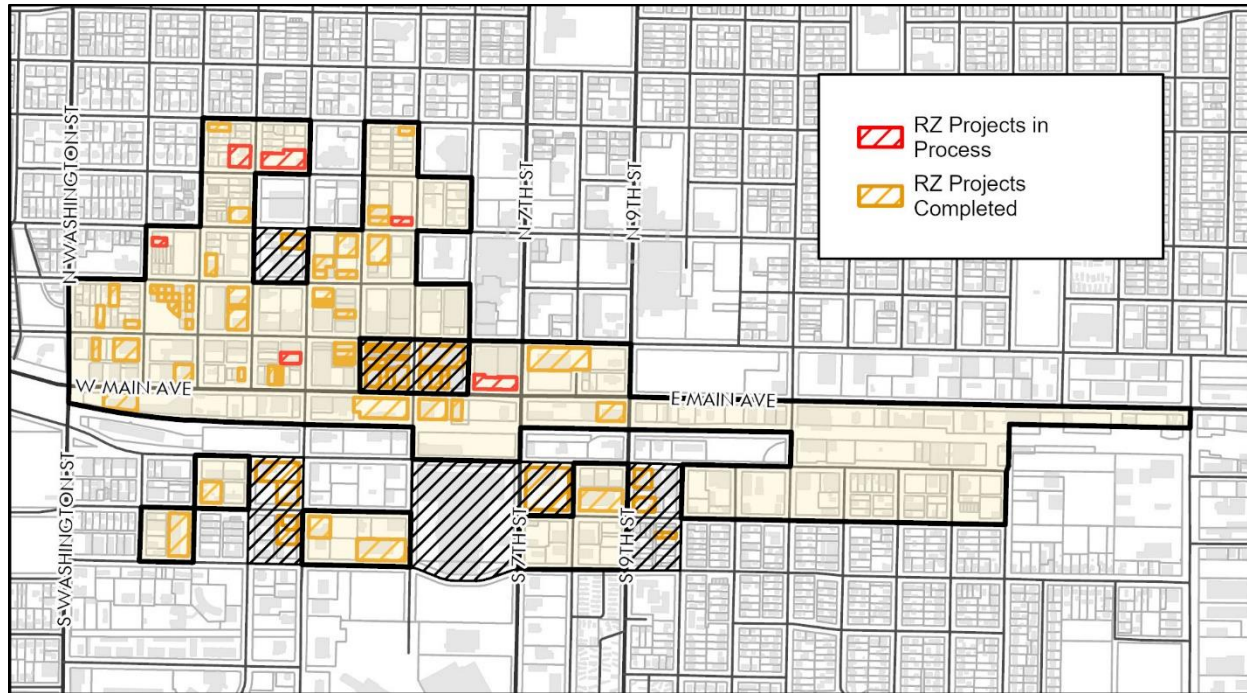


Figure 2: Completed and Approved Renaissance Zone Projects

3. Property Descriptions

Descriptions of properties/structures on each block in the Renaissance Zone, along with the present uses and conditions, is attached as Appendix C. The Renaissance Zone includes both commercial and residential properties.

4. Geographic Boundaries and Blocks of the Renaissance Zone

The current Renaissance Zone map has been attached as Appendix B. The current boundaries are legally described as:

- Blocks 13, 15, 16, 21, and 24, Northern Pacific Addition
- Blocks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 19, 28, 30, 37, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 73, 75, 84, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 116, and 122, and 124 Original Plat
- Block 25, Northern Pacific Second Addition
- Blocks 17-20, Sturgis Addition
- Blocks 29, 31, and 33, Williams Survey Addition
- Tracts along the south side of Main Avenue between South 9th Street and Airport Road in Williams Survey, Sturgis Addition and Governor Pierce Addition

- Tracts bounded by East Front Avenue, South 12th Street, BNSF railroad tracks, and the east line of Auditors Lot 1600 of Section 3, Township 138 North, Range 80 West, all within Sturgis Addition.

Blocks identified by just a number are original blocks from 2001; blocks identified by a number and the letter “A” are blocks added in 2003 or relocated in 2013; blocks identified by a number and the letter “B” are blocks added in 2007; the block identified by a number and the letter “C” was added in 2011 when a block originally added in 2003 was deemed complete, removed from the boundary and relocated within the contiguous Renaissance Zone boundary; the block identified by a number and letter “D” was added in 2017, ~~and the blocks identified by a number and the letter “E” were added in 2019,~~ and the block identified by a number and the letter “F” was added in 2022.

For the purposes of calculating the total allotment of blocks permitted, several of the blocks within the Renaissance Zone shall be considered half blocks because of the presence of government-owned buildings. Blocks 9, 13, 19, ~~21~~, 22, 23, ~~1A~~, 3B, and 8E are considered half blocks. Blocks 1 and 1B are named independently to account for when the blocks were added, but they constitute one block together.

5. Description of Assets within the Renaissance Zone

Many of the blocks comprising the Renaissance Zone contain historically significant structures. In February 2000, the *Historical Architectural Inventory and Evaluation of Downtown Bismarck, North Dakota* report was completed. The report contains an extensive evaluation of any area within downtown Bismarck as a historical district, and the Downtown Bismarck Historic District was formally designated on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

Attractive natural features are also present in some of the blocks, particularly the County Courthouse and Camp Hancock landscaped areas. It is the intent of the Development Plan to promote the growth and redevelopment of the downtown area through, among other strategies, the preservation and improvement of such assets.

available public data. Properties that are verified as no longer owner-occupied will be removed from the Renaissance Zone program. Staff will also work with the Burleigh County Auditor in such situations where a completed project becomes delinquent on taxes after approval.

Staff will verify pre-existing tax clearance at the time of application, in compliance with NDCC § 54-35-26, through several means. Income tax clearance will be verified through a Certificate of Good Standing form obtained from the State Tax Commissioners Office. Property tax clearance will be verified through self-disclosure by the applicant. Additionally, staff will verify that all properties owned by the applicant in Burleigh County are not tax delinquent, and staff will take appropriate action should staff be made aware of tax delinquencies from other political subdivisions.

c. City of Bismarck Board of City Commissioners

The Board of City Commissioners retains ultimate authority over local administration of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone program. All projects recommended for approval by the Renaissance Zone Authority are presented to the Board of City Commissioners for final action. The Board of City Commissioners also reviews and takes final action on any revisions to this Development Plan.

4. Promotion and Marketing of the Renaissance Zone Program

Promotion and marketing of the Renaissance Zone program is an important part of implementing the Development Plan and sustaining the program. Promotion efforts will be coordinated between the Community Development Department – Planning Division, members of the Renaissance Zone Authority, The Downtown Business Association, property owners, developers, commercial realtors and other business organizations.

At least once each year, all political subdivisions that have issued letters of support for the Renaissance Zone program will be briefed on the current status of the program and given the opportunity to ask any questions, either during a regular board meeting or a joint meeting with representation from each board.

The Renaissance Zone program is promoted through the following additional methods:

- An active page on the City of Bismarck website that includes updated and relevant information regarding the program.
- The availability of an information guide that provides a more concise description of the requirements and review process outlined in the Development Plan.
- Presentations to civic and professional groups with an interest in the Renaissance Zone program.

- Preparation of data and analysis of the costs and benefits of the Renaissance Zone program upon request.
- Periodic mailings to properties within the Renaissance Zone area or areas considered for possible expansion of the Renaissance Zone.

It is important to note that the City of Bismarck is a partner in promoting the Renaissance Zone Program, but not to the extent that the City's efforts will supplant the responsibility of property owners and developers to create and promote projects.

5. Potential Future Renaissance Zone Program Revisions

The state enabling legislation for Renaissance Zone programs includes certain features that the City of Bismarck has opted not to exercise at this time. The Renaissance Zone Authority may take advantage of these options through future revisions to this Development Plan.

a. Modifications of Renaissance Zone Boundaries

The City of Bismarck does not currently utilize all blocks available by state law. According to the ~~2017-2020~~ U.S Census Estimate, the population of the City of Bismarck is ~~72,865~~ 73,622. A city of this population is allotted 47 blocks (34 blocks plus 1 block per additional 5,000 population). The City of Bismarck Renaissance Zone boundary currently utilizes ~~42.5~~ 41.5 blocks, with a remaining ~~4.5~~ 5.5 blocks available.

If sufficient interest from property owners and businesses becomes evident, the Renaissance Zone Authority may consider a future expansion of the boundary. State law allows up to three blocks of a Renaissance Zone to be non-contiguous with the rest of the Renaissance Zone. At this time, the Renaissance Zone Authority has chosen not to utilize this option, although may choose to in the future.

The Renaissance Zone Authority wishes to plan future boundary modifications, whether the addition of new blocks into the Zone or the completion of certain blocks within the Zone, well in advance of implementing changes, allowing property owners the ability to consider potential improvements to their property within a known timeframe.

The Renaissance Zone Authority will review a boundary modification plan at least annually. Blocks within the future expansion or completion areas will be considered for action, and future areas will be adjusted accordingly. All changes to the boundaries will be approved by the City Commission in the form of a revision to the Renaissance Zone Development Plan.

Establishing boundaries well in advance of prospective development is essential to the effectiveness of the program. While the Renaissance Zone Authority may receive

requests from property owners to extend boundaries to support a proposed project, such a request may not be considered as a sole reason for boundary modification.

The following criteria will be used for any expansion:

1. The addition of the block(s) will further the goals and objectives of this Development Plan.
2. The addition of the block(s) will not exceed to total allowable blocks for the Renaissance Zone, either in the core contiguous area or any allowed non-contiguous blocks.
3. The proposed block(s) include evident disinvestment and redevelopment potential, as indicated by building condition, building-to-land-value ratios, rate of change in assessed value, age of buildings, zoning, or other evidence.
4. Sufficient property subject to property tax liability exists or is anticipated to exist within the proposed block(s) to allow utilization of the program
5. Sufficient public infrastructure currently exists, or is underway or planned, to support any envisioned redevelopment.

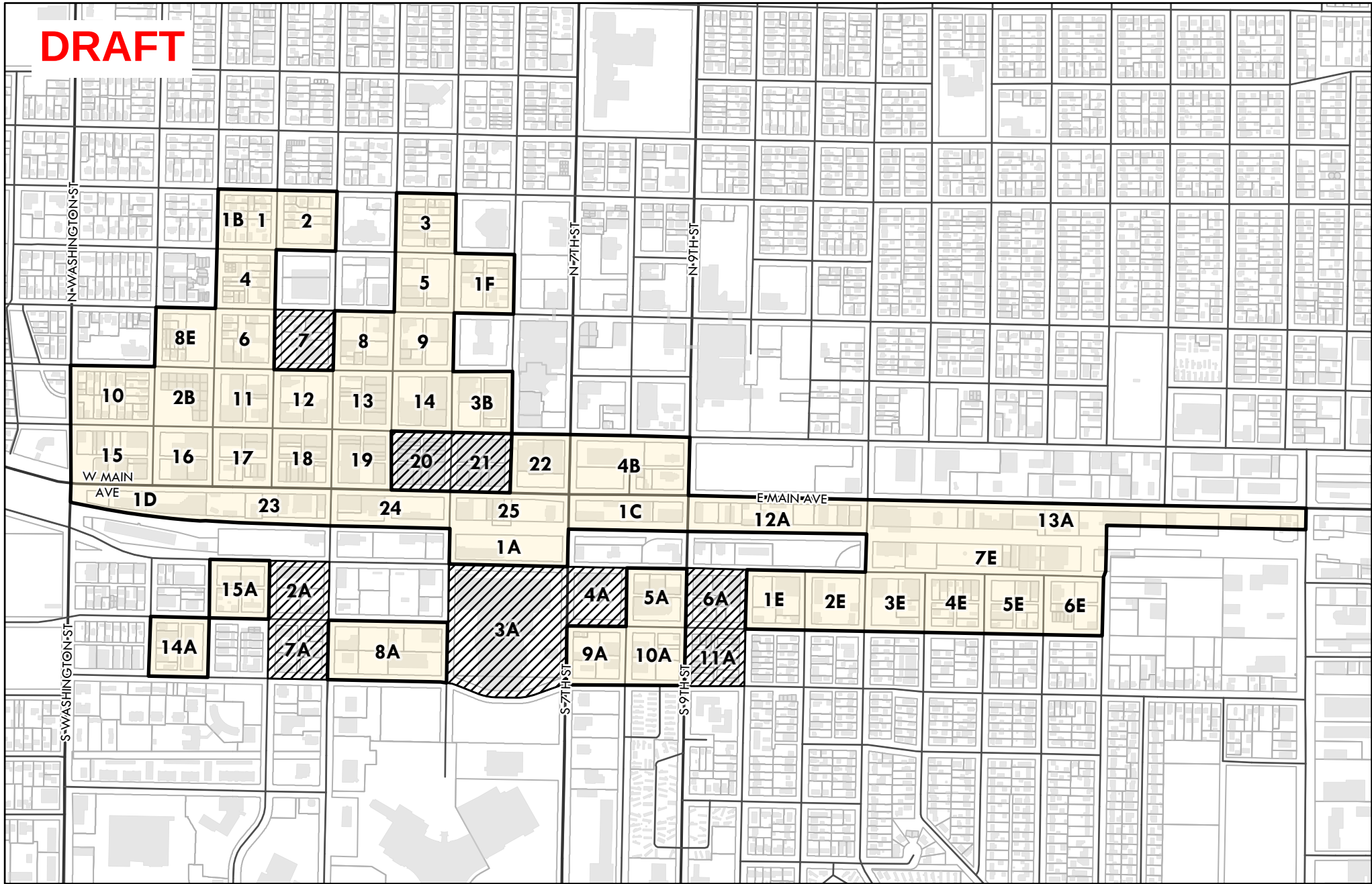
The following criteria will be used for any completions:

1. All owners within the block(s) have been given a one-year written notice of the intent to complete the block and an opportunity to voice any concerns to the Renaissance Zone Authority in a public hearing.
2. The block has been within the Renaissance Zone for at least three years.
- 1.3. A significant portion of the block(s) is either ineligible, due to a previous Renaissance Zone project or current public/non-profit ownership, or has limited property owner interest.

~~The City of Bismarck has, at the present time, elected not to create a Renaissance Fund Organization. The City of Bismarck does, however, reserve the right to create, develop or contract with a Renaissance Fund Organization in the future.~~

Renaissance Zone Program Boundary

DRAFT



City of Bismarck
Community Development Dept. - Planning Division

 Renaissance Zone
 Completed Blocks

This map is for representational use only and does not represent a survey. No liability is assumed as to the accuracy of the data delineated hereon.

0 305 610 1,220 Feet

May 3, 2022

