

# City of Moorhead, Minnesota

## Community Background

### HISTORY

Moorhead was founded in 1871 and was named after William G. Moorhead (1811-1895), a director of the Northern Pacific Railway. The railway provided the stimulus for economic and population growth in the Moorhead area. Individuals moved west to take advantage of the Homestead Act, through which they were given acreage of property in exchange for farming the land and making their home in the area.

The Red River of the North served as a transfer point for goods and passengers between the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Goods were hauled by oxcart from St. Cloud, Minnesota, to Moorhead, then loaded onto riverboats for the journey north on the Red River.

Moorhead was officially incorporated in 1881, and later that same decade added electric, water, sewer, fire and police services. That's also when Moorhead developed a reputation as "Sin City," with more than 100 bars at a time when neighboring Fargo, ND did not allow the sale of alcohol.

Today, Moorhead is still considered a transcontinental crossing. Interstates I-94 and I-29 intersect just west of the city limits. While distribution and transfer industries remain a vital part of our business environment, education and service industries have played an increasingly important role.

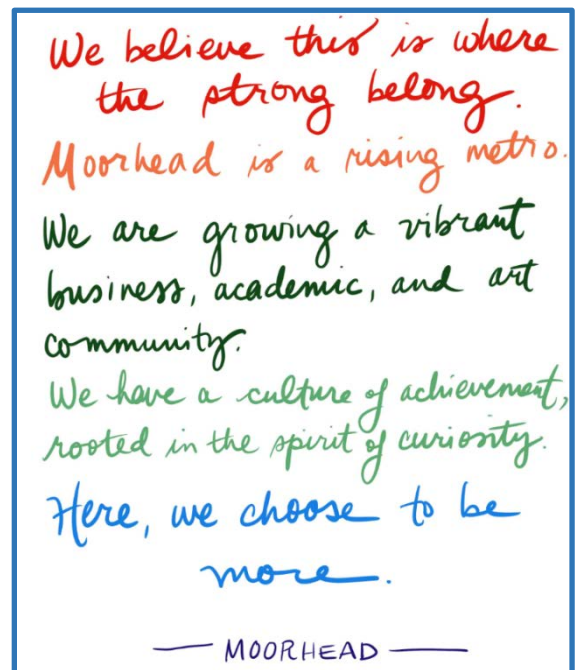
### GEOGRAPHY

Moorhead is located in Clay County and is the largest city in northwest Minnesota. Situated in the Red River Valley, Moorhead is part of a rich agricultural region that was created from silt deposits leftover when glacial Lake Agassiz melted approximately 10,000 years ago. The city borders the Red River of the North, which flows northward into Manitoba, Canada and empties into Lake Winnipeg. The Red River forms the border between Minnesota and North Dakota.

### AREA POPULATION & GROWTH

Moorhead is a growing community. According to U.S. Census Bureau, Moorhead has a population of 43,349 residents (2018), an increase of 9.9% from the 2010 Census. Moorhead is part of a metropolitan area that includes the cities of Dilworth, Minnesota and Fargo, West Fargo and Horace, North Dakota. The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area has a population of over 240,000 residents.

Continued growth in Moorhead is expected for decades to come. The 2045 population estimate for the city is 61,420. As the City looks to accommodate future growth, multiple growth areas have been identified to the North, East, Southeast and Southwest.



Sources:

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/moorheadcityminnesota,US/PST045218>

[http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/9815/4232/0448/MetroProfile\\_2018\\_adopted11152018.pdf](http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/9815/4232/0448/MetroProfile_2018_adopted11152018.pdf)

[http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/1515/3488/7055/Demographic\\_Forecast\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/1515/3488/7055/Demographic_Forecast_Summary.pdf)

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Moorhead is a youthful community with a median age of 29.7 years of age and median household income (in 2017 dollars) is \$56,516. Moorhead's population is well educated with 95% of residents having a high school diploma and 37.4% having a bachelor's degree.

Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/moorheadcityminnesota,US/PST045218>

## **INSTITUTIONS**

Education is important to Moorhead with its exemplary public and private K-12 schools and four major institutions of higher education: Minnesota State University, Moorhead, Concordia College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College and Rasmussen College.

Moorhead is the county seat of Clay County with the courthouse, law enforcement center and jail, public works operations center and family services center all located within the city.

## **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS**

US Highway 10 and US Highway 75 intersect in Moorhead, as well as Interstate Highway 94, which intersects Interstate Highway 29 in neighboring Fargo, ND.

Moorhead and neighboring Dilworth's transit system has an inventory of nine 35-foot buses and four cutaway buses providing 451,934 rides on fixed routes, 10,673 paratransit rides and 10,907 senior rides in 2017.

Source: [http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/9815/4232/0448/MetroProfile\\_2018\\_adopted11152018.pdf](http://www.fmmetrocog.org/application/files/9815/4232/0448/MetroProfile_2018_adopted11152018.pdf)

Moorhead is also served by rail service by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway with supporting service by Otter Tail Valley Railroad (OTVR). Amtrak's Empire Builder has a stop in Fargo, providing passenger service connecting Chicago and Seattle.

Moorhead also has a general aviation airport with a 4,300-foot long runway staffed with maintenance and fuel offerings. Commercial air services are available at Hector International Airport in Fargo.

## **ECONOMY**

Agriculture remains prominent in the area, but Moorhead is also home to notable corporate, manufacturing and distribution industries. The unemployment rate is consistently below the national average and property values are stable. The Fargo-Moorhead area offers a quality of life that is much more affordable than other areas of the state and country.

Notable Moorhead employers include:

- American Crystal Sugar
- Busch Agricultural Resources
- Eventide Senior Living
- Moorhead Area Public Schools
- Hornbacher's Foods
- RDO Equipment Co.
- Scheels



## COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Moorhead has over 45 different community, neighborhood and regional parks, miles of trails and sidewalks for walking, biking, cross-country skiing and more, plus facilities for entertainment, athletics, education, arts and culture, and other recreational activities.

Moorhead is also home to unique facilities – including the Hjemkomst Center, Rourke Art Museum, and Bluestem Center for the Arts.

Moorhead is unique in that it provides the feeling of a small town, with the amenities of a large community. Moorhead is a safe community with community pride and a community that loves to be called “your hometown.”

## GUIDING DOCUMENTS

In its preparation for the comprehensive planning process, City staff has researched and identified other plans from which it would like to model. The City recommends applicants view these guiding documents for tone, organization, presentation, engagement and implementation.

1. City of Austin, Texas, “[Imagine Austin](#)” – organization, consensus-focus, accessible, inclusive, implementation
2. City of St. Cloud, Minnesota, “[Comprehensive Plan](#)” – vision, accessible, implementation
3. City of Cincinnati, Ohio, “[Plan Cincinnati](#)” – organization, inclusiveness
4. City of West Fargo, North Dakota, “[West Fargo 2.0: Redefining Tomorrow](#)” – tone, accessible, organization
5. “[Community Tool Box](#)” – helpful organizational tools

## RELEVANT EXISTING MOORHEAD PLANS

1. [2004 Moorhead Comprehensive Plan](#)
2. [2009 Update - Moorhead Comprehensive Plan](#)
3. [2016 Growth Area Plans](#)
4. [Alternative Urban Area Reviews \(AUARs\)](#)
5. [Moorhead Transportation Improvement Program](#)
6. [River Corridor Master Plan](#)
7. [Art & Culture Framework Plan](#)
8. [2001 Clay County Comprehensive Plan](#)
9. [Fargo-Moorhead Metro COG Plans](#)
10. [2018 Development Report](#)
11. [2015-2016 Regional Workforce Study](#)
12. [2014 Industrial Park Positioning Strategy](#)
13. 2017 Housing Study (available upon request)
14. Downtown Plan – currently underway