



SUBSCRIBERS ONLY NEWS FARGO

## Fargo city planners give go-ahead to previously denied development near Reile's Acres

A Fargo developer has long hoped to build a business district in empty lots west of I-29 in far north Fargo. Residents of the adjacent Reile's Acres have opposed the project from the beginning.



A residential area is pictured directly across from land that may be developed for industrial use on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, at 4753 45th St. N., Fargo. Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

**By Melissa Van Der Stad**

February 09, 2024 at 10:19 AM

[Comments](#)[Share](#)[News reporting](#)**You've unlocked a premium story.**

This is a premium story that's only available to subscribers like you. Thank you for your support of this important work.

**FARGO** — After being denied by the Fargo City Commission last year, one developer has brought a revised project in far north Fargo back to the table in hopes of an approval from the city on this go-round.

Developer Trent Duda's goal since last summer has been to build a business district at 4753 45th St. N. and 4269 40th Ave. N., empty lots along the west side of Interstate 29 near Fargo's northernmost city limits. The project would shift the current residential lots into commercial and limited industrial lots

Residents of the adjacent Prairie Estates — a extra-territorial jurisdiction neighborhood of the city of Reile's Acres — have opposed the plan from the start, citing health concerns from the future businesses and the project's impacts on home values.

The proposed development, on the northern end of Fargo's city limits, abuts the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the city of Reile's Acres. Troy Becker/ The Forum

Last year, the project was met with fluctuating support from both the city commission and the Fargo Planning Commission before city leaders [ultimately denied the project in September, \(https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/saga-over-controversial-development-near-reiles-acres-ends-after-fargo-denies-project\)](https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/saga-over-controversial-development-near-reiles-acres-ends-after-fargo-denies-project) largely due to concerns from the neighbors.

After waiting the required 90 days after the denial, Duda [resubmitted the project for consideration in January, \(https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/contested-fargo-project-back-on-the-table-as-residents-developer-clash-over-solutions\)](https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/contested-fargo-project-back-on-the-table-as-residents-developer-clash-over-solutions) with changes intended to appease the residents and win city leaders' support.

Despite persistent pushback once again, the planning commission on Tuesday, Feb. 6, found the changes sufficient and unanimously voted to approve the project, sending the recommended action to the full city commission for a final decision.

#### READ MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT'S PATH:

**Contested Fargo project back on the table as residents, developer clash over solutions**  
(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/contested-fargo-project-back-on-the-table-as-residents-developer-clash-over-solutions>)

Jan 19

(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/contested-fargo-project-back-on-the-table-as-residents-developer-clash-over-solutions>)

**Saga over controversial development near Reile's Acres ends after Fargo denies project**  
(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/saga-over-controversial-development-near-reiles-acres-ends-after-fargo-denies-project>)

Sep 21, 2023

(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/saga-over-controversial-development-near-reiles-acres-ends-after-fargo-denies-project>)

**Fargo sends controversial development proposal near Reile's Acres back to city planners**  
(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/fargo-sends-controversial-development-proposal-near-reiles-acres-back-to-planning-commission>)

Jul 10, 2023

(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/fargo-sends-controversial-development-proposal-near-reiles-acres-back-to-planning-commission>)

to-  
planning-  
commissio  
n)

## 'I listened to the neighbors'

Duda told the city planners that he's made some big compromises on the project since it was first brought forward.

"I listened to the neighbors," he said.

The Fargo developer removed the [contested concrete crushing operation](https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/small-community-seeks-fargos-help-in-plea-to-reject-proposed-concrete-crushing-plant)(<https://www.inforum.com/news/fargo/small-community-seeks-fargos-help-in-plea-to-reject-proposed-concrete-crushing-plant>) and shifted some of the planned limited industrial lots to just general commercial lots. The move created a general commercial buffer between the limited industrial lots and the adjacent residential lots.

Trent Duda, center, a developer, discusses the proposed Interstate Business District Addition subdivision in north Fargo at Fargo City Hall on Jan. 18, 2023. Chris Flynn / The Forum

"We are not asking for anything out of the norm," Duda said, noting that city planning staff has supported the project since the beginning.

Realtor Tom Nelson at Swan Real Estate said developing the area will bring many benefits to the community. The project will increase the property and sales tax base, bring additional job development and could attract new industries and technology companies that are looking for commercial areas along major highways, Nelson added.

"The area is on the grow," Nelson said. "It's going to change the dynamic of the area, just as south Fargo's dynamic has changed over the last 20 years."

## 'Be a good neighbor'



Residents of Prairie Estates who oppose the plan remain firm that they don't want limited industrial buildings near their houses. Homeowners said they are concerned about noise, traffic, dust, health hazards and diminished property values.

"We do not want any type of limited industrial (developments)," resident Paula Peterson said.

The proposed changes aren't enough to address their concerns, she added. At the end of the day, limited industrial zoning should not be this close to residential properties, she said.

The proposed buffers will take years to establish, Peterson continued, and there is no way of knowing yet what businesses will move in to the currently vacant lot next to residential properties.

Paula Peterson voices her concerns about a proposed Interstate Business District Addition subdivision at Fargo City Hall on Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024. Chris Flynn / The Forum

"This is what we're fighting for," she said. "Properties that have been there for over 50 years."

Peterson called on the city of Fargo to "be a good neighbor" and move the development to the east of I-29.

Some planning commissioners during Tuesday's meeting pushed back against residents, noting the neighborhood already has several businesses in operation mixed within the residential developments.

"Have home values and the feel of the neighborhood declined due to those businesses?" Commissioner John Gunkelman probed protesting residents.

According to Google Maps, a decoy manufacturing business and a construction company are positioned within the neighborhood.

"Doesn't that kind of undercut the argument a little bit?" asked Commissioner Scott Stofferahn, noting Duda's proposed development would not be more impactful than the existing businesses.

Peterson said there was nothing that the residents could do about those existing businesses, but said Duda's development was going to be a larger concentration of businesses.

A residential area is pictured on the left directly across from land that may be developed for commercial and limited industrial use on Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, at 4753 45th St. N., Fargo. Alyssa Goelzer/The Forum

## **'I'm for it 100%'**

While residents voiced opposition, the recent application saw two Prairie Estates residents speak in support of the project. Previously, every resident who spoke at a public meeting about the project firmly opposed the idea.

Jeff Odden said he lives on a lot that is one of the closet properties to the proposed development.

Given the location of the vacant land — adjacent to a busy highway near Fargo — he'd always assumed it would eventually be zoned for commercial or limited industrial use.

He's worked in body shops his whole life, Odden added, and always worked near residential homes. "I think it's normal and I think the proposition here is normal and appropriate," Odden said.

Regarding the concern over health impacts, Odden said he felt living adjacent to a busy highway brings a bigger set of health risks than limited industrial businesses.

---

**READ MORE TOP NEWS**



Likewise, Denis Oye, a resident of Reile's Acres, wasn't concerned about the health risks.

"I was in the crushing and screening business with my dad since I was 3 years old and I'm 67," he said. "I feel pretty good."

Oye currently works in asphalt paving, he said, and supports the new development near his home.

"I don't think anything is wrong with what Trent (Duda) wants to do," Oye said. "I'm for it 100%."

City Planning Coordinator Donald Kress told The Forum that he anticipates that the project will come before the full City Commission for a final decision in the spring.

Readers with thoughts about this issue can [write a letter to the editor](https://www.inforum.com/letters-to-the-editor-and-guest-column-guidelines)(<https://www.inforum.com/letters-to-the-editor-and-guest-column-guidelines>) or email Forum reporter Melissa Van Der Stad at [mvanderstad@forumcomm.com](mailto:mvanderstad@forumcomm.com). (<mailto:mvanderstad@forumcomm.com>)

[Comments](#)
[Share](#)
[News reporting](#)
[Tags](#)

By **Melissa Van Der Stad**(<https://www.inforum.com/melissa-van-der-stad>).

Local government reporter working the night shift 🌙  
<https://www.inforum.com/melissa-van-der-stad>

[a-van-der-stad](#)  
**CONVERSATION**  
 Loading...

