

**Office of Gov. Mike Rounds**

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**Public Higher Education Looks to the Future in Sioux Falls**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – Gov. Mike Rounds says he will ask the 2006 Legislature to approve acquiring land in northwest Sioux Falls to create a permanent location for the state’s public university system. The governor, joined by members of the South Dakota Board of Regents, announced Tuesday he will also ask legislators to appropriate \$8 million for construction of an instructional classroom building at the new site.

“The bottom line is public higher education is critical to Sioux Falls and South Dakota’s long-term future. A strong Sioux Falls economy benefits all of South Dakota,” Rounds said. “But to plan for that future, public higher education in Sioux Falls must have permanent space to grow to meet these needs.”

The public university system currently leases space in parts of two buildings on the Southeast Technical Institute campus. “That space already is at capacity and allows us no room for further expansion,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett. Jewett said state transportation department property adjacent to Interstate 29 and a mile south of I-90 provides approximately 210 acres of usable land for the incremental growth and development of facilities needed to meet Sioux Falls’ needs well into the future.

Pointing out that Sioux Falls is estimated to grow to more than 300,000 people by 2040, with another 60,000 in the four-county metropolitan area, the governor said he is concerned to hear that only 20 percent of the city’s adult population has a college degree. “In order to grow our economy, which will be based on innovation and new knowledge development, we must provide a lot more access to higher education,” Rounds said.

Rounds said his vision of South Dakota as a leader in research and technology development also demands a greater presence for public higher education in the state’s largest city.

Jewett said the Great Plains Education Foundation Inc. has agreed to provide the Board of Regents with \$5.8 million to acquire the DOT property at market value, but legislative approval is needed to complete the transaction. Jewett said the location near two interstate highways is ideal for commuter students, and public infrastructure services are readily available. “More importantly, the city of Sioux Falls and this community’s leaders support the plan, which should accommodate growth and related development for the next century or more,” Jewett said.

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Jewett stressed that the location would not become a separate accredited university. It will continue as an instructional site for public higher education, offering courses, degrees and programs from the six existing public universities in the state's system.

Dave Link, Chair of the Forward Sioux Falls Technology Committee and the South Dakota Technology Business Center, said the announcement is exciting news for Sioux Falls. He said the community is already moving forward to start construction later this year on a new center for graduate education and applied research. "It makes perfect sense to locate that center along with other public university facilities, so that we can coordinate all activities in one location and make the most efficient use of our resources," Link said.

# South Dakota Public Universities



Sioux Falls



North



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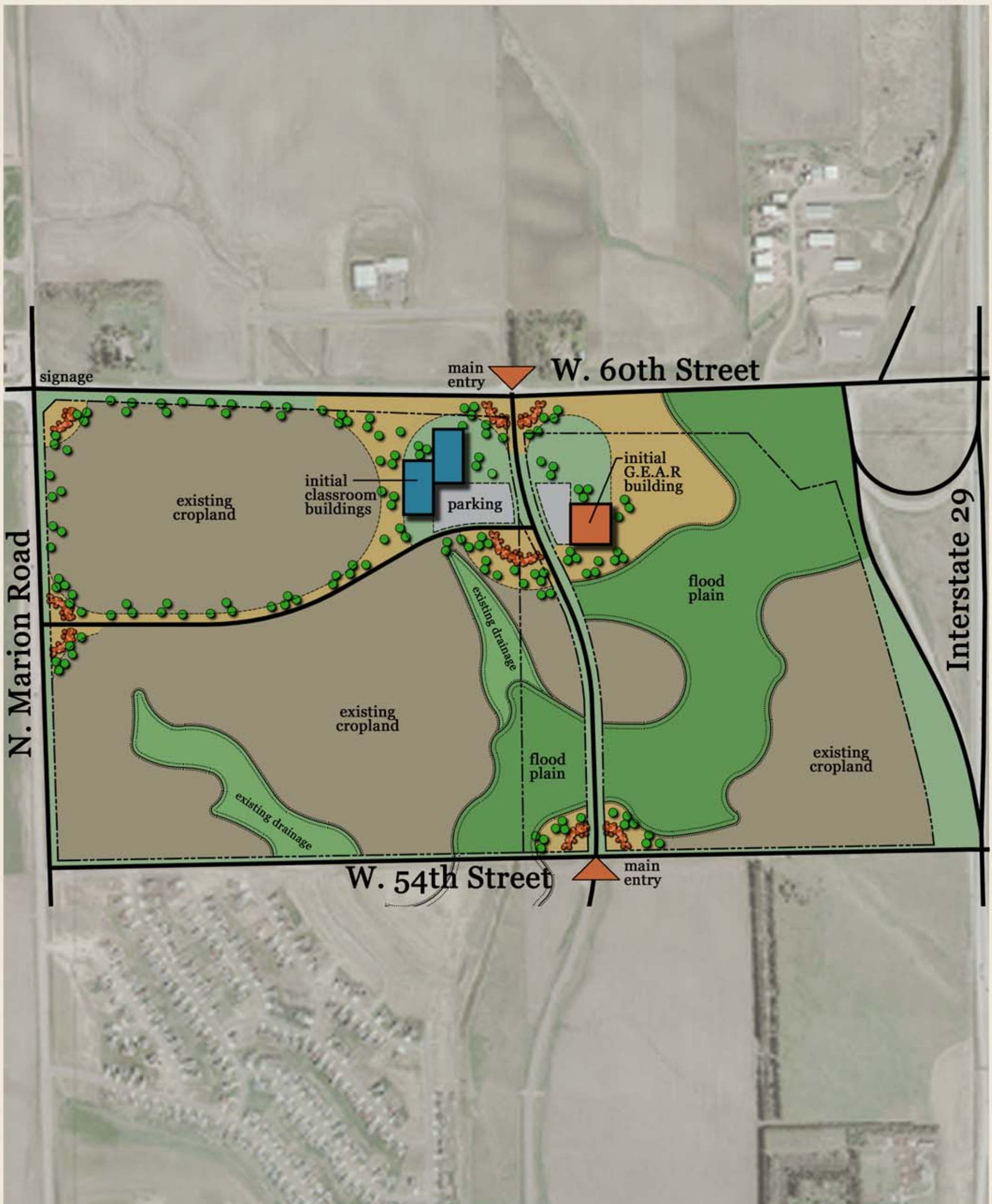


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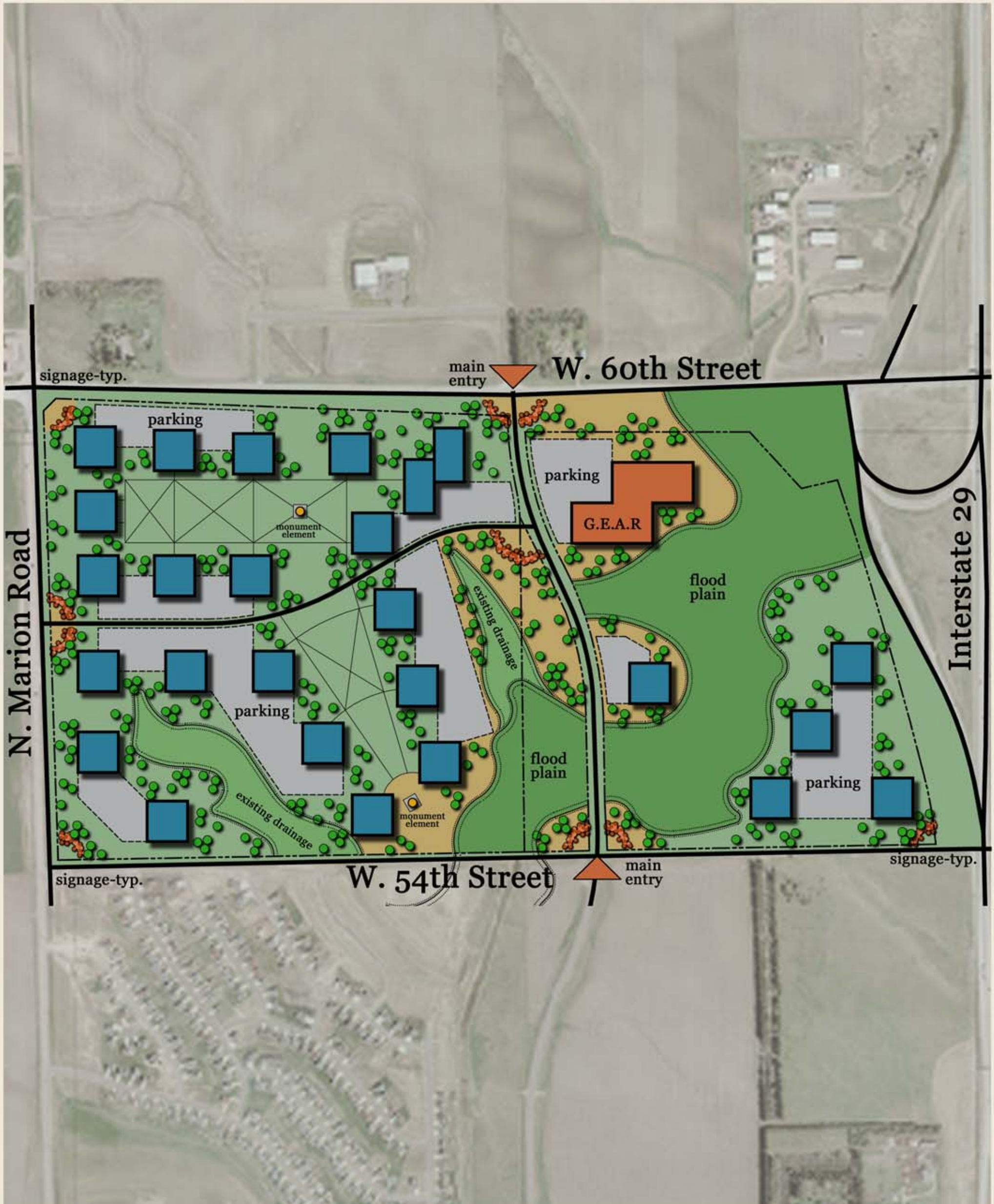


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