Cities along the Red River of the North such as Fargo, Grand Forks and East Grand Forks have been building riverbank dikes for decades. These walls of concrete, clay and sod are designed to hold back the rising waters of the Red River during floods and function as a main defense.

Access points to parks and roadways along the river are filled in with compacted clay and topped off with sandbags to match the freeboard height.

Water seepage through the dike is possible if the dike is in poor condition or not built properly.

Earthen dike
A 3-1 width-to-height ratio in dike construction creates a maintainable slope. The tops of earthen dikes are flat and about 10 feet across to accommodate equipment and additional sandbags.

Flood walls
Concrete walls are constructed where space is limited. They're costly, hide the river view and cannot be raised.

“Invisible” flood walls
During a flood, a temporary wall spans 870 feet across a two-block plaza and walkway area facing the river in East Grand Forks. The walls are assembled between supports with hollow aluminum planks and rubber seals. The planks are designed to fill with water to add weight and stability to the flood wall.

Sources: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Floun and Sanders Engineering, Grand Forks and East Grand Forks city engineers and the Grand Forks Public Information Office

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