

Comprehensive Policy Plan
"Living Spaces"

Policy Letter 205: Discourage Leapfrog Development

BACKGROUND:

Leapfrog development means development that occurs beyond the existing limits of urban development and thus leaves intervening vacant land behind. This bypassing of the next-in-line lands at the urban fringe results in the shotgun pattern of urbanization known as "sprawl". Urban sprawl is the result of haphazard growth that spreads out in a straggling and disordered manner. Leapfrog development can be costly to the City and many times limits orderly development and creates adjacent land uses that are not compatible.

Coordination for providing public facilities and services to public or private entities is key in the process of discouraging leapfrog development. Developments with requirements beyond existing levels of facilities and services should not be allowed to develop until such services can be provided and maintained. The City of Fargo should site and schedule essential public facilities as required, but enforcement of the comprehensive plan policies and development regulations is needed to ensure reasonable compatibility with other land uses.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Fargo should encourage new development or redevelopment in established areas where vacant land is appropriate for facilities and services, and where protection of an existing neighborhood can be ensured. Public facilities and utilities should be located to maximize the efficiency of services provided; minimize the costs; and minimize their impacts upon the natural environment.

CONCLUSION:

Leapfrog development is evidenced by patchy development on the outskirts of the community and numerous overlooked vacant parcels within Fargo. One of the most strategic ways to limit leapfrog development is to identify and utilize existing vacant land with full services. Establishing an inventory of vacant land with information on key parameters such as allowable uses, ownership, and public facilities would be instrumental in the success of efforts to prohibit leapfrog development.