Comprehensive Policy Plan
"Living Spaces"

Policy Letter 210: **Improve Housing (Building) Stock**

BACKGROUND:
In order to maintain the structural integrity, safety, and appearance of existing residential structures in the city, we must recognize that proactive programs to regulate and control use, occupancy, location and maintenance may be required. The type of systems or programs best suited for improving housing (building) stock should be established by home owners, but the actual policing or enforcing of these improvement standards must be done by the City.

Three areas critical to this process of improving housing (building) stock are: 1) Building Codes; 2) Limiting Conversions to Multifamily Residence; and 3) Neighborhood Upgrade. Possibly the best approach to enforcing building codes, in respect to rental property, is through inspecting dwellings at the time of sale or change of occupancy, and through voluntary cooperation by multifamily property owners. In limiting conversions to multifamily residence, guidelines must be provided that identify the maximum allowable density for people, square footage for parking and green space, design standards and also what conversions might be inappropriate based on the predominant use of single and multifamily dwellings in the neighborhood. Lastly, neighborhood upgrade has prohibitive costs that need to be addressed through the creative use of reutilization or rehabilitation funds.

POLICY STATEMENT:
The City of Fargo should identify areas of diminishing condition and target those areas with more aggressive programs in building code enforcement, standards limiting multifamily residence conversions, and neighborhood upgrades. If necessary, the City should acquire the property either for City or for private redevelopment to encourage protection of established residential neighborhoods.

CONCLUSION:
Having adequate shelter, a home of one's own, rental or owned, is probably the largest contributor of a family's self-respect and community identity. By regulating use or care of a home, the owner may perceive this as a negative impact. It is not the intent of this policy to cause financial hardship for the owners of property or to cause the rental price of homes in Fargo to rise and become less affordable. The key to protecting the housing stock in established residential neighborhoods is to get owners involved in discussing their concerns over regulated uses and to invite their participation from the beginning.