

Comprehensive Policy Plan
"Living Spaces"

Policy Letter 216: Minimum Green Space Standards

BACKGROUND:

The perception of residents in Fargo is that current land use development standards for lot size in high density residential areas is not appropriate. R-3 zoning is the zoning district which allows residential development of buildings with more than eight units per building. R-3 zoning has minimum standards for the required size of the side yard, rear yard, front yard depth, lot area, lot width, and the lot coverage by the building. Even with these zoning standards, apartment buildings can be developed to standard and still not provide a significant amount of green space for its tenants.

Factors other than just the square footage of green space must be considered in the attempt to establish minimum standards. Not all green space should be identified as usable green space. Front or side lots with plantings or structures would not typically be used by the tenants. Another example could be low-lying terrain that may be consistently moist; or rough, uneven terrain that is difficult to walk on. Also, in fairness to developers, they should receive development credit for usable space when they provide courts, pools or other usable public spaces. Efforts by the developers to be responsive to the needs of the tenants is important, but more consideration for providing an appropriate standard for usable green space is a priority.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Fargo should establish appropriate standards for land use development as it relates to usable green space for all residential zoned properties and residential Planned Unit Developments.

CONCLUSION:

Affordable housing in Fargo is important to everyone involved in the land use development process. But the perception is that standards must be raised for the well being of residents in Fargo. The solution to addressing an appropriate standard is possible through coordinated efforts of land speculators, developers, builders and owners or managers. Citizens of Fargo should continue to have a high quality place to live, with reasonable amenities, and at an affordable price.