Comprehensive Policy Plan
"Living Spaces"

Policy Letter 220: **Apartment Complex Scale**

BACKGROUND:
Multiple family dwelling units, which include apartments, duplexes, and condominiums, are the answer to affordable housing for many local residents. In the effort to keep development costs low, buildings, and specifically apartments, have grown in scale to typically 200 feet or more in length and three stories high. The zoning regulations for multiple family dwellings (R-3) have no height limitations, and only minimal requirements for lot area required and side, rear, and front yards.

Apartments built into neighborhoods, or developed on R-3 zoned land when no adjacent structures exist, should be designed to scale, or the anticipated scale of future development. Equally important in design as the height and width of the apartments is the concentration of buildings on relatively minimal land areas. An example of large scale apartment complexes that are perceived to be out of scale, are the multiple family dwellings that are adjacent to single family dwellings on the West Fargo side of the Fargo City limits.

As discussed earlier in the Comprehensive Policy Plan, Living Spaces Committee, Good Neighbor Rules, or design standards and performance zoning, are needed to protect the interest of all parties, both the developers and the residents.

POLICY STATEMENT:
The City of Fargo should adopt design and performance standards in the zoning ordinance to ensure that housing developments of different scale and type will be compatible with adjacent land uses and the overall character of the neighborhood.

CONCLUSION:
It is difficult to define, but the concentrating of large scale, high density apartment buildings is a means to invite potential land use problems in the future. Design standards that allow appropriate distance between structures, require substantial tree plantings and incorporate design features that create a neighborhood atmosphere are critical. The idea of Good Neighbor Rules must play an equal role in multiple family dwellings as well as in other residential areas of Fargo.

* See also Policy 211