

Comprehensive Policy Plan  
"Utilities"

Policy Letter 502: Storm Water Retention Standards

**BACKGROUND:**

The collection, transport, and disposal of storm water is normally handled by a system of storm sewers. Storm sewers can convey storm water by a closed system of interconnected pipes, open systems of drainage, or as in Fargo, a combination of the two. As more development occurs, trees and vegetation are removed and the ground surface is covered with buildings, pavement and other surfaces, storm water increases. So, as growth occurs, storm drainage systems become more important.

No storm water utility fee is charged in the City of Fargo. Depending on the type of development, land uses vary in the amount of storm water that is absorbed into the ground or runs off. As a general rule of thumb, agricultural land has a 20% runoff, residential land has a 40% runoff, commercial or industrial land has a 60% runoff, and of course, paved areas have 100% runoff.

City engineers are developing storm water regulations and are looking at a storm water utility. Development throughout Fargo utilizes retention ponds. These retention ponds may be parks, natural areas, lakes, or other land uses. Retention ponds hold or retain the storm water until the storm sewers can move the storm water to the Red River or until the water is absorbed into the ground.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

The City of Fargo should adopt storm water regulations that identify allowable discharge levels and storm water retention standards as they relate to the various land uses.

**CONCLUSION:**

Storm water management must include standards for retention plus deal with new federal storm water regulations. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a process to file a Storm Water Management Plan. This plan has standards to evaluate the quality of storm water runoff, and through the guidelines of the plan may direct the City to manage pollutants in the water.

The City of Fargo will continue to design storm sewers and storm water retention ponds that are able to accommodate 100% of the development with discharges very similar to zero development. But equally, developers should share some of the storm water management responsibilities as these responsibilities develop.