

Comprehensive Policy Plan
"Utilities"

Policy Letter 504: Floodplain Management

BACKGROUND:

The flat nature of the terrain and slow permeability of the soil in Fargo make it susceptible to flooding. Equally, the Red River Valley area is susceptible to long and extensive flooding during the spring snow melt and after periods of heavy rain.

The floodplain is described as the land area that could be covered by a flood on an average of once every 100 years. As you move closer to the Red River and the elevation of the land decreases, you may now be talking about a 10-year floodplain or even the floodway. Management of the floodplain is a land use development function. As Fargo develops, some of the new developments are built into the 100-year floodplain which subsequently modifies the floodplain. Typically, this development in the floodplain contains habitable basements. The federal government's willingness to insure such space appears to be changing.

Drainage and storm water runoff patterns have also been modified in the floodplain, due in many cases to the current land use development practices. As land use development continues to modify the 100-year floodplain, a critical review and analysis of the floodplain is needed to ensure public health and safety.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Fargo, in cooperation with other governmental entities, should conduct a review of drainage, flooding, and storm water runoff in Fargo and nearby jurisdictions. Floodplain management guidance should be provided for any corrective actions required.

CONCLUSION:

Even if this review of drainage, flooding, and storm water runoff reveals that there is no threat to public health or safety, the residents of Fargo should have an understanding of any potential for loss or damage of public and private property due to development in the floodplain.

Citizens of Fargo have experienced increased storm water flooding. Storm water runoff appears to have increased to a level that may require a utility fee for land use development when retention standards are not achievable. The concern of residents is that floodplain management needs to be reviewed and any corrective actions that may be required are implemented.