

Comprehensive Policy Plan
"Working Spaces"

Policy Letter 114: Beautification Standards for Downtown

BACKGROUND:

The quality of downtown's physical appearance, its streets, buildings, and open spaces, also plays a critical role in establishing a positive identity for the City of Fargo. Fargo's downtown area has qualities of scale and historic character that provide an environment that attracts people and should be preserved and enhanced in the process of development and redevelopment.

Standards for beautification are needed to minimize the negative impacts on aesthetics that occur during development. Exposed open walls or alleys will many times be left unimproved for extended periods of times, and distract from the qualities of adjacent property. Master planning of the downtown area should be encouraged to address issues of landscaping, tree planting and burial of power/telephone lines so that over the next 10 - 20 years they could be addressed gradually. In establishing both the beautification standards and a plan for downtown area development, a vision or image of what aesthetic issues are most important can be identified to guide future public decision making in the downtown area.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Fargo should insist upon a positive image both aesthetically and functionally on public and private development and redevelopment in the downtown area through proper design of landscaping, tree planting, parking, architecture, street furniture, and signage. Standards should be adopted in a development plan that is compatible with the historic image of this area.

CONCLUSION:

To become more marketable as a development location, downtown must have a positive identity and be a pleasant setting for people. Possibly the Downtown Business Association (DBA), the Plains Art Gallery, and the Fargo Architects could take a role by talking to their members and maybe doing an evaluation of the aesthetic values of the downtown. Aesthetic standards for the downtown, along with some sort of review process to promote the standards are needed in ensuring the unique and special characteristics of Fargo's downtown area are preserved and enhanced.