Chapter Two
Goals and Objectives for the Growth Plan

One of the purposes of this Growth Plan is to establish a framework for development. This framework identifies those characteristics of a newly developing area that must weave it's way through the entire growth area in order to provide continuity and establish a noticeable, consistent image for the City of Fargo. This framework involves an understanding of the characteristics that make Fargo a unique city in a unique natural setting. It also involves the characteristics that give Fargo its feel and its sense of community. The following four goals have been established for the growth plan for Fargo. Each will be explored more fully in the following section and each will help create the framework for future development.

- A livable city with an unmatched quality of life
- A city respectful of its unique place in the natural world and in history
- A city where beauty and efficiency are both paramount
- A city whose essence is community

Livability and the Quality of Life

Most of the characteristics that we associate with livable cities and with a high quality of life are not controlled by the physical setting within which we live. However, the quality of life is greatly enhanced or compromised by the physical setting of our cities. The quality of the education system is not directly under the control of city planning but the location of schools, their accessibility to parks, activities, nature, and the health of our neighborhoods has a tremendous impact on the overall quality of the education that our children receive. A well planned city does not guarantee a vibrant local economy but a poorly planned city can make it very difficult to conduct business and to create value. A poorly planned city can make it expensive to conduct business.

A well planned city can significantly enhance many of the characteristics that we associate with livability and quality of life. To enhance livability and the quality of life in the City of Fargo, the growth plan has focused on the following characteristics:

- Create a community that is highly walkable; a place that makes it easy and safe to connect to other people within the city; a place where children can walk to school; a place where it is easy to exercise and recreate regardless of the time of year.
- Adopt the concept of the neighborhood as the quintessential planning unit with the belief that a healthy neighborhood provides a sense of belonging for its residents and gives them a voice in the future of the city. This includes the concept that neighborhoods must be joined together closely to create a vibrant larger city.

- Use smart growth principles to guide development in ways that keep the city as compact as possible thereby limiting the cost of expansive infrastructure and the consumption of energy on a daily basis. Plan for growth that accepts the limitations placed on us by the land and the forces of nature such as blizzards, floods, drainage and water usage. Consider the long term impact of energy usage on the daily expenses of the citizens.
- Good planning connects people together. It creates spaces that allow and encourage civic dialogue, celebration, recreation, and contemplation. Connections are paramount.

Our Natural World and Our History

Another set of goals for the Fargo growth plan is to allow for substantial growth within the city but, to not loose track of the history and the natural setting that have contributed to the quality of life that we enjoy. The flat, agriculturally rich land that we inhabit gives us an awesome perspective of the world, literally. There are few places in the country where the horizon is so predominant and the sky is so big. Fargo definitely has a four season climate. Our cold winters are the stuff of legends in much of the country but are a time of great beauty and clear skies for our citizens. The following goals have directed the creation of this growth plan and should be kept in mind as the city grows:

- Be constantly aware of the beauty and the power of our river system. The natural processes of drainage and flooding are a constant source of constraint for our development and a constant opportunity for recreation and connection to nature.
- Our agricultural heritage should always guide us as we move into a new future. The qualities of the prairie are the qualities we should value in the city; vistas, the balance with nature, and the apparent simplicity underlying diversity and complexity.
- Constantly keep in mind that we live in an area with four distinct and often extreme seasons. The opportunities that we provide for ourselves must be available throughout the year.
- As we grow, keep in mind the architectural and landscape heritage that has come before. The qualities that exist in the historic structures and in the mature landscapes of the city are keys to its continued vitality and livability.

Beauty and Efficiency

It is important for our city to support our livelihoods and make it as easy as possible to conduct fulfilling lives. It is also important for our city to be able to touch our soul with its beauty. Often these two ideals seem to be in conflict with each other. Our goals within the growth plan focus on keeping both ideas in mind as we look to the creation of our future city.

- Make our city as energy efficient as possible. Utilize strategies that limit sprawl and the unnecessary construction and maintenance of utilities and infrastructure. Create individual opportunities for citizens to reduce their own energy usage and pollution creation. Investigate and pursue alternative energy resources that can serve the entire community.
- Create design standards that ensure that development within the growth areas meets the goals and standards established in this growth plan.
- Make sure that art has a significant place in the public realm and in the life of the city.

The Importance of Community

The real reason that we care about planning a city at all is our desire to make sure that we can easily make contact with each other. One of our primary needs as humans is to make contact and connections with other people, to feel that we are important and belong to a group. The development of technology in recent times has increased our ability to contact people throughout the world with ease. This shrinking of the world and our increasing electronic connectedness however does not quite fulfill our needs for community. The following goals become paramount to our vision of the future of Fargo if we are to continue to have a vibrant and engaged community.

- Plan and develop multiple methods of connection for people. Create overlapping systems for pedestrians, transit, and cars that provide for ease of movement and connection within neighborhoods, between neighborhoods, and between cities within the larger community.
- Create opportunities for public gatherings in each and every part of the city. Public space should meet a variety of needs including active recreation, contemplation, civic discourse, debate, and celebration. Work to minimize the privatization of public space.