DAHLGREN SHARDLOW AND·UBAN

INCORPORATED

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 21, 2005

TO: Jessica Thomasson, City of Fargo   Lisa Vatnsdal, City of Moorhead
                   Paul Vogel, City of Mankato   Matt Glaesman, City of St. Cloud

FROM: John Shardlow
                   President, Dahlgren, Shardlow & Uban, Inc.

                   Brendon Slotterback
                   Planner, Dahlgren, Shardlow & Uban, Inc.

RE: Neighborhood Best Practices – Worksheet and Teleconference Summary

ATTACHMENTS: Meeting Notes, Teleconference I

The first phase of the Neighborhood Best Practices Study has been completed and it is important to summarize the information presented and discussed during the process. This information will provide both participating cities and DSU with an insight into what challenges the cities are facing and how they are working to address these issues. The purpose of this memo is to summarize the Community Worksheets and Teleconference I.

This memo will define the objective of this study, identify the problem through a review of issues raised by each community, identify policies currently in place in each community and finally review the next steps of the study.

In summary, participants should realize that the problems faced by each of these communities are not unique. Similar issues have been identified in each of the communities involved in this study, and these same issues have been faced by towns and cities with large universities across the country. It is clear from reviewing the worksheets prepared by each community that a single-strategy approach is not being pursued in any of the cases, and would not be effective at addressing the issues. Ultimately, effective management of the issues raised in this study will require a multi-faceted approach that combines tools from each of the policy areas listed below (and possibly others not listed), tailored by an inclusive public participation process to meet the specific needs of each community. A breakdown of policies currently in place as reported by each community is shown in Figure 1.

Objective
The Neighborhood Best Practices Study is designed to bring together four communities facing issues associated with off-campus housing in campus neighborhoods. Through the collaboration of these cities and the direction of DSU, the group will attain a shared set of concerns, solutions, and ideas. The process is designed around information gathering and workshop presentations. The first step required collecting information on the existing issues and approaches in each city and presenting them to the group as a whole during a teleconference on Wednesday, December 14. The group included representatives from each city as well as various members of city government, the universities and colleges, and residential neighborhoods. The second part of the project will use the group's responses during the first presentation to direct research on approaches to campus

neighborhood issues being implemented across Minnesota and the country. These approaches and an analysis of their effectiveness and applicability to the group's situations will be presented in a second teleconference sometime in February.

The first phase of the project is summarized below, followed by a discussion on the direction and content of the next part of the project.

Problem Identification

The tasks in the initial phase of the Neighborhood Best Practices Study included an examination of current trends and policies in each participating city. DSU compiled this information by asking the cities to complete a Community Worksheet designed to identify issues, statistics, policies, and participants related to the affects of rental housing in each municipality. These results, along with an introduction to the process, were presented on Wednesday, December 14 as part of Teleconference 1. The following paragraphs detail the content of the worksheets. Notes from the meeting are included in city summary sheets starting on page 5.

Issues

Many of the cities reported very similar issues. These included:

- Conversion of single-family owner-occupied homes to rental units
- Noise from parties and vehicles
- Parking supply problems
- Public safety issues including vandalism and dumping
- Poor property maintenance including code violations
- Difficulty or cost of enforcing codes or regulations

Issues that were specific to some cities included declining elementary school enrollment, a loss of a sense of "neighborhood" due to renters, decreasing property values, a loss of affordable housing and overcrowding.

All of these issues are symptomatic of neighborhoods experiencing a rapid conversion of single-family residences to rental units as demand for student housing stays strong. A student population may have different needs and values than the traditional population of the neighborhood.   It is important to note that these issues are not unique to each city, but rather stem from very similar circumstances. This general trend of issues has also been observed on a national scale in cities with large universities.

The first meeting on December 14th allowed the cities to share their individual issues while communicating with each other about what solutions may be effective and what issues they continue to seek remedies for. Following the Research and Analysis section is a set of summary pages that contain issues, comments and policies relevant to each city. The comments summary is derived from the notes taken during the December 14th meeting. Cities are listed in the order that they presented at the meeting.

Policies

While each city was unique in the set of policies it is currently using to approach these problems, some common trends can be seen. The types of policies used by the cities can be split into four categories. The first and most frequently used type of policy is the city code or ordinance. The second is a city or university plan. The third is a university code of conduct. The final category is neighborhood strategies.

Codes

City codes and ordinances are the most common type of policy that the cities used to deal with the issues mentioned above. The codes in place dealt with a variety of different topics all relating to the issues of off-campus housing. Some common codes included:

- Noise regulations
- Rental unit registration or rental dwelling licensing
- Disorderly conduct or nuisance regulations
- Zoning ordinances
- Restrictive definition of "family"

Some cities have already adopted a more comprehensive set of these codes than others. These codes each might deal with an individual problem, but when utilized together could establish a strong set of standards for neighborhoods with student housing.

City or University Plans
Many cities and their associated colleges and universities have adopted comprehensive or master plans which guide the development and future character of neighborhoods that include student housing. Using a comprehensive plan process, a community can establish a vision of what the neighborhood should look like and how it should function and then decide on implementation strategies and identify responsible parties. This process is the first step in establishing useful and fair codes that are based on public input.

Codes of Conduct
College and University codes of conduct are in place in at least 3 of the 4 cities. These are documents maintained by the educational institution that deal with student's relation to each other and to the wider community. Generally these codes are not more restrictive than the city codes, but deal generally with student's rights and responsibilities. Stronger language and enforcement dealing specifically with off-campus housing issues could be valuable.

Neighborhood Strategies
Neighborhood Strategies is a category that includes actions taken by neighborhood groups and city agencies that may not involve city codes. These groups work at the neighborhood level to resolve problems. Strategies reported by the cities include neighborhood meetings to explain rental policies or train landlords and neighborhood groups that work with the city to facilitate their own comprehensive planning processes.

Most cities are using at least one policy from each of the above categories. Each community should strive to maintain and strengthen its current policies while supplementing additional strategies as they are deemed necessary. Maintaining a multi-faceted approach that includes a process to measure individual community's needs will ultimately lead to the best solution. Communities should consider policies from all of these categories as useful. The next step in the study, presenting examples and strategies from cities across the country, will support this kind of approach. The breakdown of all policies in place in the cities can be seen in Figure 1.

Research and Analysis
The next steps of the Neighborhood Best Practices Study will include:

- **Other Approaches:** Research will be conducted on the practices and approaches being implemented by cities dealing with similar issues across the country.

- **Further Review:** The current policies and practices being used in each city will be revisited and organized to assess how they might be adapted and effectively implemented in other cities.

- **Recommendations:** The above information will be developed into a set of recommendations designed to provide all participants with a solid base for developing a set of Neighborhood Best Practices. This will include recommendations on the **necessary components** of neighborhood policy, the **adaptation and appropriate**

implementation of general practices, and suggestions for **essential and effective communication**.

FARGO

Issues - Issue **(Entity Raising Concerns)**

- Declining Elementary enrollment threatens school viability **(School District, Residents)**
- On-street parking congestion due to increased demand by rental occupants **(Neighborhood residents)**
- Poor regular maintenance of property (**Neighborhood residents)**
- Noise nuisances **(Neighborhood residents)**
- Renters fell less connection to the neighborhood, less likely to be involved in activities **(Neighborhood residents)**
- Property values decrease near problem properties **(Neighborhood residents, school districts)**
- Affluent neighbors leave areas in which they see a change **(City)**
- Properties that were "affordable" are converted to rental **(City)**
- Decreasing home ownership opportunities due to rental conversion **(City)**

Meeting Comments
Senior Planner Jessica Thomasson represented the City of Fargo at the meeting on December 14th. Ms. Thomasson and other committee members presented information about the City of Fargo.

- All cities seem to have similar issues and varied responses.
- Housing market around the University and in the CBD is predominantly older housing stock and rental.
- 52% of the city's residents live in rental units.
- Renting itself is not a bad thing, the problem lies in the secondary effects of rental housing.
- Fargo has experienced an out-migration of students to the edge of the city leaving converted homes near the center vacant.
- Students have increased spending power and are willing to pay for more amenities.
- Fargo has a U-PASS system but many students still drive to campus.

Policies

Codes	City & University Plans	Codes of Conduct	Neighborhood Strategies
	• Comp Plan Policy • Neighborhood Plans • Housing Study • Renter Survey	• NDSU Code of Student Behavior	• Neighborhood Associations • Joint Planning/Police Meetings • Community Development Committee

MANKATO

Issues

- Definition of rent
- How to reduce over-occupied residences to current standards
- How to convert rental housing to owner-occupied
- Code enforcement

Comments
Director of Community Development Paul Vogel and Public Safety Director Jerry Huettl represented the City of Mankato at the meeting on December 14th. Comments from the two city representatives and other committee members included the following:

- An increase in housing construction has increased the population since 2000.
- The University has transitioned from an older campus in the middle of town to a more modern campus on the edge of town.
- Newer multi-family units near campus with amenities leave single-family homes with vacancies.
- It is difficult to prove that people are renting due to sales by contract-to-deed practices.
- The density of students in rental units and rental units in neighborhoods is a safety problem.
- Mankato has a zero tolerance policy that includes a walking patrol on heavy party nights – this has moved some of the drinking problems out of town.
- These patrols are made accountable through a system of meetings and check-ins.
- A restriction on the number of unrelated persons that can occupy a unit only exists in R-1 and R-2 districts.
- A restriction on the number of unrelated persons occupying one unit has helped somewhat to alleviate problems with renters, but also restricts people from purchasing homes in the area.
- It is difficult to deal with legal non-conforming uses (residences purchased before the 2-person rule was adopted).
- Mankato also has parking restrictions for rental units that serve to restrict densities.
- Mankato has a U-PASS system (discounted student bus pass), but it does not have an affect on student housing, in fact the bus system is being downsized.
- The University seems hesitant to produce a Code of Conduct that goes beyond standard MNSCU guidelines.

Policies

Codes	City & University Plans	Codes of Conduct	Neighborhood Strategies
• Rental Controls Ordinance • Nuisance Ordinance • Disorderly Conduct Ordinance	• Comprehensive Plan • Urban Design Manual		• Neighborhood Meetings • Landlord Training

MOORHEAD

Issues – Issue **(Entity raising concern)**

- Noise **(Neighborhood home-owners)**
- Parking congestion **(Neighborhood tenants, homeowners)**
- Tenant safety **(University students and parents, City Police and Fire)**
- Property Maintenance **(Neighborhood residents)**
- Tenant Accountability **(Landlords, home-owners)**
- Cost of enforcement **(Landlords, City Administration)**
- Overcrowding **(Home-owners, City Police and Fire)**

Comments
Neighborhood Services Manager Lisa Vatnsdal represented the City of Moorhead at the meeting on December 14th. Ms. Vatnsdal and other members of the committee commented on the situation in Moorhead:

- There is a technical college in the city limits, but it appears to have less impact on housing issues.
- There has been a rapid change over from owner-occupied to rental housing in Moorhead.
- There is a need for a definition of "guest" to help crack-down on over-occupied properties.
- 40% of the City's residents live in rental units.
- A U-PASS system (discounted student bus pass) exists in Moorhead, but it is unclear how it affects students housing choices.
- MSUM is notified if a student is cited for an off-campus incident.
- Campus security patrols off-campus during the weekends.

Policies

Codes	City & University Plans	Codes of Conduct	Neighborhood Strategies
• Noise Control • Rental Unit Registration • Disorderly Conduct • "Family" definition • Citations/Civil & Criminal Penalties	• Comprehensive Plan • Mixed-Use district • INS district	• On-Campus Residency Requirement (Concordia) • Student Handbook (Concordia and MSUM)	• Comstock Neighborhood Association • Knapp Park Neighborhood Association • Apartment Association • Crime-Free Multi Housing

SAINT CLOUD

Issues - Issue (**Entity Raising Concerns)**

- Conversion of Single-Family homes to rental **(Neighborhood Coalition, Residents)**
- Improved intersections **(Neighborhood residents, City)**
- Housing Code Violations (**Neighborhood residents, City)**
- Litter **(Neighborhood residents, City)**
- Vandalism **(Neighborhood residents, City)**
- Parking supply **(Neighborhood residents, City)**
- Enforcement of ordinances **(Neighborhood Residents, City)**
- Noise/Loud parties **(Neighborhood Residents, City)**
- Loud Vehicles **(Neighborhood Residents, City)**

Comments
Planning Director Matt Glaesman and the Director of Health and Safety represented the City of Saint Cloud at the meeting on December 14th. Comments on the situation in Saint Cloud were as follows:

- There are two colleges outside the city limits that also have an effect on housing issues.
- The rent/own ratio in Saint Cloud is 55/45.
- The City has experienced an out-migration of students to newer rental units on the outskirts of town and in-migration of other renters into housing that used to be occupied by students.
- Owners of contract-by-deed properties must change records at the county and utility services when the deed is changed. This allows identification of renters.

Policies

Codes	City & University Plans	Codes of Conduct	Neighborhood Strategies
• Uniform Housing Code • Noise Regulations • Nuisance Ordinances • Zoning • Heritage Preservation • Rental/Dwelling Licenses	• SCSU Master Plan • SC Tech Master Plan • Healthy Neighborhood Partnership Program	• SCSU Code of Conduct	• Neighborhood Coalition • NUCC • HRA • East Side Boosters • Crime-Free Multi Housing • Neighborhood Watch • SC Historic Preservation Association • Neighborhood/Unv. Community Council

Figure 1. Existing Community Policies

	Moorhead	St. Cloud	Mankato	Fargo
Codes	• Noise Control • Rental Unit Registration • Disorderly Conduct • "Family" definition • Citations/Civil & Criminal Penalties	• Uniform Housing Code • Noise Regulations • Nuisance Ordinances • Zoning • Heritage Preservation • Rental/Dwelling Licenses	• Rental Controls Ordinance • Nuisance Ordinance • Disorderly Conduct Ordinance	
City & University Plans	• Comprehensive Plan • Mixed-Use district • INS district	• SCSU Master Plan • SC Tech Master Plan • Healthy Neighborhood Partnership Program	• Comprehensive Plan • Urban Design Manual	• Comp Plan Policy • Neighborhood Plans • Housing Study • Renter Survey
Codes of Conduct	• On-Campus Residency Restriction • Concordia Student Handbook	• SCSU Code of Conduct		• NDSU Code of Student Behavior
Neighborhood Strategies	• Comstock Neighborhood Association • Knapp Park Neighborhood Association • Apartment Association • Crime-Free Multi Housing	• Neighborhood Coalition • NUCC • HRA • East Side Boosters • Crime-Free Multi Housing • Neighborhood Watch • SC Historic Preservation Association • Neighborhood/Unv Community Council	• Neighborhood Meetings • Landlord Training	• Neighborhood Associations • Joint Planning/Police Meetings • Community Development Committee