

## **SPOKANE CITY PLAN COMMISSION FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SOUTH UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SUBAREA PLANNING**

**A recommendation from the City Plan Commission to the City Council to APPROVE a resolution recognizing the South University District Subarea Plan as a declaration of the subarea's desired future condition and to APPROVE an ordinance adopting proposed amendments to Spokane Comprehensive Plan Map; Zoning Map; Downtown Streetscape Improvements Map; Surface Parking Limited Map; and Downtown Design Review Threshold Map for a 73 acre area in the South University District subarea.**

### **FINDINGS OF FACT:**

- A. The City of Spokane adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2001 that complies with the requirements of the Washington state Growth Management Act (GMA).
- B. The Growth Management Act provides that proposed amendments to a comprehensive plan may be considered by the governing body of a city no more frequently than once per year, but further provides that, so long as a subarea plan clarifies, supplements, or implements city-wide comprehensive plan policies, and so long as the cumulative impacts of the proposed subarea plan are addressed by appropriate environmental review under chapter 43.21C. RCW, the initial adoption of a subarea plan may occur outside of this annual process.
- C. The City of Spokane has identified the University District as a key geographic area for economic growth and development, and is identified as a Target Investment Area the City's Targeted Area Development Strategy, as adopted by City Council Resolutions 2010-0049 and 2015-0084.
- D. In 2004, the City of Spokane Office of Economic Development and a consultant team developed the *University District Strategic Master Plan*. In 2019, the University District Public Development Authority (UDPDA) adopted an update of the *University District Strategic Master Plan*, including a buildable lands analysis identifying the South University District subarea as having the highest capacity for future residential and employment growth of any portion of the University District.
- E. On April 15, 2019, the City Council passed Resolution No. RES 2019-0028, recognizing the 2019 update of *University District Strategic Master Plan* as a "written record of the UDPDA and district stakeholders' ongoing desire and effort to continue building a vibrant, healthy, active, safe, and connected University District."

- F. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Chapter, Goal LU 2, Public Realm Enhancement, states: *Encourage the enhancement of the public realm.*
- G. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Chapter, Goal LU 2, Efficient Land Use, states: *Promote the efficient use of land by the use of incentives, density and mixed-use development in proximity to retail businesses, public services, places of work, and transportation systems.*
- H. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Chapter, Goal ED 2, Land Available for Economic Activities, states: *Ensure that an adequate supply of useable industrial and commercial property is available for economic development activities.*
- I. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Chapter, Goal ED 3, Strong, Diverse, and Sustainable Economy, states: *Foster a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy that provides a range of employment and business opportunities.*
- J. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Chapter, Policy LU 7.4, Subarea Planning Framework, states: *Use the Comprehensive Plan for overall guidance and undertake more detailed sub-area and neighborhood planning in order to provide a forum for confronting and reconciling issues and empowering neighborhoods to solve problems collectively.*
- K. Outreach and public communication beginning in May 2019 included a project web page, an online survey on issues and priorities for the subarea, a recorded video about the subarea planning process replayed on City Cable 5 and the City's web page, appearances at public events, email updates to interested parties, and a mailing of more than 1,000 postcards to all property owners and taxpayers of record, as shown by the most recent Spokane County Assessor's record, and occupants of addresses of property located within a four hundred foot radius announcing key events and opportunities to provide input on the planning process.
- L. On July 30 and 31, 2019, Neighborhood & Planning Services staff and consultants from the firm MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design of Seattle, Washington (collectively the "Project Team") held a Community Design Workshop and series of stakeholder focus groups to involve a wide range of participants with distinct interests to share their insights about the subarea and help shape a vision statement and policy framework for development of a more focused proposal.
- M. The draft *South University District Subarea Plan*, prepared by MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design, includes a vision, goals, and policies that outline the future of growth and development desired in the South University District subarea, based on a review of existing adopted policies and regulations

relating to development in the subarea and input from stakeholders and the public at large.

- N. The draft *South University District Subarea Plan* also includes recommended amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and overlay maps for the subarea for a portion of the subarea focused on the intersection of Sprague Avenue and Sherman Street, near the south landing of the University District Gateway Bridge.
- O. From June 2019 through June 2020, staff gave thirteen presentations on the draft subarea plan and proposed map changes and received feedback from interested groups such as property owners, business associations, neighborhood councils, civic groups, City departments, and the Spokane Design Review Board.
- P. Staff hosted a public open house meetings in October 2019 and March 2020 to receive feedback receive feedback on a draft vision statement, goals, and policies and draft concepts for land use and zoning changes in the subarea. The City provided notice of the open house meetings by advertising on its website and via email notice to neighborhood councils and interested parties.
- Q. On October 23, 2019 and November 13, 2019 and March 11, 2020 and June 24, 2020, the Spokane City Plan Commission held workshops to study the draft subarea plan and proposed changes to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps.
- R. On February 28, 2020, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106, the City notified the Washington Department of Commerce of its intent to adopt proposed changes to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps. On March 2, 2020, the City received an acknowledgement letter from the Department of Commerce.
- S. On February 21, 2020, the responsible official issued a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist and Determination of Non-Significance for the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and overlay map changes. The public comment period for the SEPA determination ended on March 24, 2020.
- T. On March 18, 2020, the City caused notice of the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps and announcement of the Plan Commission's March 25, 2020 hearing to be published in the City's Official Gazette. The Notice and announcement was also published in the *Spokesman-Review* on March 11, 2020 and March 18, 2020.

- U. In an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and to protect those most vulnerable, the City deferred the in-person public hearing scheduled for March 25, 2020 to a virtual public hearing held July 8, 2020 consistent with Proclamation 20-28 issued by the Governor of Washington and subsequent extensions and modifications.
- V. On July 8, 2020, the City Plan Commission held a public hearing on the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps, where the Plan Commission heard testimony. The Plan Commission continued the hearing, leaving the record open to the Commission's July 22, 2020 meeting for the purposes of allowing additional public comment and testimony on the proposal.
- W. During the comment period public hearing, the Plan Commission received written comments and public testimony generally in favor of the proposal.
- X. During the deliberations held on July 22, 2020, the Plan Commission voted to modify the proposal to extend the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps to an additional area of approximately 10 acres located along both sides of S Sherman Street between E 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the I-90 Freeway (described in the Staff Report as "Optional DTU Extension #1").
- Y. As a result of the City's efforts, pursuant to the requirements of SMC 17G.020.070, the public has had extensive opportunities to participate throughout the process and persons desiring to comment were given an opportunity to comment.
- Z. The Plan Commission finds that the proposal meets the decision criteria established by SMC 17G.020.030, as described in the Staff Report.
- AA. Except as otherwise indicated herein, the Plan Commission adopts the findings and analysis set forth in the Staff Report prepared for the proposal.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

Based upon the application materials, staff analysis (which is hereby incorporated into these findings, conclusions, and recommendation), SEPA review, agency and public comments received, and public testimony presented regarding the proposed changes, as amended during deliberations, to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps, the Plan Commission makes the following conclusions with respect to the review criteria outlined in SMC 17G.020.030:

1. The draft *South University District Subarea Plan* reflects stakeholder priorities for subarea-specific implementation of land use and economic development goals adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, Zoning Map, and associated overlay maps implement the recommendations of a subarea planning process that clarifies, supplements, or implements city-wide comprehensive plan policies as described in RCW 36.70A.130.
3. Interested agencies and the public have had extensive opportunities to participate throughout the process and persons desiring to comment have been given that opportunity to comment.
4. The proposal is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Growth Management Act.
5. Any potential infrastructure implications associated with the proposal will either be mitigated through projects reflected in the City's relevant six-year capital improvement plans or through enforcement of the City's development regulations at time of development.
6. As outlined in above in the Findings of Fact, the proposal is internally consistent within the meaning of SMC 17G.020.030E.
7. The proposal is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies for Spokane County, the comprehensive plans of neighboring jurisdictions, applicable capital facilities plans, the regional transportation plan, and official population growth forecasts.
8. The proposal has been evaluated by geographic sector and land use type in order to facilitate the assessment of the cumulative impacts.
9. SEPA review was completed for the proposal, and pursuant to SEPA, any adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposal will be mitigated by enforcement of the City's development regulations.
10. The proposal will not adversely affect the City's ability to provide the full range of urban public facilities and services citywide at the planned level of service, or consume public resources otherwise needed to support comprehensive plan implementation strategies.
11. The proposed land use designation is in conformance with the appropriate location criteria identified in the comprehensive plan (e.g., compatibility with neighboring land uses, proximity to arterials, etc.).
12. The proposed map amendment and site is suitable for the proposed designation.
13. The map amendment would implement applicable comprehensive plan policies better than the current map designation as described in the staff report.

14. The proposal includes a corresponding rezone to be adopted concurrently with the land use plan map amendment as a legislative action of the city council, thereby preserving consistency between the comprehensive plan and supporting development regulations.

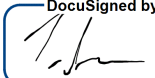
**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In the matter of South University District subarea planning, concurrent requests by the City of Spokane to adopt:

- (1) A resolution recognizing the *South University District Subarea Plan* as a declaration of the subarea’s desired future condition; and
- (2) An ordinance to change the land use plan designation on approximately 73 acres of land from “General Commercial” to “Downtown” with a corresponding change of the implementing zoning to DTU (Downtown University), and corresponding amendments to the Downtown Plan Map 5.1 (“Streetscape Improvements”), Surface Parking Limited Overlay (SMC 17C.124-M1) and the Perimeter Area of the Downtown Design Review Threshold Map (SMC 17G.040-M1);

As based upon the above listed findings and conclusions, by a vote of 9 to 1, the Plan Commission takes the following actions:

- (1) Recommends to City Council the APPROVAL of a resolution recognizing the *South University District Subarea Plan* as a declaration of the subarea’s desired future condition and;
- (2) Recommends to City Council the APPROVAL of the requested amendment to the Land Use Plan Map of the City’s Comprehensive Plan with corresponding amendments to the City’s Zoning Map, Downtown Streetscape Improvements Map, Surface Parking Limited Overlay Map, and Downtown Design Review Threshold Map, as amended during deliberations; and
- (3) Authorizes the President to prepare and sign on the Commission’s behalf a written decision setting forth the Commission’s findings, conclusions, and recommendation on the proposal.

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**Todd Beyreuther, President  
Spokane Plan Commission**

**July 28, 2020**