

SPOKANE CITY PLAN COMMISSION FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE SPOKANE DOWNTOWN PLAN

A recommendation from the City Plan Commission to the City Council to APPROVE an ordinance amending the City of Spokane’s Comprehensive Plan by repealing “Fast Forward Spokane Downtown Plan Update” passed on December 22, 2008; and adopting a new subarea plan, “Spokane Downtown Plan.”

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 Comprehensive Plan has identified downtown Spokane as the Regional Center and directs resources towards planning the growth and development of this center.
- D. In 2019, the City of Spokane and the Downtown Spokane Partnership agreed to replace “Fast Forward Spokane: Downtown Plan Update” providing a vision and a new set of goals and recommendations for Downtown in a manner consistent with public input. The City Council established the Downtown Plan as part of the Plan Commission’s 2019-2020 work program on February 25, 2019, under Resolution 2019-0010.
- E. The downtown planning area boundary has been expanded to the east to include all portions of the 2020 South University District Subarea Plan under Ordinance C35925 and Resolution 2020-0060.
- F. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3 Land Use, Goal LU 2, Public Realm Enhancement, states: *Encourage the enhancement of the public realm.*

- G. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3 Land Use, Goal LU 3, 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, Chapter 7 Economic Development, 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.*
- I. City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3 Land Use, 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.*
- J. Outreach and public communication beginning in September 2019 included a project web page, three online surveys 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 4,600 brochures 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 the expanded Downtown Planning Area announcing key events and opportunities to provide input on the planning process.
- K. On October 22, 2019, City Planning Department and Downtown Spokane Partnership staff and consultants from the firm Framework of Seattle, Washington, held a Public Workshop following a 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.
- L. The draft *Spokane Downtown Plan*, prepared by Framework, includes a vision, goals, and policies that outline the future of growth and development desired in the Downtown 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.
- M. From October 2019 to April 2021, staff gave more than 20 presentations on the draft subarea plan and received feedback from interested groups such as property owners, business associations, neighborhood councils, civic groups,

City departments and agency representatives on a technical work group, and the Spokane Design Review Board.

- N. Staff hosted additional public meetings in February 2020 and March 2021 to receive feedback on a draft vision statement, goals, and policies and draft concepts for development regulation 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.
- O. On October 23, 2019; November 13, 2019; December 11, 2019; January 22, 2020; January 27, 2021; March 24, 2021; and April 14, 2021, the Spokane City Plan Commission held workshops to receive updates on the process and study the draft subarea plan.
- P. On January 17, 2021, the Plan Commission established a Downtown Plan subcommittee. Three Plan Commissioners and a Design Review Board member participated in two virtual meetings on February 17, 2021 and March 3, 2021, and issued a report and recommendation to the Plan Commission on March 17, 2021.
- Q. On April 13, 2021, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106, the City notified the Washington Department of Commerce of its intent to adopt the subarea plan as a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The same day, the City received an acknowledgement letter from the Department of Commerce.
- R. On April 28, 2021, the responsible official issued a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Non-Significance for the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The public comment period for the SEPA determination ended on May 12, 2021.
- S. On May 5, 2021, the City caused notice of the proposed subarea plan and associated Comprehensive Plan amendment application, notice of SEPA determination, and announcement of the Plan Commission's May 12, 2021 hearing to be published in the City's Official Gazette. The Notice and announcement was also published in the *Spokesman-Review* on April 28, 2021 and May 5, 2021.
- T. On May 12, 2020, the City Plan Commission held a public hearing on the proposed subarea plan and Comprehensive Plan amendment, where the Plan Commission heard testimony.

- U. During the deliberations held on May 12, 2021, the Plan Commission voted to modify the proposal to add two new actions proposed by the Downtown Spokane Partnership: one related to police presence Downtown (described in the hearing as Action PS1.3), and another related to monitoring housing and shelter for low-income residents and residents experiencing homelessness (described in the hearing as Action WO1.5).
- V. 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.
- W. The Plan Commission finds that the proposal meets the decision criteria established by SMC 17G.020.030, as described in the Staff Report.
- X. 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 subarea plan, as modified during deliberations, the Plan Commission makes the following conclusions with respect to the review criteria outlined in SMC 17G.020.030:

1. The draft *Spokane Downtown Plan* reflects stakeholder priorities for subarea-specific implementation of land use, transportation, economic development, and social health goals adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The proposed subarea plan amendment to the Comprehensive Plan implements 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.020.030(E).
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 new subarea plan is designed to provide correction and additional guidance so the community's original visions and values can better be achieved as described in the staff report.
13. The proposal includes guidance for future development regulation changes, but acknowledges those changes would occur as part of a future process with further study and analysis before implementation, thereby preserving consistency between the comprehensive plan and supporting development regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the matter of Downtown subarea planning, requests by the City of Spokane to adopt an ordinance amending the City of Spokane's Comprehensive Plan by repealing "Fast Forward Spokane Downtown Plan Update" passed on December 22, 2008; and adopting a new subarea plan, "Spokane Downtown Plan."

As based upon the above listed findings and conclusions, by a vote of 6 to 0, with one abstention, the Plan Commission takes the following actions:

- (1) Recommends to City Council the **APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATION** to the proposal of the requested amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan, as amended during deliberations to include the additions of PS1.3 Action and WO1.5 Action as presented by the Downtown Spokane Partnership; and
- (2) 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.



Todd Beyreuther (May 19, 2021 11:48 PDT)

**Todd Beyreuther, President
Spokane Plan Commission**

May 19, 2021

Council Member Kinnear's Proposed Additions to the Downtown Plan:

Add the following Action under Strategy PS1:

PS1.3 ACTION: Continue the presence of a fully staffed, centralized downtown precinct.

The City should continue to encourage officer visibility and outreach downtown to further the implementation of community-oriented policing. Implementing neighborhood and community-oriented policing is a value established in Chapter 10 of the City of Spokane's Comprehensive Plan. Continuing to maintain an accessible downtown precinct is key to successful implementation of this Comprehensive Plan value.

Add the following Action under Strategy W01:

W01.5 ACTION: Monitor housing and shelter for low-income residents and residents experiencing homelessness.

Encouraging housing for the low-income and homeless throughout the entire city is a value established in Chapter 6 of the City of Spokane's Comprehensive Plan. To implement this value downtown, the City and the DSP should coordinate with public and private agencies and other appropriate entities to evaluate existing needs, facilities, and programs relative to health and human services downtown.