Neighborhood Planning in Spokane: Then and Now

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A Planning Department Perspective

- From a City Planner’s viewpoint
- Neighborhoods may have a different perspective
- Neighborhood planning can be political and controversial
- Neighborhood planning is resource intensive
A Bumpy, Off and On Road

- At it since the late 70’s
- Off and on since then
- No dedicated funding source
- Mixed results
What is Neighborhood Planning, Anyway?

- Growth Management Act = Sub Area Planning

- Some Planners Say = Center & Corridor Planning because the Comprehensive Plan is so detailed it covers everything else.

- Others say Neighborhood Planning is needed and is a good neighborhood issue resolution tool.

- Neighborhoods say = policy, regulation, operations, covers entire neighborhood.
Neighborhood Planning Touches On Many Topics

- Land Use and Zoning Authority/Regulations
- Neighborhood Boundaries & Organization
- Mayor/Council Elections
- City/County Joint Planning & Annexation
- Infill Development
- Transportation Planning
Spokane’s Neighborhood Planning Stages

1. Leisure Suit 70’s
   Late 70s - CDBG Neighborhood Specific and Improvement Plans

2. New Century Optimism

3. City Council CPR
   2007 – City Council’s allocation of $550k one-time funds.
Neighborhood Planning Conclusions

- Funding is/has been limited.
- Must be process/resource creative, i.e. Neighborhood Planning Guidebook.
- Neighborhoods must do much of their own work.
- Neighborhood planning can be successful, but it is not a “cure-all.”
Stage 1
Leisure Suit 70s
Community Development Neighborhoods

- First neighborhood plans in Spokane were for Community Development neighborhoods.
- In 1970s, City established Community Development neighborhoods with steering committees to assist in allocating CDBG funds and implementing projects.
- Most CD neighborhoods were established in the 70s. 14 at one time, now 13.
CD Neighborhood Plans

- Substantial CD funds available in 70s for capital improvement projects.
- 13 CD neighborhood plans were developed between the early 80s and 90s to plan for the best use of the CD capital improvement monies.
- Included elements such as land use, circulation, open space, design, improvements.
- Each plan was one part of several documents that composed the Comprehensive Plan.
1986 Plans
East Central, West Central
Emerson-Garfield and Nevada-Lidgerwood
Dutch Jakes Park - West Central
Garland Avenue Streetscape - North Hill
Ninth and Perry Streetscape - East Central
Neighborhood Councils

- In 1995, City expanded neighborhood representation - established the Neighborhood Council system. Last Council added in 2005.
- Now 27 neighborhood councils.
- Boundaries of each neighborhood were determined by the neighborhood councils.
- Purpose is to have city-wide, equal and inclusive representation of neighborhood interests – to give input to city decision makers.
City of Spokane
Neighborhood Councils
Community Assembly

- Coalition of one representative from each of the 27 neighborhood councils.
- Meets once a month to discuss issues of broad interest.
- Office of Neighborhood Services works with the Neighborhood Councils and Community Assembly.
- Authorized by the City Charter
Stage 2
New Century Optimism
Washington State Growth Management Act

- Passed in 1990 - Spokane County began planning under the Act in 1993.

- Reduce Sprawl
  - Population Allocation
  - Urban Growth Areas

- Early and continuous citizen participation

- Concurrency requirements
GMA Comprehensive Plans

- GMA requires jurisdictions to develop a new Comprehensive Plan under the GMA process.
- City’s long-range, 20-year plan for growth.
- Goals, policies, maps, illustrations, and implementation strategies that state how the city should grow physically, socially, environmentally and economically.
- Overall scheme for city development – the major land uses, transportation systems, parks, recreation, and open spaces, and centers of shopping and employment.
Comprehensive Plan

- Ensures that growth will be orderly.
- Foundation for all development regulations and city spending on physical improvements.
- Framework for all other planning activities and documents (including neighborhood planning documents).
Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

**GMA Required Elements:**
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Capital Facilities
- Utilities
- Housing

**Spokane also included:**
- Economic Development
- Urban Design and Historic Preservation
- Natural Environment
- Social Health
- **Neighborhoods**
- Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces
- Leadership, Governance, and Citizenship
Comprehensive Plan

- Adopted May, 2001 - much more detailed than pre-GMA Comp Plan.

- Designates 20 mixed-use Centers and Corridors.
  - Neighborhood Centers
  - District Centers
  - Employment Centers
  - Corridors

- Old neighborhood plans repealed. Some neighborhood land use incorporated into Plan.
Mixed-Use Centers & Corridors

School and park provide a focal point for social interaction. Compatible with existing neighborhood character.
Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

Simultaneous Tasks:

- Development Regulations
  - Initial Development Regulations
  - Mixed Use Development Regulations
  - Unified Development Code

- Neighborhood Planning
  - Centers and Corridors Pilot Projects
  - Neighborhood Planning Guidebook
  - Assessments
  - Neighborhood Planning
Center and Corridor Pilot Projects

- Fall of 2001 - Plan Commission selected four centers as “test,” or pilot centers.
- Four Pilot Areas:
  - 9th and Perry Neighborhood Center
  - Broadway and Maple Neighborhood Center
  - Holy Family Employment Center
  - North Market Corridor
- Planning began in 2002, lasted a year
Pilot Planning Process Purpose

1. Implement Comprehensive Plan – Focus Growth in Centers & Corridors

2. Develop a Center & Corridor Planning Process that could be applied to the other 16 Centers & Corridors

3. Invest and reinvest in neighborhoods – help make Spokane a better place to live, work, and play

4. Process was documented in Guidebook for future center planning
North Market Corridor Visioning Process
Broadway and Maple Vision

- Center of Commerce
- Neighborhood Scale
- Transportation Alternatives
- Housing Variety
- Compatible Design
- More Open Space
- Variety of Activities
Priority Projects

1. Create Tax Increment Finance District for Center
2. Expand neighborhood retail area of core - recommend land use and zoning changes for center
3. Streetscape Improvements
4. Historic Preservation Program
5. Establish a Funding Committee
6. Develop a Neighborhood Business Incubator and Cooperative
7. Continue to work with key players in planning and development of the center – Metropolitan Mortgage
Proposed Land Use Plan Map
Broadway & Maple

Legend
Proposed Designations
- CC Core
- CC Transition
West Broadway Streetscape Project
Neighborhood Planning
Guidebook
Neighborhood Planning Guidebook

- Purpose - to guide neighborhoods through the planning process as they develop neighborhood plans or action plans.
- Provides step-by-step information to enable neighborhoods to develop successful plans, through adoption.
- Developed by Guidebook Work Group and staff.
Neighborhood Planning Guidebook

- Three tracks as planning option:
  1. Center or corridor planning
  2. Neighborhood planning
  3. Center or corridor and neighborhood planning.
Neighborhood Planning Guidebook

- Designed to be used in conjunction with oversight from Planning staff.
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Checklists for tasks completed
Neighborhood Planning

1. Training
2. Letters of Intent to Plan
3. Pre-planning Meetings
4. Track Choice
5. Stakeholder Teams
3. Neighborhood Assessments
4. Four planning staff working with a couple of neighborhoods each
We’ve Been POG’D!

- In 2003, City engaged in the Priorities of Government process to address funding shortfalls.
- Neighborhood planning program was eliminated in 2004.
- Neighborhoods left with resources had to stop planning or continue on their own.
Stage 3
City Council CPR
New Starts

- In 2007, City Council allocated $550,000 for neighborhood planning.

- Funds split 26 ways (one neighborhood opted out of process) = $21,150 each

- Community Assembly Neighborhood Planning Action Committee (CANPAC) worked for a year on the details.

- CANPAC agreed on an “Abbreviated Planning Process,” at a minimum. Some neighborhoods will plan in more detail.
Abbreviated Planning Process

- Neighborhoods identify issues and solutions.
- Presented to the Neighborhood Action Committee (NAC) for possible resolution.
- NAC consists of various City Hall Department representatives, Community Assembly representative, CANPAC rep.
- NAC reports back to neighborhood.
What’s Happening Now

- Six neighborhoods planning at a time, two from each Council District.
- Neighborhoods can work with staff, consultant, or universities.
- One full-time planner, one part time, one project lead.
- NAC in process of being formed.
Neighborhood Planning
Conclusions

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Thank You