

Five-Mile Prairie Neighborhood Subarea Plan 2005



Prepared by the River Point Consultants

Melissa Crouch

Chris Danley

Nathan Gwinn

Jill Leonetti

Ardele Steele-Irving

Christina Wollman

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1.0 History

The Five Mile Prairie has a long and interesting history based on Native American folklore and settler accounts. The history of Five Mile Prairie begins near 1010A.D. At this time the prairie belonged to the Siwash Indian Tribe, a tribe ancestrally connected to the Spokane Indian Tribe. The prairie was first named Billymeechum, “home of the tall grass”, after the Siwash Chief. Food was plentiful for the Siwash Tribe, as fish from the streams and wild game were in abundance. The winds and weather of the winters here proved no problem as snow was blown off the open and high plateau.

The Siwash Tribe recorded significant events on the lava rock cliffs. The pictographs have been interpreted to mean that there once was a large battle between the Siwash and a band of traveling Norsemen over a cool bubbling stream. The Siwash are depicted as winning the battle and burying the Norsemen at the foot of the lava rock cliffs. Today, the paintings can still be seen but are protected by a large fence.

In 1879, the first white settlers were recorded on the prairie. The name Billymeechum was changed to Five Mile Prairie in 1880. The name Five Mile Prairie was established to signify the distance from Spokane Falls in Downtown Spokane.

Settlers planted many varieties of deciduous fruit trees that grew successfully. In addition, the settlers also planted vegetables, berries, wheat, oats, and barley. Five Mile Prairie was showcased at local fairs as the “agricultural gem of Spokane, [because the food was] grown without irrigation.”

In the late 1880s an apple packing plant was built, which is now the historic grange on the prairie. A few fruit trees from the old homestead sites are all that remain from the great orchards of 100 years ago.

Written by C.L. Johnson

2.0 Purpose

The subarea plan and neighborhood planning process will allow the staff of the Planning Commission to meet with Five Mile residents to discuss issues, such as aesthetics of development within the subarea and neighborhood participation activities. Public meetings, intended to improve communication channels with concerned residents, are planned to discuss the quality of life within their neighborhood.

This document is intended to: 1) improve communications with neighborhood and civic associations to; 2) redevelop declining neighborhoods; 3) evaluate land use for appropriateness and recommend changes where applicable; and 4) establish a process that will assist in development of the ongoing City of Spokane or Spokane County Capital Improvements Program by helping to establish the priorities of the neighborhood residents.

3.0 Open Space, Parks & Environmental Resources

Goal: Preserve and provide for open space and habitat conservation.

Policy:

1. Preserve “urban natural open space” by zoning areas as open space.

Goal: Improve and expand bike and pedestrian trails.

Trail System Focus. The focus of the Five Mile Prairie trail system is to provide a safe recreational area for walkers, joggers, bikers, skateboarders, and rollerbladers. The trail system should focus on the new elementary school, the Five Mile Prairie Schoolhouse, the Grange, Sky Prairie Park, and the prairie perimeter. Ideally, the trail system should connect Sky Prairie Park to the new elementary school.

The trail should be wide enough to accommodate simultaneous uses. A separate bike lane on Five Mile Road is additionally recommended due to the high level of vehicle traffic. The trail system should include sidewalks and roadside trails, as well as trails that are separate from the roadway all together.

The Bike and Pedestrian Trail. The northeast corner of the prairie is the desired location to create a bike and pedestrian trail. This will be a three-mile loop located along Five Mile Road, Johannsen Road, Cedar Road, and Strong Road. This trail will also be connected to Sky Prairie Park.

Other desired trail locations include a connection from Nettleton to Johannsen Road and a trail connecting Sky Prairie Park to Austin Road using the Austin Ravine, which is a natural area designated as public land by the Conservation Futures Program.

The Five Mile Prairie Perimeter Trail. The perimeter trail of Five Mile Prairie will include five-foot wide gravel pathways encompassing nine miles around the prairie's circumference. There are areas where trails are already established, such as; Riverside State Park, St. George's School, and Indian Trail Road. The northeastern section below the Five Mile Prairie bluff opens to a natural wooded area that is a designated as a natural area. A trail could possibly go through this vicinity. To the west of Strong Road there is an area that could be designated as a park and the trailhead for the perimeter trail. This region could be called "Sunset Cliffs" because of the spectacular views of the sunset and western Spokane.

Policy:

1. Connect open spaces, schools, and parks together using a trail system formed by private easements and/or public open space designations.

4.0 Public Facilities & Utilities

Goal: The City of Spokane and/or Spokane County will provide a functional piped removal and disposal system for storm water.

Storm Water. The current system of handling storm water on Five Mile Prairie is the evaporation ponds located throughout the area. This system is not effective, is not aesthetic in nature, and poses a possible health risk. For example, on Waikiki Road, at the northern entrance and exit route, there is a water drainage problem. The drainage system does not work effectively, and the water that should be collected next to the road collects

on the road instead. This water causes splashing and hydroplaning. In addition, the stagnant water provides breeding grounds for insects.

To address the storm water conditions, the following options are available. The first option is the traditional 208 grassy swales method. Due to the soil type and soil content on the prairie, this method will not work. Other methods, such as the retention/detention ponds and piped removal, are preferred options. Since the piped removal/disposal method will take time to install, the neighborhood should require all future developments to design retention ponds for the short term use until the piped removal system is complete. These ponds would then be used for open space.

Policy:

1. Change storm water removal to retention/detention ponds.
2. City and county must collaborate on study of financing for piped removal system.
3. Retain evaporation pond land as open space.

Goal: Minimize Light Pollution.

The Five Mile Prairie stakeholders see a need for a street tree plan and streetlights that minimize light pollution. A street tree program could benefit Five Mile in several ways. First, by adding trees to the area between the street and sidewalk, a barrier will be created separating pedestrian and bike traffic from vehicular traffic. Second, trees lining the street will help to reduce the effects of light pollution on homes from both street lights and from routine vehicular traffic. Finally, if street trees are planted in the 208 grassy swales, they could essentially 'suck up' some of the water flushed into the swales.

In addition to a street tree program, it is necessary for Five Mile to make contact with the City of Spokane and Spokane County to ensure that lights are capped with reflective lids. Reflective lids would force light downward rather than upward causing deterrent from the night sky.

Policy:

1. Implement a street tree program to effectively minimize light pollution, protect pedestrians and bicyclists, and to absorb storm water run off.

2. City and county must add reflective paint and/ or caps to all existing and new light fixtures to reduce light pollution.

5.0 Land Use

Goal: Preserve the neighborhood character of Five Mile Prairie.

A sound regulatory framework is essential to protect investments from conflicting land uses and preserve the natural and cultural assets that make the community attractive. The regulations should be consistent with the community's vision.

Policy:

1. Preserve the agricultural history of Five Mile Prairie by down zoning hobby farms and agricultural areas, such as the tree nursery and berry farm, as agricultural lands.
2. Down zone county lands from Urban Reserve to Rural Traditional.

6.0 Transportation

Goal: Provide for road improvements and better access on and through Five Mile Prairie.

Five Mile Prairie is rapidly being developed, and road improvements are necessary. The neighborhood council has listed some of their recommendations. These include Panorama Road, which is currently unpaved between Strong Road and Carolina Way, and Parkway Road, which is also unpaved and will become the third access to Sky Prairie Park. The neighborhood would like all the unpaved streets to be paved.

The Five Mile Prairie neighborhood stakeholders would also like to extend Johannsen Road west across Five Mile Road and complete Hawthorne and Dorset streets. There also needs to be connectivity between roads in new developments and consistency in naming streets. Sidewalk connectivity is needed as well.

Policy:

1. New roads and road improvements must be constructed to be consistent with Five Mile transportation plans.
2. Repair all potholes within 24 to 48 hours of notice.

3. All new development must include sidewalks that are constructed to be consistent with the Five Mile Prairie transportation plan.

Goals: Reduce traffic speeds on Five Mile Prairie.

The need for traffic calming in the Five Mile Prairie neighborhood is a priority, especially along Five Mile Road. Many north Spokane residents use Five Mile Road as a shortcut to bypass city traffic. One traffic calming possibility includes roundabouts and traffic circles. These options are effective and less expensive than traffic lights. There would need to be several along Five Mile Road in order to slow traffic.

Policy:

1. Traffic calming measures must be implemented by 2007.
2. City and County must conduct joint transportation study and examine traffic calming measures.

7.0 The City of Spokane and Spokane County Communication

Goal: Improve communication with the City of Spokane and Spokane County.

The residents of Five Mile Prairie feel there is a communication problem between the City of Spokane and Spokane County. The residents feel the City of Spokane and Spokane County do not act or communicate on issues involving both jurisdictions effectively. Gaining the attention of both county and city governments, especially the county Commissioner and city planning commission members, is crucial in order to fix the communication problem.

Policy:

1. Develop common visions for land use and collaborate on issues such as emergency response, trail systems, historic preservation, and capital facilities.
2. Develop a holistic and consistent transportation plan.

8.0 Five Mile Neighborhood Historic Preservation

Goal: Preserve and enhance the historic nature of the Five Mile Prairie Neighborhood.

The rich history of Five Mile Prairie and the historic sites attract people to visit the neighborhood.

Policy:

1. Research and develop a record of Five Mile Prairie History by summer 2006.
2. Identify and research possible buildings and sites for historic listing by summer 2006.

Goal: Preserve Native American History.

Policy:

1. Research possible funding for monumentation by January 2006.
2. Acquire funding for monumentation by summer 2006.

9.0 Five Mile Neighborhood Participation

Goal: Engage a broad range of citizens' groups and interests to include geographic areas, social, economic, and business interests in the creation of the Five Mile neighborhood subarea plan recommendations.

Policy:

1. Attract people that normally would not attend the meetings. Use every effective means to advertise and notify people about events and meetings such as email, newsletters, media, telephone, or issue personal invitations.
2. Make meetings constructive to ensure continuing participation.
3. Blend the planning effort into the rhythms of the community paying attention to the timing to maximize participation, i.e. hold summer meetings.
4. Hold meetings in multiple locations in the Five Mile Prairie neighborhood to engage more citizens throughout the area instead of maintaining a central location.

Goal: Generate a higher level of communication between the Five Mile Prairie neighborhood stakeholders and the City of Spokane and Spokane County officials by utilizing the Five Mile neighborhood subarea plan as a focusing mechanism.

Policy:

1. Use Spokane City Planning Goals and GMA Neighborhoods. (RCW 36.70A.080) Neighborhoods are not one of the elements required under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), but it falls within the GMA provisions for optional elements (RCW 36.70A.080). The neighborhoods chapter addresses a range of principles for neighborhood growth identified by the citizens who participated in the Spokane Horizons planning process.
2. Citizen Participation and Coordination. “Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.” In addition, the GMA, in RCW 36.70A.140, gives explicit direction regarding public participation.
3. Use Spokane County Planning Policies. The “neighborhoods” chapter also addresses the protection of neighborhood character, one of the principles from the “*Statement of Principles*,” which introduces the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs). (Refer to the Countywide Planning Policies and Environmental Analysis for Spokane County.)
4. Formal Communication Methods. Increase community awareness by *consistently* communicating the subarea plan and all operational, legislative and political issues that have financial impact on the Five Mile Prairie neighborhood to Five Mile residents and to city and county officials. A well-illustrated plan can be a local best seller to elected officials and planning professionals. Send letters to political officials, make presentations at city council meetings, testify at county commissioner hearings, follow up with emails, phone calls, etc. at regular intervals—monthly, bi-monthly, etc. Use city cable television, the Internet, computer communication, and other current technologies for dissemination of information.

5. Informal Communication Methods. Strive to provide Five Mile neighborhood residents with a community conversation about the subarea plan. Establish information centers located in schools, neighborhood centers, fire stations, or libraries. The community's conversation and actions about the future should be based on good information and documented facts.
6. Designate a Spokesperson. Find a person who is comfortable talking with the media to be the face of the effort. Seek additional authoritative partnerships to further the planning effort. Seek partnerships with other organizations and agencies that have similar goals.

Goal: Provide the City of Spokane and Spokane County officials with timely and current information concerning the needs and desires of the Five Mile Prairie neighborhood. Prioritize these concerns and produce citizen recommendations to be taken by the city or county.

Policy:

1. Assemble and prioritize residents' shared interests to build consensus on the community's future. Establish a timeline of events which provides the City of Spokane or Spokane County with the compiled information.

Goal: Utilize leaders of the Five Mile Prairie neighborhood stakeholders to further promote and advance the vision of the neighborhood and help the City of Spokane and Spokane County officials remain aware of the community's vision.

Policy:

1. Use the community's visions to help open channels of communication and forge relationships that will help people remember their common interests when facing difficult decisions.
2. Pursue and support a variety of public and private leadership training programs for the general public.

3. Inform citizens, build consensus, resolve conflict, and involve all points of view in decision making.

Goal: Organize neighborhood participation events to ensure efficient use of time.

Policy:

1. Allow sufficient time to contact community members about meetings and events.
2. Meet on a monthly basis. Five Mile Prairie's subarea plan review, revision and ratification will require several meetings. Board members will play a major role in determining meeting frequency.
3. Establish meeting design principles, visioning events, etc. to build stronger partnerships.

Goal: Incorporate appropriate models for meeting design.

Meeting Design Principles for Future Meetings.

1. Break bread together; have a community barbeque, continental breakfast, lunch buffet or potluck to set a cooperative tone and encourage informal conversation.
2. Engage people upon entry and motivate attendants of the meeting to participate.
3. Have people sign-in to obtain a broad mail or email address book.
4. Get people listening by integrating techniques that create participation.
5. Provide facts briefly and foster constructive dialogue; use handouts, visual exhibits, presentation, etc. to inform people.
6. Build on what people share; start with areas of agreement and build capacity to address more difficult issues in the future.
7. Set clear objectives; start with a clear understanding of the purpose of the event.
8. Stick to the agenda, end on time and share the results.
9. Document meetings and do a follow up promptly; mail a summary to participants two weeks after the event.
10. Be prepared to tell people what will happen next; commit to staging follow up events.

Visioning Events. Decisions the community makes should be checked against the vision statement. The vision should be a brief statement or single paragraph that describes the future direction the community wants to work towards. Successful communities develop a broadly shared vision of the future based on an accurate understanding of their local economy and assets.

Conduct Interactive Panels. Interactive panels are composed of residents meeting roughly three times a year would discuss topics set by the organizers. The purpose is to explore the views and values of the residents on the issues at hand and to address a wide range of topics. Several panels, each following the same agenda, are organized simultaneously to provide confidence in the results. Members are recruited by quota sampling to cover a range of demographic characteristics, though there shall be a regular turnover of membership to bring in new voices. Frequently, they are supplied information beforehand, and are encouraged to discuss the material(s) with friends and family. An independent will facilitate panels.

