

Latah Creek



**Specific
Plan**



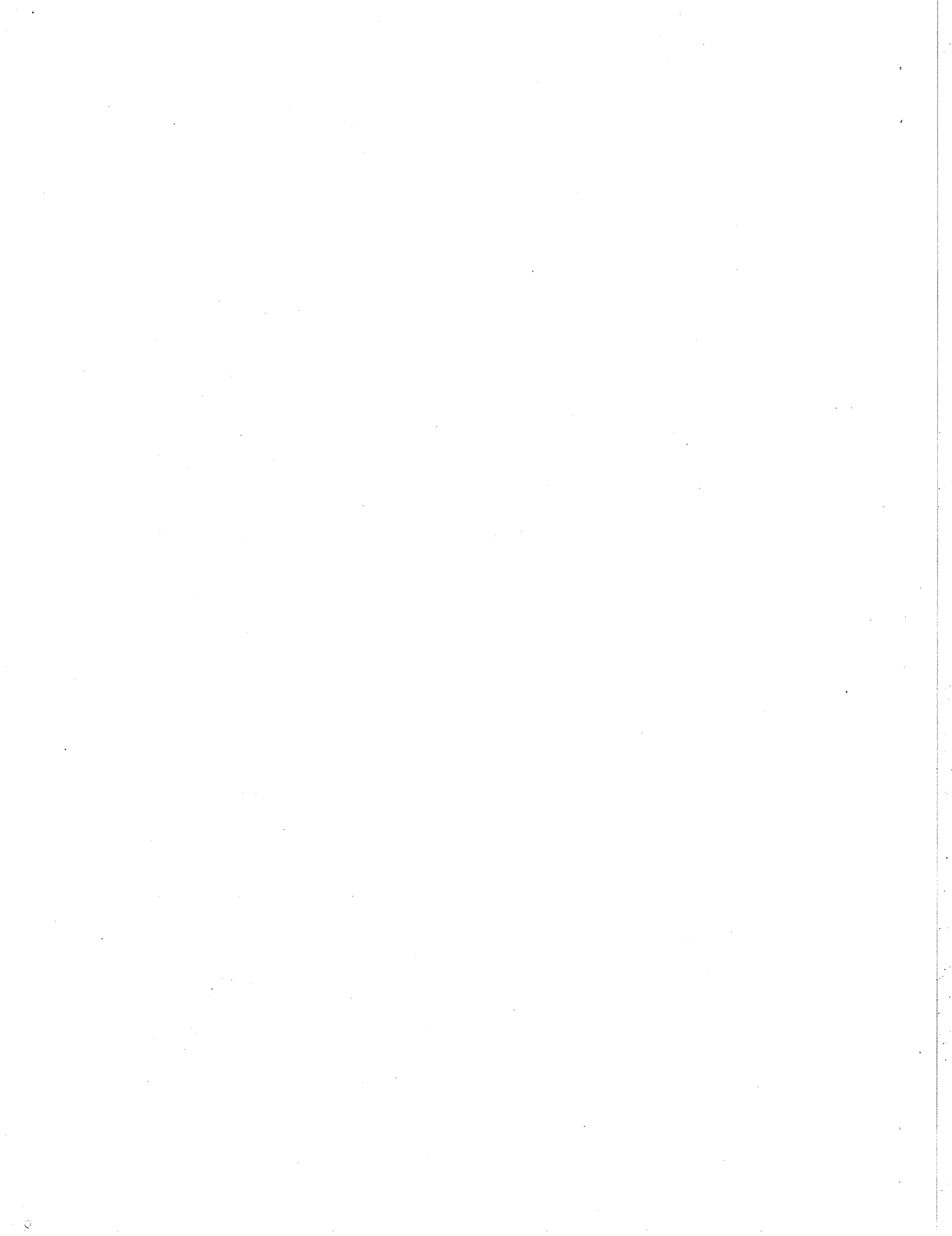


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Latah Creek

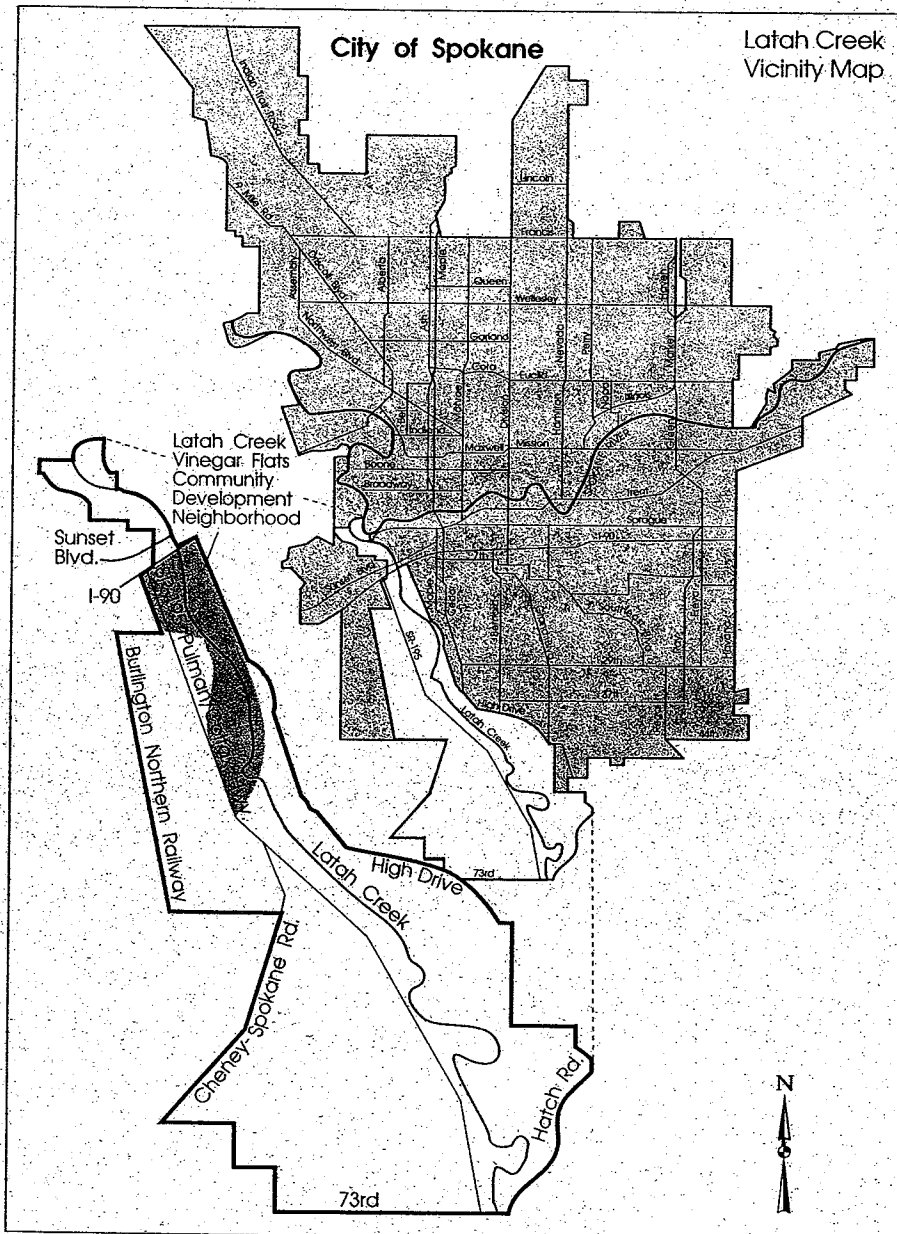
Introduction

The Latah Creek Specific Plan is the 12th "sub-area" plan to be developed within the City of Spokane. Unlike the majority of previous plans, which have been limited to areas eligible to participate in the City's Community

Development program, this plan expands substantially beyond the boundaries of the Community Development Neighborhood to include areas which are largely undeveloped. (See the Latah Creek Vicinity Map below.)

The Specific Plan has been developed to add greater detail to the more generalized policies of the various elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan. For example, this document provides more specific policy guidance regarding land use and zoning issues, the desired location and classification of arterial streets, future parks and open space needs, etc., thereby augmenting existing policy contained within the Generalized Land Use Plan, Arterial Street Plan, Parks and Open Space Plan, etc. Upon adoption, the policies contained within this document will represent the City's most recent expression of policy regarding a wide variety of issues facing the Valley. In the event of any apparent conflict between a policy of this Plan and any other, previously adopted document, those contained herein shall be considered applicable. The policies within this Plan should be consulted for all development proposals, both public and private, contemplated within the planning area.

For the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Community Development Neighborhood, this plan represents the first step in a three-phase process. Once the Specific Plan is adopted, the neighborhood will be able to begin work on developing a Neighborhood Improvement Program, which will identify desired physical improvement projects for the area and establish priorities and guidelines. The final phase of the process will be the actual construction of some of these identified improvements.



Setting

The Latah Creek planning area covers the entire length of Latah Creek as it passes through the City, from Hatch Road on the south to the confluence of the creek with the Spokane River in High Bridge Park on the north. It also includes adjacent upland areas which are related to the valley by virtue of road access and views. (See the Latah Creek Vicinity Map on the previous page.)

The planning area provides a unique entry way to Spokane from the south. It is uncommon to find an area of such outstanding aesthetic beauty in such close proximity to a major urban center. The Latah Creek Valley and surrounding uplands include a remarkable blend of both barren and forested hillsides of impressive size; basalt rock outcrops and undercut sandy banks; open lands and vegetable farms; and, of course, the creek itself. This natural setting not only provides outstanding views to motorists entering Spokane, but also is the home to many wildlife species. Added together, all of these features comprise a resource which is not and cannot be replicated elsewhere in the Spokane area.

The northern portion of the area includes High Bridge Park, a large mobile home park, and urban-density residential development within portions of the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Community Development Neighborhood. There are also several commercial greenhouses and active truck farms within this area, a legacy of the area's rich agricultural history.

The southern portion of the planning area is primarily undeveloped, consisting of more truck farms, open fields and the relatively undeveloped Qualchan plateau. However, several developments are occurring which will significantly affect the character of this area. A 3000 unit residential project is beginning to develop on the Qualchan plateau; a new City golf course has been constructed along Latah Creek between Qualchan Drive and Meadowlane Road; and associated residential subdivisions are being developed along the southern edge of the new golf course. Meanwhile, lands along Hatch Road are developing

with urban-density subdivisions. Although today the area retains a semi-rural and agricultural flavor, the developments noted above indicate that its character will change radically in the future. These projects and the attendant extensions of sewer and water utilities to serve them, will drastically change the face of the area in the next decade. In recognition of this, the Plan has been developed with a goal of retaining the existing character of the area: "a little bit of country in the city."

In pursuit of this ideal, the following goal statement was adopted to guide the development of the plan:

Maintain the rural character of the Latah Creek Valley as a "buffer" between the Palouse farmlands and the urban area as growth occurs.



View of Latah Creek and Highbridge Park



The Planning Process

The Latah Creek Specific Plan has been developed by a City Plan Commission-appointed citizens' task force. This task force reflects the "coming together" of individuals from both portions of the valley to jointly address issues of common concern. The Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Community Development Neighborhood was scheduled to begin development of a Specific Plan in early 1990. In late 1989, the Neighborhood Steering Committee agreed to "add on" to the planning area the southern portion of the Valley, which is not eligible for Community Development Funds. Residents within that area had become increasingly interested in development issues as plans were announced for the construction of a municipal golf course at Qualchan Drive and SR-195 and the extension of water and sewer service to the long-proposed Qualchan Hills/Cedar Road Estates developments on the Qualchan plateau. The magnitude of interest was evident in a well-attended meeting held in August 1989 on one of the farms in the Valley. This meeting served as an impetus for the northern and southern portions of the Valley to join together in this planning effort.

In addition to residents and landowners within the valley, the Task Force also included individuals from outside the area who represented community-wide concerns.

In late February 1990, the Task Force hosted a valley-wide "open house workshop" to solicit public input on issues of concern. Over 80 people participated in this "workshop" activity, at which individuals were given the opportunity to freely voice their concerns regarding a wide variety of planning issues

facing the area. The draft Plan attempts to respond to these comments proactively, to provide public policy which can ensure a desirable environment in the future.

The following list summarizes the main comments heard at the February 1990 public workshop:

- △ **maintain low density, with large lots**
- △ **maintain agricultural activities**
- △ **allow only limited commercial development**
- △ **limit use of Inland Empire Way to local traffic**
- △ **identify future interchange locations on SR-195**
- △ **street paving & maintenance, and sidewalks are needed**
- △ **bikeways and trails need to be identified**
- △ **maintain SR-195 as "free flowing"**
- △ **limit public access to Latah Creek**
- △ **preserve natural areas, wetlands and Latah Creek**
- △ **make additional improvements to Wentel Grant Park**
- △ **maintain nature corridors**

In addition to the workshop activity, the Task Force also utilized special mailed surveys to solicit input from both commercially-zoned and large property owners. The information received from both of these activities was utilized to guide the development of the Plan to ensure consistency with public expectations.

The final Task Force draft of the Plan was presented to the City Plan Commission in May 1991. The Commission conducted a public hearing on June 26, 1991 and after much further study and discussion, approved an amended draft Plan on August 14, 1991.

In 1992, the Plan Commission began its review of an area-wide zoning action to implement the land use policies of the draft Plan. Both public testimony and changed conditions since the fall of 1991 resulted in several changes to the draft Plan. These changes are now incorporated in this document. This final version of the Plan balances the desires of the local community with city-wide interests and needs.

The following individuals began working together as the Latah Creek Specific Plan Task Force in January 1990:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Steve Adams | Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood Steering Committee |
| Jeff Harmson | Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood Steering Committee |
| Robert Scamahorn | Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood |
| Harlow Hotrum | Truck Farmer |
| M.H. "Ole" Olson | Absentee landowner |
| Jack Kampa | South Valley truck farmers |
| Jim Balden | South Valley resident |
| Easy | Nature interests |
| Jared Miller | Economic Development interest |
| Jim Kolva | City Plan Commission |



Agriculture

Farming and agricultural activities have been an integral part of life in the Latah Creek Valley for generations and continue to be an important ingredient of the unique character of the area. Although the passage of time has seen the cessation of farming activities in some portions of the Valley, many small farms continue to economically operate, providing fresh produce and flowers for the Spokane market. This Plan provides policy support to encourage the continuation of agricultural activities without resulting economic detriment to farmers.

The Plan also recognizes the potentially adverse affects of continued development in the area on the continuation of agriculture. As the area grows in the future, with the attendant extension of streets, sewer and water services, lands in agricultural use will begin to feel the impact of non-farm land uses, potentially resulting in the conversion of many acres of farmland to residential or other uses. New development can raise land values, promoting land speculation and in time, encourages even more development.

However, the effects of land conversions go beyond rising property values. Taxes rise as the value of land increases. Air pollution can begin to decrease the productivity of farm operations. When farmers see their fellow farmers giving up farming activities, they may become reluctant to make continued capital investments necessary to maintain a profitable level of output. The presence of non-agricultural neighbors who are not accustomed to the noise, smell and dust of the farm may file nuisance complaints and

attempt to restrict the ability of farmers to conduct some of their basic operations. People residing within these non-agricultural areas may also result in vandalism and trespass of farmer's fields.

In order to effectively meet this challenge, the following goal has been established:

complaints by adjoining property owners. The law establishes the primacy of pre-existing agricultural activities which, through time, may have been surrounded by non-agricultural uses.

This Plan recommends that a law similar to the State statute be enacted at the local level, to

AGRICULTURE GOAL

Preserve the right of individuals to engage in agricultural activities, either as a primary or secondary use of their property.

Today, the farming and agricultural activities in the Valley peacefully coexist with adjacent residential development. However, as additional development occurs in the future, a variety of factors (as outlined above) could threaten the successful continuance of farming activities. This Plan contains several suggested mechanisms for helping to ensure the continuance of agricultural activities within the area, ranging from the individual who keeps a few livestock to those involved in the production of fresh produce and flowers for area markets. The agricultural activities in the Valley contribute to the public interest by maintaining an important open space/greenbelt area close to the urban center of the region and also by providing fresh high-quality produce for local markets.

Policy 1: Adopt a "right to farm" ordinance for the Valley.

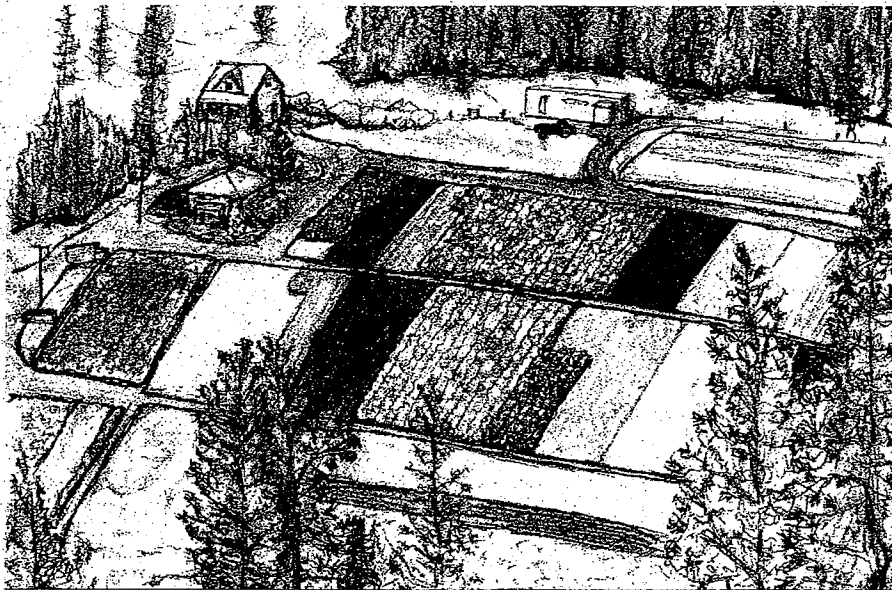
Discussion: Current Washington State law (RCW 7.48.300-310) includes a type of "right to farm" legislation which provides protection to farmers from nuisance

emphasize the importance of agricultural activities to Spokane's citizens. However, the State law should be strengthened by applying its provisions to all agricultural activities (whether pre-existing or not) and also to require that all sellers, real estate agents and title companies involved with real estate transactions in the Valley inform potential purchasers that agricultural uses are allowed in the area and that odors, dust, flies, noise, etc. may be experienced.

Policy 2: Establish an "agriculture overlay zone" for application in the Valley.

Discussion: Under the proposed new Zone Code for the City of Spokane, agricultural activities and the keeping of farm animals will be limited to areas zoned SRR-5 Semi-Rural Residential, 5 acre minimum lot size. Many existing properties used for agricultural purposes and others which are suitable, are smaller than 5 acres in size. Placing them in the SRR-5 category would allow for agricultural use, but make the lot sizes non-conforming. The result is the





Japanese Gardens

potential erosion of one of the most important elements of the life-style and character of the Valley.

In order to avoid the loss of agricultural activities over time, an "Agricultural Overlay Zone" should be established for application in the Valley. The overlay zone would provide that farming activities and the keeping of farm animals could occur anywhere within the area, regardless of the underlying zone classification of the property. In general, the overlay zone should be applied to all non-environmentally sensitive lands in the planning area, with the provision that properties could be exempt from the zone upon petition of the owner or developer.

Policy 3: Encourage the fencing of agricultural fields along Cheney-Spokane Rd. and SR-195 to protect them from theft and vandalism.

Discussion: The generally triangular shaped area formed by Cheney-

Spokane Road, SR-195 and the oxbow slough north of Qualchan Drive is the location of several productive produce farms. These fields are already subject to frequent thefts and vandalism; making access from the adjacent public right-of-ways more difficult would help to discourage these activities. Adequate protection of these fields will become more important in the future as the area develops and the likelihood of illegal activities increases.

Policy 4: Non-agricultural land uses next to farming activities should be designed to minimize potential conflicts.

Discussion: This Plan recognizes that non-agricultural land uses (particularly residential) will freely intermix with farming activities. Indeed, many of the existing farms are located within the northern portion of the Valley, where a home/farm intermix already exists.

Future residential developments should be clustered, screened and

fenced when located adjacent to farms, to increase the distance from homes to fields and to discourage trespass. Non-residential activities should minimize traffic, noise and pollution impacts on agriculture.

Policy 5: Public services and utilities within or adjacent to active farming lands should be designed to prevent negative impacts and maintain total farm acreage.

Discussion: The extension of public services and utilities through farming areas can not only result in increased property values and taxes, but also disrupt farming activities. Water and sewer lines and mains should avoid crossing farmlands unless their purpose is to provide service necessary for agriculture and then only if they can be installed at times which minimize negative impacts on seasonal farming practices. Roadway improvements in areas where farming occurs should have adequate shoulders and signs to protect farm equipment from faster vehicles. Utility districts must ensure that levies, assessments and services are consistent with long-term agriculture.

Policy 6: Support a "farmers' market" in the Spokane area.

Discussion: In summer 1991, a "farmers' market was begun in downtown Spokane as a means of adding life and vitality to the Central Business District. This market will hopefully help stimulate crop production in the Valley and also develop a greater awareness of the importance of this area in producing fresh produce for the Spokane marketplace.



Land Use

The Latah Creek planning area stands at a crossroad — future development options remain open for much of the area, providing the opportunity for public policy to establish guiding principals which will determine how this area will look in the future. Current land use policy contained within the 1983 City-wide Generalized Land Use Plan designates the area for a variety of low residential, agricultural, and open space uses. However, the “low density” category of the Generalized Plan allows for single family residential development up to 22 units per acre.

Maintaining the rural character of the area will not be possible if densities of that magnitude are allowed. The land use goal and policies that follow are intended to redefine the designations of the Generalized Land Use Plan in terms that are more in keeping with the Specific Plan's overall goal of maintaining the rural character of the Latah Creek valley.

which contribute to the area's uniqueness, while recognizing that limited growth will occur in the future. Clustered housing, continued agricultural activities, preservation of views and the provision of nature corridors and generous open space are some of the techniques which will contribute to the achievement of this goal.

Policy 1: Maintain valley lands for a variety of low density residential, open space and agricultural uses.

Discussion: The planning area consists of two major topographical subareas: the valley floor and the surrounding hillsides and plateaus. Each should be treated differently in terms of land use policy, with the majority of future residential growth directed to the upland areas.

The valley floor is the most visible portion of the area, both from SR-195 and adjacent uplands. Except

“cluster” allowed dwellings onto one portion of a site, retaining the remainder for common open space/agricultural uses.

Discussion: The Planned Unit Development mechanism of the Zone Code should be utilized for all developments proposed at a density of two units per acre or greater. Lots smaller than 1/2 acre in size could be allowed, provided that the remainder of the tract is retained for either open space or agricultural use. This residual tract could be either sold or leased to any individual or group of individuals interested in utilizing it for crop production or grazing of livestock.

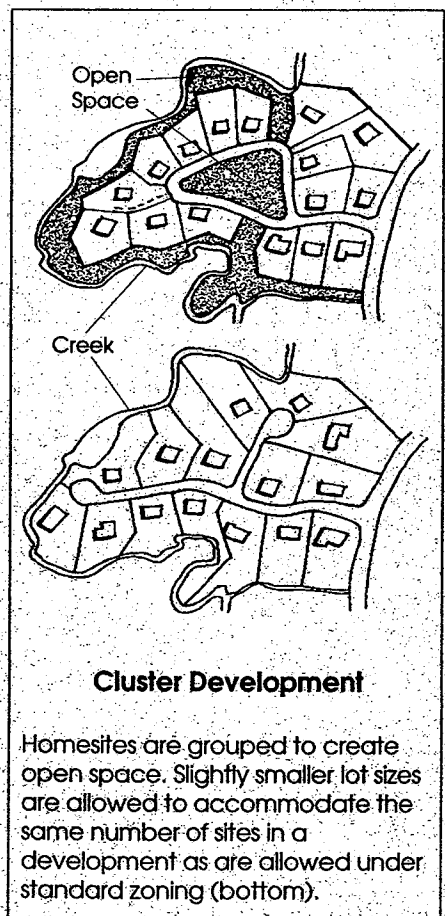
LAND USE GOAL

Preserve the low density, semi-rural character of the Latah Creek Valley and surrounding area.

The Latah Creek Valley is a uniquely distinct area within metropolitan Spokane. Only minutes from the intensive urban character of the Central Business District, the Valley has maintained a low-key, semi-rural ambiance in spite of the presence of SR-195, a four-lane divided highway slicing up its middle. The northern portion of the area, even though characterized by small, urban-size lots, maintains the feel of a small rural settlement. This Plan proposes methods to protect and preserve those features

for the northern third of the valley (which has been platted into urban-density residential lots), the area is characterized by large property ownerships, farms and vacant fields. Limited low density residential development may occur within this area in the future. As it does, efforts should be made to maintain open space and agricultural uses.

Objective 1a: Proposed residential developments of two dwelling units per acre or greater should



Homesites within these PUD's should be located adjacent to public roads to minimize paving and utility extension costs and, where abutting Latah Creek or farms, maintain desirable setbacks.

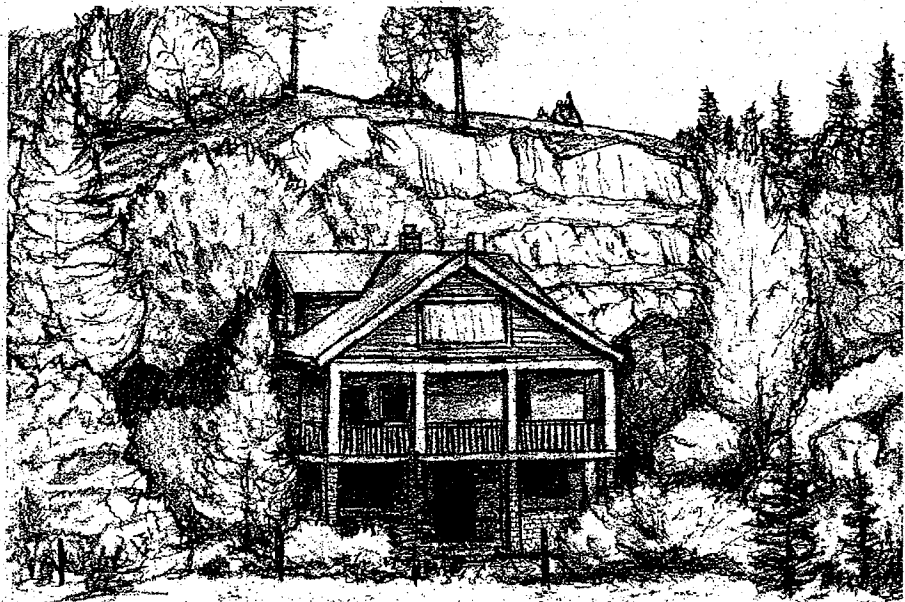
Objective 1b: Apply the SRR-5 (Semi-Rural Residential) zone district to all appropriate properties within the area.

Discussion: Intermediate lot sizes of less than 5 acres but greater than one half acre tend to limit future development options by creating inflexible development patterns which also increase the cost of infrastructure improvements (streets, water and sewer service).

In contrast, properties 5 acres and larger allow for greater flexibility in future design, as it is still possible to subdivide land in a manner consistent with the goal of maximizing open space within the area. The SRR-5 zone should thus be applied to all areas of large property ownerships within the planning area, even when the long-term intent is for more intensive development.

Policy 2: Direct urban density residential development (3.5 dwelling units per acre and greater) to upland areas.

Discussion: New residential subdivisions are being developed along both Hatch Road and the hillside and plateau south of Qualchan Drive. Sewer and water mains are being extended to serve both of these areas. Besides possessing this ready service availability, these areas also enjoy scenic views of the Valley and the opposing uplands. In addition, they are characterized by greater tree cover than most areas of the Valley. This vegetative cover can



Home Near Basalt Cliffs

help "buffer" future developments from view from SR-195, thereby helping to maintain the semi-rural flavor of the Valley.

In the mid-1980s, two large developments were approved on the hillside and plateau south of Qualchan Drive. Known as Cedar Road Estates and Qualchan Hills, they will consist of small lot single family homesites, multiple family housing areas and significant open space tracts. Approximately 3000 dwelling units are to be constructed on about one square mile of land. Due to a variety of utilities, financing and ownership difficulties, development of these projects was stalled for several years. However, with the extension of City water and sewer by fall 1991, it appears that the long-anticipated development of the plateau will finally occur. Should the initial approvals of these projects expire, new applications for similar densities and housing types may receive favorable consideration according to the Urban Residential designation

of this Plan. The Urban Residential category implies a base density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre under conventional development techniques. Bonus densities up to 5.25 dwelling units per acre may be granted through approval of a Planned Unit Development evidencing innovative residential design.

Two new residential subdivisions have been developed recently along the west side of Hatch Road, north of its intersection with SR-195. Further activity within the area should occur at similar densities (3.5 dwelling units/acre).

Small lot urban density infill development (7,200 sq. ft. lots) should be encouraged to occur within the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Community Development Neighborhood. An area south of 16th Avenue on the west side of SR-195 is designated on the Land Use Plan Map as Medium Density Residential. This area offers excellent views of the valley and west





Typical Latah Creek Residence

Policy 4: Require all new development at densities greater than one dwelling unit per five acres to be connected to City water and sewer as a condition of approval. If these utilities are not available, the development should be denied.

Discussion: The City generally requires use of public water and sewer systems as a condition of development approval. However, there are some instances in which interim sewage disposal systems have been allowed, with eventual connection to sewer being required. Private wells have also been considered for some developments. Interim and/or private systems should not be allowed, and mandatory connection to public systems should be required for all new developments, in order to protect the water supply of individuals within the area who are still utilizing private wells and to protect the natural environment (particularly Latah Creek) from potential pollution. Project developers should pay their "fair share" cost of public infrastructure costs (streets, water, sewer, etc.).

As was noted above, the extension of water and sewer to the Qualchan plateau and other areas is necessary to allow development to proceed as planned. Any L.I.D.'s which may be formed as a result of the services or other off-site improvement needs should not force area landowners to participate if they have no immediate development plans. Adhering to this policy will prevent farmers and other landowners who are keeping their land in open space from being forced to develop their properties in order to generate revenues to pay their share of costly infrastructure improvements.

bluff of the South Hill of Spokane, will enjoy good access to arterial streets and the freeway, and is geographically separate from the remainder of the planning area. Apartment developments up to 21 dwelling units per acre would be appropriate for this area.

Policy 3: Ensure that any development of the Qualchan plateau occurs in a manner that is environmentally sound and sensitive to other residents in the area.

Discussion: The preliminary approvals of the Cedar Road Estates and Qualchan Hills projects have been extended until 1997. Extension of water and sewer service to the area was completed in the fall of 1991. Should the projects proceed as planned or alternative projects be proposed in the future, there are several concerns of Valley residents which need to be addressed to compatibly integrate these developments with the community.

- a) Construction noise from the plateau is audible all through the narrow confines of the Valley. Hours of operation for construction equipment need to be limited.
- b) The developer(s) should be required to financially participate in the cost of constructing a bike path along Cheney-Spokane Road.
- c) The developer should construct the viewpoints along Cedar Road which are identified on the Environmental Resources Map.
- d) Bikeways and walking paths from the developments should connect the site with the Meadowlane Road interchange with SR-195, the golf course and new park and school sites.
- e) Strict enforcement of the mitigating measures noted in the original Environmental Impact Statement for these projects should be required.



Policy 5: Compensate owners of Valley properties in areas designated Country Residential for the development potential of their lands.

Discussion: This Plan proposes maintaining the agricultural activities and semi-rural character of the area by generally limiting the density/intensity of development within the valley floor and directing more intensive development to wooded upland areas (such as along Hatch Road and on the Qualchan plateau). However, by necessity, the streets, sewer and water systems to serve these developing areas will pass through the valley itself, thereby increasing pressures for development of these lands. This may in turn increase the value of these properties beyond what they may be practically used for, given the restrictions of the Country Residential designation.

This plan recognizes the possibility of unjust deprivation of development potential without providing for adequate compensation to the affected landowners. It therefore recommends that some method of monetary compensation be provided. At least two possibilities exist:

- a) the purchase of development rights (PDR) with public funds
- b) the transfer of development rights (TDR) between private landowners.

Realization of the first option will require the voting public to collectively decide on the importance of preserving this area by agreeing to issue bonds to raise the funds to purchase development rights. The second option (TDR) would not require voter approval, but will

require amending the new Zone Code to include the necessary mechanism.

Purchase of development rights (PDR) is a process by which local government buys the "development rights" to properties to ensure that they are maintained in a desired use (typically agriculture or open space). Funds to make the purchases are usually raised through issuance of bonds, after the citizens in the jurisdiction establishes the value of the land if it were to be utilized for the "highest and best use" possible according to development trends and other zoning in the area. Acceptance of the offer by the property owner is entirely voluntary; if accepted, future use of the property is controlled by specific deed restrictions.

Transfer of development rights (TDR) involves transactions between private landowners pursuant to regulations adopted by local government. TDR is a tool which may prove effective for implementing the policies of this Plan. Spokane has such a mechanism as part of its current (1958) Zoning Code, but since it has never been utilized, it has not been proposed for inclusion in the new Zone Code. With TDR, local government identifies lands it wishes to preserve at lower densities/intensities of development and also "targets" areas which might be suitable for higher residential densities and/or intensities of development. In the case of this Plan, the valley floor is generally designated for lower residential densities, while upland areas are to accommodate increased densities and the Meadowlane Road/SR-195 area may develop with a

community shopping center. Landowners within the two different areas would make their own arrangements regarding price, while local government would ensure that the intent of the TDR regulation was met. The "receiving" properties of the development rights could exceed the density standard of their area or develop with commercial uses, according to how much development rights are purchased.

Policy 6: The presence of water and/or sewer mains passing through agricultural or low-density residential areas should not be used as justification for reclassification to more intensive use of these lands.

Discussion: Utility extensions will be required to serve the more intensive residential developments in upland areas. By necessity, they will pass through the low density, semi-rural environment of the Valley floor. Their presence should not provide justification to amend this Plan and allow greater densities/intensities of development in the Valley.

Policy 7: Multifamily housing should only be allowed in areas so designated on the Land Use Plan Map, or as part of a Planned Unit Development and in accordance with the density standards of the underlying zone.

Discussion: The Planned Unit Development provisions of the Zone Code provide the opportunity to "group" allowed housing densities into multi-family structures, while maintaining the overall density standard of the underlying zone.



This pattern of development should be encouraged as a means of providing a variety of housing opportunities in the area and maximizing open space. The establishment of distinct multifamily zones should occur only in areas designated Medium Density Residential on the Land Use Map.

Policy 8: Existing neighborhood business zones within the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats neighborhood should be maintained within their current boundaries. Encourage the upgrading and improvement of these properties.

Discussion: There are eight separate "B1" Neighborhood Business zones located north of the intersection of Inland Empire Way and SR-195, involving 13 different properties and ownerships. These zones have existed since at least 1958, in recognition of uses which developed while Inland Empire Way was the primary route south to the Palouse. Changing driving patterns and market conditions have resulted in the discontinuance of commercial use of most of these properties; only four are currently in business use, with one additional property being a vacant commercial building. The remainder of these properties are either vacant or are being used for residential purposes.

Most of these properties are limited in size, which restricts the possibility of their development/redevelopment for business use. Those properties which are large enough offer an opportunity for small "start-up" neighborhood-serving or arts and crafts type of businesses to locate within the area. Sites that are put back into commercial use

should develop or redevelop in conformance with the development standards of the Zone Code.

Policy 9: Allow the development of a total of 20 additional acres of commercial property in the valley. New developments should locate at either the Cheney-Spokane Rd./SR-195 intersection or Meadowlane Rd. and SR-195. Any site proposed for development should be considered according to the Planned Unit Development provisions of the Zone Code and incorporate the following design features:

- a) architectural continuity amongst buildings, both within the project and with adjacent commercial projects, if such exist;
- b) low-profile buildings and signs;
- c) significant evergreen landscaping adjacent to SR-195;
- d) the rear of buildings facing the freeway to form a screen to parking areas.

Discussion: The Plan anticipates that additional residential growth will occur both within the northern portion of the Valley and also in upland areas south of Qualchan Drive and along Hatch Road. As these and the surrounding areas develop, so will a demand for everyday shopping facilities, which are currently lacking in southwest Spokane and adjacent areas of Spokane County. Specific locations for commercial facilities are not identified on the Land Use Plan Map, since more than one site might be suitable. The real estate market, operating in response to consumer demand, will determine where development will occur. This

may be at the Cheney-Spokane Road/SR-195 intersection, at Meadowlane Road and the freeway, or both. In order to prevent speculation, a time limit on commencing construction of any project should be made a condition of any zone change approval.

Convenient access to SR-195 is necessary to ensure accessibility to the larger community and also to minimize impacts to other non-commercial properties in the area. Although this Plan anticipates the eventual construction of freeway interchanges, their development should not be a prerequisite to the development of commercial properties. However, any proposed site must take into account the identified "footprint" of a future interchange, in order to allow for its construction and proper functioning. Development of commercial properties should occur according to the Planned Unit Development requirements of the Zone Code, to ensure that the design features noted above are met while encouraging innovative design, and also to provide the opportunity for compatible uses such as offices and multifamily housing to be incorporated into the project.

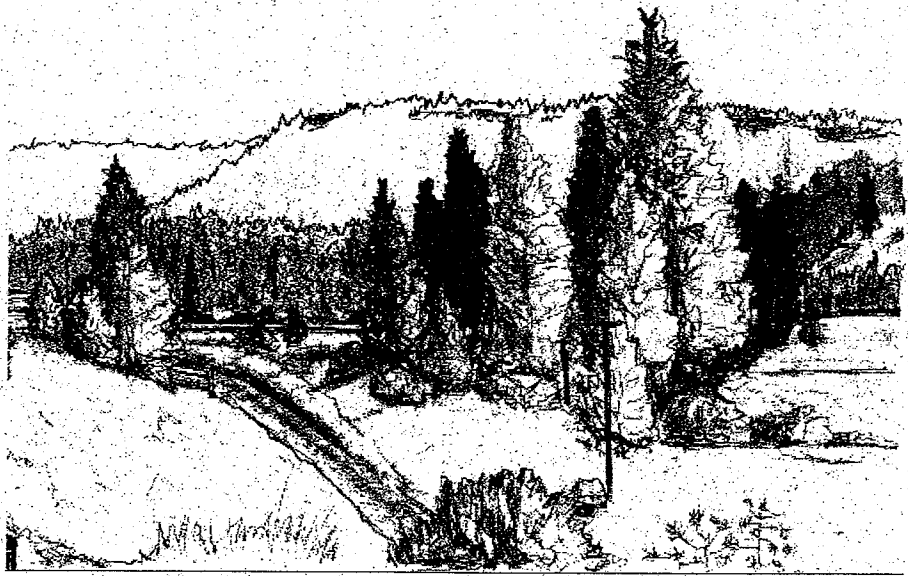
To help maintain the semi-rural flavor of the valley, significant landscaping is necessary along SR-195. A minimum 25 foot wide area should be planted, predominantly with evergreen shrubs and trees, to provide a dense vegetative buffer. In addition, buildings should be oriented away from the freeway, yet located between it and parking areas. Wall signs facing the freeway should not be allowed and the height of freestanding signs should be limited to 30 feet.



Policy 10: Acquire lands designated as "Open Space" on the Land Use Plan Map when they become available.

Discussion: Lands have been designated as "Open Space" in order to protect sensitive environmental features such as Latah Creek and the steep eastern slope of the Valley, and also to recognize existing major public/semi-public areas such as parks, school sites and the new City golf course. Although the aim of environmental protection may be achieved through regulatory control (if these properties remain in private ownership), in general, public ownership provides greater assurances against potential damage and degradation. A large amount of land shown as "Open Space" on the Land Use Plan Map is already under public ownership.

This Plan recommends that the City continue to purchase designated properties as they become available.



"Open Space" Preserves Environmental Features.

Vacant lands should be acquired first. Condemnation is not recommended; rather, the City should obtain "options" on these properties to ensure first chance of purchase. If lands along Latah Creek are not readily available, easements could be a suitable short-term alternative.

However, the goal should be to eventually purchase these properties. Also included within the category of "Open Space" are existing and abandoned railroad right-of-ways. These should also be acquired by the City for future use as pathways and greenbelts.



Land Use Plan

This map portrays intended types and density of future uses of all lands within the area, both public and private. This is not a zoning map, but a graphic portrayal of policy which may, at some future time, be implemented through private, individual rezone requests.

The Land Use Plan works within an overall concept of maintaining a low-key, semi-rural character to the Latah Creek Valley. Higher density development is directed to the adjacent hillside areas such as along Hatch Road and on the Qualchan plateau. Eight land use categories are depicted on the map. In addition to these uses, the Plan contains written policy which encourage the continuation and improvement of existing business zones in the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats C.D. Neighborhood.

URBAN RESIDENTIAL - This category recognizes the existing small lot development pattern of the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood and also the developing Qualchan plateau and Hatch Road areas. Allowable densities within these areas range from 3.5 to 5.25 dwelling units per acre (with Planned Unit Development approval).

COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL - This category allows a base density of 2 dwelling units per acre, with a possibility of increasing that to 3 dwelling units per acre upon approval of a Planned Unit Development. PUDs would be required to "cluster" allowable dwellings onto a portion of a site, retaining the remainder for open space/agriculture use.

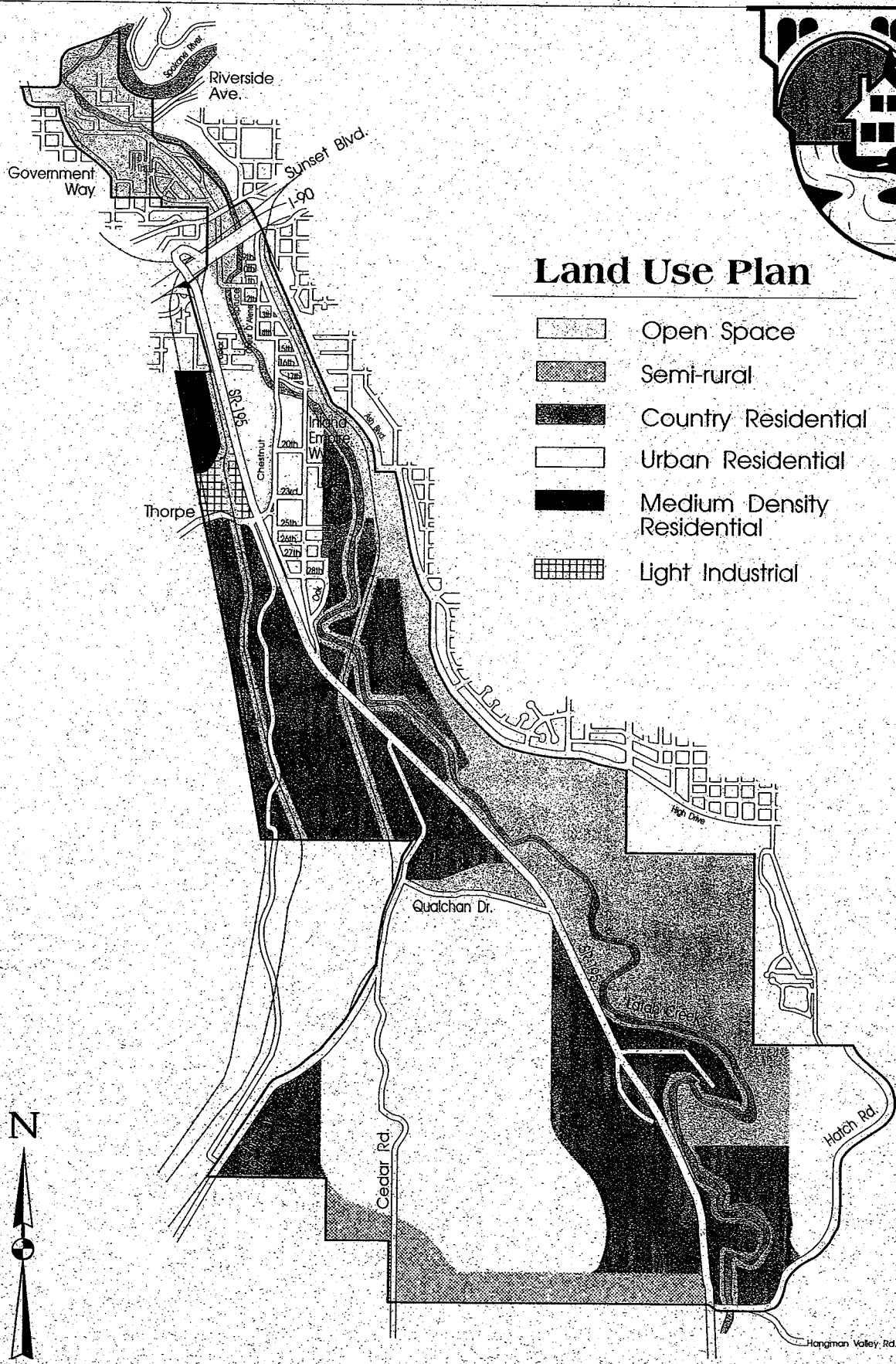
SEMI-RURAL - The Semi-Rural category has been applied to the southern boundary of the area to act as a buffer to low density areas located in adjacent unincorporated Spokane County. A maximum of one dwelling unit per 5 acres is proposed within these areas.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL - This category allows multiple-family housing development at densities up to 21 dwelling units per acre. It is applied to the upland area west of SR-195, north of Thorpe Rd., which enjoy excellent views of the valley.







LIGHT INDUSTRIAL - A small area for Light Industrial development (warehousing, light product assembly) is proposed on the north side of Thorpe Road, west of SR-195.

OPEN SPACE - This category recognizes existing publicly-owned lands and desirable future acquisitions which could complement an area-wide open space/recreation system. Existing and future parks and conservation lands below High Drive are included within this category. In addition, other lands such as railroad lines and a corridor along Latah Creek are designated as Open Space, indicating that they should be acquired by the City as they become available. *Condemnation of private properties for addition to the Open Space system is explicitly discouraged.*





Land Use Plan

-  Open Space
-  Semi-rural
-  Country Residential
-  Urban Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Light Industrial



Circulation

The primary means of access into and through the Latah Creek area is provided by State Route 195 (the Pullman-Colfax Highway), a four lane divided state highway which connects with Interstate 90 on the north and carries traffic south to the Palouse. Due to the narrow nature of the valley, SR-195 will remain an important route for both local and through traffic. The circulation policies of this plan are intended to maintain the ability of SR-195 to quickly and efficiently carry traffic, while developing a local street system that is sensitive to

the potential for increased use by runners, hikers and walkers. The circulation system for the area needs to incorporate safe and convenient routes for all modes of transportation and increase opportunities for non-motorized public access to the Valley and surrounding uplands.

Policy 1: SR-195 should be the primary north-south arterial through the area, serving traffic travelling to and from the Palouse and southwest Spokane County.

In recent years, the Washington State Department of Transportation, which is responsible for and controls access to the highway, has redefined its vision for this roadway. The highway currently features "at-grade," non-signalized intersections with area streets. At one time, it was felt that as traffic increased, these intersections would eventually feature traffic signals. However, a Route Development Plan has been jointly developed by the Washington State Department of Transportation, the City of Spokane, Spokane County and Spokane Regional Planning Council which encourages the construction of typical separated grade interchanges at limited points and the eventual elimination of other points of access.

CIRCULATION GOAL

Provide a transportation system that directs vehicular through traffic to the state highway system and enhances local street, pathway and trails systems for convenient and safe use by residents, bicyclists and walkers.

residential environments and non-motorized traffic. Given the relatively undeveloped nature of the area, both in terms of land use and streets, there is tremendous opportunity to create a pleasant and efficient circulation system.

The Latah Creek area is an entry way to Spokane from southern Spokane County and the Palouse, and also the Cheney/West Plains areas. Area roads feed into SR-195, which provides the principal connection to Interstate 90 and majority of the metropolitan area. Traffic should be routed onto SR-195 and/or associated frontage roads in efficient patterns and then discouraged from exiting to local streets which might interconnect with other areas of the City.

Because of its location and natural features, the Latah Creek area is also a favorite of bicyclists and has

Discussion: The topographic features of the area have a great limiting effect on the number of roads which may provide access both within the Valley and to points beyond. Inland Empire Way used to be the north-south "spine" from which other roads diverged; it has now been replaced by SR-195, a four-lane, divided highway.

Frontage roads will be necessary in some areas to link streets to the interchange locations. The construction of interchanges and the elimination of other points of access to SR-195 will enhance traffic safety and the carrying capacity of the highway as development occurs in the future.



Traffic Flowing on the Pullman/Colfax Highway



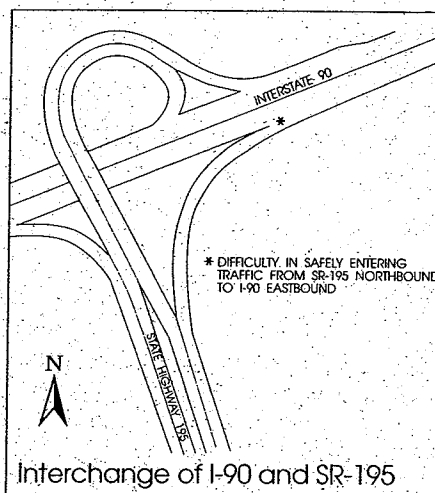
Even with future access limitations, SR-195 will continue to serve as the primary route linking together the various portions of the planning area, as well as accommodating traffic travelling to and from outside points. The circulation system should be designed to direct traffic originating from outside the area onto SR-195, to then connect with either I-90 or 2nd Avenue for motorists heading to downtown Spokane or Spokane Falls Community College/northwest Spokane. Use of local streets for through-traffic connections to the CBD should be discouraged.

Objective 1a: Minimize points of access onto the highway. Plan for the eventual construction of interchanges as identified in the SR-195 Route Development Plan.

Discussion: The Department of Transportation is planning for the eventual construction of separated grade interchanges along the highway. Construction will occur when development and associated traffic volumes indicate the need. Four locations along SR-195 are planned: Thorpe Rd., Cheney-Spokane Rd., Meadowlane Rd. and south of Hatch Rd. The local street system will need to be designed to interconnect to these interchanges. In some instances, this may require the construction of frontage roads. In addition, land uses at these points will also be influenced by the presence of the interchanges.

Objective 1b: Consider means of improving the SR-195/I-90 interchange.

Discussion: The configuration of this interchange makes it difficult for northbound motorists on SR-195 to safely enter Interstate 90. This problem is exacerbated by the fact



that eastbound I-90 traffic is frequently travelling at high speeds due to their descent from the long downhill grade west of town. The State Department of Transportation is encouraged to evaluate potential improvements to this interchange at the time construction of other interchanges within the Valley begins to occur.

Objective 1c: Construct a frontage road along the abandoned Fish Lake rail line to interconnect the Thorpe Rd. interchange & Government Way.

Discussion: As traffic volumes increase on SR-195, its interconnection with I-90 is likely to become a major constriction point. Widening the ramp between the two routes will be a very expensive project. A potential alternative to prevent excessive congestion at the interchange of SR-195 with I-90 would be to construct a frontage road along the old rail line and encourage motorists to utilize this as an alternate route to access Government Way. This would provide a quick link to Spokane Falls Community College and northwest Spokane, plus direct access into the Central Business District. Constructing this road and directing

traffic to it would also eliminate the need to utilize the street system within the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood for through traffic. This is an important element for maintaining the low-key ambience of this neighborhood.

Objective 1d: Consider closing access onto Inland Empire Way from SR-95 when traffic volumes reach 7000 vehicle trips per day.

Discussion: Inland Empire Way provides access from the south into the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats neighborhood for area residents. It also serves as a "short cut" or "back door" to the Central Business District for motorists wishing to avoid the SR-195/I-90 interchange. With new developments occurring in the planning area to the south, traffic volumes on Inland Empire Way are expected to increase. Some neighborhood residents have suggested the closing the southern access of the street onto SR-195 as a method of limiting potentially negative traffic impacts.

This Plan classifies Inland Empire Way as a Neighborhood Collector Arterial. According to the City's Arterial Street Plan, this classification of street has a practical capacity of 7000 vehicle trips per day. Current traffic volumes fall far below that figure, but increases are likely in the future. The Washington State Department of Transportation currently plans to construct interchanges along SR-195 as traffic volumes increase, and Inland Empire Way is not an identified interchange location. This means that the State will eventually look towards eliminating this point of access onto the freeway. However, it is possible that Inland Empire Way may reach its practical capacity



limits before the State is able to begin its program of interchange construction. Since it is the intent of the City to maintain this street as a Neighborhood Collector Arterial, the feasibility of closing the connection of Inland Empire Way to SR-195 should be evaluated when traffic volumes approach 7000 trips per day.

At the entrance to the valley from Sunset Highway, a directional sign is currently in place which identifies Inland Empire Way as a route to Colfax and Pullman. This sign should be relocated to another route outside the neighborhood as soon as possible. Inland Empire Way is classified as a Neighborhood Collector street and is not intended to provide a major link in the area's transportation network. Signs indicating that the street is not open to truck traffic (except local delivery) should be erected.

Objective 1e: Eliminate access to SR-195 from Qualchan Drive.

Discussion: The intersection of Qualchan Drive and SR-195 has limited visibility for motorists attempting to enter the highway due to the curvature of the road, the angle of the intersection and elevational differences. These factors combine to make access difficult, especially during winter months. In addition, a site for a future park and school are located at the northwest quadrant of the intersection; minimizing traffic by these facilities would be desirable.

Since Qualchan Drive is not a planned location for a future interchange with the highway, traffic from the plateau to the south should be directed north along Cheney-Spokane Road to enter the highway either at-grade or on a

future interchange. However, bicycle access should be maintained until such time an alternate route may be established.

Policy 2: Pave all unpaved streets within the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood and construct/reconstruct sidewalks or walkways where needed.

Discussion: This portion of the planning area is already platted at urban densities and features numerous unpaved streets. Since the Land Use element of the Plan proposes "infilling" of vacant lots within this area, it will become necessary to pave these unpaved streets. Public funds should be utilized to help reduce the expense of Local Improvement Districts to abutting property owners.

Sidewalks or walkways are needed to provide safe passage for walkers along public roadways and to provide needed links in the area's trail system. Public funds should be made available to construct these facilities in existing developed areas where they are currently lacking and also to make repairs. New residential developments should provide sidewalks or walkways in accordance with City policy. Walkways may consist of a bark or gravel path or asphalt surfacing, in lieu of conventional concrete sidewalks. These alternatives can lessen the cost of L.I.D.'s for street improvements and would be suitable for low traffic areas such as dead-end streets.

Unpaved streets also exist in other portions of the planning area. However, if these roads provide access to properties within relatively undeveloped Country or Semi-Rural Residential areas,

there may be no significant need for paving, given the lower population densities.

Policy 3: Improve traffic and walker safety by making necessary street and intersection improvements.

Discussion: Part of the rural character of the Valley is embodied within the narrow, widely-spaced roads which provide access through the southern, largely undeveloped portion of the area. These roads and their intersections were not designed to accommodate the increasing traffic which will occur as the area grows and develops. There are several locations where improvements are necessary to ensure traffic and walker safety.

The northern portion of the Valley, although adequately served by the existing street grid, has several needs which should be met in order to enhance safety and enjoyment for walkers. Needs for both portions of the Valley are addressed in the objective statements below.

Objective 3a: Widen Hatch Rd. to a Minor Arterial/bikeway standard.

Discussion: Hatch Road is classified as a Minor Arterial, but is currently developed only as a narrow, two-lane road without widened shoulders or sidewalks. Since Hatch is the primary means of access from the Valley to the South Hill, it needs to be improved to increase safety for motorist, bicyclists and walkers.

Objective 3b: Realign the intersection of Cheney-Spokane Road and Cedar Road.

Discussion: The geometry of this intersection features an acute angle



which makes visibility difficult for northbound motorists on Cedar Road. The intersection needs to be changed into a standard "T" or 90-degree configuration. Should the development of the Qualchan plateau utilize Cedar Road as a source of access, the developer should contribute to the cost of making this improvement.

Objective 3c: Improve the intersection of Cheney-Spokane Road and Qualchan Drive.

Discussion: Cheney-Spokane Road does not intersect Qualchan Drive at a 90 degree angle. The steep downhill incline of Cheney-Spokane Road as it approaches from the south makes stopping difficult during winter driving conditions. Two things could be done to improve safety at this location: realign the intersection to a true "T" configuration and provide a northbound right-turn lane on Cheney-Spokane Road. The developers of the plateau should contribute to the expense of this improvement.



Objective 3d: Realign Cheney-Spokane Rd. to the west near its intersection with SR-195 to provide a safer intersection and to accommodate future interchange construction plans.

Discussion: Future interchange plans for Cheney-Spokane Rd. and SR-195 could directly impact several homes located on the east side of the road, forcing their removal. However, if the road were moved westward, this impact could be avoided. In the interim, moving the road would also lengthen the distance between a curve and the highway, enhancing safe traffic movements. Plans to implement this improvement can proceed

independently of interchange construction.

Objective 3e: Illuminate the cast iron lights on Inland Empire Way at Sunset Highway and 7th Avenues.

Discussion: These old light standards add historic character to the area at one of the most important entrances to the Valley. They are the last remaining cast-iron lights in the city's street system. The light standards have already been restored at city expense. In addition to enhancing the area, illumination of the light standards will also improve walker safety.

Objective 3f: Install additional lights along Inland Empire Way between Couer d'Alene Street and Latah Creek bridge, and also in the vicinity of 23rd Avenue.

Discussion: Inland Empire Way is the primary route through the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats neighborhood. It is also an important bicycle route for area cyclists. Additional illumination is necessary to ensure safety and minimize vehicle-bicyclist conflicts.

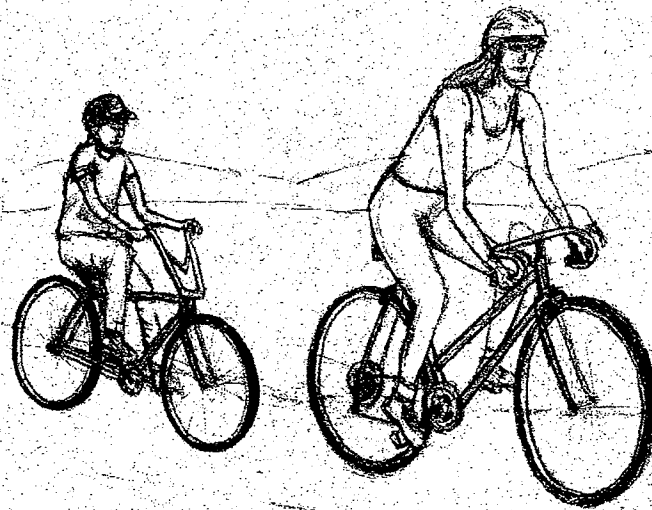
Policy 4: Provide bicycle/walkway route connections in the area.

Discussion: The bicycle is becoming a more popular means of recreation and commuting for many Spokane area residents. Bike rides to destinations southwest of the City frequently pass through the Latah Creek area. Although several routes are identified on the City's Bikeways Plan, additional routes and connections should be provided to enhance bicycle safety and use as an alternate means of transportation both through and within the area. Bicycle routes should also include provisions for walkers, where appropriate. Separate plans are needed for both bikeways and walking trails.

Objective 4a: Promote the use of Inland Empire Way as a bike route.

Discussion: The City-wide Bikeways Plan identifies both "Priority" and "Proposed" bicycle routes. Inland Empire Way is currently designated as a "Proposed Bikeway Route" by the Plan, while the abandoned Fish

continued on page 20



Cyclists Utilizing Bicycle Paths



Circulation

The Circulation element of the Specific Plan is intended to accommodate automobile traffic efficiently and in a manner which minimizes impacts to area residents. SR-195 (the Colfax-Pullman highway) should transition into a free-flowing "freeway," with access eventually being limited to four interchange locations (Thorpe Rd., Cheney-Spokane Rd., Meadowlane Rd. and Hatch Rd.).

SR-195 will serve as the primary means of access both through and within the area. Construction of the interchanges will occur as increases in traffic indicate a need and according to Washington State Department of Transportation guidelines.

When interchanges are constructed, access to the highway from private driveways and City streets will be eliminated, with frontage roads being constructed as necessary to provide access to properties. Even prior to the construction of any interchanges, the access point of Qualchan Drive to SR-195 is proposed for closure. The intersection at Qualchan Drive has poor visibility for motorists attempting to enter the highway.

Other significant improvements proposed by the Specific Plan are the realignment of the intersections of Cheney-Spokane Road with Cedar Road and Qualchan Dr., both in the interest of safety; the construction of a frontage road along the abandoned railroad line west of SR-195 to interconnect Government Way and Thorpe Road; and the realignment of Hatch and Cheney-Spokane Roads to future interchange locations.

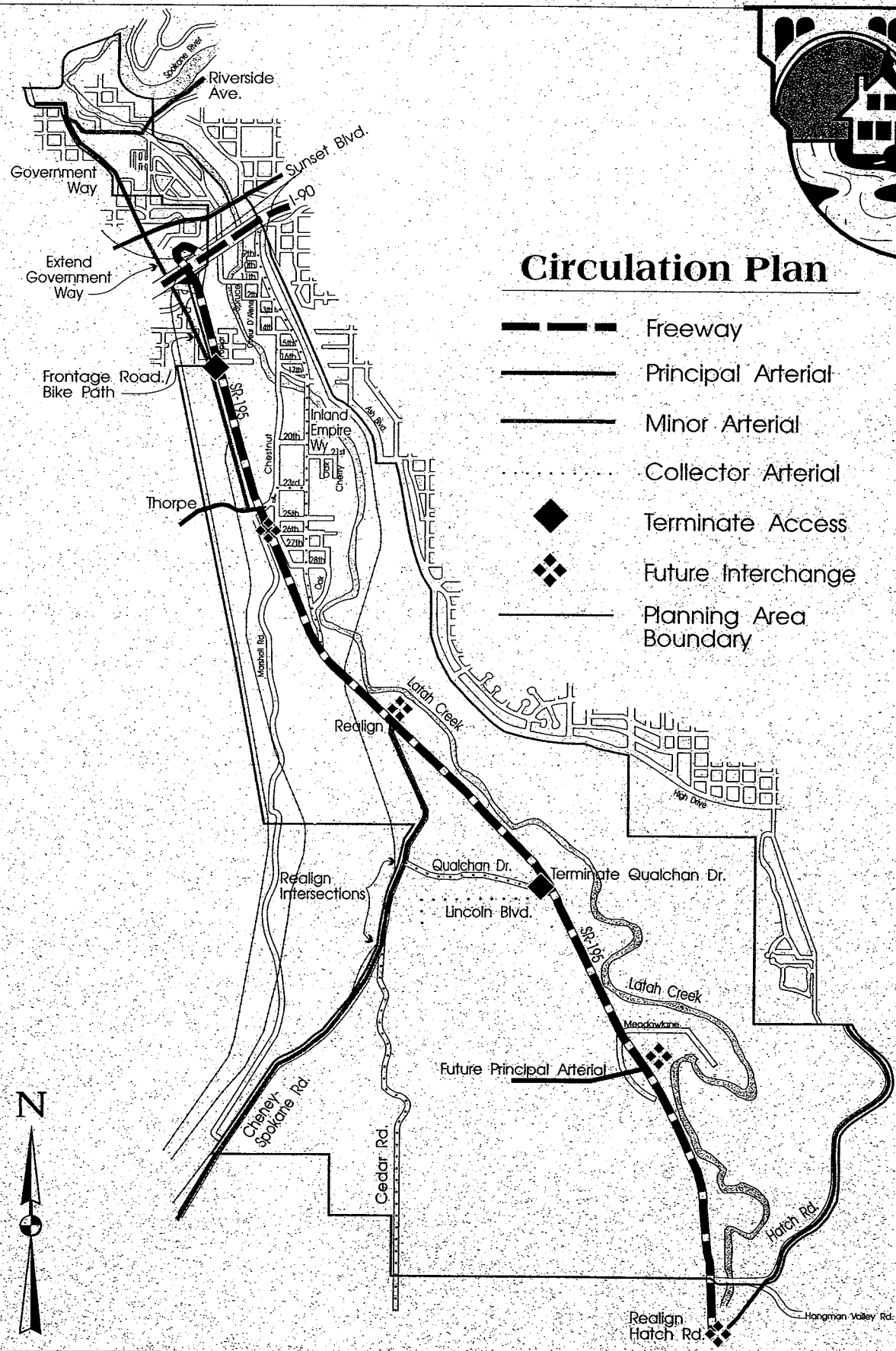
Streets are grouped into four categories, based upon the volume of traffic they are expected to carry and their intended function in the overall circulation system. Both Interstate 90 and SR-195 are designated as **Freeways**, recognizing their regional transportation roles and also meaning that access should be limited to controlled interchanges.

Thorpe Road and Sunset Blvd. are **Principal Arterials**, which are intended to be the primary means of travelling through the Spokane metropolitan area. A new Principal Arterial is also proposed to serve the large residential development on the Qualchan plateau, to interconnect with SR-195 at the Meadowlane Road area. Principal Arterials should be developed to a minimum of four travel lanes and allow only limited access from abutting properties.

On the other hand, **Minor Arterials** may consist of either 2 or 4 lanes of moving traffic, may allow on-street parking and provide direct access to abutting properties.

Finally, **Neighborhood Collector Arterials** have only 2 travel lanes and are intended to provide safe means of access to well-defined neighborhoods. They are not intended to carry traffic through a neighborhood.





Lake Railroad line is classified as a "Priority" route. Since Inland Empire Way already exists as a paved route (and was repaved in 1990) and is frequently utilized by cyclists, its status should be upgraded to "Priority" and efforts made to immediately stripe the roadway to provide a combination bike lane/parking area and narrow the travel surface for motorized vehicles to two lanes.

When the connection of Inland Empire Way to SR-195 is discontinued for automotive traffic, access for bicycles should be maintained.

When freeway interchanges are constructed, the bike route should be diverted to the Thorpe Road interchange to provide access to the west side of SR-195. In the interim, efforts should be made to improve the safety of crossing SR-195 for bicyclists and walkers.

* **Objective 4b:** Establish a bike route on Cheney-Spokane Road.

Discussion: Cheney-Spokane Road is an important connection between the City and southwest Spokane County for bicyclists. The provision of a bike lane should be included in future roadway improvements to this designated Minor Arterial street.

Objective 4c: Widen Qualchan Drive to accommodate bicycle traffic and a soft trail.

Discussion: Qualchan Drive provides direct access to a future community park and school site. It can also be used as a by-pass bicycle route from SR-195 until such time that freeway frontage roads are provided. Currently a narrow, concrete road, Qualchan Drive needs to be resurfaced and widened for both automotive and non-automotive traffic.

Objective 4d: When freeway interchanges are constructed on SR-195, develop bicycle/walkway routes along future frontage roads.

Discussion: At some point in the future, traffic volumes will increase such that it will become necessary to construct freeway interchanges at identified points on SR-195. Frontage roads should be provided in order to continue to provide access to properties fronting the freeway. Traffic volumes on the freeway will also have increased so that bicycle/walker traffic on the shoulder will no longer be desirable or safe. In order to ensure continued bicycle and walker access to points south of the area, these frontage roads should also include provisions to serve those modes of transport.

Objective 4e: Reactivate the old horse-watering trough at 20th Avenue and Chestnut Street for use as a water stop for bicyclists and walkers.

Discussion: Chestnut Street is part of the planned Bicycle/Walking trail system for the area. This watering trough was utilized in the early 1900's by horse-drawn delivery wagons in the area. Water to the trough is still available. A possible improvement project would fix this structure to make it suitable for providing water to people traveling along this route.

Policy 5: Ensure that new residential developments provide connections to area bikeways and trail systems.

Discussion: As the area develops with new residential subdivisions, these developments should provide safe and convenient routes that connect to identified bikeways and trails, parks and schools, and shopping

areas. For example, the proposed Qualchan Hills development should provide access off the plateau to the future park/school site, the new golf course and other activity centers. This will enhance the enjoyment of this unique area by future residents.

Policy 6: Provide a continuous walking corridor through the area which allows access to Latah Creek.

Discussion: The Community Facilities element of this plan includes a proposed "trail" system throughout the valley and surrounding uplands. This system includes trails within the area under public ownership which is adjacent to the creek and also utilizes public streets where necessary for route continuity. Those streets included within the walking system should receive highest priority for sidewalk/walkway repair and construction.

Policy 7: Ensure that new developments include provision for public transit service where appropriate.

Discussion: The Spokane metropolitan area continues to suffer from excessive carbon monoxide levels in the atmosphere. The primary source of these emissions is motor vehicle traffic. Use of public transit service can do much to help alleviate this problem, in addition to reducing the traffic on streets and serving individuals who might otherwise lack mobility. New residential developments of sufficient density should be served by public transit, with bus "turnouts/pullouts" being provided along arterial streets. If a shopping center is constructed within the area, room should be provided for a park and ride facility.



Community Facilities

The term "community facilities" refers to a variety of publicly owned and operated facilities which meet the educational and recreational needs of an area and the wider community. Included within the category are fire and police protection, schools, parks, libraries, and community centers.

The Latah Creek area is unique in that it has (or will have) a major city park and a municipally owned golf course, in addition to other parks and an extensive bicycle/walking trails system. The proper development of these various

Policy 1: Make improvements to High Bridge Park in accordance with the 1989 Parks and Open Space Plan and as modified herein.

Discussion: High Bridge Park is classified as one of three "Major Parks" in the City's parks system (the other two being Manito Park and Riverfront Park). The 1989 Parks and Open Space Plan includes a "vision statement" for each major park facility. High Bridge is envisioned as being a family park, with both passive and active recreational opportunities for all age groups.

Plan, except as specifically noted below. In addition, other concerns are addressed to ensure the safety and vitality of High Bridge Park and Latah Creek.

Objective 1a: Improve walker/bicyclist access from the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood.

Discussion: Access into the park from the south is available at the 11th Ave. bridge along both sides of Latah Creek. On the east side of the creek, a dirt path provides access under the I-90, railroad and Sunset Avenue bridges and then follows along the top of the rip-rap adjacent to the creek, at the toe of the slope leading up to the Browne's Addition area. Large boulders placed near the beginning of this path on 11th Ave. prevent automobiles from utilizing this route. These boulders should remain and entry signs should be erected, which identify the park, inform people of trail routes and note the distance of the trail to the next creek crossing (at Riverside Avenue).

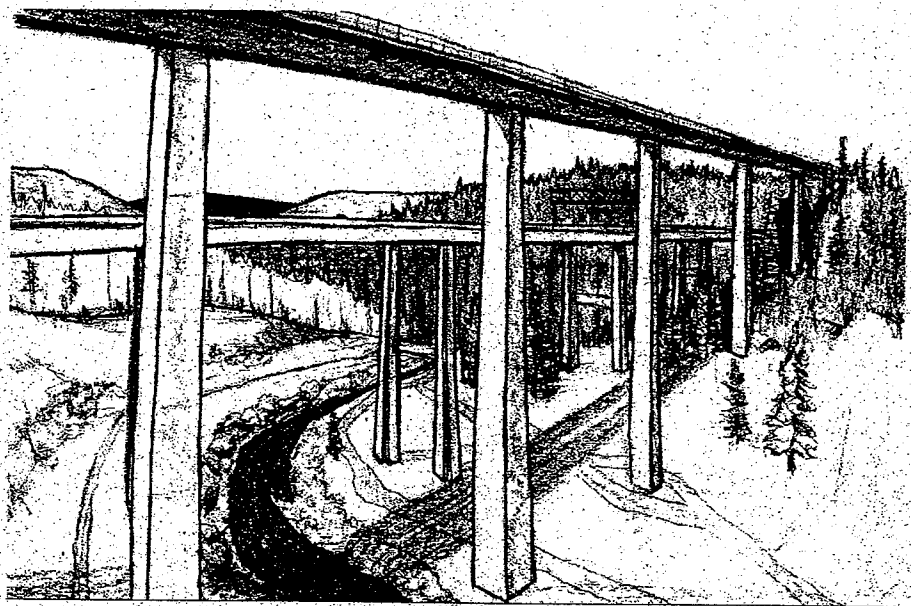
COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOAL

Provide community facilities to meet the needs of a growing citizenry both within the area and greater Spokane.

facilities is crucial to both residents of the area and all of Spokane. The Latah Creek Valley and surrounding upland areas offer a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities which serve area residents and the wider Spokane community. As development and growth occurs in the future, demands upon existing facilities will increase, as will the need for additional facilities. New parks and schools must be developed, as well as other facilities such as a fire station and community center. Continued extension of bicycle and trails systems will meet growing demands and provide alternate means of transportation throughout the area.

The guiding philosophy should be to ensure that the area develops as a complete community, while maintaining those semi-rural features which make it an attractive place to live and recreate.

High Bridge is currently relatively undeveloped, which leaves the door open to a wide variety of future options. This Plan is generally supportive of the possible improvements discussed within the Parks



High Bridge Park

Specific Plan



On the west side of the creek, motor vehicle access from the south is possible via a dirt road which provides access into the developed lawn and picnic area of the park. This automotive access creates dust problems during dry months for northern valley residents. This and all other travelled roadways within the park should be paved to minimize dust pollution. As with the east side route, a sign should be erected providing information about the park and detailing the routes of trails which follow the creek.

Additional directional signs should be erected within the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood to direct bicyclists and walkers utilizing the area's pathways system to the southern park entrance.

Objective 1b: Improve walker/bicyclist access across Riverside Avenue.

Discussion: High Bridge Park is divided into two portions by Riverside Ave., a Minor Arterial which interconnects the Browne's Addition and Peaceful Valley neighborhoods with Government Way to the west. Park users desiring to cross the street must currently do so without the benefit of traffic safety protection.

Striping of a crosswalk and necessary traffic warning signs would be appropriate at this point to alert motorists to the presence of foot and bicycle traffic crossing over the street to access the northern portion of the park (frequently referred to as People's Park). If the bridge across the creek is replaced in the future, provisions should be made to allow foot traffic to pass underneath an elevated span.

Objective 1c: Improve access to the area of the confluence of Latah Creek and the Spokane River.

Discussion: Users of the northern portion of the park (often referred to as People's Park), must park their vehicles in a small area along Riverside Avenue, more than 1/4 mile south of the confluence of the creek and river. A roadway should be constructed to provide access to a parking area located closer to the north end of the park. Other than this improvement, the area should be maintained as a "natural area" or "wildlife habitat".

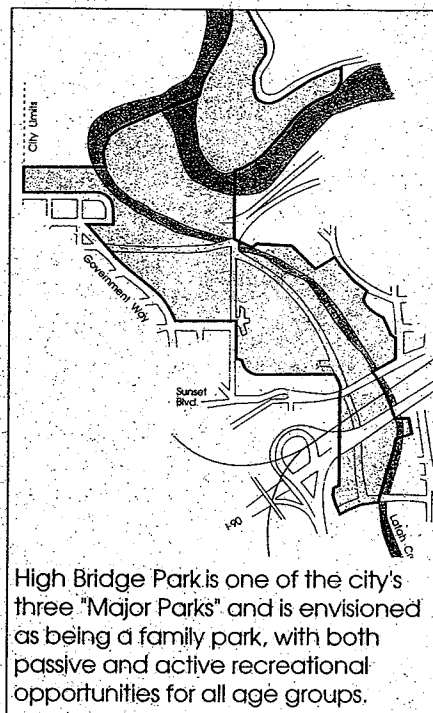
The confluence area is also one of the more scenic and interesting portions of the park. Unfortunately, during warm weather, it is frequented by nude sunbathers, which diminishes its appeal for family outings. Greater efforts should be made to enforce public decency laws and reclaim this area for family use.

Objective 1d: Develop a pathway connection between Browne's Addition and the park.

Discussion: The Browne's Addition neighborhood is located directly adjacent to High Bridge Park, yet, because of elevation differences, easy access for walkers from Browne's addition is not available. The construction of a pathway between the neighborhood and the pathway along the east side of Latah Creek would improve accessibility.

Objective 1e: Provide additional improvements to enhance family use of the park.

Discussion: High Bridge Park has great potential for the future, primarily because so little has been developed at the park. In many



High Bridge Park is one of the city's three "Major Parks" and is envisioned as being a family park, with both passive and active recreational opportunities for all age groups.

ways, the park is starting with a "clean slate." Among a number of improvements which might be made to augment the family theme of the park are the following projects:

- a) construction of additional restrooms and drinking fountains;
- b) reinstallation of the stoves in the picnic shelter;
- c) installing lighting throughout the park;
- d) expansion of the community gardens on the west side of "A" St.; and
- e) installation of active play equipment near the picnic area.

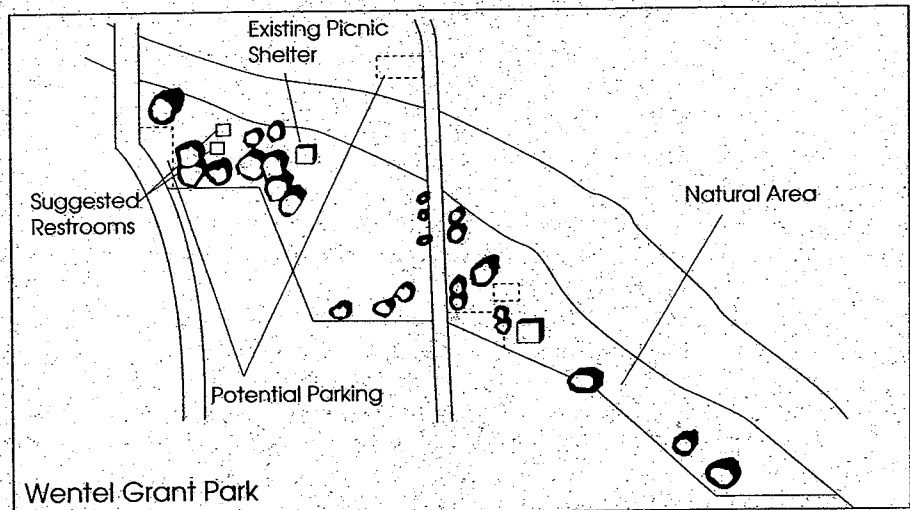
Objective 1f: Groom cross-country skiing trails within the park during winter months.

Discussion: The size and somewhat linear nature of the park makes it a natural for use by cross-country skiers during the winter. Grooming cross-country ski trails would increase recreational opportunities at a time of year when park use is otherwise very limited.



Objective 1g: Protect archaeological resources from potential damage.

Discussion: Latah Creek was a favored gathering place of native peoples in the Spokane area, long before the arrival of the white man. The confluence of the creek with the Spokane River was a campsite for several months during the year, and may have been the birthplace of Chief Spokane Garry. This area is highly important to the cultural history of the Spokane area.



The Parks and Open Space Plan mentions the possibility of a constructing an interpretive center within the Park boundaries. If this is done, it should be located in an area where minimal disturbance to archaeological resources is probable. Other construction activities proposed within the park should also be directed to areas less likely to disturb archaeological resources.

Objective 1h: Limit activities within 100 feet of the creek.

Discussion: Although High Bridge Park is a primary area within the valley in which public access to the creek will occur, sensitivity to the shorelines environment is still necessary. The Parks and Open Spaces Plan mentions the possibility of constructing additional foot bridges across the creek. This Plan does not support construction of additional bridges except for those which may utilize pilings already located within the creek or adjacent riparian environment. Activities within the 100 foot area next to the creek should be limited to maintaining existing trails, planting native vegetation where necessary and directing foot traffic to the shoreline at a limited number of points. The old dirt

roadways near the creek and in other areas need to be replanted/ reseeded with native species to restore the natural environment.

Objective 1i: Do not construct a 9-hole golf course within the park.

Discussion: The Parks Plan mentions the possibility of constructing a 9-hole golf course within the boundaries of High Bridge Park. Although it appears that the Park Board has abandoned this concept, this Plan wishes to re-emphasize that decision. The majority of the park should be maintained in a natural state, not developed as a golf course.

Objective 1j: Relocate Parks Department maintenance headquarters within the park.

Discussion: The Parks staff has considered relocating its maintenance headquarters from the north side of Riverfront Park to High Bridge Park. This Plan is supportive of the move, provided the following:

- a) the headquarters should be located on a relatively isolated portion of the park, away from view;
- b) no more than 3 acres should be devoted to the facility; and

- c) the facility should only be allowed as part of an overall development plan for the park. If a maintenance facility is constructed, it should include a room large enough to accommodate meetings by the neighborhood and other groups.

Policy 2: Continue to develop Wentel Grant Park as a Neighborhood Park serving the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood.

Discussion: Wentel Grant Park is centrally located to the neighborhood and provides another opportunity for public access to Latah Creek. The Park is relatively undeveloped, featuring a grass playfield, picnic shelter and baseball backstop. Additional improvements should be made to enhance its use by neighborhood residents.

Objective 2a: Construct facilities oriented to active use by neighborhood children.

Discussion: Enjoyment of the park by neighborhood residents would be greatly enhanced by the construction of active play equipment and restrooms. Space should be preserved



within the park for the installation of a "Big Toy" or similar play equipment. In addition, the construction of restroom facilities would make it possible for families with small children to enjoy use of the park for greater periods of time and would also augment use of the picnic shelter.

Objective 2b: Provide off-street parking to serve the park.

Discussion: Parking at the park is currently limited to that which can be found on adjacent streets. Construction of off-street parking lots at both the west and east sides of the park is necessary to meet the needs of neighborhood residents who do not live within easy walking distance. Small lots could be constructed near the entrance on Chestnut Street and also on the north side of the creek on the west side of Inland Empire Way. Both of these lots should provide shielded lighting for evening use.

Objective 2c: Improve access from Chestnut Street.

Discussion: Although the park extends west to Chestnut St., access from this location is difficult to distinguish from an adjacent residential use. A sign should be erected at this location to identify the park property and a small parking area should be provided.

Objective 2d: Maintain the eastern portion of the park in a natural state.

Discussion: Although the main portion of the park lies west of Inland Empire Way, there is a small area on the east side of the street which is totally undeveloped. Trail construction in this area and subsequent increased public access could result in habitat degradation.

It is recommended that this area remain undeveloped.

Objective 2e: Provide a bicycle/walkway connection through the park.

Discussion: Both Chestnut Street and Inland Empire Way are identified as part of the bicycle/walkway system for the area. A logical connection between the two routes could be provided through the northern portion of Wentel Grant Park. This could be provided by a soft trail or a paved surface.

Policy 3: Develop a community park at the Qualchan Drive site. Include active recreational facilities and coordinate park improvements with School District #81.

Discussion: The Parks Board has acquired an approximately 23 acre site on the north side of Qualchan Drive, near its intersection with SR-195. School District #81 has acquired property adjacent on the east for the eventual construction of an elementary school. Development of both of these facilities will be dependent upon future residential development on the Qualchan plateau. Therefore, the developer(s) of the Qualchan plateau should be required to help fund the purchase of play equipment and other facilities for the park and school sites.

A community park is intended to serve a wide population base and should therefore be oriented to provide those active facilities enjoyed by many in the community. This park site should not only include playground equipment, but also baseball/softball diamonds, basketball courts, tennis courts, etc. Facilities which could be utilized as part of the School District's

educational programs should be designed and sited accordingly. In order to limit noisy activities during evening hours, lighting of the park should not be provided.

Policy 4: Construct a Neighborhood Park on the Qualchan plateau when the area develops.

Discussion: This Plan recognizes that the entire Qualchan plateau will eventually develop with housing at a density up to 5.25 dwelling units per acre, resulting in a substantial residential population. As the area develops, a site for a park should be identified and preserved for future development. The developer(s) of the plateau should contribute to the improvement of the park site.

Policy 5: Develop an elementary school at Qualchan Drive and SR-195 when warranted by population densities.

Discussion: School District #81 has purchased a site at the corner of Qualchan Drive and SR-195 for the eventual construction of an elementary school. The development of a local school would be of great benefit to the entire area, since area school children are currently bussed to South Hill schools. It would not only meet educational needs, but also provide a focus for area residents and greatly enhance a feeling of community.

The Qualchan plateau is currently split in half, north to south, between School District #81 and the Cheney School District. This boundary should be moved westward to Cheney-Spokane Road to provide a more logical service area for each district and to ensure common schooling opportunities for future residents on the plateau.



Objective 5a: Provide safe walking access to the school site from the Qualchan plateau.

Discussion: Ideally, school children should be able to walk to their “neighborhood” school. Although the distance between the school site and the southern portion of the plateau may be too great for walking to be feasible, a large portion of the area will remain within walking distance. As the area develops, walkways and paths should be required to provide a direct and safe linkage to the school site for youngsters.

Policy 6: Develop a walkway/trail system throughout the area to connect activity centers and residential areas, and to provide access to natural features and open space.

Discussion: More and more people are rediscovering the joys of walking for not only recreational/health purposes, but also as an alternate means of transportation. Since the area is relatively undeveloped, there are ample opportunities for creating an integrated, functioning trail/pathway system.

A skeletal system is portrayed on the Bikeways/Trails map contained within this Plan. This system provides for linkages between public access points to Latah Creek and also routes for traffic travelling through the area. The system will need to be expanded to connect area residents with a future shopping center, community and neighborhood parks and the elementary school site.

Policy 7: Secure a community meeting location within the northern portion of the valley.

Discussion: There currently is no location within the valley where the Latah Creek/Vinegar Flats Neighborhood may conduct their meetings. Instead, these activities occur within Browne’s Addition. Providing a meeting location within the area is needed to strengthen the social life of the community.

Several locations have potential. All would require the acquisition or lease of the property for public use, and, in one instance, the actual construction of the facility. The following are suggested as possible future community meeting space locations:

- a) the old Lowell School on Inland Empire Way;
- b) the old feed store on Chestnut St.;
- c) the parks maintenance facility, if it is constructed within High Bridge Park.

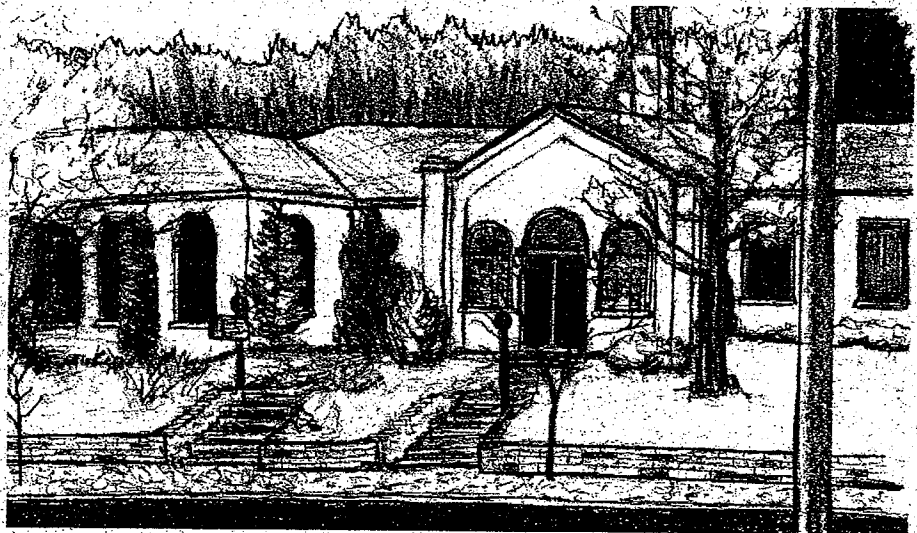
Policy 8: Maintain a high level of protective services as the area grows and develops.

Discussion: Should the area develop in the locations and with the densities envisioned by this Plan,

there will be a need for increased police patrolling and more readily accessible fire service. The latter will probably require the construction of a new station within the Valley, since at this time, the closest one is located at the western edge of downtown Spokane, at First and Adams. Ideally, a new station should be centrally located to enjoy quick access to residential areas. A site next to, or integrated with, a future shopping center may be appropriate and could minimize impacts to residences in the area.

Policy 9: Distribute the cost of sewer and water utilities extensions fairly and equitably.

Discussion: All development within the area should be required to connect to public water and sewer. This will require the extension of the utilities to individual projects, often through lands for which the property owner has no development plans. Methods of assessment should not result in undue hardships for property owners who desire to keep their land in agricultural or open space use.



Lowell School: Possible Site of Community Meeting Location



Community Facilities

This map portrays both existing and future publicly-owned parks and recreational facilities. The Specific Plan contains numerous policies regarding the intended use and development of the various facilities noted on the map.

High Bridge Park should be developed as a Regional Park for the Spokane area. The Plan notes the need to improve access to all areas of the park; to provide additional parking; and to add amenities to encourage its use for family outings.

Wentel Grant Park should be improved with restrooms, off-street parking areas and additional play equipment. The portion of the park east of Inland Empire Way should be maintained in a natural state.

The other park site on the map is the recently-acquired Qualchan property, which is adjacent to a future elementary school site owned by School District #81. Development of this park will most likely be triggered by residential growth on the Qualchan plateau. This site is classified as a "Community Park," meaning it should include facilities such as tennis courts, softball diamonds, etc.

The Plan encourages additions to the existing Conservation Lands located along the steep eastern hillside of the valley. These lands should be maintained in their natural state and reclamation efforts made where damage has occurred. Also included within the designation of Conservation Lands are existing and abandoned railroad lines, significant basalt rock outcroppings; and a corridor adjacent to Latah Creek.

The Plan encourages the acquisition of all Conservation Lands as they become available; condemnation of private properties is not encouraged.


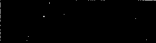


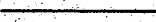
Also shown on this map is the primary bikeways/footpath system for the area. Additions and connections to this "backbone" system should be made as part of each new development. The Plan encourages development of both of these facilities to encourage use of these means of travel for both recreational and commuting purposes. Bikeways may consist of painted lanes at the edge of roadways or totally separate pathways. The walking path system will consist of a combination of sidewalks, paved pathways and soft trails.

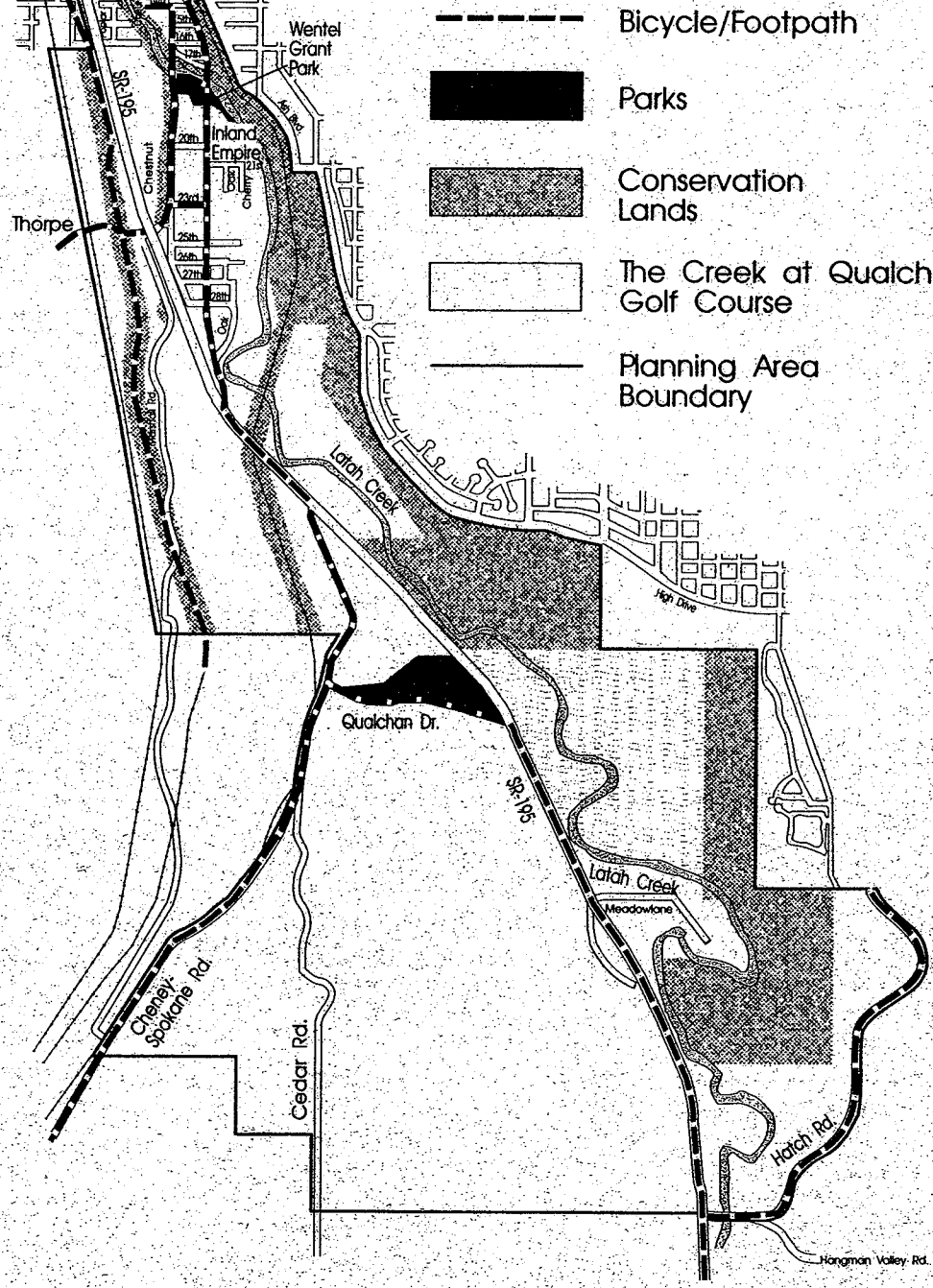




Riverside Ave.
 Government Way
 High Bridge Park
 Sunset Blvd.
 I-90

Community Facilities

-  Bicycle/Footpath
-  Parks
-  Conservation Lands
-  The Creek at Qualchan Golf Course
-  Planning Area Boundary



Environment

Latah Creek.... a variety of wetlands, basalt rock outcroppings, glacial sandcliffs, forested hillsides. The Latah Creek area contains a wide variety of both interesting and sensitive environmental features. They are not only important elements of natural systems and their functioning, but are also amenities which add to residents' and visitors' enjoyment of the area. As development occurs in the future, these features will need protection from the potentially adverse effects of human activity. This protection may occur through a variety of means, including public acquisition of desirable lands (when they become available), creative development design, development regulations, and/or viewshed protection. In furtherance of this goal of environmental protection, the following goal has been established:

Policy 1: Protect sensitive habitat along Latah Creek.

Discussion: The Latah Creek riparian environment provides habitat for a variety of birds and animal species. These species include kingfishers, herons, eagles, osprey, hawks, mallards, white-tailed deer, mule deer, porcupine, skunk, ermine, and beavers. Protection of this environment is important to maintaining the viability of this area for wildlife and also to ensure other ecosystem functioning such as cleansing of stormwater runoff before it enters the creek.

Objective 1a: Do not allow habitat degradation within the nature corridor along the shoreline.

Discussion: The City's Shorelines Management Regulations require a

Policy 2: Maintain existing wetlands and their functioning through sensitive site design and/or public purchase.

Discussion: In addition to the Latah Creek environment, the planning area contains several wetlands such as Spring Lake, Crystal Spring and Marshall Creek, which also serve important roles in wildlife habitat and stormwater management. These wetland areas are identified on the Environment Resources Map. In order to enhance public awareness and appreciation of these wetlands, their locations should be identified by signs along adjacent public roadways.

In some instances, human activities have resulted in the alteration of these areas, adversely impacting their visual quality and ecological function. The Sunny Creek Mobile Home Park is one example of inappropriate development adjacent to a wetlands area. Further degradation of this wetland (and others) should be prevented by careful regulation and control of developments in their immediate vicinity through the use of Planned Units Developments and granting of bonus densities for wetlands protection. Further study of all area wetlands should be accomplished in order to more fully understand their individual functioning, character and sensitivity to impact from adjacent development.

Objective 2a: Restore the Marshall Creek slough.

Discussion: The Marshall Creek slough, located on the north side of Qualchan Drive near its intersection with Cheney-Spokane Road, has suffered severe impacts from the

ENVIRONMENT GOAL

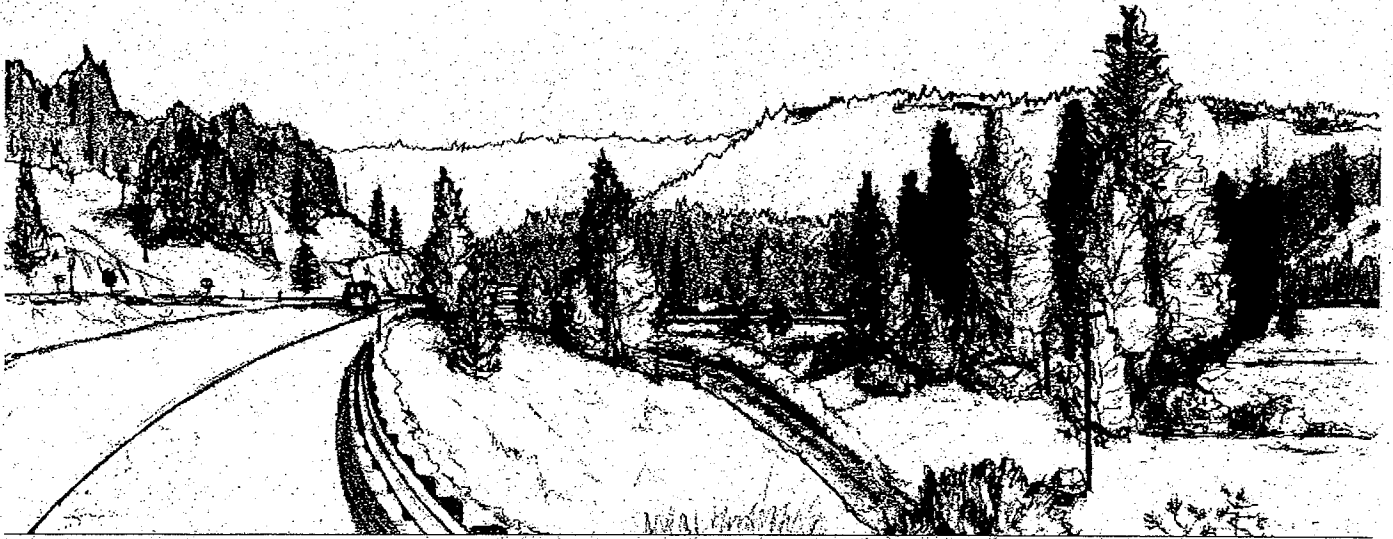
Preserve and protect the unique environmental features of the area for both the benefit of natural systems and human enjoyment.

This Plan recognizes that many environmental features need protection not only because they are visual amenities or offer an opportunity for informal recreation, but also because they are important to the continued functioning of natural systems. The perceived "mosquito-breeding swamp" may actually be a wetland that provides a rich habitat for a variety of wildlife species, while at the same time, both storing and cleansing stormwaters before they enter surface or groundwater systems. The interrelationship of these features and their sensitivity to human impacts must be carefully considered as development occurs within the area.

50 foot wide natural buffer area along Latah Creek. However, they do allow the construction of bulkheads and placement of riprap next to the creek. Only "clean" rock riprap and gabions which allow native grasses to grow within them should be allowed for erosion control. The use of busted-up concrete and asphalt should be prohibited.

Protection of the streambank, riparian and adjacent environments could adversely impact property owners along the creek. Preferred means of preserving/protecting the streambank should be added to the list of criteria for granting residential bonus densities in Planned Unit Developments.





View of Latah Creek Area from Southern End Looking North.

development of the adjacent Sunny Creek Mobile Home Park. The main access drive into the park was developed by placing two culverts in the slough and then filling and paving to create a road-way surface. Restoration of the quality of this wetland should be utilized as a criteria for granting bonus densities for any proposals to redevelop the mobile home park site.

Policy 3: Maintain and protect natural drainage systems to protect water quality & reduce environmental degradation.

Discussion: Natural drainage systems serve many important functions, including storing and regulating stormwater runoff, purifying surface water, conveying water and supporting important biological activities. The area's wetlands are also important elements of these systems. Alteration of natural systems can result in such damage as flooding, erosion, sedimentation and damage to water quality both in wetlands and in Latah Creek. Public improvements and private developments should not alter drainage systems without providing acceptable mitigating measures which eliminate negative

impacts to water quantity and quality.

Policy 4: Require retention of significant native vegetation and natural features in all new developments.

Discussion: The hillsides and uplands within the area typically enjoy greater forest cover and more substantial vegetation than lands within the valley floor. When developments (meaning anything greater than single family home construction on pre-existing lots) are proposed within these areas, an inventory should be required prior to the commencement of site work, in order to identify the general location of large trees and other significant vegetation. Site design should then be guided in such a way as to minimize the need for tree and understory removal. This will help with bank stabilization, provide wildlife habitat, and also "soften" the view of these developments from SR-195 and the valley floor.

Where basalt outcroppings exist, roadways should be diverted to avoid the need to remove or undercut these features.

On the valley floor, residential densities should be "clustered" to keep homesites away from Latah Creek and wetland areas. Natural vegetation should be maintained within these common areas to provide protection to these features. For non-residential developments, a natural buffer area should be required.

Policy 5: Maintain scenic views of the natural features noted on the Environmental Resources Map and a sense of "openness" along SR-195.

Discussion: Although the entire planning area contains numerous desirable views, there are several unique features/viewpoints which deserve special attention. These features are identified on the Environmental Resources Map. Maintenance of these views should be accomplished by limiting building scale and height within the viewshed.

In addition, views of the valley and surrounding uplands are outstanding for motorists travelling along SR-195. The land use policies of this Plan encourage the maintenance of

continued on page 32



Environmental Resources

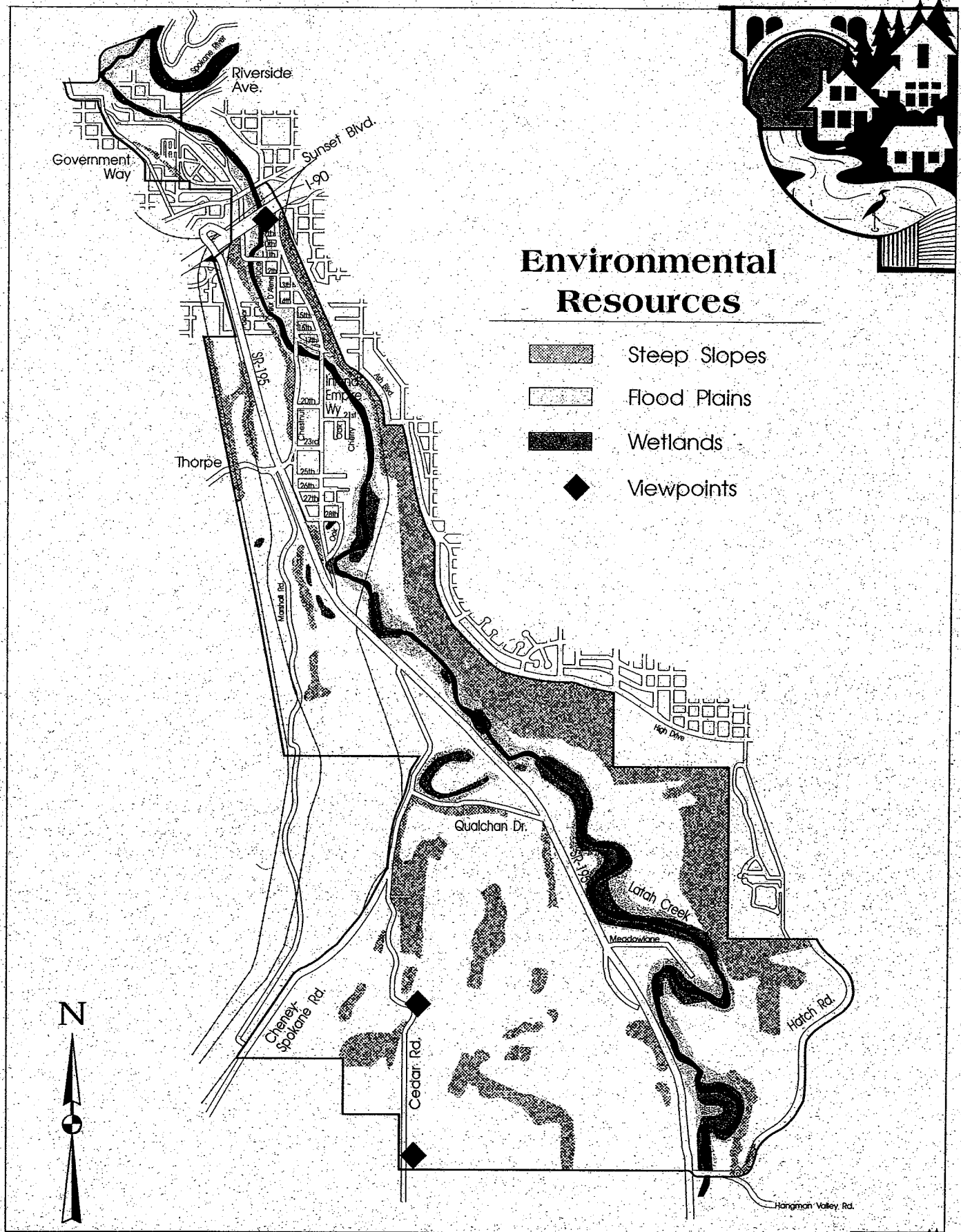
The Latah Creek valley and surrounding hillsides include a wide variety of environmental resources which are valuable amenities for both human enjoyment and for the functioning of natural systems. The Specific Plan contains policies which indicate desired management techniques for the lands shown on this map.

Areas designated as "**Steep Slopes**" contain slopes in excess of 30% (approx. 1:3). The City already has policies regarding these areas, found within the City-wide Land Use Plan. In general, those policies restrict development unless it is demonstrated that it can be accomplished in a manner that does not impose a threat to natural systems, human life or property. The Specific Plan also calls for greater efforts to protect the hillside beneath High Drive, including greater enforcement of prohibitions against off-road vehicle use.

The "**Floodplains**" areas on the map are those lands which are likely to flood in a 100-year flood event. Adjacent to these areas and elsewhere in the valley are "**Wetlands**," which have been identified through use of National Wetlands Inventory Maps. The Plan discourages activities within both of these areas which could alter their natural character and functioning, and, in the case of wetlands, encourages their purchase and management by the City as these properties become available.

Finally, the map indicates desired **Viewpoints** along public streets. These locations should be developed with vehicle turnouts, benches, etc.





a low-density, semi-rural/agricultural environment within the valley floor. Those developments which do occur within the valley should be reviewed for their potential visual impact on the aesthetic quality of the SR-195 corridor.

Policy 6: Protect the steep slopes along the eastern edge of the Valley.

Discussion: Most of the slopes which run from the valley floor up to High Drive are under public ownership. Those areas which are not should be acquired when possible to ensure public protection of this sensitive environmental area. Lands so acquired should be placed in a "conservation status" and managed according to the City's policies regarding these types of lands.

In addition, the City must take further measures to prohibit off-road vehicle access onto these slopes. Motor vehicle access from High Drive must be prevented through the use of aesthetic barricades. Signs indicating that motorized vehicle use is prohibited need to be erected and City police need to place greater emphasis on enforcing this regulation.

Many portions of the slopes have suffered damage abuse by off-road vehicles and/or the railroad. These areas need to be replanted with native vegetation to restore their former stark beauty and prevent possible erosion.

Policy 7: Developments in areas of steep slopes should be designed to prevent possible

property damage and environmental degradation and to enhance greenbelt and wildlife habitat values.

Discussion: The Environmental Resources Map identifies areas of greater than 30% slopes located outside of current or proposed public ownership. In 1988, amendments to the Generalized Land Use Plan were adopted which effectively address the issue of developing within these areas. Those policies should be referred to as necessary.

Policy 8: When possible, acquire lands noted as scenic amenities on the Environmental Resources Map.

Discussion: Of the numerous scenic amenities the Valley and surrounding uplands have to offer, several are not located within areas designated as "Open Space" on the Land Use Plan Map. These are typically isolated sites within areas that are otherwise suitable for development. The basalt outcroppings along the western edge of Latah Creek, beneath the Spokane Cascade Mobile Home Park, and similar outcroppings west of Marshall Road near its intersection with SR-195 are examples of these types of areas. In order to ensure long-term maintenance of these interesting features, the City should actively pursue their acquisition.

Policy 9: Encourage maintenance of all properties within the area, both private and public.

Discussion: Enhancing the environment of the Latah Creek area is a primary goal of this Plan. Several actions are necessary to achieve that end:

- a) Noxious weed control: both private and public property owners need to take action to control noxious weeds. These species are a hazard both to farmlands and natural areas, where they can overtake more desirable varieties which have greater value for wildlife. The City and State both need to make greater efforts in this area.
- b) Control of accumulations of junk and litter: Numerous property owners within the area have yards full of dilapidated vehicles and other "junk" materials. If necessary, public funds should be to clean up the sites and a lien placed upon the property.

The Plan also recommends further acquisition, without condemnation, of public properties within the area. The City must spend greater attention to maintaining its lands, both in parks and in conservation areas, in order to ensure continued public support for property acquisition and to prevent environmental degradation.

Policy 10: Protect and preserve historical and archaeological resources within the area.

Discussion: The Latah Creek Valley was a favored hunting, fishing and camping area for native Americans long before the arrival of the earliest white settlers. The entire valley is rich with archaeological resources, which need to be protected from inadvertent disruption. A site analysis should be required prior to construction for any development proposed within the area to determine the likely presence of artifacts and provide a means for their protection and preservation.



Acknowledgments

| Latah Creek Neighborhood Specific Plan Task Force | Spokane City Council | City Plan Commission |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
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Notes:

