

Working Outline Draft 6/20/2017

The following document was originally discussed at the third meeting of the Working Group on June 13. Additional edits, shown in tracked changes, have been made by staff in response to discussion at that meeting and after additional research into the topic.

Mechanism for Allowing Greater Flexibility in Building Heights

I. Options for Implementation

- A. Existing "Plans in Lieu" Method.
- B. Newly-created Special District.
- C. Amend existing code for DTC-100 zone.

The working group feels that Option C is the most effective solution available. Amendments to the DTC-100 zone would be need to be consistent with the Downtown Plan, which identifies properties within the DTC-100 as catalytic opportunity sites.

II. Desired Outcomes

- A. Create opportunities within the DTC-100 zone for mixed-use redevelopment and incentives for residential development to occur in an economically viable manner.
- B. Put activity on the street.
- C. Create relationships with the enhanced park.
- D. Consider and mitigate development impacts to light, air, vistas and shade to the park, especially along the Howard Street Promenade within Riverfront Park, while allowing more flexibility in development standards.

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III. Principles

A. Unique Place

Create a positive, highly identifiable environment in the area bounded by Main Street, the Spokane River and Riverfront Park, Lincoln Street, and Washington Street that will draw people to a wide range of public and private destinations.

B. Integrated Development

Guide the redevelopment of properties along the south side of Spokane Falls Boulevard in order to result in a seamless integration with the enhanced park, so that the entire area is a lively and ever-changing part of downtown.

C. Active Streetscapes

Ensure a lively and activated streetscape through both management of public spaces and activation by commercial and residential uses that embrace the public realm.

D. Varied Building Forms

Promote flexibility in building location, form, height, and massing. Avoid creating a continuous “wall” effect fronting the park.

E. Economic Development

Attract types of development and uses that can reinforce activities and spaces associated with the park and residents who can monitor and populate the area.

F. Howard Street Corridor

Preserve significant amounts of sunlight throughout the year on the highly important Howard Street corridor through the park.

IV. Development Standards (Conceptual)¹

The following development standards would necessitate code amendments to SMC 17C.124.220.

A. Floors occupied exclusively by residential, live/work, and/or hotel uses may be allowed as a bonus to extend above the underlying height limit under certain conditions as indicated below.

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B. If residential and hotel uses are located in the 100 foot building base, an equal area of non-residential uses may be permitted above 100 ft, provided all other requirements of the bonus height provisions have been met.

C. Floor plates above 100 feet shall be no larger than 14,000 sf (or as may be determined from the subsequent public process).

Commented [A1]: The Working Group discussed the floor plate standards applicable to the north bank (145 feet maximum diagonal) but on further calculation that standard was found to be more restrictive than this original number. Thus, no change has been made here.

D. The long dimension of building floors above 100 feet shall be perpendicular to Spokane Falls Blvd.

E. Towers above 100 feet shall be spaced apart no less than 50 to 70 feet (roughly the same as a north/south street cross section) or as may be determined from the subsequent public process.

F. Active retail (shops, personal services, and food services) or residential uses shall occupy no less than 50% of the street frontage. Corporate offices, banks, and financial institutions do not qualify as retail. Such uses shall have entrances directly on the public sidewalk.

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V. Design Review & Guidelines

Because of the relationship of properties in the DTC-100 Zone to significant public open spaces, such as Riverfront Park, development should receive extra attention through the

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¹ All numbers included in these standards are conceptual in nature and subject to future study and discussion.

City's design review process. In this review, a number of expectations will need to be demonstrated by proposed buildings:

- A. Architectural detail at the ground level that supports people walking, lingering, eating, and socializing. This should include elements such as moveable tables and chairs, pedestrian-scaled lighting, pedestrian-scaled signs, generous windows that open out to the park with possibly roll-up or sliding sections, canopies, and artwork.
- B. Enhancements to the existing sidewalk areas to ensure that they feel welcoming, usable, visually interesting, and usable to all members of the public. Ways of extending character-giving aspects of the park should be provided in this wide sidewalk area. For example, places for live music and temporary art could be provided.
- C. Upper stories of buildings should be articulated with architectural "sculpting" such as decks, balconies, projecting bays, recesses, offsets, changes in materials and color, roof gardens, upper levels setbacks. Flat, featureless, rectilinear forms are to be avoided.
- D. In order to reflect the importance of a gateway effect, the corners of buildings should be given special treatment such as public spaces, distinctive architectural expressions, major entrances, dramatic lighting, and unique landscape design.
- E. At the initial stage of review, the Design Review Board should express its priorities and not merely react to already-designed proposals. The process between the DRB and the applicant shall be a collaborative one. Adherence to the principles listed previously shall inform the review.

F. Any towers above 100 feet should be placed so as to give consideration to sunlight, air, views, and vistas, especially on the Howard Street Promenade within Riverfront Park.

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VI. Additional Code Recommendations

A. Replace the existing image in SMC 17C.124.220.E.1 with the updated image presented to the working group.

B. Correct noted inconsistencies in the language in SMC 17C.124.220.

VII. Recommendation for Future Action²

A. Plan for coordinated streetscape improvements along Spokane Falls Boulevard.

B. Consider the elimination of the DTC-100 zone within the scope of the Downtown Plan Update.

² Outside the scope of the Working Group discussion.

C. Review of Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines, including a study of height and massing standards, as part of the Downtown Plan Update scope, or as a subsequent strategic action , assuming adequate budget and time.

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