

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY REVIEW FOR INFILL HOUSING

LAND USE

LU 1.1 Neighborhoods

Utilize the neighborhood concept as a unit of design for planning housing, transportation, services, and amenities.

Discussion: Neighborhoods should have identifiable physical boundaries, such as principal arterial streets or other major natural or built features. Ideally, they should have a geographical area of approximately one square mile and a population of around 3,000 to 8,000 people. Many neighborhoods have a neighborhood center that is designated on the land use plan map. The neighborhood center, containing a mix of uses, is the most intensive activity area of the neighborhood. It includes higher density housing mixed with neighborhood-serving retail uses, transit stops, office space, and public or semi-public activities, such as parks, government buildings, and schools.



A variety of compatible housing types are allowed in a neighborhood. The housing assortment should include higher density residences developed in the form of small scale apartments, townhouses, duplexes, and rental units that are accessory to single-family homes, as well as detached single-family homes.

A coordinated system of open space, nature space, parks, and trails should be furnished with a neighborhood park within walking distance or a short transit ride of all residences. A readily accessible elementary school should be available for neighborhood children. Neighborhood streets should be narrow and tree-lined with pedestrian buffer strips (planting strips) and sidewalks. They should be generally laid out in a grid pattern that allows easy access within the neighborhood. Alleys are used to provide access to garages and the rear part of lots. Pedestrian amenities like bus shelters, benches, and fountains should be available at transit stops.

LU 1.3 Single-Family Residential Areas

Protect the character of single-family residential neighborhoods by focusing higher intensity land uses in designated centers and corridors.

Discussion: The city's residential neighborhoods are one of its most valuable assets. They are worthy of protection from the intrusion of incompatible land uses. Centers and corridors provide opportunities for complementary types of development and a greater diversity of residential densities. Complementary types of development may include places for neighborhood residents to work, shop, eat, and recreate. Development of these uses in a manner that avoids negative impacts to surroundings is essential. Creative mechanisms, including design standards, must be implemented to address these impacts so that potential conflicts are avoided.

LU 1.4 Higher Density Residential Uses

Direct new higher density residential uses to centers and corridors designated on the land use plan map.

Discussion: Higher density housing of various types is the critical component of a center. Without substantially increasing population in a center’s immediate vicinity, there is insufficient market demand for goods and services at a level to sustain neighborhood-scale businesses. Higher density residential uses in centers range from multi-story condominiums and apartments in the middle to small-lot homes at the edge. Other possible housing types include townhouses, garden apartments, and housing over retail space.

LU 2.1 Public Realm Features

Encourage features that improve the appearance of development, paying attention to how projects function to encourage social interaction and relate to and enhance the surrounding urban and natural environment.

Discussion: The “public realm” is the public or private area where people interact with their surroundings or other people. The “public realm” is affected by the appearance, use, and

attractiveness of development and how it functions. It is important to design buildings to maintain compatibility with surrounding development, and to design sites that provide for pathways, attractive and functional landscaping, properly proportioned open spaces, and other connecting features that facilitate easy access between public and private places.

LU 3.2 Centers and Corridors

Designate centers and corridors (neighborhood scale, community or district scale, and regional scale) on the land use plan map that encourage a mix of uses and activities around which growth is focused.

Discussion: Suggested centers are designated where the potential for center development exists. Final determination is subject to the neighborhood planning process.

LU 3.3 Planned Neighborhood Centers

Designate new centers or corridors in appropriate locations on the land use plan map through a neighborhood planning process.

Discussion: The comprehensive plan recognizes that centers and corridors are the most appropriate venue for the location of commercial and higher density residential uses. In some areas of the city, there may be a need to establish a center or corridor. The exact location, boundaries, size, and mix of land uses in a potential neighborhood center should be determined through the neighborhood planning process. This process may be initiated by the city at the request of a neighborhood or private interest.

LU 3.5 Mix of Uses in Centers

Achieve a proportion of uses in centers that will stimulate pedestrian activity and create mutually reinforcing land uses.



Discussion: Neighborhood, District, and Employment Centers are designated on the land use plan maps in areas that are substantially developed. New uses in centers should complement existing on-site and surrounding uses, yet seek to achieve a proportion of uses that will stimulate pedestrian activity and create mutually reinforcing land use patterns. Uses that will accomplish this include public, core commercial/office and residential uses.

LU 3.11 Compact Residential Patterns

Allow more compact and affordable housing in all neighborhoods, in accordance with neighborhood-based design guidelines.

Discussion: Compact and affordable housing includes such choices as townhouses, accessory dwelling units (granny flats), live-work housing, triplexes, zero-lot line, starter, small-lot, and rowhouses.

LU 3.12 Maximum and Minimum Lot Sizes

Prescribe maximum, as well as minimum, lot size standards to achieve the desired residential density for all areas of the city.

Discussion: One of the ways to use the remaining usable land more efficiently is to increase the overall housing density. Increased density promotes efficient and cost-effective provision of city facilities, services, and transportation systems and enables the provision of affordable housing.

LU 4.1 Land Use and Transportation

Coordinate land use and transportation planning to result in an efficient pattern of development that supports alternative transportation modes consistent with the transportation chapter and makes significant progress toward reducing sprawl, traffic congestion, and air pollution.

Discussion: The GMA recognizes the relationship between land use and transportation. It requires a transportation element that implements, and is consistent with, the land use element. The transportation element must forecast future traffic and provide information on the location, timing, and capacity needs of future growth. It must also identify funding to meet the identified needs. If probable funding falls short of needs, the GMA requires the land use element to be reassessed to ensure that needs are met.

LU 5.5 Compatible Development

Ensure that infill and redevelopment projects are well-designed and compatible with surrounding uses and building types.

TRANSPORTATION

TR 3.1 Transportation and Development Patterns

Use the city's transportation system and infrastructure to support desired land uses and development patterns, especially to reduce sprawl and encourage development in urban areas.

Discussion: Transportation and land use planning must be coordinated for the city to function smoothly, efficiently, and healthily. Investments in new transportation infrastructure can have both positive and negative impacts on the city. For example, while it may be relatively easy to build new streets or expand existing streets at the edge of the city to add transportation capacity, that can lead to sprawling development that, in the long run, is costly to the city.



TR 3.3 Walking and Bicycling-Oriented Neighborhood Centers

Incorporate physical features in neighborhood centers to promote walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized modes of transportation to and within the centers, reducing the need for driving.

Discussion: This policy, though similar to TR 2.1, “Physical Features,” is included to ensure that the neighborhood services desired in TR 3.2, “Reduced Distances to Neighborhood Services,” are walking and bicycling oriented. Development that requires driving to the development and from place to place within the development should be avoided.

TR 3.4 Increased Residential Densities

Increase residential densities, as indicated in the land use element of the City of Spokane’s Comprehensive Plan, to support the efficient functioning of transit and mass transit.

Discussion: Residential densities relate strongly to transportation options. Lower densities decrease the ability to provide efficient alternative transportation modes while higher densities increase the ability. Furthermore, sprawling growth increases the stress on the transportation system in that the more spread out the city becomes, the farther people have to travel and the less likely they will be to walk, bicycle, or take the bus.

HOUSING

H 1.4 Use of Existing Infrastructure

Direct new residential development into areas where community and human public services and facilities are available and in a manner that is compatible with other Comprehensive Plan elements.

Discussion: Using existing services and infrastructure often reduces the cost of creating new housing. New construction that takes advantage of existing services and infrastructure public resources that can then be redirected to other needs such as adding amenities to these projects.

H 2 HOUSING CHOICE AND DIVERSITY

Goal: Increase the number of housing alternatives within all areas of the city to help meet the changing needs and preferences of a diverse population.

H 2.1 Distribution of Housing Options

Promote a wide range of housing types and housing diversity to meet the needs of the diverse population and ensure that this housing is available throughout the community for people of all income levels and special needs.

Discussion: A variety of housing types should be available in each neighborhood. The variety of housing types should not concentrate or isolate lower-income and special needs households. Diversity includes styles, types, and cost of housing. Many different housing forms can exist in an area and still exhibit an aesthetic continuity. In many cases, neighborhood-based design guidelines will be available to guide the design of the housing forms. Allowing a wide range of housing types throughout the city provides the opportunity for increased socioeconomic integration. Housing standards that will be allowed throughout the city include small single-family lot sizes (under 5,000 square feet), manufactured housing on single-family lots, townhouses, condominiums, clustering, and other options that increase the supply of affordable home ownership opportunities.



H 2.2 Senior Housing

Encourage developments that provide a variety of housing options so that seniors may stay within their neighborhoods.

Discussion: Accessory dwelling units, condominiums, and existing home conversions within centers are examples of other arrangements that reduce maintenance worries and increase access to services.

H 2.3 Accessory Dwelling Units

Allow one accessory dwelling unit as an ancillary use to single-family owner-occupied homes in all designated residential areas as an affordable housing option.

Discussion: Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) increase the amount and variety of available affordable housing. ADUs increase the housing stock and living options within neighborhoods in a manner that is less intensive than alternatives. Increasing the mix of housing helps to satisfy changing family needs and the trend of smaller households. They help provide an avenue for seniors, single parents, and families with grown children to remain in their homes and neighborhoods while obtaining extra income, security, companionship and services. Often ADUs allow a more efficient use of existing housing and infrastructure.

Accessory dwelling units should be built in a manner that does not adversely affect the neighborhood. They should be designed to be physically and visually compatible with surrounding structures. In order to ensure management of the additional dwelling is to community standards one of the dwelling units on the lot must be owner-occupied. Further, in order to maintain a compatible living environment equivalent to surrounding dwellings ADUs shall provide living facilities and space at least equivalent to a studio apartment including a private kitchen, bath and sleeping area.

H 3.5 Housing Goal Monitoring

Provide a report annually to the City Plan Commission that monitors progress toward achieving the housing goals and includes recommended policy change if positive direction toward achieving the housing goals is not occurring.



Discussion: Using readily available datasets as a basis for a simple set of indicators can highlight what is happening within the larger system. This process should provide assistance in determining what actions are needed to implement the goals and policies and whether revisions to the policies are needed. The public can provide feedback about the indicators that are most important to them.

NEIGHBORHOODS



N 2.3 Neighborhood Redevelopment

Identify specific areas in neighborhoods where redevelopment is appropriate, and program the manner in which those changes are to occur, consistent with the neighborhood planning process.

N 2.4 Neighborhood Improvement

Encourage rehabilitation and improvement programs to conserve and upgrade existing properties and buildings.

Discussion: Neighborhood citizen groups should focus on home and neighborhood maintenance and improvement through the neighborhood planning process. To stimulate property owners to maintain

or improve their properties, the city should fund improvement programs for inadequate or deteriorating parks, streets, utilities, libraries, community centers, and other public facilities, particularly in older areas.

N 2.6 Housing Options

Provide housing options within neighborhoods to attract and retain neighborhood residents, consistent with the neighborhood planning process.

Discussion: A mixture of low, moderate, and high-income housing should be available within the neighborhood or neighborhood center. Various types of housing that provide lifestyle choices for our diverse population should also be available. Apartments, condominiums, townhouses, rowhouses, duplexes, and single-family homes are examples of housing options. The housing in downtown Spokane primarily consists of multifamily units targeted for low-income and elderly occupancy. While it is important to continue to meet the needs of the low-income and elderly, downtown Spokane can also benefit from meeting the housing needs of a wide range of consumers, from affordable, below market rate housing to luxury units. Other downtown areas across the nation have discovered a demand for market rate units, particularly with young professionals and empty-nesters. Increasing the number and diversity of downtown residents helps to support retail and neighborhood services and generates day and night activity in downtown Spokane.



URBAN DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



DP 1.4 New Development in Established Neighborhoods

Ensure that new development is of a type, scale, orientation, and design that maintains or improves the character, aesthetic quality, and livability of the neighborhood.

Discussion: While compatibility is more of an issue in established neighborhoods, new development needs to take into account the context of the area and should result in an improvement to the surrounding neighborhood.

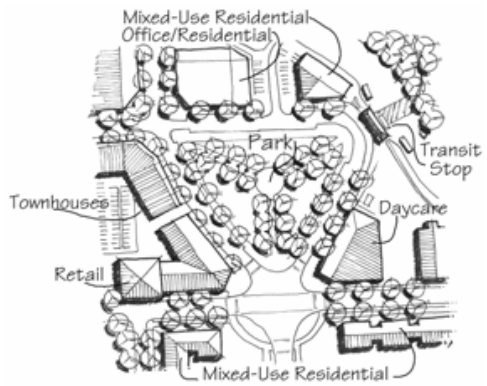
DP 3.8 Infill Development

Ensure that infill construction and area redevelopment are done in a manner that reinforces the established neighborhood character and is architecturally compatible with the surrounding existing commercial and residential areas.

Discussion: Infill construction can represent a benefit to the community that does not necessitate an expansion of the infrastructure when done in a manner that does not detract from the area. Flexible design standards enable infill development that is architecturally compatible with the context of the proposed area by permitting higher intensity activities without detracting from the existing character of the area.

DP 6.2 Access to Housing Choices

Encourage building and site design that allows a variety of housing forms while being compatible with the character of the immediate surrounding area, thereby generating community support for development at planned densities.



Discussion: Increasing housing densities and innovative development protects special sites, and enables the efficient use of remaining buildable land, the efficient and cost effective provision of city facilities and services, the provision of affordable housing, and the promotion of increased ridership on mass transit. A variety of housing types, such as townhouses, courtyard buildings, and housing clusters, contributes to housing diversity and interest, and provides more opportunities for prospective residents. Design that is compatible with the surroundings helps make increased densities acceptable to the current residents. Higher residential density in commercial areas can provide additional economic stability for businesses while lessening automobile dependence.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

PRS 1.4 Property Owners and Developers

Work cooperatively with property owners and developers to preserve open space areas within or between developments, especially those that provide visual or physical linkages to the open space network.

Discussion: This should be a consideration during the approval process for subdivisions, planned contracts, and shoreline permits. The city should explore the use of regionally consistent incentives to protect open space. Incentives may include bonus densities, transfer of development rights, and tax abatement or deferment.

