

ULI Technical Assistance Panel Recommendations

City of Spokane - Lincoln Heights



ULI Northwest

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- Encourage the collaboration among all domains – public and private – of the real estate industry.
- Build consensus among industry and public leaders who influence land use, transportation, environmental, and economic development policies.

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City of Spokane

Spokane is the second largest city in Washington with a population of 208,916 according to the 2010 census. It is located on the Spokane River west of the Rocky Mountain foothills in eastern Washington, 92 miles south of the Canadian border, approximately 20 miles from the Washington–Idaho border, and 280 miles east of Seattle along Interstate 90.

Spokane is in the midst of a transition to a more service-oriented economy in the face of a less prominent manufacturing sector. Developing the city's strength in the medical and health sciences fields has seen some success, resulting in the expansion of the University District with a medical school branch.

Lincoln Heights

The Lincoln Heights neighborhood is a suburban residential area with corridors of auto-oriented retail. In 2011, Trader Joe's opened a store in the Lincoln Heights Shopping Center, which is the only Trader's Joe's in an approximate 250 mile radius of Idaho, Montana, British Columbia, Alberta, and the rest of Eastern Washington. This has sparked a large economic upswing for the area in and around that shopping center.

The City of Spokane seeks recommendations from the ULI Technical Assistance Panel on how to take advantage of this increased interest in Lincoln Heights and how to make it a pedestrian friendly and community-minded place to spend the day.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lincoln Heights is at a crossroads.

The neighborhood has assets that can be leveraged to attract more retail visitors and increase demand for its affordable, market rate housing. Decisions made now could nurture and preserve key features that make it an attractive place to live, especially for new households and young families.

In the last few decades, the Lincoln Heights District Center has seen some significant investment by large retail chains. But it holds limited attraction for small businesses or visitors who might gather or linger for more than an hour or two. It is also lagging in demand for residential property. There are too few reasons to choose to live in Lincoln Heights District Center, or raise a family there.

Efforts to address these issues should be concentrated on key corridors and overall strategies that involve public-private partnerships and better pedestrian infrastructure.

Key corridors. Two important east-west corridors could become the heart of a reinvigorated Lincoln Heights Center. East 27th Avenue is a natural pedestrian street, adjacent to Thornton Murphy Park and to scenic features that include a pine tree-lined basalt ridge. This corridor may be the most important public asset for Lincoln Heights, the heart of an emerging pedestrian infrastructure that makes the neighborhood more attractive to home buyers and more viable for small businesses. While East 29th Avenue continues to take precedence as a commercial street, with traffic volumes and retail business concentrated there, the two corridors together have the potential to complement each other in a complete retail and residential community. Through-block connections would reinforce that relationship.



Along with traffic calming strategies along East 29th Avenue, pedestrian improvements will make that corridor more inviting. At the same time, careful study of bicycle and transit paths and follow-up improvements will help Lincoln Heights accommodate buses and bicycles along with cars. A redesign of the busy intersection at East 29th Avenue and South Regal Street should be studied further.

Overall strategies. With strategic investment concentrated in Lincoln Heights Center, Lincoln Heights is more likely to prosper as a district. Public-private partnerships, coupled with strategic investments, can make Lincoln Heights more livable and also more identifiable as a distinctive place to live. The investments should also enhance the value of existing retail businesses and homes.



Making Lincoln Heights a more attractive place to live and shop means creating better pedestrian infrastructure. This can go hand in hand with incremental grey-to-green steps for making parking areas more inviting and a planting plan that extends the natural assets.

An association of retail businesses and owners in the Lincoln Heights Center should help shape planning and spur the entire area to succeed. This type of organization has played a key role in revitalizing neighborhoods around the country, ultimately bringing greater prosperity to businesses old and new, large and small.

BACKGROUND

The area within the Lincoln Heights District, south and east of downtown Spokane, was annexed to the City of Spokane in 1907.

The commercial core is dominated by strip style shopping centers. These, along with nearby multifamily developments, date predominantly from the 1970s and 1980s. There has been recent and continuing investment in façade improvements for retail buildings.

The busiest intersection is at East 29th Avenue and South Regal Street. Data from Demographics Now shows a total population of 13,969 within one mile of that intersection, in 6,317 households. While the median household income within the same area is over \$48,000, the medium income in the immediate area is between \$24,000 and \$39,000.

The nearby South Perry District has undergone a period of successful revitalization, but Lincoln Heights retains the character of an inner-ring suburb. It has yet to develop a successful system of pedestrian infrastructure.

The City of Spokane's Comprehensive Plan is based on a strategy of focused growth called Centers and Corridors. Within the Comprehensive Plan, Lincoln Heights was designated a District Center in the City of Spokane's land use map in 2001. There has been pressure for land use changes from a few individual property owners since that time.

As a part of preliminary data gathering for the Lincoln Heights District Center planning, which is still in process, City staff prepared baseline information and held an open house in the fall of 2013 to learn neighborhood concerns. A walkability audit was conducted in March of 2014 with graduate students from Eastern Washington University.

The busy intersection East 29th Avenue and South Regal Street, where transit buses turn 90 degrees, is of great concern to the surrounding neighborhood. Residents report that the District is not pleasant to walk and there are hazards to pedestrians. There is a lack of pedestrian connections around parks and other points of interest. The City of Spokane has planned a network of bicycle paths. Traffic issues, with transit, bicycle and pedestrian traffic competing with cars is of particular concern.

In 2014, the South Hill Coalition Connectivity and Livability Strategic Plan was completed. It recommends steps to improve walkability and pedestrian amenities in several area neighborhoods, including Lincoln Heights.

An eight-acre neighborhood park, Thornton Murphy Park, has two softball fields, a popular playground, splash pad, and dog-walking area. The ADA-compliant park is shared by the Southside Senior Center and has 25 parking stalls available.



Lincoln Park

Lincoln Park, to the northwest of the study area, is rich in natural scenery and trails, with basalt outcroppings, pine trees and a pond. Similar natural features extend through the hilly residential area between Lincoln Park and Thornton Murphy Park, and a natural basalt ridge is viewable from East 27th Avenue. The area historically contained wetlands among basalt formations, and natural streams mapped by the Department of Natural Resources.

South Hill Park & Ride has been identified as an opportunity site for redevelopment. However, layover and transfer center functions must be accommodated or replaced on another site. It has a large, underused parking area, and a new park & ride is scheduled to be built further south at East 57th Avenue.

Many of the residential units within Lincoln Heights are dedicated to seniors. Rockwood Retirement Communities, and Lincoln Heights Garden are all close to East 27th Avenue and Thornton Murphy Park. Several garden-style apartment complexes built in the 1970s and 1980s are designated as low-income housing. There are a number of medical offices in the District.

Retail anchors include Safeway, Rosauers, Rite Aid, Petco, and Hastings Book Store. Lincoln Heights Shopping Center, built in 1974, is located in the block just south of Thornton Murphy Park, between East 27th Avenue and East 29th Avenue. Renovation and construction has been taking place



along both East 27th Avenue and East 29th Avenue, and upscale grocer Trader Joe's arrived at Lincoln Heights Shopping Center in 2011.

DISTRICT-WIDE STRATEGIES

A few transformational strategies would set the course for a more livable, prosperous and sustainable future in Lincoln Heights. Public and private investments can be strategically combined to support a unique identity, welcoming visitors while making Lincoln Heights an attractive place to live:

Create a theme. The future of Lincoln Heights could be expressed in a lively and up-to-date brand and logo, one that speaks to shopping, living, and walking. To make it place-based and authentic, it might evoke the features and natural drama of the local landscape.

Establish gateways. Gateways mark the transition to a cohesive and recognizable community, creating expectations about the neighborhood now and in the future. The best locations in Lincoln Heights are along arterials, at points where they might meet scenes of existing natural and manmade features that inspire recognition and respect. These gateways do not necessarily lie on formal District boundaries. Instead, they assist in wayfinding, define a walkable area, and help to literally put the District on the map. One possible gateway for Lincoln Heights Center is the corner of Southeast Boulevard and East 25th Avenue, where a pond comes into view with other natural scenery. Other points along South Ray Street and South Regal Street could be identified as gateway points.

Make East 27th Avenue the heart. East 27th Avenue is adjacent to a large City park, near natural areas, and bounded by some underused land. All of these could be leveraged through investment in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as well as attractive housing. Through-block access between East 27th Avenue, where living is emphasized, and East 29th Avenue, where large and small retail business is emphasized, could make the couplet into the heart of a revitalized district.



Colored stickers denote gateways into the Lincoln Heights area that should be highlighted with wayfinding signage and themes.

Slow traffic on 29th. Along with future residents, retail businesses will benefit from slower traffic along East 29th Avenue. Traffic could be slowed by reducing lanes to three, without reducing capacity.

Make pedestrian improvements. Traffic slowing along East 29th Avenue could make it practical to design pedestrian improvements including widened sidewalks, medians and plantings. An alternative measure to make the corridor more welcoming would be pedestrian pockets, or places of rest that involve plantings and seating along the sidewalk. Typical spacing for improved walkability is about 500 feet. Pedestrian pockets require small easements of approximately 5 feet by 20 feet on private property, and could be partially supported by a merchant's and owner's association.

Tame the intersection at 29th and Regal. The future of Lincoln Heights depends, in part, on the successful integration of bus transit within the right-of-way. The busy intersection of East 29th Avenue and South Regal Street presents special challenges. Re-channelization

should be studied. This might involve changes in curb alignment and lane divisions that would make right turns for buses easier. Re-channelization can be tried cheaply, using re-painted lines.

Make through-block pathways. Pedestrians suffer from the necessity to circumnavigate large blocks in order to reach many destinations, exposed to fast traffic and noise. One strategy for welcoming pedestrians is to give them ways to cross easily between streets, passing local businesses on the way. An ideal location for creating this kind of pathway would be a north-south connection between East 27th Avenue and East 29th Avenue at South Regal Street, where pedestrians could linger at a bookstore and stop at a coffeehouse as they make their way through the block. Public and private investment and cooperation in creating such a pathway could be transformational.

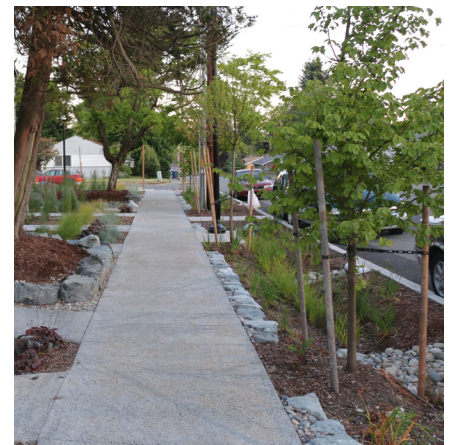
Define streetscaping. The identity of Lincoln Heights Center can be supported with a slate of coordinated elements that might include plantings or planting pots, crosswalks, striping and banners. These additions will help establish and carry the theme of Lincoln Heights Center.

Give lighting precedence. New lighting is a game changer. Pedestrian standards for lighting can improve walkability and safety after dark. They also raise the ambiance of the street to a new level, making walking more pleasant and the neighborhood more inviting. Coupled with other improvements, lighting signals a new and different way of investing in Lincoln Heights, and literally highlights other improvements, as well as natural assets.

Seek opportunities to reduce asphalt and reuse the land. Gray-to-green strategies can yield water quality benefits while adding beauty and livability to the neighborhood, especially in places where cars and paving now dominate the landscape.



*A through-block pathway in
Kirkland, Washington*



*Example of streetscaping in
Kirkland, Washington*



*Modern pedestrian outdoor lighting in
Granville, Ohio*



RETAIL AND BUSINESS

Together, private business people and property owners can be a powerful political and economic force, partnering with the City for the future of Lincoln Heights. Steps could include:

Supporting a merchants' and owners' association. Through an association of retailers and property owners, neighborhood businesses can work together to develop and implement common marketing and promotion strategies for the District. This type of association can be politically powerful and effective in raising the value of all property within the District.

Partnering for gray to green. Through a merchant's association or City program, retail businesses can partner with the City of Spokane to transform parking lots with strategic landscaping. Plantings can help with water quality goals through biofiltration.

Activating retail frontages. New pedestrian connections between East 27th Avenue and East 29th Avenue with not only make it easier for new small businesses to flourish, they will bring more eyes and foot traffic to the doors of existing retail businesses facing these major streets.

Creating a parking management strategy. Lincoln Heights District Center is overparked, with expanses of unused and underused space that lend a feeling of neglect. A parking management strategy wherein owners allow for reciprocal parking would contribute toward reducing blacktop and allowing parking lots to be developed to a higher and better use.

HOUSING

New housing development has a very important role to play in the future of Lincoln Heights, and the City can take the following measures to make it work for private investors:

Seek opportunity sites for transformation. New housing development can be strategically located to enhance community connections and take advantage of available or underused land. Nearby services, amenities, and retail like Trader Joe's could drive higher rents. Underused lots near Goodwill on 27th could be prime areas for multifamily housing around green space and shared amenities. Developers could partner with the City to integrate natural drainage and water filtration infrastructure with housing or mixed-use projects.

Use Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE). This financing strategy can be an incentive for new, diverse housing choices in Lincoln Heights.

Customize the code with incentives. The development code including zoning and design guidelines can be used to set appropriate standards for Lincoln Heights Center. The right height for housing might be two-tiered, with incentivized maximum at about 75 feet. Structured parking is likely to be unaffordable, but it could be partially tucked under buildings where the topography creates opportunity.



Current multifamily housing across the street from Lincoln Heights Shopping Center.



A kid-friendly splash pad at Thornton Murphy Park located directly north of Lincoln Heights Shopping Center.

COMMUNITY

The following can help invigorate Lincoln Heights by joining City objectives, public resources, and pedestrian improvements with the resources of volunteer groups, schools, and small enterprises:



Activating the park. Re-planning and programming the park could make it a day-long destination, as well as an amenity for new and existing residents who are within walking distance. Creating public performance spaces and partnering with a non-profit to program them could be a huge boost to the neighborhood. Food trucks in strategic areas can add to the festival atmosphere and encourage economic development in the area.

Partnering with schools. Concerts and other programming involving Spokane schools could bring well-attended programs to parks and other venues, and provide synergistic community benefits for seniors. Partnerships with schools could also benefit retailers with concert-in-the-square-like events at shopping centers.

Mixing it up with seniors. Senior citizens, a potentially expanding market for many businesses, can be encouraged to get out, enjoy the neighborhood and spend money. A strategic liaison between a merchant's association and a taxi cab company or two could encourage seniors to make trips to stores and other neighborhood attractions while not adding substantially to traffic pressure.

Bringing back the corner store. Without competing with larger retailers, neighborhood residents could be incentivized to open small gathering places where ice cream or beverages are sold. If supported by neighborhood residents, carefully written laws could allow limited small commercial uses in transitional nodes on the district edges.

Bringing in an activity anchor. A fitness-based non-profit such as YMCA has the potential to become a community gathering spot as well as an asset to neighborhood residents.



CONCLUSION

The future of Lincoln Heights District Center should begin by building upon a set of existing assets, as well as a community-inspired identity.

Through strategic messaging and physical improvements in Lincoln Heights Center, Lincoln Heights is in a position to increase market-rate housing and grow value. Small measures can signal community intention to become a recognizable neighborhood and center, along with concrete steps to create a more safe and inviting environment for pedestrians. Revisions to the right-of-way that encourage walking and bicycle traffic, along with zoning changes that support attractive multifamily development, could be at the center of these changes.

Every owner and visitor in Lincoln Heights can benefit if businesses and owners work together, ensuring that public investments benefit everyone in the District and make it a place where people enjoy walking and spending time, day and evening. They can literally put Lincoln Heights on the map.



ULI Northwest Technical Assistance Panel Professional Biographies

Jon Rose, Olympic Property Group - TAP Chair

Jon Rose became President of Olympic Property Group in August 2001. Before joining ORM in 1996, he worked as a licensed professional civil engineer for Pac-Tech Engineering. Along with office management and marketing, his primary role with Pac-Tech was as planner and civil engineer working on the permit approval, design, and construction management of residential, commercial, and municipal development projects. Jon continues to be the Company's point person for development projects in Jefferson, Kitsap, and Pierce counties. He has a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Vermont and a B.A. in General Studies from the University of Washington.

Stephen Antupit, CityWorks

Stephen Antupit uses his extensive professional experience to identify, design, and develop urban strategies, all with the goal of creating socially equitable, resilient communities. His expertise in complex urban design, master plan, and private-public partnership challenges (including the creation of mixed-income transit communities) is highly respected. His knowledge of regional and national policy related to green infrastructure and smart growth fuels his consulting practice. Stephen Antupit was a founder of CityLab7, an innovative "do tank" committed to connecting people through tactical urbanism. He previously led green urbanism and strategic brand efforts at Mithun. Stephen was a founding partner at Fish to Water, and serves often as an expert panelist for the Urban Land Institute.

Gary Bernado, Bernado | Willis Architects

Possessing an innate ability to visualize and detail master plans and to create image-defining architecture, Gary is considered an expert in retail planning and design by regional developers, who value his expertise in entitlements, code review, feasibility studies, and community presentations. In addition to high-profile national and regional retailers, Gary's client roster includes corporate, commercial, industrial, and civic entities.

Casey Brazil, Kiemle & Hagood Company

Casey Brazil is Assistant Director of the Brokerage Division and Managing Broker of Kiemle & Hagood Company. He is a licensed realtor in Washington and Idaho. Casey joined the Brokerage Division of Kiemle & Hagood Company in May 2005, and had previously worked for Colliers International in Boise, Idaho. He specializes in Commercial Leasing and Sales, in which he represents buyers, sellers, landlords, and tenants. Casey graduated from Washington State University with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Real Estate and Entrepreneurship.

Hal Ferris, Spectrum Development Solutions

Hal Ferris has over 30 years of real estate development, management, and construction experience, and has led the development of urban mixed use mixed income projects, historic renovations, affordable housing and collegiate services throughout Washington. Hal grew up in Spokane and his family has had roots there for several generations.

Peter Hahn, City of Shoreline

Hahn has over 30 years of experience in public works and transportation. Most recently, he was the Director of Transportation for the City of Seattle. Before that, he was the Deputy Administrator of Public Works for the City of Renton, the Director of Public Works for Snohomish County, and the Director of Community Services for the City of Edmonds.

Michael Craven, Regulus Properties

Michael Craven is the President of Craven Company, a boutique real estate development firm located in Spokane. Michael focuses on development, redevelopment, and value-add investments in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. He has managed the development of commercial, residential, and mixed-use real estate projects valued in excess of \$150 million. Michael has been involved in the commercial real estate industry since 1999 and has extensive experience in the acquisition, disposition, leasing, and development of commercial and multifamily real estate. Before founding Craven Company in 2011, Michael spent 9 years at SRM Development, a highly regarded developer of large mixed-use projects spanning the West Coast. Michael is a licensed real estate broker in the states of Washington and Idaho and a member of the CCIM Institute. He is a graduate of Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington.

ULI Northwest Technical Assistance Panel Professional Biographies

Peg Staeheli, SvR Design

With over 36 years of practice, Peg has focused in the public realm where landscape design meets engineering. Her work includes green infrastructure, complete streets, accessibility, utility systems, urban forestry, parks, and site design. She encourages her coworkers in consistently pushing the local and national agenda to improve urban conditions. Peg brings a comprehensive understanding of the issues large infrastructure projects present: site conditions, feasibility, construction sequencing, maintenance, and operations. Her thoughtful insights and approach – collaborating with clients and agency staff, understanding regulations, working with the community, and maintaining a deep commitment to the environment – allow her to envision integrated solutions where balance is brought to site infrastructure. Peg knows how to hustle—she can often be seen commuting by bus and bike to and from West Seattle—and fosters an environment where innovation is matched with attention to human-centered design.

Ben Wolters, City of Kent

Ben Wolters is the Economic & Community Development Director for the City of Kent. As Director, he oversees Economic Development, Planning Services, Building Services, the Permit Center, and Development Engineering Divisions. Ben has 24 years of experience in economic development and public affairs. Before coming to the City of Kent, he worked as the Economic Development Director for the City of Renton and for the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development, recruiting and retaining businesses and investment in the industrial, high tech, and service sectors. Ben is a graduate of Oregon State University, holds a Master's Degree in International Economics from the University of Denver, and is certified as an Economic Development Finance Professional by the National Development Council.

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