

TEXT CHANGES

Policy LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses

Dear reviewer:

The Plan Commission developed two versions of possible changes to Policy LU 1.8 for review and comment. The Commission will consider these changes' consistency with other policies in [Chapter 3 – Land Use](#) of the comprehensive plan, which assume most future growth will occur within concentrated areas such as Centers and Corridors, while single-family neighborhoods remain largely unchanged. The drafts below show changes with existing text to be deleted ~~struck through~~, and text to be added underlined.

*A subcommittee of Commission members met in April to recommend a clearer approach to contain General Commercial areas, except in certain areas near arterial streets, reflected in **Draft 1**. Then in May the full Commission composed **Draft 2**, a more flexible approach to allow future expansion of existing General Commercial areas, which included factors discussed by the subcommittee.*

*In considering the text changes and the different versions proposed, you are encouraged to make general as well as specific comments, such as about the particular words chosen. The Commission expects to select one of the versions at its meeting on July 10, 2019, to use for distributing to the public for additional comment before the hearing in early fall. Please see the 2019 Comprehensive Plan amendments [project webpage](#) for information. Comments are due by **July 29, 2019 at 5:00 P.M.** Email written comments to tblack@spokanecity.org or send or deliver to: Tirrell Black, Principal Planner, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, WA 99201.*

Existing Text of Policy LU 1.8

LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses

Contain General Commercial areas within the boundaries occupied by existing business designations and within the boundaries of designated Centers and Corridors.

Discussion: General Commercial areas provide locations for a wide range of commercial uses. Typical development in these areas includes freestanding business sites and larger grouped businesses (shopping centers). Commercial uses that are auto-oriented and include outdoor sales and warehousing are also allowed in this designation. Land designated for General Commercial use is usually located at the intersection of or in strips along principal arterial streets. In many areas such as along Northwest Boulevard, this designation is located near residential neighborhoods.

To address conflicts that may occur in these areas, zoning categories should be implemented that limit the range of uses, and site development standards should be adopted to minimize detrimental impacts on the residential

area. Existing commercial strips should be contained within their current boundaries with no further extension along arterial streets allowed.

Recognizing existing investments by both the City of Spokane and private parties, and given deference to existing land use patterns, an exception to the containment policy may be allowed by means of a comprehensive plan amendment to expand an existing commercial designation, (Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Mini-Center, or General Commercial) at the intersection of two principal arterial streets or onto properties which are not designated for residential use at a signalized intersection of at least one principal arterial street which as of September 2, 2003, has traffic at volumes greater than 20,000 vehicular trips a day. Expansion of the commercial designation under this exception shall be limited to property immediately adjacent to the arterial street and the subject intersection and may not extend more than 250 feet from the center of the intersection unless a single lot, immediately adjacent to the subject intersection and in existence at the time this comprehensive plan was initially adopted, extends beyond 250 feet from the center of the intersection. In this case the commercial designation may extend the length of that lot but in no event should it extend farther than 500 feet or have an area greater than three acres.

If a commercial designation (Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Mini-Center, or General Commercial) exists at the intersection of two principal arterials, a zone change to allow the commercial use to be extended to the next street that runs parallel to the principal arterial street may be allowed. If there is not a street that runs parallel to the principal arterial, the maximum depth of commercial development extending from the arterial street shall not exceed 250 feet.

Areas designated General Commercial within Centers and Corridors are encouraged to be developed in accordance with the policies for Centers and Corridors. Through a neighborhood planning process for the Center, these General Commercial areas will be designated in a land use category that is appropriate in the context of a Center and to meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Residential uses are permitted in these areas. Residences may be in the form of single-family homes on individual lots, upper-floor apartments above business establishments, or other higher density residential uses.

Draft 1 of Policy LU 1.8

LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses

Contain General Commercial areas within the boundaries occupied by existing business designations and within the boundaries of designated Centers and Corridors.

Discussion: General Commercial areas provide locations for a wide range of commercial uses. Typical development in these areas includes freestanding business sites and larger grouped businesses (shopping centers). Commercial uses that are auto-oriented and include outdoor sales and warehousing are also allowed in this designation. Land designated for General Commercial use is usually located at the intersection of or in strips along principal arterial streets. In many areas such as along Northwest Boulevard, this designation is located near residential neighborhoods.

To address conflicts that may occur in these areas, zoning categories should be implemented that limit the range of uses, and site development standards should be adopted to minimize detrimental impacts on the residential area. Existing commercial strips should be contained within their current boundaries with no further extension along arterial streets allowed.

~~((Recognizing existing investments by both the City of Spokane and private parties, and given deference to existing land use patterns, an exception to the containment policy may be allowed by means of a comprehensive plan amendment to expand an existing commercial designation, (Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Mini-Center, or General Commercial) at the intersection of two principal arterial streets or onto properties which are not designated for residential use at a signalized intersection of at least one principal arterial street which as of September 2, 2003, has traffic at volumes greater than 20,000 vehicular trips a day. Expansion of the commercial designation under this exception shall be limited to property immediately adjacent to the arterial street and the subject intersection and may not extend more than 250 feet from the center of the intersection unless a single lot, immediately adjacent to the subject intersection and in existence at the time this comprehensive plan was initially adopted, extends beyond 250 feet from the center of the intersection. In this case the commercial designation may extend the length of that lot but in no event should it extend farther than 500 feet or have an area greater than three acres.))~~

Note:

The elimination of this paragraph removes confusing, outdated language. This also removes the possibility of expanding most general commercial areas, leaving only the expansion option offered near intersections of two principal arterial streets, described in the next paragraph.

If a General Commercial land use designation ~~((Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Mini-Center, or General Commercial))~~ exists at the intersection of two principal arterials, a ~~((zone))~~ land use plan map change to allow the commercial use to be extended to the next street or alley ~~((that runs parallel to the principal arterial street))~~ may be allowed, but should not exceed 250 feet from a principal arterial. ~~((If there is not a street that runs parallel to the principal arterial, the maximum depth of commercial development extending from the arterial street shall not exceed 250 feet.))~~

Note:

The subcommittee reviewed additional locations, but decided including only intersections of two principal arterials in this draft. The subcommittee noted locations near such intersections where nearby streets form irregular blocks, and favored these edits to simplify and emphasize limitation of expansions to 250 feet of depth—viewed as the minimum necessary for redevelopment of a neighborhood business site such as a drug store or mid-size grocery.

Areas designated General Commercial within Centers and Corridors are encouraged to be developed in accordance with the policies for Centers and Corridors. Through a neighborhood planning process for the Center, these General Commercial areas will be designated in a land use category that is appropriate in the context of a Center and to meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Residential uses are permitted in these areas. Residences may be in the form of single-family homes on individual lots, upper-floor apartments above business establishments, or other higher density residential uses.

Draft 2 of Policy LU 1.8

LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses

~~((Contain))~~ Direct new General Commercial ~~((areas within the boundaries occupied by existing business designations and within the boundaries of designated))~~ uses to Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map.

Note:

Changes to the main text of the goal align with the text in policies LU 1.4, LU 1.5, and LU 1.6.

Discussion: General Commercial areas provide locations for a wide range of commercial uses. Typical development in these areas includes freestanding business sites and larger grouped businesses (shopping centers). Commercial uses that are auto-oriented and include outdoor sales and warehousing are also allowed in this designation. Land designated for General Commercial use is usually located at the intersection of or in strips along principal arterial streets. In many areas such as along Northwest Boulevard, this designation is located near residential neighborhoods.

To address conflicts that may occur in these areas, zoning categories should be implemented that limit the range of uses, and site development standards should be adopted to minimize detrimental impacts on the residential area. New General Commercial areas should not be designated in locations outside Centers and Corridors. Existing commercial strips should be contained within their current boundaries with no further extension along arterial streets allowed.

Note:

A sentence would be added for clarification against establishing new General Commercial areas outside centers: is it necessary?

~~((Recognizing existing investments by both the City of Spokane and private parties, and given deference to existing land use patterns, an exception to the containment policy may be allowed by means of a comprehensive plan amendment to expand an existing commercial designation, (Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Mini-Center, or General Commercial) at the intersection of two principal arterial streets or onto properties which are not designated for residential use at a signalized intersection of at least one principal arterial street which as of September 2, 2003, has traffic at volumes greater than 20,000 vehicular trips a day. Expansion of the commercial designation under this exception shall be limited to property immediately adjacent to the arterial street and the subject intersection and may not extend more than 250 feet from the center of the intersection unless a single lot, immediately adjacent to the subject intersection and in existence at the time this comprehensive plan was initially adopted, extends beyond 250 feet from the center of the intersection. In this case the commercial designation may extend the length of that lot but in no event should it extend farther than 500 feet or have an area greater than three acres.~~

Note:

*These edits remove mention of intersections of principal arterial streets as a necessary situation where General Commercial areas may be expanded, allowing potential expansions in more locations citywide than **Draft 1**. This version also removes the reference to a maximum distance of 250 feet, relying instead on the qualitative criteria in the proposed next paragraph.*

If a commercial designation (Neighborhood Retail, Neighborhood Mini-Center, or General Commercial) exists at the intersection of two

principal arterials, a zone change to allow the commercial use to be extended to the next street that runs parallel to the principal arterial street may be allowed. If there is not a street that runs parallel to the principal arterial, the maximum depth of commercial development extending from the arterial street shall not exceed 250 feet.)

However, recognizing existing investments, and given deference to existing land-use patterns, exceptions to the containment policy may be allowed for limited expansions adjacent to existing General Commercial areas located outside Centers and Corridors. The factors to consider in such adjacent expansions include: maintaining the minimum depth from an arterial street necessary for the establishment or expansion of a general commercial neighborhood business; avoiding intrusion where incompatible into established neighborhoods; and confining any such expansion within physical boundaries such as streets or alleys.

Areas designated General Commercial within Centers and Corridors are encouraged to be developed in accordance with the policies for Centers and Corridors. Through a neighborhood planning process for the Center, these General Commercial areas will be designated in a land use category that is appropriate in the context of a Center and to meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Residential uses are permitted in these areas. Residences may be in the form of single-family homes on individual lots, upper-floor apartments above business establishments, or other higher density residential uses.

Note:

The proposed text in this paragraph would establish limited exceptions where expansions would be allowed. The subcommittee discussed these limiting factors in order to:

- *Maintain the minimum depth needed for a neighborhood business (such as a drug store or mid-size grocery store);*
- *Allow expansions where there is no adjacent incompatible development pattern; and*
- *Use streets or alleys as boundaries for expansions.*