

Plan Commission Subcommittee Working Group
LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses
8:30-10:30 a.m. April 16, 2019, City Hall Room 3A

Commissioners in attendance:

Greg Francis, Sylvia St. Clair, Diana Painter

Staff:

Tirrell Black, Nate Gwinn

1. Review of Centers & Corridors Adoption Era Documents

- Tirrell led a discussion about the Spokane Quest alternatives (i.e. current patterns, focused growth mixed use centers, and focused growth central city) that the City considered leading up to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 2001.
- The group discussed the current framework of desired separation, proximity, or mixing of uses, depending on zoning category.
- The group discussed alternative land use designation to General Commercial (GC) that would allow growth and more permissive uses than other categories. Creating a new center designation is the way to allow growth.
- The group discussed the various designated areas in and around the city, including existing GC areas along Division. The City has adequate commercially and industrially designated areas for services.

2. Review of Land use Goals in Chapter 3, Land Use – Reviewed land use goals and each policy within LU 1 Citywide Land Use: particularly LU 1.5 Office Uses, and LU 1.6 Neighborhood Retail Use policies. The group mentioned that it would be helpful to have a concise user guidebook for the Comprehensive Plan.

3. Review of LU 1.8 as now written – The group discussed the existing language and the changes that occurred in 2003. Commissioners noted the limited expansion allowed in proximity to intersections of principal arterials, within the depth of the block (to the next parallel street). Commissioners liked the concept of commercial near residential areas, but not “big box” stores.

4. Discussion to see if group is ready to begin draft changes next meeting

- **Preliminary Goals**
 - High containment – avoid slowly propagating additional GC, while allowing expansion in undeveloped areas such as certain areas in the West Plains
 - Simple, clear, easy to understand as possible
 - Expansion depth – limit expansion in redeveloping areas to depth of block
- **Other Ideas**
 - Expansion size – Better to review each proposal than set a maximum size of expanded area?
 - Adjacency – Sites surrounded on at least two sides by GC?
- **Additional Information**
 - The group would like to see a comparison of GC zone with Centers and Corridors zones and other categories, particularly the primary land uses allowed and parking location.
 - What reasons led to 2006 code change from allowing parking lots in adjacent residential areas as a conditional use? What are pros/cons?
 - Where are principal arterial intersections located? What GC locations are adjacent to principal arterials but not near intersections with other principal arterials?

Plan Commission Subcommittee Working Group
LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses
8:30-10:30 a.m. April 23, 2019, City Hall Room 3A

Commissioners in attendance:

Greg Francis, Sylvia St. Clair, Diana Painter

Staff:

Tirrell Black, Nate Gwinn

1. Welcome

- The group recapped the discussion of the previous meeting.
- The group reviewed text in Section 3.3 of the land use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Staff showed areas designated GC in various city locations. The group discussed familiar sites and typical dimensions of GC designated land, such as depth from arterials.

2. Report on Conditional Use Provision for parking lots

- Staff handed out repealed code provision SMC 11.19.082(C)(5). This text once allowed parking lots in residential zones on lots adjacent to GC for at least 40 feet by special use permit pursuant to hearing examiner review.

3. LU 1.8 Draft Review – Review of two optional draft revisions

- Discussion Draft Option 1 – highlighting containment
 - Group members advised striking the added sentence regarding recognizing that arterials are GC in nature.
- Discussion Draft Option 2 – highlighting containment exceptions
 - Group members appreciated intent, but suggested need for simple as possible and less text. Clear and concise, less ambiguity. Containment is important.
- Group members proposed taking two alternatives back to Plan Commission, based on Discussion Draft Option 1:
 - (1)(a) Intersection of principal arterials with principal arterials only – 250-foot depth
 - (1)(b) Intersections of either principal-principal and principal-minor arterials – 250-foot depth
- Additional Information to Review – Next Meeting:
 - How much GC is vacant or underutilized?
 - Need maps/graphics showing what the two suggested alternatives would look like:
 - i. 250 foot distance at intersections of principal arterials with GC
 - ii. 250 foot would apply at intersections of principal and minor arterials where GC exists

Plan Commission Subcommittee Working Group
LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses
8:30-10:00 a.m. April 30, 2019, City Hall Room 3A

Commissioners in attendance:

Greg Francis, Sylvia St. Clair, Diana Painter

Staff:

Tirrell Black, Nate Gwinn

1. Welcome

- The group reviewed the past discussions held on April 16, and April 23, 2019.

2. Review of intersection types with General Commercial (GC) designated area

- Staff reviewed locations in Spokane where GC is adjacent to intersections of arterial streets without a Center & Corridor designation present. The existing text allows expansion at intersections of two principal arterial streets.
- The group discussed examples with a 250-foot distance from the arterial intersections. Group members pointed out block patterns where they believed an expansion of existing GC designated area might work, and others where it would not work. Both principal-principal arterial intersections and principal-minor arterial intersections were reviewed.

3. LU 1.8 Draft Review

- Group members expressed a preference for language modifications to Policy LU 1.8 to contain GC expansions without crossing streets. The group preferred direct, parcel-to-parcel adjacency, regardless of whether the adjacent land use designation was Residential 4-10 or another designation.
- The group additionally suggested using alleys to contain GC expansions. This would require a separating alley to be vacated in order to expand the GC designation to any land on the opposite side of a block from a principal arterial street.
- The group noted that 250 feet of depth allowed retail businesses to function viably without opening new opportunities for the largest types of stores. Such “big box” locations could be approved following additional planning as part of a Center designation, which committee members believed would be appropriate for such a proposed use.
- The group believes the 250-foot distance from the arterial is more important than the next parallel street from the arterial, which is an option allowed in the existing Policy LU 1.8 language.
- The group made changes to the text to reflect the discussion. Group members decided to send the proposal to the full Plan Commission for review at its next workshop, May 8, 2019.