



# Chapter 3

## Land Use

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION



#### Planning History

Spokane has a long history of planning. The first subdivision regulations were adopted in 1906, and the first zoning ordinance passed in 1929. The City Plan Commission was established by a City Charter amendment in 1917 to, “investigate and make recommendations to the City Council on all matters pertaining to the living conditions of the city, and betterment of facilities, for doing public and private business therein, the elimination of slums, the

correction of unhealthful housing conditions to further its growth along consistent, comprehensive and permanent plans.”

From these early beginnings, planning in Spokane has continued to grow in significance and usefulness. The first land use plan, a report including maps and policies, was adopted in 1968 as the official guide for development in Spokane. A new land use plan was adopted in 1983. Between 1982 and 1995, neighborhood plans were adopted for fifteen city neighborhoods, encompassing approximately 70 percent of the city’s geography. In 2001 the first GMA compliant Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City Council which superseded those previous plans. In addition to annual amendments, that plan went through a full update in 2006. All of these plans, including portions of the neighborhood plans mentioned above, continue to serve as foundation materials for the city’s Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to these efforts, there have been many significant planning accomplishments since the adoption of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. They include the Arterial Street Map Update, the Parks and Open Spaces Plan Update, the Fast Forward Spokane Downtown Plan Update, the 2015 Pedestrian Master Plan, and the Shoreline Master Plan.



## **3.2 VISION AND VALUES**

Spokane volunteers working to develop the 2001 Comprehensive Plan identified important themes in relation to Spokane's current and future growth. A series of visions and values was crafted for each element of the Comprehensive Plan that describes specific performance objectives. From the Visions and Values document, adopted in 1996 by the City Council, the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies were generated.

Land use is defined as the general location of various uses of land, population density, and building intensities.

### **Vision**

"Growth will be managed to allow a mix of land uses that fit, support, and enhance Spokane's neighborhoods, protect the environment, and sustain the downtown area and broaden the economic base of the community."

### **Values**

"The things that are important to Spokane's future include:

- Acquiring and preserving the natural areas inside and outside the city;
- Controlling urban sprawl in order to protect outlying rural areas;
- Developing and maintaining convenient access and opportunities for shopping, services, and employment;
- Protecting the character of single-family neighborhoods;
- Guaranteeing a variety of densities that support a mix of land uses; and
- Utilizing current residential lots before developing raw land."

## **3.3 GOALS AND POLICIES**

Goals and policies provide direction for planning and decision-making. Overall, they indicate desired directions, accomplishments, or aims in relation to the growth and development of Spokane. The land use goals and policies establish a framework for future growth and development of the city.

Much of the future growth will occur within concentrated areas in Neighborhood Centers, District Centers, Employment Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map. While this growth occurs in Centers and Corridors, established single-family residential neighborhoods will remain largely unchanged.



The Centers and Corridors contain a mix of uses, including higher density housing centered around or above retail and commercial establishments, office space and public and semi-public activities (parks, government and schools). In addition to these uses, areas designated as Employment Centers emphasize a strong employment component such as major offices or light industrial uses. Street patterns within the Centers and surrounding neighborhoods enable residents to walk or bicycle for their daily service needs and to access each center's transit stop. Higher density housing within and around the Centers supports business in the Center and allows for enhanced transit service between Centers, along Corridors and to the downtown area. Center designations on the Land Use Plan Map may change to reflect neighborhood planning decisions.

Other important directives of the land use goals and policies include:

- limiting commercial and higher density development outside Centers and Corridors to support growth and development of Centers and Corridors;
- directing new higher density housing to Centers and Corridors and restricting this type of development in single-family areas; and
- using design guidelines to ensure that commercial buildings and higher density housing are compatible with existing neighborhood character in and around Centers and Corridors.

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## LU 1 CITYWIDE LAND USE

**Goal: Offer a harmonious blend of opportunities for living, working, recreation, education, shopping, and cultural activities by protecting natural amenities, providing coordinated, efficient, and cost effective public facilities and utility services, carefully managing both residential and non-residential development and design, and proactively reinforcing downtown Spokane's role as a vibrant urban center.**

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### Policies

#### LU 1.1 Neighborhoods

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

**Discussion:** Neighborhoods generally 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 1.2 Districts

*Identify districts as the framework for providing secondary schools, larger park and recreation facilities, and more varied shopping facilities.*

**Discussion:** Districts generally are composed of logical and contiguous groupings of several neighborhoods having a population of 30,000 to 60,000 people. Within a district, the size and scale of schools, parks, and shopping facilities are larger because they serve a larger portion of the city. For example, within a district, there is usually a centrally located high school, one or two well-located middle schools, and one or more well-located community parks.



The core area of the district, known as the District Center, is usually located at the intersection of arterial streets. District Centers offer a wide range of retail and service activities including general merchandising, small specialty shops, personal and professional services, offices, food, and entertainment. They should also include plazas, green space, and a civic green or park to provide a focal point for the Center. Urban design guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan or a neighborhood plan are used





to guide architectural and site design to promote compatible mixed land uses. Housing density should decrease as the distance from the District Center increases.

### 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.

To ensure that the market for higher density residential use is directed to Centers, future higher density housing generally is limited in other areas. The infill of Residential 15+ and Residential 15-30 residential designations located outside Centers are confined to the boundaries of existing multi-family residential designations where the existing use of land is predominantly higher density residential.

### LU 1.5 Office Uses

*Direct new office uses to Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map.*

**Discussion:** Office use of various types is an important component of a Center. Offices provide necessary services and employment opportunities for residents of a Center and the surrounding neighborhood. Office use in Centers may be in multi-



story structures in the core area of the Center and transition to low-rise structures at the edge.

To ensure that the market for office use is directed to Centers, future office use is generally limited in other areas. The Office designations located outside Centers are generally confined to the boundaries of existing Office designations. Office use within these boundaries is allowed outside of a Center.

The Office designation is also located where it continues an existing office development trend and serves as a transitional land use between higher intensity commercial uses on one side of a principal arterial street and a lower density residential area on the opposite side of the street. Arterial frontages that are predominantly developed with single-family residences should not be disrupted with office use. For example, office use is encouraged in areas designated Office along the south side of Francis Avenue between Cannon Street and Market Street to a depth of not more than approximately 140 feet from Francis Avenue.

Drive-through facilities associated with offices such as drive-through banks should be allowed only along a principal arterial street subject to size limitations and design guidelines. Ingress and egress for office use should be from the arterial street. Uses such as freestanding sit-down restaurants or retail are appropriate only in the Office designation located in higher intensity office areas around downtown Spokane.

Residential uses are permitted in the form of single-family homes on individual lots, upper-floor apartments above offices, or other higher density residential uses.

### **LU 1.6 Neighborhood Retail Use**

*Direct new neighborhood retail use to Neighborhood Centers designated on the Land Use Plan Map.*

**Discussion:** To ensure that neighborhood retail use is attracted to Centers, future neighborhood retail development is directed to the Centers. Neighborhood Retail areas located outside Centers are confined to the boundaries of the Neighborhood Retail designations.

The Neighborhood Retail designation recognizes the existence of small neighborhood-serving businesses in locations that are not larger than two acres and that lie outside of designated Centers. These locations are usually found along arterial streets, typically at the intersection of two arterials. In neighborhoods that are not served by a Center, existing neighborhood businesses provide nearby residents access to goods and services.

No new Neighborhood Retail locations should be designated outside of a Center. Further, business expansion at existing locations should be contained within the



boundaries of the existing designation. Business infill within these boundaries is allowed.

Businesses that are neighborhood-serving and pedestrian-oriented are encouraged in Neighborhood Retail locations. Buildings should be oriented to the street and provide convenient and easily identifiable sidewalk entries to encourage pedestrian access. Parking lots should not dominate the frontage and should be located behind or on the side of buildings. Drive-through facilities, including gas stations and similar auto-oriented uses, tend to provide services to people who live outside the surrounding neighborhood and should be allowed only along principal arterials and be subject to size limitations and design guidelines.

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.

### **LU 1.7 Neighborhood Mini-Centers**

*Create a Neighborhood Mini-Center wherever an existing Neighborhood Retail area is larger than two acres.*

**Discussion:** The Neighborhood Mini-Center designation recognizes the existence of small neighborhood-serving businesses in locations that are two to five acres in size that lie outside Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map. However, some designated Neighborhood Mini-Centers are over five acres in size because they are based on pre-existing zoning designations. Similar to Neighborhood Retail, the Neighborhood Mini-Center designation consists of small, freestanding businesses usually sited at the intersection of or along arterial streets. Another characteristic of this designation is the greatly restricted potential for redevelopment of the surrounding area to support a full Neighborhood Center. Consequently, the Mini-Center designation limits mixed-use development to the boundaries of the existing Mini-Center designation.

Mini-Center locations are encouraged to become small, mixed-use centers with higher density residential use as a major component. Residential use adds market demand for neighborhood business and enables enhanced transit service to these locations. Shared-use parking arrangements are encouraged to increase the development intensity of the site for both residential and commercial uses.

This designation allows the same uses as the Neighborhood Retail designation. No new drive-through facilities, including gas stations and similar auto-oriented uses, should be allowed except along principal arterial streets where they should be subject to size limitations and design guidelines. Buildings should be oriented to the street



to encourage walking by providing easy pedestrian connections. Parking lots should not dominate the frontage and should be located behind or on the side of buildings.

New Mini-Center locations may be established through a neighborhood planning process. They should be separated by at least one-mile from other neighborhood serving business areas and should not exceed five acres in size. To provide convenient accessibility from the surrounding neighborhood, new Mini-Centers should be located at the intersection of arterial streets.

### **LU 1.8 General Commercial Uses**

*Direct new General Commercial uses to Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map.*

**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.

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 implementing transitional land uses with the intent of protecting neighborhood character.

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.

*Policy LU 1.8 amended by Ordinance C35842 on January 17, 2020.*

### **LU 1.9 Downtown**

*Develop city wide plans and strategies that are designed to ensure a viable, economically strong downtown area.*

**Discussion:** Downtown Spokane, designated as the Regional Center, is a top community priority. Its wellbeing influences the entire region via employment, revenue generation, and transit. It should be a thriving Regional Center with a diversity of activities and a mix of uses so that it is alive and vibrant night and day. The mix of uses must include residential (high, medium and low-income), office, entertainment, retail, and parking. It should be developed as a unique collection of businesses, neighborhoods and open spaces with a vision and a plan to which all stakeholders contribute. Major land use changes within the city should be evaluated to identify potential impacts on Downtown.

### **LU 1.10 Industry**

*Provide a variety of industrial locations and site sizes for a variety of light and heavy industrial development and safeguard them from competing land uses.*

**Discussion:** Planned industrial locations should be free from critical areas, not subject to conflicting adjacent land uses, readily accessible to adequate transportation, utility, and service systems, and convenient to the labor force.

Commercial and office uses have historically been permitted in most areas that are designated for industrial use. Continuation of this practice may lead to the displacement of the vital industrial lands needed for the economic vitality of the city. The industrial lands inventory in the city and the urban growth area should be evaluated to determine which industrial lands should be preserved for exclusive industrial use and which areas should continue to allow commercial use.

In most cases, residential use is not appropriate in the Industrial designation because of off-site impacts generated by industrial uses and the lack of residential amenities in these areas. However, river-oriented residential use is allowed in areas along the Spokane River where residents can take advantage of the river amenity. Residential uses should be carefully designed to be compatible with industrial uses. This compatibility may be maintained by using slope to other means or separate uses, and through buffers, landscaping, setbacks, fencing or other appropriate measures. The



intent is to avoid conflicts between residential and industrial uses permitted in these areas.

### LU 1.11 Agriculture

*Designate areas for Agriculture lands that are suited for long-term agricultural production.*

**Discussion:** The Agriculture designation is applied to agricultural lands of local importance in the Urban Growth Area. These areas have historically been farmed, contain highly productive agricultural soils (at least SCS Class II soils or designated prime agriculture lands as defined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS] United States Department of Agriculture), and have large enough parcel sizes for productive farming. These areas have been determined in consultation with soil scientists from the National Resource Conservation Service. They are expected to remain Agriculture for at least the next twenty years. Uses planned for Agriculture areas include: farming, green house farming, single-family residence, and minor structures used for sales of agricultural products produced on the premises. Caretakers' quarters associated with the agricultural activity may be permitted as an accessory use when a single-family residence is located on the parcel.

Uses adjacent to designated Agriculture lands, both inside and outside the city, should be compatible with farm uses. This compatibility may be maintained by limiting uses or density, by using slope or other means to separate uses, and through buffers, setbacks, fencing or other appropriate measures. Another method of lessening conflicts between uses is to give notice to nearby properties that agricultural operations will take place nearby. The Growth Management Act requires that local governments include a notice on subdivisions, development permits and building permits within 500 feet of an Agriculture area that incompatible uses may occur on nearby land (per RCW 36.70A.060.b). A third way of reducing conflicts between uses is a right to farm law. This type of law gives farmers some protection against nuisance lawsuits when conducting traditional agricultural activities. While these laws are common in counties, they are uncommon in cities. Spokane should study whether such a law could work successfully within the city.

To protect and preserve Agriculture designated land, clustering of residential building sites shall be required as part of the subdivision approval process. Through the planned unit development (PUD) process, land in the Agriculture designation may be developed at a density of up to 10 units per acre. Clustering the allowable units is required so that structures located on Agriculture designated parcels are situated in a manner that preserves as much land as possible for the agricultural operation.



A transfer of development rights program or purchase of development rights program should be developed to encourage the preservation of Agriculture lands inside the Urban Growth Area.

### LU 1.12 Public Facilities and Services

*Ensure that public facilities and services systems are adequate to accommodate proposed development before permitting development to occur.*

**Discussion:** Chapter 5, Capital Facilities and Utilities, ensures that necessary public facilities and services are available at the time a development is ready for occupancy without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

When development or redevelopment occurs, it is also important that adequate provision is made for stormwater drainage facilities, paved streets, sidewalks, street lighting, traffic and access control, circulation, off-street parking and loading facilities, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other public improvements made necessary by individual developments.

*See Chapter 5 – Capital Facilities and Utilities for more information on public facilities and services.*

### LU 1.13 Parks and Open Spaces

*Develop funding mechanisms, incentives, and other methods to procure land for formal parks and/or natural open space in existing and new neighborhoods based upon adopted standards of the Comprehensive Plan.*



### LU 1.14 Nonconforming Uses

*Avoid the creation of large areas of nonconforming uses at the time of adoption of new development regulations.*

**Discussion:** Whenever land use regulations such as allowable use or building area are modified by the City during the course of a normal public process, the potential exists for current buildings and uses that were previously allowed to now no longer be acceptable. These uses are then considered “nonconforming” and can result in significant challenges to residents, business owners, and developers who wish to modify or expand those uses. The city should seek to limit the amount of these nonconforming uses created by any land use or building regulation changes in the future.



### LU 1.15 Airfield Influence Areas

*Prohibit the siting of land uses that are incompatible with aviation operations in the Airfield Influence Areas designated on Comprehensive Plan maps, and contain residential Comprehensive Plan designations and zoning in the Airfield Influence Areas to their existing locations not allowing for expansion or increases in residential density.*

**Discussion:** Aviation facilities are a functionally and economically vital part of the community. The Federal Aviation Administration's Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace, establishes standards for determining obstructions to the airspace necessary for safe aircraft operations. Part 77 regulations define a set of airspace protection surfaces referred to as "imaginary surfaces" which may not be penetrated by any structures or natural features. However, the height of development is not the only characteristic that can cause it to be incompatible with aviation facilities. Areas surrounding these facilities are impacted by noise and safety concerns. RCW 36.70.547 General Aviation Airport mandates; "Every county, city, and town in which there is located a general aviation airport that is operated for the benefit of the general public, whether publicly owned or privately owned public use, shall, through its comprehensive plan and development regulations, discourage the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to such general aviation airport." Air Field operators prepare and maintain Master Plans with the guidance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or the Department of Defense (DOD). The Master Plans are used to identify Airfield Influence Areas based on their proximity to an airfield, air traffic patterns, relative risk of an accident or current or anticipated levels of aviation generated noise. The Airfield Influence Areas are designated on Comprehensive Plan maps.

Residential uses and uses generally associated with residential uses such as schools and religious institutions are highly sensitive to aviation operation impacts. Other uses that concentrate a large number of people in a small area, endanger critical community infrastructure or create hazards for air traffic are also incompatible. Because of their low building occupancies and similar impacts on adjoining properties, industrial uses are generally considered to be compatible with aviation facilities. In order to avoid an increase in potential conflicts between residents and airfield operations no additional land within the Airfield Influence Areas shall be designated for residential uses or other uses that have a high congregation of people. Existing residential designations shall not be changed to a higher density designation. Residential uses are prohibited in Commercial and Industrial designations. Existing Industrial designations are to be preserved and industrial uses that complement aviation facilities encouraged. Airfield Overlay Zones found in the city's development code shall only allow commercial and industrial uses that do not conflict with aircraft operations.





### LU 1.16 Mobile Home Parks

*Designate appropriate areas for the preservation of mobile and manufactured home parks.*

**Discussion:** Manufactured and/or mobile home parks provide affordable housing to many city residents. In many cases, they provide the opportunity of home ownership to households which cannot afford to purchase other types of housing. When existing manufactured home parks are redeveloped, many homeowners are unable to move their homes to other sites. Additionally, redeveloped mobile and manufactured home parks are generally not replaced by new parks within the city, resulting in a net loss of this type of housing.

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## LU 2 PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT

**Goal: Encourage the enhancement of the public realm.**

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### Policies

#### 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 2.2 Performance Standards

*Employ performance and design standards with sufficient flexibility and appropriate incentives to ensure that development is compatible with surrounding land uses.*

**Discussion:** Performance and design standards should address, among other items, traffic and parking/loading control, structural mass, open space, green areas, landscaping, and buffering.

In addition, they should address safety of persons and property, as well as the impacts of noise, vibration, dust, and odors. An incentive system should be devised that grants bonuses, such as increased building height, reduced parking, and increased density, in exchange for development that enhances the public realm.



## LU 3 EFFICIENT LAND USE

**Goal: Promote the efficient use of land by the use of incentives, density and mixed-use development in proximity to retail businesses, public services, places of work, and transportation systems.**

### Policies

#### LU 3.1 Coordinated and Efficient Land Use

*Encourage coordinated and efficient growth and development through infrastructure financing and construction programs, tax and regulatory incentives, and by focusing growth in areas where adequate services and facilities exist or can be economically extended.*

**Discussion:** Future growth should be directed to locations where adequate services and facilities are available. Otherwise, services and facilities should be extended or upgraded only when it is economically feasible to do so.

The Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map are the areas of the city where incentives and other tools should be used to encourage infill development, redevelopment and new development. Examples of incentives the city could use include assuring public participation, using public facilities and lower development fees to attract investment, assisting with project financing, zoning for mixed-use and higher density development, encouraging rehabilitation, providing in-kind assistance, streamlining the permit process, providing public services, and addressing toxic contamination, among other things.

#### 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 a sub-area planning process.

#### Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood Centers designated on the Land Use Plan Map have a greater intensity of development than the surrounding residential areas. Businesses primarily cater to neighborhood residents, such as convenience businesses and services. Drive-through facilities, including gas stations and similar auto-



oriented uses tend to provide services to people living outside the surrounding neighborhood and should be allowed only along principal arterials and be subject to size limitations and design guidelines. Uses such as a day care center, a church, or a school may also be found in the Neighborhood Center.

Businesses in the Neighborhood Center are provided support by including housing over ground floor retail and office uses. The highest density housing should be focused in and around the Neighborhood Center. Density is high enough to enable frequent transit service to a Neighborhood Center and to sustain neighborhood businesses. Housing density should decrease as the distance from the Neighborhood Center increases. Urban design guidelines for Centers and Corridors, located in the Spokane Municipal Code, are used to guide architectural and site design to promote compatible, mixed land uses, and to promote land use compatibility with adjoining neighborhoods.

Buildings in the Neighborhood Center are oriented to the street. This encourages walking by providing easy pedestrian connections, by bringing activities and visually interesting features closer to the street, and by providing safety through watchful eyes and activity day and night. Parking lots should not dominate the frontage of these pedestrian-oriented streets, interrupt pedestrian routes, or negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods. Parking lots should be located behind or on the side of buildings as a rule.

To promote social interaction and provide a focal point for the center, a central gathering place, such as a civic green, square, or park, should be provided. To identify the Center as the major activity area of the neighborhood, it is important to encourage buildings in the core area of the Neighborhood Center to be taller. Buildings up to three stories are encouraged in this area.

Attention is given to the design of the circulation system so pedestrian access between residential areas and the Neighborhood Center is provided. To be successful, Centers need to be integrated with transit. Transit stops should be conveniently located near commercial and higher density residential uses, where transit service is most viable.

The size and composition of Neighborhood Centers, including recreation areas, vary by neighborhood, depending upon location, access, neighborhood character, local desires, and market opportunities. Neighborhood Centers should be separated by at least one mile (street distance) or as necessary to provide economic viability. As a general rule, the amount of commercial space and percent devoted to office and retail should be proportional to the number of housing units in the neighborhood. The size of individual commercial business buildings should be limited to assure that the business is truly neighborhood serving. The size of the Neighborhood Center,



including the higher density housing surrounding the Center, should be approximately 15 to 25 square blocks. The density of housing should be about 32 units per acre in the core of the Neighborhood Center and may be up to 22 units per acre at the perimeter.

The following locations are designated as Neighborhood Centers on the Land Use Plan Map:

- Indian Trail and Barnes;
- South Perry;
- Grand Boulevard/12th to 14th;
- Garland;
- West Broadway;
- Lincoln and Nevada; and
- Fort George Wright Drive and Government Way.

### District Center

District Centers are designated on the Land Use Plan Map. They are similar to Neighborhood Centers, but the density of housing is greater (up to 44 dwelling units per acre in the core area of the center) and the size and scale of schools, parks, and shopping facilities are larger because they serve a larger portion of the city. As a general rule, the size of the District Center, including the higher density housing surrounding the Center, should be approximately 30 to 50 square blocks.

As with a Neighborhood Center, new buildings are oriented to the street and parking lots are located behind or on the side of buildings whenever possible. A central gathering place, such as a civic green, square, or park is provided. To identify the District Center as a major activity area, it is important to encourage buildings in the core area of the District center to be taller. Buildings up to five stories are encouraged in this area.

The circulation system is designed so pedestrian access between residential areas and the District Center is provided. Frequent transit service, walkways, and bicycle paths link District Centers and the downtown area.

The following locations are designated as District Centers on the Land Use Plan Map:

- Shadle – Alberta and Wellesley;
- Lincoln Heights – 29th and Regal;



- Southgate;
- 57th and Regal;
- Grand District;
- Five Mile – Francis and Ash (*suggested Center, with final determination subject to a sub-area planning process described in LU 3.4*); and
- NorthTown – Division and Wellesley (*suggested Center, with final determination subject to a sub-area planning process described in LU 3.4*).

### Employment Center

Employment Centers have the same mix of uses and general character features as Neighborhood and District centers but also have a strong employment component. The employment component is expected to be largely non-service related jobs incorporated into the Center or on land immediately adjacent to the Center.

Employment Centers vary in size from 30 to 50 square blocks plus associated employment areas. The residential density in the core area of the Employment Center may be up to 44 dwelling units per acre. Surrounding the Center are medium density transition areas of up to 22 dwelling units per acre.

The following locations are designated as Employment Centers on the Land Use Plan Map:

- East Sprague – Sprague and Napa;
- North Foothills Employment Center;
- Maxwell and Elm;
- Holy Family;
- North Nevada, between Westview and Magnesium; and
- Trent and Hamilton.

### Corridors

Corridors are areas of mixed land use that extend no more than two blocks in either direction from the center of a transportation corridor.

Within a Corridor there is a greater intensity of development in comparison to the surrounding residential areas. Housing at a



density up to 44 units per acre and employment densities are adequate to support frequent transit service. The density of housing transitions to a lower level (up to 22 units per acre) at the outer edge of the Corridor. A variety of housing styles, apartments, condominiums, row houses, and houses on smaller lots are allowed. A full range of retail services, including grocery stores serving several neighborhoods, theaters, restaurants, dry-cleaners, hardware stores, and specialty shops are also allowed. Low intensity, auto-dependent uses (e.g., lumber yards, automobile dealers, and nurseries) are prohibited.

Corridors provide enhanced connections to other Centers, Corridors, and downtown Spokane. To accomplish this, it is important to make available safe, attractive transit stops and pedestrian and bicycle ways. The street environment for pedestrians is much improved by placing buildings with multiple stories close to the street with wide sidewalks and street trees, attractive landscaping, benches, and frequent transit stops. Parking lots should not dominate the frontage of these pedestrian-oriented streets, interrupt pedestrian routes, or negatively impact surrounding neighborhoods. Parking lots should be located behind or on the side of buildings whenever possible.

The following locations are designated as Corridors on the Land Use Plan Map:

- North Monroe Street;
- Hillyard Business Corridor; and
- Hamilton Street Corridor.

### Regional Center

Downtown Spokane is the Regional Center and is the primary economic, cultural and social center of the region. With the creation and development of the University District on the east end of Downtown, it is also a major academic hub with the collaboration of multiple institutions of higher education. Downtown contains the highest density and intensity of land use, and continues to be a targeted area for additional infill housing opportunities and neighborhood amenities to create a more livable experience.

The following location is designated as the Regional Center on the Land Use Plan Map:

- Downtown Spokane

### LU 3.3 Designating Centers and Corridors

*Designate new Centers or Corridors in appropriate locations on the Land Use Plan Map through a city-approved planning process.*



**Discussion:** The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that Centers and Corridors are the most appropriate location for commercial and higher density residential uses. In some areas of the city, there may be a need to designate a new Center or Corridor. The exact location, boundaries, size, and mix of land uses in a Center or Corridor should be determined through a city-approved sub-area planning process that is inclusive of all interested stakeholders, including business and property owners, and the affected neighborhood(s). This process may be initiated by the city, or at the request of a neighborhood or private interest.

### LU 3.4 Planning for Centers and Corridors

*Conduct a city-approved subarea planning process to determine the location, size, mix of land uses, and underlying zoning within designated Centers and Corridors. Prohibit any change to land use or zoning within suggested Centers or Corridors until a subarea planning process is completed.*

**Discussion:** Suggested Centers and Corridors are those that have been newly designated and do not have any underlying Center and Corridor land use or zoning. Land use and zoning, as well as the size, location and intensity of the land use for all Centers and Corridors should be determined through a sub-area planning process that is inclusive of all stakeholders. Any such process shall include consultation and coordination with property owners and the neighborhood in which the Center or Corridor is located. This process may be initiated by the city, or at the request of a neighborhood or private interest. Center and Corridor planning should consider the following factors:

- existing and planned commercial and residential densities and development conditions;
- amount of commercial land needed to serve the neighborhood;
- public facilities, available utilities and infrastructure, and service capacity for residential and commercial development;
- capital facility investments and access to public transit; and
- other characteristics of a Center as provided in this plan, or as further refined.

The subarea planning process should result in a determination of the boundaries of the designated Center or Corridor, the land use mix and intensities of use, and the identification of any changes to the Land Use Map within the designated Center or Corridor.



### 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 Map 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.

All Centers are mixed-use areas. Some existing uses in designated Centers may fit with the Center concept; others may not. Planning for Centers should first identify the uses that do not fit and identify sites for new uses that are missing from the existing land use pattern. Ultimately, the mix of uses in a Center should seek to achieve the following minimum requirements:

TABLE LU 1 – MIX OF USES IN CENTERS		
Land Use	Neighborhood Center	District and Employment Center
Public	10 percent	10 percent
Commercial/Office	20 percent	30 percent
Higher-Density Housing	40 percent	20 percent

*Note: All percentage ranges are based on site area, rather than square footage of building area.*

This recommended proportion of uses is based on site area and does not preclude additional upper floors with different uses.

The ultimate mix of land uses and appropriate densities should be clarified in a site-specific planning process in order to address site-related issues such as community context, topography, infrastructure capacities, transit service frequency, and arterial street accessibility. Special care should be taken to respect the context of the site and the character of surrounding existing neighborhoods. The 10 percent public use component is considered a goal and should include land devoted to parks, plazas, open space, and public facilities.

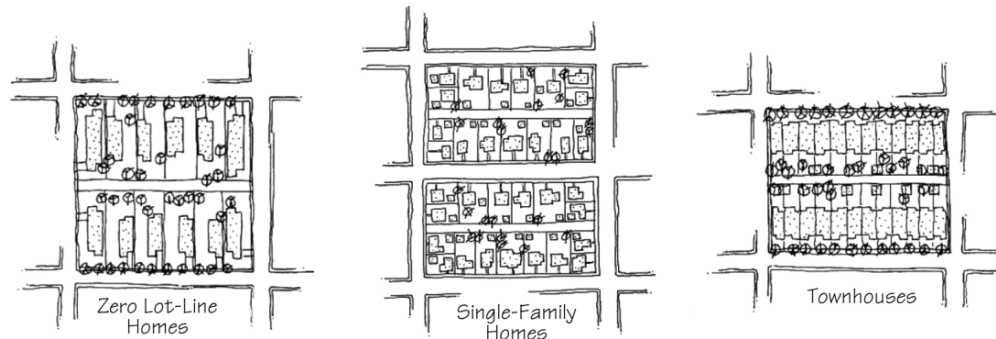




### LU 3.6 Compact Residential Patterns

*Allow more compact and affordable housing in all neighborhoods, in accordance with 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 row houses.



### LU 3.7 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 3.8 Shared Parking

*Encourage shared parking facilities for business and commercial establishments that have dissimilar peak use periods.*

**Discussion:** Many businesses have different hours of the day during which they are most busy. Whereas a movie theater is occupied during the evening hours, an office building flourishes during the day. In this type of situation, there is an opportunity for shared parking. Shared parking lots consume less land and are a more efficient use of land compared to the construction of separate parking areas for each individual business.



## LU 4 TRANSPORTATION

**Goal: Promote a network of safe and cost effective transportation alternatives, including transit, carpooling, bicycling, pedestrian-oriented environments, and more efficient use of the automobile, to recognize the relationship between land use and transportation.**

### Policies

#### 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 4.2 Land Uses That Support Travel Options and Active Transportation

*Provide a compatible mix of housing and commercial uses in Neighborhood Centers, District Centers, Employment Centers, and Corridors.*



**Discussion:** This provides opportunities for people to use active forms of transportation to get to work and shopping, enables less reliance on automobiles, reduces commuting times and distances, makes mass transit more viable, and provides greater convenience for area residents while supporting physical activity.

#### LU 4.3 Neighborhood Through-Traffic

*Create boundaries for new neighborhoods through which principal arterials should not pass.*

**Discussion:** Principal arterials that bisect neighborhoods create undesirable barriers to pedestrian circulation and adversely impact adjoining residences. Whenever possible, principal arterials should be located on the outer edge of neighborhoods.



#### LU 4.4 Connections

*Form a well-connected network which provides safe, direct and convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles, through site design for new development and redevelopment.*

#### LU 4.5 Block Length

*Create a network of streets that is generally laid out in a grid pattern that features more street intersections and shorter block lengths in order to increase street connectivity and access.*

**Discussion:** Excessively long blocks and long local access residential streets result in fewer alternative routes for pedestrian and vehicle travel and generally result in increased vehicle speeds. A grid pattern featuring more street intersections and shorter blocks provides more alternative routes for pedestrian and vehicle travel and tends to slow traffic. Block lengths of approximately 250 to 350 feet on average are preferable, but should not exceed 660 feet in length (per Spokane Municipal Code). Environmental conditions such as topography or rock outcroppings might constrain these shorter block lengths in some areas.

#### LU 4.6 Transit-Supported Development

*Encourage transit-supported development, including a mix of employment, residential, and commercial uses, adjacent to high-performance transit stops.*

**Discussion:** People are more likely to take transit to meet their everyday travel needs when transit service is frequent, at least every 15 minutes. Mixed-use development in these areas will enable less reliance on automobiles for travel, reduce parking needs, and support robust transit ridership. Land use regulations and incentives will encourage this type of development along high-performance transit corridors.

Transit-supported development should be encouraged through the application of development incentives, enhanced design measures, streetscape standards, parking standards, and potential changes in density and use. Each of these measures should be developed through a sub-area planning (or similar) process as each high-performance transit line is planned and developed. These sub-area planning processes should include neighborhood and stakeholder involvement and public participation processes to ensure that site-specific and neighborhood-context issues are addressed and benefits are maximized.

*Policy LU 4.6 added by Ordinance C35841 on January 17, 2020.*



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## LU 5 DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

**Goal: Promote development in a manner that is attractive, complementary, and compatible with other land uses.**

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### Policies

#### LU 5.1 Built and Natural Environment

*Ensure that developments are sensitive to the built and natural environment (for example, air and water quality, noise, traffic congestion, and public utilities and services), by providing adequate impact mitigation to maintain and enhance quality of life.*

#### LU 5.2 Environmental Quality Enhancement

*Encourage site locations and design features that enhance environmental quality and compatibility with surrounding land uses.*

**Discussion:** Ensure the provision of adequate landscaping and other site design features that enhance the compatibility of development with the surrounding area.

#### LU 5.3 Off-Site Impacts

*Ensure that off-street parking, access, and loading facilities do not adversely impact the surrounding area.*

**Discussion:** Off-street parking, access, and loading facilities are usually associated with the development of higher density residential, office, and commercial uses. These features often have major impacts on single-family residential areas. The impacts are most significant when these facilities are next to or intrude between homes. When these facilities are accessory to a higher density residential or nonresidential use, they should be developed according to the same policies and zoning regulations as govern the primary use. New parking lots should also have the same zoning classification as the primary use. In addition, these facilities should be developed to minimize adverse impacts to adjacent properties. All parking lots should be paved. Parking lots and loading areas should have appropriate buffers to fully screen them from adjacent, less intensive uses. Access to business and higher density residential sites should be controlled to avoid impacts on adjacent uses, pedestrian movement, and street functions.

#### LU 5.4 Natural Features and Habitat Protection

*Ensure development is accomplished in a manner that protects significant natural features and wildlife habitat.*



**Discussion:** Natural areas include environmentally sensitive areas, critical areas and buffers, trail corridors, areas with difficult topography, stands of trees, wildlife habitat, and other natural features. To encourage conservation of natural features and habitat protection, development regulations should be established that allow clustering of development at higher densities than otherwise allowed (consistent with overall density allowed for the site). If the minimum density cannot be achieved by clustering of development, exceptions to minimum residential density requirements may be permitted.

### LU 5.5 Compatible Development

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

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## LU 6 ADEQUATE PUBLIC LANDS AND FACILITIES

**Goal: Ensure the provision and distribution of adequate, public lands and facilities throughout the city.**

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### Policies

#### LU 6.1 Advance Siting

*Identify, in advance of development, sites for parks, open space, wildlife habitat, police stations, fire stations, major stormwater facilities, schools, and other lands useful for public purposes.*

**Discussion:** Attempts should be made to obtain or secure (e.g., by obtaining the right of first refusal) such sites as early as possible in the development of an area to ensure that the facilities are well located to serve the area and to minimize acquisition costs.

#### LU 6.2 Open Space

*Identify, designate, prioritize, and seek funding for open space areas.*

**Discussion:** The open space land use map designation consists of three major categories:

**Conservation Open Space:** Conservation Open Space includes areas that are publicly owned, not developed, and designated to remain in a natural state. It is intended to protect areas with high scenic value, environmentally sensitive conditions, historic or cultural values, priority animal habitats, and/or passive recreational features. It is expected that improvements in these areas would be limited to those supporting preservation or some passive recreation activities, like soft trails and wildlife viewpoints.



**Potential Open Space:** Potential Open Space includes areas that are not currently publicly owned, not developed, and designated to remain in a natural state. The purpose and types of improvements in this category are the same as the Conservation Open Space category. Public acquisition of land designated Potential Open Space is encouraged and may be accomplished by outright purchase, nature space tax incentives, Spokane County Conservation Futures funds, and other methods. Restrictions on the use of land designated Potential Open Space may not occur until the city or Spokane County acquires sufficient interest to prevent development of the lands. Otherwise, uses allowed in the Residential 4-10 designation may be allowed on land designated Potential Open Space.

**Open Space:** Open Space includes major publicly or privately owned open space areas, such as golf courses, major parks and open space areas, and cemeteries. These areas usually have facilities for active and passive recreation and include paved and unpaved roads, parking lots, hard surface trails, and buildings and facilities that support activities occurring in the open space area.

### LU 6.3 School Locations

*Work with the local school districts to identify school sites that are located to serve the service area and that are readily accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.*

**Discussion:** Schools are among the most important public facilities society provides for its citizens. Not only are they the centers of learning for children, but they serve as important focal points for all kinds of neighborhood activities. Their libraries and auditoriums often serve as neighborhood meeting places. The health and vitality of a neighborhood school is invariably a clear indicator of the health and vitality of the neighborhood itself.

An elementary or middle school should be centrally located within its service area to allow children to walk to school. The school should be located within or close to a designated center.

A high school should be centrally located within its service area so as to be easily accessible to vehicular and pedestrian traffic. High schools tend to generate high levels of traffic from student drivers, school personnel, and interscholastic events. To accommodate the higher levels of traffic, high schools should be located on an arterial street. They should also be located within or close to a designated Center.

Most of Spokane is served by School District 81. Mead School District 354 serves an area within the northern city limits, and Cheney School District 360 covers an area within the city limits in the southwest. The Mead, Cheney and Nine Mile School Districts also serve citizens within the Urban Growth Area.



## LU 6.4 City and School Cooperation

*Continue the cooperative relationship between the city and school officials.*

**Discussion:** The city has a modest role to play in school planning. Public schools are operated by local school districts and governed by state and federal laws and regulations. State funds provide the bulk of school finances. Some funds come from the federal government. School districts raise the rest from local property taxes. State laws set standards for service levels and facility development, such as site size and enrollment. They also specify funding methods. These laws thus perform much of the role of a functional plan for schools. School districts complete the remaining tasks of planning.

Nevertheless, there are important things the city can do. Through good planning, the city can ensure that the environments around existing and future school sites are conducive to their needs. The safety needs of school children and the need for school buildings to be appropriately accessible to their service areas should be considered. The city can certainly continue to work closely with school officials and neighborhoods to serve citizens.

In addition, the Growth Management Act requires cities and school districts to cooperate in capital facility planning. Future school sites are among the types of “lands needed for public purposes,” which must be identified in a city’s comprehensive plan. If a school district is to collect impact fees for new schools, the school facilities must be reflected in the city’s Capital Facility Program (CFP).

Consideration should also be given to joint planning, which could include prioritization of sites for future school construction and preservation of historic sites.

## LU 6.5 Schools as a Neighborhood Focus

*Encourage school officials to retain existing neighborhood school sites and structures because of the importance of the school in maintaining a strong, healthy neighborhood.*

## LU 6.6 Shared Facilities

*Continue the sharing of city and school facilities for neighborhood parks, recreation, and open space uses.*

## LU 6.7 Sharing and Programming Planning

*Develop a joint plan for the city and school districts serving Spokane for sharing and programming school sites for common activities.*



### LU 6.8 Siting Essential Public Facilities

*Utilize a process for locating essential public facilities that incorporates different levels of public review depending on facility scale and location.*

**Discussion:** The Growth Management Act requires local governments to include a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities, and as defined in RCW 47.06.140, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020.

In 2002, Spokane County adopted the Spokane County Regional Siting Process for Essential Public Facilities. It includes a siting review process, location analysis, and requirements for public involvement and is incorporated into city land use regulations. The Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) references that siting process.

### LU 6.9 Facility Compatibility with Neighborhood

*Ensure the utilization of architectural and site designs of essential public facilities that are compatible with the surrounding area.*

**Discussion:** It is important that essential public facilities enhance or improve the environment in which they are proposed. Cost considerations should be balanced with attempts to construct buildings and site features that are compatible with their surroundings.

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## LU 7 IMPLEMENTATION

**Goal: Ensure that the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented.**

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### Policies

#### LU 7.1 Regulatory Structure

*Develop a land use regulatory structure that utilizes a variety of mechanisms to promote development that provides a public benefit.*

**Discussion:** Incentives are one of the tools that can be used to encourage development that is beneficial to the public. For instance, a development may be allowed a higher residential density, greater lot coverage, or increased building height if there is a dedication of open space for public use or some other development feature that results in a direct benefit to the public.





The regulations should be predictable, reliable, and adaptable to changing living and working arrangements brought about by technological advancements. They should also be broad enough to encourage desirable development and/or redevelopment.

### **LU 7.2 Continuing Review Process**

*Develop a broad, community-based process that periodically re-evaluates and directs city policies and regulations consistent with this chapter's Vision and Values.*

### **LU 7.3 Historic Reuse**

*Allow compatible residential or commercial use of historic properties when necessary to promote preservation of these resources.*

**Discussion:** Preservation of historic properties is encouraged by allowing a practical economic use, such as the conversion of a historic single-family residence to a higher density residential or commercial use. A public review process should be required for conversions to a use not allowed in the underlying zoning district. Special attention should be given to assuring that the converted use is compatible with surrounding properties and the zone in which the property is located. Recommendations from the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer should be received by any decision-maker before a decision is made regarding the appropriateness of a conversion of a historic property.

### **LU 7.4 Sub-Area Planning Framework**

*Use the Comprehensive Plan for overall guidance and undertake more detailed sub-area and neighborhood planning in order to provide a forum for confronting and reconciling issues and empowering neighborhoods to solve problems collectively.*

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## **LU 8 URBAN GROWTH AREA**

**Goal: Maintain an Urban Growth Area that includes areas and densities sufficient to accommodate the city's allocated population, housing and employment growth for the succeeding twenty-year period, including the accommodation of the medical, governmental, educational, institutional, commercial, and industrial facilities related to such growth, but that does not exceed the area necessary to accommodate such growth.**

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**Policies**

**LU 8.1 Role of Urban Growth Areas**

*Limit urban sprawl by encouraging development in urban areas where adequate public facilities already exist or where such facilities can be more efficiently provided.*

**Discussion:** New growth should be directed to urban areas to allow for more efficient and predictable provision of adequate public facilities, to promote orderly transition of governance for urban areas, to reduce development pressure on rural lands, and to encourage redevelopment of existing urban areas.

**LU 8.2 Joint Planning in Urban Growth Area**

*Plan with Spokane County for the unincorporated portions of the Urban Growth Area.*

**Discussion:** Work with Spokane County toward adoption of consistent land use designations and development standards, as well as identifying and preserving natural environment features, in unincorporated Urban Growth Areas in recognition that Urban Growth Areas are the city's future annexation areas and will become the city's responsibility upon annexation.

**LU 8.3 Review of Urban Growth Area**

*Review the Urban Growth Area boundary in accordance with the requirements of the Growth Management Act and Countywide Planning Policies relative to the current Office of Financial Management's twenty-year population forecast and make adjustments, as warranted, to accommodate the projected growth.*

**Discussion:** The City of Spokane and Spokane County should coordinate their periodic reviews of the Urban Growth Area, reviewing the densities permitted within the city to determine the extent to which the urban growth occurring within Spokane County has located in the city and within the unincorporated portions of the Urban Growth Area.

The review process should include conducting an inventory of the buildable land supply using the latest available data gathering and mapping techniques, including geographical information system (GIS) or newer technology.

*Additional information on the Urban Growth Area is included in Volume V, Appendix A – "Countywide Planning Policies".*



## LU 9 ANNEXATION

**Goal: Support annexations that enhance effective and efficient government.**

### Policies

#### LU 9.1 Annexation Boundaries

*Encourage annexations that create logical boundaries and reasonable service areas within the adjacent Urban Growth Area, where the city has demonstrated the fiscal capacity to provide services.*

**Discussion:** Rapid development and population growth frequently occur just outside city boundaries where property is less expensive and zoning laws may be less restrictive. Developments on the city's fringe create increased traffic congestion and the need for improved urban governmental services, including police and fire protection. These problems cross boundary lines and increase the city's cost of providing urban governmental services without corresponding revenues to cover the increased costs. The Growth Management Act seeks to reduce urban sprawl by encouraging development in urban areas where adequate public facilities already exist or where such facilities can be more efficiently provided and facilitates the annexation of urban areas through the coordinated comprehensive planning process it mandates.

As the city annexes territory, it should be guided by the following objectives:

- preservation of natural neighborhoods and communities;
- use of physical boundaries, including but not limited to bodies of water; highways, and land contours;
- creation and preservation of logical service areas; and
- adjustment of impractical municipal boundaries.

State requirements for the annexation process are included in RCW 35.13.

#### LU 9.2 Peninsula Annexation

*Encourage and assist property owners in existing unincorporated "peninsulas" in the adjacent Urban Growth Area to annex to the city.*

**Discussion:** Unincorporated "peninsulas" are land areas of any size that are located outside of the city limits that have at least eighty percent of their boundaries contiguous to the city. RCW 35.13.182 et seq., allows the cities to resolve to annex such areas (in existence before June 30, 1994) subject to referendum for forty-five days after passage following the adoption of the annexation ordinance.



### LU 9.3 City Utilities

*Require property owners requesting city utilities to annex or sign a binding agreement to annex when requested to do so by the city.*

### LU 9.4 Community Impacts

*Evaluate all annexations on the basis of their short and long-term community impacts and benefits.*

**Discussion:** If the annexation includes proposed development, consideration of the proposal should include an analysis of the short and long-term impacts on the neighborhood and city in terms of all services required.

### LU 9.5 Funding Capital Facilities in Annexed Areas

*Ensure that annexations do not result in a negative fiscal impact on the city.*

**Discussion:** In general, property owners in annexing areas should fund the public facility improvements necessary to serve the area in a manner that is consistent with applicable City of Spokane policies and regulations. If the city determines that an area to be annexed to Spokane requires public facility improvements to correct health and safety related problems, the property owners within the annexed area should fund these improvements. If an area annexed to Spokane has public facilities that do not meet city standards and the property owners or residents want to improve the facilities to meet city standards, the property owners should fund those improvements, or the proportion of those improvements, that do not have a citywide benefit. Public facility improvements within annexed areas that have a citywide benefit should be considered for funding through city revenues as part of the city's capital facilities and improvements planning processes.

### LU 9.6 Land Use and Zoning Designations upon Annexation

*Recognize the interests of the residents of the annexing area and, in the absence of specific policies and standards adopted by the city, honor the intent of adopted county plans and ordinances for areas proposed to be annexed.*

**Discussion:** Spokane County's land use and zoning designations for the area are generally converted to the city Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan Map and Official Zoning Map designations that are the most similar concurrently with an annexation.

### LU 9.7 City Bonded Indebtedness

*Require property owners within an annexing area to assume a share of the city's bonded indebtedness.*

**Discussion:** When property is annexed to the city, it becomes subject to all city laws. It is also assessed and taxed in the same way as the property already in the city. As a



result, annexed areas are required to help pay for the outstanding indebtedness of the city approved by voters prior to the effective date of the annexation.

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## LU 10 JOINT PLANNING

**Goal: Support joint growth management planning and annexation requests which best meet the Comprehensive Plan’s development goals and policies.**

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### Policies

#### LU 10.1 Land Use Plans

*Prepare land use plans in cooperation with Spokane County for the Urban Growth Area to ensure that planned land uses are compatible with adopted city policies and development standards at the time of annexation.*

#### LU 10.2 Consistent Development Standards

*Require utilities, roads, and services in the adjacent Urban Growth Area to be built to city standards.*

**Discussion:** Interlocal agreements are a mechanism that should be used to apply these standards to the Urban Growth Area. Requiring these facilities to be built to city standards will assure that they meet city standards at the time of annexation of these areas to the city.

#### LU 10.3 Special Purpose Districts

*Confer with affected special purpose districts and other jurisdictions to assess the impact of annexation prior to any annexation.*

**Discussion:** Where possible, boundaries should be mutually resolved by the jurisdictions involved before any final action is taken on a formal annexation petition.

#### LU 10.4 Long Range Urban Growth Area Planning

*Establish a forty-year planning horizon to address eventual expansion of UGAs beyond the twenty-year boundary required by the Growth Management Act.*

**Discussion:** The purpose of the longer planning period is to ensure the ability to expand urban governmental services and avoid land use barriers to future expansion of the twenty-year UGA boundary. Within the Urban Reserve areas, densities and land use patterns should be established that do not preclude later subdivision to urban densities.

To identify Urban Reserve areas, it is necessary for the city and Spokane County to work together to identify the amount of land necessary to support the next 40 years of growth. Factors that need to be considered include the ability to provide public



services and facilities and carrying capacity issues, such as water quantity and air quality.

### **3.4 DESCRIPTION OF LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Much of the future growth will occur in District Centers, Employment Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and Corridors. A key component of each of these focused growth areas is higher density housing centered around or above service and retail facilities. This enables residents near the Center or Corridor to walk or bicycle for their daily needs. Higher density housing also provides economic support for the businesses and allows for more efficient transit service along the Corridor and between mixed-use Centers and downtown Spokane.

Focusing growth results in a more compact urban form with less land being used at the fringe of the city. It provides city residents with more housing and transportation choices. New policies, regulations, and incentives allow mixed-use in designated Centers and Corridors and assure that these areas are designed to be compatible with surrounding lower density residential areas.

The land use designations and their general characteristics are as follows:

**Neighborhood Center:** The Neighborhood Center contains the most intensive activity area of the neighborhood. In addition to businesses that cater to neighborhood residents, activities such as a day care center, church, or school may be found in the Center. Size and composition of the Center varies depending upon location, access, neighborhood character, local desires, and market opportunities. Important elements to be included in the Center are a civic green, square or park, and a transit stop. Buildings fronting on the square or green should be at least two or three stories in height with housing located above ground floor retail and office uses. Building height is stepped-down and density of housing is lower as distance from the Center increases. The circulation system is designed to facilitate pedestrian access between residential areas and key neighborhood components.

**District Center:** District Centers are similar to Neighborhood Centers except they are larger in scale and contain more intensive residential and commercial activities. Size and composition of the Center vary depending upon location, access, neighborhood character, local desires, and market opportunities. District Centers are usually located at the intersection of principal arterial streets or major transit hubs. To enhance the pedestrian environment, plazas, green space, or a civic green serve as an integral element of the district center. Higher density housing is found both within and surrounding the District Center to help support business and transit. A circulation system, which facilitates pedestrian access between residential areas and the District Center, is provided. District Centers and downtown Spokane are linked by frequent transit service, walkways, and bikeways.



**Employment Center:** Employment Centers have the same mix of uses and general character features as Neighborhood and District Centers but also have a strong employment component. The employment component is expected to be largely non-service related jobs incorporated into the Center or on land immediately adjacent to the Center. Employment Centers vary in size from thirty to fifty square blocks plus associated employment areas.

**Corridor:** The Corridor concept focuses growth along transportation corridors, such as a major transit line. It is intended to allow improved transit service to daily activities. Housing and employment densities are increased along the Corridor to support frequent transit service and business. Usually, Corridors are no more than two blocks in depth along either side of the Corridor. Safe, attractive transit stops and pedestrian and bicycle ways are provided. A variety of housing styles—apartments, condominiums, row houses, and houses on smaller lots—are located in close proximity to the Corridor. Important elements include multi-story buildings fronting on wide sidewalks with street trees, attractive landscaping, benches, and frequent transit stops. A full range of services are provided including grocery stores serving several neighborhoods, theaters, restaurants, drycleaners, hardware stores, and specialty shops.

**Regional Center (Downtown):** Downtown Spokane is a thriving neighborhood with a diversity of activities and a mix of uses. A variety of goods and services are available. The range of activities includes cultural, governmental, hospitality, and residential uses. It serves as the primary economic and cultural center of the region. Emphasis is on providing new housing choices and neighborhood services for downtown residents, in addition to enhancing economic, cultural, and social opportunities for the city and region. The Plan for a New Downtown adopted by the City Council in March 1999 serves as the plan for the Downtown Planning Area.

**Center & Corridor Core:** This designation allows commercial, office, and residential uses in designated Centers and Corridors. The type, intensity, and scale of uses allowed shall be consistent with the designated type of Center or Corridor. This Comprehensive Plan designation will be implemented with the Land Use Code for Centers and Corridors.

**Center & Corridor Transition:** These areas are intended to provide a transition of mixed uses (office, small retail, and multi-family residential) between the Center & Corridor Core designations and existing residential areas. Office and retail uses are required to have residential uses on the same site. This Comprehensive Plan designation will be implemented with the Land Use Code for Centers and Corridors, Center and Corridor Type 4.



**Heavy Industrial:** This designation is intended to accommodate heavier industrial uses at locations where there is no interaction with residential uses.

**Light Industrial:** This designation is intended for those lighter industrial uses, which produce little noise, odor, or smoke. River-oriented residential use is permitted in the Light Industrial designation.

**General Commercial:** The General Commercial designation includes a wide range of commercial uses. Everything from freestanding business sites or grouped businesses (shopping centers) to heavy commercial uses allowing outdoor sales and warehousing are allowed in this designation. Higher density residential use is also allowed. Commercial designated land is usually located at the intersection of or in strips along principal arterial streets. In locations where this designation is near residential areas, zoning categories should be implemented that limit the range of uses that may have detrimental impacts on the residential area. Existing commercial strips are contained at their current boundaries with no further expansion allowed.

**Neighborhood Retail:** The Neighborhood Retail designation recognizes the existence of small neighborhood-serving businesses in locations that are not larger than two acres and that lie outside designated centers and corridors. These locations are usually found along arterial streets, typically at the intersection of two arterials. In neighborhoods that are not served by a center or corridor, existing neighborhood businesses provide nearby residents access to goods and services.

To encourage the creation of mixed-use environments that attract growth in centers, no new neighborhood retail locations should be designated outside of a Center. Further, business expansion at existing locations should be contained within the boundaries occupied by the existing designation. Business infill within these boundaries is also allowed.

Businesses that are neighborhood-serving and pedestrian-oriented are encouraged in Neighborhood Retail locations. Buildings should be oriented to the street and provide convenient and easily identifiable side-walk entries to encourage pedestrian access. Parking lots should not dominate the frontage and should be located behind or on the side of buildings. Drive-through facilities, including gas stations and similar auto-oriented uses tend to provide services to people who live outside the surrounding neighborhood and should be allowed only along principal arterials. Residential uses should be 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.

**Neighborhood Mini-Center:** This designation allows the same uses as Neighborhood Retail. Higher density residential use is encouraged in these areas.





The Neighborhood Mini-Center designation recognizes the existence of small neighborhood-serving businesses in locations that are two to five acres in size that lie outside Centers and Corridors designated on the Land Use Plan Map. Similar to Neighborhood Retail, the Neighborhood Mini-Center designation consists of small, freestanding businesses usually sited at the intersection of or along arterial streets. Another characteristic of this designation is the greatly restricted potential for redevelopment of the surrounding area to support a full neighborhood center. Consequently, the Mini-Center designation limits mixed-use development to the boundaries of the existing Mini-Center designation.

Mini-Center locations are encouraged to become small, mixed-use centers with residential use as a major component. Residential use adds market demand for neighborhood business and enables enhanced transit service to these locations. Shared-use parking arrangements are encouraged to increase the development intensity of the site for both residential and commercial uses.

This designation allows the same uses as the Neighborhood Retail designation. No new drive-through facilities, including gas stations and similar auto-oriented uses, should be allowed except along principal arterial streets. Buildings should be oriented to the street to encourage walking by providing easy pedestrian connections. Parking lots should not dominate the frontage and should be located behind or on the side of buildings.

**Office:** The Office designation usually indicates freestanding small office sites and larger sites with two or more buildings located along arterial streets or intersections or as a buffer adjacent to residential areas. Higher intensity office areas should be located around downtown Spokane.

**Institutional:** The Institutional designation includes uses such as middle and high schools, colleges, universities, and large governmental facilities. The Institution designation on the Land Use Plan Map is a general boundary. It is intended to show where institutional uses are located without defining specific boundaries of institutional development.

**Residential 15+:** This designation allows higher density residential use at a density of 15 or more units per acre or more.

**Residential 15-30:** This designation allows higher density residential use at a density of 15 to 30 units per acre.

**Residential 10-20:** This designation allows single-family residences or two-family residences on individual lots or attached (zero-lot line) single-family residences. The allowed density is a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 units per acre. Allowed structure types are single-family residences or two-family residences on individual



lots or attached (zero-lot line) single-family residences. Other residential structure types may be permitted through approval of a Planned Unit Development or other process identified in the development regulations.

**Residential 4-10:** This designation allows single-family residences, and attached (zero-lot line) single-family residences. The allowed density is a minimum of four units and a maximum of ten units per acre. Allowed structure types are single-family residences, attached (zero-lot line) single-family residences, or two-family residences in appropriate areas. Other residential structure types may be permitted through approval of a Planned Unit Development or other process identified in the development regulations.

**Agriculture:** The Agriculture designation is applied to agricultural lands of local importance in the Urban Growth Area. Uses planned for Agriculture areas include: farming, green house farming, single-family residence, and minor structures used for sales of agricultural products produced on the premises. Caretakers' quarters associated with the agricultural activity may be permitted as an accessory use when a single-family residence is located on the parcel.

**Conservation Open Space:** The Conservation Open Space land use category includes areas that are publicly owned, not developed, and designated to remain in a natural state. The purpose of this category is to protect areas with high scenic value, environmentally sensitive conditions, historic or cultural values, priority animal habitat, and/or passive recreational features. It is expected that improvements would be limited to those supporting preservation or some passive recreation activities, like soft trails and wildlife viewpoints.

**Potential Open Space:** The Potential Open Space land use category identifies areas that are not currently publicly owned, not developed, and designated to remain in a natural state. The purpose and types of improvements in this category are the same as the Conservation Open Space category.

**Open Space:** This designation includes major publicly or privately owned open space areas, such as golf courses, major parks and open space areas, and cemeteries. These areas usually have facilities for active and passive recreation and include paved and unpaved roads, parking lots, hard surface trails, and buildings and facilities that support activities occurring in the Open Space area.

**Mining:** Mining areas are primarily devoted to sand, gravel, rock or clay production. Related products such as concrete, asphalt and brick are also produced.

The following table, LU 2, "Description of Land Use Designations," provides the names of the Land Use Map designations, a description of the typical land uses found in each designation, and some of the applicable development standards. The table is



followed by the Land Use Plan Map which shows the location of the various land use designations that are described in the following table:

TABLE LU 2 – DESCRIPTION OF LAND USE DESIGNATIONS			
Land Use Designations	Typical Land Use	Density (Units per Acre)	
		Minimum	Maximum
Heavy Industrial	Heavier Industrial uses. No residential uses.	-	-
Light Industrial	Light industrial uses, limited commercial and residential uses.	-	-
General Commercial	Commercial and residential uses, warehouses.	-	-
Regional Center (Downtown)	Variety of goods, services, cultural, governmental, hospitality, and residential uses. Downtown plan provides detail of planning for this area.	-	-
Neighborhood Retail	Neighborhood-Serving Business and residential use. Maximum containment area of two acres.	-	30
Neighborhood Mini-Center	Same uses as Neighborhood Retail.	-	30
Office	Offices and residential use.	-	-
Institutional	Includes uses such as middle and high schools, colleges, universities, and large governmental facilities.	Same standards as designation in which institution is located or as allowed by discretionary permit approval.	
Residential 15+	Higher density residences.	15	-
Residential 15-30	Higher density residences.	15	30
Residential 10-20	Attached or detached single-family and two-family residences.	10	20
Residential 4-10	Attached or detached single-family residences.	4	10
Agriculture	Agricultural lands of local importance.	-	-
Conservation Open Space	Areas that are publicly owned, not developed and designated to remain in a natural state.	-	-
Potential Open Space	Areas that are not currently publicly owned, not developed and expected to remain in a natural state.	-	-
Open Space	Major publicly or privately owned open space areas such as golf courses, major parks and open space areas, and cemeteries.	-	-



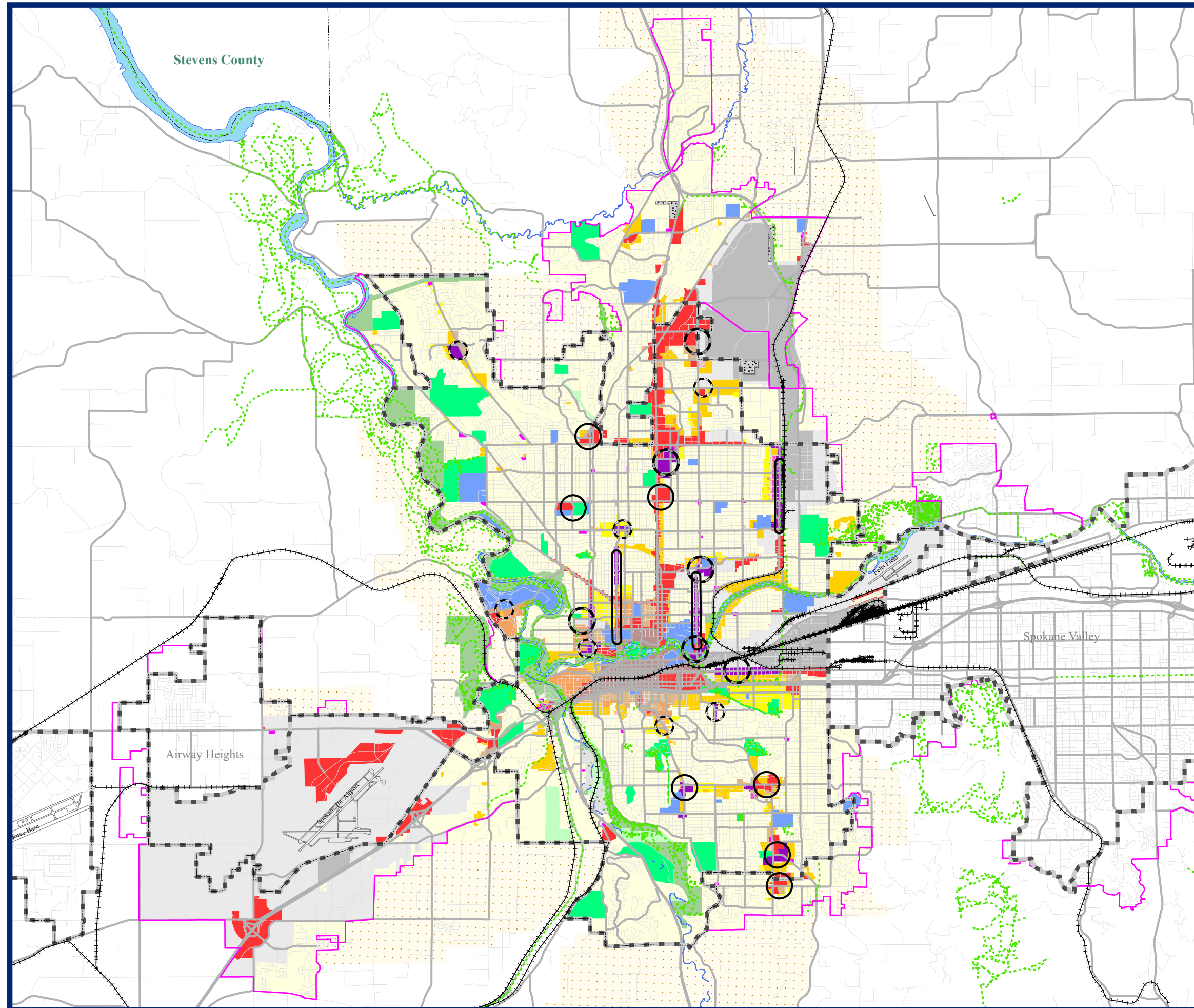
**TABLE LU 2 – DESCRIPTION OF LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Land Use Designations	Typical Land Use	Density (Units per Acre)	
		Minimum	Maximum
Neighborhood Center	Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses, offices, mixed-type housing, parks, civic uses in a master-planned, mixed-use setting.	15	32 in the core, 22 at the perimeter
District Center	Community-oriented commercial uses, offices, mixed-type housing, parks, civic uses in a master-planned, mixed-use setting.	15	44 in the core, 22 at the perimeter
Corridor	Community-oriented commercial uses, mixed-type housing in a master-planned, mixed-use setting.	15	44 in the core, 22 at the perimeter
Employment Center	Major employment uses, community-oriented commercial uses, mixed-type housing in a master-planned, mixed-use setting.	15	44 in the core, 22 at the perimeter
Center & Corridor Core	Commercial, office and residential uses consistent with type of designated Center and Corridor.	-	-
Center & Corridor Transition	Office, small retail, and multi-family residential uses. Office and retail uses are required to have residential uses on the same site.	-	-



# Land Use Plan Map

Map LU 1



## Legend

### Land Use Plan Categories

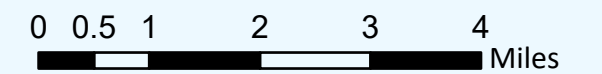
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|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Conservation Open Space | Neighborhood Retail |
| Open Space              | Mini Center         |
| Potential Open Space    | CC Transition       |
| Agriculture             | CC Core             |
| Residential 4-10        | General Commercial  |
| Residential 10-20       | Downtown            |
| Residential 15-30       | Light Industrial    |
| Residential 15+         | Heavy Industrial    |
| Institutional           | Mining              |
| Office                  |                     |

### Center and Corridor Types

- Neighborhood Center
- District Center or Corridor
- Employment Center

### Base Map Layers

- County Adopted Urban Growth Area
- Municipal Boundary
- County Boundary
- Rivers
- City Urban Reserve
- Approximate Airport Property SIA and Felts Field
- Interstate Highway
- Arterials
- Trails
- Proposed Light Rail
- Proposed North/South Corridor



Source: GIS  
Date: 01/2023




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The information shown on this map is compiled from various sources and is subject to constant revision. Information shown on this map should not be used to determine the location of facilities in relationship property lines, section lines, roads, etc.*




# Airfield Influence Areas

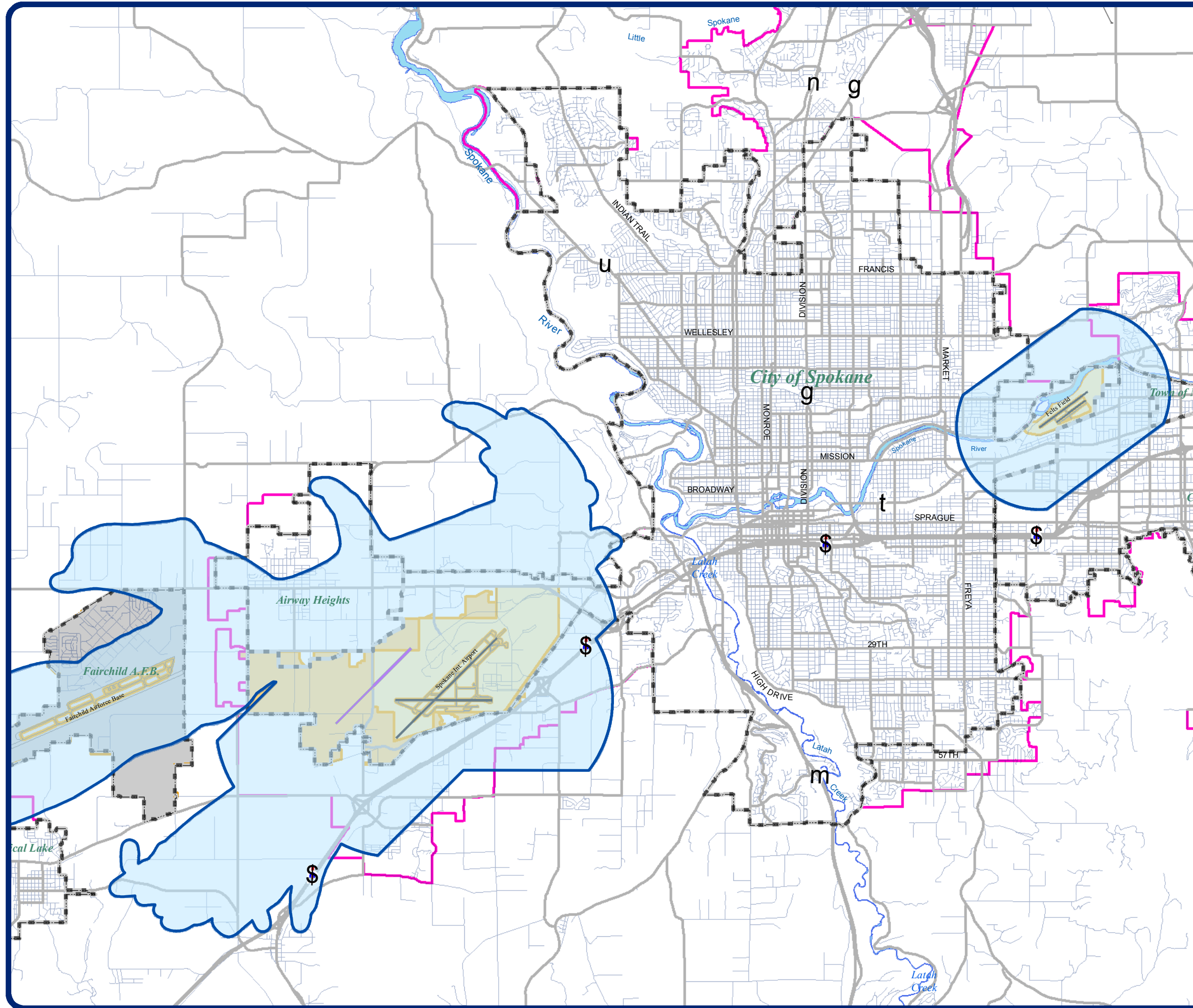
Map LU 2

## Legend

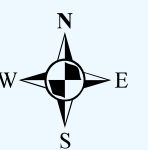
 Airfield Influence Areas

### Base Map Layers

-  County Adopted Urban Growth Area
-  City Limits
-  County Boundary
-  FAFB Boundary
-  Airport Property
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Interstate Highway
-  Arterials
-  Railroads
-  Runways
-  Planned Runway



Source: GIS  
Date: 07/2017



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