



Comprehensive Plan Background

CHAPTER CONTENTS

The Chapter Contents have not been updated here. They will be updated with the correct subsections and page numbers at the end of the approval process, as page numbers can change due to formatting and other factors.

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As part of this update, Chapters 1 and 2 were combined and a new Chapter 2, Implementation, was created. As a result, parts of each chapter have been moved into other chapters. For the sake of readability, those moves have not been shown in green here, as in other chapters. The following table provides a key of those moves:

| Original Section | New Section |
|--|--|
| 1.1 Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan | 1.1 Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan |
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| 3.1 Growth of the City | |
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| 2.6 Overview of Planning Efforts | 1.5 Overview of Planning Efforts |
| 1.3 Implementation - Carrying out the Plan | 2.1 Carrying out the Plan |
| 1.4 Monitoring and Evaluation | 2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation |

~~1.32.1 IMPLEMENTATION~~ — CARRYING OUT THE PLAN

~~A plan means nothing if it is not carried out, or implemented.~~ The Comprehensive Plan, as a community-wide plan, is implemented by the combined efforts of individuals, businesses, neighborhoods, civic groups, and local government. Many of the plan’s policies reflect this shared responsibility for community action.

Section 2.1 was originally Section 1.3 of the document. It has since been moved here as part of the creation of this new chapter.

City government has the primary responsibility to implement the plan. ~~Two key options for implementation available to the city are~~ ~~The city’s two main implementation activities are managing~~ ~~management of future~~ development ~~by via the application of~~ land use regulations and ~~the spending allocation of~~ public funds ~~on for~~ physical improvements. The relationship of these activities to the Comprehensive Plan is specified in the State Growth Management Act, which states that regulations shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and capital budgeting and spending shall be in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Consistent Regulations

The city created regulations to ensure that development occurs consistent with ~~the our community’s~~ goals and ~~objectives policies embodied in the Comprehensive Plan.~~ These ~~implementing regulations~~ include zoning and subdivision ordinances, environmental laws, building codes, historic preservation laws, and design review procedures.

Zoning

~~The regulations that most people are at least a little familiar with are in the zoning code.~~ ~~The zoning this~~ code controls ~~the way land can be used, meaning~~ the type of activity and intensity of development. Zoning restricts ~~where the location of~~ residences, stores, industry, and other land uses ~~are located~~, along with ~~urban requirements for~~ building height, minimum lot size, and the amount of landscaping and parking that must be provided. Zoning ~~can establish~~ districts, such as single-family residential or light industrial, ~~to keep land uses separated, but it also can~~ ~~also~~ set rules for combining many types of uses to create a “mixed-use” project or district.

The city’s official zoning code is part of the Spokane Municipal Code, which includes all the local laws that citizens and ~~the~~ city government must follow. The zoning code consists of definitions, descriptions of zoning classifications and the uses allowed in each, dimensional standards for development, and maps that show how the zone classifications divide the entire city into land use districts. Since zoning is a device to implement the ~~Comprehensive P~~lan, its rules must be consistent with the plan. ~~The decisions about land development are made when the plan is prepared or amended.~~ ~~The zoning code puts these decisions into operation as enforceable rules.~~

Example of Zoning Consistency

~~The plan’s policies and map designate a location for a neighborhood center that includes a mix of housing types and neighborhood business uses, developed in character with the surrounding single family neighborhood. The zoning code map for the area shows the boundaries of the center and a zoning classification, such as “Neighborhood Center Mixed Use,” near its middle. The map also identifies districts for higher density housing adjoining the mixed use district, and surrounding those, large single family districts to preserve the existing neighborhood character. The zoning map districts and classifications follow the direction of the plan and, therefore, meet the rule for consistency.~~

This was removed to keep the discussion general and not overly specific.

Subdivision

The manner in which parcels of land are divided into smaller parcels, or platting, is specified in the subdivision ordinance. Subdivision provisions relate primarily to procedures for dividing land. These procedures include review by public agencies to ensure that zoning standards (e.g., minimum lot size, for example), street access, public facilities, and other urban service requirements are provided. State subdivision law requires that local legislative bodies include appropriate provisions to ensure that facilities specified in the plan will be available to serve the subdivision at the time of development.

~~State subdivision law requires that local legislative bodies include written findings that “**appropriate provisions are made.** . . . for such open spaces, drainage ways, streets or roads, alleys, other public ways, transit stops, potable water supplies, sanitary wastes, parks and recreation, playgrounds, schools and school grounds and other relevant facts, including sidewalks and other planning features” as part of the decision for approving a plat. Appropriate provisions are made with a finding that those facilities specified in the plan will be available to serve the plat at the time of development.~~

This paragraph was combined into a single sentence above.

Environmental Review

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) ensures that environmental values are considered during decision-making by state and local agencies. SEPA gives agencies the tools to allow-enable them to consider environmental information, including mitigation measures, before making a decision on a proposed plan or project. SEPA also includes provisions to involve the public, tribes, and interested agencies in most review processes prior to a final decision.

The environmental review process in SEPA works with other regulations to provide a comprehensive review of a proposal. Combining the review processes of SEPA and other laws reduces duplication and delay by combining study needs, combining comment periods and public notices, and allowing agencies, applicants, and the public to consider all aspects of a proposal at the same time. SEPA also gives agencies authority to condition or deny a proposal based on the agency’s adopted SEPA policies and environmental impacts identified during SEPA review.

Design Review ~~and Design Guidelines~~

One of the biggest concerns of the community is how the pieces of our urban environment fit together. Design Review addresses the “fit” and compatibility of a development within the context of its surrounding environment both visually and in terms of how well a project will function as a neighbor. Review of projects is based on urban design guidelines included as policies and illustrations within the Comprehensive Plan and can cover height, bulk, architectural elements, landscape, signing, lighting, points of access, and many other details of building and site development.

Design Review Board

The Design Review Board is comprised of citizens and practicing professionals who represent community interests, including a diversity of design and technical professions. Board members are nominated by the Mayor, appointed by City Council, and serve without compensation. The Board was established to do the following:

This subsection was added in response to a request by the Plan Commission to highlight the purpose of the Design Review Board.

- Improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors, and the city early in the design and siting of new development subject to design review under the Spokane Municipal Code;

- Ensure that projects subject to design review under the Spokane Municipal Code are consistent with adopted design guidelines and help implement the city's comprehensive plan;
- Advocate for the aesthetic quality of Spokane's public realm;
- Encourage design and site planning that responds to context, enhances pedestrian characteristics, considers sustainable design practices, and helps make Spokane a desirable place to live, work, and visit;
- Provide flexibility in the application of development standards as allowed through development standard departures; and
- Ensure that public facilities and projects within the city's right-of-way wisely allocate the city's resources and serve as models of design quality.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are a primary tool in plan implementation to ~~insure~~ensure that proposals are compatible in character with adjacent development. Guidelines are adopted as descriptions, photos, or illustrations of desired character, and they have the effect of public policy. Building materials, architectural details, site features, and relationship to the street and adjacent properties are common specification in design guidelines. Design guidelines can serve as education and information for developers and the general public and can be recommended to a decision-making authority by an advisory committee in regards to a specific project. They also can be required as a condition of a particular development by a decision-maker, such as the Hearing Examiner.

Building Codes

Building codes help ~~insure~~ensure that development is safe and not a threat to public and personal health. These rules are applied when a property owner or tenant applies to the city for a building permit to gain approval to develop property including structures. During the permitting process, the proposal is checked for compliance with other codes and regulations, such as zoning, ~~and~~ SEPA, the Americans with Disability Act, and rules for historic preservation are checked for compliance.

~~Some of the most important areas involving consistency with the plan include the Americans with Disability Act requirements, rules for historic preservation, and the creation of live/work spaces. Community interests such as these, as stated in the Comprehensive Plan, must be reflected through local administration of the Building Code.~~

This paragraph was folded into the previous paragraph and removed.

Historic Preservation

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the high value that citizens place on historic resources in Spokane. Policies express public ~~desires~~concern regarding their preservation and how to manage changes to these resources as they are impacted by new development. Historic properties can range from individually listed commercial, governmental, or residential buildings to historic districts in both neighborhood and commercial areas ~~downtown commercial buildings to neighborhood clusters of historically significant homes. Historic properties could also be buildings or structures owned or used by the City of Spokane.~~

This section was modified by the city's Historic Preservation Officer for currency and accuracy.

A number of implementation tools are already in place. The Spokane Register of Historic Places lists significant properties over 50 years old ~~by owner consent~~that meet specific criteria, with the consent of

~~the owner.~~ Following designation on the register, through a contract with the owner, properties are subject to ~~historic~~-design review by the Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission using in reference to federal rehabilitation standards, known as the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

To encourage compliance, incentives are available for privately owned historic properties. Those incentives include the Federal Investment Tax Credit, which provides an income tax reduction for National Register listed, income-producing properties that have undergone a substantial rehabilitation; local Special Valuation, which reduces property tax;~~;~~ local Building Code Relief, which ~~allows for may~~ allow deviation from building code requirements that directly impact important historic features of listed buildings; and the option of the donation of a Facade Easement, which ~~provides may provide~~ a one-time Federal Income Tax deduction based on the value of the donation.

A database of information of identified and potentially historic properties is also available and can be used as a planning tool by local government, ~~by~~ developers, and ~~by~~ elected officials to make informed decisions about actions that could affect historic resources.

Conforming Capital Budget and Spending

As communities grow, new schools, parks, libraries, streets, water and sewer lines, and similar urban facilities are needed to serve the expanding population. The Capital Facilities Program (CFP) is an official city document that lists all of the facility needs identified by each service provider for the future next twenty years, including those required to support future population growth. The City Council adopts the program as the official outline of long-range spending on public improvements.

Transportation, water, wastewater, solid waste, fire, police, library, and parks facilities are planned in greater detail in ~~their respective~~ the citywide Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) ~~and summarized in the first six year projects in the 20 year CFP~~. The CIP lists the specific physical improvements, specifies a time for construction, and identifies the anticipated source of funds to pay for the project. In addition to ongoing needs for repair and maintenance, these lists of capital facilities include the immediate improvements necessary to support growth, in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

This paragraph has been updated to reflect the fact that the city now creates a single, citywide Capital Improvement Program, not several individual CIPs for each department/service area.

Capital Facilities and Concurrency

The CFP and CIPs outline the city’s capital budgets and include projects needed to realize the proposals in the plan. The GMA’s Concurrency rule ensures that those public facilities and services necessary to support development are adequate to serve the development without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards, and available when the service demands of development occur. The basis for this rule is two-fold: new growth should pay its way without placing additional financial burden on existing citizens or future generations, and growth should not reduce the quality or types of urban services that current residents enjoy.

Concurrency is ~~pursued~~ considered at the planning level and ensured at the project review level. During planning, the six-year capital improvement programs reflect City Council resolve to pursue funding for projects to meet the demands of new growth. The concurrency management system tracks current and future capital projects against land use trends and funding availability. At the project review level, developments generating new service demands can only be approved if adequate public facilities and services are available to meet the needs of the development.

2.21.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Throughout the life of the Comprehensive Plan, a monitoring and evaluation process is conducted periodically to assess the effectiveness of the goals and policies; and to identify ideas that may need to be added or modified in order to produce a result consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the community's original visions and values, and the changing needs and priorities of the community.

Original source: Chapter 1.4

Many sources of information are-may be used during this process. Building permit records indicate whether or not new development activity is concentrating in designated centers, as described in the Comprehensive Plan. Departmental budgets, Six-Year Capital Improvement Plans, and findings from the Concurrency Management System demonstrate whether adequate resources exist and if they are being allocated at a level sufficient to accomplish the plan's objectives. Quality of life factors are tracked over time as they relate to the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan – such as environmental quality, physical health, economic vitality, social conditions, housing availability, and other factors. Also, public participation in the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process helps to identify unmet needs or new issues.

~~However, it is not enough to know whether or not the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are being met. We need to know that quality of life is actually improving because the goals are being met. Quality of life factors are tracked over time through Indicators and Benchmarks that cover the full range of topics represented by the chapters in the Comprehensive Plan. Indicators are measurements that can be compared regularly to assess trends and changing conditions. Benchmarks are reference points or standards for comparison that mark progress along the path toward a desired outcome. Measurements address issues such as environmental quality, physical health, economic vitality, social conditions, housing availability, civic engagement and other factors which are key to general community well being. The information needed is gleaned from close partnerships with agencies and community organizations such as the Health Improvement Partnership (Spokane Community Report Card), who already collect this data for similar community building purposes. In the end, this process should help to coordinate and improve programming and operations for all entities in Spokane whose purpose it is to improve the quality of life in Spokane.~~

Quality of life was added to the previous paragraph.

2.3 WORK PLAN MATRICES

Purpose of the Work Plan Matrices

Putting the Plan into action is one of the most important, and arguably most challenging, aspects of the comprehensive planning process. Without viable, realistic mechanisms for implementation, the community vision and goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan will be difficult to realize. The implementation matrices serve as that mechanism, ensuring that city projects and initiatives are specifically targeted at achieving the goals stated in this Plan.

This section is entirely new. It provides a preface for the work plan matrices that have been added at the end of this chapter as well in Volume V, Appendix G.

This section establishes a process to ensure the Plan functions as a living document, advancing the long range vision for the community, while also being responsive to changing conditions. The intended outcomes of these matrices are:

1. The strategic and coordinated execution of the goals and policies in the Plan.
2. Ensure the Plan is a living document, capable of responding to changing conditions and expanding information.
3. Information and progress on Plan implementation is documented and disseminated through bi-annual reports to the community (matrix update).

Projects and initiatives have been organized by their estimated time frames into short-term, mid-term, long-term and on-going priorities; these must be balanced with timing, funding, and staff resources prior to execution. Other than the classification of these policies into short-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing, they are in no order of priority. The matrices will also serve as short-, mid-, and long-term work plans as well as important tools for identifying activities intended to help achieve the long-term vision articulated throughout the Plan.

Structure of the Work Plan Matrices

The implementation matrices for Chapters 3-13 provide guidance about how to put the Plan to work and begin transforming ideas into action. The Plan has a long-term horizon, looking ahead to 2037, but the Implementation Plan focuses on near-term (1-2 years), and mid-term (3-5 years) actions that are necessary prerequisites to long-term results.

Four implementation matrices were created as tools to monitor and evaluate Plan implementation. Each matrix has a different focus, to assist the user in quickly identifying information. The Master Matrix, located in Volume V, Appendix G of the Comprehensive Plan, lists every policy, notes closely related elements, provides examples of past implementation efforts, identifies future projects, describes whether the policy is ongoing or a one-time effort, and notes potential future projects or initiatives. The Related Elements column highlights other policies in the Plan that share a similar focus. The Implementation Examples column highlights past projects that serve to implement the policy and is not meant to be an exhaustive list of every project the city has completed. The Future Projects column describes projects or initiatives that are anticipated to begin in the near or mid-term connected to the policy. Information from this matrix was further divided into three sub matrices: Ongoing, Near- and Mid-Term, and Future Implementation.

The Ongoing Implementation matrix is intended to provide a quick view of the work the city has done and continues to do, to realize the goals of the Plan. The policies in this matrix have been implemented to some degree, and have ongoing work associated with them. The policies found on this matrix comprise the majority of the policies in the Plan, which is an indication that the city has and continues to make good progress making the Plan a reality.

The Near- and Mid-term Implementation matrix is intended to provide a quick view of planned future projects. This work plan matrix highlights Related Elements and whether the implementation will be ongoing. The Near-term and Mid-term columns provide an anticipated timeline for project initiation.

The Future Implementation matrix provides a quick view of policies that still require implementation. Some policies may have next step strategies identified, while others may have strategies yet to be determined. The policies on this list have not been implemented and have no near-term implementation actions planned.

This chapter of the Plan should be viewed as an action plan and should be updated as progress occurs on these items. The iterative process of taking action, reporting on results, and updating the priorities is necessary to respond to change and to keep the plan current, while continuing to implement the Plan's overall policies.

DRAFT