



**Spokane City Plan Commission
Findings of Fact, Conclusions, and Recommendations
Downtown Development Code and Design Guideline Update Project**

A recommendation of the City Plan Commission proposing updated Downtown development regulations and design guidelines to implement the recently updated Downtown Plan “Fast Forward Spokane: Downtown Plan Update.” The changes include amendments to the Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) Title 17 Unified Development Code, the Official Zoning Map and other Spokane Municipal Code chapters as needed to implement the new Downtown code and design guidelines.

Findings of Fact:

- A.** The Spokane City Council adopted the updated Downtown Plan “Fast Forward Spokane: Downtown Plan Update” in December 2008.
- B.** The updated Downtown Plan includes a vision, goals and policies that outline the future of growth and development desired within the Downtown.
- C.** During the Downtown Plan Update process the community discussed and documented their vision and direction for the future of the Downtown and began discussions about how to implement the desired vision.
- D.** During the Downtown Plan Update process, in April 2008, the Design Review Committee met with the consultant group and staff to discuss their role in implementing the Plan. From April 2008 through October 2009 the Design Review Committee met five additional times to discuss the proposed code and design guidelines.
- E.** In September of 2008, the City in cooperation with the Downtown Spokane Partnership formed the Downtown Code Task Force in order to explore and draft options for updated development regulations and design guidelines for the Downtown.
- F.** From September of 2008 through August of 2009, the Downtown Code Task Force held ten meetings to discuss, draft, and review proposed development codes and design guidelines. In October of 2008, the Downtown Code Task Force toured Downtown to review new development and discuss issues to be addressed in the new codes and guidelines.

- G.** Two public open house meetings were held in April and May of 2009 to receive public feedback on the draft Downtown development codes and design guidelines. The City provided notice of the open house meetings by advertising in the Spokesman Review and Inlander. In addition to the newspaper advertisements, 3,600 post cards were mailed to property owners, property tax payers, business owners, neighborhood groups, and residents.
- H.** In May of 2009 a presentation on the Downtown Code and Design Guideline Update Project was video recorded as an episode of Spokane Building Blocks and was replayed through July of 2009 on Spokane's public television channel "City Cable 5."
- I.** From June of 2009 through October of 2009, eleven presentations were given on the draft codes and guidelines to receive feedback from interested groups such as property owners, business associations, neighborhood councils, civic groups, City departments, and the Spokane Historic Landmarks Commission.
- J.** The City Plan Commission was briefed on the progress of the Downtown Code Task Force in December of 2008 and February of 2009.
- K.** The City Plan Commission began their review of the draft Downtown Codes and Guidelines by conducting a walking tour of the Downtown in April of 2009.
- L.** From April of 2009 through September of 2009, the City Plan Commission held seven workshops to review and revise the draft Downtown development codes and design guidelines.
- M.** Notice of the proposed updated Downtown development codes and design guidelines and announcement of the Plan Commission's October 14th, 2009 hearing was published in the Spokesman Review on September 30th and October 7th. Notice of the Plan Commission's October 28th, 2009 continued hearing was advertised in the Spokesman Review on October 14th and 21st. In addition to the newspaper advertisements, 3,600 post cards were mailed to property owners, property tax payers, business owners, neighborhood groups, and residents notifying them of the Plan Commission's October 14th, 2009 hearing.
- N.** A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Checklist was completed and a Determination of Nonsignificance issued for the draft Downtown development codes and design guidelines, with notice published in the Spokesman Review on September 30th, October 7th, October 14th and October 21st of 2009. The City Plan Commission held a public hearing on October 14th and continued the hearing on October 28th to obtain public comments on the proposed drafts. The comment period for written testimony was closed on November 2nd, 2009.
- O.** During the Plan Commission deliberations the public comments received during the hearing process were reviewed and changes to the draft products were made when deemed necessary by the Plan Commission.
- P.** The Plan Commission, after discussing standalone commercial surface parking and review of the Comprehensive Plan, has determined that further consideration be given to additional non-automobile options for transportation. See Comprehensive Plan policies LU 3.2, TR 1.1, TR 2.1, TR 2.4, and TR 2.5.

- Q.** Upon adoption of the updated Downtown development codes and design guidelines, the City will officially publish the following additions and amendments to the City's Unified Development Code and administrative policy:
1. A new SMC chapter titled "17C.124 Downtown Zones" that will replace the existing downtown zoning standards in SMC 11.19.
 2. A new map included within the SMC titled "Design Review Threshold Map."
 3. A new SMC chapter titled "17G.040 Design Review Board Administration and Procedures."
 4. New Downtown Design Guidelines that will replace the Downtown Design Guidelines adopted in 2000.
 5. New Downtown Character Area Considerations.
 6. A new map included within the SMC titled "Downtown Parking Requirement Map."
 7. Amendments to SMC Chapter 17C.220 - Landscaping and Screening.
 8. Amendments to SMC Chapter 17C.230 - Parking and Loading.
 9. Amendments to the City of Spokane Official Zoning Map.
 10. Amendments to SMC Chapter 4.13 - Design Review Committee.
 11. Amendments to SMC Chapter 17G.060 - Land Use Application Procedures.
 12. Amendments to various chapters of the SMC implementing the name change of the Design Review Committee to the Design Review Board.
 13. Amendments to various chapters of the SMC implementing the downtown zone name changes and updating code number references.
 14. A new administrative policy document titled, "Design Review Application Handbook and Procedures."
- R.** The City Council must receive a recommendation from the City Plan Commission to approve an ordinance to amend the development regulations contained within the City's Unified Development Code.

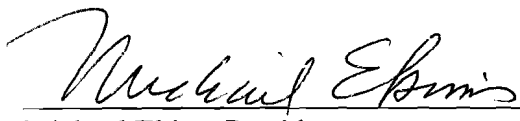
Conclusions:

- A.** The Plan Commission has reviewed all public testimony received during the public hearing and has made changes to the draft documents during deliberations to address the testimony as needed.
- B.** By a vote of 6 to 2, the Plan Commission determined that additional study needs to be completed before new stand alone commercial surface parking is allowed. This study will include looking at other transportation options as supported in the Comprehensive Plan.
- C.** The amendments and additions to the Unified Development Code have been reviewed by the City Plan Commission and found to be in conformance with the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan "Fast Forward Spokane – Downtown Plan Update."

- D. The Plan Commission recognizes that adoption of the updated Downtown development codes and design guidelines does not preclude neighborhoods that are adjacent to the Downtown from reviewing and proposing revisions to the zoning and development standards for the areas that overlap the neighborhood council boundaries and the areas described in the Downtown Plan Update.
- E. The Plan Commission recognizes that additional amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Plan, and development standards will be forthcoming to address other identified work program items such as; sign code, skywalks, street standards, street trees, and other subjects as needed.

Recommendations:

- A. The Spokane City Plan Commission finds that the proposed new Spokane Municipal Code chapters, design guidelines and amendments to the Unified Development Code are in full compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and updated Downtown Plan “Fast Forward Spokane: Downtown Plan Update” and are recommended for adoption by the Spokane City Council.
- B. The Plan Commission, by a vote of 7 to 0, recommends approval of these documents with changes as deliberated, by the City Council.



Michael Ekins, President
City Plan Commission

11/11/09

Date