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**Chapter 8**  
**Urban Design & Historic Preservation**  
**Proposed Amendments Z10000-55-COMP**  
**July 2011**

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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“While a few fine buildings were evidently designed and superintended by trained architects, and set a standard which is cause for national comment and much local pride, many of the commercial buildings, particularly in the center of the city, seem to have been put up without the help of any competent architects at all, and hence are not alone structures of questionable utility, but also make a bad impression on visitors and public alike.”

Although written in 1921 in The Architect and Engineer, Frederick Jennings’ ideas remain relevant to the City of Spokane. Spokane does have many fine examples of architecture and a strong legacy of good design. However, economic considerations and the lingering 1950s architectural dictum of “form follows function” often creates a situation wherein cost and functional factors hold sway over humanistic concerns and spiritually uplifting design.

The citizens of Spokane have declared in recent years that they want to recreate the city that was once referred to as “The City Beautiful.” The demolition of noteworthy, turn-of-the-century buildings to make way for curtain walled glass and steel monoliths devoid of character and of scale and mass defining details, has finally reawakened the sentiment that design does matter and that new development should take into consideration the people for whom it is intended and the context in which it is intended to be built.

After the 1889 fire in which much of downtown Spokane was destroyed, a number of architects relocated here and made names for themselves by designing enduring buildings of the then current, and now remarkable, styles of the day. These include the Arts and Crafts bungalows, Queen Anne houses, Tudoresque mansions, Romanesque churches, and Gothic commercial buildings, as well as Classic Revival office buildings and Art Deco theaters. The years between the fire and the Second World War were rich in regards to the development of a vibrant downtown and a city of national renown. As early as 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt was quoted in the Chamber of Commerce publication, Spokane: A Modern City, “I never saw two such cities anywhere as Spokane and Seattle. If my eldest boy was large enough to be choosing a place, I would advise him to locate in one or the other of those cities and it is a shake-up between them.”



Because of the lack of fine materials and trained craftsman, it is neither possible nor actually desirable to try and replicate the architecture and designs of that time. The essence of the features that make those styles of architecture so interesting and memorable can and should be incorporated into the architecture of today. New buildings should be compatible with the surrounding context and environment. They should reinforce the rhythm, line, mass, and shape of the adjacent structures, and take into consideration the public space created by the building facade, surrounding pavement, and vegetation. The designs of these buildings should incorporate and demonstrate public values and should be proportionate to and comfortable for the human occupants. It should also set up a hierarchy to de-emphasize the automobile and primarily establish the human element as the ultimate recipient and the primary design constraint for the particular development.

In 1994, the City Council, recognizing the public demand for quality projects, established a design review program and appointed a citizen committee of design professionals and organization representatives to conduct individual project reviews and oversee the development of the program. The members of the Design Review Committee (now known as the Design Review Board) accepted the challenge to act in an advisory role, developing guidelines, reviewing projects, and making recommendations to the city approving authority for the assigned specific classes of projects. ~~The guiding principles of the committee are reiterated in their mission statement:~~



~~“Instill the values of the public into a project’s design, keeping in mind the developmental standards established by the governing body, while at the same time, not substantially increasing the development cost or permit issuance time for the proponent.”~~

The Design Review Board is advisory. Recommendations as to whether a proposal is consistent with the applicable design criteria are forwarded to the responsible approving authority of the City. In most cases, the Board’s recommendations are adopted or made a condition of approval. ~~As an advisory body, the Design Review Committee lacks the authority to cause adherence to their recommendations. This, along with the limitation on the types of projects to be reviewed, has led to some frustration for the committee and has resulted in some buildings that do not fully reflect community values. A few of the Neighborhood Specific Plans, which require design review, and the Spokane Horizons process have given the public the opportunity to bring these inadequacies to light. If The Design Review Board may prove to be is a the vehicle through which community values are reinstalled into design parameters, the result being better projects, greater pride in the city, and Spokane once again being recognized as “The City Beautiful.”~~

The joint City/County Historic Landmarks Commission is responsible for the stewardship of historically and architecturally significant properties within the City and unincorporated areas of Spokane County. The Landmarks Commission sets historic preservation policies, including providing advice to the City Council as well as the Board of County Commissioners on matters of history, historic planning and preservation.

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## **8.2 GMA GOAL AND REQUIREMENTS AND COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES**

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### **GMA Urban Design and Historic Preservation Planning Goals (RCW 36.70A.020)**

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) includes 13 goals, which were adopted to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations. Although urban design and historic preservation have different points of emphasis, they have been grouped together in recognition of their similarities and overlap regarding improvement and preservation of quality of life. While Urban Design is not mentioned directly in the goals of the GMA, Goal 13 related to Historic Preservation states, "Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance."

Urban design encompasses issues that are addressed in other GMA goals. Design is a necessary element in accomplishing Goals 1 and 2 of reducing sprawl and encouraging development in urban areas, thus enabling the efficient provision of public facilities and services. Promoting a variety of residential housing types, as directed by Goal 4, requires good urban design to ensure they are compatible with existing neighborhoods and are accepted by the residents of a particular area. Preservation of the environment and retention of open space for recreational opportunities, Goals 9 and 10, obviously are included in the emphasis of urban design principles of the preservation of a high quality of life.

Last, citizen participation, Goal 11, is the driving force behind the historic preservation and urban design efforts. Continued public participation in these efforts is necessary to ensure that inevitable growth does not cause a decline in the quality of life and those physical features valued by the citizens (RCW 36.70A.020).

### **Countywide Planning Policies**

The Countywide Planning Policies of Spokane County (CWPPs) do not specifically mention urban design or historic preservation. However, similar to the GMA goals, there are policies that are more easily achieved and accepted through the practices of good urban design and historic preservation.

County policies direct jurisdictions to ensure compatibility of mixed density residential development. Good design is the necessary ingredient to make this type of development acceptable to the citizens of the neighboring areas. Achieving the intent of the county policies related to affordable housing is also facilitated by urban design standards that ensure architectural and functional compatibility. Urban design, along with historic preservation, are both means to realizing economic development and maintaining the integrity of downtown Spokane as a retail and cultural center.

## 8.3 VISION AND VALUES

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Spokane Horizons volunteers 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.

Urban design and historic preservation involves the city's form and function, subdivision design, street character, and identification and preservation of historic resources, including buildings, sites, and districts.

### Vision

"The qualities that make Spokane unique, including the historic and cultural fabric, neighborhoods, downtown area, parks and green spaces, and tree-lined streets, will be maintained and improved."

### Values

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

- ◆ Maintaining Spokane's "comfortable feel," size, neighborhoods, and friendliness.
- ◆ Maintaining the downtown area as the center of the region in order to ensure the city's economic and cultural health.
- ◆ Having downtown Spokane be distinctive and urban by using its architectural heritage and splendor.
- ◆ Maintaining the natural beauty that makes Spokane distinctive, including the parks, waterways, tree-lined streets, and green areas.
- ◆ Preserving the historic buildings, historic fabric, and cultural heritage that provide Spokane with its character.
- ◆ Ensuring that new buildings in historic areas complement their surroundings.
- ◆ Developing Spokane to be an attractive, clean city in which people take pride.
- ◆ Supporting neighborhoods and their associated business districts."

## 8.4 GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals and policies provide specificity for planning and decision-making. Overall, they indicate desired directions, accomplishments, or aims in relation to the growth and development of Spokane. Additional materials for this chapter are located in the Draft Comprehensive Plan/EIS Volume 2, Chapter 22, Urban Design and Historic Preservation.

### DP 1 PRIDE AND IDENTITY

**Goal:** Enhance and improve Spokane’s visual identity and community pride while striving to maintain its visual diversity.

#### Policies

#### DP 1.1 Public Land Use Sites

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

**Discussion:** Anticipating the need and location for public facilities prior to an area being developed eliminates the confusion regarding the potential locations of future projects and enables the programmed expenditure of public funds.



#### DP 1.2 Landmark Structures, Buildings, and Sites

*Promote the recognition and preservation of unique or outstanding landmark structures, buildings, and sites.*

**Discussion:** Landmarks provide focal points of historic or cultural interest. Preservation of them, even when not located within historic districts, celebrates the uniqueness of the particular area. Development that is compatible with and respects the architecture of these landmarks enhances the richness and diversity of the built and natural environments while reinforcing the landmark structures and sites.

#### DP 1.3 Urban Trees and Landscape Areas

*Maintain, improve, and increase the amount of landscaped area in the urban environment and, at a minimum, replace any tree that needs to be removed from publicly owned property.*

**Discussion:** The public urban cityscape with its pavement, automobiles, and pollution can be a harsh environment for landscape vegetation and can create less than optimal growing conditions for the plants and trees. Therefore, additional care is usually necessary to maintain plants in an urban environment. This additional care of urban trees and landscaped areas benefits situation can often be tolerated, for it is the overall well-being and enjoyment and pleasure of the human occupants of the city the community, that these landscaped areas and trees are provided.



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The City of Spokane must establish a no-net-loss position for the existing quantity of urban trees and develop a mechanism to require tree replacement on public lands. The City of Spokane also needs to develop incentives to encourage tree replacement on privately owned property. Consideration should be given to the creation of a system to grant a credit or bonus for trees retained and incentives to encourage new tree planting. While it is impractical to require replacement trees to be of like size, the existing character, site, and the desired effect should be

considered in determining the minimum size and species. Tree plantings should be coordinated with, and meet the minimum standards of, the Urban Forestry Program.

### DP 1.4 New Development in Established Neighborhoods

Ensure that new development is of a type, scale, orientation, and design that maintains or improves the character, aesthetic quality, and livability of the neighborhood.

**Discussion:** While compatibility is more of an issue in established neighborhoods, new development needs to take into account the context of the area and should result in an improvement to the surrounding neighborhood.



### DP 1.5 Significant Views and Vistas

Identify and maintain significant views, vistas, and viewpoints, and protect them by establishing appropriate development regulations for nearby undeveloped properties.

**Discussion:** The protection of identified important views and vistas of both natural and man-made features of the environment, and improving and making safe the actual viewpoints are important for preserving the character of the city. The preservation of these features provides the citizens with orientation, visual relief, and a sense of uniqueness and place, helps create a city identity, and instills a sense of pride in its citizens.



### DP 1.6 Gateway Identification

Establish gateways to Spokane and individual neighborhoods consisting of physical elements and landscaping that create a sense of place, identity, and belonging.

**Discussion:** Special gateways to neighborhoods or sub-areas are a cost-effective means to instill pride in an area. This can be the “seed” that causes an overall improvement to a given area, which may result in increased investment, home ownership, maintenance, and decreased crime.



## DP 2 QUALITY DESIGN

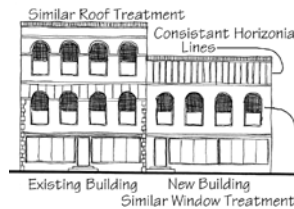
**Goal:** Enhance the livability of Spokane by preserving its historic character and building a legacy of quality public and private development.

### Policies

#### DP 2.1 Building and Site Design Regulations

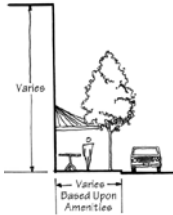
Ensure that a particular development is architecturally compatible with its neighbors.

**Discussion:** New and remodeled projects can have a major impact on a specific area. Compliance with building and site regulations and a design review process, benefits and provides for the existing residents, and guarantees new residents that new or remodeled buildings are developed in a manner that does not diminish their quality of life. This would apply to all new commercial, public, multifamily structures, high density single-family projects, and exterior remodels of existing commercial structures.



## DP 2.2 Zoning and Design Standards

*Utilize zoning and design standards that have flexibility and incentives to ensure that development is compatible with surrounding land uses.*



**Discussion:** Maintaining or enhancing the neighborhood's character, livability, and property value is a benefit to the residents of an area and provides business owners with some assurance of community stability. Adopted standards that are adhered to, even when some flexibility is included, offer protection and instill confidence in established and prospective residents and business owners. The standards should address traffic, parking, loading control, structural mass, open space, green areas, lighting, landscaping and buffering, and safety of persons and property, as well as the impacts of noise, vibration, dust, and odors.

## DP 2.3 Design Review Process

*Ensure effective application of design guidelines through a review process that relies on the expertise of design professionals and other community interests to achieve design performance that meets citizen's quality of life expectations.*

**Discussion:** Design guidelines provide the direction needed to reach design solutions that meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan policies relative to a particular issue at hand. The flexible application of specific development standards to achieve a qualitative instead of quantitative result may be appropriate in specific cases and, when incorporating an innovative solution, will lead to a more compatible project and livable community. The authority to negotiate enforceable design performance, and the flexible application of specific design standards, when based upon adopted design guidelines, should be vested in the Design Review ~~Committee~~ Board consisting of members representing the design professions and community interests. In most cases, review by the Design Review ~~Committee~~ Board is the appropriate process to objectively direct projects to a level of compatible design. However, the impact of particular deviations from specific development standards may be of insufficient scale, scope or magnitude to warrant the committee's attention, and threshold determinations may be made to assign these reviews to the city's urban design staff. This would speed-up the process while providing sufficient review and enabling cooperative efforts among city departmental staff and project proponent.

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## DP 2.4 Design Guidelines

*Utilize design guidelines that are understandable, enforceable, predictable, and consistent and that are applied to the entire city, sub-areas, and individual districts in order to measure and evaluate proposed development.*

**Discussion:** Effective design guidelines include graphic depiction and written text that are clear, understandable, and unambiguous. They function specifically to guide the physical development of projects that require design review. The desire is to create an attractive and efficient city, increasing the life of existing buildings while not adding undue time to the development process. Basic guidelines apply to design on a citywide basis, while more specific guidelines are germane to specific local areas. The uniform application of design guidelines ensures a high quality of living.

## DP 2.5 Special District and Neighborhood Design Guidelines

*Utilize design guidelines and criteria that are based on local community participation and the particular character and development issues of each special district or neighborhood.*

**Discussion:** Due to inherent differences in neighborhoods and particular needs of recognized special districts, each may need to develop a set of area-specific guidelines that supplement and augment the citywide general guidelines. Local input and the existing characteristics of an area or special district are the basis for design guidelines used for the evaluation of specific projects

in that particular area. Area-specific guidelines should be flexible enough to allow for some creative interpretation.

### DP 2.6 Permit Process

*Coordinate the design review process with other permitting processes to reduce the time and expense that is involved for developers and city staff.*

**Discussion:** Lessening the time involved in the permit process not only saves investment time and money but may result in better cooperation between the public and city government.

## DP 3 FUNCTION AND APPEARANCE

**Goal:** Use design to improve how development relates to and functions within its surrounding environment.

### Policies

#### DP 3.1 Commercial Areas

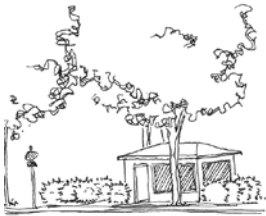
*Make aesthetic and functional improvements to commercial areas in order to improve their image, appeal, and sales potential.*

**Discussion:** Projects that are designed to ~~belong in a certain~~ complement the character of the surrounding area further the sense of continuity and permanence, which not only can improve the image of the area but also makes the area seem more desirable since it is moving in a positive direction. This, in turn, can stimulate investments and economic stability, benefiting the businesses and residents alike.

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#### DP 3.2 Access to Alternative Modes of Transportation

*Ensure that commercial and public building sites provide direct and convenient access for pedestrians, bicyclists, or persons utilizing alternative modes of transportation.*

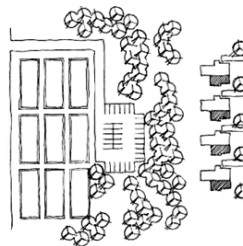


**Discussion:** Alternative forms of transportation are becoming more important. Walking and bicycling are non-polluting forms of transportation that go hand-in-hand with living in proximity to places of work, recreation, services, and shopping. Providing facilities for bicycle parking, showers, and changing rooms, and a more direct access route, such as bicycle lanes and pathways, for those who use these and alternative modes of transportation encourages their use. It also provides benefits to the entire community in terms of reduced air pollution, less traffic congestion, and greater availability of parking for those who must drive.

#### DP 3.3 Buffers and Transitions

*Use landscaped buffers and less intense land uses between incompatible industrial, commercial, and residential uses.*

**Discussion:** Buffers and intervening less intense land uses can mitigate noise, glare, and other impacts associated with a particular commercial or industrial land use. Increased density and intensity can create bothersome and potentially unsafe environmental factors for residents of a particular area.



### DP 3.4 Streetscape Plan

*Prepare and implement a comprehensive streetscape plan for each commercial and neighborhood area.*

**Discussion:** A comprehensive streetscape plan includes pedestrian amenities and safety features, provision for snow storage, street trees, parking opportunities, character and form-giving elements, identification of views and vistas, and other features. Since the street setting is one of the most visible elements of the urban environment, street plans are a vital element of every localized plan.

### DP 3.5 Urban Forestry Program

*Develop and support a comprehensive urban forestry program.*

**Discussion:** An urban forestry program includes an inventory of existing trees and all available tree locations and establishes goals for new and replacement tree planting and total canopy cover. Needed are citywide regulations and street standards that require establishing and maintaining plantings in traffic islands and planting strips and that allow large canopy street trees. Landscape standards for parking lots and neighborhood entranceways, along with regulations designed to save large trees in newly developed areas and subdivisions, are a necessary part of the program. The program could establish incentives, such as reduced parking requirements or building setback deviations for tree planting and replacement and could serve as a means to educate the public regarding the benefits of trees and their necessary maintenance. The City of Spokane should ~~consider joining~~ continue to work with the Spokane County Conservation District, which is a state-chartered agency established to promote education and preservation of natural resources. ~~Joining This cooperation could~~ avails the city ~~to of~~ greater funding opportunities, encourages the sharing of staff expertise, and promotes tree planting programs on a countywide basis.

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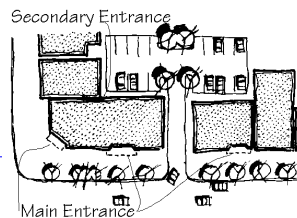
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### DP 3.6 Business Entrance Orientation

*Create a sense of cooperation and neighborliness by orienting one or more building entrance of commercial building facades toward the pedestrian sidewalks and pathways that lead to adjoining residential neighborhoods.*

**Discussion:** Orienting the business entrance toward the adjoining residential area ~~in addition to the placement of~~ and placing parking ~~in a location~~ other than between the entrance and the sidewalk demonstrates the business owner's commitment to the residents of the neighborhood instead of only to the motoring public.

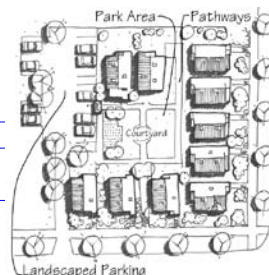


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### DP 3.7 Improvements Program

*Provide facilities such as sidewalks, street improvements, street trees, sewers, and parks in neighborhoods and commercial areas designated for higher density development.*

**Discussion:** ~~Increased density in established~~ Established areas should ~~be not have to accommodate increased density, which~~ without the commensurate ~~with~~ upgrading and/or provision of the necessary public facilities and improvements, ~~could have in order~~ to avoid a detrimental impact on the character of and investment in the area. The provision of these necessary facilities and improvements is in the public interest of maintaining a high quality of life and must be accounted for in the



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budget for public expenditures.

### DP 3.8 Infill Development

*Ensure that infill construction and area redevelopment are done in a manner that reinforces the established neighborhood character and is architecturally compatible with the surrounding existing commercial and residential areas.*

**Discussion:** Infill construction can represent a benefit to the community that does not necessitate an expansion of the infrastructure when done in a manner that does not detract from the area. Flexible design standards enable infill development that is architecturally compatible with the context of the proposed area by permitting higher intensity activities without detracting from the existing character of the area.

### DP 3.9 Commercial and Mixed-Use Development

*Identify and work with the adjoining property owners to develop streetscape improvements that encourage more intensive commercial and mixed-use developments.*

**Discussion:** Densification, as opposed to sprawl, sometimes requires an investment in the infrastructure. While generally beneficial to a community, the identification and programming of improvements may constitute a public expense. As opposed to the spending of public funds, this should be considered an investment, as the desire is for the economic improvement of an area as well as for the city in general.

### DP 3.10 Parking Facilities Design

*Minimizing surface parking by creating alternatives that enable intensive and pleasant site development.*

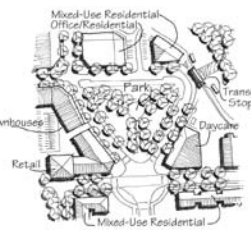


**Discussion:** Less surface parking, underground and parking within buildings, and increased landscape requirements for automobile concealment and lot shading can create a more pleasant atmosphere for the users and passersby. This could result in a reduction of total parking lot size and minimize the impact of surface parking.

### DP 3.11 Town Squares and Plazas

*Require redevelopment areas and new development to provide town squares, plazas, and “pocket parks,” and encourage these spaces to be used as the focus of commercial and civic buildings.*

**Discussion:** The inclusion of public spaces in areas of development gives pedestrians a place to rest and interact while providing a location for community and economic focus. It improves the appearance of, and gives identity to the particular area. The amount of public open space should be relative in size to the development.

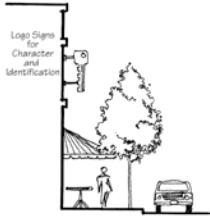


### DP 3.12 Transit Use and Transportation Alternatives

*Develop facilities that are safe, pleasant, and that promote the use of transportation alternatives.*

**Discussion:** To foster a more livable city, alternative modes of transportation are needed. Provision of facilities that are safe, attractive, and functional helps lessen automobile reliance. They are to be located close to the users’ place of residence, work, and play and should be well-lighted and comfortable. Businesses located along transit routes should be encouraged to provide shelters and seating to accommodate their customers.

### DP 3.13 On-Premise Advertising



*Ensure on-premise business signs are of size, number, quality, and style to provide identification of the business they support while contributing a positive visual character to the community.*

**Discussion:** On-premise signs provide an important public function by identifying sources of desired goods and services. Cities where business signs provide identification of on-premise businesses without degrading the visual environment are noted for their high quality community character. Collectively, the effectiveness of business signs is enhanced when they are not too large, too numerous, or too distracting in visual character.

On-premise signs should be of high quality and managed in all urban environments to reduce visual clutter, which contributes to a distracting and unsafe experience for motorists and visual blight for citizens, especially in proximity to living environments. Business signs in residential settings should relate to the smaller scale and lower-intensity activity of these environments. Sign area and design guidelines should reflect the relative intensity of commercial arterials as well as any unique district character, such as a historic neighborhood. Exclusively residential areas should be free of business signs entirely, except for small, unobtrusive signs to identify legal home occupations.

### DP 3.14 Billboards

*Prohibit new construction of billboards and eliminate existing billboards over time using various means.*

**Discussion:** Visual quality of the urban environment is one of the distinguishing characteristics of communities. The reputation of some cities is based largely on their good or bad visual image. Because of its scale or location, off-premise advertising including billboards can be among the biggest contributors to negative imagery. This advertising detracts from the surrounding setting and distracts the attention of motorists.

Off-premise advertising is not related to identification of the adjoining business use so does not share that public value of on-premise signs. In all locations, the large size of billboard advertising dominates the immediate visual environment as well as reduces the effectiveness of adjacent on-premise business signs.

To avoid extreme financial hardship to owners of existing billboard structures, eventual elimination by amortization is encouraged.

### DP 3.15 Bus Benches

*~~Continue to identify~~ identify and implement ways to provide bus benches and control bus bench advertising.*

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**Discussion:** Bus bench advertising adds visual clutter to streetscapes in all environments and is particularly intrusive in residential settings. However, it is recognized that benches at the more heavily used transit stops provide a valuable service to bus riders because they provide a place to sit while waiting for the bus. The city, STA, and Neighborhood Councils should continue to explore alternative optimum ways to provide this service. ~~This issue shall be addressed within one year of the adoption of the comprehensive plan.~~ Appropriate guidelines shall be developed for the location -

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of the benches, and whether advertising, if any, should be allowed. Among the many issues to be considered as a part of the guidelines for addressing bus benches are:

- ◆ whether they should be allowed in front of public buildings or in city parks;

- ◆ the number of benches per bus stop.

Until the bus bench issue is addressed, policies of previously existing neighborhood plans which prohibit bus bench advertising should be enforced.

### **DP 3.16 Other Off-Premise Advertising**

*Identify and implement ways to control other forms of off-premise advertising.*

**Discussion:** Other small off-premise signs that are often located in the public right-of-way also add visual clutter to streetscapes in all environments and are particularly intrusive in residential settings. Signboards placed “temporarily” at the street edge often encroach on the sidewalk and impede the safe movement of pedestrians. Regulations should be adopted to control this type of advertising.

### **DP 3.17 Telecommunication Facilities**

*Control the visual impact of telecommunication facilities.*

**Discussion:** Telecommunication facilities, including wireless communication support towers, can be visually obtrusive. For this reason, efforts should be made to place them as efficiently and as effectively as possible, thus minimizing the total number of such sites. For example, maximum use should be made of existing structures that can support unobtrusive [co-located](#) telecommunication facilities before new stand-alone facilities are constructed for this purpose. Also, the city should require telecommunication sites to utilize visually unobtrusive technology, landscaping and screening techniques whenever possible.

### **DP 3.18 Display, Flood and Direct Lighting**

*Control display, flood and direct lighting installations so to not directly and unintentionally illuminate, or create glare visible from adjacent properties, residential zones or public right-of-way.*

**Discussion:** Lighting on buildings and sites can have a dramatic effect on the form, mood, quality, and character of an area. Lighting contributes to the convenience of the user and increases the safety and security of a site, the street, and surrounding properties during night hours. Although, lighting effects such as color, amount, intensity, and types of lighting are major factors contributing to the form and character of the city, poorly managed lighting can be a nuisance. Specific project lighting on buildings, parking and landscaped areas and the site in general should not brightly illuminate or glare, either directly or indirectly, onto adjoining properties or into residential or other sensitive areas. Careless use of outdoor lighting damages the aesthetics of the night and the nighttime environment, decreasing security and safety or by creating hazards through reduced contrast or increased glare and distraction. While lighting can help establish an attractive, distinctive and safe environment, care should be taken to ensure that it does not detract from the character of an area. The use of directional or “cut-off” lighting and the elimination of wasted light saves energy and resources, returns a sense of balance to the night and gives the city a quality appearance.

## DP 4 PRESERVATION

**Goal:** Preserve and protect Spokane's significant historic structures, neighborhoods, and sites.

### Policies

#### DP 4.1 Historic Preservation

*Establish historic preservation as a high priority in the development of future city programs.*

**Discussion:** Historic preservation has traditionally received less funding and fewer resources than any other city department. An increase in funding and an accompanying increase in connecting preservation with city functions of economic development and planning ensures that these policies are enacted. Well-funded historic preservation programs have produced measurable economic development in many communities.

#### DP 4.2 Historic Preservation Plan

*Encourage public understanding and support of Spokane's historic heritage by educating the public of the goals of the Historic Preservation Plan.*

**Discussion:** The plan promotes public understanding and support of the diversity of Spokane's heritage. It continues to be an effective historic and cultural resource management tool as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan.

#### DP 4.3 Representation of Diversity

*Encourage awareness and recognition of the many cultures that are an important and integral aspect of Spokane's heritage.*

**Discussion:** Historic preservation must reflect the diversity of Spokane's past. The city must be proactive in including the many cultures and traditions of Spokane's heritage in historic preservation planning and activities.

#### DP 4.4 Landmarks Commission

*Utilize the expertise of the Landmarks Commission in decision making by the City Council, City Plan Commission, City Parks Board, and other city agencies in matters of historic preservation.*

**Discussion:** The City of Spokane and Spokane County established the Landmarks Commission in 1980 to advise them in matters of historic preservation. Their link with other government processes needs to be strengthened. More effort is needed to seek the counsel of the Landmarks Commission before decisions are made.

#### DP 4.5 Publicly-Owned Historic Structures

*Require a critical review of a project prior to the removal or destruction of any publicly-owned building, structure, or site that is listed on, or eligible for the local, state, or national historic register.*

**Discussion:** Spokane County and the City of Spokane are major owners of local cultural and historic resources. Many of these resources are public buildings or elements of the public infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, and park landscapes. The city and county should demonstrate the importance of historic preservation by critically evaluating any public building or structure before it is demolished.

#### DP 4.6 Protection of Archaeological and Historic Sites

*Ensure that known archaeological and historic sites are identified and protected.*

**Discussion:** Significant archaeological and historic sites must first be identified and designated historic if established criteria are met, and then protected through the city's permit process. Identification and designation distinguishes the properties that meet criteria for historic significance from all other older properties. When new sites are discovered the city will attempt to ensure they are appropriately preserved.



Compatible Structure in Vacated Alleyway

#### DP 4.7 Legislation Reform

*Propose and support legislation at all government levels that encourages historic preservation, including tax reform legislation that makes historic preservation more economically feasible.*

**Discussion:** Historic preservation should be encouraged because it provides economic benefits to government at all levels. Sales tax revenue is generated, local jobs are created, and vacant properties are rehabilitated. This can also result in a long-term increase in property tax revenue. Economic incentives can stimulate the rehabilitation of historic properties, thus increasing government revenue. These should include legislation that offers such incentives for privately-owned historic properties.

#### DP 4.8 Zoning Provisions and Building Regulations

*Utilize the existing and develop new zoning provisions, building regulations, and design standards that are appropriate for historic properties, sites, districts, and neighborhoods.*

**Discussion:** Regulations are tools that can and should be used to promote preservation and renovation rather than demolition. New provisions could take the form of zoning categories and standards that reinforce certain districts or promote adaptive reuse of existing underutilized buildings. Deviations ~~of from~~ parking requirements and reduction of site dimensional standards are other possibilities. The existing "Historic Building Code Relief" and "~~Special~~ Conditional Use Permit" incentives should be improved and their use encouraged.

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#### DP 4.9 Rehabilitation of Historic Properties

*Assist and cooperate with owners of historic and cultural landmarks and sites to identify, recognize, and plan for the use of their property to ensure compatibility with preservation objectives.*

**Discussion:** Assistance with the identification and designation of historic properties, and public recognition for the owners, could serve as an important stimulus and reinforcement for historic preservation. Public agencies can cooperate with owners to provide for the preservation and maintenance of historic and cultural resources. There are too few incentives for the adaptive reuse of older buildings in the downtown and other small commercial districts, resulting in a loss of opportunities and a proliferation of surface parking lots and vacant land. Creative incentives, such as reduced taxes, deviations from development standards, and accelerated permitting could be sponsored and provided by the City of Spokane at little or no direct cost. Public recognition of owners who have undertaken appropriate rehabilitation of historic properties could also serve as an incentive.

#### DP 4.10 Neighborhoods, Areas, and Historic Districts

*Assist neighborhoods and other potential historic districts to identify, recognize, and highlight their social and economic origins and promote the preservation of their historic heritage and cultural resources.*

**Discussion:** Identifying the social and cultural resources of an area is necessary for protection and guides decision-making in resource planning and management, and environmental review. The conservation of neighborhoods of historic character, preservation of historically significance resources, and their inclusion into historic districts are encouraged. Outstanding historic structures should be preserved when neighborhoods are redeveloped and rehabilitated. Where these resources exist, the blending of quality newer developments with the historic landmarks enhances and enriches the neighborhood character.



### DP 5 DOWNTOWN CENTER VIABILITY

**Goal:** Create a vital, livable downtown by maintaining it as the region's economic and cultural center, and preserving and reinforcing its historic and distinctly urban character.

#### Policies

##### DP 5.1 Downtown Residents and Workers

*Support investments and create opportunities that increase the number of residents and workers in downtown Spokane.*

**Discussion:** Increasing the number of residents and workers in the downtown area provides the necessary number of patrons to maintain a healthy business climate, which increases the tax base, making more funds available for the provision of public facilities and services. More people in downtown Spokane can increase street level activity and can lessen crime by having more "eyes-on-the-street." Supporting investments and opportunities is not only a benefit to the developers and property owners but also to the general public who can enjoy a safer, thriving business district.

##### DP 5.2 Street Life

*Promote actions designed to increase pedestrian use of streets, especially downtown, thereby creating a healthy street life in commercial areas.*

**Discussion:** A healthy street life is essential to creating healthy cities. Public streets are places where all citizens can feel welcome. Providing activities and reasons for people to be on the street heightens the sense of excitement, improves a sense of safety, encourages diversity, and increases social interaction essential to healthy community life. Street level activity not only provides opportunities for businesses to make sales but also attracts people and provides relief from harsher built environments. Public areas with features such as seating, landscaping, sculptures, fountains and buildings with plenty of windows, attract activities, are more people-friendly, and reduce the opportunities for crime against people and property.

### DP 5.3 Downtown Services

*Support development efforts that increase the availability of daily needed services in downtown Spokane.*

**Discussion:** The availability of services and facilities, such as dry cleaners, health clubs, grocery stores, video outlets, and hair salons make living downtown more convenient, lessens dependence on automobile transportation, and helps provide the critical mass of residents necessary to create a vibrant downtown.

## DP 6 NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITIES

**Goal:** Preserve, improve, and support the qualities of individual neighborhood areas.

### Policies

#### DP 6.1 Auto-Intense Land Uses

*Restrict intense land uses that are oriented to motorists and other large commercial buildings to major arterials, and reduce their number in residential areas.*

**Discussion:** Auto-intense land uses include drive-through eating and banking facilities and automobile repair, parts, sales, service, and fuel outlets. These uses and commercial buildings that by their size are presumed to serve the region should be located along major arterials. The result is easier access for patrons and better exposure for the businesses. Residential neighborhoods benefit from the eventual removal of this type of development from their areas.

#### DP 6.2 Access to Housing Choices

*Encourage building and site design that allows a variety of housing forms while being compatible with the character of the immediate surrounding area, thereby generating community support for development at planned densities.*

**Discussion:** Increasing housing densities and innovative development protects special sites, and enables the efficient use of remaining buildable land, the efficient and cost effective provision of city facilities and services, the provision of affordable housing, and the promotion of increased ridership on mass transit. A variety of housing types, such as townhouses, courtyard buildings, and housing clusters, contributes to housing diversity and interest, and provides more opportunities for prospective residents. Design that is compatible with the surroundings helps make increased densities acceptable to the current residents. Higher residential density in commercial areas can provide additional economic stability for businesses while lessening automobile dependence.

#### DP 6.3 Transit and Pedestrian-Oriented Development

*Encourage attractive transit and pedestrian-oriented development.*

**Discussion:** Creating attractive transit and pedestrian-oriented development requires attention to detail. For example, the provision of ample sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping, street level physical and visual access, detailing, building colors and textures makes the pedestrian feel more comfortable. For transit users, the distance to transit stops, location of shelters, lighting, and safety, as well as accessibility to goods and services contribute to increased transit use. The city should consider development incentives, such as increased building height, greater site coverage, or reduction in parking as exchange to promote transit and pedestrian-oriented development.

#### DP 6.4 Accessory Land Uses

*Utilize development standards to ensure that land uses or structures that are accessory to a principal use are developed in a manner compatible with the principal structure and the character of the surrounding area.*

**Discussion:** An accessory structure that is of a greater bulk, larger scale, or greater height than the principal structure or the typical structures of the immediate area would generally detract from the visual character of the particular area and may be considered an “eyesore.” As a general rule-of-thumb, an accessory structure should be of a lesser square footage and volume and should utilize materials and colors less dominate than the principal structure. An accessory land use that does not include a structure should be located and designed to be subordinate to the principal use.

#### DP 6.5 Accessory Dwelling Unit Compatibility

*Require accessory dwelling units in residential districts to be designed to be physically and visually compatible with the main structure.*

**Discussion:** Accessory dwelling units can increase the amount of available, affordable housing and can provide income for elderly homeowners or other owners of large homes. These dwelling units should be created in a manner that does not adversely affect the neighborhood. The conversion or creation of new accessory units is made more acceptable by establishing parking requirements and specific siting and design controls that ensure neighborhood character be maintained or enhanced.



#### DP 6.6 Alleys in New Residential Subdivisions

*Encourage the provision of alleys in the development of new residential subdivisions to provide access and service delivery at the rear of residential properties.*

**Discussion:** Alleys are a feature common in most inner-city neighborhoods. They were a common element of the grid street platting pattern until the 1960s when curvilinear design emerged in the growing suburbs. Often alleys are not included in new plats, even though they may provide benefits in a neighborhood setting. Alleys allow for the provision of utilities and refuse collection. Garages in the rear yard rather than the front, reduce conflict with street and sidewalk activity. The ability to accommodate and access accessory dwelling units over garages from a public right-of-way and the reduction of residential street widths also represent advantages of alleys.

#### DP 6.7 Design Standards for Public Projects and Structures

*Design all public projects and structures to uphold the highest design standards and neighborhood compatibility.*

**Discussion:** The development of public projects and structures can have an impact on surrounding areas. The perception that this has not been considered has resulted in neighborhood opposition to projects, in spite of potential benefits. In order to mitigate the perceived negative impacts on a neighborhood, the city must serve as an example by building its facilities to make a positive visual and functional contribution to the neighborhood, rather than just trying to mitigate negative impacts.

The process for developing city projects and structures to achieve this aim will utilize the City of Spokane’s Design Review Process. ~~The mission of the city design review process states, “Instill the values of the public into a project’s design, keeping in mind the developmental~~

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~~standards established by the governing body, while at the same time, not substantially increasing the development cost or permit issuance time for the proponent.” Thus, the~~ The design review process is both an appropriate and useful tool to use, particularly since the intent of this ~~policy~~ process is for city projects and structures to serve as models of design quality and community values for the entire community. The process to achieve desirable projects that adds to the functional and aesthetic aspects of the project’s merits includes coordination between the funding sources, urban forestry program, urban design and engineering, utilities, police, fire, transportation, school districts, neighborhoods and adjacent property owners, among others.

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It is crucial that a uniform development process, whether or not it includes project design review, is clear and easily understood from the beginning. This ensures that when design review is necessary, it is well integrated into the overall building development process and is timely and efficient as well as productive. The implementation of this policy, as well as the buildings that result from it, can serve as a model to the entire community that the design review process can be smooth and efficient and that it results in a superior design.

Key issues about the design review process include:

- ◆ The goal or intent of the design review process will be to use the process as an opportunity to make projects the best possible for the public, as measured by the goals, policies, and regulations of the comprehensive plan.
- ◆ The design review process will begin as early as possible to provide the optimal opportunity for efficient and effective input into the development process.
- ◆ The design review process can take place on two levels, depending on the impact or complexity of a project, and can utilize the expertise of both the Design Review Committee and the staff of the Urban Design Program of the Planning Services Department. Therefore, some projects would be reviewed only by staff on behalf of the Design Review Committee, while other projects would undergo review by the Design Review Committee itself.

## DP 6.8 Design Flexibility for Neighborhood Facilities

*Incorporate flexibility into building design and zoning codes to enable neighborhood facilities to be used for multiple uses.*

**Discussion:** Neighborhood public facilities are often developed to serve a particular purpose. This can be the result of code requirements that preclude the ability to utilize the facilities for other purposes. For example, the strict application of the parking requirements for a community center could be inadequate for the same center to occasionally be used for a concert or as a branch campus. Enabling flexibility in the application of the standards could better maximize the utility and cost effectiveness of neighborhood public facilities.

## DP 7 LOCAL DETERMINATION

**Goal:** Make neighborhoods attractive, safe places by encouraging residents to express their design and development values through local and sub-area planning efforts.

### Policies

#### **DP 7.1 Design Guidelines in Neighborhood Planning**

*Include design guidelines in neighborhood planning processes to address local urban design issues.*

**Discussion:** Neighborhood residents are the best equipped to determine what neighborhood design details and elements represent the particular characteristics of their specific area. Citywide guidelines may not adequately address issues that are of concern to their specific neighborhood. The inclusion of development design guidelines in the neighborhood planning process helps ensure that these issues are addressed and that future construction projects are compatible with the neighborhood and preserves neighborhood characteristics.

#### **DP 7.2 Neighborhood Involvement in the City Design Review Process**

*Encourage the neighborhoods to participate in the city's design review process.*

**Discussion:** The design review process should be accessible to the neighborhoods to allow involvement and input into the deliberations. Through the design review process, the neighborhoods can provide input regarding a specific project's design issues to the Design Review Committee and to the project proponents. Input regarding design issues should be based upon neighborhood design guidelines or plans that adequately portray the desires of the citizens of the neighborhood. To enable neighborhood participation, the city staff shall endeavor to see that the neighborhood councils or steering committees are adequately informed of upcoming design review meetings regarding projects that are being proposed to be developed within their particular neighborhood.