

Southgate Concerns Related to District Center ROW Design January 6, 2014

The Southgate District Center (DC), created in 2005, is subject to a variety of design standards and guidelines including the Spokane Municipal Code, Comprehensive Plan, Developer's Agreements, and Integrated Site Plan that all define the city's vision of a higher-density, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use District Center. One critical component of developing the DC is the street character created using the guidance mentioned above.

Since the August 2012 beginning of the design review process required by the District Center Developer's Agreements, Southgate has been concerned with the final right of way (ROW) designs for the roads in our District Center. These concerns have been raised numerous times in every venue available to us:

- In initial meetings with the developer's architect and representatives in August 2012;
- at the Design Review Board in February and April 2013;
- in SEPA application comments in May 2013;
- and in meetings with city planning staff in May, August, October, and December 2013.

Each step of the way Southgate has been told that these issues were either not in the purview of the reviewing body, or that they would be addressed during later permitting. Now all of the review and permitting for the Target site is done and these issues have not been discussed in any meaningful way with the neighborhood.

The Southgate Neighborhood Council has endeavored, through comments made and submitted during the Design Review process, the SEPA comment process, and meetings with city planning staff, to ensure that street designs enhance multi-modal transportation and provide safe streets with a sense of place similar to other CC1 zoned areas in Spokane are created in this District Center.

At this point we fear that despite our efforts, and in contradiction to the Spokane Municipal code, important aspects of street design that will create the desired character are not planned to be implemented by either the City or the developers. This document outlines the city codes and guidelines that support the Southgate Neighborhood Council's vision for the streetscapes in Southgate District Center. Specific areas for concern are features like on-street parking, speed limits, medians, and pedestrian crossings.

On-Street Parking

“Streets located in the central business district and centers and corridors require on-street parking.” - SPOKANE MUNICIPAL CODE 17H.010.120(A)

Issue: All ROW designs presented so far do not indicate that on-street parking will be built in the District Center, despite ordinances requiring that it be provided.

As a CC2 (with CC1 overlay) District Center, Regal Street and Palouse Highway should have on-street parking provided through the length of the District Center. Similar street designs are already in place on streets like Garland Avenue, Monroe Street, Market Street, and Perry Street. As District Centers are developed this feature should automatically be included as a standard feature in this type of zoning.

Additionally, the Spokane Complete Streets Ordinance (SMC 17H.020.010) can apply to this issue since the ordinance is designed to, “to ensure all users are planned for in the construction of all City transportation improvement projects as outlined in the Comprehensive

Plan.” On-street parking is a well-established complete street feature that improves pedestrian safety and is required in District Centers under the Comprehensive Plan. Table TR13 (see Appendix A) of the Spokane Comprehensive Plan reinforces the SMC section referenced above by stating that on-street parking is required in all arterials located in Focused Growth Areas, which includes District Centers.

The Southgate Neighborhood Transportation and Connectivity Plan and the final, approved Southgate District Center Integrated Site Plan also show street section designs with on-street parking included as a complete street and traffic-calming element (see figures below).

Speed Limits

The Southgate District Center is zoned to be a pedestrian oriented CC1 area; therefore Southgate Neighborhood Council believes that the speed limits along Regal Street and Palouse Highway need to be reduced to promote traffic calming and pedestrian safety. Looking at other CC1 Centers and Corridors around Spokane show that Perry Street, Garland Avenue, and Market Street all have 20 mph speed limits while having comparable traffic volumes. Table TR13 in the Comprehensive Plan states that speed limits on minor arterials (such as Regal and Palouse) can have speed limits of 20 mph to 30 mph.

Currently Regal Street is 30 mph though the District Center and Palouse Highway is 35 mph from Freya Street to the intersection with Regal Street. Ideally both of these areas would be reduced to 20 mph to promote the sense of a pedestrian-oriented zone as has been done on Perry Street or Garland Avenue. Since these roads pass through a District Center, and not just through a Corridor (like Monroe or Hamilton), this is a reasonable request.

Further traffic calming could be done by slowing down traffic entering the District Center from the north along Regal Street from 30 mph to 25 mph. This would promote more traffic calming and pedestrian safety in the existing commercial zone running from Thurston Avenue to Palouse Highway. These reductions in speed along with the inclusion of on-street parking will emphatically signal that the Southgate District Center is a pedestrian-oriented zone and help activate the urban-designed buildings to be built along Regal Street.

Medians

Both the Southgate Neighborhood Transportation and Connectivity Plan and the Southgate District Center Integrated Site Plan call for street sections along Palouse Highway and Regal Street that include planted medians for traffic calming and aesthetic enhancement (see figures below). The section examples in the approved ISP were adapted from the Southgate Connectivity Plan by the developer’s architect. Inclusion of these features would further create the sense of place desired by the CC zoning and provide traffic calming and safety enhancements when coupled with pedestrian crossings along Palouse Highway.

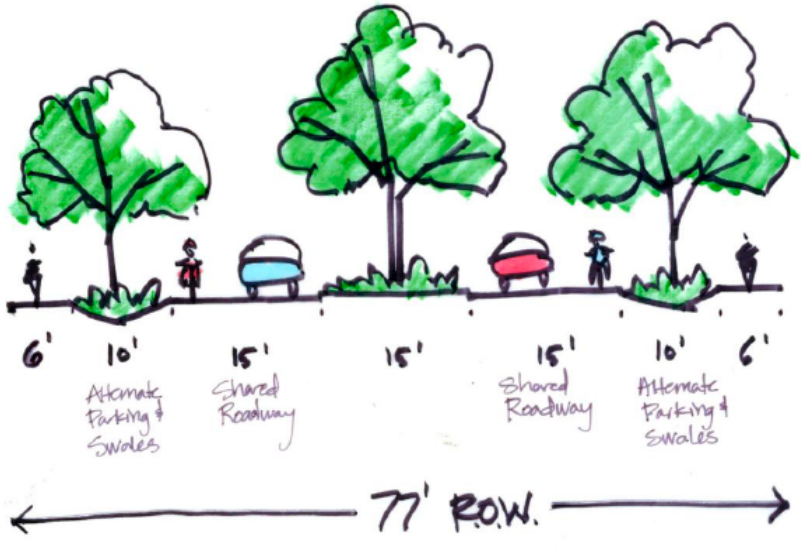


Figure 1 - Regal Street cross section from Southgate Connectivity Plan



Figure 2 - Palouse Hwy. cross section from Southgate Connectivity Plan

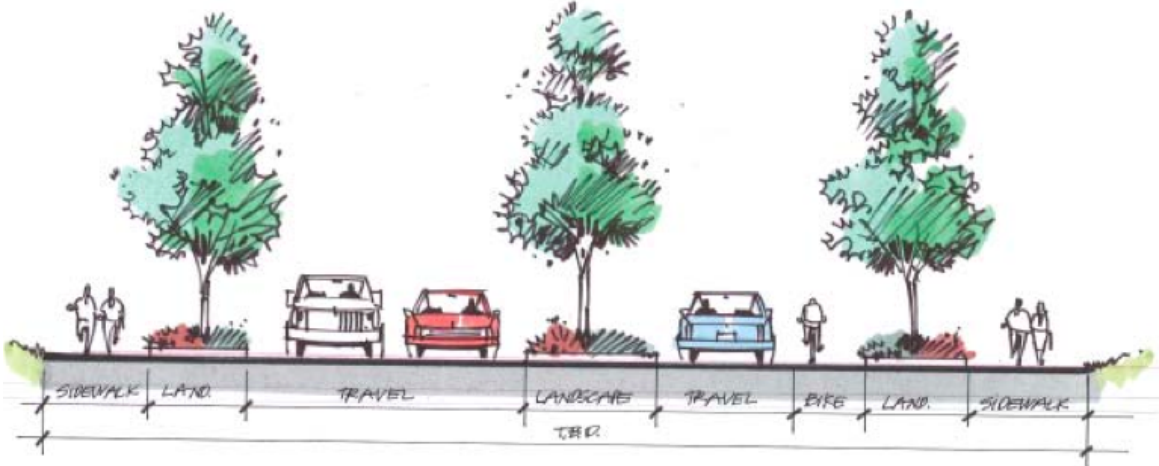


Figure 3 - Regal Street cross section from Southgate District Center ISP

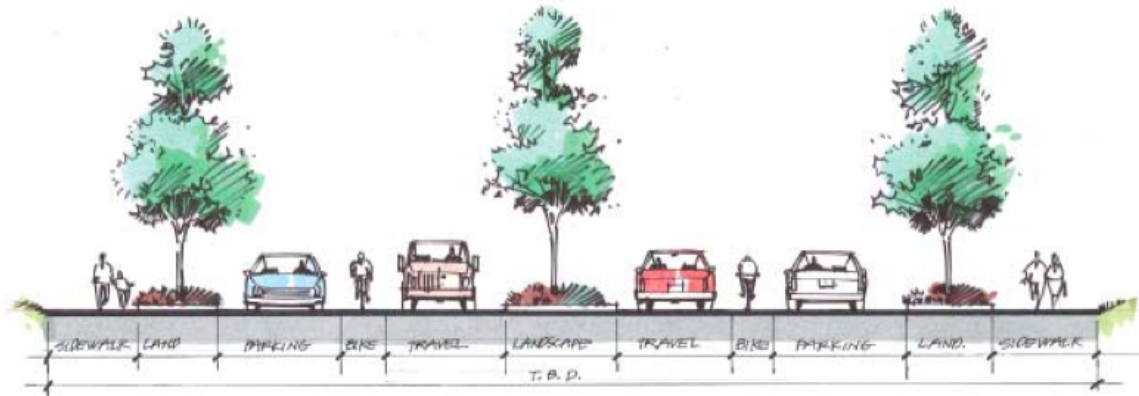


Figure 4 - Palouse Highway cross section from Southgate District Center ISP

Pedestrian Crossings

A critical element of creating a pedestrian-oriented District Center is including convenient and safe pedestrian/bike connections across the roads running through the District Center. These types of crossings and connections are a requirement of the Developer Agreements through the Integrated Site Plan. Additionally, a signalized crossing at the corner of Palouse Highway and Regal Street is the sole condition of the Mitigated Determination of Non-significance from the Target project’s SEPA application.

Throughout the Design Review process, the figures below were highlighted as key features to the “pedestrian emphasis” required for this site under CC1 zoning. Recent discussions with city staff have brought into question the development of these features as presented by the developer and approved in the ISP. Current design of the signalized intersection has focused on the auto accommodation of the intersection, not the pedestrian/transit considerations or the aesthetic elements touted in the ISP.



Figure 5 - Intersection of Palouse Hwy. and Regal St. as shown in the approved ISP

The focus of pedestrian connection in the District Center has been the signal at Palouse and Regal. However, the main area where pedestrian traffic will cross into the heart of the

Southgate District Center from surrounding residential developments would be along Palouse Highway, which has not been addressed so far. An additional pedestrian crossing would also make sense at the south end of the District Center on Regal Street. While these features may not be built during the development of the Target site, the intent of the Integrated Site Plan is to make sure these features are accounted for in the design process for easy inclusion as the rest of the Southgate District Center is developed.

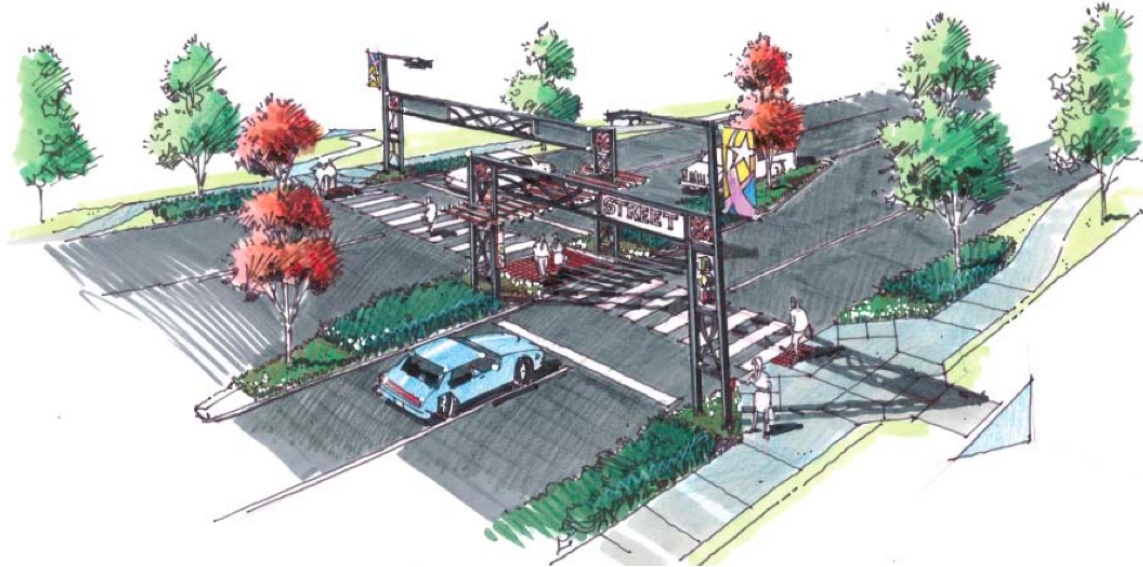


Figure 6 - Example of a pedestrian crossing along Palouse Hwy. from the ISP

Conclusion

Street design and character is a critical component to realizing the vision and meeting the requirements of a District Center. To date Southgate Neighborhood's efforts to have a discussion regarding these issues and impact the design of our neighborhood's District Center have not been successful. We have outlined the features and elements of street design that are mandated by the Spokane Municipal Code, encouraged by Spokane's Comprehensive Plan, and envisioned in the city-adopted neighborhood plans and the Integrated Site Plan.

As we have said since the beginning of the design process outlined in the Developer's Agreements, this is the only District Center in Spokane to be developed from scratch. This is the one place in Spokane where enacting the Center and Corridor Guidelines and the Comprehensive Plan vision of a District Center can be done on a blank slate. For the city to ignore, defer, or delay this implementation is unconscionable and unacceptable.

The development in our District Center is on track to be just another suburban-style shopping center, something the neighborhood has resisted for almost 10 years, and something that clearly contradicts the vision for District Centers in the Comprehensive Plan. The designation of these properties as a District Center was supposed to be the compromise that would allow appropriate development to occur in our neighborhood, right now the requirements of that zoning are not being met. Right now is the one chance to get these issues resolved and to place our District Center on the path to realizing the clear vision laid out in city code and the comprehensive and neighborhood plans.

We look forward to continued conversation with city staff to resolve these issues, but more importantly we look forward to immediate, measurable action on these issues.

Appendix A

TABLE TR 13 STREET STANDARDS BY AREA CLASSIFICATION— FOCUSED GROWTH AREA				
	Arterial Classification			
	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector Arterial (Commercial and Industrial)	Collector Arterial (Residential)
Traffic Volumes				
Recommended Minimum	20,000	8,000	-	-
Recommended Maximum	40,000	15,000	7,000	5,000
Number of Lanes				
Two-Directions	3-5	3-5	2-4	2
One-Direction	3-4	3	1-2	1
Lane Widths				
Interior	10'	10'	10'	-
Exterior	12'	12'	12'	12'
Single Lane, No Parking	16'	16'	16'	16'
Medians and Left-Turn Lanes				
Requirement	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Minimum Width	2'	2'	2'	2'
Minimum W/Pedestrian Refuge	8'	8'	8'	8'
Maximum Width	15'	15'	15'	15'
Sidewalks				
Requirement	Both Sides*	Both Sides*	Both Sides*	Both Sides*
PBS Minimum: Planted	-	-	-	-
PBS Minimum: Hard Surface	3'	3'	3'	3'
Walkway Strip Minimum	7'	7'	7'	7'
208 Treatment/Drainage				
Adjacent Drainage Swale	No**	No**	No**	No**
Minimum Width	-	-	-	-
Bike Lanes (one direction)				
Requirement	See Bike Plan	See Bike Plan	See Bike Plan	See Bike Plan
On-Street Parking				
Requirement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Width	8'	8'	8'	8'
Posted Speed				
Minimum	25 mph	20 mph	20 mph	20 mph
Maximum	30 mph	30 mph	30 mph	30 mph
Access Spacing				
Maximum Width	30'	30'	30'	24'
Spacing	125'	125'	100'	80'
Number of Driveways	2	2	2	1
*Required on both sides in all cases with exceptions to be coordinated with the City of Spokane.				
**Proximity of storm sewer may limit option. Issue to be coordinated with the City of Spokane.				