

Spokane Housing Ventures Annexation

Comments from the Southgate Neighborhood Council

The Area



Land Use

One area of concern we have is the differentiation of the Land Use and Zoning designations in the alternative plan. The large CC parcels already in Southgate are designated CC-Core for Land Use and CC2-DC for zoning. We are wondering why the city-proposed alternative splits the Land Use and Zoning designations into General Commercial and CC2-DC. We would like to see them match the other CC zones in our neighborhood to maintain uniformity in their development. During discussions that led to the creation of the Southgate District Center back in 2005/06, it was explained to the Southgate Neighborhood Council that that city would not be creating any more General Commercial areas in Spokane and that dense, commercial development would happen only within the Center and Corridor designation. Why has the policy changed? When did it change?

Zoning

In an email on May 18, 2015, Acting Planning Director Louis Meuler stated that the department's intention was to use Spokane Comprehensive Plan policy LU 10.3 as guidance when considering the zoning designation for these properties.

LU 10.3 – Existing Plans

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

Southgate finds it appropriate to follow this policy as the city considers how to integrate these properties into the Southgate neighborhood. The mix of developing mixed use, established community commercial, and open low-density designated parcels provides a good blend of new land to our neighborhood. Given that the majority of the proposed annexed area is currently in the County's Mixed Use zoning, Southgate believes that the city should seek to maintain that designation as this land becomes part of our neighborhood.

According to County Zoning Code Chapter 14.608.100, the intent of Mixed Use zoning is to, "implement the Mixed-use Area, Community Center and Urban Activity Center categories of the Comprehensive Plan. These mixed-use categories encourage development that fosters pedestrian activity, supports transit, and provides for a mix of diverse land uses. **The Mixed-use zone supports many activities of daily life that can occur within easy walking distance, giving independence to those who do not drive.** Mixed-use areas support higher intensity

development, but compatibility of uses is ensured through special design standards. Mixed-use areas often provide a central focus point with transportation linkages to the broader community.”

When you compare this intent with the various zoning classifications in the Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) you see that it aligns most directly with our Center and Corridor Zoning as outlined in SMC 17C.122.010, “The intent of center and corridor regulations is to implement the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan for centers and corridors. These areas are **intended to bring employment, shopping, and residential activities into shared locations** and encourage, through new development and rehabilitation, new areas for economic activity. New development and redevelopment is encouraged in these areas that promotes a relatively cohesive development pattern with a mix of uses, higher density housing, buildings oriented to the street, screened parking areas behind buildings, **alternative modes of transportation with a safe pedestrian environment**, quality design, smaller blocks and relatively narrow streets with on-street parking.”

It is Southgate’s view that designating the Land Use and Zoning Center and Corridor is the best way to meet the intent of the Comp Plan policy cited by Mr. Meuler.

The Vision

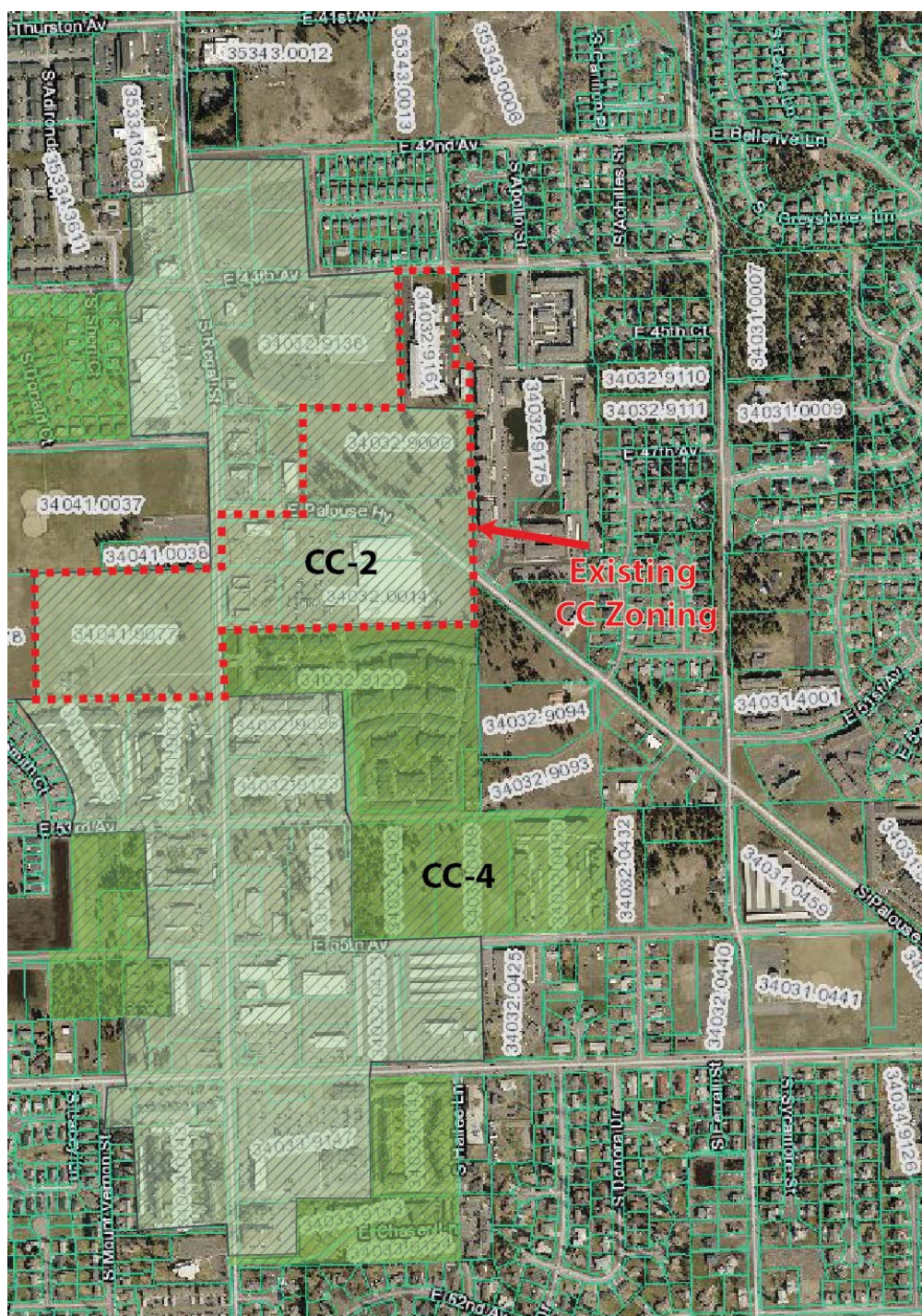
In early September, the neighborhood met with city staff to discuss the annexation and proposed the following zoning for the parcels (see image below). The city can annex the Mixed Use properties and designate them as a combination of CC-2 and CC-4 to meet the intent of the County zoning and the reality of the projects in development. The CC-2 pedestrian enhanced/auto-accommodating zoning will encourage the development of pedestrian-oriented commercial projects in the 8-acres adjacent to Regal Street and the CC-4 zoning for the apartment parcels will accommodate those projects as well. This vision has been modified and incorporated into the City’s “alternative” option.



The total area of these CC designated parcels (27 acres) are larger than the CC zones found at 29th and Grand Ave., the Perry District, and 14th and Grand Ave. This area has the potential to align with our Comprehensive Plan’s vision for a high-density, mixed-use area. To zone it as purely commercial and residential is to violate LU 10.3 and fall short of the standards we have set for ourselves as a community.

A Bigger Vision

Beyond the current annexation question, Southgate would suggest the city expand its vision to look at the Southgate/Moran Prairie area as a whole. There are already three designated District Centers along Regal Street within 2 miles of each other: Lincoln Heights, Southgate, and 57th and Regal Street. The annexation of the properties at the southern edge of our neighborhood point to a need for broader planning for the future annexation of the land already in the Urban Growth Area which extends clear to 65th Ave. to the south and Glenrose Road to the east. In this immediate case, the city should look to see how these three Centers are connected or can be connected with a comprehensive and holistic plan that enacts the vision of our city as state in the Comprehensive Plan.



Two Alternatives

The city planning staff is proposing two alternatives to the land use and zoning of the proposed annexed area. One would create a Community Business zone along Regal Street, the other would reflect a version of the thoughts laid out by Southgate Neighborhood Council above which includes creating Center and Corridor zoning along Regal Street. The Southgate Neighborhood Council would recommend the Plan Commission and City Council adopt the “alternative” plan being proposed by the City. The Center and Corridor zoning is more in line with the intent of the County’s Mixed Use zoning (as outlined above). It could even recommend revising the Land Use and Zoning to match the mixed CC-2/CC-4 zoning the neighborhood proposed back in September.

The Center and Corridor Land Use and Zoning is also better aligned with the city-adopted Southgate Neighborhood Connectivity Plan and would provide a better neighborhood commercial development for the large number of high-density residential developments nearby (over a dozen within a quarter mile). Pedestrian-oriented land use and zoning could help create the type of vibrant, walkable neighborhood that is the goal of the Spokane Comprehensive Plan and the stated goal of such lauded developments as Perry Street, Kendall Yards, and the East Sprague Redevelopment Project. In either case, the neighborhood urges the city to include ADA/Pedestrian access along 53rd and 55th clear to Regal Street. As the design stands right now, there is limited access along those streets for residents of the apartments along 55th to the transit corridor on Regal Street.

Creating desirable, livable neighborhoods is an intentional exercise, it cannot be achieved by maintaining or accepting the status quo. Pedestrian-oriented development at this location can be built up over time to connect with the growing Southgate District Center and the Comp Plan-designated Center at 57th and Regal Street. We thank you for your time and consideration and look forward to continued dialogue and input with the city as we work to implement our neighborhood plans.

Thank you,
Ted Teske, Chair, Southgate Neighborhood Council
Kerry Brooks, Chair, SNC Land Use Committee