

SPOKANE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP
October 27, 2022

A Meeting and a Public Workshop of the Spokane County Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Stephen Pohl at 9:00 a.m. on October 27, 2022. The meeting was accessible to the public in the Commissioner’s Hearing Room, Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway, Spokane WA, and via Zoom, with links provided in public notices, published in the Spokesman Review on October 12, 2022, online, by mail, and by email 16 days prior to the meeting, as required.

Present

Stephen Pohl, Chair	Deacon Band, Vice Chair	Jim Carollo	Pete Rayner
Clyde Haase	Duane Hamp	Wayne Brokaw	

Spokane County Department of Building and Planning Staff

Elya Miroshin, Clerk	Susan Luna, Clerk
Robert Brock, AICP, Planner	Saegen Neiman, Planner
Scott Chesney, AICP, Planning Director	Jessica Pilgrim, Spokane County Deputy Prosecutor

Call to Order: Stephen Pohl called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. a quorum was present.

Public Comment for items that are not on this agenda:

Paul Kropp addressed the commission with a comment about public accessibility for the Planning Commission meetings. He requested scheduling afternoon meetings instead of meeting in the morning. Teri Horn, Spokane County Buyer Beware, addressed the committee and voiced her concerns about stormwater deluging and development in the West Plains.

Public Hearing and Discussion of the Capital Facilities Plan: Scott Chesney addressed the committee and gave a presentation on requested initiation of an amendment to the CFP, Chapter 7 of the comprehensive plan, and Spokane County Code 13650. The Chair opened the floor for public comments. There were no public comments regarding the proposed action.

The Chair asked to move to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners Initiations of the Amendments to the Capital Facilities Plan, Chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan Policies, and Spokane County Code 13.650. Wayne Brokaw moved to initiate the amendments, Duane Hamp seconded the motion, there was no discussion, and the motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

Public Hearing of eight Proposed 2022 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Projects: Scott Chesney presented a summary of comprehensive plan amendments to CPA-01-22, CPA-04-22, and CPA-05-22, in the Hastings/Farwell Corridor and CPA-07-22 and CPA-08-22 in the North Metro Industrial Area and Hillyard district, and CPA-02-22, CPA-09-22, and CPA-06-22 in the West Plains locale.

Building & Planning staff addressed virtual public questions and comments received from the website and will continue to encourage public participation.

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Chair Stephen Pohl opened the Public Hearing to public testimony, they started with CPA-01-22.

Ray Rimbey commented about flooding conditions and traffic concerns associated with higher density residential apartment buildings in the Hastings-Farwell Corridor.

Darren Marsicola commented on the size and the occupancy of apartment buildings coming to the area. He also mentioned pedestrian and commuter traffic.

Tom Kron voiced his concern about drainage and an increase in the population of his neighborhood.

Kristy McKenna commented on concerns that she does not want apartments, an increase in the population, or impacts on the traffic in her neighborhood. She also had concerns about flooding.

Robert Edwards commented via Zoom. He did not like the esthetics of buildings over 50' tall in a neighborhood which formerly had a 35' cap. He was also concerned with the impact on the increase of traffic flow.

Ned Wendle, Director of Facilities and Planning, Mead School District, spoke via Zoom. He spoke about the level of service for his school district. The School District will consider building a new Middle School within the next 3-5 years. There is also some capacity in High School. He stated he does not oppose the developments, but he feels the level of service is not sufficient to current necessities. Mr. Chesney noted that the level of service for planning purposes is a "floor", and each school district is able to set an LOS that meets their needs.

Teri Horn addressed the committee by Zoom and commented on the responsibilities of the County to address improvements regarding stormwater facilities and flood mitigation. She opposes this development.

There were no comments for CPA-04-22.

The chair opened the floor for comments on CPA-05-22.

Shannon Demant expressed concerns over the impact of an increase in residential density due to multi-family units and the impact on traffic and the general peacefulness of the neighborhood.

Tim Demant voiced his concerns for the impact on increased traffic and recommended a traffic study on Perry and Hastings. He expressed concern for his privacy due to his backyard being in view of a planned three-story apartment building.

Jean Giovanazzi proposed that two homes be built on the 2-acre parcel near her house in order to prevent an apartment complex from being built in the Low-Density Residential. She wants to prevent additional traffic by not allowing any additional roads. She appreciates the esthetics of

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the Low-density area and single-story dwellings. Jean has organized a petition and she collected signatures; it is available for review.

Robert Edwards commented that he wanted it made clear that this is a zoning hearing and not a project hearing. He wanted to stress that the project details come out in the permitting process. There is a procedure in place for public comments on bigger projects.

Darrin Marsicola stated he opposed all three of the Hastings-Farwell Corridor zone changes. He believed the area was not able to provide adequate resources for a High-Density Residential zone.

Tom Kron appreciated the chance to speak and wanted to retain the Low-Density Residential zone for his neighborhood for the safety and security of his family.

Ben Goodmanson, Engineer for the applicant for CPA-04-22 and CPA-05-22, presented the goals and policies of this proposed comprehensive plan. He noted that this hearing is for a zone change and not an individual plan for any one parcel. He displayed a table from a Land Use Comparison study comparing High Density Residential to Low Density Residential use and commented on the negligible differences. He discussed trip generation reports and future traffic projections and the available capacity for heavier traffic.

Cliff Trimble, Storhaug Engineering, applicant for CPA-01-22, addressed the general goals of the comprehensive plan and quoted UL1A to provide a healthful safe and suitable urban environment that offers a variety of opportunities and affordable housing and employment. He also quoted UL.7, to guide development in efficient patterns by locating residential development in areas where facilities and services can be provided in a cost effective and timely fashion. He also referenced a trip generation study and traffic mitigation. He stated the level of service is identified as adequate. He mentioned that as a condition of approval, another traffic study will be completed to assess necessary improvements. Also, all projects are required to have onsite stormwater retention based off of calculations for the impervious area in that zoning category. A question was asked about Hasting Road and an issue with its watershed, and whether that consideration will be addressed by this development, and would it help out the county? Mr. Chesney answered the question, stating the projects are often required to make off site mitigations for these situations because the projects may add additional burdens to these county systems. These mitigations are negotiated with the project on a specific basis as a requirement for permit approval.

Todd Whipple mentioned the focus comprehensive plan changes currently before the committee will support infill developments which use the UGA land more efficiently. These developments are required to be strategically placed on arterial roads, which are limited in supply. These infill projects provide housing using good growth boundary management as the population continues to grow within the community. Mr. Whipple touched on the stormwater drainage issues, and the requirements to mitigate drainage in a development. He stated he was confident that the CPA-04-22 or CPA-05-22 projects would not have drainage problems.

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The Chair invited comments for CPA-02-22

Dale Birchell, Regional Warehouse Manager for the Odem Corporation which borders the project. Odem is planning to develop 25 acres on this site to expand business operations. The area considered for new development is closer to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment area. Odem is a beverage company. Odem is concerned with noise restrictions. Odem formerly leased a facility in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Half of the product is moved for distribution between 8:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. the following morning. The yearly volume in this facility is 6 million cases. Another main concern is traffic, as many as 50 to 70 trucks per day enter and exit Odem's facility. 90 employees work at this facility. This could be as much volume as 160 trips to and from our facility each day. If the development project with 1700 units were to go through, it could add up to 3400 cars and vehicles to the traffic past our facility. We also have concerns with security. We are concerned with theft because we are an alcohol beverage business. Mr. Birchell stated that Odem supports 300 employees and if operations are exposed to peril from CPA-02-22, then 300 jobs would leave the area.

John P. Rouse, Owner, WEMCO Inc., stated that he had participated in hearing exams both before and during the time he built his facility in 2014. He said there were lots of questions and mitigations to address because there were still a few residences within the block between Grove Road and Abbott Road and the freeway. He said he addressed all the stormwater issues that continue to come up regarding the West Plains. He hired David Evans and Associates to handle all the drainage issues. Like Odem, WEMCO has an additional 20 acres he would like to develop to expand the capacity of his facility. WEMCO is a heavy industrial business, it does fabrication, machine work, and it does make a lot of noise. WEMCO runs multiple shifts. He stated all of these activities were a concern before we built and when we had to wait for the comprehensive plan to rezone that to Light Industrial. The airport alternate runway is right over the top of our building. The area is undesirable for High Density Residential because it is a crash zone. We have traffic considerations; Thorpe Road is not built as a route to Highway 95 because of the tunnels. Abbott Road is too tiny and cannot stand up to heavier truck traffic. This means the traffic must route through Grove Road.

Dan Scheschuk, Westside Motor Sport, Owner, identified his business as a motor sports dealership with servicing. He is concerned that the current plan for this development includes housing along the immediate border. His business has been in this location for 35 years; it has been in his family for 25 years. The noise level is high because technicians are constantly operating loud motor sports engines to test them or to repair them. This noise level is very disruptive to homes in residential areas. Mr. Scheschuk related his experiences with motor racetracks that were shut down because residential areas moved to close and complained of noise. Mr. Scheschuk stated that he and his 30 employees could not be expected to mitigate the noise of day-to-day operations through the borders of his business.

Elizabeth Tellessen, Winston & Cashatt, Legal Representative for WEMCO and John P. and Karma Rouse, presented objections to CPA-02-22. She suggested the need for a comprehensive

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assessment to establish future use of the zone. She demonstrated the concept that the CPA would establish spot zoning in this area and would not be compatible with industrial uses. She pointed out that the current LOS plan did not meet the demands of residential areas because it is deficient in public transportation, has inadequate water and sewer facilities, has no reasonable mitigation measures to address the identified environmental impacts, and it is putting an extraordinary burden on current investors. She strongly encouraged a recommendation of denial for CPA-02-22 and encouraged an area study of the West Plains.

William Lenz, Foster Garvy, representative for Odex Investment, echoed the comments of Ms. Tellessen. He stressed that the CPA stood out from the other amendments as a spot zone because it is surrounded by industrial zones on every side. He stated that CPA-02-22 did not have any consistency with residential zones and could cause health, safety, and welfare concerns. He asked that the comp plan be denied.

Christopher Barnobi, Acoustical Discipline Manager, Coffman Engineers, stated that he had performed an acoustical study on the CPA area and would demonstrate quantifiable results. He identified locations he used to take short-term and long-term acoustical measurements in the general vicinity of the rezone area. He sampled noise from several sites including the interstate highway, the Odem facility, and near Westside Motor Sports proving grounds. He used quantifiable noise criteria classifications from a Washington Administrative Code to define his standards. He used residential noise standards. He applied his data to a graph to demonstrate the ambient noise ranges in the CPA area for both night and day times over a three-day period. The graph demonstrated that the noise levels exceeded levels consistent with residential standards for both daytime and nighttime. He also applied his results to a chart to demonstrate an excess in noise limits. He concluded that the area is too noisy for a residential location.

Nancy Schimmels, project proponent, quoted the Spokane County code for Mixed Use and Urban Activity Centers specifically stating that under Mixed Use zoning, Urban Activity Centers may contain Office and Light Industrial, Heavy Commercial Uses, Light Manufacturing, as well as many other uses. Furthermore, Industrial uses may be appropriate in Mixed Use Developments of Residential, Commercial, and Light Industrial. She claims the Comprehensive Plan clearly recognizes the relationship that Mixed Use and Light Industrial areas provide as a buffer for residential zones. She believes the CPA-02-22 follows this plan on this matter and approving this zone change will give Spokane an opportunity to provide an Urban Activity Center, address the housing crisis, and alleviate traffic congestion.

Kevin Freibott, City of Spokane, Planning, Kevin asked the committee to review a letter Spencer Gardner, the Director of Planning for the City of Spokane had submitted about the CPAs. Mr. Freibott brought up concerns over the LOS especially pertaining to water and sewer needed to accommodate the new demand on these sites. He also mentioned traffic concerns, especially the impact on Thorpe Road. He mentioned that the city planners look forward to the wider study of this area.

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Gary Schimmels, project proponent and property owner, addressed Mr. Freibott's comment about concerns over the LOS in this area by pointing out the water and sewer mains on the map. He claimed that none of the property owners on Abbott Road opposed the zone change. He stated that he believed there are approximately 12,000 acres of land zoned as Light Industrial in the West Plains area 4,000 is in Spokane County's jurisdiction and the balance is in several other jurisdictions. He declared his business is vested in 67 lots, including 16 acres for parks and wetlands, and a 2-1/2 million square foot industrial facility. This investment includes transportation, water and sewer, a stormwater plan, and infrastructure. Mr. Schimmels deemed that Mixed Use is less of an environmental impact than Light Industrial. Mr. Schimmels related some concerns the transportation planners recounted the need for housing and services in the West Plains. He asserted that 96% of the West Plains workforce commutes through Spokane from the east. Mr. Schimmels said his investment is answering the concerns with the addition of population density to the West Plains. He asserted this addition would drive level of service provisions with the expression "you build it, we will come." Mr. Schimmel responded to Mr. Barnobi's acoustical study using his own observations and examples of speech and average decibel levels to demonstrate relatable noise levels in the hearing room. He stated he is offering a transitional area and a buffer to the neighboring businesses. Additionally, he has traffic studies which confirm the location is excellent for transportation.

Dwight Hume, Agent for Gary Schimmels, acknowledged the need for joint planning between the County and the City of Spokane. He reiterated the idea that Mixed use is a desirable zone for planning purposes. Using MU allows developers to out of the ordinary design standards. Mr. Hume said that there will be a lot of protections in place to launch projects. He also agreed with Mr. Schimmel about the potential for improved transportation because the I-90 West Plains commute could potentially be eliminated. He felt this particular site is unique because it is large enough to be designed so workers could both work and live within the site. He stated there is enough land in this single ownership plot to create 1450 homes and other retail spaces. He claimed there were no other areas that were large enough to offer this unique situation.

Ben Goodmanson, Whipple Consulting Engineers, stated that the changes brought to the area will take place over a long period of time. The traffic study was performed, and they made projection out to 2045 for the analysis. He stressed that Mixed Use would provide for a shorter commute for commercial as well as workers. This would keep traffic off I-90.

Todd Whipple said he will be working with Dwight to submit responses to the comments from MS. Tellesson and others who have submitted objections. Planning and coordination will need to be in place with the city. The storm drain elements were addressed after a current Binding Site Plan was completed. The storm water will also be mitigated using the wetlands and ponds in the area as well as the wetland mitigation plan for the BSP.

The Chair invited comments for CPA-06-22

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Dwight Hume spoke on behalf of the LLC that owns the property and has a pending sale to build apartments which triggered the need for the amendment. The property is located across from Snowdon Elementary School. It is also flanked by existing residential to the north and the south.

The Chair invited comments for CPA-09-22, There were no comments.

The Chair invited comments for CPA-07-22

Ben Finnoe, Finnoe Design and Fabrication, a structural steel fabricator, owns three parcels adjacent to and south of the applicant. Mr. Finnoe stated that Finnoe Design and Fabrication has a significant impact on many of the premier projects throughout this country and all over the world. He stated his intentions are to develop his property as an industrial property which was the determining factor when he purchased the property. He has plans to move his shop from Regal Street. His manufacturing process is noisy and will always be that way. He feels as part of the comprehensive plan, Heavy Industrial land needs to be preserved. He has significant concerns about Holland continuing through because it causes the loss of rail. Rail access is important to his business. He is enthusiastic about his prospects with the future of his property but putting RC next to it does dampen the future plans.

Allyson Halpin, property manager for Viking Development, and Financial Controller for Finnoe Fabrication and Design, offered more details about the renovation of buildings to be used for expansion. They are also bringing in a spur from the railway through an easement so they can ship finished product. This action will help to attract other manufactures who would need rail access. She reaffirmed that their business is noisy, and they cannot mitigate this aspect for the ease of apartment dwellers. They currently run two shifts and work into the evening. She asked that the conversion of industrial lands be strictly limited for the protection of existing businesses.

Holly Finnoe addressed the concept of affordable housing. She defined affordable housing as houses not apartments. She believed that apartment rent costs are the same as house mortgages and wanted an affordable alternative. She brought up Low Density Residential areas and felt that smaller houses with smaller lots are more in line with affordability would encourage homeownership. She detailed that her well paid employees could not afford to buy large houses with large acre lots which she felt is the only alternative in Spokane County.

Del Stratton, representing Harley Douglas, spoke about the heavy industrial use in the area and buffering between zones. He stated that as one of the reasons to pick regional commercial zoning for the area. He explained that picking changing the zone to regional commercial allows to continue the road from Holland to Market Street and this is a great benefit to the area. He pointed out that Hawthorn is an alternative route to the North/South Freeway. He felt that there is no reason we could not provide a buffer zone with either apartments or housing. He stated that they had no reason to shut down the businesses of the opposition. He said that the Heavy Industrial zone was considered and taken into account when they took on this project.

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No further comments were made for CPA-07-22

The Chair asked for comments on CPA-08-22.

Ben Goodmanson, applicant for the both CPA-08-22 and CPA-09-22 said his business is continuing the current trend of changing the zone from Light Industrial to Low Density Residential. Aspen Park, a PUD which was developed when residential was allowed within the Light Industrial, is directly adjacent to his property. We are continuing this trend for CPA-09-22. This area is a hillside and is zoned as Light Industrial. Hillside are very difficult to market as Light Industrial this is why the property owners asked to have it rezoned. The property does have residential zone directly to the south, it was the area formerly known as the camel farm. We understand the city's property concern with the emergency floodway for the reservoir, but we do have a lot of right-of-way that can be utilized. If we enter into an agreement with the city, we can also access through Big Spring.

There were no further comments during this hearing

Deacon Band moved to continue the public hearing on the proposed 2022 comprehensive plan amendments to November 17, 2022, leaving the public comment open. The Motion was seconded by Pete Rayner. The Chair asked for discussion on the motion, Clyde Haase brought up a question regarding answers to comments and questions provided prior to the meeting on the 17th. Scott Chesney stated that staff will provide answers to the degree that answers can be provided successfully, yes. If there are particularly challenging questions, they will be provided too. The motion to continue was passed by unanimous vote.

Action on Minutes of September 29, 2022: The Chair entertained a motion to adopt the minutes, Clyde Haase put forth a motion to adopt the minutes, the motion was seconded by Deacon Band, and the minutes were adopted by vote.

Staff Report: The agenda for the next meeting will be similar to the current hearing but staff will ask for a recommendation to approve the CFP to the Board of County Commissioners. The public comment period will be left open, and we will respond and consider each comment as they come in. The Planning Commission will only have one meeting in November. The Board will be presented with your recommendation and action by December 13th.

Set Next Agenda: The next meeting date is November 17, 2022.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Deacon Band moved to adjourn; it was seconded by Dwane Hamp. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Chair



Stephen Pohl,

Date

11.17.2022

Susan Luna, Clerk to the Planning Commission