

Southgate Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee Comments on the Garden District Development

November 14, 2018

Overview

The Southgate Neighborhood Council (SNC) Land Use Committee (LUC) reviewed the two alternative site plans presented by the developer based on our Southgate Neighborhood Connectivity Plan, the City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Spokane Municipal Code, and in addition wish to acknowledge the comments and concerns of neighbors who live near the development.

The consensus of the Southgate Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee remains the same as it was back in April when the site plans were first released. That is to favor the original site plan for the Garden District with full multi-modal connectivity from Crestline Street to Southeast Boulevard via 31st Avenue in accordance with the City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan, Lincoln Heights District Center Master Plan, Southgate Neighborhood Connectivity Plan, Spokane Bike Master Plan, and Spokane Municipal Code. We have included relevant and supportive policies from the Comprehensive Plan in Appendix A. Supporting ordinances from the Spokane Municipal Code are listed in Appendix B. The alternative plan without the Crestline connection is inconsistent with these guiding documents, policies, and codes.

The Committee still believes traffic calming should be maximized to the greatest extent possible on this new road to mitigate automobile traffic impacts south of the development regardless of which site plan is ultimately approved. We understand the developer is seeking an emergency Comp Plan amendment to change Crestline's designation through the subject property, but regardless of the road's final designation, we believe it should be connected to Southeast Boulevard in support of the plans, policies, and codes referenced above and explained in more detail below.

Comments from Nearby Neighbors living in Lincoln Heights and Southgate

Many comments received by the Southgate Neighborhood Council prior to the initial Design Review of this PUD expressed concern about potential traffic and pedestrian impacts of this new development, especially regarding Crestline Street south of the development. The City Comp Plan currently includes Crestline as a Major Collector Arterial through the property connecting to Southeast Boulevard. This designation, while criticized by some residents and the developer, is an extension of Crestline's designation as Collector Arterial from 37th south to the City limits in the Spokane. Crestline has had this designation in the Municipal Code since at least 2008 (SMC 12.08.040). This designation is also reflected in the Southgate Neighborhood Connectivity Plan adopted by the City in 2012 that notes the street is a Collector Arterial to the Southgate Neighborhood border at 37th Avenue and shows the neighborhood's desire to enhance it with bike/pedestrian facilities heading north into Lincoln Heights.

Some neighbors support the connection of Crestline through the development, recognizing the earlier Garden District concepts' support for the plans, policies, and codes mentioned above and the development's potential to increase residential density and add much-needed housing to the city. All of the City and neighborhood planning documents discussed here support increasing full multi-modal connectivity through and between developments in Spokane with the additional caveat that these connections should foster a sense of safety for all users.

Support for connectivity can be found in the City Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code from the City's Complete Street Ordinance (2011) to the Comprehensive Plan (updated in 2017). City-adopted code and policies require, or at minimum strongly encourage, development of traffic-calmed, pedestrian-friendly connections that support all modes of transportation. The Spokane Comprehensive Plan discusses good connectivity in its Land Use (Chapter 3) and Transportation

(Chapter 4) portions, including multiple references to developing a grid of connected streets to foster good urban design. No less than 12 goals and 12 key actions support the concept of connectivity with maximized traffic calming. These goals and key actions are listed in Appendix A, below.

The Connection in History

The idea of Crestline as a through-street has been part of every land plat of this area since at least 1970 (and probably before that). The original Estate Development Plat created by Dr. Sonneland and his partners showed the completion of Crestline between 29th and 34th Avenues. The binding site plan that created the Quail Run office park in the mid-90s maintained the connection along what was deemed the “future Stone Street” alignment. The creation of Southeast Boulevard in the late-90s created connected right-of-way from Crestline to Southeast Boulevard via 31st Avenue. The City went so far as to install the intersection outlet of 31st along Southeast Boulevard when that road was completed. In fact, the Garden District PUD is the first development plan for this site that *doesn't* include the connection of Crestline to other parts of the City road grid.

The Spokane Bicycle Master Plan

The Crestline connection also appears in the Spokane Bicycle Master Plan. The Proposed Bike Network Map (Map TR 5 in the Spokane Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4) shows this connection as a Neighborhood Greenway. The Spokane Bike Master Plan and Spokane City Comprehensive Plan (pg. 4-39) defines Neighborhood Greenways as, “low-volume and low-speed streets that have been optimized for bicycle and pedestrian travel. Neighborhood Greenway treatments can be applied at several different intensities, which should be identified in detail during project design. Wayfinding signs, pavement markings, traffic calming and intersection treatments are potential elements of these facilities. Neighborhood Greenways are designed to attract bicyclists of all ages and abilities, especially those in the ‘Interested but Concerned’ category. The design of the neighborhood greenway is flexible and will be tailored to meet the specific needs of the roadway.” Prior to the 2015 update of the Spokane Bike Master Plan, this Crestline connection was shown as a “shared roadway” in the Bike Master Plan. This indicates that the connection has been considered a potential *vehicular* route since at least the last iteration of the Bike Master Plan.

Crestline Street as an Arterial

Many comments received by the SNC discussed concern about making Crestline Street south of the project an “arterial.” Crestline south of 37th is already designated an “Urban Major Collector” based on the Comprehensive Plan Proposed Arterial Map (TR12). This is the 3rd highest designation of arterial and the same designation as 44th Avenue between Regal and Freya Streets. Regardless of its official designation (arterial, collector, local access), the intent of the plats and plans is clear, that Crestline north of 34th Avenue has always been intended to be connected to the surrounding streets. The Lincoln Heights District Center Master Plan adopted in 2017 also calls for the Crestline connection to be made. The connection is included on page 4.9 where it says, “This plan [the Lincoln Heights Master Plan] - concurrent with those of the developer - envisions an east-west connection to Southeast Boulevard, introducing another entry point into the District Center near the current STA Park & Ride.”

Regarding bike and pedestrian enhancements, the design of this road should be guided by the Comprehensive Plan as well. Greenstone originally stated a desire to create the connection with marked bike lanes, a design feature that is a step up from a Neighborhood Greenway. The Comp Plan states that “The actual design of the street is determined by two primary factors: context and street type. In terms of context, for example, sidewalks must be wider on downtown streets to accommodate higher pedestrian volumes. In terms of street type, bicycle facilities on arterial roads in any context require physical separation of vehicles for safety and comfort.”

This is a more critical point than the designation of the road. For context (and possible character comparison) Crestline currently has the same arterial designation as 44th Avenue between Regal Street and Freya Street in Southgate. That road is a 2-lane, 25mph road with a curvilinear design and separated bike/pedestrian facilities along both sides of the road. While designated an arterial, it's design is more of a traffic-calmed local access street providing a much needed east-west connection in the Southgate Neighborhood. An option may be to consider connecting Crestline to Southeast Boulevard as originally proposed, but end the arterial designation at 37th Avenue designating Crestline north of that point to Southeast Boulevard as a residential street. This is done in other neighborhoods around Spokane providing full multi-modal connectivity, but providing street calming by diverting traffic to designated arterials.

Regardless of Crestline's designation, the street's design inside the development as well as south of the development between 32nd Avenue and 37th Avenue needs to be updated in a similar fashion using the City's policy of prioritizing pedestrians first, transit users second, and autos third. Neighbors to the south of the project have valid concerns about traffic impacts and lack of multi-modal bike/pedestrian facilities along Crestline whether Crestline connects to Southeast Boulevard or not. The developer has an opportunity and the City a responsibility to provide those missing links as mitigation for the impact created by the development of the Garden District. This addition of missing multi-modal infrastructure will provide better connectivity for residents of the new development, better safety for the existing residents (especially school children who walk to Hamblen Elementary), and fulfills an envisioned bike/pedestrian link from the Southgate Neighborhood Connectivity Plan between Southgate and the Lincoln Heights shopping and transit amenities across Southeast Boulevard.

Connectivity in the Spokane Municipal Code

The Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) also calls for maximized connectivity and accommodation of all modes of transportation. SMC 17H.010.030 deals with Street Design Standards and there are multiple parts of that section that support creating multi-modal, fully connected street systems (See Appendix B of this document for a listing of those sections). In summary, they say that developments are required to connect to the adjacent street systems (SMC 17H.010.030(F)) and create a grid-stye street system instead of disconnected, isolated areas of development (SMC 17H.010.030(M)).

Additionally, the SMC forbids the creation of new dead end streets and cul-de-sacs, which the non-connecting PUD site plan would do. SMC 17H.010.080(A) states, "New, permanent dead-end or cul-de-sac streets require the approval of the director of engineering services. Dead-end and cul-de-sac streets are *only allowed* when street connectivity is unachievable, such as property that is isolated by topography or the configuration of existing lots and streets." The cul-de-sac at 32nd Avenue will likely be grandfathered in (hopefully with some new bike/pedestrian connectivity on the east end) due to the fact it dead ends into adjacent private property. However, the current right-of-way designations on the property provide a connection to Southeast Boulevard and as such, a connection should be made per the requirements in SMC 17H.010.030 and 17H.010.080.

Finally, the City's 2011 Complete Street ordinance as implemented under SMC 17H.020.040 supports the development of a full, multi-modal connection through the Garden District property. It states, "All street projects *shall include* Complete Streets elements as called for in the Master Bike Plan and Pedestrian Plan." That same chapter defines a complete street as one, "that is designed to be safe for drivers; bicyclists; transit vehicles and riders; and pedestrians of all ages and abilities." (SMC. 17H.020.020) As previously noted, the Bike Master Plan includes this connection as a "Neighborhood Greenway" which primarily supports bike and pedestrian traffic and accommodates vehicles as well.

When taken together, the Comprehensive Plan policies and Spokane Municipal Code regulations point to development of a full-multi-modal connection with maximized traffic calming both within the development and to the south towards Hamblen Elementary School to meet the guiding principles of connectivity and safety for all users. Many people have been alarmed by the misconception or

misinformation regarding the character of Crestline as a Collector Arterial. While the Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code call for this connection to be made, it also emphasizes in multiple places that the connection should accommodate vehicles, but primarily support biking and walking.

There is much room for discussion about how this road can be designed to slow traffic and deter cut-through trips from Southeast Boulevard to the south while providing a necessary exit to the north for new residents and business users on the Garden District property. Greenstone's vision for a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development is generally compatible with and enhanced by the City's "complete streets" code sections. However, dead-ending Crestline into 32nd Avenue is not consistent with City code or policy and violates the basic tenets of good urban design. Having a disconnected road system through the property actually perpetuates the suburban development style already prevalent (and much denounced by planners) in many areas of Spokane including Southgate, Eagle Ridge, and Five Mile Prairie.

Conclusion - Mitigation Essential

While we are advocating for the connection of Crestline to the street grid to the north, we are also calling for mitigation of traffic impacts to the adjacent areas. In addition to the mitigations already proposed by Greenstone, the City and developer should consider further traffic calming measures such as speed tables at pedestrian crossings and intersections, roundabouts at intersections to slow traffic, and on-street parking along Crestline and 31st Avenue to further narrow the road and slow vehicular traffic and implement the intent of Crestline's designation in the Bike Master Plan as a Greenway. All of these concepts are supported by the Comp Plan and Municipal Code.

The SNC Land Use Committee also believes the City and developer should add traffic calming features along Crestline to the south between the edge of the development and at least Thurston Avenue. The lack of pedestrian and bike accommodations along this section of Crestline does require attention and would help the development and the City further to achieve Comp Plan and Neighborhood Plan goals by providing Complete Streets, improving safety along routes to school, and improving active transportation modes between residences to the south of the development and the Lincoln Heights District Center.

Southgate looks forward to further discussions with the developer, city staff, and Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council about how to realize the goals and vision of our plans as they relate to this development opportunity.

Appendix A - Spokane Comprehensive Plan Policies Supporting Connectivity and

Appropriate Mitigation of Traffic Impacts

LU 4.4 (pg. 3-26) - Form a well-connected network which provides safe, direct and convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles, through site design for new development and redevelopment.

LU 4.5 (pg. 3-26) - Create a network of streets that is generally laid out in a grid pattern that features more street intersections and shorter block lengths in order to increase street connectivity and access...A grid pattern featuring more street intersections and shorter blocks provides more alternative routes for pedestrian and vehicle travel and tends to slow traffic.

LU 5.1 (pg. 3-26) - Provide adequate impact mitigation to maintain and enhance quality of life.

LU 5.5 (pg. 3-27) - Ensure that infill and redevelopment projects are well-designed and compatible with surrounding uses and building types.

LU 6.4 (pg. 3-29) - Through good planning, the city can ensure that the environments around existing and future school sites are conducive to their needs. The safety needs of school children and the need for school buildings to be appropriately accessible to their service areas should be considered.

The Comprehensive Plan goes on to discuss Transportation in Chapter 4 which includes the following connectivity-related goals:

Introduction, Section 4.1 - Key Themes (pg. 4-5)

- Making Spokane a City of Transportation Choices
- Provide viable transportation choices.
- Continue creating active transportation infrastructure (Bicycle and Pedestrian).
- Health and Safety
- Promote health through transportation choices.
- Leverage investments to enhance public safety and promote positive health outcomes.
- Right size appropriate streets to enhance safety.
- Build active transportation choices back into our daily lives.
- Livable Streets
- Match street design to the adjacent land use.
- Enhance neighborhood livability and mobility.
- Livable streets are:
 - safe and convenient for all users;
 - economically active in centers and along corridors;
 - designed for live, work, play; and
 - multi-purpose and multi-functional.

TR 1 Transportation Network for All Users (pg. 4-19)

Design the transportation system to provide a complete transportation network for all users, maximizing innovation, access, choice, and options throughout the four seasons.

Key Action A: Make transportation decisions based upon the adopted policies, plans, design standards and guidelines

TR 2 Transportation Supporting Land Use (pg. 4-20)

Maintain an interconnected system of facilities that allows travel on multiple routes by multiple modes, balancing access, mobility and place-making functions with consideration and alignment with the existing and planned land use context of each corridor and major street segment.

Key Action A: Establish and maintain Street Design Standards and Guidelines reflecting best practices to implement designs that effectively support multi-modal transportation while supporting local context and existing and planned land uses.

TR 6 (pg. 4-23 & 4-24)

Improve multi-modal transportation options to and within designated district centers, neighborhood centers, employment centers, corridors, and downtown as the regional center.

Key Action B: Maintain street design guidelines reflecting best practices to implement designs that effectively manage traffic flow within designated Centers and Corridors while ensuring designs correspond to and support local context.

Key Action C: Designate and develop neighborhood greenways and low vehicle volume bicycle routes that parallel major arterials through designated Centers and Corridors.

TR 7 - Neighborhood Access

Require developments to have open, accessible, internal multi-modal transportation connections to adjacent properties and streets on all sides.

Key Actions A - Increase connectivity by providing walking and biking pathways where roadways do not connect.

Key Action B - Ensure future connectivity to adjacent future development on vacant and/or underutilized parcels.

TR 13 - Infrastructure Design

Maintain and follow design guidelines...reflecting best practices that provide for a connected infrastructure... (pg. 4-26)

Key Action A - Require that Urban Context streets be designed to provide a pleasant environment for walking and other uses of public space, including such elements as shade trees; plantings; well-designed benches, trash receptacles, news racks, and other furniture; pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures as appropriate; wayfinding signage; integrated transit shelters; public art; and other amenities.

Key Action B - Maintain street design guidelines reflecting best practices to implement designs that effectively manage traffic flow, reduce the need for street expansions, and make roadways safe for all road users, while ensuring designs correspond with local context.

Key Action C - Collaborate with key agencies to plan the locations of arterials, ensuring compatibility with and satisfy the needs of existing and future land uses.

TR 15 - Activation (pg. 4-27)

Build great streetscapes and activate public spaces in the right-of-way to promote economic vitality and a sense of place, with a focus on the designated Centers and Corridors identified in the Land Use chapter.

Key Action A: Maintain ability for businesses to utilize excess sidewalk capacity for seating as long as an accessible walk route is provided and the sidewalk's use and design in in conformance with the neighborhood plan. (pg. 4-27)

TR 20 - Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordination (pg. 4-30)

Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian planning to ensure that projects are developed to meet the safety and access needs of all users.

Key Action D - Maintain Street Design Standards and Guidelines to ensure that public and private developments meet a variety of transportation needs. Refer to national references (such as NACTO) for facilities design when updating the standards and guidelines.

Key Action F - Consistently update and implement the pedestrian and bicycle master plans for active transportation users.

TR 23 - Effective and Enhanced Public Outreach (pg. 4-32)

Assess the effect of potential transportation projects on gathering places or destinations such as schools, community centers, businesses, neighborhoods, and other community bodies by consulting with stakeholders and leaders that represent them. These effects are to be mitigated as possible in collaboration with stakeholders.

Appendix B - Spokane Municipal Code Regulations Supporting Connectivity

SMC 17H.010.030 - Street Design Standards

This chapter of the SMC has many parts that support the concept of multi-modal connectivity in the development of Spokane's street system. Statements include:

- "Street design is governed by the comprehensive plan and street design standards." (SMC 17H.010.030(A))
- "Streets shall be designed in light of topography and existing and planned street patterns." (SMC 17H.010.030(B))
- "The street system shall facilitate all forms of transportation including pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles and emergency services." (SMC 17H.010.030(C))
- "The layout of new streets shall provide for the continuation of existing streets in adjoining subdivisions. If a public street or right-of-way terminates at a plat boundary, provisions shall be made for the extension of the public street to the adjacent property or to another public street in a manner consistent with public mobility and utility infrastructure needs." (SMC 17H.010.030(F))
- "Street layout shall provide for future extension of streets into areas which are presently not subdivided." (SMC 17H.010.030(G))
- "Bordering arterial routes should be considered and design continuity provided." (SMC 17H.010.030(H))
- "Subdivisions comprised of more than thirty lots shall include two access points acceptable to the city fire department and the director of engineering services." (SMC 17H.010.030(I))
- "A grid pattern featuring more street intersections and shorter block lengths should be implemented wherever possible." (SMC 17H.010.030(M))
- "Permanent dead-end or cul-de-sac streets may be allowed when the property is isolated by topography or the configuration of existing platted lots and streets. Dead-ends and cul-de-sacs will be reviewed in every case for connectivity" (SMC 17H.010.030(P))