

South University District

SUBAREA PLAN

February 2020

Approved by Resolution 2020-0060



Acknowledgments

The South University District Subarea Plan would not be possible the enthusiasm and support of district stakeholders, including the businesses, neighbors, and institutional partners in and around the subarea. A special thanks to everyone who contributed their time and effort to the development of this plan.

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Executive Summary

Since 2003, the City of Spokane and South University District stakeholders and partners have undertaken at least eight planning efforts to:

- Craft and reaffirm a vision for the district.
- Identify land use goals and strategies.
- Identify circulation, streetscape, and placemaking improvements.
- Examine environmental barriers and remediation strategies.
- Analyze real estate market conditions, trends, and opportunities.
- Examine strategies to support and retain existing businesses and enhance new investment.

Thanks in part to these and other community efforts, more than \$100 million in private development and nearly \$100 million in public infrastructure improvements are now underway in the district. While these investments have been in the works for many years, coinciding implementation is transforming the district in a very short period of time.

For this reason, the City sought this effort to reaffirm and adopt a vision, goals, and policies for the district along with updated zoning and design regulations to implement the plan. Figure 1 below illustrates the district’s proposed land use and community design framework. The E Sprague Avenue and S Sherman Street corridors form the pedestrian-oriented backbone of the district. The activity node between the University District Gateway Bridge landing and the Sprague and Sherman intersection forms the heart of the district. These areas will see the greatest transformation in the coming years.

The areas southwest and to a greater extent, southeast of these corridors are intended to evolve on a slower pace that allows existing businesses to continue to prosper.

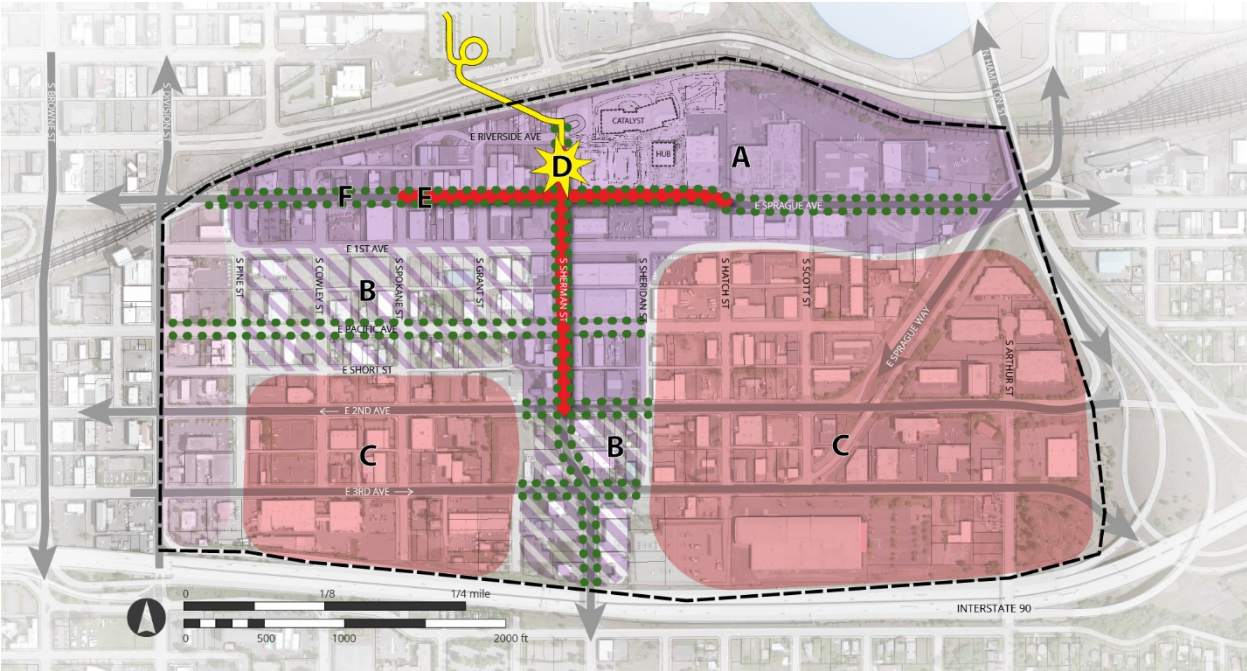


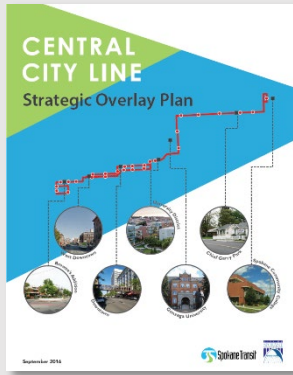
Figure 1. South University District Subarea Concept Map

<p>A. Pedestrian-oriented mix of uses (DTU rezone)</p>  <p><i>New mixed-use, institutional & multifamily buildings integrated with existing buildings.</i></p>	<p>D. Bridge Landing</p>  <p><i>The heart of the district.</i></p>
<p>B. Possible DTU extension areas</p>  <p><i>While a wide mix of uses would continue to be allowed, housing is likely to be the most dominant new use.</i></p>	<p>E. Storefronts</p>  <p><i>Active uses lining the sidewalks.</i></p>
<p>C. Retail Commercial/industrial emphasis</p>  <p><i>Continue to accommodate the wide range of existing uses, while allowing these areas to evolve at its own (and more likely slower) pace.</i></p>	<p>F. Pedestrian Priority</p>  <p><i>Corridors and block frontages where pedestrian activity and safety is prioritized.</i></p>

Figure 1. South University District Subarea Concept Map legend

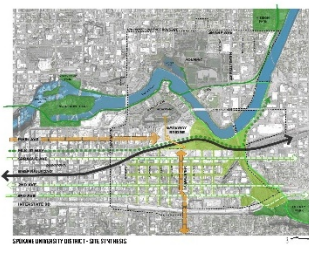
Summary of Past Planning

Year	Title	Key Contribution
2004	University District Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a vision for a unified University District Called for a pedestrian bridge over BNSF tracks Creates work plan for coalition of University District stakeholders Updated in 2019
2012	South U District-Sprague Corridor Investment Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First post-recession study to revisit U District vision. Promoted mix of uses in the subarea including housing, retail, jobs and institutional uses First plan to develop the “T-concept” focusing on Sprague and Sherman Developed a streetscape redesign for E Sprague Avenue with landscaping, traffic calming, and transit flow improvements Proposed east/west differentiation between industry and residential focus
2014	University District Integrated Planning Study: Market Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market study that identified the most viable development typologies in the subarea Explored barriers to redevelopment – potential contamination and exposed bedrock Adaptive reuse may be more feasible than new construction Multifamily development becomes more viable with Gateway Bridge construction
2015	University District Redevelopment Implementation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies findings of Market Assessment to create a redevelopment strategy Lays out strategy for new development at bridge landing using MOU to unite major stakeholders Recommends City help property owners pursue historical insurance liability claims for environmental contamination Provides manual for owners and investors to redevelop individual properties



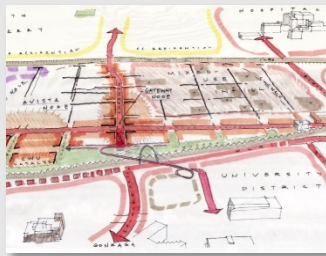
2016 Central City Line: Strategic Overlay Plan

- Proposes high capacity transit bus corridor through central Spokane, serving the north University District
- Recommendations for leveraging new transit service for economic development and housing production



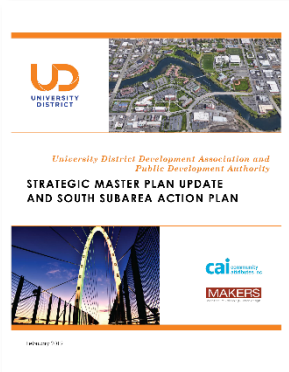
2016 Visioning Workshop

- Explores examples of streetscape and urban design improvements that could contribute to a more lively, attractive, walkable urban neighborhood



2018 Catalyst Engagement

- Further refines “T” concept, envisioning at “gateway node” at the intersection of Sprague and Sherman.
- “Urban Village” scenario preferred with mixed-use infill in southwest subarea
- Emphasizes southern connections to hospitals



2019 University District Strategic Master Plan Update

- Updates the original university district-wide strategic plan for the district and reaffirmed the vision
- Includes action plan for subarea; recommends updating zoning and development standards, improving livability, improving bike/ped transportation, preserving existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and remediating brownfield contamination.
- Builds on “Urban Village” scenario to envision mixed-use and industrial areas to west and east respectively.
- Provides strategic guidance to the University District Public Development Authority

District Context and Trends

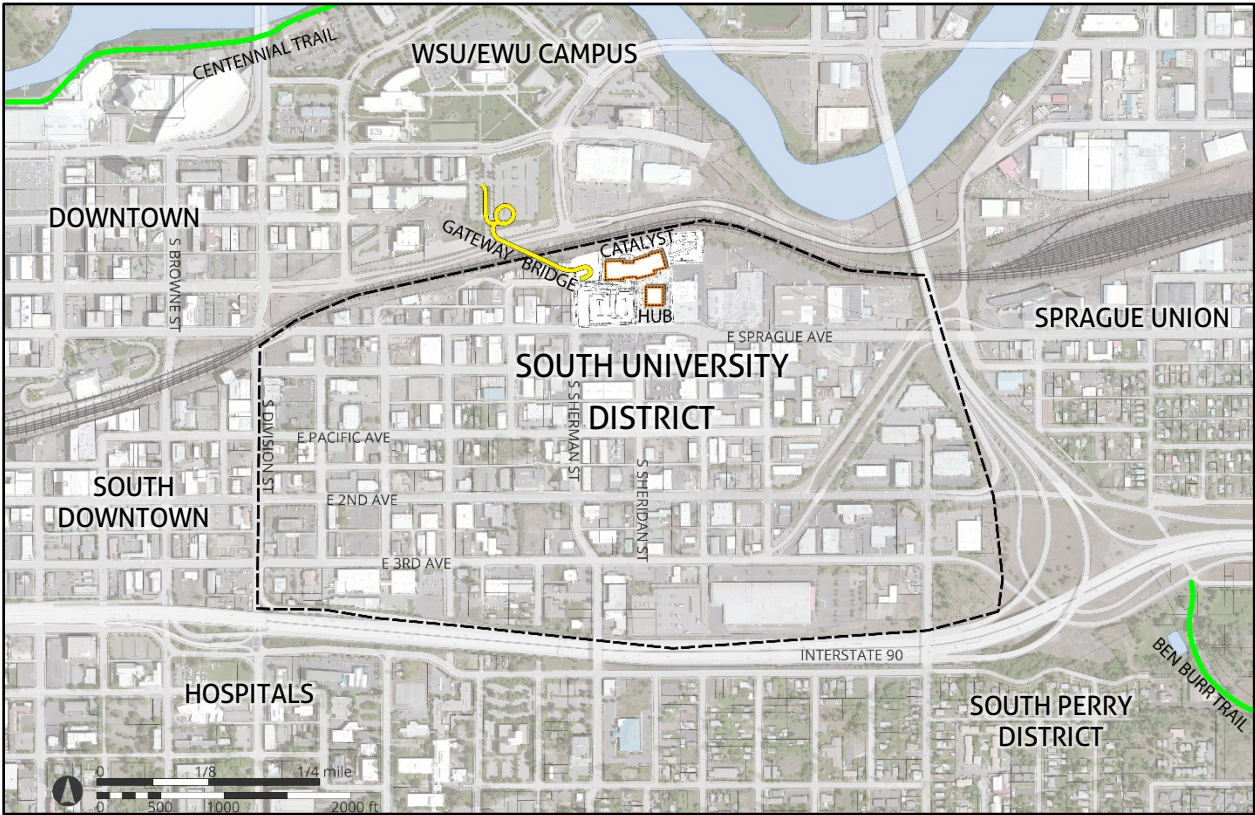


Figure 2. The South University District in context

Old District, New Opportunities

The South University District subarea is experiencing new growth and investment, and emerging as a true “gateway,” with close access to many of the fastest-changing parts of Spokane:

- East of the Downtown core
- South of the University District campuses of Gonzaga, WSU, and EWU
- North of the concentration of medical services and hospitals on the lower South Hill
- West of the Sprague Union district

Public and private projects to revitalize the University District have been underway for more than a decade and the recent opening of the **University District Gateway Bridge** marks the beginning of a new chapter for the district, particularly the area south of the bridge landing. The upcoming **Catalyst Building and Scott Morris Center for Innovation (formerly known as the Hub Building)**, with 150,000 square feet of research and classroom space, the investment by the City and University District Public Development Authority in Sprague Phase II streetscape improvements, additional service by Spokane Transit Authority, additional planned connections to regional trail systems such as the **Ben Burr Trail** and the **Centennial Trail**, and the potential for several more public and private development projects in the vicinity of the south bridge landing are making the South University District a destination in its own right.

Growth of the student enrollment and research activities at adjacent university campuses and increased demand for centrally located places to live, work, and play are likely to drive additional growth over the longer term.

Existing Uses and Development Patterns

The South University District today supports a diverse mix of uses, with retail, office, industrial, and residential uses spread throughout the area. Development in the district is characterized by low building heights, a mix of building ages – some dating back to the early 1900’s – and a range of parcels sizes with many small parcels remaining from when the area was originally platted in the 1880’s. Generally, the use mix is more fine-grained in the western half, with small vacant lots, historic buildings, and a few remaining houses; in the eastern half is it more coarse-grained with larger industrial and office uses and a younger building stock.



Figure 3. Existing land uses in the South University District. Source: University District Integrated Planning Study – Market Assessment

Two arterial streets have historically played an important role in the structure of the subarea:

- **E Sprague Avenue** is a key east/west arterial and has served as an important travel and retail corridor since early in Spokane’s history. Established retail and service businesses along Sprague play an important role in the district community and generate activity along the street.
- **S Sherman Street** is the most important north/south connection in the district and provides one of the only bridges from the north University District over Interstate 90. Retail businesses are present along Sherman but at a lower intensity than along Sprague. Sherman’s lower traffic volumes and connection to neighborhoods south of I-90, and current future importance as a cross-city bikeway make it potentially attractive as a pedestrian and bicycle-oriented corridor.

Existing Zoning and Development Standards

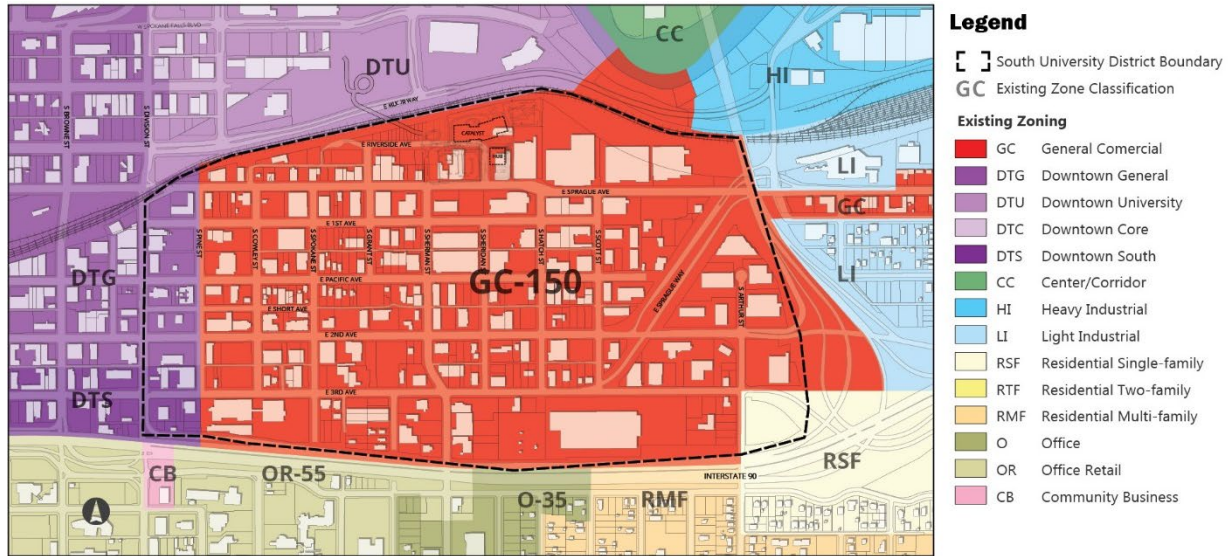


Figure 4. Current Zoning

The South University District subarea is currently zoned General Commercial with a maximum building height of 150 feet (GC-150). This is a flexible automobile-oriented zone designed to support a broad mix of commercial uses. Prior to 2005, the area was zoned light industrial. The westernmost row of blocks in the subarea is divided between Downtown General (DTG) and Downtown South (DTS) zones. The extreme southeast corner of the district is a remnant of the original site of Liberty Park and is zoned Residential Single Family (RSF).

Table 1 below summarizes key zoning parameters for the GC-150 zone.

Table 1. General Commercial Development Standards

Building Height	150 feet	
Floor area ratio (FAR)²	2.5 - No FAR limit for residential buildings	
	Figure 5. Example massing with different floor area ratios (FAR)	
Parking	Residential: 1 per unit (~1,000 sf) Office: 1 per 500 sf Retail/Service: 1 per 330 sf	Restaurant: 1 per 250 sf Industrial: 1 per 1000 sf
Permitted Uses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail sales & service Office Residential Commercial Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive-through uses Vehicle service and repair Institutional Outdoor sales and storage

² Does not include structured parking, public amenities, vertical circulation, and open air building space area

Subarea Plan Process

City of Spokane planning staff, with the assistance of MAKERS architecture and urban design, LLP, conducted the following community engagement activities to help craft this plan:

- More than 1,000 mailers sent to businesses and residences in and around the district
- A project page on the City website with up-to-date information about events and project progress
- In-person presentations to East Spokane Business Association (ESBA), East Central Neighborhood Council, and Community Assembly Land Use Committee, Plan Commission, Downtown Spokane Partnership, Design Review Board, University District Development Association Board, and City Council
- Video on City Cable Channel 5 (also available on City website).
- Table at University District Gateway Bridge grand opening celebrations
- Online Survey
- Community Design Workshop held July 30-31, 2019
- Open House held in October 3, 2019

Online survey

An online survey was conducted to collect input from the community in a low-barrier format. The survey was conducted July 22-August 11, 2019, to gauge public sentiment about the present and future of the South University District and potential development standards that should be applied in the district. The survey was completed by 308 individuals, of which 47% visit the district at least weekly. More than 60% of participants said they often travel through the district without stopping. When people do travel to the district, about a third go for both for food and drink and shopping and services. In addition 19% of respondents visit the district because they work there, 6% attend school there, and 3% of respondents live in the district.

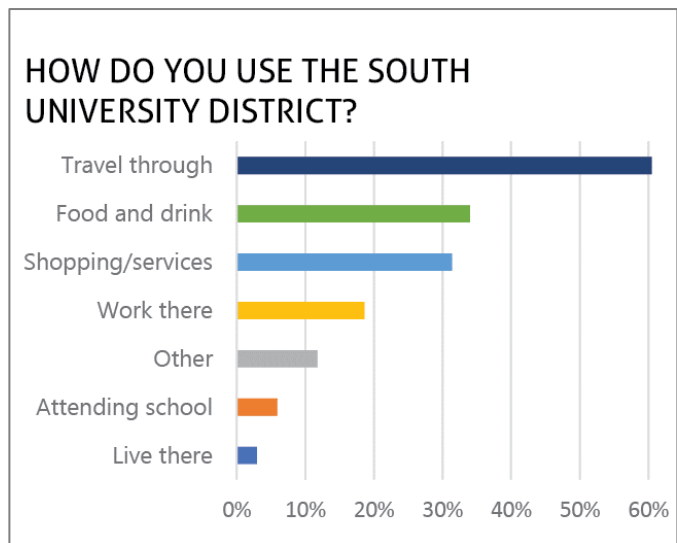


Figure 6. Reasons survey respondents visit the South University District

Survey Preferences

STRONGEST PREFERENCES

- S Sherman Street should become a 'main street' for the area.
- Buildings should not be replaced with parking lots.
- Side streets should be oriented towards bikes, pedestrians and local access.
- The district should evolve towards a mix of employment, residential, and retail uses.

OTHER PREFERENCES

- Parking should be consolidated in central locations if possible.
- Drive-through facilities should not be allowed.
- Design review should be required.

Open-Ended Comments

Survey participants were also asked: "do you have other ideas or concerns about the future of the South University District area?"

Respondents shared a range of views. In general, most responses shared a positive vision for future change in the district. The most common topics shared were the need for:

- more pedestrian and cyclist friendly infrastructure and connections to other districts,
- more housing,
- retail amenities like restaurants, and
- a park, more trees or open space.

The increasing presence of homelessness and perceptions of declining safety were the most commonly shared concerns.



Figure 7. Frequency with which survey respondents visit the South University District

"I believe a mix of educational/commercial spaces with equitable housing and amenities would be ideal."

"Mixed use with housing options for students attending school at the University District. More restaurant options that make the neighborhood unique and livable."

"There are a lot more homeless people in this area as of late. I've owned my property in the district for over 30 years and I've never seen it this bad."

"Keep multimodal facilities and services in mind when planning for the area. Walking, bicycling, and transit access is important for a vibrant area."

Figure 8. Representative open-ended survey comments

Community Design Workshop

A Community Design Workshop was held to share information with community members about the subarea planning effort and involve them in shaping plan outcomes. The event was held at PRIDE Prep Public Charter School on July 30th, 2019 with approximately 20 non-staff participants.

Initial Draft Vision Statement

"The South University District is a dynamic neighborhood, where commerce, innovation, and industry interact. The district's historic fabric provides a walkable framework that supports the creation of new places for people to live, work and study, while the retail and freight corridor along E Sprague Avenue continues to play a regional role in providing and conveying goods and services to the larger city"

Vision Statement Input

- Incorporate residential/mixed use component of neighborhood in the opening sentence.
- Emphasize diversity.
- Add importance of north-south connections between to hospitals and universities and continuity of service between them.
- Keep the language simple.
- Emphasize the district's unique identity.
- Emphasize learning rather than studying.

Workshop small group summaries

ZONING

- Most groups were in favor of exploring the application of Downtown General zoning to parts of the South University District.
- The southeastern portion of the area should remain General Commercial.

BLOCK FRONTAGES

- Broad support for pedestrian-friendly building frontages on Sherman and Sprague and prohibition of ground-floor residential on some block fronts.
- Support for pedestrian-friendly design on some side streets, especially near the intersection of Sprague and Sherman.

PARKING

- No broad consensus about parking standards, but some support for extending the downtown "no minimum parking" overlay to the district.

BUILDING DESIGN

- Design guidelines emphasizing a particular design character were not widely supported.



Figure 9. Community Design Workshop participants

Focus Group Interviews

Group interviews were held with area stakeholders with distinct interests in the South University District. These focus groups provided rich insight into dynamics at play in the area's redevelopment, contributed to crafting the vision statement, and flagged potentially problematic policy proposals. Takeaways from each interview are summarized below.

Property Owners and Developers

- Some property owners bought into the area in anticipation of pedestrian bridge opening.
- Bedrock presents construction challenges to development, notably for parking and utilities.
- Owners are generally favorable towards prohibiting ground-floor residential on key blocks of E Sprague Avenue and S Sherman Street.

Business Owners

- Free parking is part of the area's competitive advantage.
- Overabundance of low-barrier subsidized housing may discourage market-rate developers.
- Zoning non-conformance affects the resale value of property with light industrial buildings because it limits the future ability to change use.
- Few objections to pedestrian friendly street front design on Sprague.
- Skepticism about likelihood of change in this part of the city.

Education and Medical Institutions

- This district is important because of the connectivity it provides between hospitals and medical offices to the south and universities to the north.
- Life sciences industries and continuing education are potential partnerships between health care providers and universities here.
- Universities are likely to expand their presence in the district, but storefront standards may be a disincentive.
- Students parking in the district may become an issue with the recent opening of the Gateway Bridge.

Non-profit Organization and Neighborhood Groups

- More housing is needed.
- District does not have a strong identity today. It could with more residents and retail amenities.
- This project shouldn't reduce allowed building heights from current standard.

Community Open House

A community open house was held on October 2nd, 2019 to share preliminary plan concepts and recommendations. About 25 members of the public attended including local businesses, neighbors, and representatives from Avista, the U District PDA, and WSU. City staff, project consultants, and members of the public had fruitful discussions about subarea plan progress and the future of the subarea, the outcomes of which are reflected in this plan's recommendations.

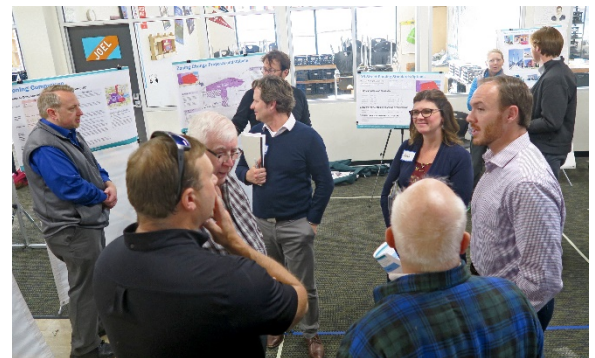


Figure 10. Community Open House Participants

Planning Framework

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement below was developed through conversations with community stakeholders, workshop participants, and city staff. It builds on vision statements expressed in past planning efforts while highlighting the issues that were most important in this planning process.

The South University District is a dynamic crossroads for innovation, commerce, and industry amidst a diverse residential neighborhood. The district's unique historic fabric supports the creation of new places live, learn, work and shop on streets that are walkable and safe. Sprague Avenue continues to play a regional role in providing goods and services to the larger city, while Sherman Street and the University District Gateway Bridge connect to educational and medical institutions north and south.

Subarea Goals & Policies

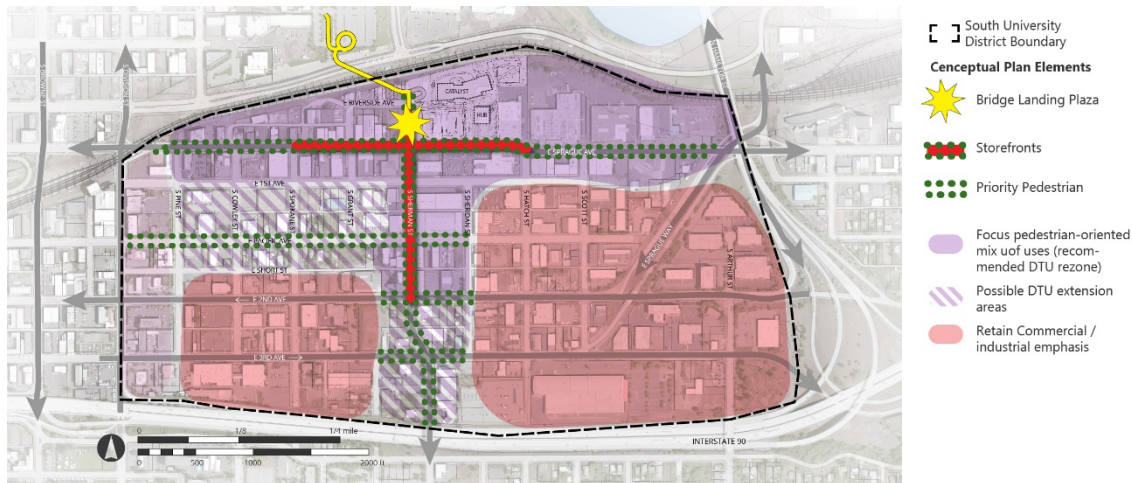


Figure 11. Concept Plan map

Land Use Goals

LU-1 Private Investment

Promote increased private investment in the district, especially for housing and employment-related development.

LU-2 New Housing

Promote the integration of new housing developments including a mixtures of housing types and prices.

LU-3 Pedestrian Friendly Development

Prioritize pedestrian-oriented development along E Sprague Avenue, S Sherman Street, and near the University District Gateway Bridge landing.

Policies implementing LU-1-3:

- Adjust zoning to emphasize pedestrian-oriented mix of uses along E Sprague Avenue, S Sherman Street other areas within close proximity to the University District Gateway Bridge landing.
- Continue pro-active engagement with district stakeholders, including property owners, universities, hospitals, light industrial businesses, and housing developers to facilitate desired development.
- Work with the University District Public Development Authority (PDA) to explore opportunities for public/private partnerships facilitating desired pedestrian-oriented and bicycle-friendly developments in strategic locations.
- Work with property owners to locate and identify resources for mitigating environmental contamination.
- Reduce minimum parking requirements for blocks along E Sprague Avenue, S Sherman Street, and other areas within close proximity to the University District Gateway Bridge landing.

LU-4 Support Existing Businesses

Support the continued viability of existing businesses in the district.

Implementing Policies:

- Configure zoning and design provision changes to balance land use objectives and minimize the creation of non-conforming uses and other negative impacts to existing businesses.
- Continue pro-active engagement with property owners and existing businesses to understand their unique needs and to help mitigate impacts to their businesses.
- Consider the needs of employees and customers of existing business in establishing a management program for on-street parking in the district.

Community Design Goals

CD-1 Sense of Place

Foster a distinct sense of place in the district that emphasizes innovative design and creativity.

CD-2 Enhanced Neighborhood Context

Enhance the district's safety, visual character, and neighborhood amenities to support and encourage residential development.

Policies implementing CD-1 & 2:

- Improve streetscapes within the district to enhance the environment for walking and bicycling while maintaining functionality for existing businesses.
- Promote the creation of new neighborhood amenities that cater to residents.
- Market the district as a place that prioritizes innovative design and creativity.
- Continue pro-active engagement with the PDA, property owners, and existing businesses to promote innovative design within the district.
- Develop programs and work with the PDA to ensure that the open space amenity at The University District Gateway Bridge plaza is well-activated and maintained.
- Identify additional opportunities for neighborhood greenspace and support community-led efforts to secure land for a park.
- Increase the presence of street trees to improve livability, reduce heat island, and reduce stormwater runoff.

CD-3 Walkable and Bikeable Streets

Focus pedestrian-oriented streetscapes and development frontages along E Sprague Avenue and S Sherman Street, particularly on the blocks closest to the University District Gateway Bridge. Focus bike-friendly features on S Sherman Street.

Implementing Policies:

- Enhance E Pacific Avenue west of S Sherman Street as a low-traffic, pedestrian and bicycle-oriented neighborhood street, with cutting-edge stormwater biofiltration infrastructure design where appropriate.
- Apply pedestrian-oriented block frontages standards in focus areas.
- Use pedestrian-oriented streetscape designs, as well as bicycle-friendly features on streets designated for this use, when making street improvements in focus areas.
- Coordinate with adjacent property owners and other stakeholders on strategic placement of street furniture within focus areas.
- Reduce the relative presence of surface parking in focus areas.

CD-4 Historic Fabric

Reinforce the district's historic legacy as an eclectic industrial mixed-use district.

Implementing Policies:

- Encourage innovative site and building design that honors/draws from the district's industrial legacy.
- Avoid design standards that emphasize a single architectural style.
- Designate areas in the district zoned DTU as "Perimeter Area" on the Downtown Design Review threshold map, providing a level of design review consistent with other areas zoned DTU or located outside of downtown core or gateway areas.
- Structure zoning and development standards to allow flexibility for continued use and adaptive reuse of nonconforming structures.
- Identify resources to assist property owners for renovation and improvements to historic buildings.
- Evaluate the extension of the Surface Parking Limited Area to prohibit the development of new standalone commercial surface parking lots as a primary use in areas zoned DTU or the entire South University District subarea.

Connectivity Goals

CT-1 District Connections

Strengthen connections from the South University District to Downtown, nearby universities, and South Hill medical uses.

Implementing Policies:

- Enhance bicycle access through the district and connections to downtown, the university campuses, the Ben Burr and Centennial Trails, and South Hill medical uses.
- Work with Spokane Transit Authority to optimize transit service in the district, recognizing the role of efficient shuttle service in connecting the subarea to lower South Hill medical uses.
- Explore the creation of protected bicycle lanes on Sherman Street extending at least to E 5th Avenue.

Block Frontages and Complete Street Concepts

The map below illustrates the plan's land use and design approach to strategic block frontages that will be critical in implementing the goals of the district over time.

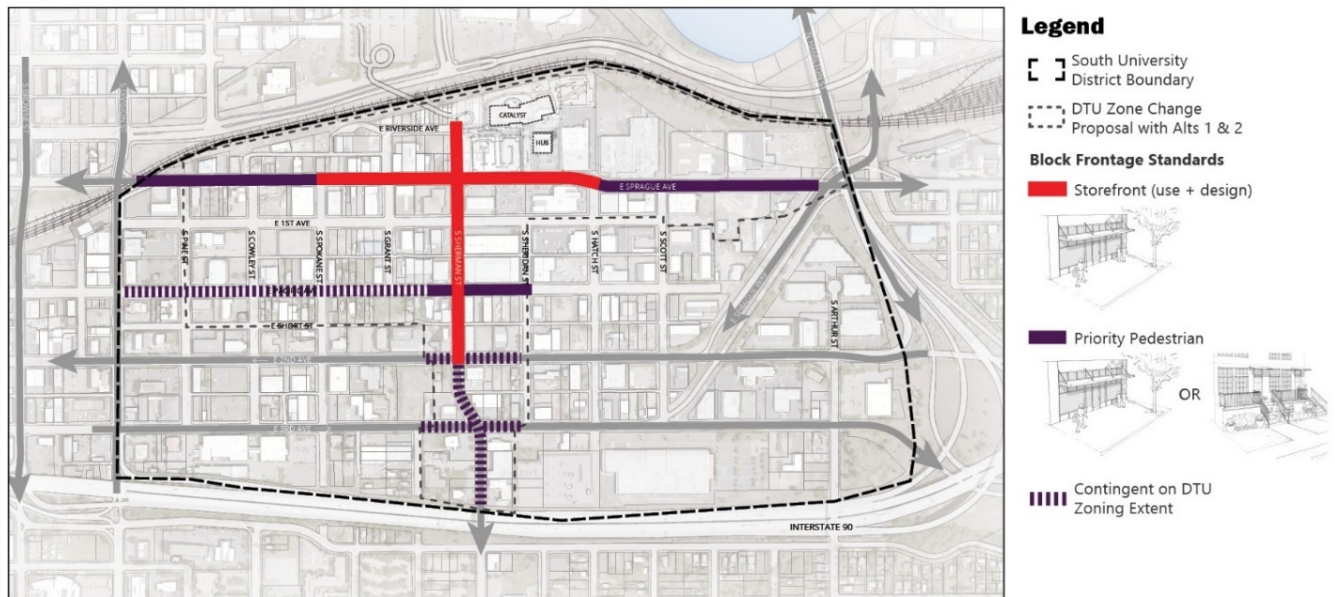


Figure 12. South University District Block Frontage recommendations

Proposal

The proposed block frontage /complete street concept calls for the four northern blocks of S Sherman Street and four blocks of E Sprague Avenue (centered on Sherman) to emphasize storefront use and design. This includes buildings with generous window transparency and entrances facing the sidewalk built up to the sidewalk edge and featuring non-residential uses within those ground-level storefronts.

A second “Priority Pedestrian” block frontage designation is included and applied to the remaining blocks of Sprague and the blocks of E Pacific Avenue within the proposed DTU rezone area. It allows for the flexibility of storefronts and landscaped setbacks and can accommodate any of the zone’s permitted uses (including ground floor residential). These block frontages emphasize pedestrian-friendly building frontages and limit surface/ground level parking to no more than half of block frontages.

Depending on additional areas included as in the DTU rezone, the Priority Pedestrian designation and standards could be applied to the southern two blocks of Sherman and Pacific west of Sherman.

Why?

- The strict storefront approach creates predictability – guaranteeing that when new development occurs, it follows the storefront pattern.
- The concentrated storefront configuration is intended to create a critical mass of ground-level activity necessary to create a vibrant business district while limiting its extent to those most critical block frontages.

Implementation

- There are two optional ways that this concept could be implemented as a part of Spokane’s complete street provisions: by adapting existing designations or by creating new designations specifically for Sprague and Sherman.

Recommended Code Changes – Phase I

This plan recommends several changes to zoning and development standards. These recommendations have been broken into two phases: Phase I changes are recommended for immediate adoption, while Phase II recommendations for future consideration are designed to be compatible with the outcomes of the ongoing North Bank and Downtown Subarea plans.

District Zoning

The map below illustrates a proposed extension of Downtown University (DTU) zoning into a portion of the subarea, plus two optional additions that would extend DTU zoning further southward in certain areas.

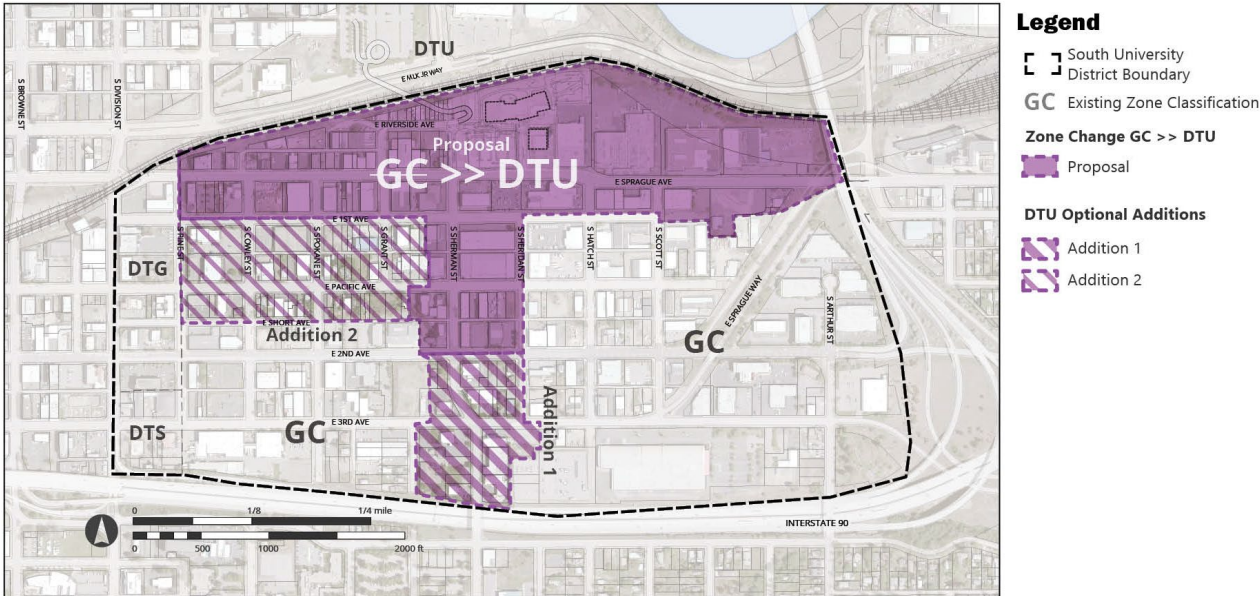


Figure 13. South University District Rezoning Alternatives

Proposal

This plan proposes a change from General Commercial (GC-150) to Downtown University (DTU) along the E Sprague Avenue corridor and the northern blocks of the S Sherman Street corridor (closest to the University District Gateway Bridge).

Why DTU and why here?

- The proposed boundary focuses on Sprague corridor and portions of Sherman closest to the south bridge landing (retaining the GC-150 designation for most of the district).
- DTU still allows for a very broad mix of uses, but has a greater emphasis on pedestrian-oriented uses.
- DTU offers much more flexibility for larger office and institutional uses.
- DTU has stronger design standards, particularly in how developments look from the street.
- DTU requires design review (see Table 2 below) for larger developments and for some remodels/additions to existing buildings.

Table 2. Comparison of GC-150 and DTU zones

Zone	General Commercial (GC-150)	Downtown University (DTU)
Building Height	150 feet	12 stories
FAR³	2.5 - No FAR limit for residential buildings	6.0 - No FAR limit for residential buildings
Parking	Residential: 1 per unit (~1,000 sf) Office: 1 per 500 sf Retail/Service: 1 per 330 sf Restaurant: 1 per 250 sf Industrial: 1 per 1000 sf	All Uses: 1 per 1,000 sf
Permitted Uses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail sales and service • Office • Residential • Institutional • Commercial Parking • Drive-through uses • Vehicle sales, service, and repair • Commercial outdoor recreation • Major event entertainment • Outdoor sales and storage • Some industrial uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail sales and service • Office • Residential • Institutional • Commercial Parking • Drive-through uses (except on Type I and II complete streets) • Major Event Entertainment (stadiums, auditoriums, exhibition areas etc.)

How is DTU different from GC-150?

Height: GC-150 and DTU both allow much taller buildings than are currently present in the district. The real estate market doesn't currently support the construction of 12 story buildings here (though it may be possible in the future).

Building Mass: The GC-150 zone's floor area ratio (FAR) limit of 2.5 purposely caps the scale of new office buildings; changing strategic areas to DTU allows greater flexibility for institutional and office uses near the south bridge landing. FAR standards do not apply to residential buildings (building code requirements for dwelling unit light and air limit building mass) and do not include area used for structured parking, public amenities, vertical circulation, and open air building space.

General Commercial – FAR 2.5

Downtown University – FAR 6.0

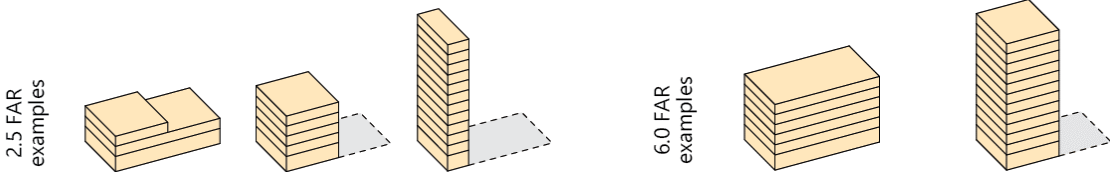


Figure 14. Example massing with different floor area ratios (FAR)

Permitted Uses: Auto sales and some vehicle repair and industrial service businesses would become non-conforming uses if rezoned to DTU. These businesses could continue operating, but expansion would be limited, and no new businesses of these types would be allowed to open in rezoned areas.

³ Does not include structured parking, public amenities, vertical circulation, and open air building space

Parking: DTU has lower minimum parking requirements than GC-150, especially for restaurant and retail uses.

Site Use and Design Provisions: The integration of complete street standards in DTU are a significant difference between GC-150 and DTU, as most types of complete streets don't allow parking lots in front of buildings. A number of lots in the proposed rezone area would also have nonconforming site uses, including outdoor storage, drive-throughs, and street-fronting surface parking. These elements could continue in use, but could only be expanded in certain situations.

Building Design Provisions: The facade transparency provision (required for the commercial and residential buildings) combined with more strict building/parking lot location standards (associated with complete street designations) emphasize pedestrian-oriented design much more than GC-150 zone provisions.

Design Review: Design review is intended to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the built environment of an area. Design expectations are higher (with design review) than they would be in the GC-150 zone.

DTU Zoning – Optional Addition 1

This alternative to the proposed rezone above would extend the DTU zone over the two remaining southern blocks along S Sherman Street to Interstate 90 and the district boundary.

Why?

- Extension includes the entire S Sherman Street corridor to strengthen the connection through the district to South Hill medical uses and other neighborhoods to the south.

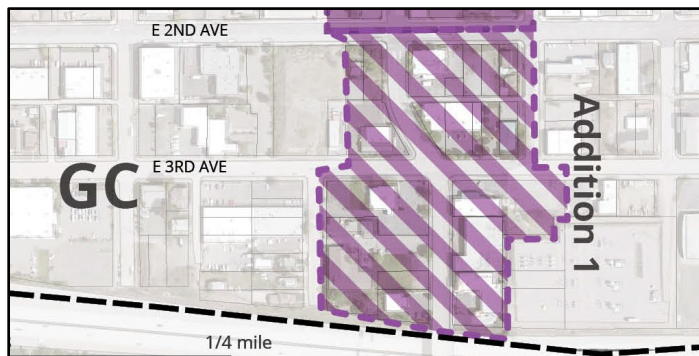


Figure 15. Alternative 1 rezoning proposal

DTU Zoning – Optional Addition 2

Extends the DTU zone south of E First Avenue and west of S Sherman Street to S Short Street to the edge of existing GC-150 zoning.

Why?

- Extension includes the E Pacific Avenue corridor, which provides an opportunity to create a quieter mixed-use neighborhood street, and is designated as a Bike Friendly Route in the City’s Bicycle Master Plan.



Figure 16. Alternative 2 rezone proposal

Overlay Zones

In addition to the base zones (e.g. DTU), several overlay zones implement supplemental standards across all or part of the areas with a Downtown zoning designation. The project team considered the appropriateness of extending each of these overlays to areas where DTU zoning is proposed.

Interim Complete Streets Approach

In downtown zones, including DTU, Complete Street designations are used to create more pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. In the short term, this plan recommends the extension of existing Complete Street designations to rezoned areas of the subarea, per Figure 17 below. In the longer term, additional changes to Complete Street standards should be considered in conjunction with a broader downtown planning process to better reflect the street frontage concepts described in Block Frontages and Complete Streets Concepts. For these recommendations, see Appendix: Possible Phase II Code Changes.

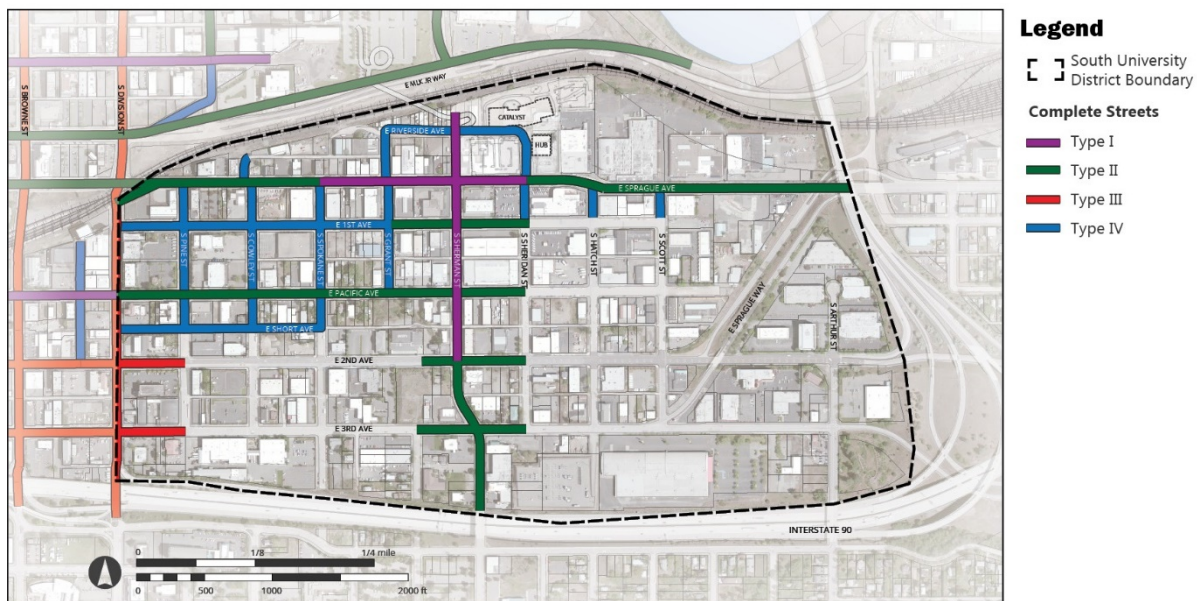


Figure 17. Distribution of suggested updated complete street types

Design Review

The Design Review Board reviews the design elements of developments in all downtown zones (subject to certain exceptions), per SMC 17G.040. All areas in downtown zones are designated one of three thresholds for design review: Central, Gateway, or Perimeter, with the highest threshold for entering the review process applied to new developments in the Perimeter Area. See map SMC 17G.040-M1 below:

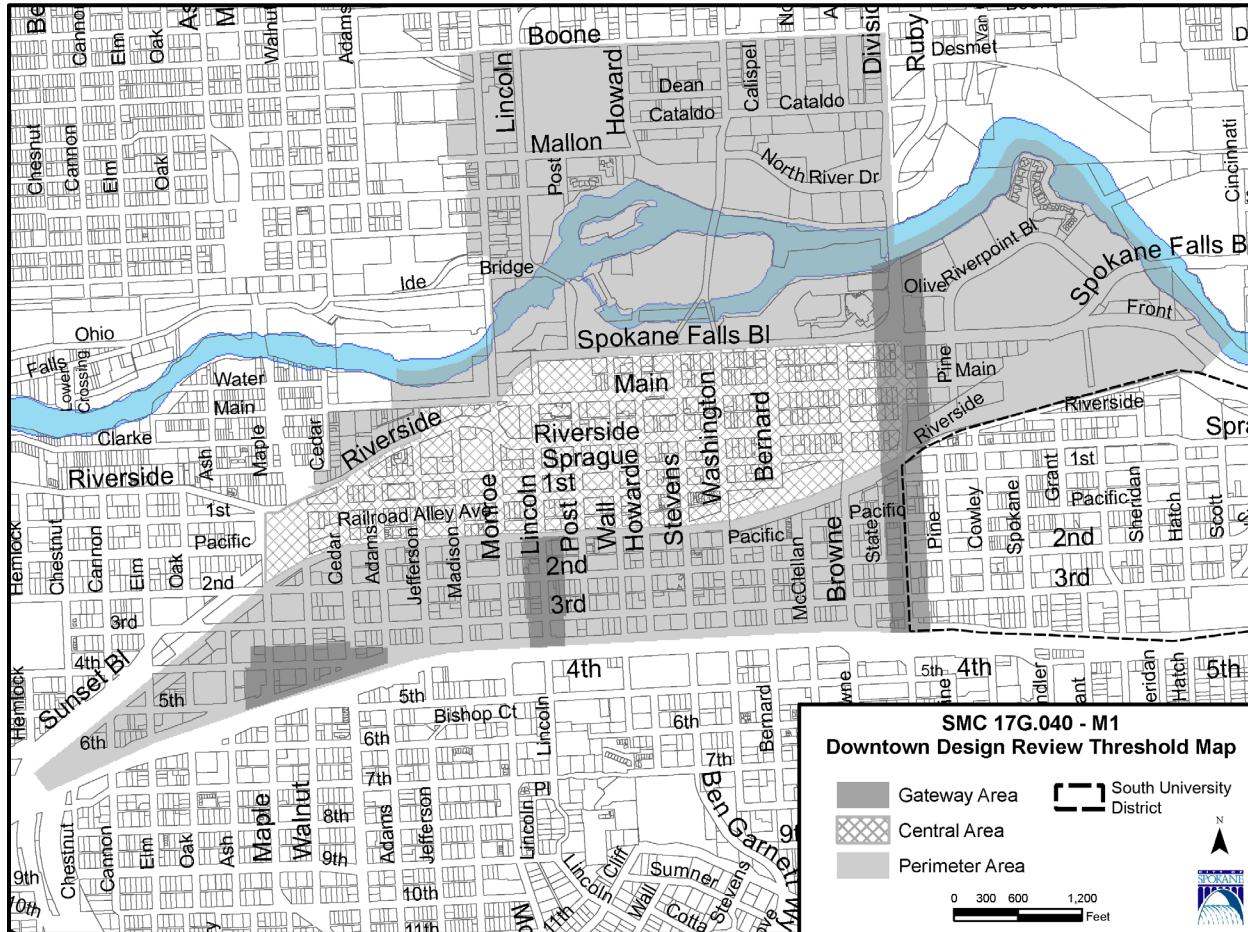


Figure 18. Design Review Threshold map

Proposal

Designate rezoned portions of the subarea as “Perimeter Areas” for design review.

Why?

- The Perimeter Area has the highest threshold for design review of the three design review areas. It applies mainly to public buildings, new private buildings over 50,000 square feet, and modifications of 25 percent of the visible façade of existing buildings.
- Setting a high threshold for design review retains greater flexibility and predictability for smaller infill and remodel projects within the district.
- The visual character of the subarea is quite mixed – in terms of the age, character, and scale of buildings. As a result of this varied design context, the need for the design review process does not need to be conducted as frequently as it might be in the Central or Core threshold areas.

Downtown “No Parking Required” Overlay

Although the DTU zone includes parking requirements (as described in [SMC 17C.230](#)), at present all areas zoned DTU (and most other areas in “downtown” zones) are currently covered by a “No Required Parking” overlay (see map below). Within this overlay base parking minimums included in each zone are not active.

This plan **does not** recommend extending the overlay into the South University District.

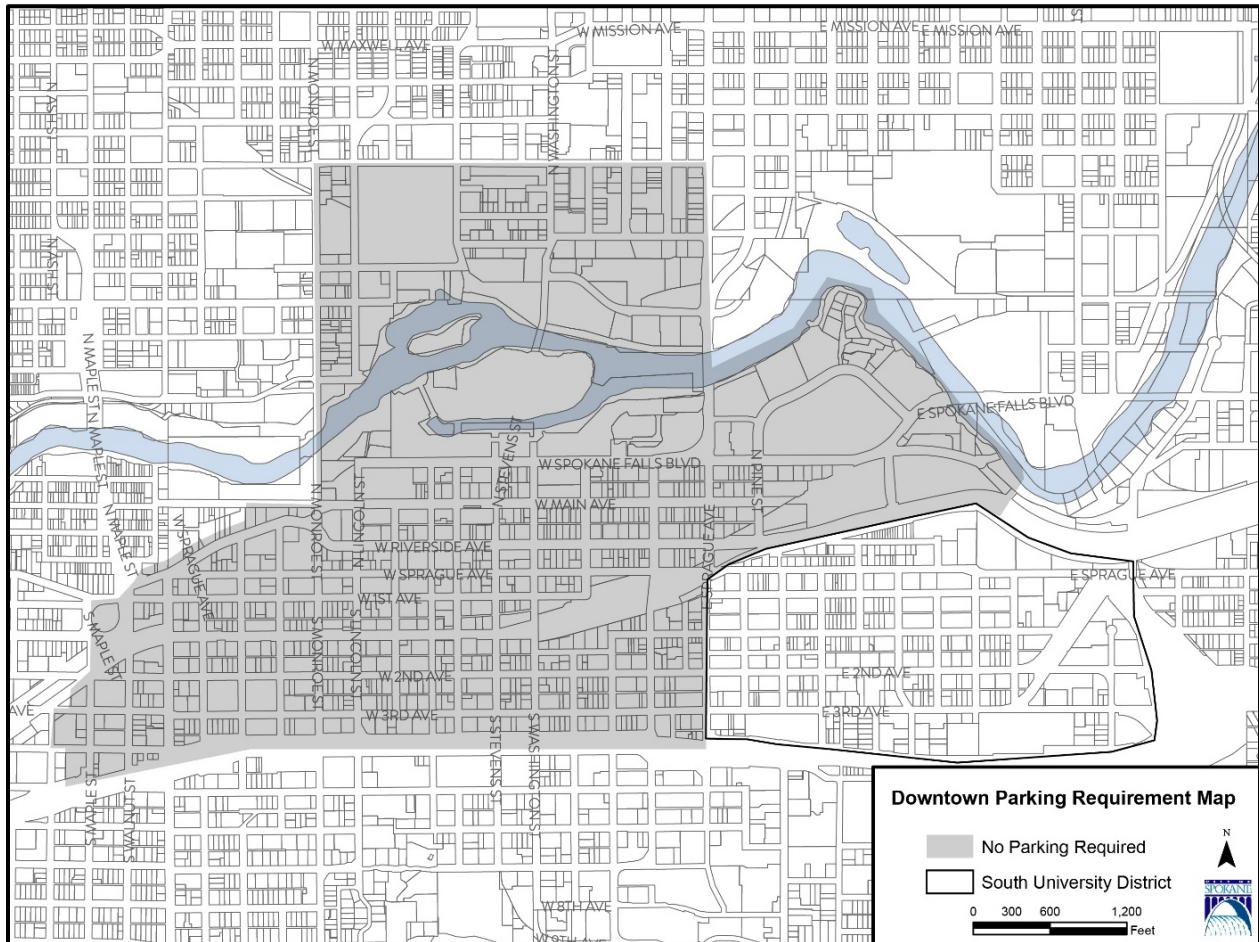


Figure 19. Downtown Parking Requirement map

Why not?

- While there was interest in reducing off-street parking requirements in the district, this change was considered too drastic given the current mix of uses and parking context within the district.
- Neighborhood stakeholders have voiced concerns about adequate parking in new development in the district. Such new development, they fear, would increase the demand for the valued on-street parking resources that the existing district uses currently enjoy.

Rezoning to DTU already reduces parking minimums significantly from what is currently required from GC-150 zoning, especially for retail and restaurant uses. This change will reduce barriers to redevelopment and begin a transition towards development that is less dependent on automobile parking. Expansion of the overlay may be worth revisiting in the future as the South University District develops.

Surface Parking Limited Overlay

In addition to the No Required Parking Overlay, much of downtown is also covered by a Surface Parking Limited Overlay which prohibits standalone commercial surface parking lots as an allowed use. This restriction applies to paid parking lots that are operated as a stand-alone business, rather than lots which serve adjacent businesses. See the map below ([SMC 17C.124.-M1](#))

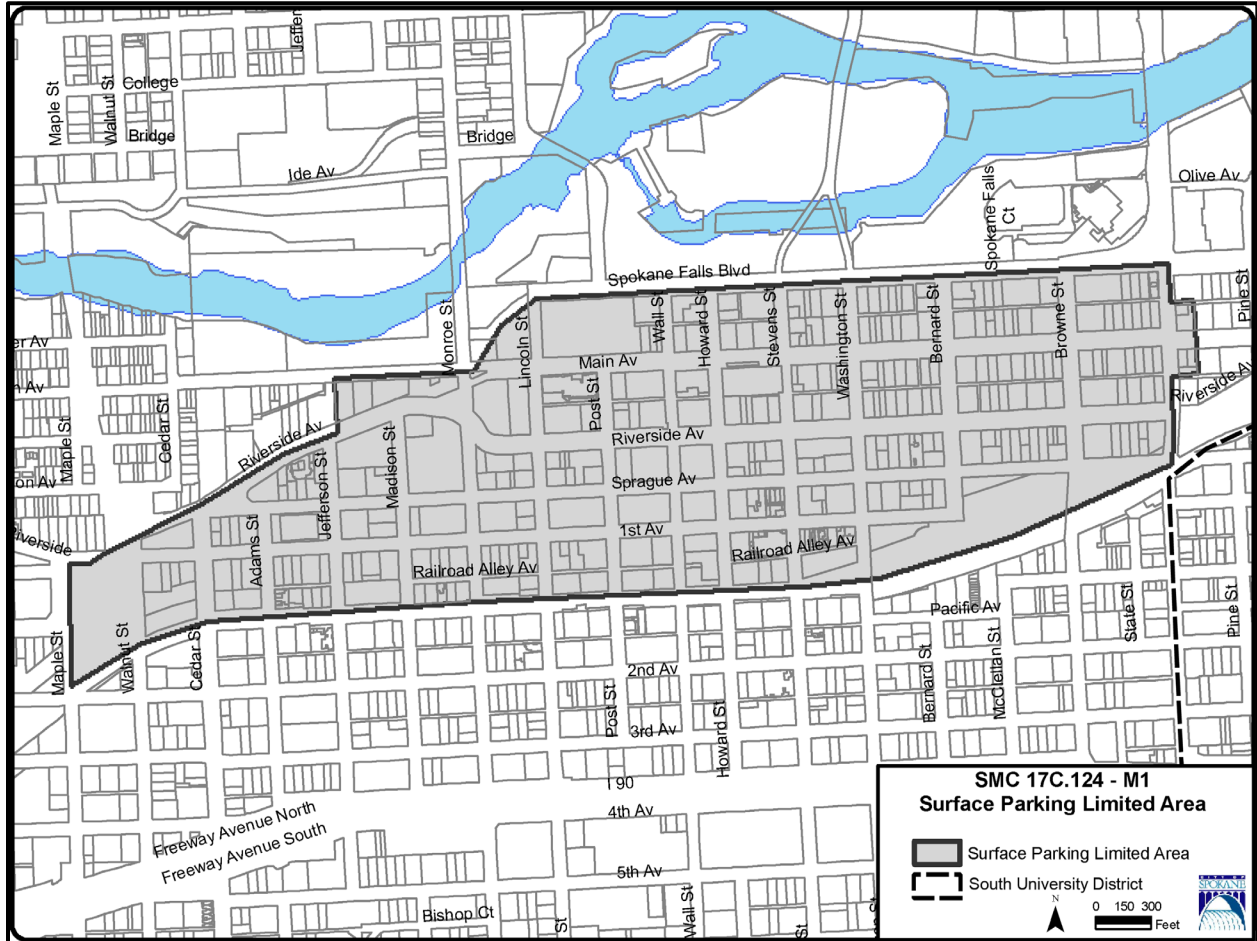


Figure 20. Existing Surface Parking Limited Area map

Proposal

Extend the Surface Parking Limited Area to the rezoned portions of the subarea.

Why?

- The goals of this plan seek to achieve a district with more active, pedestrian-friendly uses. The potential spread of commercial surface parking lots would make these goals more difficult to achieve by creating gaps in building frontages along Sprague Street and Sherman Avenue, two streets that stakeholder feedback and public investments in streetscape improvements have emphasized as focal points for the subarea.
- There are no commercial parking lots in the area at present and demand for paid parking in this area is likely low. However, if parking becomes scarcer in the nearby downtown core and WSU-Spokane Health Sciences campus to the north, paid parking may become a viable land use. Customers for these lots would likely primarily use them to access destinations in downtown or on campus, offering limited benefit to businesses within the subarea.

Appendix: Possible Phase II Code Changes

Block Frontages and Complete Street Updates

There are two additional implementation options for the block frontage recommendations included in this plan using Spokane’s complete street regulatory framework. This first is to add new complete street designations while leading existing designations unchanged. The second option is to overhaul of all four complete street types to harmonize the block frontage recommendations of this plan with the North Bank Subarea plan and Downtown plan.

Option 1: New complete street designations

The two additional complete street designations below would supplement the designations and standards set forth in SMC 17C.124.035 and apply to property within the North River Overlay. These designations and their associated standards are distinct from the Type I through IV streets and include:

- a. Type V –Storefront (see suggested standards below).
- b. Type VI – Priority Pedestrian (see suggested standards below).

Type V – Storefront Complete Street Standards.

1. Permitted uses. See SMC Table 17C.124-1 for primary use standards. Exceptions: Residential uses and structured parking are prohibited on ground level building frontages (to a depth of 30-feet), except lobbies and residential amenity space may occupy up to 20-percent of the applicable block’s lineal frontage.
2. Storefront location. New buildings must be located at the back end of the required sidewalk (see SMC 17.C.124.230 B). (R)
3. Ground-level height: The ground floor features a minimum 13-foot floor to ceiling height at a minimum depth of 30-feet. (R)
4. Entries. Uses within the building shall feature an entry that faces the street. (R) Maximum 50 feet between entrances.
5. Transparency. At least 60-percent of ground floor street façade between two-feet and ten-feet above the sidewalk must be transparent. At least 40-percent of the façade between ten and 40-feet above the sidewalk must be transparent. (R)
6. Weather protection. Canopies, awnings, or other weather protection features are required over all building entries that face or are visible from the street. Such features must be at least three feet deep and cover the full width of the building entrance. (R)
7. New surface parking adjacent to the street is prohibited. (R)
8. New driveways along subject frontages are prohibited. (R)

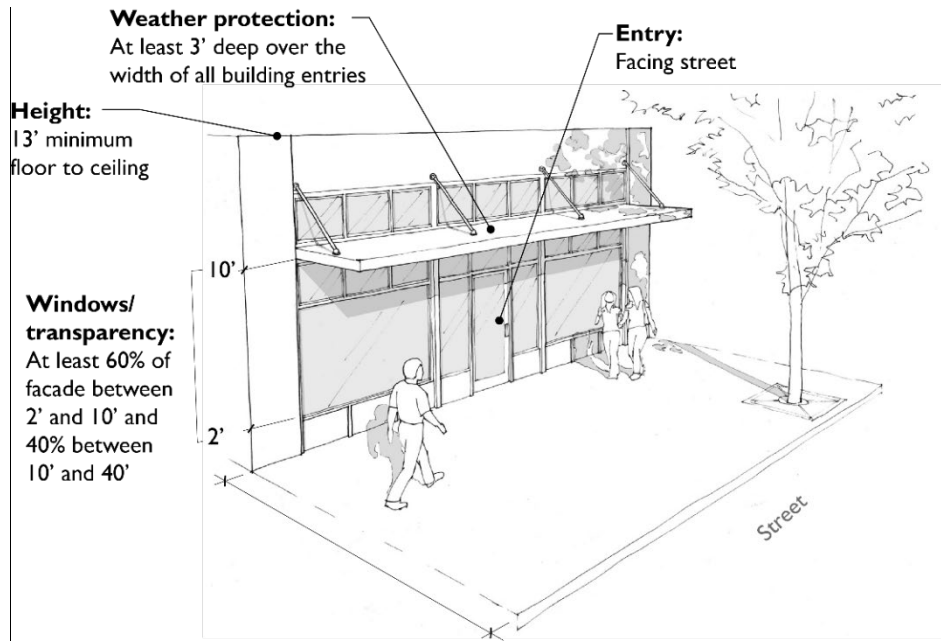


Figure 21. Design standards for Type V - Storefront Complete Streets

Type VI – Priority Pedestrian Complete Street Standards.

Developments along Type VI-designated streets may choose from the storefront use/design option or the stoop/landscaped frontage design option for building frontages as set forth below.

1. Buildings may be sited within ten-feet of the back of the sidewalk provided they comply with the building/use-related standards in subsection (C) above, Type V – Storefront Complete Street Standards.
2. Stoop/landscaped frontages.

- a. Permitted uses. See SMC Table 17C.124.100 for primary use standards.
- b. Minimum setback from street lot line: Ten feet. (R) Reduced setbacks will be allowed for ground floor residential uses and single purpose residential buildings (down to a minimum of five feet) will be considered where the ground floor is elevated a minimum average of 30-inches and design treatments are included that create an effective transition between the public and private realm. For example, a stoop design or other similar treatments that utilize a low fence or retaining wall, and/or hedge along the sidewalk may provide an effective transition [see Figures below for examples].

Reduced setbacks will be considered for buildings featuring ground floor non-residential uses provided the design treatment provides a pleasant, rich, and diverse pedestrian-friendly experience by connecting activities occurring within a structure to adjacent sidewalk areas. The closer the building is to the sidewalk, the greater expectations for the level of window transparency.

Where it is not clear to the director whether or not the proposal for reduced setbacks satisfies the purposes of the standard, the director, may also refer the project application to the design review board.

- c. Entries. Uses within the building shall feature an entry that faces the street. (R)

- d. Transparency. At least 20-percent of the façade between two- and 40-feet must be transparent. (R)
- e. Weather protection. Canopies, awnings, or other weather protection features are required over all building entries that face or are visible from the street. Such features must be at least three feet deep and cover the full width of the building entrance. (R)
- f. Surface parking adjacent to the street is prohibited between the street and a building. (R)
- g. Ground level structured parking facilities are limited to 50-percent of the building façade and subject to the setback and landscaping standards herein. (R)
- h. Driveways along subject frontages are prohibited unless no other options are available.
- i. Landscaping must be integrated between the sidewalk and the façade, including a mix of Landscaping Types L1, L2, and L3 to add visual interest to the streetscape, provide an effective transition between the sidewalk and buildings, and allow for views of the street from the building's windows. (P)



Figure 22. Examples of stoops/landscaped frontages.



Figure 23. Examples of acceptable reduced setback landscaped frontages. The apartment building on the left includes an elevated ground floor for increased privacy and a terraced planter to provide an effective transition between the sidewalk and the building. In the right image, the façade uses an effective blend of storefront/landscaped frontage with extensive window transparency.

Option 2: Adjust existing complete street standards to implement proposal

The second option is updating the complete streets standards and corresponding district map so that Types I and II mirror the Storefront and Priority Pedestrian block frontages as detailed in Option 1 above. Figure 22 below illustrates the recommended distribution of complete street designations under this option.

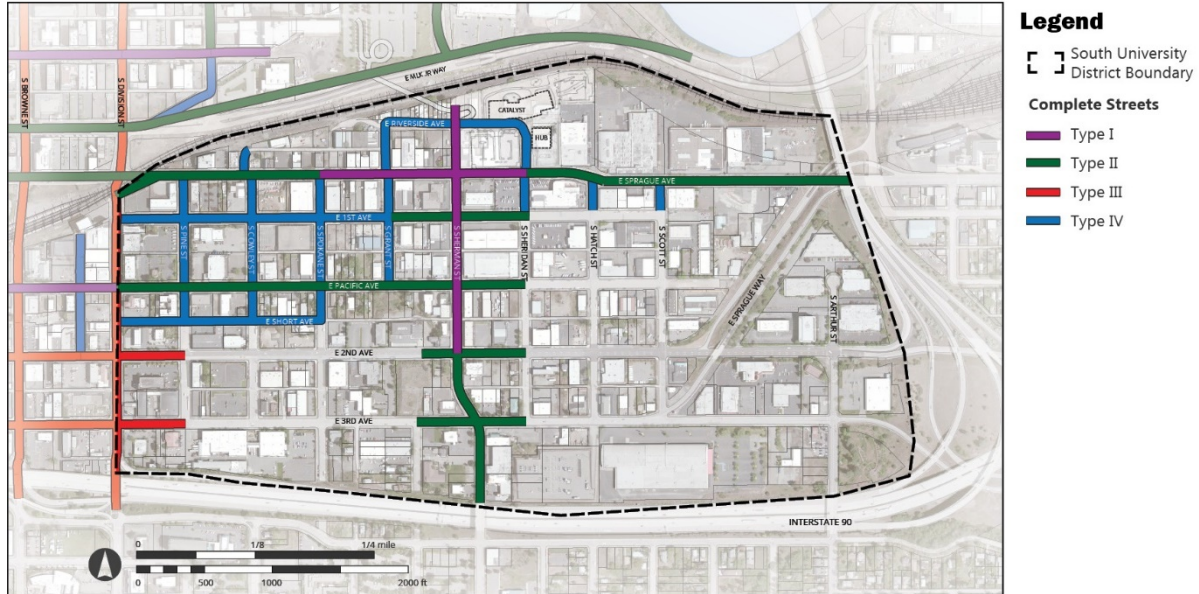


Figure 24. Distribution of suggested updated complete street types

NOTE: Any changes to the existing complete street provisions (such as changes to complete streets standards to fully implement the block frontage recommendations in Option 1 above) would be considered as part of a wider downtown planning process, as such changes affect all of the Downtown Zones.

Table 3 below and on the following page below identifies strategic recommendations to update Type I and II designations to implement the Storefront and Priority Pedestrian concepts. Suggested changes from current provisions are shown in **bold**.

Table 3. Complete Street Designations

Standard	Type I: Community Activity Street	Type II: Community Connector	Type III: Regional Collector	Type IV: Neighborhood Street
Ground-level Use Restrictions <i>(beyond permitted uses)</i>	Type I requires non-residential uses on ground floor frontages⁴	None, except parking garages must include street level retail, office, or civic along 50% of frontage (consider also allowing active ground-based residential uses along parking garage frontages)	None	None
Land Use				
Floor to ceiling height minimum <i>(for minimum non- residential space depth)</i>	13'	13' where storefront frontages are utilized⁵	No minimum	No minimum
Non-residential space depth minimum	30'	30' where storefront frontages are utilized.	No minimum	No minimum
Building Placement	Storefront required – setbacks only allowed for wider sidewalk or pedestrian-oriented space	10' maximum setback⁶	No special restrictions	No special restrictions
Parking lot location restriction	No new parking adjacent to the street	Not between street and building Where surface parking is placed to the side of buildings, limit to 50% of block frontage	No special restrictions	No special restrictions
Driveways	New driveways along subject frontages are prohibited.	From alleys first (if available)	From alleys first (if available)	From alleys first (if available)

⁴ Exception for lobbies for upstairs residential uses

⁵ Applies to any building elevation within 5' of back of sidewalk

⁶ Greater allowed where setback for plaza/pedestrian-oriented space

Standard	Type I: Community Activity Street	Type II: Community Connector	Type III: Regional Collector	Type IV: Neighborhood Street
Entries (max interval)	(R) or (P) 50'	(R) or (P) 60'	No standard	No standard
Window Transparency	(R) 60% (2-10') if non-res façade within 60' of street (R) 20% (2-40') for residential uses; applies to upper floors as well	(R) 60% (2-10') if non-res façade within 60' of street; (R) 20% (2-40') for residential uses	(R) 50% (2-10') if non-res façade within 20' of arterial	(R) 60% (2-10') if non-res façade within 60' of street; (R) 20% (2-40') for residential uses Same note as to the left
Weather Protection	3' deep weather protection over all building entries.	3' deep weather protection over all building entries.	3' deep weather protection over all building entries.	3' deep weather protection over all building entries.
Sidewalk width	12'	12'	12'	12'

DTU Uses

The DTU zone as currently written does not allow auto sales. Applying the DTU zone to the area around E Sprague Avenue would have the effect of making existing auto retail a non-conforming use.

Proposal

Adjust the list of permitted uses in the DTU zone to include auto-sales in order to avoid non-conformance of existing auto retail on Sprague.

Why?

- The adjustment would allow greater flexibility for existing businesses, while the existing/proposed complete street designation/provisions help to ensure that the design of any such auto sales developments would need to conform to applicable standards.
- Similar retail uses are already allowed in DTU; there isn't a meaningful distinction between these types of retail and auto sales.

Implementation

Because there are DTU-zoned properties outside of the South University District subarea, this proposed code change would effect a geographic area broader than the scope of the subarea plan. This proposal could be considered as part of future code changes to implement the Downtown Plan Update.

