

Implementation

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive plan should be a “living document,” that is, a document that is frequently referred to for guidance in decision making with regard to land development and public investments in infrastructure and services. It is in that context that this chapter breathes life into the rest of the Comprehensive Plan by setting out a practical, prioritized, and sequenced implementation program. The key objective of this chapter is to integrate the different elements of the Plan together in such a way as to provide a clear path for sound decision making.

Implementation is not simply a list of action items. It is a challenging process that will require the commitment of the City’s elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, the University of Idaho, Latah County, Chamber of Commerce, environmental organizations, Partnership for Economic Prosperity, Clearwater Economic Development Association, and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the plan.

7.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7.2.1 Generally

Simply setting out an implementation framework in this chapter is not enough to ensure that the action items of this Plan will be carried out. These action items should be consulted frequently, and should be widely used by decision makers as a basis for decisions regarding:

- ◆ The timing and availability of infrastructure improvements.
- ◆ City-initiated and owner-initiated annexations.
- ◆ Proposed development and redevelopment applications.
- ◆ Conditional use permits.
- ◆ Zone change requests.
- ◆ Expansion of public facilities, services, and programs.
- ◆ Annual capital budgeting.
- ◆ Zoning and subdivision code re-writes and amendments.
- ◆ Intergovernmental (including City-University) coordination and agreements.



- ◆ Operations, capital improvements, and programming related to individual City departments.

7.3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

There are five general methods for plan implementation: policy-based decisions; land development regulations and engineering standards; capital improvements; specific plans and studies, and special projects, programs, and initiatives.

7.3.1 Policy-Based Decisions

Land use decisions should be made based on the policies that are set out in this Comprehensive Plan. In some measure, the adoption of new land development regulations (e.g., zoning, subdivision, landscaping, sign controls, etc.) will establish a specific framework for evaluating private development proposals against the City's articulated policies (see **Section 7.3.2, Land Development Regulations and Engineering Standards**). However, decisions regarding annexation, infrastructure investment, future character map amendments, and right-of-way acquisition are generally left to the broad discretion of the City Council. This plan provides the common policy threads that should connect those decisions.

7.3.2 Land Development Regulations and Engineering Standards

Land development regulations and engineering standards are fundamentals for plan implementation. It is obvious (but often overlooked) that private investment decisions account for the vast majority of any city's physical form. Consequently, the zoning, subdivision, landscaping, sign control ordinances, as well as technical engineering standards, become the basic keys to ensuring the form, character, and quality of all private development reflects the City's planning objectives. These ordinances should use economic forces to ensure quality, but should not be set up to unnecessarily delay or interfere with appropriate new development.

7.3.3 Capital Improvement Programming

The Capital Improvement Program ("CIP") is a five-year plan that identifies budgeted capital projects including: street infrastructure, water, wastewater, and drainage facilities; parks, trails, and recreation construction and upgrades; construction of public buildings; and, purchase of major equipment. Identifying and budgeting for major capital improvements will be essential to implementing this Plan. The City established capital improvement plans for the City's water and sewer utilities as part of the City's Utility Masterplans and for parks and recreation facilities as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Capital improvement plans are being established for the City's public safety, stormwater, and street facilities and systems. Decisions regarding capital improvement programming should take into account the policy and management directives of this Plan, particularly **Chapter 5, Public Utilities, Services, and Growth**



Capacity.

7.3.4 Specific Plans and Studies

There are a number of areas where additional planning work is recommended at a “finer grain” level of detail than is appropriate in a comprehensive plan. As such, some parts of this plan will be implemented only after some additional planning or special study.

7.3.5 Special Projects, Programs, and Initiatives

Special projects or initiatives are the last broad category of implementation measures. These projects or initiatives may include establishing an administrative body or communication protocol, initiating or expanding City programs, entering into interlocal agreements, expanding citizen participation programs, providing training, and other special projects.

7.4 PLAN ADMINISTRATION

During the development of initial drafts of the Plan in 2009, community leaders in government, business, civic groups, the University, and others came together to inform the planning process. These leaders, and new ones to emerge over the horizon of this Plan, must maintain their commitment to the ongoing implementation of the Plan’s policies – and the periodic updating of the Plan to adapt to changing conditions and unforeseen events.

7.4.1 Education

Comprehensive plans are relatively general in nature, but they are still complex policy documents that account for interrelationships among various policy choices. As such, educating decision makers and administrators about plan implementation is important. As the principal groups that will implement the Plan, the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and City department heads should all be knowledgeable with regard to priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations.

7.4.2 Role Definition

As elected officials, the City Council will assume the lead role in implementation of this Plan. The key responsibility of the City Council is to decide and establish the priorities, timeframes by which each action will be initiated and completed, and adoption of the budget. In conjunction with the Mayor and City Administrator, they must also ensure the coordination among the various groups who are responsible for carrying out the Plan’s recommendations.

The City Council will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ♦ Act as a “champion” of the plan.



- ◆ Adopt and amend the plan by resolution, after recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- ◆ Adopt new land development regulations to implement the plan.
- ◆ Rezone property proactively.
- ◆ Approve interlocal agreements that implement the plan.
- ◆ Establish the overall action priorities and timeframes by which each action item of the plan will be initiated and completed.
- ◆ Consider and set the required funding commitments.
- ◆ Offer final approval of projects and activities and the associated costs during the budget process, keeping in mind the need for consistency with the Plan and its policies.
- ◆ Provide policy direction to the Planning and Zoning Commission and staff.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Periodically obtain public input to keep the plan up to date, using “citizen meetings, hearings, surveys, or other methods, to obtain advice on the planning process, plan, and implementation.”¹
- ◆ After holding one or more public hearings to discuss potential recommendations, make recommendations to the City Council with regard to plan updates and plan amendments.²

City Staff will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Manage day-to-day implementation of the plan.
- ◆ Support and implement capital improvement planning efforts.
- ◆ Manage the development of new land development regulations.
- ◆ Conduct studies and develop additional plans (including managing consultant teams, as necessary).
- ◆ Review applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan when required by the Idaho Statutes or the City’s land development regulations.
- ◆ Negotiate the specifics of interlocal agreements.
- ◆ Administer collaborative programs and ensure open channels of communication with implementation partners (*e.g.*, the University of Idaho, Latah County, Whitman County, Pullman, and Washington State University).

1 Section 67-6507, *The Planning Process and Related Powers of the Commission*, Idaho Statutes (2017).

2 Section 67-6509, *Recommendation and Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal of the Plan*, Idaho Statutes (2017).



7.5 PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

The process for amending the Comprehensive Plan is set out in Section 67-6509, Idaho Statutes (2017), *Recommendation and Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal of the Plan*. In sum, the process is as follows:

- ♦ Adoption, amendment, or repeal of the Plan requires at least one public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission (at which input is taken from interested persons), after which the Commission recommends action to the City Council. The public hearing must be noticed at least 15 days in advance in an official newspaper and other media outlets. The official notice must include the time and place of the meeting and a summary of the plan to be discussed. Notice must also be sent to all political subdivisions that provide services within the planning jurisdiction, including school districts.
- ♦ After the Planning and Zoning Commission hearing, if the Commission recommends a material change to a proposed amendment, the City Council may conduct a hearing on the original amendment or consider the modified amendment. If the Council hears the original amendment, then it must include the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation in its public notice. Otherwise, the Planning and Zoning Commission must conduct another public hearing on the modified amendment, and then make a recommendation to the Council. Records must be kept of the hearings, findings, and actions of the Commission and Council.
- ♦ Upon recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Council may conduct at least one public hearing using the same notice procedures as the Commission. If the Council makes a material change to the amendment, the Council must hold another noticed public hearing on the amendment as modified. The Council ultimately adopts, amends, or repeals the plan by resolution, and then files the plan and adopting or amending resolution with the City Clerk.
- ♦ Any person may request that the plan be amended by petitioning the Planning and Zoning Commission. The text of the plan may be amended at any time. However, the Planning and Zoning Commission may not recommend amendments to the land use map (Future Character Map) more frequently than once every six months.

When the City annexes unincorporated areas, the City Council must request and receive a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission with regard to the proposed plan and zoning ordinance changes for the area to be annexed. These hearings must be noticed as provided in Section 67-6509, Idaho Statutes (2017). Concurrently or immediately following the adoption of an annexation ordinance, the City Council shall amend the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.



7.6 EVALUATION AND UPDATING

An evaluation of the Plan and any necessary updates to account for changes in the community should be prepared every five years to ensure that this Plan reflects current community conditions. This update process should be coordinated by the Community Development Department, with input from various City departments, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council, and other boards and commissions.

