

Chapter Two

Process

Due to a community's dynamic nature, city officials are continuously monitoring existing and anticipated conditions in the locality and assessing when it is appropriate to amend its comprehensive plan to best suit residents' needs. In Pullman, this sort of "community pulse-checking" activity has occurred since the initiation of comprehensive planning here.

The city of Pullman adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1961. This plan, prepared by consultant Harlan Nelson and Associates of Lake Oswego, Oregon, presented some rudimentary objectives related to the development of the community. In 1972, the city adopted a revision to the 1961 document. This 1972 plan, produced at a time of significant growth at WSU, predicted a future population of 100,000 people for Pullman. It also envisioned an extension of the city limits several miles into the countryside. In 1982, another Comprehensive Plan revision was adopted. Relative to the 1972 document, the 1982 plan presented greatly scaled-down expectations for growth. The 1982 plan stated that, since significant population increases were not anticipated, "Pullman can concentrate on maintaining and improving existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and public facilities, rather than worrying about new areas far beyond the current city limits."

Pullman began the process of developing a major revision to the 1982 plan in the early 1990's with public participation activities such as the Pullman 2000 forums and a series of neighborhood meetings. These events helped to identify community members' interests and concerns. While compiling the results of these citizen input activities, city staff also reviewed a substantial amount of information regarding existing conditions in the community and projections for its future.

Early in 1997, the city decided to retain the services of a consultant, David Evans and Associates, Inc. of Spokane, to assist in the preparation of the plan revision. The consultant's first product was a report entitled Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints, based on the material city staff had assembled earlier regarding existing conditions and future projections.

In the spring of 1997, preliminary goals and policies for the plan revision were prepared and distributed to the public. The city conducted a public meeting soon thereafter to obtain input on these draft goals and policies and to learn more about issues of significance to community members.

Also in the spring of 1997, work began on an amended city land use plan map for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan revision. The consultant and city staff cooperated to formulate three different scenarios, labeled Alternatives A, B, and C, which depicted different patterns for future growth in the greater Pullman area. These three scenarios are described below.

Alternative A called for a dispersed, low density development pattern and substantial separation between dissimilar uses

Alternative B called for a compact development pattern with an emphasis on high residential densities and mixed land uses

Alternative C proposed a continuation of the adopted 1982 Comprehensive Plan land use plan with some minor adjustments; with respect to land use density, it represented a mid-range alternative between the two extremes depicted in Alternatives A and B

Once these alternatives had been produced, the city held an open house to listen to citizens' comments regarding the three different scenarios. Of the options presented, Alternative B was preferred by most attending the session, but some aspects of this alternative were clearly not well-received, such as the proposal to designate the vast majority of College Hill as high density residential.

Based on the input received at this open house, city staff and the consultant created a "Recommended Alternative" land use plan. This plan represented a combination of the public's most preferred elements from the three original scenarios, as identified during the open house. This "Recommended Alternative" plan map was the subject of another public meeting at which residents were afforded the opportunity to provide further input. Feedback from those in attendance was positive.

During this time, both the Planning Commission and City Council held public discussions regarding community challenges and possible solutions. Both bodies conversed at length about growth, land use, housing, transportation, public facilities, parks, and the environment. The comments generated during these discussions were then used to revise the proposed goals and policies and draft land use plan map for the Comprehensive Plan.

Through the latter half of 1997 and the first few months of 1998, a complete draft of the Comprehensive Plan was assembled by the consultant, with assistance from the Spokane Regional Transportation Council. In the spring of 1998, this draft was introduced to the public at a joint session of the City Council and Planning Commission. At workshops conducted over the next six months, the Planning Commission carefully reviewed the draft plan and called for an extensive number of changes to the document. The city's Environmental Quality Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission also examined the draft plan and suggested alterations to it.

Once all of the above-referenced amendments had been made, the Planning Commission initiated a public hearing in the fall of 1998 to solicit formal public input on the plan revision. At this hearing, community members, representatives from local organizations, and public officials either expressed support for the plan's concepts or requested changes to the document. The Commission then addressed each suggested amendment to determine whether it should be incorporated into the plan and finalized its preferred version of the document. In January of 1999, the Planning Commission

passed a resolution recommending approval of the draft plan revision to the City Council.

The draft plan revision was presented to the City Council at a meeting held in February. At that session, staff provided a summary of the document's contents and informed the Council of the significant policy shifts represented in the draft plan. Then, at its meeting of March 9, 1999, the Council made several modifications to the plan and officially adopted this amended version of the document as the new Pullman Comprehensive Plan.