



City of Airway Heights: Downtown Plan

To: Heather Trautman, Principal Planner
From: Rachel Granrath, Alicia Ayars, SCJ Alliance
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Project: Downtown Plan
Subject: Corridor Policy Code Audit

Background

The City of Airway Heights is undergoing a planning process to study and create a Downtown and US 2 Subarea Plan. The process will amend the development and zoning code to encourage growth, housing, mixed-use, commercial and redevelopment downtown and along the US 2. The purpose of the corridor policy code audit is to explore the development and zoning regulations within the downtown and US 2 corridor subarea geographic region and related overlay zones, identify where the code restricts and permits commercial, residential, and mixed-use development.

From this baseline understanding we can then address inconsistencies in code language, amend it, and explore recommendations to move beyond the current code to implement provisions that will shape the future vision along the Airway Heights corridor and downtown core.

The development and zoning requirements for the City of Airway Heights are complex. There are many variables to consider and codes to analyze for any given development. There is the base zoning designation, overlay districts, and development restrictions due to JLUS which provide protections for Fairchild Air Force Base (FAFB) by restricting development within certain sound contours and airport protection zones in order to reduce conflicts between development and military flight operations.

Existing development, land use patterns, and military operations strongly influence the residential and commercial growth and development. Helping to determine the opportunities and constraints will provide options for change and improvements along US 2 and within the downtown core. Factors considered in this memo include:

- ◆ Specific land uses and associated compatibility;
- ◆ Transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure and design;

Each of these factors are within the cities capacity to manage and/or control. Actions implemented via this plan and others will play a primary role in shaping the community in the future.

Zoning Code Audit

Village Square Overlay

The purpose of the Village Square Overlay is to provide reduced parking requirements and increased lot coverage, allowing a higher degree of coverage and denser development. The Village Square encourages mixed-use development via the Mixed-Use Overlay Zone, development in this area should focus on creating a harmonious residential and commercial uses conveniently located, scaled at the pedestrian and cyclist level, and encouraging overall walkability.

Opportunities

- ◆ Phased right-of-way improvements should be adopted into the City's comprehensive plan and included in the City's capital improvements. Improvements within the Village Square overlay should focus on walkability, local retail, grocery, and residential development
- ◆ Comprehensive plan goals and policies promotes a lively pedestrian-oriented downtown district with a mix of uses.
- ◆ Mixed use residential is allowed within the Restricted (C-1) and General Commercial (C-2) zones, and of the approximately 436 acres of land available in these commercial zones, 30% is assumed to be suitable for mixed-use development. This provides approximately 131 acres of additional available land for residential mixed-use development.
- ◆ Lundstrom Street, King Street, and Lawson Street are frequently used arterials which connect traffic from US 2 to the park, civic buildings, and residential areas to the north, restrictions provide by military operations are limited here. Considerations to expanding the Village Square Overlay zone should be considered for these streets, creating a mixed-use area full of pedestrian and bicycle amenities. This type of change can shape the "downtown" core, provide the amenities necessary and allow for less restrictions on development.
- ◆ Professional services are envisioned to include specialized personal and professional service businesses that commonly locate in the C-1 zone. Professional Services is also envisioned to include mixed-uses, generally occurring within a single building or as multiple structures on the same property.

Constraints

- ◆ Mixed-use development is restricted within 100 feet from US 2 and Ldn 70. It is strictly prohibited within Ldn 70 and generally not permitted in Ldn 60-69. Ldn 60-69 encompasses much of the Village Square Overlay.
- ◆ Mixed-use development is constrained in the C-1 and C-2 zones adjacent to US 2 within the Village Square Overlay due to current build out of the parcels, the access roads which parallel US 2 restricts the size/shape of developments. Vehicle accessibility and flow would need to be altered in order to include pedestrian and bicycle pathways/trails.
- ◆ Limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and facilities in the overlay zone do not support walkability and connectivity
- ◆ The US 2 overlay excludes the area of the Village Square overlay. Projects within the implementation matrix of the US 2 Corridor study only apply to the US 2 overlay zone affectively excluding improvements from the Village Square.
- ◆ The mixed-use overlay zone is restricted by the 70 Ldn sound contour to the south. To the north of US 2 mixed-use is permitted in the C-2 zone. However, mixed-use development is prohibited in the adjacent single-family and manufactured housing zone on the northwest side of town.

SR 2 Corridor Overlay

The purpose of the US 2 Corridor Overlay is to allow for pedestrian-oriented commercial development and implementation of the SR 2 Corridor Study strictly along the US 2 Corridor. The SR 2 corridor overlay encompasses the general commercial zoning (C-2), however, it excludes tribal land and the Village Square Overlay.

Opportunities

- ◆ The SR 2 corridor study promotes commercial activity at either edge of the corridor and a town center. The plan directs development of commercial land along the corridor be done in a manner that is aesthetically attractive, supportive of the City's population base, and sensitive to the movement and needs of pedestrians as well as vehicles. Continued implementation of the SR 2 project implementation should continue, particularly, those projects which promote pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
- ◆ Mixed-use development: Commercial and Retail is also envisioned to include multifamily residential, generally occurring within a single building or as multiple structures on the same property. Residential uses in this category are envisioned to promote pedestrian-oriented development patterns and efficient use of land and public services. Mixed-use development is permitted within the C-1 and C-2 zoning designations.
- ◆ Considerations to modifying the SR 2 overlay boundary to include the Village Square Overlay zone.
- ◆ Permitted uses within the C-2 zone and APZ II overlay include; some manufacturing, trade and service-oriented industries, cultural, entertainment and recreation and resource production/extraction industries. These land use types are industrial by nature and in many ways incompatible with the adjacent Village Square Overlay and downtown features. Transitions between zones, street infrastructure, design standards and public art should be incorporated so as to create fluidity and an appealing public interface along US 2.
- ◆ Identify a list of shovel ready project types/prototypes within the downtown core and areas restricted by JLUS. This would benefit the city by identifying the types of projects are not suitable, restricted, prohibited. The project types/prototypes should also include locked in cost range(s) for transportation impact fees, design standards to create consistency throughout the corridor, and infrastructure improvements which identify developer and city responsibilities.

Constraints

- ◆ Sound contour 75+ restricts some commercial development and prohibits residential development entirely
- ◆ At the intersection of Garfield and US 2, APZ II and Ldn 70 overlap at this intersection providing increased restrictions to any residential development. Commercial development is permitted however, restrictions to use, density, height and other development standards apply. From the Garfield/US 2 intersection to Deer Heights the level of noise increases along this area as is in direct alignment with the FAFB flight patterns. Restrictions to commercial development will further determine the use and standards permitted in this area, residential and mixed-use development is strictly prohibited here
- ◆ The US 2 Overlay zone does not overlay with the Village Square Overlay this is a barrier to creating the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure necessary in the downtown core and is in conflict with the project implementation list of the SR 2 Corridor study.
- ◆ Spokane Tribal lands are between Fairview Heights Road and Craig Road to the north and Kalispel Tribal Lands between Lyons Road and Hayden Road. There is limited control over development of these area. Creating a strong relationship and partnerships with the tribe is desirable to create consistency in development and design standards from the tribal lands into and out of the city limits.

Hayford Square Overlay

The purpose of the Hayford Square Overlay zone is to support auto-oriented commercial development along the eastern edge of the city.

Opportunities

- ◆ Given the purpose of the Hayford Square Overlay to support auto-oriented commercial development consideration should be given to extending the overlay zone to encompass the area from Garfield and US 2, headed east to the city limits.
- ◆ Restrictions to land use and development because of impacts to military operations in the areas and between Garfield and the eastern city limits consider expanding the Hayford Square Overlay to encompass this larger area and update the Hayford Square Overlay zone with exact development standards and permitted land use types so that it is easier for developers to narrow down the types of development, size, density and other standards allowed here.

Constraints

- ◆ Sound contour 70+ restricts some commercial development and prohibits residential development entirely within this area.
- ◆ The Hayford Square Overlay zone code provide little benefit to encouraging development due to its very limited standards. Considerations to modify the code language, or remove entirely, should be considered. The comprehensive plan provides goals and policies to support the auto-oriented development of this area, furthermore, JLUS restricts many land use activities that are not either industrial or auto-centric by nature within this area and immediately adjacent to this area.

Code Audit Summary Recommendations:

Overlay zones

The Airway Heights municipal code provides several overlay zones – Village Square, SR 2 Corridor, Hayford Square, Hayford Road, and Mixed-Use. Each overlay zone functions separately from one another and provide very little design standards. The overall recommendation for the Village Square, SR 2 Overlay, and Hayford Square is to remove the overlay zone criteria, designating the Village Square and Hayford Square as a center and SR 2 as a corridor. Design standards along SR 2 should be cohesive and align with those identified in the Public Art Plan.

- ◆ Combine the Village Square, Hayford Square, and SR 2 overlay zones into a Centers and Corridors overlay. Keep characteristics from the Village Square and Hayford Square (i.e. pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities vs. auto centric development).
- ◆ Overtime, the Centers and Corridors model should be expanded to the north and south of US 2. For example, Hayford Road, to the north and south, would be designated as a corridor and Hayford Road Overlay Zone would be eliminated as an overlay zone and designated as a center.
- ◆ The Comprehensive Plan provides policy level defining characteristics for the Village Square and Hayford Square overlay zone, those characteristics should be incorporated into the vision for each center. Design standards should reinforce each vision.
- ◆ Establish distinguishing design features and public amenities specific to each Center (Village Square and Hayford Square). Where possible identify areas suitable for mixed use development, design standards for the mixed-use development and, the center it's located in should be cohesive and enhance the character of the zone.
 - ◆ Village Square design features should enhance bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Incorporation of foot paths to connect commercial, office, retail and residential structures. Landscape requirements should focus on enhancing connectivity and safety. Public places and public art should be incorporated.
 - ◆ Hayford Square design features while auto centric in nature should also include walking paths to connect the overall corridor from the Village Square to Hayford Square and neighboring residential areas. Landscape should be enhanced around bike/pedestrian amenities to create increased safety and buffering between US 2 and large commercial areas.
- ◆ To create cohesiveness along the entire stretch of the US 2 corridor artistic elements, as provided in the Airway Heights Public Art Plan, should be incorporated into the design and/or selection of public infrastructure and art. The entire stretch of the US 2 corridor was identified as a “Cultural Crossroads” bringing together a broad interpretation of culture include the ethnic and historical contribution of the local tribes and geographic nature of the West Planes.

Mixed Use Development

- ◆ Identify areas best suited for single and multi-building mixed use development.
- ◆ Outright permit mixed-use development within sound contour 65-69 Ldn.
- ◆ Enhance landscape and design standards of mixed-use development to provide buffers for safety and enhance connectivity.

- ◆ Encourage multi-family housing options in the area to be rezoned from R-2 to R-3 between Lundstrom and Lawson and 13th Ave. to 12th Ave.

Downtown Core

The Village Square has been long recognized as the “downtown core” for Airway Heights. Development on the north side of US 2 includes strip mall style shopping, fast food dining, and retail. Fronting the strip mall includes a one lane service road which runs parallel to US 2 connecting businesses within a single block to one another. Behind the strip malls includes an alley backed by medium density residential, within walking distance residents and visitors alike can walk to the strip mall, local civic buildings, and Sunset Park. US 2 provides a barrier to residents walking to the grocery store located on the south side of US 2.

On the south side of US 2 in the Village Square area includes Yoke’s grocery store which is fronted by a large parking lot and 14th Avenue which runs parallel to US 2 as a service road. Much of the land south of Yoke’s is vacant, roads are primarily dirt and infrastructure for sewer is not as developed in this area.

Mixed use development is conditionally permitted in the Village Square and under lying zone C-1, furthermore, mixed use development is conditionally permitted in the C-2 zone flanking the Village Square.

- ◆ Remove barriers to creating mixed use development by permitting mixed use development in the C-1 and C-2 zones.
- ◆ Repurpose the service road on the north and south side of US 2 into pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities. Include public spaces like plazas and patios and incorporate areas for public art.
- ◆ Enhance the pedestrian crossings at the intersections of Lundstrom Street, King Street, and Lawson Street. Consider removal of mid-block pedestrian crossings between King/Lundstrom and Lundstrom/Ziegler.
- ◆ Create design and landscape standards that enhance bicycle and pedestrian movement, build upon the standards provided in the mixed-use development overlay zone.
- ◆ Consider rezoning the residential area along 13th Ave. and 12th Ave. to R-3. This will allow a transition zone between C-1 and C-2 and the adjacent residential area. Furthermore, rezoning to R-3 will provide more opportunity to develop mixed use development on the north side of US 2 and outside of the 65-69 Ldn, thus reducing conflicts with military air travel.
- ◆ The city should consider enhance landscaping and amenities (pathways, lighting etc.) at the intersection of US 2 and King and King Street so as to create a more vibrant neighborhood and business/retail district, connecting people from US 2 along King Street to Sunset Park. Enhancements on King Street could then be applied to Lundstrom Street and Lawson Street.
- ◆ Create design and landscape standards for civic buildings to create identity and unity. Enhance the cluster of civic buildings at the intersection of 12th Ave. and Lundstrom Street by developing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities as well as incorporation of landscaping and public places.
- ◆ The alley on the north side of SR 2 behind the commercial zone should be enhanced with bicycle and pedestrian amenities and accessibility to local business and future residential development.

