

Community Assembly Strategic Plan

2023

Working Draft as of 05/02/2023

The best way to predict the future is to create it.--Peter Drucker

Executive Summary/Introduction

This document reflects the inaugural Community Assembly (CA) strategic plan. It has been formulated in the spirit of Peter Drucker's quote above. The CA wants to be a recognized and effective city entity, yet that is only possible if the CA develops and implements agreed upon goals and activities that flow from the desired future set forth in both a well-articulated vision and mission.

This strategic plan covers the year 2023. Successive annual plans will cover the months October through September, with provision for both monthly monitoring and an annual evaluation. Yearly revisions will take place during the CA's annual October retreat.

The strategic plan is meant to be followed, not just placed on a metaphorical shelf. Following this plan will mark the beginning steps that need to be taken to ensure a better future for the CA which, in turn, will contribute to a better future for the City and all its residents.

Vision Statement

The CA is a recognized and valuable partner in the city's governance. The CA is, in fact, the vehicle that ensures that the residents of Spokane, through their neighborhood councils, have a collective and unified voice in the city's decision-making processes as reflected in the City Charter.

Source Spokane City Charter

[Article VIII, Section 75](#) of the City of Spokane Charter defines the purpose of the CA as:

The community assembly is a coalition of independent neighborhood councils and serves as a forum for discussion of issues of broad interest. Each neighborhood council selects one representative and a designated alternate to serve on the community assembly.

Representatives are expected to represent the interests of their respective neighborhood council. The community assembly meets with the city council neighborhood committee and the City's office of neighborhood services periodically to discuss community-wide issues. The responsibilities of the community assembly include to:

- 1. review and recommend an action, policy, or plan to the city council neighborhood committee, the city council, the mayor, the City, and any city agency, commission, or board on any matter affecting the City;*
- 2. support and promote citizen participation and neighborhood enhancement;*
- 3. promote and facilitate open communication between the City and neighborhood councils and provide the primary means of communication between individual neighborhood councils;*
- 4. support and assist, as requested, individual neighborhood councils in becoming recognized and in performing their functions and responsibilities; and*
- 5. serve as an information resource to neighborhood councils.*

Mission Statement

The mission of the Community Assembly is to actualize its core values, as reflected in the CA Handbook.

Source: CA Handbook

Core values:

Common Good: Working towards mutual solutions based on diverse and unique perspectives.

Alignment: Bringing together the independent neighborhood councils to act collectively.

Initiative: Being proactive in taking timely, practical action.

Balance of Power: Being a transparent, knowledgeable representative body giving power to citizens' voices.

SWOT Analysis

This analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These are the elements that were used to develop the CA's goals and activities for 2023.

Source: Community Assembly Retreat, October 10, 2022

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuity ● Passion & commitment to neighborhoods ● Meeting consistency ● Strong attendance ● Community Engagement Grant funding ● Recently Updated CA Handbook ● CA Liaisons 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of unified voice ● Perceived lack of support from City ● Lack of active participation ● Seemingly different goals between CA and City ● Lack of onboarding process for new reps ● Lack of shared vision, action and goals ● Lack of awareness of CA in the larger community
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CC/CA subcommittee focused on refreshing relationship ● Having a voice in City process ● Liaison positions ● Provide input on ONS Director hiring ● Rebuild/strengthen relationships ● Recognition from CC ● Opportunity to grow neighborhood councils ● Engaging underrepresented groups ● Active recruitment ● Awareness of NCs & CA 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of active, consistent participation ● Apathy, loss of hope ● Turnover and loss of knowledge for both CA reps and City staff ● Meeting structure seen as ineffective ● Inability to unify ● Decision making timing ● Loss of NCs and other orgs like district groups

Goals, 2023.

1. Improve relationships between and among the Community Assembly, the Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS) and City Council,
2. Develop a strategy or strategies for reactivating the inactive neighborhood councils.
3. Work on behalf of all neighborhoods by improving neighborhood council participation in the CA.
4. Work with the City Council to explore ways to make the CA a true partner in local government.
5. Develop a CA Marketing Plan (See Marketing Plan, 2023-2024 below.)
6. Assist neighborhood councils financially so they might better serve their neighborhoods. (See the Financial Plan, 2023-2024 below.)

Operations Plan, Activities for 2023.

1. Review, and amend, if necessary, and actualize the CA-ONS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). (Goal 1)
2. Participate in the City Council Neighborhood Committee (Goal 1)
3. With ONS support, develop and implement a plan to reactivate the inactive neighborhood councils. (Goal 2)
4. Return to in-person meetings, with members attending remotely only when extenuating circumstances require (Goal 3)
5. Select a permanent venue for CA meetings (Goal 3)
6. Review and update the CA code of conduct (Goal 3)
7. Develop CA agenda items that are action-oriented with fewer presentations per meeting allowing more time for discussion and formulation of recommendations, as appropriate. (Goal 4)
8. Recruit to fill all CA Liaison positions (Goal 4)
9. Explore additional CA representation on city boards and committees, as appropriate. (Goal 4)
10. Weigh in on proposed City Council policies and ordinances, as appropriate. (Goal 4)
11. Work with the City Council to improve CA/CC meetings, so they are more productive and action-oriented. (Goal 4)
12. Coordinate with Gonzaga for continued Neighborhood Leadership Academy work. (Goal 4)
13. With ONS support, offer training opportunities,, including training to become a 501 (c) (3).. ((Goal 6)

Marketing Plan, Activities for 2023. (Goal 5)

1. Create and implement effective ways to outreach to inactive neighborhoods, including by mail, social media, and public announcements, in order to build capacity. (Goal 5)

2. Increase advertising of neighborhood council events and activities. (Goal 5)
3. Research national Neighborhood Council best practices and share them with Spokane neighborhood leaders..(Goal 5)
4. Develop effective strategies for use by neighborhood councils that will increase participation of underrepresented groups within neighborhoods (Goal 5)
5. Update the Online Toolkit.(Goal 5)

Financial Plan, Activities for 2023. (Goal 6)

This year the City Council has granted the CA \$25,000 to be distributed to the neighborhood councils with the goal of increasing neighborhood participation in the councils and their activities. These are the CA's only funds.

- 1.Continue to refine our process, application and timeline procedures.(Goal 6)
2. Provide a year-end report to the CA and City Council on spending.(Goal 6)
3. Provide a mid-year report in July or August (spent, committed, available).(Goal 6)
4. Maintain and increase neighborhood grant participation wherever possible.(Goal 6)
5. Propose 2024 training-related expenses for end-of-year Community Engagement Grant fund usage (Goal 6)

The City Council supports the CA in other ways as well, although the CA Budget Committee is not directly in charge of the approval and distribution of the funds. These programs are available to individual, active neighborhoods through application, including:

- a. Mobile speed signs
- b. Traffic calming
- c. Crosswalk/street art
- d. Clean-up
- e. Leadership academy
- f. School, park, and hospital zone speed cameras

Responsible Parties

- 1.Community Assembly–Operations Plan Activities 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11.
- 2.Administrative Committee–Operations Plan Activities 1, 7.
3. BSN–Goals listed under the Marketing Plan section and Operations Plan Activities 3 an, 12 and 13. .
4. Budget Committee–Activities listed under the Financial Plan section
5. Liaison Committee–Operations Activity 8

Monthly Monitoring and Yearly Evaluation

In order to monitor this plan on an ongoing basis, the CA will include a written strategic plan update on each monthly agenda. Each month's report should include progress made on particular goals and challenges that inhibit progress on others. Possible solutions for the challenges should be explored and decisions made..

A final written report needs to be presented yearly and should be used as the basis for creating the next year's strategic plan.