

**SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE/AGENDA OF THE
SPOKANE PLAN COMMISSION CHAPTER REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE**

**MEETING OF THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2025
9:00 A.M. – CITY HALL LOBBY TRIBAL CONFERENCE ROOM**

The Spokane Plan Commission Chapter Review Subcommittee will be holding a Special Meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 5, 2025, in the City Hall Lobby Tribal Conference Room at 808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA. The purpose of the meeting is to consider and discuss items on the attached agenda.

The special meeting will be open to the public.

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Video ID: 115 489 228 4

Written public comments will be accepted at erapdsdp@spokanecity.org on these items up to one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Verbal testimony may also be accepted during the meeting.

SEE ATTACHED AGENDA



Spencer Gardner
Planning Director

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION: The City of Spokane is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs and services for persons with disabilities. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may call, write, or email Risk Management at 509.625.6221, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201; or m_lowmaster@spokanecity.org. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact Risk Management through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.

Special Meeting Notice

Final Audit Report

2025-05-28

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Spokane Plan Commission Chapter Review Subcommittee Agenda

Special Meeting
Thursday, June 05, 2025
9:00 AM

Hybrid – City Hall Lobby, Tribal Conference Room/ Microsoft Teams
808 W Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA 99201

Environment Chapters (Natural Environment, Parks & Recreation, Shorelines)

Group 2 Members: Carole Shook, Tyler Tamoush, Jill Yotz

Virtual Meeting Link - See Next Page for Information

TIMES GIVEN ARE AN ESTIMATE AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Subcommittee Briefing Session:

9:00 – 9:10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roll Call 2. Introduction to the Subcommittee 3. Approval of current agenda 	Planning Staff Kevin Freibott All
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Agenda:

9:10 – 9:25	1. Review of Process and Goals	Kevin Freibott
9:25 – 10:30	2. Natural Environment Chapter	Kevin Freibott

Adjournment: The next scheduled Plan Commission Chapter Review Subcommittee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 5, 2025.

*Items denoted with an asterisk may include final action taken by the Subcommittee. Written public comments will be accepted at planspokane@spokanecity.org on these items up to one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Verbal testimony may also be accepted during the meeting.

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Plan Commission Chapter Review Subcommittee Meeting Information

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Plan Commission Chapter Review Subcommittee will be held in a hybrid in-person / virtual format. Members of the public are welcome to attend in person at City Hall or online using the following information.

Microsoft Teams

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

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Please note that public comments will be taken during the meeting, but the public is encouraged to continue to submit their comments or questions in writing to: planspokane@spokanecity.org. Written public comments will be accepted up to one hour prior to the start of the meeting.

The audio proceedings of the Plan Commission meetings will be recorded and are available online.

May 28, 2025

Chapter Review Subcommittee
Spokane Plan Commission
City of Spokane

Re: June 5 Meeting of the Chapter Review Subcommittee

Dear President Bank and Plan Commissioners,

The third meeting of the Chapter Review Subcommittee is scheduled for **June 5 at 9:00 AM** in the **Tribal Conference Room, first floor lobby of City Hall**. We have much to discuss and, as will be usual for these meetings, there is a lot to review and consider beforehand. Please take the time to read and consider the attached materials before the meeting. We have provided the following:

1. **Chapter Review Subcommittee Briefing.** An introduction to the subcommittee and its intended purpose.
2. **Community Visioning Engagement Summary.** A summary of the public engagement that has already occurred towards crafting a new vision for the community.
3. **Natural Environment Chapter.** Text of Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan, showing the results of initial streamlining and updates.

If you are a member of Group 2: Environment Chapters, we ask that you read these materials *before* the meeting, as we will have limited time to discuss the changes and updates.

We look forward to seeing everyone next week during the workshop. Please let me know if you have any questions at that time.

Sincerely,

Kevin Freibott, Senior Planner
Planning & Economic Development
kfreibott@spokanecity.org
509-625-6184



PlanSpokane

Plan Commission Periodic Update Chapter Review Subcommittee

April, 2025



PLANSPOKANE

Resilient | Connected | Livable | 2046



City of Spokane Plan Commission PERIODIC UPDATE CHAPTER REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE



The Plan Commission Subcommittee will meet for in-depth discussion and input on the Comprehensive Plan Chapters.



Feedback will help direct the PlanSpokane 2046 Periodic Update, ensuring compliance with state legislation and understanding of community input.

CHAPTER GROUPINGS:

May 6 & May 21, 2025

- Vision Statement
- Local Governance
- Neighborhoods
- Social Health



VISION AND COMMUNITY CHAPTERS

June 5 & June 19, 2025

- Natural Environment
- Parks & Recreation
- Shorelines



ENVIRONMENT CHAPTERS

June 30 & July 17, 2025

- Urban Design & Historic Preservation
- Econ. Development
- Housing



HOW WE GROW CHAPTERS

Q1 2026

- Land Use
- Capital Facilities
- Transportation



TECHNICAL CHAPTERS

Background

The City of Spokane is preparing a periodic update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. A “periodic update” is the state’s term for a full review of a Comprehensive Plan, intended to maintain conformance with any changes to state law. The update also provides an opportunity learn about any changes supported by the community.

The City’s first Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act was adopted in 2001 after a robust community engagement process. It contains 14 Chapters which include Housing, Land Use, Transportation, Neighborhoods, Capital Facilities, Natural Environments, and more. Minor annual amendments are processed most years, which primarily consider adjustments to the land use designation and zoning of individual properties needed to meet project needs. Then, every ten years the City goes through a Periodic Update as required by the Growth Management Act, which takes a deeper look at the entire document. Spokane’s last Periodic Update was adopted in 2017 and is called “Shaping Spokane”.

The next Periodic Update is due to be adopted by the end of in 2026. Dubbed PlanSpokane 2046, this update is looking at the next twenty-year planning horizon. While regular amendments have occurred over time, this effort will be the first substantial update since the Comprehensive Plan was first adopted in 2001. Facing significant population growth and changing local factors, this update provides the community with an opportunity to reevaluate our vision and development strategy to meet current and future needs of the community. The goals of this update are to meet all state legislative requirements updated since 2017, incorporate community input around changing needs and wants, and to streamline the Plan and make it easier to read and more user friendly.

Roles and Expectations

To best navigate potential and proposed updates to the current Comprehensive Plan chapters, a Plan Commission Subcommittee has been created to allow for additional time for in-depth discussion and input. After the subcommittee provides input, the entire Plan Commission will discuss these and other changes. To ensure productive and thorough review of the chapters, roles and expectations have been established for both the City of Spokane Planning Staff and City of Spokane Plan Commission Subcommittee.

City of Spokane Planning Staff

The City of Spokane Planning Staff agrees to:

- Provide materials and streamlined drafts of the relevant chapters one week prior to each Subcommittee meeting.
- Present an overview of the streamlined drafts, relevant state legislation and plans, and community feedback to the Subcommittee.

- Summarize discussion of the Subcommittee to present before the full Plan Commission body.

City of Spokane Plan Commission Subcommittee

The City of Spokane Plan Commission Subcommittee agrees to:

- Review all materials before the designated Subcommittee meeting.
- Be prepared with questions and comments for the designated Subcommittee to foster robust conversation.

Because there is so much to discuss, and time is somewhat limited, there will not be time during the meetings for staff to go line by line through every change. We ask that subcommittee members commit the necessary time to read and understand the chapters before we meet, so we can spend our time most productively during the meetings.

Scope of PlanSpokane 2046 Chapter Review

The final product of PlanSpokane 2046 will be based off the existing Comprehensive Plan and past engagement, state requirements, and new community input. The document will also be streamlined to greater usability and rebranded to PlanSpokane.

This is not an entirely new Comprehensive Plan. The intent is to pay homage to the existing plan and the work and input by so many in the past, while simultaneously making this a plan of today, for tomorrow—one that is easier to read, containing less cumbersome language. The hope is to have a new plan that incorporates the best of the old plan while simultaneously taking advantage of new information, plans, and policies.

To assist in the review of the existing Comprehensive Plan chapters, the chapters have been organized into thematic categories: Community Chapters, Environmental Chapters, How We Grow Chapters, Technical Chapters, and Functional Chapters. Initial work with the first three groups can occur during summer of 2025, since those chapters are less likely to be affected by the selection of a preferred growth strategy (part of the Environmental Impact Statement preparation). Review of the Technical Chapters, those most affected by the preferred alternative, will occur early 2026, while the Functional Chapters will be finalized at the end.

Additionally, Climate Planning efforts are occurring through a separate process, as funded by the Climate Commitment Act. Policy discussion is expected late 2026 through early 2027, with climate and resiliency related policies being integrated into the overall Comprehensive Plan afterwards. More information about Climate Planning can be found at my.spokanecity.org/climateplanning.

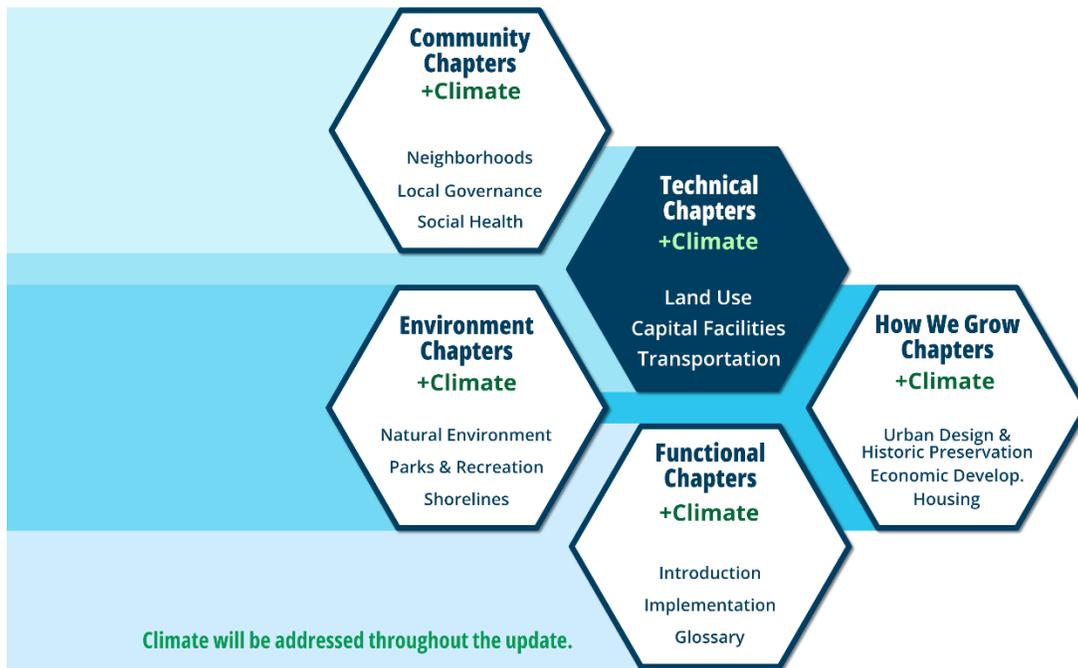


Figure 1. Illustration of the City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan Chapter Groupings for streamlined review.

Review Timeline

The process for this update is very complex, with a lot of moving parts. There are major efforts underway that will inform and affect the eventual Comprehensive Plan, and these efforts are on their own timelines and paths, necessitating a flexible process for review and consideration. Know that this review of the first three chapter groups is only the beginning. The entire Plan Commission will be having many conversations and workshops regarding the various moving parts along the way.

The general timeline is as follows:

1. The Plan Commission Subcommittee reviews the first three groupings (May, June, July 2025)
2. The first three groupings will be brought before the full Plan Commission body (August, September 2025)
3. The first public draft of the first three-chapter groupings will be released for public comment along with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (tentatively October 2025)
4. Technical Chapter work with Plan Commission, along with review of the Draft Alternatives and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (October through December 2025)
5. During this time, climate policies and language will begin to be inserted into the document as well as the results of the City's ongoing work around Racially Disparate Impacts and as well as Displacement
6. The first full draft will be released to the public as soon as the preferred alternative is selected, and analysis is nearing completion (later part of Q1 2026)



PlanSpokane Community Visioning Engagement Summary

April, 2025

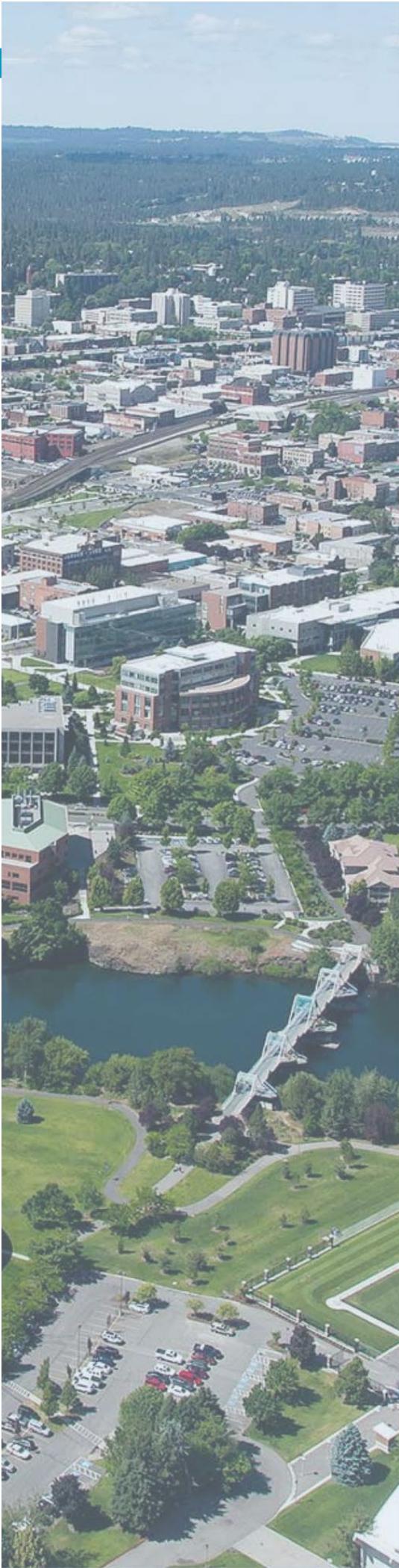


PLAN **SPOKANE**

Resilient | Connected | Livable | 2046

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Community Visioning Engagement **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



Over 300 community members provided insightful feedback for Spokane's future vision.



Feedback will help direct the PlanSpokane 2046 Periodic Update and inform the growth options of our city for the next twenty years!

COMMON THEMES :

- Access to nature
- Sustainability and environmental stewardship
- Healthy and clean



NATURE

- Welcoming and diverse
- Accessible
- Family-friendly
- Connected
- Human-centered
- Safe



COMMUNITY

- Good jobs
- Culture and arts economy
- Cutting-edge
- New industries
- Reuse



INNOVATION

- Affordable
- Walkable and bike-friendly
- Access to neighborhood services
- Attractive



LIVABLE

Background

The City of Spokane is commencing a periodic update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. A “periodic update” is the state’s term for a full review of a Comprehensive Plan to make sure it’s in conformance with any legislative changes to state law. The update also provides an opportunity to learn about any changes supported by the community.

The City’s first Growth Management Act compliant Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001 after a robust community engagement process. It is made up of 14 Chapters which include Housing, Land Use, Transportation, Neighborhoods, Capital Facilities, Natural Environments, and more. Minor annual amendments are processed most years, which primarily look at individual properties to adjust land use designations to meet project needs. Then, every ten years the City goes through a periodic update as required by the Growth Management Act, which takes a deeper look at the entire document. Spokane’s last periodic update was in 2017, producing a plan called “Shaping Spokane”.

The next periodic update is due in 2026, and is dubbed PlanSpokane 2046, as it is looking at the next twenty-year planning horizon. While regular updates have occurred, this will be the **first substantial update since the Comprehensive Plan was first adopted in 2001**. With the significant population growth and changing local factors Spokane has experienced since then, this update provides the community with an opportunity to reevaluate the vision. The goals of this update are to meet all state legislative requirements updated since 2017, incorporate community input around changing needs and wants, and to streamline the Plan to make it more user friendly.

Being the first substantial update since 2001, the City of Spokane has determined that this proposal is likely to have a significant and potentially negative impact on the environment. As such, an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared as part of the PlanSpokane 2046 effort. The Determination of Significance is the first step towards updating the Comprehensive Plan to reflect visions, goals, and legislation to support Spokane’s growth into 2046, and will provide insight into how to mitigate any potential impacts of future growth.

The first step of the EIS process is known as “scoping”. Ultimately, the “scope” of the EIS identifies different ways the City can meet its goals for growth or put differently, **how to meet Spokane’s**

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is the community’s vision for how the city grows and invests. It is mandated by state law requiring a “road map” for fast-growing cities, known as the Growth Management Act. Spokane must have a Comprehensive Plan to manage population growth, with goals that include reducing sprawl, supporting efficient multimodal transportation, protecting the environment, and many more. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision for the city – looking at a horizon of twenty years. It guides implementation through Capital projects, City programs, and regulations.

envisioned future. A request for comment on the scope of the EIS was issued on February 5, 2025 and ran through April 7, 2025. Both before and during the scoping comment period, the City of Spokane Department of Planning and Economic Development provided opportunities for the community to be engaged in the process of identifying that future vision for Spokane’s next twenty years.

Feedback received during the Vision Board, Community Visioning Workshop Series, Community Visioning Survey, and Spring Market Visioning are documented below and will help inform the Environmental Impact Statement and PlanSpokane 2046 update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Vision Board

Launched on January 9, 2025 and open for three months through April 10, 2025, the City of Spokane Vision Board provided an early opportunity for community members to share their future vision for Spokane. A vision board is a collection of images and words that inspire and motivate you to reach your goals. Looking towards the Periodic Update of Spokane’s Comprehensive Plan, this vision board sought to identify the community’s goals for Spokane for the next twenty years.



Figure 1. City of Spokane Vision Board was open from January 9, 2025 through April 10, 2025.

Of the 36 individual responses to the vision board activity, the common themes revolved around **nature and environmental stewardship, community connection, opportunities** for housing and jobs, improved **access to public spaces**. The list of responses can be found below.

A roof over every head	Human-centered urban planning
Dedicated dog parks	Make Spokane more walkable
Promote a mindset and local economy of recycling and upcycling	Increased public green spaces in all neighborhoods
Improved lighting on streets	Preservation of historic architecture
Conversion of residential arterials to boulevards	Build homeownership opportunities in infill housing
Ensure public access to school playfields	Rewild Spokane
A green, wet, and cool Spokane	A Spokane River regatta
Neighborhood signs and identify	Natural spaces preserved for wildlife
Pride in a cleaner city	Neighborhood historic character preserved
Wilderness in every neighborhood	Teach Peace
A welcoming Spokane to all people	End of the housing shortage

Children own the streets	No one feels alone
Good jobs with higher wages	People-oriented streets
Third places in every neighborhood (corner stores, coffee shops, etc.)	Property crime enforced and a greater feeling of safety
Promote home ownership over workforce housing	Spaces where bicyclists and pedestrians are protected from vehicles
An ability to age in place	Attainable and accessible housing for all
Inclusive and welcoming community that caters to the needs of everyone	Robust community gardens and sharing of local crops
Public art and cultural arts economic growth	Walkable and lively neighborhoods

Community Visioning Workshop Series

To further identify the community’s desires for Spokane’s future, the City of Spokane hosted a Community Visioning Workshop Series in March 2025. One workshop was held in each Council District, with one community-wide workshop located in downtown. Over 150 individuals attended one or more of the workshops, providing valuable feedback to help shape the vision and future policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

These in-person workshops included discussion, mapping exercises, and feedback opportunities related to various aspects of the Comprehensive Plan and future growth options for the City. Each station sought reactions and comments on how community members envisioned the next twenty years of Spokane.



Figure 2. Community members participate in the District 2 Community Visioning Workshop.

Station 1: Vision

The current City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan – Shaping Spokane – has unique vision statements for the majority of the chapters. This station aimed to receive feedback on the general future they envisioned for Spokane while also working towards the creation of a singular vision statement for the updated Comprehensive Plan that will allow all chapters to work towards the same future.

When asked to write down one word that describes their ideal future, community members provided the following themes:

Vibrant	Affordable
Walkable	Industries/Jobs
Safe	Resilient/Sustainable
Bike-Friendly	Attractive
Diverse	Dense

When asked what may be missing from the rough draft statements, common themes were:

Arts and Culture	Safety/Safe Streets
Housing and Food Security	Acknowledgement of Tribal Sovereignty
Economic Mobility	Connected Community
Access to Nature	Pedestrian Focus

Station 2: Commercial Use Preference

Community members were asked to identify which commercial types they wanted to see more of throughout Spokane and within their neighborhood. Participants were asked to vote between convenience/groceries/big-box, restaurants, boutique stores, shopping/retail complex, pharmacies/clinics, mixed-use/ground-floor retail, neighborhood corner stores/cafes, and hotel/lodging. The top three selected uses were **neighborhood corner stores/cafes** (83 votes), **mixed-use/ground-floor retail** (79 votes), and **restaurants** (42 votes).



Figure 4. Community members participate in the District 3 Community Visioning Workshop.

Additional uses or considerations provided included childcare, senior housing, adaptive reuse of existing building, neighborhood groceries, community spaces, breweries, and bike repair/rentals.

Station 3: Your Spokane Mapping Exercise

Workshop participants were asked to indicate where they currently live, work, and play in Spokane to provide an understanding of who was providing comments and what areas in Spokane are currently appealing to its residents. The four workshops had a wide range of geographic input, with participants living and working throughout the city. District specific locations can be found in the attached appendices.

Comments were also received on initial thoughts about Spokane’s current needs. Common themes included **increased walkability and bikeability, more frequent and expanded public transportation, fire and traffic management, and public meeting places.**



Figure 5. Community members participate in the District 2 Community Visioning Workshop.

Station 4: Your Future Spokane Mapping Exercise

Next, community members were asked to think about the future of Spokane. **Local businesses and job opportunities** were desired throughout Spokane, with specific locations identified during the

individual workshops found in the attached appendices. However, large retailers were only indicated to be desired in downtown and the North Hill Neighborhood.

Additional uses and considerations for Spokane’s future included:

Community gardens	Increased fire infrastructure
Small grocery stores	More housing types (including senior housing)
Improved pedestrian infrastructure	Use of vacant properties
More natural areas and habitats	Improved transit services
Public community spaces	Balanced development (density + open space)

Station 5: Climate Ready Spokane

While the integration of climate and resiliency policies into the Comprehensive Plan is going through a [separate engagement process](#) to gather even more feedback about the community’s experiences with climate hazards and their impacts, the visioning workshops provided an additional opportunity to reflect on ways to increase resiliency in Spokane. Specific mapped concerns or considerations can be found in the attached appendices for each workshop. Common themes to support resiliency were:

Provide more covered bus shelters	Provide electric car charging stations
Plant more trees	Increase public transit access
Reduce community water usage	Increase recycling
Further incentivize low-water landscaping	Improve walkability and bikeability
Fire management	Provide public education on resiliency

Station 6: What Did We Miss?

At the end of the workshops, community members were asked to document any other topic or theme that was missed, or any additional comments they wished to provide. Those comments can be found in the attached appendices. Larger concepts that the community wants to also be considered as part of the PlanSpokane 2046 update included **services for Spokane’s unhoused residents, food policy, urban design, connectivity, and all-age and all-ability usability of the city.**

Community Visioning Survey

In order to provide a feedback opportunity for members of the community who were unable to attend one of the in-person workshops, an online Community Visioning Survey was launched. Though only open two weeks during the beginning of April to ensure feedback was timely and able to be included in the scoping process of the PlanSpokane 2046 effort, 64 responses were received that will help direct the scope of the Periodic Update.

Survey respondents were first asked what one word describes their ideal future for Spokane. Shared themes include:

Inclusive/Diverse	Prosperous
Sustainable/Nature/Conservation	Safe/Clean
Affordable/Housed	Accessible
Community	Walkable/Bikeable
Healthy	Family-Friendly
Vibrant	Resilient

When asked to rank the available draft vision statement (reference Station 1: Visioning section above), vision statement B was ranked the most preferred. 25 votes ranked the statement the most preferred and 22 votes ranked it second most preferred. Vision station A came in second.

Vibrant, walkable neighborhoods, environmental stewardship, balanced, and affordable housing were all concepts in the draft statements that stood out to respondents. Missing terms from the vision statements were also called out, including **accessibility**, **clean**, an emphasis on **safety**, leveraging **existing investment**, and **all-age amenities**. This feedback largely mirrors the preferences of the Community Visioning Workshop Series and will help shape the final vision statement of the PlanSpokane 2046 Comprehensive Plan.



Figure 6. Scout the Marmot encourages you to get involved in PlanSpokane 2046.

To better understand desired uses throughout Spokane’s neighborhoods, the Community Visioning Survey also asked about opinions on commercial uses. The majority of respondents *agreed* in some capacity that they would like more **local businesses** and **job opportunities** within their neighborhoods. Conversely, the majority of respondents *disagreed* in some capacity that they would like more **larger retailers**. When asked to rank commercial uses, **neighborhood corner stores/cafes** ranked first, followed by **restaurants** and **groceries**.

When asked what other uses they would like to see in their neighborhood, survey respondents responded with:

Child Care	Affordable Housing/Accessory Dwelling Units
Safe Sidewalks/Walking Trails	Amenities in Parks
Professional Services	Community Spaces/Maker Spaces
Farmer’s Markets/Community Gardens	Bike Shops
Access to Transit	Electric Charging Stations
Neighborhood Events/Art Walk	Fire Services
Mental Health Support	Memory-Friendly Public Spaces

Spring Market Visioning

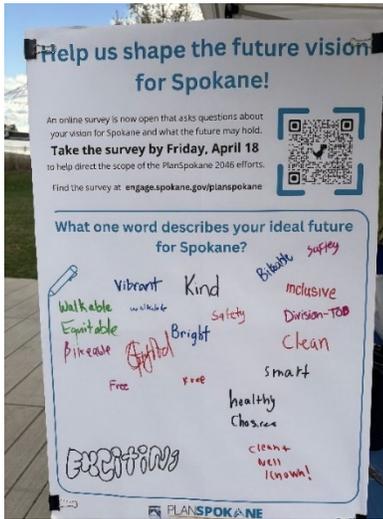


Figure 7. Comments received during the 2025 Spring Riverfront Market.

To wrap up the community engagement for the PlanSpokane 2046 visioning process, Planning staff attended the Spring Riverfront Market in early April to advertise the Community Visioning Survey and learn additional themes for Spokane’s future. Approximately 50 community members attended the tabling booth to learn about the PlanSpokane 2046 project, Climate Planning efforts, and ongoing transportation projects.

Shared themes for Spokane’s ideal future include:

Walkable/Bikeable	Equitable
Healthy	Safe/Clean
Well Known	Exciting/Vibrant

Next Steps

Feedback received during the visioning, or scoping, process will inform the next steps of the PlanSpokane 2046 effort. Based on the identified vision, potential “hows” of meeting that vision will be identified. These different ways that the City may grow, called Growth Alternatives, will be reviewed through the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. These Growth Alternatives look at different scenarios, like different job growth or different zoning and code allowances, and what impact those different scenarios may have on the environment and Spokane as a whole. Those impacts are compared and a Preferred Alternative, the selected “how” for getting to the future vision, will be selected. The Preferred Alternative, along with legislative requirements and document streamlining, will inform changes to the actual Comprehensive Plan document. Final adoption of the PlanSpokane 2046 Comprehensive Plan is expected in the later part of 2026.

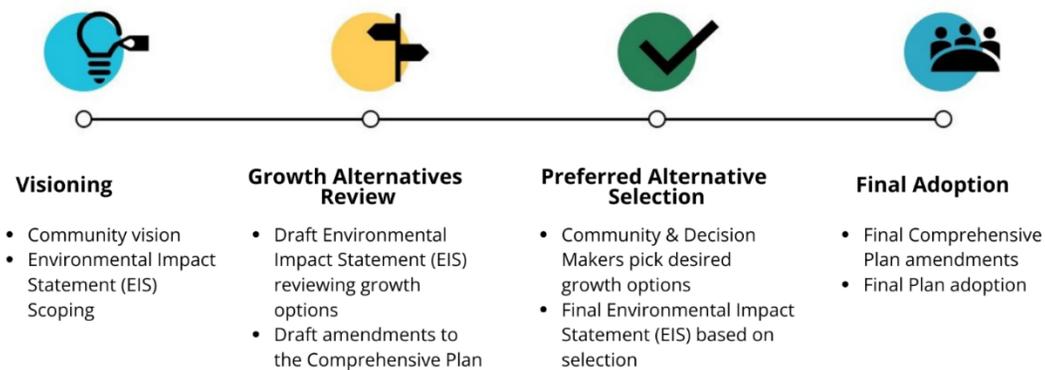


Figure 8. PlanSpokane 2046 process timeline

Community feedback will be accepted throughout the entire PlanSpokane 2046 process, from helping select the Preferred Alternative to weighing in on proposed goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

We invite your participation:

- Visit the project webpage at PlanSpokane.org to learn more about the planning process
- Learn more about the Climate Planning efforts at my.spokanecity.org/climateplanning
- [Subscribe to the PlanSpokane monthly newsletter](#) to receive timely updates
- Attend future workshops, meetings, and hearings hosted by the City of Spokane
- Provide written comments or ask questions of the Planning team by emailing PlanSpokane@spokanecity.org

Appendices –

District 1 Memo

District 2 Memo

District 3 Memo

Community-Wide Memo



Memo

Date: April 2, 2025

Re: District 1 Visioning Workshop Engagement Summary

The District 1 Visioning Workshop occurred on March 5 at the Northeast Community Center. Approximately 30 community members attended. Feedback received at each station activity is summarized below. A full visioning engagement summary will be developed at a later date.

Station 1: Vision Statement – One Word

Community members were asked to write down one word that describes their ideal future. The themes were:

- Community
- Resilient / Sustainable / Nature
- Affordable
- Walkable
- Innovation

Station 1: Vision Statement – Statement Ranking

Community members were asked to rank three similar vision statements based off themes found in the existing vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan. With 6 votes, vision statement B received the most votes: “Spokane will foster livability, connectivity, and resiliency throughout the city by balancing economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and the diverse needs of residents, while cherishing its unique and vibrant neighborhoods. The city will ensure access to safe and efficient mobility, attainable housing, natural environments, and walkable neighborhood services to support a high-quality of life for all residents.”

When asked what was missing from the sample vision statements, the themes were:

- Investment
- All-age access
- Engage / Active voice
- Open spaces access
- Emphasis on non-personal vehicle transportation
- Historic connections

Station 2: Commercial Preference

Community members were asked to identify which commercial types they wanted to see throughout Spokane.

Neighborhood corner stores/cafes received the most votes, with 14.

Mixed-use/ground-floor retail came in second, with 10 votes.

Restaurants came in third, with 9 votes.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- Gathering places / Community meeting spaces
- Corner stores in walkable areas
- Evening / weekend childcare
- Reuse of small-scale commercial that's currently vacant

Station 3: Your Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to indicate where they currently live, work, and play in Spokane. Participants indicated a wide array of areas in the city, showing geographic diversity in living, working, and leisure activities. Despite the range, there were more people who live in District 1. Downtown also contained a significant number of pins indicating work and favorite places.

Comments received focused on initial thoughts about Spokane's current needs:

- Hillyard needs transit
- River access is priority
- No good N-S bike route to E Sprague
- Need indoor aquatics facilities
- Lack of connectivity & services
- West of Latah/Hangman has equestrian activities

Station 4: Your Future Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to think about the future of Spokane. Pins indicated a desire for more **local businesses** in Chief Garry (Napa and Sprague), Bemiss, Northwest, Balboa/South Indian Trail, Shiloh Hills, and North Indian Trail. More **job opportunities** were desired in North Indian Trail/Balboa and South Indian Trail.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- Focus on vacant / underutilized commercial, particularly in East Central and Chief Garry
- More accessible commercial on South Hill / Cliff Cannon
- Allow hotels in more areas, makes short term rentals less desirable
- More historic activities in every neighborhood
- Community meet-ups / gathering spaces
- Bakery in Hillyard
- Jobs near schools for high schoolers
- More grocery stores, food deserts (North Hill)
- More dense middle housing balanced with open space, trees, food gardens

- Safety concern for Mission bridge crossing
- Create a pedestrian friendly downtown
- More trees, more food forests, daylighting creeks
- Expand commercial along freeway
- More local businesses in all neighborhoods
- Mixed-use on arterials
- Recapture the spirit of Expo '74 and create a community-side festival focusing on the river
- Healthy food / neighborhood grocery
- Faster bus times
- North Indian Trail traffic calming
- Scattered site shelters

Station 5: Climate-Ready Spokane

Community members were asked to reflect on ways to increase resiliency within Spokane. Suggestions included:

- Empower the community to adopt lawn-less, water-less landscaping
- Incentivize low water lawns
- Bring back increased rates for high water users
- Advocate for shift away from natural gas for homes
- Need more neighborhoods with lots of services and housing choices
- Every bike lane should be a protected bike lane
- Provide subsidies for people purchasing an e-bike / other related purchases
- Ensure housing development incorporates non-vehicle transportation to reduce burden on roads

Community members also mapped specific concerns or considerations on a map of the City of Spokane:

- Fire danger and low fire response in N Indian Trail / 5-mile prairie
- Audubon / Downriver needs more bike/ped routes to services
- Need community / neighborhood resiliency hubs
- Help people replace wood / vinyl siding with more fire-resistant materials
- What is planned for potential Yellowstone pipeline issues?
- Need more trees in Bemiss, Logan, Mission, and the City in general
- Dead street trees need replaced
- Need bike crossings at major intersections (e.g. Division / Ruby)

Station 6: What Did We Miss?

Community members were asked to document anything topic or theme that was missed, or any additional comments they wished to provide. Those comments included:

- All-age and all-ability usability of the city
- Solution for homelessness / urban camping
- Security / safety
- Lighting for more public spaces to increase safety
- Access to safe / attractive route to bike to the library, school, high-frequency transit route for all housing
- Make downtown more pedestrian friendly
- City line is great, replicate and incorporate transit-oriented development
- Address existing car parking lots and car dealerships in downtown / underutilized land
- Not enough bus shelters and safe bus stops
- Buffering between railroads / freeways / industrial development and residential
- Arterials as boundaries for neighborhoods makes it harder to advocate for better bike / ped crossings on them (funding limiting within neighborhood boundaries)



Memo

Date: April 2, 2025

Re: District 2 Visioning Workshop Engagement Summary

The District 2 Visioning Workshop occurred on March 25 at the Liberty Park Library. Approximately 45 community members attended. Feedback received at each station activity is summarized below. A full visioning engagement summary will be developed at a later date.

Station 1: Vision Statement – One Word

Community members were asked to write down one word that describes their ideal future. The themes were:

- Accessible
- Thriving
- Inclusive / Diverse
- Density
- Verdant / Sustainable
- Family-friendly
- Cutting-edge
- Safe / Clean
- Creative

Station 1: Vision Statement – Statement Ranking

Community members were asked to rank three similar vision statements based off themes found in the existing vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan. With 13 votes, vision statement A received the most votes: “Spokane will support its vibrant and inclusive neighborhoods by balancing livability, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality, while cherishing its unique cultural and natural assets. The city will ensure safe and efficient mobility, attainable housing, access to green spaces, neighborhood services, and a high quality of life for all residents through planning and community partnership.” Vision statement C had 12 votes.

When asked what was missing from the sample vision statements, the themes were:

- Commitment to expanding public transportation / bike lanes
- Safe street for pedestrians / bicyclists
- Retain the elements that distinguish neighborhoods from each other
- Commitment to not only trees, but entire ecosystem

- Connection of Spokane to nature-based building solution
- Improving health of residents
- Economic mobility
- Access to nature
- Connected community / places to gather

Station 2: Commercial Preference

Community members were asked to identify which commercial types they wanted to see throughout Spokane.

Mixed-use/ground-floor retail received the most votes, with 32 votes.

Neighborhood corner stores/cafes came in second, with 28.

Restaurants came in third, with 18 votes.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- Public open space
- Small neighborhood grocery stores
- Parking with rooftop gardens
- Family-friendly businesses
- Alleys – require for new development, build new ones, improve existing alleys
- Preservation of green space
- Mixed-use neighborhood
- Ensure appropriate parking for all uses

Station 3: Your Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to indicate where they currently live, work, and play in Spokane. Most participants indicated living in West Central / Chief Garry Park and south. Downtown also contained a significant number of pins indicating work, as well as East Central and Comstock. People's favorite places were in nearby State park lands, downtown, in local parks, and along the Centennial Trail / Spokane River.

Comments received focused on initial thoughts about Spokane's current needs:

- Plan for traffic in Cliff-Cannon, Vinegar Flats, along 29th, and generally within South Hill
- Support natural environment of Lincoln Park
- Unpaved roads within Hillyard
- Pavement improvements along heavy traffic routes
- Create partnerships to reduce homelessness
- Define what density means for Spokane / avoid comparisons to other cities

Station 4: Your Future Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to think about the future of Spokane. Pins indicated a desire for more **local businesses** in Northwest, North Hill, West Central, East Central, Lincoln Heights, Cliff-Cannon, and Manito/Cannon Hill. More **job opportunities** were desired in Northeast Spokane, downtown in Riverside, East Central, and West Central. **Large retailers** were desired in downtown.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- Need more natural areas and habitats in East Central
- Neighborhood park needed in east of Lincoln Heights
- Mixed-use and arts development in Comstock near 37th and Grand
- Support native habitat / bird habitat in Lincoln Heights
- More transit routes / stops needed in Vinegar Flats, Magnolia and 5th, and near MLK Center
- Neighborhood Center in lower South Hill near 6th and 7th off Maple
- Mixed use in Lincoln Heights along 29th
- Create more indoor community activities during winter
- What is the future plan for cemeteries?
- Reduce front-facing parking lots along N Division St
- Possibility of “tunneling” sections of I90 to reduce separation of neighborhoods (e.g. between Maple and Freya)

Station 5: Climate-Ready Spokane

Community members were asked to reflect on ways to increase resiliency within Spokane. Suggestions included:

- Build more shade structures at parks and over play areas
- More covered bus stops
- Plant more trees
- Incentivize meadow lawns / emphasize Water Wise efforts
- Provide electric car charging stations
- Ensure public transportation is accessible to all new development / treat public transportation like a required utility

Community members also mapped specific concerns or considerations on a map of the City of Spokane:

- Expand greenways for pedestrian connectivity downtown
- Use less water / partner with schools and community gardens to reduce water usage
- Cliff Cannon lacks bus service and considerations for commercial traffic
- Enforce watering restrictions
- Create more resiliency hubs

- Protect tree health
- Improve access and mobility at Lewis and Clark High School
- Promote new infrastructure for clean electricity
- Increase recycling / reduce amount of garbage burned
- Fire concern over Spokanescape encouraging wood mulch groundcover

Station 6: What Did We Miss?

Community members were asked to document anything topic or theme that was missed, or any additional comments they wished to provide. Those comments included:

- Need more frequent and later bus times
- Keep park bathrooms open
- Create a plan to save assets e.g. open space / habitat / water resources
- Install automated recycling at WTEF to increase recycling to 66%
- Support more winter activities within city limits
- Plan for water health / conservation
- Food policy
- Support greater system of bike lanes and transit stops
- Aesthetics of the built environments – landscaping, art, design, open space
- Narrow streets for slower and safer streets
- Photo enforced speed cameras near District 2 public schools
- Support multi-family and mixed-use development
- Reduce parking
- Increase sidewalk network



Memo

Date: April 3, 2025

Re: District 3 Visioning Workshop Engagement Summary

The District 3 Visioning Workshop occurred on March 27 at the Shadle Park Library. Approximately 37 community members attended. Feedback received at each station activity is summarized below. A full visioning engagement summary will be developed at a later date.

Station 1: Vision Statement – One Word

Community members were asked to write down one word that describes their ideal future. The themes were:

- Inclusive / Diverse / Welcoming
- Equity
- Sustainable / Green
- Fun
- Welcoming
- Thriving
- Livable
- Dense
- Bike-friendly
- Healthy
- Connected
- Affordable
- Safe
- Attractive

Station 1: Vision Statement – Statement Ranking

Community members were asked to rank three similar vision statements based off themes found in the existing vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan. With 12 votes, vision statement B received the most votes: “Spokane will foster livability, connectivity, and resiliency throughout the city by balancing economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and the diverse needs of residents, while cherishing its unique and vibrant neighborhoods. The city will ensure access to safe and efficient mobility, attainable housing, natural environments, and walkable neighborhood services to support a high-quality of life for all residents.” Statement A came in second with 9 votes.

When asked what was missing from the sample vision statements, the themes were:

- Support for arts and culture
- Housing security
- Food security
- Safety
- Acknowledgement of Tribal sovereignty
- Conservation / preservation of natural spaces

Station 2: Commercial Preference

Community members were asked to identify which commercial types they wanted to see throughout Spokane.

Neighborhood corner stores/cafes received the most votes, with 27.

Mixed-use/ground-floor retail came in second, with 26 votes.

Restaurants came in third, with 10 votes.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- Senior housing (Audubon-Downriver, Northwest, Balboa, South Indian Trail)
- Reuse of history buildings prior to new development
- Community spaces
- Greenway or walking path connection Division to Garland District
- Neighborhood grocery (e.g. Downriver)
- Protected bike lanes

Station 3: Your Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to indicate where they currently live, work, and play in Spokane. Participants primarily indicated living, working, and playing within District 3 boundaries. However, participants also worked in downtown, in Chief Garry Park, and Lincoln Heights in addition to concentration of employment in West Central. Favorite places included downtown as well, in addition to areas along Northwest Boulevard, in North Hill, and within natural areas like State park lands.

Comments received focused on initial thoughts about Spokane's current needs:

- More walkability, bike-ability, and access to transit
- Protected bike lanes
- Connect sidewalks and improve crossings on Northwest Boulevard
- Ash and Grace bus stop is dangers for school students
- Need bus access to medical district
- Address high speed cars / traffic calming
- Fire management needed
- Need transit access to natural areas
- Connect northern portions of Spokane to a bike network throughout the city
- Traffic considerations from new housing in North Indian Trail

Station 4: Your Future Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to think about the future of Spokane. Pins indicated a desire for more **local businesses** throughout North Indian Trail, Balboa/South Indian Trail,

Northwest, Audubon/Downriver, West Central, Emerson Garfield, North Hill, and Nevada Heights. More **job opportunities** were desired in Balboa/South Indian Trail along Indian Trail Road and in North Hill. **Large retailers** were desired in North Hill.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- More industrial in the West Hills with a job focus
- Increased fire infrastructure in Latah Valley
- Small, locally owned grocery stores throughout, in West Central
- Various housing types within each neighborhood, including senior housing
- A walkable urban center for Shadle area with connections to the neighborhood
- Pedestrian infrastructure along Northwest Boulevard
- Protective bike lanes connection Garland / Monroe / Downtown
- Park in northeast corner of North Indian Trail
- Conversion of existing homes into cafes / small businesses
- Community gardens
- Yoga studio (North Hill)
- Main Street pedestrian mall with no cars downtown
- Incentivize use of land / do not let land sit unused / vacant
- Tall mixed-use development along Northwest Boulevard
- Increase bus service (Routes 22 and 23, Northwest Boulevard, Maple to Driscoll, throughout)
- Make Northwest Boulevard more walkable

Station 5: Climate-Ready Spokane

Community members were asked to reflect on ways to increase resiliency within Spokane. Suggestions included:

- Increase frequency and number of transit routes
- Water usage – use non-potable water for irrigation, make it easier to use rainwater, reduce lawn watering, increase fees
- Support low water and other Water Wise workshops
- Invest in natural areas
- Make neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly

Community members also mapped specific concerns or considerations on a map of the City of Spokane:

- Transit access needed to recreational areas
- Create bike friendly routes on Cedar Street from Francis to downtown
- More frequent transit / support Bus Rapid Transit / consider light rail
- Provide increased incentives for Spokanescape

- Prioritize pedestrian and alternative transportation for all development
- Northwest road resident with bike lanes
- Create safe crossing points on SR 291, current separates walking and biking pathways
- Provide more “essential stores” such as groceries and pharmacies in North Hill / Garland
- Crosswalks on Ash and Maple
- Connect Children of the Sun to Centennial Trail
- Increase tree plantings for canopy cover
- Fire mitigation along Sunset and Peaceful Valley
- Make Main Street pedestrian only / create pedestrian mall downtown
- Safer bike routes in South Hill / to Garland
- Protected bike lanes needed
- More fire infrastructure in Latah Valley
- Preserve natural areas around Thorpe area
- Increase watering restrictions
- Consider land value tax
- Drop city speed limit
- Bike route to Northwest and Driscoll

Station 6: What Did We Miss?

Community members were asked to document anything topic or theme that was missed, or any additional comments they wished to provide. Those comments included:

- Planning for a large community aquatics center
- Improve greenways by incorporating traffic calming measures



Memo

Date: April 2, 2025

Re: Community-Wide Visioning Workshop Engagement Summary

The Community-Wide Visioning Workshop occurred on March 12 at the Central Library. Approximately 50 community members attended. Feedback received at each station activity is summarized below. A full visioning engagement summary will be developed at a later date.

Station 1: Vision Statement – One Word

Community members were asked to write down one word that describes their ideal future. The themes were:

- Industries / Jobs
- Affordable
- Walkable
- Safe
- Arts / Culture
- Diverse
- Resilient
- Dense
- Vibrant
- Multi Mobile / Good Public Transportation
- Robust
- Thriving
- Access to Nature
- Family-friendly

Station 1: Vision Statement – Statement Ranking

Community members were asked to rank three similar vision statements based off themes found in the existing vision statement in the Comprehensive Plan. With 9 votes, vision statement B received the most votes: “Spokane will foster livability, connectivity, and resiliency throughout the city by balancing economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and the diverse needs of residents, while cherishing its unique and vibrant neighborhoods. The city will ensure access to safe and efficient mobility, attainable housing, natural environments, and walkable neighborhood services to support a high-quality of life for all residents.” Statement A came in second with 5 votes.

When asked what was missing from the sample vision statements, the themes were:

- Pedestrian focus
- Community support (e.g. financial literacy and housing classes)
- Enforcement of laws
- Focus on ownership to build personal stability and wealth
- Understood and defined solution to homelessness

- How to test the benefits of proposed changes

Station 2: Commercial Preference

Community members were asked to identify which commercial types they wanted to see throughout Spokane.

Neighborhood corner stores/cafes received the most votes, with 14. Comments indicated a desire for this use in South Hill, Cliff Cannon, Minnehaha, West Hills, and around Maxwell. Some community members noted a need for design standards with the use.

Mixed-use/ground-floor retail came in second, with 11 votes, with an emphasis of the use in Neighborhood Centers, Downtown, and around Maple and Francis.

Restaurants came in third, with 5 votes. There was a desire for this use on East 5th Avenue and along Mission Avenue.

Boutiques, convenience stores, groceries, and big-box stores all received 4 votes. Mission and Napa, as well as Downtown, were noted as desired areas for those uses. Downtown has an emphasis for groceries.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- Small scale hotels / lodging
- Corner stores near housing, grouped with other businesses, on every corner “where it makes sense”
- Bike repair & rental
- “more of everything in Latah Valley”
- Breweries
- Retain existing businesses

Station 3: Your Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to indicate where they currently live, work, and play in Spokane. Participants indicated a wide array of areas in the city, showing geographic diversity in living and leisure activities. Downtown contained a significant number of pins indicating work. Favorite places included areas in State parks and other recreational areas, in downtown, Manito Park, libraries, and community centers.

Comments received focused on initial thoughts about Spokane’s current needs:

- Create a hub on Northwest Boulevard near Audubon/Downriver and Emerson/Garfield border
- Bus route needed near Riverview Drive near Audubon/Downriver and West Hills border
- Need more small grocery store option in West Central

- Arts and culture events and places in West Central
- Infill development around 3rd
- Add retail / restaurants / mixed-use in University District

Station 4: Your Future Spokane Mapping Exercise

Community members were asked to think about the future of Spokane. Pins indicated a desire for more **local businesses** in Chief Garry, Nevada Heights, Minnehaha, Audubon/Downriver, Manito/Cannon Hill, East Central, and Latah/Hangman. More **job opportunities** were desired downtown in Riverside. **Large retailers** were desired downtown and Southgate.

Additional uses/considerations provided included:

- More retail in Whitworth
- More walkable bus routes throughout city / Route 28
- Small scale retail near and on Five Mile Prairie
- Support and improve existing development and infrastructure
- Encourage more use of transit / cycling / vanpools
- Small retail “like Garland” throughout, in West Central
- Avoid convenience stores
- Small / affordable grocery stores throughout
- Attract more employees to downtown to support downtown local businesses
- More businesses in western portion of Northwest
- Community gardens in East Central
- More South Hill retail due to low commercial vacancy
- Opportunity for mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development in Lincoln Heights
- Latah / Hangman needs centers / corridors to provide services

Station 5: Climate-Ready Spokane

Community members were asked to reflect on ways to increase resiliency within Spokane. Suggestions included:

- Properties that use more water should pay more
- Do not require traditional landscaping for new construction
- Help get Spokane buildings off gas heat
- Considerations for how much water goes to Airway Heights
- Preserve green space in new developments
- Support walkability with accessible curb cuts, snow clearing
- Provide public education and awareness around low-water plants, landscaping, sustainable choices

Community members also mapped specific concerns or considerations on a map of the City of Spokane:

- Wildfire risk: Northwest and South
- Make it easier to make environment-friendly choices in north and center city
- Provide more green spaces and permeable surfaces throughout Division Street
- More density / housing in Five Mile Prairie
- Francis / Maple / Ash difficult to navigate via bike
- More trees in Hillyard / Northeast Spokane
- Conflict between street trees and sidewalks
- Concern over wood mulch promoted through Spokanescape due to fire risk
- Citywide leaf pickup
- Bike friendly routes on Highway 2

Station 6: What Did We Miss?

Community members were asked to document anything topic or theme that was missed, or any additional comments they wished to provide. Those comments included:

- No gentrification with growth
- Need small neighborhood grocery stores in downtown and in food desert areas
- Ensure continued development of East Central with green space and community gardens
- Grow Spokanescape program / increased use of Spokanescape on city-owned properties
- Maintain good job of listening to residents and departments working together
- Ensure changes are beneficial to city at large, not just those heard from
- Preserve positives in Spokane, don't change
- Increase transit access, connectivity, and frequency between neighborhoods
- Pedestrians and cyclist first policies
- East / west transit connectivity
- Rethink parking minimums
- More permeable surfaces
- All-age use of the city, including bike lanes (design focused on all-age use)
- New sidewalks need planting strip to create pedestrian separation

Introduction and Guidelines

The following chapter provides the goals and policies meant to guide growth and development in the City of Spokane through the lens of the **Natural Environment** chapter. While reviewing this document, it helps to keep a few things in mind:

1. PlanSpokane 2046 is NOT an entirely new document. The existing Comprehensive Plan and ongoing community engagement were the foundation of this document, along with adopted plans, state legislation, and new engagement informing proposed changes.
2. The current Comprehensive Plan, Shaping Spokane, can be found at shapingspokane.org. Readers may refer to that document if they wish to see the existing chapter language.
3. The Vision and Values, previously found in each chapter, are being combined into a single unified vision for the City. Accordingly, those sections of the chapters do not appear in this document.
4. Many policies in the existing plan include “discussion” below the policy. Where those discussions do not provide a better understanding or clarification of the policy, they have been removed from this new document or the language in that discussion has been incorporated into the policy language itself. These removals are not identified specifically here.
5. The plan has undergone a review and minor edits throughout. Terms have been updated, language has been streamlined, and many small changes have been made to increase readability and understanding. Minor wording changes aren’t marked directly to make sure the proposed language is as clear as possible, but any large updates may be identified.
6. A range of helpful notes are provided in the sidebar to the right—these are not part of the proposed text, rather they help readers understand certain proposed changes.
7. The [Climate Planning effort](#) is still ongoing and may affect the language in the chapter later on. Places where we anticipate this *might* occur will be marked with the appropriate icon (see at right).
8. Work towards understanding Racially Disparate Impacts and Displacement is ongoing and may likewise have an impact on the language in this chapter. Where we anticipate this happening, an icon has been included (see at right).
9. Some policies or goals from the past versions of the Comprehensive Plan may have been omitted. If they have been combined with other

The following icons will appear where:



General information or notation is provided, clarifying changes to the existing text.



Language was streamlined or condensed. Minor changes won’t be marked.



New text or policy was added, not sourced from the current plan.



Two or more policies in the existing plan were combined into one.



A policy or language was added because of a change in state law requirements.



Climate and Resiliency work might impact this language in the future.



Racially Disparate Impacts or Displacement work may impact this language in the future.



Text, goals, or policies were removed—a reason will be provided.

policies or goals, there will be an icon and description in the blue margin. Where policies or goals have been removed entirely, they are listed at the end in their own section.

The currently proposed language for this chapter begins on the following page. Please be sure to note the “version date” at the bottom of the page as we anticipate future changes as this effort evolves.

A Note on Climate and Resiliency and this Chapter

It is clear this chapter will be influenced heavily by the ongoing work related to Climate and Resiliency (see note 7 above). Reviewers should note that this chapter does not incorporate the many changes that might come from that work—as a result, please note that this chapter might change substantially between the Plan Commission review and the final incorporation of Climate policy, expected in early 2026.



Natural Environment

Introduction

This chapter addresses the natural environment of Spokane and the surrounding region. The natural environment element includes topics such as rivers, wetlands, the urban forest, nature areas, the aquifer, clean air, shorelines, trails, energy, agricultural lands, the economy, and wildlife.

Goals and policies address restoration, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment, as well as guiding incentives, regulations, future plans, and public investments. These measures aim to bring back and maintain all that can be great in Spokane: clean rivers and streams, healthy air, natural areas with native vegetation, trails, sacred and historic sites, trees, native landforms, and citizens who understand the impacts of growth on the natural environment and the opportunities to make positive changes.

Natural Setting

Spokane enjoys an extensive natural environment for an urban area. Not many other cities have the amount of nature space and the presence of native plants and animals as Spokane. Spokane must continue to protect and enhance the natural environment to maintain and improve this region's quality of life.

Goals and Policies

Goals and policies provide specificity for planning and decision-making. Overall, they indicate desired directions, accomplishments, or aims in relation to the growth and development of Spokane along with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Goal: NE-1, Water Quality

Protect the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer and other water sources so they continue to provide clean pure water.

Policy: NE-1.1, Aquifer Study

Continue to study the aquifer and utilize strategies to remedy all sources or activities of contamination.

Policy: NE-1.2, Stormwater Techniques and Innovation

Encourage the use of innovative stormwater techniques, including solutions like rain gardens, Wastewater Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) tanks, and other low-impact mitigation tools that protect ground and surface water from contamination and pollution.

Policy NE-1.3, Regional Coordination of Stormwater Quality

Coordinate with concerned regional partners and agencies for the study, creation, and adoption of new manuals and standards for stormwater quality solutions, creating options for more effective stormwater quality solutions.

Policy: NE-1.4, Regional Water Board and Stewardship Groups

Continue to support regional watershed groups and boards, including the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board, in their efforts to conduct aquifer planning as well as allocating, monitoring, and studying responsibilities for the entire watershed.

Policy: NE-1.5, Mining Activities

Prohibit open pit mining that exposes the aquifer or ground water to potential contamination.

Policy: NE-1.6, Natural Water Drainage

Identify and preserve areas that provide natural water drainage to accommodate future stormwater runoff while protecting surface and ground water.

Policy: NE-1.7, Wellhead Protection

Allow only non-polluting land uses to be developed and operated within the water recharge zones of the public water wells, as guided by development regulations and land use limitations within critical areas.

Policy: NE-1.8, Toxic Dumping Regulations

Develop and enforce restrictions and fines for the dumping of toxic fluids in locations where they may reach the aquifer or surface waters, consistent with state and federal law.

Policy: NE-1.9, Sewer Requirement

Ensure that newly developed property in the city and within the City's sewer service area is connected to municipal sewer service, minimizing aquifer contamination.

Goal: NE-2, Sustainable Water Supply and Sources

Ensure all aquifers and water sources do not fall below sustainable recharge or flow levels.

Policy: NE-2.1, Water Conservation

Develop and implement a water conservation strategy that seeks to decrease household, commercial, industrial, and agricultural use citywide, commensurate with the true capacity of the City's water supply, including



This policy was added following consultation with the City's Stormwater department.



NE 1.4 was broadened slightly to avoid referencing only one body/solution.



The original mention of the urban growth area was made more specific, limiting this policy to the City's service area where the City has influence.



Water conservation will be a significant topic in the Climate and Resiliency work.

incentives for drought-tolerant, native plantings and the use of innovated incentive programs.

Policy: NE-2.2, Landscaping Requirements and Incentives

Expand the use of incentives like SpokaneScape and other programs that encourage use of drought-tolerant plants and the placement of native trees and vegetation, including incentives like water bill credits and discounts.

Policy: NE-2.3, Native Tree and Plant Protection and Preservation

Preserve existing native vegetation in parks and other public lands, incorporating the placement of new native, drought-tolerant species when constructing new facilities.

Goal: NE-3, Surface Waters

Provide for clean rivers that support native fish and aquatic life and are healthy for recreational uses.

Policy: NE-3.1, Watershed Plan

Continue to support and develop regional watershed plans in partnership with regional and local partners, concerning all watersheds that are associated with the geographic boundaries of the city and the City's service areas.

Policy NE-3.2, Zero Pollution Industrial Parks

Develop standards and incentives for zero pollution industrial parks and uses, focusing on manufacturing that utilizes recycled and reused materials sourced from adjacent uses in the immediate vicinity.

Policy NE-3.3, Impervious Surface Reduction

Continue efforts to reduce the installation of new impervious surface in the city, understanding that there are locations where impervious surfaces have less benefit to surface runoff and absorption, such as areas of drainage concern mapped by the City.

Policy: NE-3.4, Wetlands

Enforce and monitor regulations that achieve no overall net loss in acreage and functions of the remaining wetland base and, over the long term, increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the city.

Goal: NE-4, Clean Air

Work consistently for cleaner air that nurtures the health of current residents, children and future generations.



This policy has been strengthened, expanding SpokaneScape while seeking additional possible solutions.



A cross-reference to Goal NE-7 will likely be provided here, as these topics interrelate.



This policy will likely be influenced by the Climate work. This policy also has ties to Chapter 7, Economic Development.



We are considering including a map of areas of drainage concern in this chapter or, alternatively, a cross-reference to the online map.



This policy was moved here from under Goal 7 as it has relationship with both goals. A cross-reference will likely be provided.

Policy: NE-4.1, Clean Heating Sources

Encourage the use of heating sources that do not negatively affect Spokane’s air quality, including through continued membership and support of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (SRCAA) and other similar bodies.

Policy: NE-4.2, Facility Review

Review and determine public benefits in comparison to the environmental impacts of new and existing public or private facilities that negatively impact the region’s air quality and health of its citizens.

Policy: NE-4.4, Vegetation that Improves Air Quality

Plant, preserve, and encourage the use of vegetation known to benefit local air quality, concerning both urban trees and landscaping incorporated into facilities and development.

Goal: NE-5, Native Species Protection

Protect and enhance diverse and healthy native species, such as plants, trees, animals, and fungi, for present and future generations and respect the ecological necessity of biodiversity.

Policy: NE-6.1, Native and Non-Native Adaptive Plants and Trees

Encourage the use of and development of standards for using native and non-native adaptive plants and trees in landscape designs for public and private projects.

Policy: NE-6.2, Public Native Species Application and Education

Utilize and expand programs and incentives like SpokaneScape that educate and recognize members of the public who install and maintain native planting in yards and landscaping.

Policy: NE-6.3, Habitat Network

Identify, purchase, preserve, and maintain existing and potential links between wildlife habitats, seeking to form a network of wildlife habitats while partnering with regional and state agencies and programs.

Policy: NE-6.4, Fish and Wildlife Protection

Continue to identify and protect those fish and wildlife and their habitats which are identified as a priority by citizens and scientific experts.

Policy: NE-6.5, Protection of Adjacent Wildlife Habitats

Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies to designate, protect, and acquire wildlife habitats that abut or straddle the city limits or the urban growth area boundary.



SRCAA was added to this policy as they are currently the primary agency related to this topic, though the language was broadened to allow for other actions.



The term ‘citizen’ was changed, as that term can be problematic in some contexts.



The topic of habitat is a regional one, thus regional agencies were added to this policy.

Goal: NE-7, Natural Landforms

Preserve natural landforms that identify and typify our region, including landforms of cultural significance.

Policy: NE-7.1, Landform Identification

Define, identify, and map natural landforms that typify our region and that warrant protection, including features like pine forests, views of Mount Spokane, aquifer springs, the Palouse Hills, scablands, the Spokane River Falls and rapids, basalt cliffs, Missoula flood stones, granite hillsides, basalt ponds and wetlands, camas fields, and shrub steppe drylands.

Policy: NE-7.2, Landform Protection

Purchase or preserve lands that contain natural landforms through incentives, clustering, or the transfer of development rights.

Policy: NE-7.3, Rock Formation Protection

Identify and protect basalt rock formations that give understanding to the area’s geological history, add visual interest to the landscape, and contribute to a system of connected conservation lands.

Policy: NE-7.4, Landforms of Cultural Significance (new)

Recognize and protect views and preservation of significant landforms and features that provide cultural value to the community and its rich tapestry of different cultures, such as views of Mt. Spokane and access to the Spokane Falls and Spokane River.

Goal: NE-8, Areas of Geologic Concern

Recognize that some landforms and physical geologic and slope features are not suitable for development while warranting protection.

Policy: NE-8.1, Rock Formation Protection

Identify and protect basalt rock formations that give understanding to the area’s geological history, add visual interest to the landscape, and contribute to a system of connected conservation lands.

Policy: NE-8.2, Unstable Slope Protection

Continue to map and designation areas of unstable slopes as unsuitable for development, including standards and code that prohibit development in these areas.

Policy: NE-8.3, Slope Protection

Integrate the protection of slopes with wildlife corridor and natural area designations and acquisitions.



Landforms are a topic of Chapter 14, Shorelines as well—a cross-reference will be provided.



This policy will likely have a relationship to Chapter 3, Land Use, and may move there in future reviews.



Landforms and their cultural value were a topic of recent public engagement discussions.



Geologic topics were formerly part of the landform discussion above. They have been separated out under a new goal for clarity.

Policy: NE-8.4, Geologically Hazardous Areas

Continue to classify, designate, and protect Geologically Hazardous Areas as identified in the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Goal: NE-9, Agricultural Lands

Preserve land and provide opportunities for farming that generates produce for local markets and supports the farming economy.

Policy: NE-9.1, Agricultural Lands of Local Importance

Designate areas of the city that have been used traditionally for agricultural purposes, have at least Soils Conservation Services Class II soils or are designated prime agriculture lands, and are at least one acre in size as agricultural lands of local importance.

Policy: NE-9.2, Compatible Agricultural Activities

Allow agricultural activities adjacent to urban uses without compromising farmers' rights to farm their land.

Goal: NE-10, Sustainable Economies and Employment

Enhance and protect the natural environment while supporting a sustainable economy and incentivizing employment that enhances the natural environment.

Policy: NE-10.1, Environment and the Economy

Identify, preserve, and enhance the natural environment elements that define Spokane's quality of life and help sustain the economy, including the draw that the region's natural beauty has on those that choose to live and work here.

Policy: NE-10.2, Environment Supporting Businesses

Provide incentives for businesses that restore and benefit the natural environment while providing jobs for residents.

Policy: NE-10.3, Local Business Support

Support and provide incentives for businesses that employ local people, use local materials, and sell their products and/or services locally to preserve existing businesses and reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gasses (GHG).

Policy: NE-10.4, Incentives for Ecologically Responsible Businesses

Identify and provide incentives for economic activities that combine the goals and principles of economy, ecology, and social equity.



Goals 9 and 10 in the existing plan were combined into NE-10 here, as they were closely interrelated.



This policy's relationship to Climate and Resiliency topics was strengthened—it may change further following that work.

Policy: NE-10.5, Profit from Waste

Recruit industries that can make use of and profit from Spokane’s solid waste in a manner that minimizes or mitigates environmental impacts while maximizing reuse of materials.

Policy: NE-10.6, Packaging Reduction

Create and advocate legislation, education, and other means that reduce product packaging, so that waste disposal is decreased.

Goal: NE-11, Natural Areas

Designate a network of natural areas (natural areas and connecting corridors), distinct from developed parks, throughout Spokane that support native habitats and natural landforms.

Policy: NE-11.1, Identification of Natural Areas

Identify natural areas throughout the city, based on the Parks Master Plan, neighborhood input, existing city-owned parks and conservation lands, wildlife habitats, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, adjacency to county natural areas, and proximity to state parks.

Policy: NE-11.2 Natural Corridor Links and Connections

Identify and enhance interconnections between undisturbed natural areas, understanding that protected and local species need movement corridors to successfully continue.

Policy: NE-11.3, Acquisition of Natural Areas

Acquire and protect natural areas and connecting corridors through various acquisition techniques, such as tax incentives, purchases, Spokane County Conservation Futures funds, volunteer funding drives, donations, transfer of development rights, clustering, easements, and requirements for contribution when adjacent areas develop, seeking to create a network of natural areas throughout the city.

Policy: NE-11.4, Natural Area Paths

Develop soft, permeable, low-impact paths in natural areas while protecting environmentally sensitive areas from encroachment.

Policy: NE-11.5, The Spokane River Gorge

Continue to pursue and encourage the Spokane River Gorge as a natural area, maintaining this place as one of the region’s greatest natural resources while developing connections to other important features like Riverfront Park, Latah Creek, Indian Canyon, and Riverside State Park.



These two policies (10.5 and 10.6) were moved here from Goal NE-4 as they relate more to this goal.



This goal exhibits close relationships to Chapter 12, Parks and Recreation. At a minimum, a cross-reference will be provided.



This policy was lengthened to include samples of techniques formerly listed in the discussion.



Commensurate with the stronger connection language under this goal, the connection between the Gorge and other natural areas was added here.

Goal: NE-12, Urban Forestry

Maintain and enhance the urban forest to provide good air quality, reduce urban warming, and increase habitat.

Policy NE-12.1, Street Trees

Establish standards, incentives, and requirements for the planting of street trees along all streets in the city, public or private, as well as education and standards that ensure the long-term survival and growth of those trees.

Policy: NE-12.2, Urban Forestry Programs

Participate in the Spokane County Conservation District for urban forestry programs, protection, and maintenance while seeking to grow similar programs in the region.

Policy: NE-12.3, Protection Techniques

Use incentives and acquisition to protect forested areas both on public and privately owned land.

Policy: NE-12.4, Forest Inventory Database

Maintain an inventory of the urban forest in the city's Geographic Information System and disseminate the information for decisionmakers in a useable, interactive format.

Policy: NE-12.5, Tree Replacement Program

Develop and implement a program whereby the City maintains "no net loss" of street trees through programs and incentives for tree maintenance and replacement, while considering exemptions for emergencies and public safety.

Goal: NE-13, Connectivity and Access to Wildlands and Open Space

Create a citywide network of trails, sidewalks, and pathways that link regional trails, natural areas, parks, sacred and historical sites, schools, and urban centers, maximizing the social and health benefits from access to nature.

Policy: NE-13.1, Walkway and Bicycle Paths Through Natural Areas

Identify, prioritize, and connect natural places in the city with a walkway or bicycle path system that includes connections to regional trails, natural areas, soft path networks, community parks, sacred and historic sites, schools, the downtown area, and community and neighborhood centers.

Policy: NE-13.2, Natural Area Path Design

Design walkways and bicycle paths in natural based on qualities that make them safe, functional, and separated from automobile traffic where possible,



Missing from the original policy was discussion of maintaining trees once planted. That language has been added here.



"No net loss" was formerly only in the discussion of this policy. It has been added to the policy itself to highlight its importance.



Language has been added to this goal and policies to make the relationship with natural areas and wildlands more overt.



The discussion has been incorporated into the body of the policy itself here.

while seeking to maintain a high level of sensitivity to the natural area and its biological value.

Policy: NE-13.3, Year-Round Use

Build and maintain portions of natural area path systems that can be used year-round.

Policy: N-13.4, Winter Trail Network

Link soft trails, parks, and golf courses with the wider walkway and bicycle path system to develop a winter trail network.

Policy: NE-13.5, Promote the Growth of an Urban Tree Canopy

Promote policies, programs, and incentives that help the City reach its goal of 30% canopy coverage in every neighborhood by 2023, focusing first on parts of the City where tree coverage is low or missing entirely.

Goal: NE-14, Incorporating Natural Designs in Public Spaces

Develop or revitalize plazas and public spaces using local nature elements, including water, vegetation, wildlife, and landforms.

Policy: NE-14.1, Plaza Inventory and Improvements

Inventory existing public plazas and open spaces that lack nature elements and that are not used actively and identify natural element features that will improve them.

Policy: NE-14.2, New Plaza Design

Develop public plazas and open spaces with native natural elements and formations, such as basalt, Missoula flood stones, stream patterns, river character, native trees, and plants that attract native birds.

Goal: NE-15, Natural Aesthetics

Retain and enhance nature views, natural aesthetics, sacred areas, and historic sites that define the Spokane region.

Policy: NE-15.1, Protection of Natural Aesthetics

Protect and enhance nature views, natural aesthetics, sacred areas, and historic sites within the growing urban setting through collaboration with local Tribes, historians, organizations, and citizens to identify features to be protected.

Policy: NE-15.2, Community Education and Awareness

Coordinate with local and regional agencies and organizations to educate the community on the meaning of sacred and historic sites, fostering greater perceived value in their protection and enhancement.



This goal and its policies have been broadened slightly to incorporate more than just plazas, also considering other public spaces.

Policy: NE-15.3, Naming Culturally Historic Sites

Identify local nature views, natural aesthetics, sacred areas, and historic sites that define the Spokane region with the original names local historic cultures gave to them by coordinating with local Tribes.

Policy: NE-15.4, Nature Themes

Identify and use natural themes in large-scale public and private landscaping projects that reflect the natural character of the Spokane region, incorporating features that harken to local landforms.

Goal: NE-16, Natural Environment Education

Educate children and the community on the value the natural environment provides to the community, engaging with the public and fostering greater stewardship.

Policy: NE-16.1, Protection and Recognition

Develop a program that formally recognizes activities, development, businesses, groups, and people that contribute to the protection and improvement of Spokane’s natural environment.

Policy: NE-16.2, Natural Environment Sources

Create a central source within city government to disseminate information on anything affecting the city’s natural environment, programs to enhance the natural environment, and environmental education opportunities.

Policy: NE-16.3, Environmental Education for Children

Educate children about the interrelationship between people and nature so that an understanding and respect for human impacts and the benefits of nature is developed.

Goal: NE-17, Energy Conservation

Promote the conservation of energy in the location and design of residential, service, and workplaces.

Policy: NE-17.1, Innovative Development Techniques

Encourage innovative residential development techniques that produce low energy consumption per housing unit, including development of middle housing types, solar-enhancing site orientation, earth sheltering, and the use of renewable energy sources.

Goal: NE-18, Flood Hazards Management

Protect life and property from flooding and erosion by directing development away from flood hazard areas.



A cross-reference to Policy NE-7.1 will be provided here, as they relate to each other (the themes are the same).



The relationship between this policy and middle housing has been added.

Additionally, a cross-reference to pertinent parts of Chapter 3, Land Use, is expected.

Policy: NE-18.1, Channel Migration Zone Management

Determine the channel migration zone of streams and rivers in locations within the city that have a history of flooding and ensure that the entire migration zone is maintained and protected, not only the water.

Policy: NE-18.2, 100-Year Flood Plain Reassessment

Coordinate with federal and state agencies in the reassessment of the 100-year flood plain and adopt standards and mitigation that provides for adequate protection in areas where flooding is more likely.

Policy: NE-18.3, Land Acquisition & Home Relocation Program

Consider and analyze a program for the purchasing and/or relocation of homes in the 100-year floodplain, establishing those areas long-term for natural area conservation and potential movement corridors.

Policy: NE-18.4, Discourage Development in the 100-Year Flood Plain

Discourage development and redevelopment of habitable structures that are within the 100-year floodplain.

Policy: NE-18.5, Public Awareness and Education

Develop a public awareness and education program for residents living within flood plains, highlighting the risks involved and ways they might mitigate some of their risk.

Policy: NE-18.6, Downstream Impacts Consideration

Consider the downstream impacts created by development, erosion control devices, and public works projects within or adjacent to rivers and streams.

POLICIES REMOVED FROM THE TEXT:

The following policies have been removed from the text, largely due to redundancy, unclear goals/success, and similar factors.

Policy: NE-1.4, Water Quality Report

Prepare an annual water quality report that identifies the year’s water quality and quantity and compares these to prior years.

Goal: NE-3, Shorelines

Protect the natural state of shorelines while providing community access that does not negatively impact riparian habitats, fragile soils, and native vegetation.



This policy has been substantially rewritten to better consider the City’s role in floodplain mapping and designation.



Policy N 5.2 will be moved to the Land Use Chapter.



This goal (which had no policies tied to it) is redundant with Chapter 14, Shorelines.

Policy: NE-15.2, Natural Aesthetic Links

Link local nature views, natural aesthetics, sacred areas, and historic sites with the trail and path system of the city.

Goal: NE-16, Quality of Life

Compile social, natural environment, and economic indicators of a healthy Spokane community on an annual basis, and compare them to prior years in order to assess Spokane's progress.

Policy: NE-16.1, Quality of Life Indicators

Coordinate with other groups and agencies to develop quality of life indicators based upon what others have previously identified.

Policy: NE-16.2, Benchmark Adoption

Develop quality of life benchmarks based on identified indicators that the community wants to obtain over time.



This policy was redundant with another policy elsewhere in the chapter, so it was omitted. (See goal NE-13.)



This goal and its policies would be better if included in Chapter 10, Social Health. These may show up there instead.