

**SPOKANE CITY PLAN COMMISSION
FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS
REGARDING THE HOUSING ACTION PLAN**

A Recommendation from the City Plan Commission to the City Council accepting the Housing Action Plan as a guide for future policy development and potential regulatory and programmatic implementation measures.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

- A. The City of Spokane adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2001 that complies with the requirements of the Washington state Growth Management Act, including a Housing Element meeting the requirements set forth in RCW 36.70A.070(2).
- B. The Washington State Legislature created a new grant program under Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (E2SHB) 1923 (Chapter 348, Laws of 2019; in part RCW 36.70A.600), which provides a number of eligible land use planning activities for cities to consider to implement increases in housing capacity, including the creation of a housing action plan.
- C. The City of Spokane applied for and received a \$100,000.00 grant from Washington Department of Commerce to support development of a housing action plan following the requirements outlined in RCW 36.70A.600.
- D. EcoNorthwest, a consulting firm specializing in economics, finance, and planning prepared a Housing Needs Assessment for the City of Spokane that analyzes population and employment trends, documents projections, and quantifies existing and projected housing needs for all income levels, including extremely low-income households.
- E. Outreach and public communication beginning in the summer of 2020 included a project web page, online surveys on issues and priorities related to housing, recorded videos about the Housing Action Plan process replayed on City Cable 5 and the City's web page, email updates to interested parties, blog posts, social media, and press releases promoting participation in the planning process.
- F. From August 2020 through April 2021, staff gave six presentations on the Housing Action Plan in a virtual online format and received feedback from interested groups such as property owners, civic groups, City departments, Community Assembly, and other City boards, committees, and commissions.
- G. During summer 2020, staff and consultants held a series of stakeholder interviews with representatives of housing developers, associations, nonprofit housing providers and advocates, realtors, faith-based organizations, and

community groups to help understand housing challenges and identify participants for the process.

- H. A Housing Action Plan Working Group, comprised of housing stakeholders, community groups, and community members supporting and representing a variety of experiences in the community held a series of socially distanced meetings in compliance with public health directives to review, advise, and provide insight during the planning process. The Housing Action Plan Working Group met July 29, 2020; October 21, 2020; December 15 and 16, 2020; and March 9, 2021.
- I. Staff hosted two online public open house meetings on May 18, 2021 share information and receive feedback on the draft Housing Action Plan and provide information about upcoming public hearings. The City provided notice of the open house meetings by advertising on its website and via email notice to neighborhood councils and interested parties.
- J. Staff conducted four virtual online roundtable meetings as part of the engagement process. These discussions included members of the Housing Action Plan Working Group, City staff, and additional community members to gain deeper understanding of local housing challenges, needs, and affordability issues. Stakeholder roundtables were held September 10, 2020; September 15, 2020; September 17, 2020; and September 23, 2020.
- K. On July 22, 2020; September 9, 2020; September 23, 2020; November 11, 2020; January 27, 2021; February 10, 2021; February 24, 2021; May 12, 2021; and May 19, 2021 the Spokane City Plan Commission held workshops in a virtual online format to study the draft Housing Action Plan and various components of the draft plan developed throughout the planning process.
- L. The Housing Needs Assessment, included as Appendix A to the Housing Action Plan, quantifies existing and projected housing needs for all income levels in the City of Spokane for the 2017-2037 time period, including extremely low-income households, with documentation of housing and household characteristics, and cost-burdened households, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(a).
- M. The Housing Action Plan includes recommended strategies to further four priorities; increasing housing supply, options, and affordability for all incomes; preserving existing housing affordability and quality to help people thrive where they live; enhancing equitable access to housing and homeownership; and leveraging and growing partnerships to support housing initiatives across the region. These recommended priorities and strategies aim to increase the supply of housing and variety of housing types needed to serve the housing needs identified in the Housing Needs Assessment, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(b).

- N. The Housing Needs Assessment prepared by EcoNorthwest analyzes population and employment trends for the City of Spokane during the 2017-2037 time period, with documentation of projections, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(c).
- O. Some stakeholders disagree with the Housing Needs Assessment conducted as a part of the Housing Action Plan regarding housing growth and current underproduction models. The Plan Commission recommends that a sensitivity analysis on current underproduction and future growth be conducted during strategy prioritization to better understand scenarios appropriate for both planning activities and development activities.
- P. The Displacement Risk Analysis, included as Appendix E to the Housing Action Plan, and recommendations contained aligned with Priority B ("Preserve existing housing affordability and quality to help people thrive where they live") consider strategies to minimize displacement of low-income residents resulting from redevelopment, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(d).
- Q. The Housing Policy Framework, included as Appendix C to the Housing Action Plan, reviews and evaluates the current Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, including an evaluation of success in attaining planned housing types and units, achievement of goals and policies, and implementation of the schedule of programs and actions, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(e).
- R. The public participation program for the Housing Action Plan, described in further detail in Appendix D ("Summary of Community Engagement") included participation and input from community members, community groups, local builders, local realtors, nonprofit housing advocates, and local religious groups, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(f).
- S. The Housing Action Plan includes an Implementation Matrix and Monitoring Program that include a schedule of programs and actions to implement the recommendations of the Housing Action Plan, consistent with the required housing action plan component set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(g).
- T. On May 12, 2021, the responsible official issued a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Checklist and Determination of Non-Significance for the proposed Housing Action Plan. The public comment period for the SEPA determination ended on May 26, 2021.
- U. The Plan Commission recognizes the Housing Action Plan recommendations do not direct nor result in any change to land use or zoning, nor does the HAP commit to funding or programmatic changes.

- V. The City caused notice of the Plan Commission's May 26, 2021 hearing to be published *Spokesman-Review* on May 12, 2021 and May 19, 2021.
- W. On May 26, 2021, the City Plan Commission held a virtual public hearing on the proposed Housing Action Plan, consistent with Proclamation 20-28 issued by the Governor of Washington and subsequent extensions and modifications. At the public hearing, the Plan Commission heard testimony on the draft Housing Action Plan, deliberated on the proposed plan, and elected to continue deliberations until the next regularly scheduled Plan Commission meeting on June 9, 2021.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based upon the draft Housing Action Plan and appendices, staff analysis (which is hereby incorporated into these findings, conclusions, and recommendation), SEPA review, agency and public comments received, and public testimony presented, the Plan Commission makes the following conclusions with respect to the Housing Action Plan:

1. The draft Housing Action Plan is consistent with the goals and purposes of the Growth Management Act.
2. The draft Housing Action Plan is consistent with the requirements for a Housing Action Plan as set forth in RCW 36.70A.600(2)(a) through (e), as well as the overall goal of encouraging construction of additional affordable and market rate housing types.
3. Interested agencies and the public have had extensive opportunities to participate throughout the process and persons desiring to comment have been given that opportunity to comment.
4. Additional legislative action with robust public engagement will be required for any strategies that involve changes to adopted policy and regulations of the City of Spokane, which would be incorporated into subsequent work plans of the Plan Commission and/or considered in conjunction with ongoing or upcoming major planning efforts such as the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan required by the statutory deadline of 2026.
5. SEPA review was completed for the proposal, and pursuant to SEPA, any adverse environmental impacts associated with the policy, regulatory, and programmatic strategies suggested by the Housing Action Plan will be mitigated by enforcement of the City's development regulations.

RECOMMENDATION:


In the matter of the City of Spokane Housing Action Plan (HAP):

As based upon the above listed findings and conclusions, by a vote of 9 to 0 (with one member abstaining), the Plan Commission takes the following actions:

- (1) Recommends to City Council the **APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATION** a resolution accepting the Housing Action Plan as a guide for future policy development and potential regulatory and programmatic implementation measures, as amended during deliberations to include the following:

Amend strategy A1 in Table 1 to include an additional first step that states, "Form a joint Plan Commission/City Council led task force to conduct a review of all residential-focused zones to develop a set of specific actions that could include both Comprehensive Plan revisions and development code changes."

- (2) Authorizes the President to prepare and sign on the Commission's behalf a written decision setting forth the Commission's findings, conclusions, and recommendation on the resolution.



Todd Beyreuther (Jun 23, 2021 10:37 EDT)

**Todd Beyreuther, President
Spokane Plan Commission**

June 23, 2021