



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Co-Benefits



Reduces wasted resources and pollution while creating a healthy environment where humans and nature coexist.



Positions Spokane as a leader in clean energy, material conservation, and innovation, to take advantage of the opportunities available to communities who embrace sustainable development.



Builds a workforce with access to living wages and benefits to keep loved ones healthy and thriving. Increases economic vitality of the region while ensuring our residents have access to healthy food.



Creates a just distribution of opportunities and benefits gained from taking actions toward a more prosperous and resilient economy.

SDG Alignment





In 2020, we ushered in a year of devastating economic impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there are some success stories, in many ways, our community was left unprepared to quickly adapt to the challenges our economy faced. As leaders throughout the Spokane region determined actions needed for their economic recovery, we soon discovered that the same strategies employed to address the pandemic also apply in preparing our community for climate change. The core priority of City leadership is to ensure the prosperity of city residents, and to do this, the City needs to invest in the basic human needs of healthcare, housing, and workforce development.

The strategies and actions outlined in this chapter are dedicated to building resiliency through economic development and preparedness. These actions will better prepare Spokane residents for future challenges of any kind, including those challenges expected to arise with a changing climate.



City Council Member, Betsy Wilkerson, at a press conference in 2020. Photo credit: City of Spokane

Current City and Regional Initiatives¹⁴

Creating resilient communities means that residents have equitable access to housing, employment, healthcare, and education. The following projects and initiatives are currently underway in support of these goals.

- Spokane Housing Action Plan (under development)
- Washington State Universal Health Care Work Group
- Ubanova’s Neighborhood Impact and Smart & Connected Streetlight Projects
- The ZoNE’s Equitable Employment Pathways Program

Comprehensive Plan Alignment

Chapter 3: Land Use

LU 1: Citywide Land Use

Chapter 4 Transportation

TR 1: Transportation Network for All Users

TR 9: Promote Economic Opportunity

Chapter 6: Housing

H 1: Housing Choice & Diversity

H 2: Housing Quality

Chapter 7: Economic Development (most sections)

▶ Action in-progress

▶ Action complete

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GOAL 1. Invest and promote a just, regenerative, and resilient local economy

Strategy 1. Engage with regional and neighborhood business associations to create coordinated economic resiliency

Priority Actions

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|---------|---|
| EP 1.1 | Re-establish City department dedicated to centralizing and addressing economic development planning |
| EP 1.2 | Work with regional businesses to fully understand current challenges for local small business and develop a plan to address those challenges |
| EP 1.3 | Partner with regional and neighborhood business associations to develop resiliency plans for specific sectors of our economy, including retail, hospitality, skilled labor, nonprofit, and food processing & supply |
| EP 1.4 | Continue to develop and invest in local purchasing campaigns designed to educate local consumers on how to support local businesses |
| EP 1.5 | Evaluate and update scoring criteria that the City uses to determine infrastructure and capital investments to ensure equitable investments, especially in historically underserved and underinvested neighborhoods or districts |
| EP 1.6 | Work with regional organizations to develop Best Practice Guidelines to help small businesses be more agile and adaptable |
| EP 1.7 | Identify and recognize creative local strategies that have proven beneficial during challenges (co-op model, shared services, online marketplace) |
| EP 1.8 | Work with regional partners to conduct an analysis on supply chain resiliency and develop plan to prioritize regional supply and infrastructure |
| EP 1.9 | Partner with local universities, colleges, and private organizations to support research and development opportunities for Spokane's small and medium sized business community |
| EP 1.10 | Develop a centralized marketing program for all City-sponsored business districts. This program should build on the Live Local marketplace developed in response to the 2020 pandemic and should be an ongoing resource for local business, rather than an ad hoc program during crises |

Strategy 2. Expand access to sustainable business practices & resources

Priority Actions

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| EP 2.1 | Provide resources to small businesses helping them save money through energy efficiency and resource conservation strategies |
| EP 2.2 | Create public, private partnerships to pilot programs for waste diversion including reducing food waste, expanding commercial composting, and developing programs to address hard to recycle materials |

Building a Stronger Local Food System

The Spokane region is located within a rich agricultural area, but very few crops and livestock grown here feed our residents. We spend over \$1.5 billion each year buying food from outside our region and less than \$5 million buying locally grown food.¹⁹ If people who live in Spokane eat more locally grown food, we will create a more resilient local food system, strengthen our economy and reduce climate impacts associated with transporting food great distances. Citizens, neighborhoods, growers, food-related businesses, non-profit organizations and local governments need to work together to take the far-reaching actions that are needed to localize and strengthen Spokane's food system.

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GOAL 2. Ensure local workforce has access to affordable healthcare, transportation, housing, and education

Strategy 3. Adopt and implement regional policies and initiatives that support workers and individuals

Priority Actions

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|----------|---|
| ▶ EP 3.1 | Continue to support and implement Spokane Housing Action Plan |
| EP 3.2 | Work with public and private partners to create citywide program for increasing access to capital for homeownership at all income levels |
| EP 3.3 | Invest in and support public transit infrastructure that increases access to affordable and convenient transportation options |
| EP 3.4 | Use the City's 5 th Avenue Initiative as a model for prioritizing investment in historically underserved communities citywide |
| EP 3.5 | Coordinate local workforce training needs through Public Development Authorities (PDAs) to align with the needs of large regional employers and industries (ex. IT support, healthcare) |
| EP 3.6 | Prioritize economic development and projects that commit to maintaining a sustainable workforce, including local hire provisions, paying prevailing wages, expediting permitting, and labor agreements. |

Strategy 4. Support just and sustainable State and Federal economic development policies

Priority Actions

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|----------|---|
| ▶ EP 4.1 | Support State and Federal healthcare reform that will allow workers and individuals to maintain affordable healthcare benefits and access to healthcare regardless of employment status |
| ▶ EP 4.2 | Support statewide efforts to incorporate climate action, affordable housing, and transportation within the Growth Management Act (GMA) |
| EP 4.3 | Implement industrial symbiosis strategies in conjunction with statewide efforts and in coordination with the local PDAs |

We will move to a low-carbon world because nature will force us, or because policy will guide us. If we wait until nature forces us, the cost will be astronomical.

-- Christiana Figueres

There are costs to addressing sustainability and climate impacts -- sometimes significant costs -- but there are huge opportunities as well. Innovation and technology are at the heart of mitigating climate change and Spokane is well positioned to take advantage of those opportunities. From an eco-district on the West Plains, to energy innovators in the University District, and a thriving local food economy, Spokane has a lot to offer and a lot to gain by committing to and investing in environmental sustainability.

