



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Co-Benefits



Empowers Spokane residents with information on how they can take climate and sustainability actions within their own lives. Promotes local food systems, reduces environmental degradation, and preserves urban farmland.



Decreases healthcare costs over time and increases the safety and security of Spokane residents.



Improves health outcomes for people disproportionately exposed and susceptible to the impacts of climate change including low-income, people of color, the elderly, children, and people with pre-existing health conditions.



Ensures benefits are enjoyed equitably across our community by prioritizing access and investment in underserved communities.

SDG Alignment





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The impacts of climate change will intensify issues that Spokane residents face today like financial insecurity, affordable housing, food security, and healthcare access. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed how a crisis disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities. By investing in the health and wellbeing of our residents, Spokane can ensure our city has the systems in place to adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. We envision a city with local leadership that proactively invests in public health, access to healthy food, affordable housing, emergency services, and resiliency infrastructure. Empowering communities by making these investments will result in a stronger Spokane.



2020 First Responder's Parade Photo Credit: City of Spokane

Current City and Regional Initiative²¹

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

Comprehensive Plan Alignment

Chapter 3: Land Use

- LU 1: Citywide Land Use
- LU 4: Transportation
- LU 6: Adequate Public Lands and Facilities

Chapter 5: Transportation

- TR 1: Transportation Network for All Users
- TR 20: Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordination

Chapter 6 : Housing

- H 1: Housing Choice and Diversity
- H 2: Housing Quality

Chapter 10: Social Health

- SH 1: Funding & Mechanisms to Support Social Health
- SH 2: Facilities for Special Needs Populations
- SH 4: Diversity & Equity
- SH 5: Public Benefit Uses
- SH 8: Food Access & Security

▶ Action in-progress ▶ Action complete



2018 District 3 health education fair. Photo credit: City of Spokane

As we move toward implementation of this plan, it is critical that our leaders and community members develop a shared understanding of what public health is and its role in community wellbeing. Public health is prevention-focused, population-wide targeting, and seeks to address the causes of social inequity leading to differentials in health. Public health is not health care.

Success from a public health perspective means decisions must be based on science, outcomes must be evaluated and course-corrected as indicated, and we must be constantly mindful of social justice and equity.

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GOAL 1. Prioritize & invest in all communities to ensure equitable outcomes

Strategy 1. Increase household food security regionwide

Priority Actions

HW 1.1	Support the Spokane Food Policy Council (SFPC) in studying, identifying and implementing sensible and achievable codes, policies, and requirements that eliminate barriers and reduce costs for urban farms and community gardens and expand local control of food grown, processed, and sold directly to consumers
HW 1.2	Work with regional partners, including SFPC, to develop and adopt a regional food plan. This document will outline the needs of the community and a blueprint for meeting these needs.
HW 1.3	Partner with local nonprofits, advocacy groups, and other governmental organizations to create a Regional Food System Partnership. This Partnership will bring stakeholders together to maximize our local food system capacity, efficacy, and efficiency.
HW 1.4	Partner with other public entities, local business organizations, and food producers to launch a local food campaign to educate the public on the benefits of eating local

Strategy 2. Increase access to affordable housing and healthy outcomes

Priority Actions

HW 2.1	Continue to invest in affordable housing, low-barrier housing, and safe, accessible, affordable public transportation
HW 2.2	Fund grants for sustainable home upgrades that benefit resident health and transition renters to improved housing
HW 2.3	Support policy that addresses low-income access to healthcare and health services, including health services for non-working individuals
HW 2.4	Collaborate with regional partners to create a robust regional response to homelessness
HW 2.5	Ensure schools and early learning facilities meet acceptable clean indoor air quality standards
HW 2.6	Support efforts to engage community leaders from underrepresented communities to determine barriers to health & healthcare access and create a 5-year plan to address those barriers
HW 2.7	Partner with local medical and nursing schools and community-based organizations to increase healthcare outreach to low-income communities and unhoused persons

Household Food Security

According to the USDA, food insecurity occurs when “consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year.” In Spokane, it is estimated that 1 in 5 children live in food insecure households. Food security for a household in Spokane is dependent on two things: the existence of a secure and robust supply network that produces food and brings it to market; and the economic ability of a household to access it. This Sustainability Action Plan addresses Spokane’s ability to ensure household food security for all residents.



Under HW Strategy 1, Spokane will strengthen our local food supply network to decrease dependency on global networks.

Actions in the TL & WR chapters help protect farmlands while action EP 1.3 will improve the viability of local businesses, including those involved in food production and processing. About 18% of Spokane residents fall below the federal poverty level.²¹ That is why this plan recommends actions to both strengthen household income and divert edible food to those in need.

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GOAL 2. Implement climate adaptation strategies into emergency and disaster response

Strategy 3. Include climate impacts in disaster and emergency management response

Priority Actions

▶ HW 3.1	Finalize Climate Vulnerability Assessment by 2021
▶ HW 3.2	Ensure City's disaster and emergency management plans include specific strategies to prepare for vulnerabilities identified in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and from other relevant sources
HW 3.3	Partner with regional emergency and disaster response teams to ensure a regional approach is used to respond to any future crisis or challenge
HW 3.4	Develop regional plan to respond to impacts of increased heat and wildfire smoke on vulnerable populations, including identifying public buildings to function as cooling and clean air centers and addressing associated mental health needs

GOAL 3. Create community engagement around sustainability & climate action

Strategy 4. Increase community awareness of climate change risks and impacts

Priority Actions

▶ HW 4.1	Promote science-based climate change curriculum adoption in all k-12 classrooms
HW 4.2	Develop public outreach campaign on how residents should respond to high heat risks and wildfire smoke
▶ HW 4.3	Provide community tools and opportunities for the public to participate in sustainability and climate action
▶ HW 4.4	Partner with Community Centers and local community organizations working with vulnerable populations to find alignment and opportunities to promote shared goals of health and wellbeing for Spokane residents
HW 4.5	Create a community engagement plan for implementation and improvement of the Sustainable Action Plan goals among underserved communities



According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, climate change poses threats to human health, safety, and security, and children are at particularly high risk. The effects of climate change on child health include:

- Cumulative physical and psychological impacts of recurring weather disasters (eg., wind events, wildfires, flooding)
- Increased heat stress
- Decreased air quality
- Altered vector-borne disease patterns
- Food, water, and nutrient insecurity

Photo from Party in the Park, 2016 Credit: City of Spokane