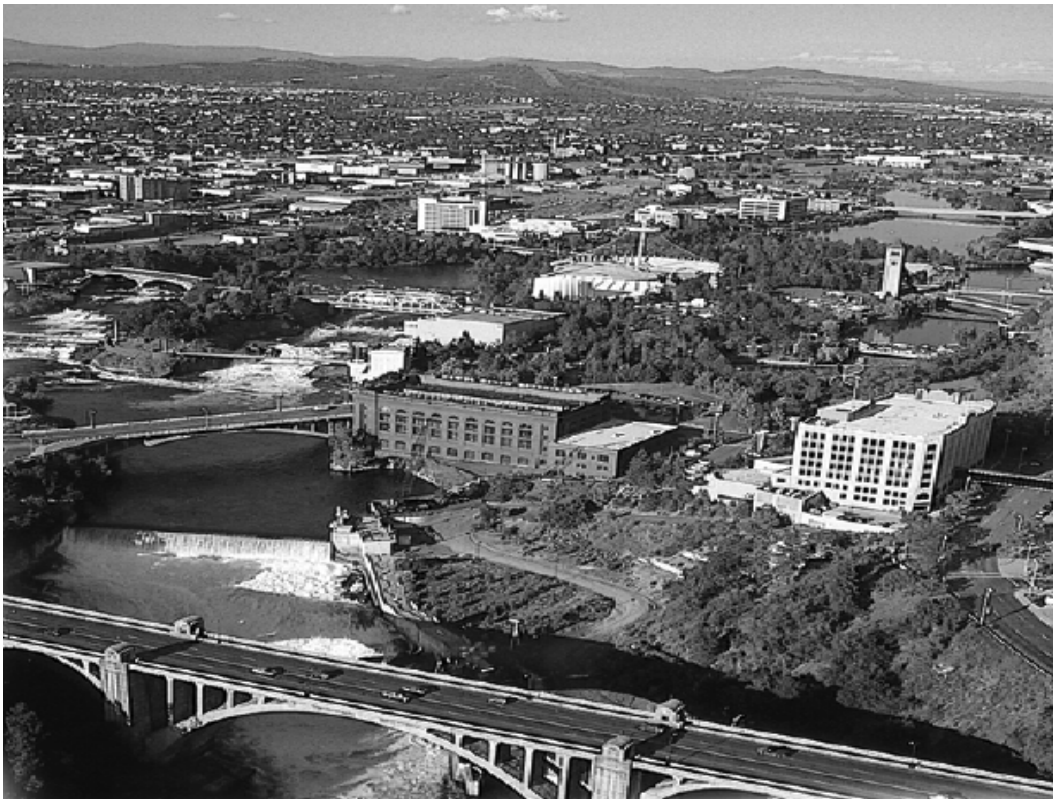




GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY CENTER PLAN SUMMARY



City of Spokane
February 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2006, the Washington State Legislature approved the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Efficiency Act. Under the CTR Efficiency Act, the Washington State Legislature created the GTEC program to increase the efficiency of the state's transportation system in areas of the state containing a concentration of jobs and housing.

The purpose of the GTEC program is to allow communities wanting to improve the efficiency of their transportation system in order to meet their targets for future growth and economic development. Cities and counties are given the option establish Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTECs) in their densest employment or residential areas. Through the GTEC program, cities, developers, land owners, employers, and transit agencies will work together to create customized transportation demand management programs and transportation-efficient land use policies in designated GTECs. In turn, the state will provide technical assistance and financial incentives for GTEC programs that have the potential to improve transportation system performance.

The City of Spokane has elected to designate the downtown neighborhood as a GTEC. The GTEC has been designated as a neighborhood by the City of Spokane, has a neighborhood plan, and meets city and county standards for an urban center. The City has an existing Downtown Plan and University District Master Plan for this area. This GTEC plan is based on many of the strategies identified in these previously written planning documents.



The proposed GTEC program for the Spokane downtown is a collection of City-adopted goals and policies, facility and service improvements, and marketing strategies about how the City of Spokane will help make progress for reducing drive alone trip and vehicle miles traveled for the GTEC over the next six years. The program also specifies a financial plan and organizational structure for implementing the program strategies and services. Building upon the success of the existing commute trip reduction (CTR) program, the City strives to meet the goals of the plan for the future by working in partnership and coordination with other agencies.

The GTEC program has been developed through extensive involvement by employers, organizations, and individuals from throughout the jurisdiction who helped identify strategies and ways for successful achievement of the goals. This plan helps to support the achievement of the jurisdiction's overall CTR plan.

A. Vision of the GTEC and how it relates to the base CTR program:

Our Downtown is a mixed-use regional center for shopping, working, living, recreation and entertainment. Riverfront Park is the center of the City and Downtown. It is the “Jewel” of the City. Riverfront Park is a great public open space in the center of a growing vital and urban City.

Downtown Spokane should be a thriving neighborhood with a diversity of activities and a mix of uses; it should be alive night and day. The mix of uses must include residential (high, medium, and low-income), office, entertainment, and retail. Plans for the downtown must ensure a viable, economically strong downtown area.

Downtown Spokane needs to encourage a desirable living environment to encourage residential uses. The Downtown is connected with a network of pedestrian friendly streets, trails, plazas and parks linking places and neighborhoods to live with retail and recreational, entertainment, educational, and cultural opportunities. In addition, residents and workers have access to the Downtown via safe, clean, and reliable and convenient transportation and transit systems.



Downtown Spokane should be developed as a unique and historical neighborhood with its own vision and plan with all stakeholders contributing.

B. GTEC program goals and targets:

The goal of the GTEC program is to reduce drive alone trips by 10% and vehicle miles traveled by 13% among affected and unaffected CTR work sites in Downtown Spokane.

C. GTEC target population:

The Downtown Spokane GTEC program will focus primarily on commuters who travel to Downtown Spokane. However, as multi-family housing develops in the area, the program will be expanded to residential groups. There is a strong market for increasing transit and ridesharing programs among the following groups of employees:

- Major Employers
- Unaffected Employers
- Multi-family Residential Sites

D. Proposed GTEC program strategies:

Goals and strategies from the 1999 Downtown Plan, the 2004 University District Master Plan, and the 2006 University District Traffic Study were used as a basis for developing strategies for the proposed Downtown Spokane GTEC plan. The proposed GTEC strategies for downtown Spokane include a combination of service improvements, capital facility improvements, and new programs and policies. The following strategies for reducing drive alone trips and vehicle miles traveled are proposed:

1. Services

- Increase the number of passengers on trolley service.
- Encourage employers and property owners to implement parking management to reduce the number of downtown employees driving alone to work.
- Adjust signals downtown to improve traffic flow for cars and buses
- Improve bus headways and levels of service in downtown
- Add vanpools.
- Institute a University District Shuttle System, which would improve transportation options within the University District and connect it with its neighboring areas. The shuttle should provide service to each of the campuses, designated parking areas, downtown, the Sprague Area, and the Medical District with 10 to 15 minute intervals.

2. Policies

- Encourage mixed uses throughout Downtown; create unique and vital retail spaces to attract people to the area, and rehabilitate and reuse existing structures for office, retail, and residential uses to keep community character and history.
- Develop design guidelines for the downtown area to ensure that they are consistent with the University District Master Plan and the goals of the GTEC.

3. Programs

- Encourage private-public-community partnerships. The challenges confronting Downtown Spokane are complex, and will require continued commitment, cooperation and collaboration from all sectors of the community. Public-private-community partnerships, such as those borne out of this planning effort, should continue to be encouraged in the implementation phase.

4. Capital Projects

Community design projects can improve perception of safety for pedestrians in Downtown and in turn attract more pedestrian traffic into a neighborhood. These types of projects can also encourage more people to use alternative modes of transportation, which generally requires more walking through the Downtown, and revitalize a neighborhood to encourage new businesses and investors to the area. Some of the projects proposed in the Downtown Plan include construction of Public Square and other public spaces, increasing the number of street trees planted, implementing more Green Street improvements, improving skywalks, and improving pedestrian connections to neighborhoods to encourage more pedestrian traffic. Specifically, some of the improvements proposed for the GTEC include:

- Increase the number of city blocks with pedestrian friendly sidewalks and crosswalks and streetscapes, including Main Avenue, Sherman Street, Sharp Street, Hamilton Street, Pacific Avenue, Grant Street, and Sprague Avenue.
- Provide bike lanes on arterials where there is sufficient right of way.
- Improve the pedestrian crossing near Gonzaga University and along Division Street.
- Install transit amenities such as bus shelters, roadway lighting, and transit trackers.
- Provide adequate bicycle parking in downtown locations.
- Increase on-street parking meters near downtown.
- Extend the trail system near the river in conjunction with the proposed Burr Trail extension.
- Provide way-finding signs throughout the downtown to improve traffic for pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles.

E. Key funding and service partnerships:

The following funding source and service partnerships will be relied upon for implementation of the above-mentioned strategies:

- WSDOT GTEC funding
- City of Spokane CIP
- Spokane Transit Authority
- Spokane County
- Major Employers

