

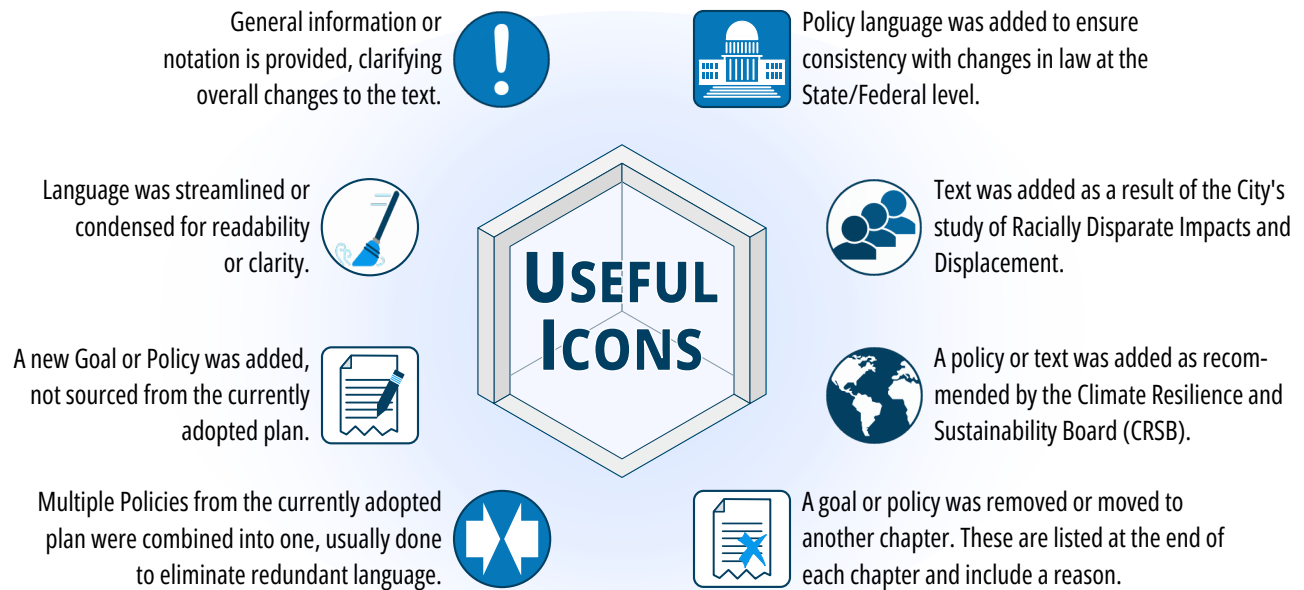


The chapter you see here is the result of months of work by countless individuals throughout the community. It represents a combination of inputs generously provided by the public, Plan Commission, City Council, and many others. This updated chapter will eventually be considered by the Plan Commission and City Council for inclusion in [PlanSpokane 2046](#).

Our teams have worked hard to create these updated chapters. Each has been discussed at the Plan Commission, by various Plan Commission subcommittees, with City Council in general, and shared with the public at various points along the way. These chapters represent the efforts of many, helping to describe the policy and guidance the Comprehensive Plan can provide in each topic area.

Please note this version supersedes any previously published versions, including the release of many chapters last October. All prior versions should be considered out-of-date from this point on.

As with prior versions, this chapter includes the basic text, but might not match the visual look and format of the final document (we're still working on that). To help readers identify where updated language has been provided, a series of icons are shown at right along the way. These aren't part of the final document--they're provided to help readers understand where certain changes may have come from, where past policies have been combined, etc. A guide to those icons is provided below. Each chapter will use the same set of icons for consistency.



What's Next for PlanSpokane?

Because this is the first complete view of some chapters (e.g. Growth Strategy, Transportation, Capital Facilities), we anticipate one more release of updated chapters and maps later this summer. After that, Plan Commission will likely hold a hearing to consider the overall document. We'd love to hear from you along the way.

If you have any comments on the chapters, please engage with us at <http://planspokane.org> or by email at planspokane@spokanecity.org. All comments are considered and each will be provided to the Plan Commission and City Council for their consideration prior to any hearings on the proposed document.

Chapter 8: Urban Design and Historic Preservation

Introduction

Buildings and public spaces play a significant role in creating a sense of place, supporting a city's ability to meet the needs of its residents, and establishing the general quality of life. To that end, the City of Spokane has a great foundation on which to stand, being informed by a landscape that offers the resources and inspiration to allow the city to grow and prosper. Spokane's history began as an important center of trade and fishing for local indigenous communities, continued through settlement and changing industry and commerce, on to the present. Through periods of rapid growth, and even the fire of 1889, which destroyed a large portion of the city, Spokane retained an impressive legacy of historic structures that tell the story of Spokane's social, economic, and architectural history. More recent growth and development resulted in a city recognized for its success in urban revitalization and innovation.

The following goals and policies are intended to enhance Spokane's unique and authentic sense of place with the tools of Urban Design and Historic Preservation. It is significant that this Chapter combines Urban Design and Historic Preservation, drawing on principles that support good planning in both areas, recognizing the importance of both the past and the future.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies provide specificity for planning and decision-making. Overall, they indicate the desired direction, of growth and development of Spokane.

Goal: DP-1, Community Identity and Design

Enhance Spokane's community identity through the preservation and improvement of historic structures and features while designing new structures and public spaces that enhance quality of life and create a unique sense of place.

Policy: DP-1.1, Landmark Structures, Buildings, and Sites

Recognize and preserve significant landmark structures, buildings, and sites providing focal points of historic, aesthetic, or cultural interest, celebrating the distinctiveness of Spokane.

Policy: DP-1.2, New Development in Established Neighborhoods

Encourage new development that adapts to the evolving needs of neighborhoods while recognizing the existing built environment and the context of the site.



Existing Goals 1 and 2 were very close in intent and effect, so they have been combined here and all design policies moved below it.

Note that policies have been reordered throughout for readability and flow.



Policy DP-1.2 has been updated to avoid preservation from deterring all improvement or change over time, in line with discussions during the development of Building Opportunity for Housing.

Policy: DP-1.3, Significant Views and Vistas

Preserve views, vistas, and viewpoints identified by the City as having historic and cultural value by establishing viewsheds and view corridors, providing protection from encroachment or adverse impacts.

Policy: DP-1.4, Gateway Identity and Physical Elements

Establish and maintain gateway features into Spokane and individual neighborhoods, consisting of physical elements and landscaping that create a sense of place, identity, and belonging as well as signage and wayfinding that directs visitors towards points of interest.

Policy: DP-1.5, Urban Design Principles

Utilize urban design principles and elements that make places distinct, recognizable, and memorable by implementing clear and consistent design requirements that provide for a continuity of form, community interaction, and coherent visual elements throughout.

Policy: DP-1.6, Design Review Process

Apply design guidelines to significant projects through a review process that relies on community input and the expertise of design professionals to achieve design performance that meets or exceeds citizens' quality of life expectations.

Policy: DP-1.7, Balance Requirements with Need

Craft development regulations and design requirements that recognize the influence design regulations have on meeting the needs and wants of Spokane's residents, while ensuring appropriate flexibility to avoid unnecessary and negative effects on overall development feasibility and creativity.

Policy: DP-1.8, Design Review as Part of the Permit Process

Integrate the design review and permitting process to ensure permit processing is efficient while also enforcing the design standards established to implement the community's vision.

Policy: DP-1.9, Design Principles for Public Projects and Structures

Design and construct public facilities and structures using the highest design principles to maximize public benefit and encourage similar improvements to the built environment.

Policy: DP-1.10, The Public Realm

Enhance the livability of Spokane by preserving the city's unique mix of modern and historic structures and supporting access and usability of the public realm.



Original policies 2.1 and 2.2 were combined into this policy (1.5).



Policy DP-1.6 has been updated to make it clear not all projects need or should go through the design review process. Additionally, reference to the Design Review Board has been removed to allow for different forms of design review.



This new policy was suggested by the Chapter Review Subcommittee as an important consideration when adopting standards. A cross-reference to the Growth Strategy Chapter is likely.

Policy: DP-1.11, Building and Site Design

Ensure that development is thoughtful in design and improves the quality of the immediate neighborhood while responding to the site's unique features and environmental conditions.

Policy: DP-1.12, Design Considerations in Planning Efforts

Include consideration of design and the built environment when conducting planning efforts, including subarea plans, seeking to preserve and enhance the design and development of an area while allowing for a vibrant, evolving community.

Policy: DP-1.13, People-Oriented Design

Orient building entrances and building facades toward sidewalks, pathways, and public rights-of-way rather than towards parking lots or internal spaces, prioritizing the human experience of structures rather than cars. Likewise, orient elements serving drivers, such as driveways and garages, away from the public realm when possible or minimize their impacts when unavoidable.

Policy: DP-1.14, Constant Improvement in Design of Public Spaces

Facilitate improvements to sidewalks, pathways, multi-modal infrastructure, streetscapes, street trees, sewers and drains, and parks in all neighborhoods and commercial areas designated for higher density development on an ongoing basis, including upgrades to the city's oldest infrastructure.

Policy: DP-1.15, Diversity of Design in the Built Environment

Respect and encourage diversity in scale and design of commercial development throughout the city, recognizing the context and style of different areas of the city and the needs of different uses.

Policy: DP-1.16, Parking Facility Design Standard

Enhance and improve the interaction between parking facilities and the community by requiring people-centered design features such as trees and other landscaping, multi-modal parking infrastructure, structured parking, and public plazas to soften impacts to people using and viewing the facility. In high-activity locations, parking should be located behind active uses such as storefronts.

Policy: DP-1.17, Urban Trees and Landscaping in All Development

Maintain, improve, and increase the number of street trees and planted areas in the urban environment by requiring that new development incorporate natural elements where appropriate, while providing incentives towards increased landscaping and trees.



People-oriented ideals have been strengthened throughout and will likely be highlighted in other Chapters as well.



This new policy was added following discussion with the Subcommittee, paying homage to the idea that different parts of the City have different contexts.

Policy: DP-1.18, On-Premises Advertising

Ensure that on-premises signs are of a size, number, quality, and style to provide identification of the business they support while contributing to the visual interest of the community and enhancing the style of development in Spokane.

Policy: DP-1.19, Billboards and Off-Premises Advertising

Prohibit construction of new advertising billboards and develop rules to phase out existing billboards over time. Regulate off-premises advertising overall, with the intent of reducing visual clutter and distraction, and enhancing safety throughout the city.

Policy: DP-1.20, Telecommunication Facilities

Minimize the visual impact of telecommunication facilities such as cell and microwave towers by encouraging their placement on existing structures in a manner that reduces facility visibility without impacting signal strength and coverage.

Policy: DP-1.21, Lighting

Support human-scaled lighting that increases visibility and safety while regulating display, flood, and light direction to minimize off-site impacts, including controls against signage and lighting that distract drivers.

Goal: DP-2, Historic Preservation

Preserve and protect Spokane's historic districts, sites, structures, and features by recognizing Spokane's diverse cultures and communities and their contributions to the City.

Policy: DP-2.1, Historic Preservation as a High Priority

Uphold historic preservation as a high priority and vital economic development tool within City programs through incentives and tax abatement programs providing essential reinvestment in Spokane's historic properties.

Policy: DP-2.2, Historic Preservation Education

Raise community awareness and support of Spokane's historic value by educating the public about the Historic Preservation program, including the value of the Spokane Register of Historic Places, local historic districts, incentives and regulatory framework for historic preservation, and other important aspects of the program.

Policy: DP-2.3, Historic Preservation Plan

Establish a citywide historic preservation plan that identifies goals, strategies, and priorities to achieve balance between the social and economic benefits



The relationship between distracting lighted signs, etc. along roadways and safety was brought up during engagement and has been strengthened in Policy DP-1.21.



This goal and its policies have been reviewed by the City's Historic Preservation Office in addition to work by Planning staff.



This is a new policy created to highlight the need for coordinated planning for historic preservation in Spokane.

of preservation and enhancement with the importance of accommodating growth and investment within Spokane's historic built environment.

Policy: DP-2.4, Zoning Provisions and Building Regulations

Utilize zoning provisions, building regulations, and design standards that foster preservation, rehabilitation, and enhancement appropriate for historic districts, sites, and structures.

Policy: DP-2.5, Identification and Protection of Resources

Identify historic resources to inform decision-making in City departments through the maintenance of an inventory of historic properties, including in the Spokane Register of Historic Places and National Register. Nominate historic properties and districts to the Spokane Register of Historic Places based on priorities and considerations identified in a Historic Preservation Plan.

Policy: DP-2.6, Reflecting Spokane's Diverse History

Encourage awareness, recognition, and preservation of the many diverse cultures and communities that are important and integral aspects of Spokane's past through listing properties and districts important to underrepresented communities and groups on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

Policy: DP-2.7, Equitable Communities

Harness the economic and cultural benefits of preservation to intentionally respond to historic and current inequities to ensure historic preservation resources benefit the entire community and avoid exclusionary impacts.

Policy: DP-2.8, Landmarks Commission and Citizen Consultation

Utilize and consider the expertise and recommendations of community members and preservation experts on the City Landmarks Commission in decision-making by the City Council, City Plan Commission, City Parks Board, and other city agencies in matters of historic preservation.

Policy: DP-2.9, Preservation Through Tribal Coordination

Collaborate with local Tribal governments to identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and sacred sites through the development of planning and permitting processes, as well as development regulations.

Policy: DP-2.10, Publicly Owned Historic Structures and Infrastructure

Adopt regulations that ensure review and consultation with the Historic Preservation Office prior to the removal or destruction of any publicly owned building, structure, right-of-way infrastructure, or site that is listed, or is eligible for listing, on the local, state, or national historic registers.



This policy, originally DP-3.10, was moved here for readability and flow purposes.



Policy 2.5 has been updated to better support and implement the plan called for in Policy 2.3 above.



New policy proposed as part of the Racially Disparate Impacts work and from community feedback.



This policy has been broadened to allow for more than just one solution (Landmarks Commission) while not diminishing the original effect.



Supported by Climate Resilience and Sustainability Board (CRSB) policy recommendation. Recommended policy already captured by DP-2.9, amended to include sacred sites per recommendation.

Policy: DP-2.11, Protection of Archeological Sites

Ensure that archaeological sites are identified through consultation with State agencies and protected locally by encouraging and incentivizing projects that include ground-disturbing activities or significant new construction to conduct cultural surveys prior to commencing work.

Policy: DP-2.12, Legislative Priorities for Preserving Historic Buildings

Support City, State, and Federal legislative priorities that promote and expand access to historic preservation wherever possible and provide enhancements to economic incentives for the preservation of historic buildings.

Policy: DP-2.13, Incentives Towards Reuse, Renovation, and Preservation

Provide a range of financial and regulatory incentives to encourage the reuse, renovation, and preservation of historic structures while disincentivizing demolition.

Policy: DP-2.14, Reuse of Historic Materials and Features

Encourage the deconstruction and reuse of historic materials and features when historic buildings or public infrastructure are demolished, preserving those materials and features for reuse in other historic renovations and reuse projects in the city and region.

Policy: DP-2.15, Rehabilitation Education and Assistance

Assist and educate owners of historic properties in identifying, recognizing, and planning for the use of their property while ensuring compatibility with preservation objectives and optimizing use of available incentives, code relief, and conditional uses.

Policy: DP-2.16, Historic Districts

Collaborate with community members to identify and establish historic districts that preserve historic and cultural resources in the built environment and spark economic revitalization while providing opportunities for new construction in support of the needs of a growing, vibrant, and evolving community.

Policy: DP-2.17, Affordable Housing

Encourage the rehabilitation of historic housing units throughout the city to expand affordable housing choices, contributing to market-rate and workforce housing.



Changes were made here to make it clear identification standards flow from the State, not the City.



Supported by Climate Resilience and Sustainability Board (CRSB) policy recommendation.



This policy has been updated to seek a balance between preservation and new development.



DP-2.17 and 2.18 were added in response to the housing and displacement requirements of HB1220 as well as during discussions with the public during the Building Opportunity for Housing project.

Policy: DP-2.18, Avoid Displacement

Investigate and implement tools and resources to support the ability of small businesses, renters, and homeowners to stay in their buildings and homes during and after rehabilitation or historic designation.

Policy: DP-2.19, Protection from Climate Hazards

Protect significant historic and cultural sites prone to floods or other hazards worsened by climate change.

Goal: DP-3, Sustainable Development

Support community development that is resilient to climate hazards, reducing environmental impacts of building practices, encouraging sustainable design that has long-term viability, and creating a high quality of life that benefits all community members.

Policy: DP-3.1, Sustainable Regulations

Implement and support building and energy codes and policy amendments that reduce energy and fossil fuel use, and air quality impacts for existing and new residential, commercial, industrial, and other buildings in a manner that equitably considers energy transition cost and benefits for overburdened communities.

Policy: DP-3.2, Long-Term Usability

Support the long-term usability of commercial buildings in economically disadvantaged areas through targeted investments and incentives such as technical assistance, grants, or loans for revitalization of facades and storefronts, security and accessibility improvements, and other renovations.

Policy: DP-3.3, Community Resiliency

Conserve, reuse, and retrofit older buildings to reduce carbon emissions, conserve resources, reduce waste, and improve local resiliency of the built environment throughout the community.

Policy: DP-3.4, Building Reuse and Recycling

Strengthen and expand programs that enable and incentivize reuse and recycling of construction, deconstruction, and demolition materials and waste and the incorporation of such materials into building and construction designs.

Policy: DP-3.5, Urban Heat Resilience Strategy

Develop and implement an urban heat resilience strategy that includes land use, urban design, public infrastructure, urban greening, and waste heat reduction actions that benefit overburdened communities.



Climate Resilience and Sustainability Board (CRSB) recommended policy.



Goal DP-3 and most associated policies are based on CRSB recommended policies.



New policy proposed as DP-2.15 in initial draft, relocated to this new goal as it was applicable and complementary.



Policy: DP-3.6, Resilience to Extreme Heat

Promote natural tree cover, built shade, and cooling infrastructure along new and existing sidewalks, streets, transit stops, and public spaces to enhance resilience to extreme heat, prioritizing urban heat islands and locations where populations susceptible to health impacts gather.

Policy: DP-3.7, Heat Mitigation Features

Encourage the development of heat mitigating roofs and other passive cooling site and building features by exploring code updates and incentives in Downtown and other high-intensity areas of the city to reduce energy use and improve resilience.

Policy: DP-3.8, Access to Nature and Food Security

Incentivize rooftop and ground-level gardens, community composting, and food forest projects within new and existing development to strengthen local food security and access to nature, prioritizing access for renters, residents without private yards, and overburdened communities.

Policy: DP-3.9, Incorporating Natural Designs in Public Spaces

Develop and revitalize plazas and public spaces using natural elements, including water, native vegetation and trees, landforms, and plants that attract native bird and other native wildlife.

Policy: DP-3.10, Natural Features and Habitat Protection

Ensure development is designed in a manner that protects significant natural and cultural features, critical areas, and identified wildlife habitat and habitat corridors.

Goal: DP-4, Inclusive Design

Enhance the built environment by supporting development that is welcoming and inclusive to all community members regardless of age or ability.

Policy: DP-4.1, Universal Design

Implement development regulations, design standards, and building codes that incorporate universal design principles to create a built environment that is inclusive, adaptable, accommodating, responsive, and comfortable for all community members.

Policy: DP-4.2, Accessibility Improvements

Identify and support financial and design incentives that allow for the retrofitting of existing buildings and sites that are not physically accessible to all community members to increase access to the city's existing built environment.



Goal NE-13 and policy NE-13.1 from first PlanSpokane 2046 Natural Environments draft consolidated and relocated.



Previously LU-5.4. Policy was removed in May 2026 draft release due to identified redundancy with other policies in Growth Strategies. Policy updated to reflect design influence and relocated to this Chapter based on community feedback.



New goal DP-4 and associated policies based on public engagement supporting greater accessibility and universal design.



Policy: DP-4.3, Accessible Placemaking

Encourage placemaking, community spaces, and plazas that incorporate universal design features to allow for all community members to benefit from the city's social and cultural assets.

POLICIES REMOVED FROM THE TEXT:

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

Policy: DP-2.4, Design Flexibility for Neighborhood Facilities

Incorporate flexibility into building design and zoning codes to enable neighborhood facilities to be used for multiple uses.

Policy: DP-2.12, Infill Development

Encourage infill construction and area redevelopment that complement and reinforce positive commercial and residential character.

Policy: DP-2.18, Bus Benches and Shelters Advertising

Continue to identify and implement ways to provide bus benches and control transit stop advertising.

Goal: DP-4, Downtown Center Viability

Create a vital, livable downtown by maintaining it as the region's economic and cultural center and preserving and reinforcing its historic and distinctly urban character.

Policy: DP-4.1, Downtown Residents and Workers

Encourage investments and create opportunities that increase the number of residents and workers in downtown Spokane.

Policy: DP-4.2, Street Life

Promote actions designed to increase pedestrian use of streets, especially downtown, thereby creating a healthy street life in commercial areas.

Policy: DP-4.3, Downtown Services

Support development efforts that increase the availability of daily needed services in downtown Spokane.

Goal: DP-5, Local Determination

Make neighborhoods attractive, safe places by encouraging residents to express their design and development values.



Policy is reframing of existing DP-1.17 to better highlight the intent of accessible public spaces. Incorporates concepts from existing DP-2.14 around town squares and plazas.



Policy 2.4 is redundant with policies already in the Community Health Chapter.



Policy 2.12 was not distinct enough from the new policies 1.2 and 1.14 above. As such, it's redundant.



Off-premises advertising is already addressed in DP-1.20 while transit amenities are discussed in the Transportation Chapter.



Goal 4 and its policies include topics covered by the Growth Strategy Chapter, in particular GS-1.3, A Vibrant Downtown. D-4.1 also captured in Economic Prosperity, EP-3.10, Downtown Spokane.



Concepts from Goal 5 and its attendant policies are already present in the Local Governance and Growth Strategy Chapters.

Policy: DP-5.1, Neighborhood Participation

Encourage resident participation in planning and development processes that will shape or re-shape the physical character of their neighborhood.

Policy: DP-5.2, Neighborhood Involvement in the City Design Review Process

Encourage neighborhoods to participate in the city's design review process.