PLANSPOKANE

Resilient | Connected | Livable | 2046

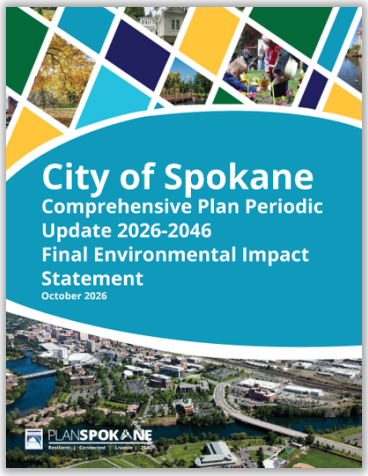
Final EIS Summary



Background

The City of Spokane is working on a periodic update to the City's Comprehensive Plan as required by the State's Growth Management Act (GMA). The last periodic update was completed in 2017. Since then, the State has added new requirements, especially around climate and housing. Due in December 2026, the periodic update will identify policies and future regulations to guide the next 20 years of our city.

As part of the PlanSpokane 2046 process, the City has developed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), an informational document that provides the City, public, Tribes, and agencies with environmental information to be considered in the decision-making process.



What We're Planning For

The City of Spokane is expected to gain at least 23,357 new residents between 2023 and 2046, bringing the City's total population to just over 256,000.

Based on state requirements, the City is expected to need 22,359 additional housing units between 2020 and 2046. In addition to the total number housing units, the City is also required to plan for housing by affordability bracket.

23,357

Projected new residents by 2046

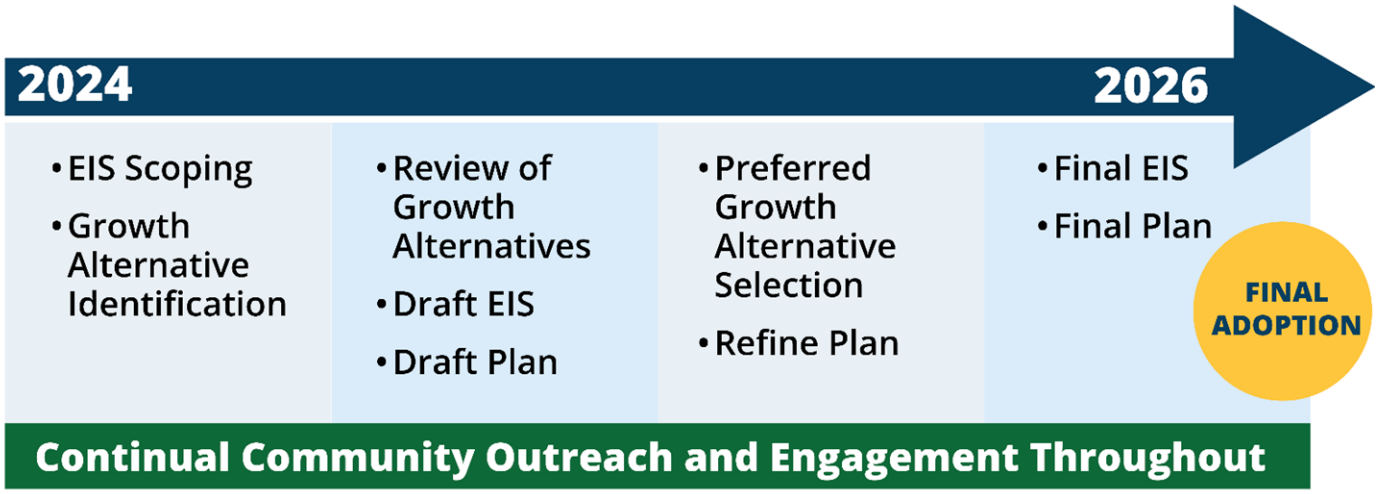
22,359

Additional housing units needed between 2020 and 2046

For more information, Visit PlanSpokane.org

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Purpose and Process

An EIS is required under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) for larger projects such as a significant update to the Comprehensive Plan. **An EIS describes the potential environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and ways to avoid or minimize negative impacts of policies.**



The City prepared a Draft EIS in December 2025 (comment period December 18, 2025-March 5, 2026) to evaluate different growth patterns and policies. The Final EIS presents four alternatives to test different growth patterns and policies. This includes three alternatives studied in the Draft EIS and a "preferred alternative" based on public input and the Draft EIS evaluation. The preferred alternative includes features of several of the alternatives studied in the Draft EIS. The preferred alternative informs the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

The EIS studies the following topics:

- **Earth, water quality, and water resources**
- **Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions**
- **Plants and animals, including critical areas and habitat**
- **Land use patterns and urban form, including historic and cultural resources**
- **Population, employment, and housing**
- **Relationship to plans, policies, and regulations**
- **Transportation, including multiple modes and city and state facilities**
- **Public services: police, fire and emergency medical services, parks, schools, libraries, solid waste**
- **Utilities: power, water, wastewater, and stormwater**

Responding to the Spokane Complex Fire

The Spokane community was directly affected by the Spokane Complex fire in August 2026. The City lost approximately 513 dwellings and more than 74 other structures were destroyed in the city limits, with more losses in the surrounding county. There was significant loss of tree canopy as well and numerous effects on the Spokane River and ecological systems within and adjacent to the burn area. The immediate focus of the City is to prioritize emergency response and support rebuilding of homes in affected neighborhoods. The need to rebuild does not increase the City's 2020-2046 growth targets. Rebuilding has begun and the City will meet its long-term obligations to implement the updated Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to manage growth, provide additional housing and economic opportunities, plan for necessary services and infrastructure (e.g., fire protection, streets, stormwater, parks), improve environmental and climate resilience, and more.

Objectives

This EIS compares alternatives for their ability to meet these objectives:

- **Meet Periodic Update Requirements,** including providing capacity for more housing types and affordability levels, increasing resiliency to climate impacts, evaluating tree canopy coverage, increasing opportunities for active transportation, reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions, addressing needs of overburdened communities, increasing green infrastructure, planning for jobs and economic development, and more.
- **Accommodate Growth** through 2046 based on State projections and County allocations.
- **Clarify the Plan** to remove policies that are inconsistent, outdated, duplicative, or unclear.
- **Simplify the Plan and Codes** including future land use map categories and zoning districts and reflect any new designations.
- **Protect Critical Areas** by updating critical area regulations to reflect best available science.
- **Fast-Track Desired Growth** in priority locations through permit streamlining.

The City's proposed draft vision statement for the periodic update is also considered an objective:

> *Spokane aims to foster a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive city by supporting economic growth, environmental stewardship, and the diverse needs of the whole community. The City is dedicated to ensuring access to attainable housing, safe streets, and thriving neighborhoods while inspiring innovation, cultural vitality, and connection for all Spokane residents.*

Proposed Alternatives

Alternative 1 "Stay the Course" would maintain the current comprehensive plan and code. It was developed in prior years with different growth targets and different state expectations.

Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative are designed to meet current state requirements (including new housing, climate, and other requirements), create the opportunity for housing at all income levels, accommodate jobs, and update policies and codes to streamline them and facilitate growth.

Alternatives Summary

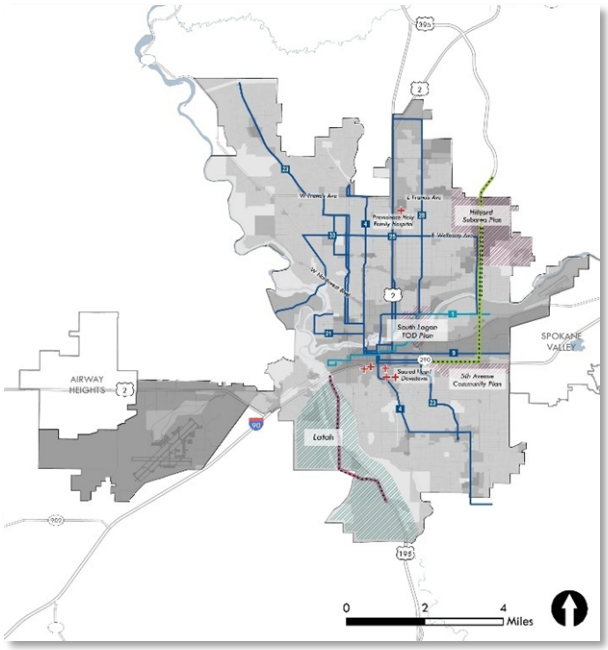
		Alternative 1 **Stay the Course**	Alternative 2 **Distributed & Balanced**	Alternative 3 **Center City & Regional Hubs**	**Preferred Alternative**
Same for all alternatives	*Housing / population growth*	▶ **21,739 new housing units** from 2022-2046 (about 21% more housing units than present)* ▶ **25,157 new residents** from 2022-2046*			
Varies by alternative	*Plan and code update*	▶ Maintains current comprehensive plan and code	▶ Updates the comprehensive plan and code	▶ Updates the comprehensive plan and code	▶ Updates the comprehensive plan and code
	Focus areas for growth	▶ Focuses growth in Downtown and Centers and Corridors	▶ Focuses growth in mixed-use, transit-oriented development ▶ Allows more neighborhood-serving commercial uses ▶ Simplifies Land Use Plan	▶ Focuses growth in downtown, regional hubs, and areas with greatest investment in transit and transportation ▶ Allows more neighborhood-serving commercial uses ▶ Simplifies Land Use Plan	▶ Combines elements of Alternative 2 and 3 ▶ Focuses growth along frequent transit corridors and in hubs ▶ Allows more neighborhood-serving commercial uses ▶ Simplifies Land Use Plan
	Housing mix	▶ 63% of the City's total housing as single unit housing	▶ 59% of the City's total housing as single unit housing	▶ 59% of the City's total housing as single unit housing	▶ 59% of the City's total housing as single unit housing

		Alternative 1 **Stay the Course**	Alternative 2 **Distributed & Balanced**	Alternative 3 **Center City & Regional Hubs**	**Preferred Alternative**
	Housing affordability	▶ Would provide enough housing capacity at incomes above 80% of the median* ▶ Would **not** provide enough housing capacity at incomes less than 80% of the median**	▶ Would provide enough housing capacity affordable at all income levels	▶ Would provide enough housing capacity affordable at all income levels	▶ Would provide enough housing capacity affordable at all income levels
	*Job projections****	▶ **34,850 new jobs**	▶ **24,939 new jobs**	▶ **38,848 new jobs**	▶ **34,850 new jobs**

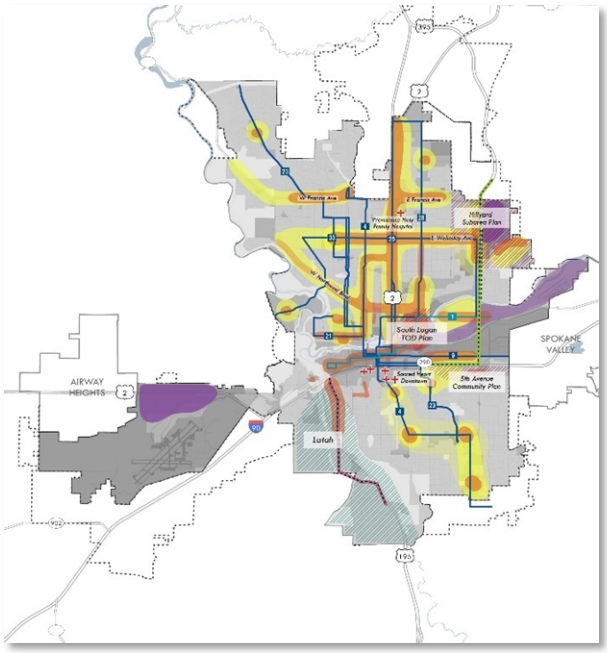
*This is the 2020-2046 housing growth target minus the units already added from 2020 to 2022. Population is adjusted to 2022-46 instead of 2023-46 using state data for a consistent 2022 base year.
**Area median income is $70,600 for a one-person household, $80,700 for a two-person household, $90,800 for a three-person household, or $100,800 for a four-person household as of 2025.
***Each alternative studies a job projection from a different data source. The different numbers are not based on an alternative's likelihood to produce more or fewer jobs

Alternative Concepts

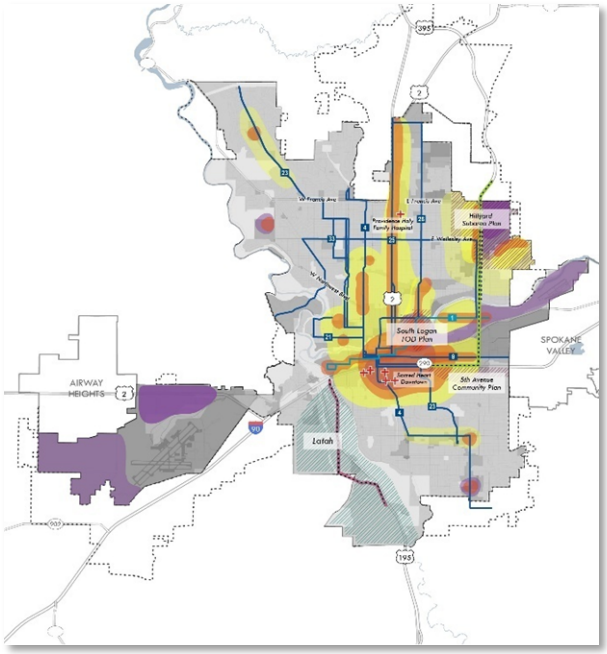
Alternative 1: Stay the Course



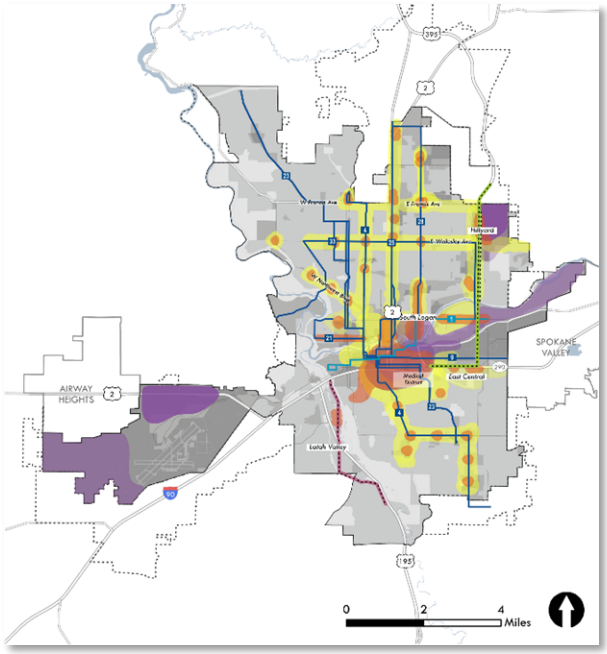
Alternative 2: Distributed and Balanced



Alternative 3: Center City and Regional Hubs



Preferred Alternative



Key Features

- Subarea Planning
- Additional Infrastructure Study
- Transit Routes, Selected
- North Spokane Corridor/ US 395
- Children of the Sun Trail
- Inland Empire Way + connections
- Hospitals

Growth Intensity

- Low
- Moderate
- Moderate-High
- High
- High Density Housing
- Moderate Density Housing
- Mixed-use/Commercial
- Employment/Industrial Light
- Employment/Industrial Heavy

Note: The Preferred Alternative shows a unified color for Moderate/High Density housing.

Source: City of Spokane, BERK, 2026.

Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative would better meet the objectives for the plan update than Alternative 1.

Ability to Meet Objectives

Objectives	Alternative 1: Stay the Course	Alternative 2: Distributed and Balanced	Alternative 3: Center City and Regional Hubs	Preferred Alternative
Meet Periodic Update Requirements	Less	Most	Most	Most
Accommodate Growth: Housing at All Affordability Levels	More	Most	Most	Most
Accommodate Growth: Jobs	More	More	Most	More
Clarify the Plan	Less	Most	Most	Most
Simplify the Plan and Codes	Less	Most	Most	Most
Protect Critical Areas	More	Most	Most	Most
Facilitate Desired Growth	Less	Most	Most	Most
Alignment with Vision Statement	Less	Most	Most	Most

Source: City of Spokane, BERK, 2025.

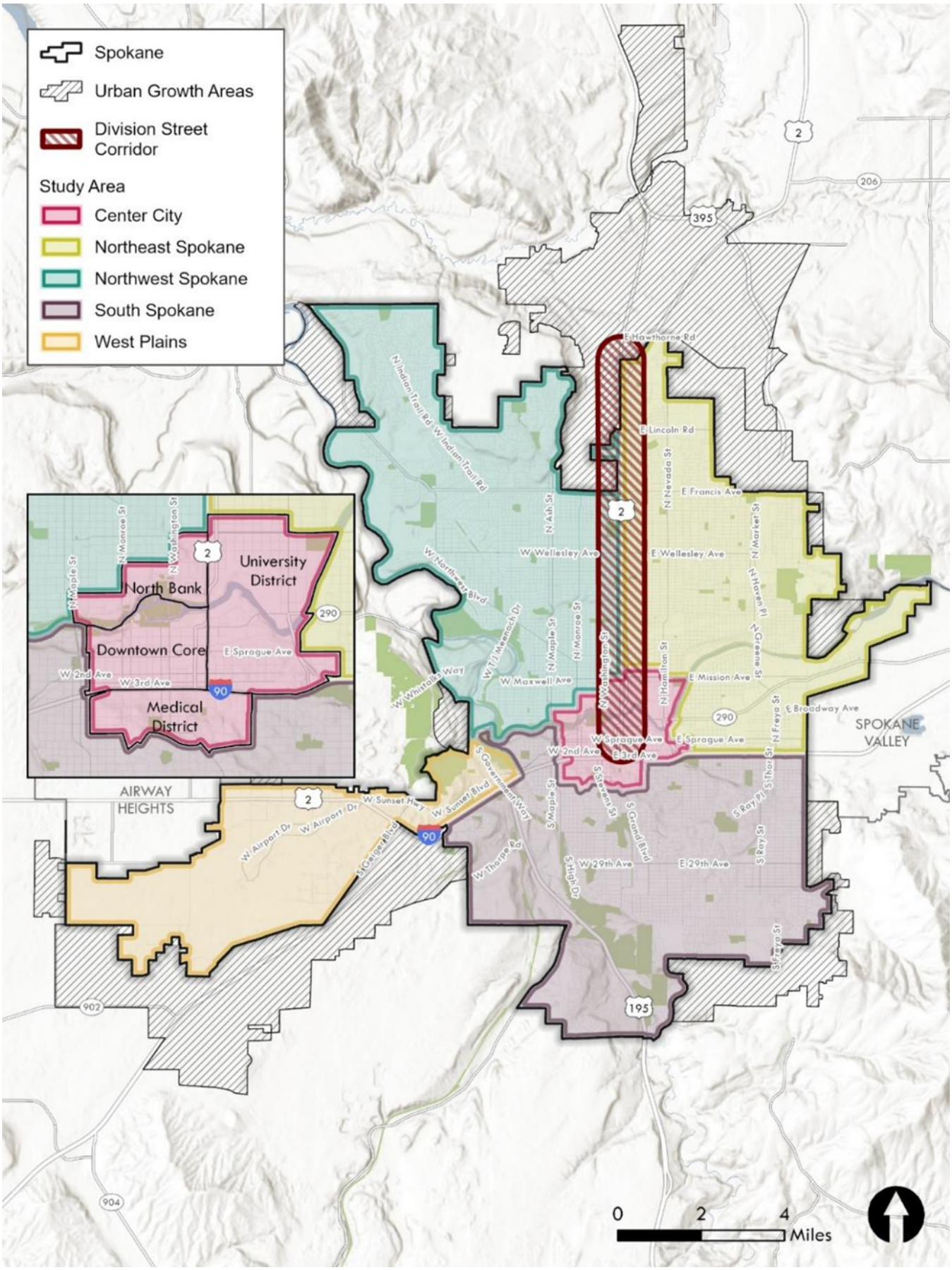
Study Area

This EIS primarily focuses on the Spokane city limits. These city study areas are referenced in the EIS:

- Northwest Spokane
- Northeast Spokane
- South Spokane
- West Plains
- Center City, overlapping several study areas, including Downtown Spokane
- Division corridor, straddling Northwest and Northeast Spokane

Within these broad study areas, the EIS also mentions Neighborhood Council boundaries.

Spokane Study Areas



Sources: City of Spokane, BERK, 2025.

Abbreviated Summary of Impacts *(see Final EIS for full context)*

Earth, Water Quality, and Water Resources



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- Impacts from construction (soil disturbance, erosion, water pollution, and soil contamination)
- Increased pollution and rainfall runoff due to growth and increased hard surfaces
- **Alternative 1 has the highest impacts** (more growth on undeveloped land)

Mitigation Options

- Stormwater runoff best management practices
- Increased density (reduces sprawl)
- New climate policies and updated critical areas regulations in Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative
- Potential measures:
  - Updated stormwater controls
  - Critical area buffer restoration
  - Protecting tree canopy in forested areas
  - Review Spokane Municipal Code Section 17E.010 Critical Aquifer Recharge Area for additional protections

Air Quality/Greenhouse Gases



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- All alternatives see a net decrease in transportation emissions
- Emissions from non-transportation sources would be highest under Alternatives 1 and 3
- Preferred Alternative produces the lowest transportation-sector emissions and the second-lowest energy-sector emissions.
- Differences among alternatives are small at the citywide scale

Mitigation Options

- New climate policies and monitoring metrics in Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative addressing GHG and VMT reduction and Community Resilience.
- Potential measures:
  - Investments in multi-modal transportation infrastructure
  - Fees that reduce traffic congestion
  - Mixed uses and density
  - Electric vehicle adoption
  - Building electrification and energy efficiency incentives
  - Designated truck routes
  - Tree canopy protection
  - Street sweeping to reduce dust
  - Development standards for buildings and air filtering
  - Education on air pollutants
  - Adopted emissions reduction targets.

Plants and Animals



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- New development in currently vegetated areas, impacting fish and wildlife habitats
- Increased impervious surfaces affecting aquatic habitats (runoff, heat, less shade)
- Construction could impact habitat through runoff of soils and sediments, equipment spills, and noise
- **Alternative 1 has the highest impacts** due to location of growth and more growth on undeveloped land

Mitigation Options

- New climate policies and updated critical areas regulations in Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative
- Potential measures:
  - More program resources for tree canopy cover
  - Incentives for habitat conservation
  - Land acquisition in key areas
  - Adaptive management policies for critical areas and shorelines
  - Code that limits clearing and soil disturbance

Land Use Patterns and Urban Form



All the alternatives have the potential for significant adverse impacts to cultural resources.

No unavoidable significant adverse impacts expected to land use, urban form, and environmental justice.

Likely Impacts

- Highest levels of growth in areas that are already higher intensity
- Greater development intensity over time due to infill
- More middle housing types and ADUs
- Some tree, noise, shadow, view, potential historic and archeological resource impacts
- Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative update neighborhood and urban design policies, and add climate policies, to address development compatibility, investments in amenities, and climate resilience

Mitigation Options

- Spokane Municipal Code regulations for land use, urban form, and historic preservation
- Potential measures:
  - Apply historic and cultural resources discovery policies to full city limits
  - Construction noise rules and other noise standards
  - Additional development standards for light and shading
  - Investments to reduce heat and noise
  - Citywide historic preservation plan and pre-project historic and cultural resource review

Population, Employment, and Housing



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- Some housing policy and code changes from the Housing Action Plan
- More jobs in Northeast Spokane and Center City
- Inadequate housing capacity to meet targets for lower income bands (under 80% Area Median Income) under Alternative 1
- More opportunities for moderate and high intensity residential and mixed-use development in Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative
- More housing displacement impacts under Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative, but greater housing production and diversity
- Higher jobs to housing ratio than current in Alternatives 1 and 3
- **Alternative 1 has the highest impacts**

Mitigation Options

- Updates to comprehensive plan under Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative to address housing targets for all incomes, displacement, racially disparate impacts, and housing barriers
- Spokane Housing Action Plan strategies
- StartUp Spokane program for business resources
- Potential measures:
  - Rental Assistance Fund
  - Public Development Authority
  - Land banking
  - Use of development agreements
  - Minimum density requirements
  - Incentives for affordable commercial tenant space
  - Other measures as detailed in EIS section 3.5.3

Relationship to Plans, Policies, and Regulations



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- All alternatives accommodate citywide growth targets
- **Alternative 1 has the highest impacts** due to inadequate housing capacity for lower income bands (under 80% Area Median Income)
- Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative are better aligned with state requirements and regional, county, and local plans

Mitigation Options

- Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative meet housing targets at all income levels and address other state requirements for the periodic update, including housing and climate planning

Transportation



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- All alternatives would continue making pedestrian improvements but Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative may accelerate them
- All alternatives would continue making bicycle improvements
- Alternative 1 has the highest vehicle miles traveled per capita
- Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative would be expected to have a slightly higher share of walking
- All alternatives would have impacts on road intersection levels of service

Mitigation Options

- Planned roadway and transit improvements including Transportation Facilities Plan
- Transportation impact fee program
- Potential measures:
  - Vehicle miles travelled per capita reduction strategies
  - Transportation Demand Strategies to encourage carpooling, vanpooling, transit, walking, biking, and telework
  - Transportation Systems Management and Operations and signal timing
  - Agency partnerships

Public Services



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- Increased demand for police, fire/emergency medical services, schools, parks, libraries, and solid waste
- Alternative 1 would increase demand in the Center City, existing centers and corridors, and less developed areas
- Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative would reinforce growth in already developed areas
- Mead School District would see more student growth under Alternative 1 and Spokane School District would see less

Mitigation Options

- Updated Comprehensive Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, and other policies support public services planning
- An increased local sales and use tax to support a Public Safety Tax became effective April 1, 2025
- Wildland fuels reduction program
- Emergency management programs
- New climate policies under Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative addressing Community Resilience
- Potential measures:
  - Impact fees for schools, parks, and fire protection
  - Parks fee-in-lieu program
  - Parkland dedication opportunities in key locations
  - Partnerships for education and childcare spaces and parks and natural lands

Utilities



No significant adverse impacts expected with mitigation.

Likely Impacts

- Increased demand for utilities due to growth
- Increased concentration of utility users under Alternatives 2 and 3 and the Preferred Alternative (better efficiency, but potential upgrades needed for energy, water, and sewer)
- Specific upgrades needed would vary by alternative based on location of growth

Mitigation Options

- City water conservation programs
- Ongoing planning for water and wastewater systems to address growth and changing demand
- Regular energy planning with Avista
- Potential measures:
  - More local energy resources
  - Energy-efficiency infrastructure
  - Upgraded stormwater infrastructure
  - Minimizing runoff
  - Protection of critical aquifer recharge areas
  - Continue to transition areas with combined sewers to separate stormwater and sewer facilities

Next Steps

The City of Spokane anticipates adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan by early 2027. As the plan is reviewed by the Plan Commission and City Council, there will be opportunities for public comment. Please see the project website for more information and ways to participate in the periodic update and future code preparation efforts: https://my.spokanecity.org/planspokane/.

