

# DRAFT 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Initiative Overview

The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Initiative is a neighborhood-driven effort to revitalize East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Liberty Park and Thor/Freya in the East Central neighborhood. In partnership with the City of Spokane, this project presents a community vision that is inclusive and unified. It provides strategic actions for improvements, programming, and community building along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Reflecting the diversity of East Central, the outcome supports efforts to foster neighborhood identity and enhance the quality of life for residents at every life stage and economic condition, and to promote local businesses along the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor.

## Neighborhood History

East Central is one of the oldest and most diverse neighborhoods in Spokane. Developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s as a strong community of working-class and immigrant families, the neighborhood grew in connection with industrial development. It was the first neighborhood built east of the city's downtown core.<sup>1</sup>

However, the financial success that prospered early did not last long. Beginning in the 1920s, core industries declined after World War I and land values in East Central dropped. Racial discrimination in mortgage lending in the 1930s created “redlined” maps that the federal government used to determine the kinds of mortgages it would insure. This worked to segregate African American communities, making it difficult or impossible for people in certain areas to access mortgage financing and become homeowners and build equity. The East Central neighborhood was redlined, and by the 1950s it had become one of the poorest neighborhoods in Spokane along with other redlined neighborhoods in West Central and Hillyard. Still, East Central remained home not just to thousands of families from all different backgrounds, but hundreds of businesses which employed many of its residents. The struggles of the previous decades had left a robust, if less well-off, community.

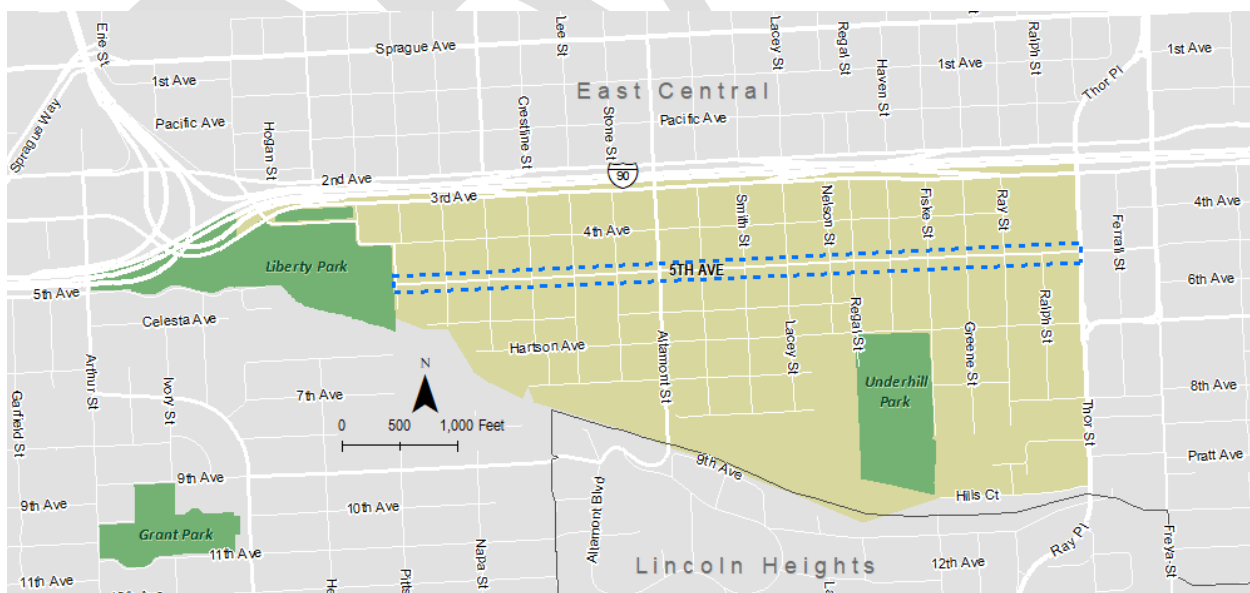


Figure 1. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Initiative Area

<sup>1</sup> Sources on history of East Central: <http://www.historicspokane.org/east-central/>; <https://spokanehistorical.org/items/show/468>

This decline eventually made for cheap land and East Central became a focus for federal highway planners in the 1950s looking to develop the national system of highways. One of three options through Spokane, the interstate was routed through East Central with devastating and traumatic impacts for residents. The development of I-90 split the neighborhood into two sections north and south of the freeway, leveled over a thousand homes, and displaced residents—the majority of whom were African American and immigrant families. Liberty Park was the oldest and most elaborate city park in Spokane at the time, and a source of pride for the community. However, the park was destroyed when the City sold 26 of its 28 acres for the freeway. Due to traffic being redirected onto the freeway, nearly all the long-standing small businesses that served the neighborhood were forced to close. Impacts were felt for decades after the freeway construction and continue to be felt by residents today.

## Honoring Heritage and Building Legacy

The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area in East Central is a community of immense diversity: families and individuals at every stage of life; immigrant communities from all over the world; and residents of various backgrounds, races, ethnicities, faiths, and income levels. Though neighborhood demographics have evolved, the area is still one of the most diverse communities in a city that is 85% white.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the area has been an important cultural center for the African American community for decades. In 1970, 20% of residents were Black or African American; by 2017 this decreased to 5% while Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, multi-racial, and Hispanic/Latino populations increased during this time. In total, 43% of residents in the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area are people of color, including 19% Hispanic/Latino. The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue commercial area is reflective of this diversity, with businesses that are African American-owned, and organizations that support local immigrant communities like the Marshallese, Latino/Hispanic, and Russian-speaking communities. The area serves people from all backgrounds and income levels across the city and region, and this is an important value the residents want to preserve.

### 5TH AVENUE AT A GLANCE

2,541 residents  
934 households  
61.3% family households  
43.2% of residents are people of color  
\$32,297 median household income  
28.2% of people below poverty level  
59.6% housing units are owner-occupied  
16.1% of residents are foreign-born  
19.5% residents speak another language at home  
21.2% of residents have a disability

*\* Data from 2013-2017 ACS<sup>2</sup>*

Businesses, community organizations, and churches have been working to revitalize 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a catalyst for a renewed vision in East Central. There has been much progress already, including the opening of Fresh Soul, the Carl Maxey Center, and SERA Youth Tutoring and Recreation Center. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Outreach Center moved into the East Central Community Center in 2018 to become the Martin Luther King Jr. Center at East Central. The campus is expanding with more space, SNAP, Community Colleges of Spokane's Head Start program, and with building the CHAS Dental Health Clinic connected to the Center. Starting in 2020, the Eastside Library will be rebuilt in Liberty Park with nearly double the space and will feature a Children's Zone programming space. The Children of the Sun Trail is planned to connect with the Centennial Trail and Ben Burr Trail through East Central, and the City recently invested in sidewalk improvements and planting new street trees along the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue commercial area.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Initiative

In 2016, the community began engaging with the City under former Mayor David Condon's administration on a vision for 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Liberty Park to Thor/Freya. The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Initiative was identified as a priority focus for concerted efforts to counter decades of disinvestment. Discussions initially began with the challenge that the East

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Central neighborhood has never healed from the impact that the I-90 construction caused to the community. Nor does the community feel that this legacy has been adequately addressed. Community problems identified included an underutilized commercial area, lack of cultural identity, need for pedestrian and streetscape improvements, and lack of community coordination. The objective was to address past mistakes and reconnect residents and the neighborhood to opportunities that can strengthen and reinvigorate the community in culturally relevant ways.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area is at a unique crossroad. New investments both private and public are creating new opportunities, and community stakeholders have come together to articulate a strategy to build upon this momentum. The area's location is an important asset for residents and a strength to build from when considering strategies for neighborhood improvement. While signs of reinvestment are more visible, families who live in the neighborhood still face significant challenges. There is much concern about gentrification and displacement of current residents as changes come. Strategies that support people where they are at and work to enhance livelihoods for the whole community will help ensure everyone can achieve a successful life.



Figure 2. Visionary words for 5th Avenue shared by stakeholders at a community forum.

## Development of the Community Strategy

The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Initiative built on previous discussions in 2016 and 2017 with additional and expanded stakeholder meetings in late 2019 and early 2020. The City contracted with a facilitator and community liaison to help convene and lead conversations. Three stakeholder meetings were held in November and December 2019 to review previous discussions, provide project updates, and identify emerging challenges and opportunities. A community forum was held in December 2019, and through these conversations, initial themes rose to the surface. Priorities for each theme were developed, and a second community forum was held in February 2020. Community members reviewed the priorities, shared what is most important, and discussed next steps for moving forward.

The priorities in this strategy provide guidance to the community, City, and partners for projects, needs, and desired outcomes. The initiative brought together a diverse group of residents, businesses, property owners, and organizations to focus on collaboration. This strategy hopes to capture the community momentum and focus the energy to keep the important work alive today and for the future. The hope is that both the social and economic health of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is fostered, nurtured, and strengthened for residents going forward. As a guiding document, implementation will require the ongoing support and advocacy of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue stakeholders and residents.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Strategic Priorities

## A. Define the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue identity and foster collaboration.

In stakeholder discussions and the community forums, participants expressed that one of the first steps they would like to engage in is to define the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue neighborhood identity as both unique and a part of the East Central neighborhood. With changing demographics, it is also important to emphasize the diverse and rich heritage of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including the historic African American community and the emerging Asian, Marshallese and Hispanic/Latinx communities. As part of the discussion around identity, there is strong concern over gentrification that could change the fabric of the neighborhood and displace current residents. Addressing cultural, economic, and social equity are important points in directing if and how change will occur, and for whom the benefits will emerge. With this initiative, the community is in a unique position to guide these discussions and help influence the outcome of revitalization activities and growth as it comes to the area. Establishing a coalition and framework to continue engaging residents, businesses, and community organizations is considered an important part of the success of the strategy moving forward. This could be additional civic forums, a coordination committee, or other framework that convenes the group and helps organize a collective community voice.

- A1.** Work as a community to define the 5th Avenue neighborhood identity that honors the history of the neighborhood and celebrates the diversity of cultures.
- A2.** Advocate for equitable policies and projects that address gentrification, preserve the identity of the neighborhood, and support cultural equity.
- A3.** Develop a story map that documents the story of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area.
- A4.** Establish a 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue coalition to organize and coordinate strategic efforts, identify funding and partnerships, and advocate for the community.
- A5.** Expand shared experiences for residents that promotes physical and emotional well-being, fosters social connections, helps with community healing.
- A6.** Build awareness of how to participate in City and other public processes, neighborhood council meetings, and connect with fellow community members.

## B. Promote coordination among community service providers.

Improve access to key assets within the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area by connecting residents to information about resources, support, and program offerings. Community service providers in the area support local residents as well as people from all over the region, including the MLK Jr. Outreach Center at East Central, Carl Maxey Center, Southeast Reunion Association, Southeast Daycare Center, SNAP, the incoming CHAS dental clinic, and numerous faith-based organizations. Ongoing coordination among organizations can help foster relationship building and develop a shared understanding of programs and collaboration for resources. Providers can work together to support the community while also developing and supporting their niche focus and core audience. This can help strengthen programming and minimize overlap. It can also make it easier for residents to understand the resources available and how to access and engage with community service providers.

- B1.** Identify the best way to communicate with the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue residents, businesses, and organizations. Consider a resource guide and community calendar of events. Address language and cultural barriers to make outreach accessible and relevant.

- B2.** Expand youth and intergenerational programming. Topics include tutoring, mentoring, extracurricular activities, parental support and parenting skills, health and wellness, and food security and nutrition.
- B3.** Create one annual community event that promotes the area, supports neighborhood diversity, and encourages visitors.
- B4.** Develop partnerships to increase participation from businesses like Fred Meyers and Dominos in neighborhood council meetings, stakeholder meetings, and other community events.

## C. Improve the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue streetscape to promote safety and accessibility.

Continue to build on past and recent investments in infrastructure and capital facilities with enhanced streetscapes. A major priority is traffic calming solutions along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to support pedestrians and non-motorized uses. This includes through the commercial area; the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> and Altamont; around community service providers; and the connection between the MLK Jr. Outreach Center at East Central, the relocated Eastside Library, and neighborhoods parks. Desired outcomes are expanded street lighting, sidewalk improvements, bump outs, improved bus shelters, and green infrastructure along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

- C1.** Identify opportunities and partnerships for funding a streetscape improvement plan and follow-up improvements. Consider traffic calming, lighting, sidewalk improvements including bump outs and benches.
- C2.** Explore wayfinding signage that calls more attention to community assets and local businesses.
- C3.** Participate with WSDOT in the North Spokane Corridor planning to identify locations for pedestrian crossings over I-90 that connects 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the East Sprague Business District.<sup>3</sup>
- C4.** Work with STA to enhance public transit stops along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue with safe and welcoming amenities and placemaking.
- C5.** Explore a solution for an enhanced pedestrian connection between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the Perry District.

## D. Preserve and expand options for affordable housing to support residents at every life stage and economic condition.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area is one of the most diverse areas for homeownership in Spokane. One in two households of color in the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area is a homeowner; specifically, 68% of African American households, 62% of Asian households, and 65% of Hispanic/Latino households own their homes.<sup>4</sup> Comparatively, this is 1.5 to 2 times the percentage of home ownership by race citywide. The area is critical to providing affordable housing options for many households that would not be able to achieve homeownership in other parts of the city. Yet even with this affordability, 45% of households in the area are still cost-burdened. It is important to support the social and economic health of existing residents and help sustain affordable housing opportunities. The community and partners can promote existing repair and rehab programs, and provide guidance to homebuyers through training, courses, and other loan programs. Affordable housing projects that support multi-generational and immigrant families is also an important part of maintaining and fostering community in the area. Mixed income developments that include both affordable and marketing rate housing can support successful lives for all residents in all phases of their life and economic condition.

<sup>3</sup> Updates on the North Spokane Corridor are provided at [nscplace.com](http://nscplace.com)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

- D1.** Establish a community vision for affordable housing in the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue area that prioritizes anti-displacement strategies for residents. Explore opportunities and resources that support a community land trust homeownership model and shared-equity homeownership programs.
- D2.** Participate in City discussions on housing. Hold civic forums to educate and mobilize residents on issues of ownership and long-term residency.
- D3.** Maintain affordable, older single-family housing with incentives and training for low-income households to repair and weatherize their homes. Promote community resources and programs.
- D4.** Explore ways to incentivize the development of high-quality, affordable, mixed-income, and multi-generational housing.
- D5.** Expand culturally relevant training with community organizations and local realtors to offer homeownership, equity, and finance courses for residents to pursue and maintain homeownership if desired.

## E. Promote vibrant neighborhood commercial opportunities and jobs that reflects the diversity of the community.

Projects and strategies that support both a strong community and a strong place will be key to a vibrant and resilient commercial area along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The small commercial area is zoned neighborhood retail, which encourages businesses that are neighborhood serving and pedestrian-oriented. The community is encouraged to explore ways to maximize existing commercial opportunities with locally-owned cultural businesses and services that meet neighborhood needs. In addition to supporting existing businesses, the neighborhood can also further identify appropriate spaces and desires for targeted commercial development and active reuse of vacant spaces. Ideas include community gathering spaces, neighborhood coffee shop, ethnic food, bakery, and local restaurants. In 2015, the City eliminated parking requirements in neighborhood retail areas for buildings less than 3,000 square feet to help encourage revitalization of small scale, neighborhood serving businesses.

- E1.** Identify appropriate spaces for targeted businesses and build partnerships with property owners for active reuse, including the former Horseman's Foods.
- E2.** Work with City to identify neighborhood ideas for adapting and reusing the current Eastside Library building.
- E3.** Promote and encourage placemaking activities, like sidewalk art, intersection art, and the play streets program to temporarily reclaim public spaces.
- E4.** Promote the existing Community Empowerment Zone incentive program by identifying opportunities to create small-scale manufacturing opportunities and jobs, like incubator spaces or craft businesses.

## F. Protect and enhance neighborhood parks and trails.

Enhance the experience at neighborhood parks with amenities and play while also protecting local natural areas and trees. The development of the Children of the Sun Trail provides an opportunity to expand connections to the Ben Burr Trail and Centennial Trail, and the commercial areas along East Sprague and Perry District. The community can support the health of residents by identifying walking routes and integrating the heritage and culture of the area into the experience.

- F1.** Request installation of electrical power and more lighting at Underhill Park for safety and events. Expand amenities at both Liberty Park and Underhill Park, including art and interactive play equipment. Explore designating an area dog park.

- F2.** Maintain natural areas and natural beauty in neighborhood parks. Organize community clean-ups in the parks.
- F3.** Support efforts to expand trail connections between Underhill and Liberty Parks, the Ben Burr Trail and the Children of the Sun Trail.
- F4.** Establish a one-mile walking route/heritage and culture route around the neighborhood to encourage residents to build community and increase physical wellbeing.

## Next Steps and Implementation

Developed in partnership with the City of Spokane, the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue strategy will require the ongoing support and commitment of residents, businesses, property owners, community organizations, and other partners. This document provides an overview of community priorities and provides guidance to ensure policies and projects align to the neighborhood vision. Each priority action will require further analysis and funding for implementation. Still, this is an important step for the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue community that lays the foundation for when funding, resources, and partner opportunities arise. The 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue community can pursue the following next steps in order to successfully implement the plan and develop key catalyst projects:

- **Funding:** Build partnership and advocate for potential funding sources for priority projects. Consider grants, public/private partnerships, fundraising, and community volunteer efforts.
- **Update:** Consider reviewing and updating the priorities on an annual basis to address completed projects and changed neighborhood conditions.

### Upcoming Projects

Project	Est. Start	Est. Completion
East Central CHAS Dental Clinic	July 2019	Mid 2020
Eastside Library Relocation and Rebuild	Spring 2020	2022
The Rose Apartments Relocation	2020	2020
Street Construction: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue Grind and Overlay	2020	2020
Street Project: 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave from Pittsburg to Thor Crack Seal	2020	2020
Street Project: Hartson from Magnolia to Altamont Chip Seal	2022	2022
Street Project: Altamont from Hartson to Sprague Crack Seal	2023	2023
Children of the Sun Trail Alignment	Winter 2020	2030
North Spokane Corridor Liberty Park Alignment	Ongoing	2030

## Resources

- Affordable Housing, Senior Housing
  - Housing Trust Fund: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/housing/housing-trust-fund/>
  - Housing Programs: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/housing/>
  - Perpetual Housing, Acquisition, and Capital Improvements Program: <https://my.spokanecity.org/chhs/funding-opportunities/perpetual-rfp/>
  - HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/cn/planninggrants](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn/planninggrants)
  - HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/cn/grants](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn/grants)
  - Community Frameworks: <https://communityframeworks.org/>
  - SNAP Essential Home Repair: <https://www.snapwa.org/services-we-provide/i-need-help-with-housing/essentialhomerepair/>
  - SNAP Housing Down Payment Assistance: <https://www.snapwa.org/services-we-provide/i-need-help-with-housing/i-want-to-buy-a-house/>
  - SNAP Low Interest Home Repair Loans: <https://www.snapwa.org/home-repair>
  - SNAP Rental Housing: <https://www.snapwa.org/services-we-provide/i-need-help-with-housing/i-need-rental-housing/>
  - Washington Homeownership Resource Center: <http://www.homeownership-wa.org/>
  - ARC of Spokane Homeownership: <https://www.arc-spokane.org/home-ownership>
  - Habitat for Humanity Homeownership: <https://habitat-spokane.org/homeownership/>
- Arts, Culture & Education
  - The Carl Maxey Center: <https://www.carlmaxeycenter.org/>
  - Spokane Arts: <https://spokanearts.org/>
  - ArtsWA Snap Grant: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/snap-grants/>
  - Kresge Foundation Arts & Culture Program: <https://kresge.org/programs/arts-culture>
- Business
  - SNAP Women's Business Center: <https://www.snapwa.org/womens-business-center/>
  - SNAP Business Loans: <https://www.snapwa.org/services-we-provide/lending-services/>
- Capital Facilities
  - Community-Building Capital Facilities: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/building-communities-fund/>
  - Energy Efficiency and Solar Grants: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/energy-efficiency-and-solar-grants/>
    - [Fact Sheet explaining the program](#)
  - Community-Building Capital Facilities: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/building-communities-fund/>
- Coalition Building
  - Community Based Organizations - SUD Prevention / Mental Health Promotion Programming: <https://www.theathenaforum.org/grants>
  - Educational Service District (ESD) 101
- Community Safety
  - Crime Victims and Safety Advocacy: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/crime-victims-public-safety/>
- Energy
  - Avista Foundation: <http://www.avistafoundation.com/home/Pages/default.aspx>
  - SNAP Energy Assistance: <https://www.snapwa.org/services-we-provide/i-need-help-with-my-energy-bill/i-need-energy-assistance/>
- Health & Family
  - Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center: <https://mlkspokane.org/>

- Spokane Regional Health District Neighborhoods Matter: <https://srhd.org/programs-and-services/neighborhood-matters>
- County Health Insights: <https://countyhealthinsights.org/>
- Hoopfest Community Basketball Courts: <https://www.spokanehoopfest.net/spokane-hoops-association/community/>
- GirlTrek: <https://www.girltrek.org/>
- Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Grant Program: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/reduceleadbasedpaint>
- The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/healthiestnextgen>
- Healthy Communities Washington: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/HealthyCommunitiesWashington>
- ACEs and Resilience Statewide Community of Practice: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/EssentialsforChildhoodInitiative/ACEsandResilienceStatewideCommunityofPractice>
- Essentials for Childhood Initiative: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/EssentialsforChildhoodInitiative>
- ARC of Spokane Family Support: <https://www.arc-spokane.org/family-support>
- Philanthropy
  - Innovia Foundation Community Grant Program: <https://innovia.org/nonprofits/apply-for-a-grant/>
  - Kresge Foundation Opportunities: <https://kresge.org/opportunities>
  - Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund: <http://www.smith-barbieri.com/>
  - Hagan Foundation: <http://haganfoundation.com/>
  - Humanities Washington: <https://www.humanities.org/program/grants/>
- Planning
  - Activate Existing Neighborhood Commercial Structures: <https://my.spokanecity.org/projects/activate-existing-neighborhood-commercial-structures/>
  - ArtsWA Creative Districts: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/community-readiness-toolkit/>
- Small Manufacturing Business (Community Empowerment Zone)
  - Greater Spokane Inc (GSI): <https://greaterspokane.org/>
  - Spokane CEZ Incentive: <https://my.spokanecity.org/economicdevelopment/incentives/cez/>
- Traffic Calming and School Safety
  - <https://my.spokanecity.org/neighborhoods/programs/traffic-calming/>