



# Code Modernization Project

## Public Participation Plan 2026

### Introduction

In December of 2025, the City of Spokane initiated a comprehensive update of Title 17 of the Spokane Municipal Code (the Spokane Development Code or “SDC”), which governs zoning, land use, and development review procedures. This update aims to modernize the City’s regulatory framework, align the development regulations to implement policy goals and objectives in the updated Comprehensive Plan, eliminate barriers to development and redevelopment, promote equity and sustainability, and improve efficiency and predictability in development review processes.

The SDC has undergone incremental change and updates over the past several decades. While each of these updates supported a specific purpose, the SDC in its entirety has become fragmented and inconsistent. Additionally, recent legislation, state mandates, and regional planning initiatives, along with the City’s current [Comprehensive Plan](#) update, necessitate a holistic re-examination of the SDC. The updates that result from this re-examination will improve the SDC’s usability, alignment with City planning efforts and policies, and implement planning best practices. To support the City in this undertaking, the City has engaged national land use consultants from Clarion Associates, with local representation from Kimley Horn.

The goal of this project is to evaluate and improve the SDC. This project supports the implementation of Spokane’s [Comprehensive Plan](#), advances the City’s housing and economic development objectives, furthers efforts to address racially disparate impacts (RDI) and climate planning concerns by supporting efficient land use patterns, infrastructure investment, and equitable access to housing and economic opportunity.

### Purpose of this Public Participation Plan

Public engagement for a development regulations update project is unique. While comprehensive plan updates seek the broadest possible participation from members of the community to discuss higher level concepts and community aspirations that are then translated into policy direction, development codes are binding legal documents that address various technical topics from zoning district specifications to stormwater management and building design. However, because legal regulations support policy implementation, it is still important for the community members to share their priorities and provide direction when choosing among regulatory options. It is also critical to collect input from users of the code, including developers, designers, builders, and code administrators, since they know best what parts of the

current code work or don't work, and what changes would be beneficial to producing the community's desired development. Therefore, community input is central to the success of this project.

This public participation plan (PPP) provides a detailed strategy for engaging code users (described hereafter as specific committees or stakeholder groups), as well as the larger community, throughout the duration of this project. Specifically, the PPP outlines the stakeholder groups to engage throughout the process, communication methods, and opportunities for input. Information contained in this PPP will be used as a guide throughout this project, and may be subject to change to accommodate evolving project objectives, or "course correct" if proposed methods of engagement are not producing meaningful participation or results.

Public input will inform staff and consultant evaluation and the development of recommendations. Because the development code is a technical and legally binding document subject to state law and other constraints, not every piece of individual input can be incorporated. Recommendations will be reviewed by the Plan Commission and acted on by City Council, which makes final decisions.

## Objectives

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The PPP proposes public engagement activities to be conducted for this project, with the intent to:

- ❖ Solicit input from frequent users of the SDC to understand the strengths and weaknesses in the code's structure, format, and organization, and collect opinions on how these elements might be improved;
- ❖ Inform and educate the community about best practices in zoning regulation and planning that may improve the City's ability to advance community priorities and provide a venue to share why some ideas were or were not pursued;
- ❖ Ensure the community understands (i) the purpose and scope of the project, (ii) their role in influencing the project's outcome, and (iii) their role in the City's decision-making process, as well as how to remain informed about the project's progress;
- ❖ Safeguard transparency and project accessibility for all and support inclusive participation by providing a variety of ways for the community to provide input; and
- ❖ Examine how the SDC can assist with implementing the City's long-term vision, goals, and objectives as laid out in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

## Principles

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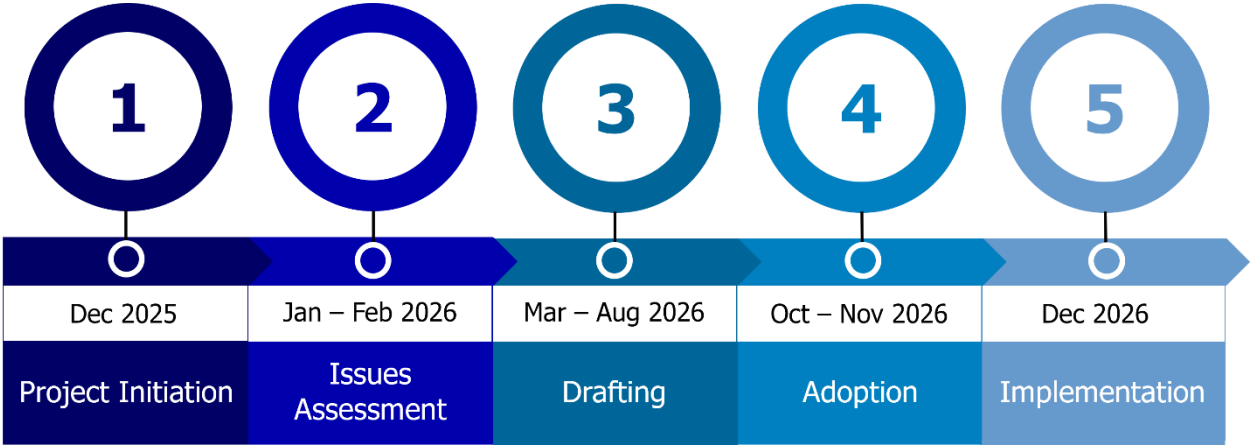
The PPP is guided by the following principles:

- ❖ Solicit participation from diverse participants and consider varying perspectives;
- ❖ All perspectives will be considered. Input will be evaluated collectively and used to inform recommendations and major decisions based on policy, legal requirements, and technical feasibility.
- ❖ Bridge differences between diverse groups and seek common ground by promoting civil and civic-minded conversations on contentious issues;
- ❖ Focus on key issues and opportunities identified by city leadership and community priorities identified in the City's adopted plans;
- ❖ Promote civic engagement to encourage a greater sense of responsibility and increased participation in decision-making;

- ❖ Provide multiple and meaningful ways for engagement to create an environment that promotes collaboration and cooperation;
- ❖ Strengthen community understanding of the SDC and the role the public plays in both day-to-day decision-making and the City’s long-term future; and
- ❖ Be transparent throughout all phases of the project.

## Process Overview

The graphic below shows the anticipated timeline for progress on the BUILDSpokane project. The project is designed to move rapidly, in order to align with the comprehensive plan periodic update and state mandates. Some adjustments or flexibility may occur with timing of individual components of the project, but the dates for adoption and implementation are fixed.



*Anticipated project timeline*

## Groups in the Process

This section identifies groups that will be asked to provide frequent guidance and feedback throughout the project, and provides a brief description of each group’s composition. Beyond these defined groups, the entire community will also be invited to provide ideas and input in this project at key points during the process, as outlined in the Opportunities for Input section. This list of groups is not intended to be all encompassing and may evolve throughout the project.

### *Spokane Development Code Project Team (SPT)*

The project team consists of City planning staff, supported by consultants from Clarion Associates and local, Spokane-based Kimley-Horn staff. City leadership staff will work directly with the project team to coordinate and schedule project and public meetings, review and provide input on interim drafts, and identify issues and solutions. The SPT will meet frequently with the project team throughout the process.

### *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)*

A technical advisory committee (TAC) consists of representatives from city departments that are frequent users of the SDC, who have the knowledge and expertise to provide guidance and input on a range of technical, development-related issues. This group will be asked to provide feedback to the project team at regular intervals during the project – at minimum, each time one of the three draft installments of the code

is delivered for review. Where certain topics would benefit from more targeted review and expertise – such as appropriate plantings for Spokane’s climate, or extent of lot coverage allowed by stormwater system capacity -- subgroups or subcommittees of the TAC may be convened to provide input on specific topics as necessary.

### *Steering Committee (SC)*

A steering committee (SC) is comprised of community representatives whose professional pursuits require interaction with the SDC, or those whose work or interests may be indirectly impacted by it. This includes development professionals (architects, engineers, designers, builders, and developers), as well as representatives from community and business organizations such as homebuilders associations, realtors, and housing advocates, historic and environmental preservationists, transportation agencies and multi-modal advocates, representatives from native communities, the Downtown Spokane Business Improvement District, along with other groups and individuals who have an interest in land use in the community. This group will also be asked to provide feedback to the project team at regular intervals during the project – reviewing the three draft installments of the code, and providing comments, suggestions and recommendations on the proposed changes in the draft installments.

### *Elected and Appointed Officials*

The project team will provide regular updates to the City Council and Planning Commission, keeping both bodies informed of the project’s progress. At key milestones in the project process, or at the request of the decision-making body, the team will present progress updates during regular public meetings, also allowing an opportunity for public comment. While these are the primary elected and appointed decision-making bodies that the project team will interact with throughout the project, other decision-makers, including elected political officials, the hearing examiner, and board or commission members, may request progress updates from the project team, or be called upon to provide input and guidance.

### *Residents and Community Members*

The residents and community members of Spokane will be asked for input and feedback surrounding specific topics reflected in the SDC that are community priorities identified within the City’s adopted plans.

### *Other Stakeholders*

Other interested groups or individuals – broadly, “stakeholders” – are invited to participate in the effort to update the SDC. These groups may be engaged throughout the project to solicit input on specific regulations that pertain to each group’s area of interest or expertise. The table below includes examples of groups and associations who are often interested in code regulation update participation to advocate for their particular interest or objective. As the city has many Boards, Commissions, Committees, Councils, and Associations, the entities mentioned below are a representative sample. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, or all-inclusive: participation from all interested groups is welcome.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES	CITY DEPARTMENTS
Plan Commission	Engineering
Historic Landmarks Commission	Public Works
Climate Resiliency & Sustainability Board	Historic Preservation
Park Board	Parks and Recreation
Transit Authority	Public Works
ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	Housing

Tribes	Fire
University Representatives	Legal
Environmental Activists	Police
Community Advocates	Code Enforcement
Social Service Agencies	Parking Services
Business Owners	Economic Development
Regional Partners (WSDOT, State and County representatives)	<b>COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS</b>
Adjacent municipalities, Spokane County	Community Assembly
Spokane Regional Airport	Neighborhood Councils
Transportation Professionals and MPOs	Senior Centers
	Non-profit or Religious Organizations

## Methods for Outreach

Establishing and maintaining open lines of communication surrounding the project is a guiding principle of this PPP. We encourage the use of the broadest possible array of communication methods to reach the broadest possible numbers of potentially interested groups and individuals. Because using established networks is an efficient and effective way to “spread the news,” the project team will rely on city staff to reach out through established means such as city websites (Engage Spokane) and social media networks, newsletters and blogs, local news outlets, and distribution lists that the City maintains. Typically, the project team will provide the content, and rely on city staff for means of distribution. Primary methods of communication are anticipated to include, but are not limited to, those shown in the following table. All materials will be provided in English, accompanied by translation of public-facing materials to Spanish, Russian, Arabic, and other languages as needed.

SPECIFIC METHOD	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMING
<i>Web/Online Media</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated webpage on Engage.Spokane.gov</li> <li>Banner on main City webpage</li> <li>Blogs, statements, and releases on City’s news page</li> <li>Comprehensive Plan update newsletter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide general project information and access to work products and other project related material, including meeting and learning session recordings</li> <li>Advertise upcoming meetings and events</li> <li>Host online input opportunities and live learning sessions</li> </ul>	City staff, with content provided by the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web page established at project kick off during Phase 1</li> <li>Online input solicited during Phase 3</li> <li>Live learning sessions hosted during Phase 3</li> <li>Announcements of meetings, work products, and other updates throughout the project</li> </ul>
<i>Social Media</i>			

SPECIFIC METHOD	OBJECTIVE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMING
<i>Web/Online Media</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instagram</li> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• X</li> <li>• YouTube</li> <li>• Vimeo</li> <li>• Nextdoor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide awareness of public meetings and in person engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Direct community to online engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Highlight participation</li> </ul>	City staff, with content provided by the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements of meetings, work products, and other updates throughout the project</li> <li>• Frequent social media posts to highlight participation and encourage attendance at in-person meetings and participation in online engagement</li> </ul>
<i>Email Newsletters</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLANSpokane</li> <li>• Community Update</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide awareness of public meetings and in person engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Direct community to online engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Provide brief project updates</li> </ul>	City staff, with content provided by the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements of meetings, work products, and other updates provided throughout the project, to the maximum extent possible in connection with regularly scheduled email newsletters</li> <li>• Periodic additional announcements in advance of public meetings and in person engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Brief updates following key project milestones</li> </ul>
<i>Local Media</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Television</li> <li>• Press</li> <li>• Local interest podcasts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide awareness of public meetings and in person engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Direct community to online engagement opportunities</li> </ul>	City staff, with content provided by the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute press releases of announcements of project milestones and events</li> <li>• Reach out to contacts to encourage attending meetings and/or interviewing members of the project team to increase project visibility</li> </ul>
<i>Flyers</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community message boards</li> <li>• Public buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide awareness of public meetings and in person engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Direct community to online engagement opportunities</li> </ul>	City staff, with content provided by the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements of meetings, work products, and other updates throughout the project</li> </ul>

## Opportunities for Input

Engagement activities are intended to identify key issues and inform recommendations. Input may be reviewed and summarized by key themes rather than addressed at an individual comment level.

This section outlines opportunities for input on the project, generally tied to major project milestones such as delivery of draft assessment or code installments. After the Issues Assessment, the project team anticipates delivering the draft code in three installments, with content and date of delivery anticipated as follows:

1. Issues Assessment (February-March 2026)
2. Installment 1: Administration and Procedures (May-June 2026)
3. Installment 2: Zoning Districts and Land Uses (June-July 2026)
4. Installment 3: Development, Design, and Subdivision Standards (July-August 2026)

Details for each engagement opportunity will be refined based on discussions with the city project team. Please note that the table proposes a general schedule of events for the whole project. As the project advances, additional engagement opportunities may be added in response to public feedback, emerging issues with the SDC, or the need to reach particular stakeholder groups.

TIMEFRAME	OPPORTUNITY			OBJECTIVES
	KEY:	Virtual	In-Person	
November 2025		Project kick off		This is an internal interaction between city project leadership staff and the consultant team. It is intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm project roles and responsibilities</li> <li>- Gather background data and information (adopted plans, current code, etc.),</li> <li>- Establish overall project calendar, as well as specific dates and an agenda for the initial round of orientation meetings, and</li> <li>- Discuss public engagement strategies and ongoing project management</li> </ul>
December 2025		Orientation meetings with City staff from all departments that work with the SDC and Spokane’s elected and appointed officials		Discuss overall project goals, scope and schedule, initial strategies for public engagement, and key issues for the new SDC
December 2025		Stakeholder meeting(s)		Obtain insight about the strengths and weaknesses of the SDC and how the regulations hinder or facilitate desired development and the implementation of the City’s comprehensive plan
January 2026		Issues Assessment staff draft meeting		Receive feedback from city project team staff on Issues Assessment
March 2026		Issues Assessment public meeting(s)		Discuss the SDC Issues Assessment and collect comments to invite the public into the SDC update conversation, share the general scope and parameters of the issues that the project will address, and identify critical issues where more extensive community-based conversation is needed to move toward a shared resolution
March 2026		Issues Assessment Steering Committee meeting		Present feedback from the SDC Issues Assessment public meeting(s) and present a summary of the assessment for feedback
March 2026		Planning Commission and City Council meeting(s)		Provide project update presentation(s) on the SDC Issues Assessment and provide an opportunity for public comment
April – August 2026		Code Section Draft Installment Staff Project Team Review		Receive feedback and suggested edits from city project staff on draft code installments; identify appropriate updates and keep a list of recommended changes and unresolved issues for TAC, SC, community or policy-maker discussion Installment 1: Administration and Procedures (staff review draft in April)

TIMEFRAME	OPPORTUNITY			OBJECTIVES
	KEY:	Virtual	In-Person	
				Installment 2: Zoning Districts and Land Uses (staff review draft in May) Installment 3: Development, Design, and Subdivision Standards (staff review draft in July)
April – August 2026				Discuss and receive feedback from TAC on each code section installment: Installment 1: Administration and Procedures (May) Installment 2: Zoning Districts and Land Uses (June-July) Installment 3: Development, Design, and Subdivision Standards (July-August)
April – August 2026				Discuss and receive feedback from TAC on each code section installment: Installment 1: Administration and Procedures (May) Installment 2: Zoning Districts and Land Uses (June-July) Installment 3: Development, Design, and Subdivision Standards (July-August)
August--September 2026				Inform and educate the public on the components of the SDC
August--September 2026				Provide opportunity for comment on the Public Review Draft
September 2026				Review components of the SDC to identify issues and potential changes
September 2026				Provide project update presentation(s) and provide an opportunity for public comment
September 2026				Review comments from the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, City Council, and the public to identify any additional edits that need to be made to the Public Review Draft
October – November 2026				Present the Adoption Draft. Provide an opportunity for public comment