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**To:** Chris Zimmerman, Smart Growth America  
**From:** Boris Borisov, City of Spokane  
**Subject:** Smart Growth America, Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health Workshop 6 month report  
**Date:** May 6, 2016  
**Cc:** Robert Benner

The City of Spokane participated in the Economic and Fiscal Health workshop facilitated by Smart Growth America in September of 2015. The workshop was attended by a diverse group of approximately 40 stakeholders. Below is our six month report to address specific recommendations provided in the Next Steps Memo dated December 7, 2015.

### **Focus the effort**

*Focus within the focus area: the East Sprague TIP area is big.*

- A group of business and residential leaders from the East Sprague Corridor and surrounding area continued to meet with City of Spokane Engineering and Planning Departments to identify which portion of East Sprague Avenue would receive enhanced features as part of the reconstruction project. The strategy is to create a focus area that “pops,” while still providing streetscape features throughout the entire project length. The group met on January 27, 2016 to finalize the focus area and streetscape elements. The streetscape project will improve East Sprague Avenue between Helena and Stone; however, enhanced streetscape elements will be applied between Madelia Street and Crestline Street (4 blocks).

*Start by getting a few really good blocks*

- Based on recommendations from Smart Growth, TIP Advisory Board members worked to conduct focused investment within the core four block area. Some features include pedestrian light poles between new street lights, hanging flower baskets with water and electrical outlets to each light pole to support additional enhanced features following construction. In addition, stakeholders worked with the City to change the streetscape plans to include a full sidewalk rebuild within this core area to allow for up to 12 foot sidewalks. Originally, the plan called for a street rebuild and only replacement of heavily deteriorated sidewalks. This new plan will increase the sidewalk space as much as possible within the current right of way to conform as closely as possible to the City’s Centers and Corridors standards. Increasing the sidewalks width will create an enhanced pedestrian environment and support the increasing retail activity in the district. Below is a list of other project elements:
  - Pavement resurfacing
  - Street and Pedestrian lights in dense pattern
  - Stormwater: Use of cartridge filters and permeable concrete pavement in parking strips to maximize parking while still accomplishing stormwater separation needs
  - Trees at intersections and mid-block

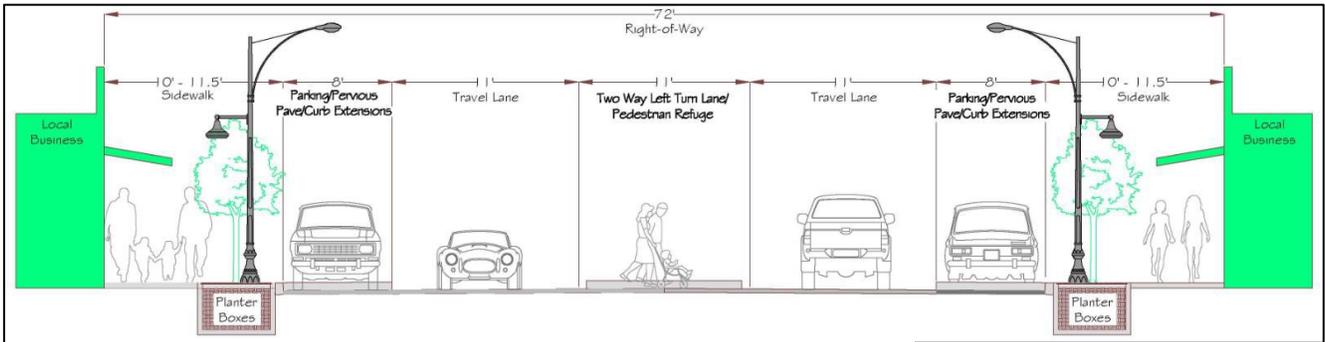


Figure 1: Cross-section elements for the core intensity zone

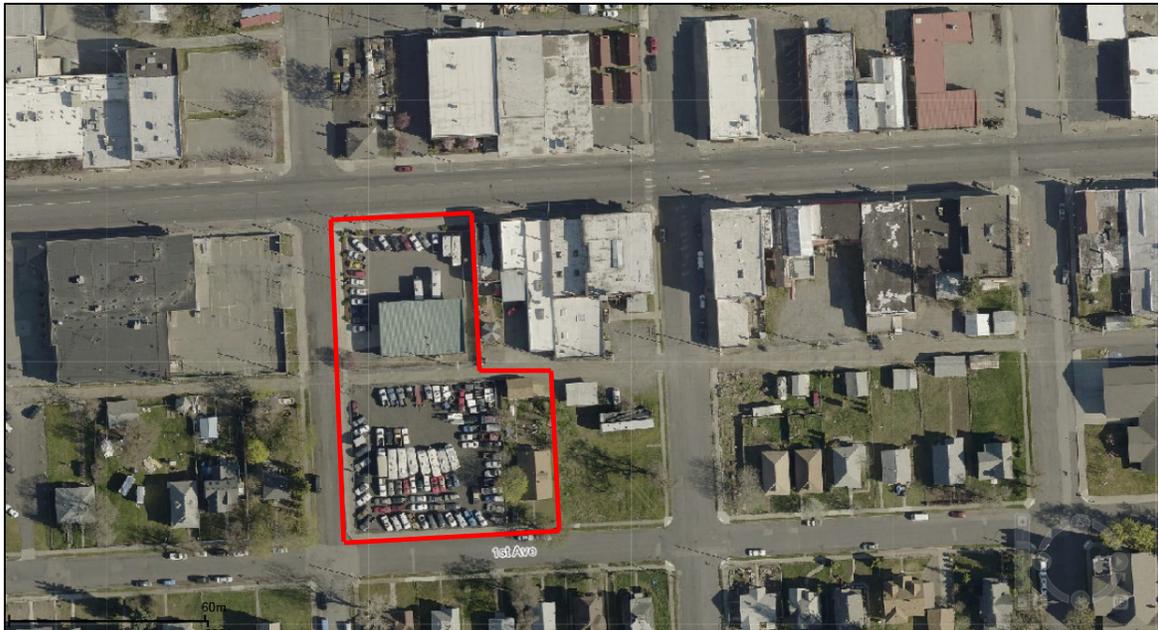


Figure 2: Four Block Focus Area – Madelia Street to Crestline Street

*Make sure to fill the space in the small area, leaving no empty “missing teeth.”*

- Business recruitment efforts continue, focusing on filling vacant or underutilized parcels in the project core area. Since the last progress report several businesses are preparing to open, have already opened or expanded including 4 Degrees , Graceful Gift Baskets, Street Fit, University District Mercantile, and the Rail Creek Furniture Store.
- TIP Advisory Board members continue working to secure no or low cost appraisals for underutilized commercial properties on E. Sprague in order to assist in potential property transfers.
- Staff and the local business association are connecting willing property owners with potential buyers interested in district investment.

- District leadership and partners such as Window Dressing are continuing to work with property owners to decorate empty/underutilized storefronts with seasonal signage – storefront displays were installed by Window Dressing as part of the Cleaning from the Corridor Event held on April 23, 2016.
- Community Frameworks, a non-profit housing provider is in the process of purchasing lots on the corner of Madelia and Sprague and along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave (the entrance to the intense focus area) and will be completing a housing development which will replace a car lot with 36 units of quality affordable housing. Community Frameworks has taken input from district leaders and will be designing the portion of the project facing Sprague in a way that complements the pedestrian environment.



*Figure 3: Community Frameworks Housing Project*

*Go all out on the streetscape*

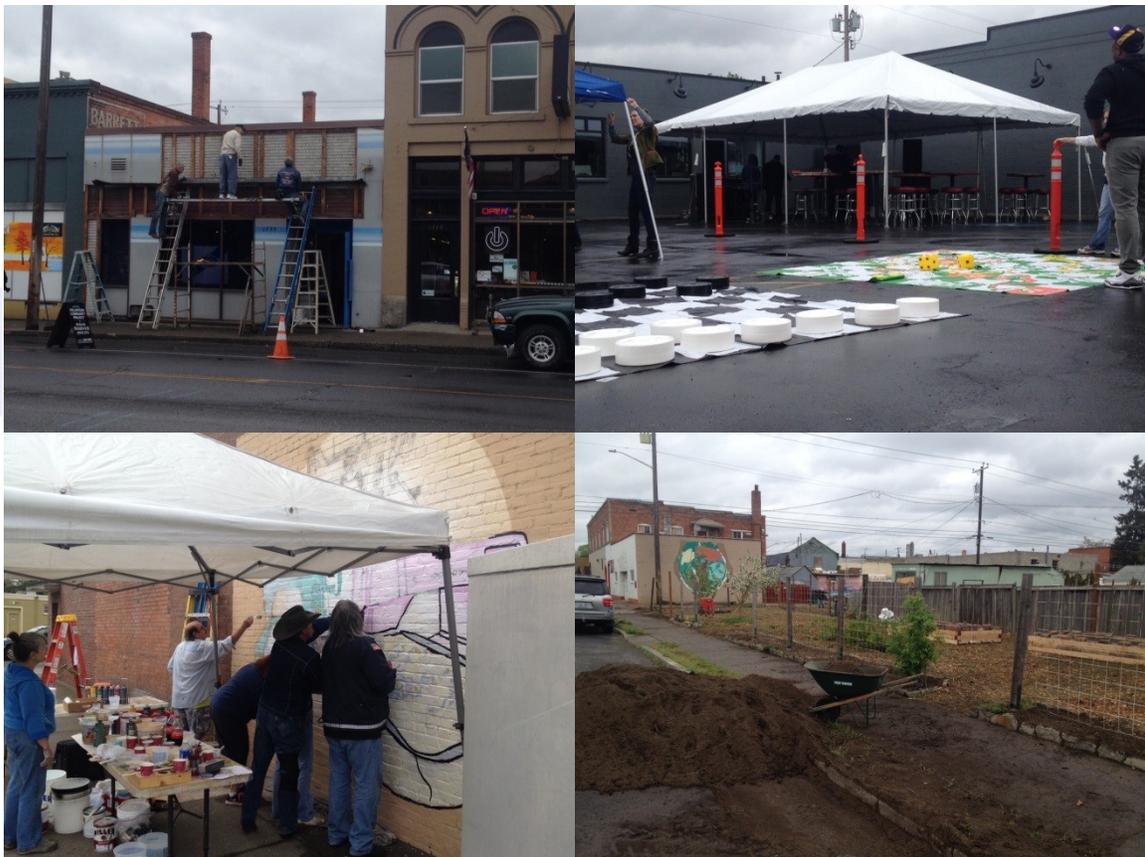
- District leadership met with the City of Spokane staff on January 27, 2016 to finalize a design proposal covering a seven block area (between Helena and Stone). This will include a focus area with a higher density of features (as mentioned above). The remainder of the project area will have the following improvements:
  - Bump-outs and pedestrian islands
  - Stormwater separation
  - Street resurfacing
  - Repair/replace damaged sidewalks
  - Sewer and water connections
  - New signals at Helena and Napa for 3 lane configuration
  - Street and pedestrian lights (less dense than core area)
  - Trees near intersections
  - Upgraded bus stops
  - Permeable concrete pavement in parking lane

*Incorporate public art, trailblazing and wayfinding*

- The City and local stakeholders are discussing opportunities for the use of public art in streetscape projects - particularly in the gateway areas (which are part of future phases of the streetscape work).
- Members of the local business association continue to work with Window Dressing, a non-profit organization as well as owners of storefronts to place signage and public art installations in the area.

*Bring every tool to bear to achieve near term success*

- Staff finalized an incentive program for the area aimed at spurring investment and redevelopment. Some of the major incentives include: impact fees due at occupancy, brownfield remediation, blight remediation, and waivers for general facility connection fees (water and sewer). Staff in both long-range and current planning are marketing the program to developers, real estate firms and individual business owners before and during the predevelopment phase of projects to ensure developers and broader business and real estate community are connected with the incentives.
- The City is reviewing and plans to remove self-imposed limits on housing rehabilitation dollars from HUD within the target area (allowing owner-occupied and rental rehab as well as facade/exterior work when done in combination with other health and safety work).
- The City of Spokane worked with district partners and hundreds of volunteers on April 23, 2016 on the “Cleaning from the Corridor” project. This volunteer event included a neighborhood clean-up, storefront painting, historic preservation activities, residential rehabilitation work, residential painting and yard clean-up, mural creation, community garden revitalization, a streetscape/pedestrian amenities mock-up, music, kids activities and more.



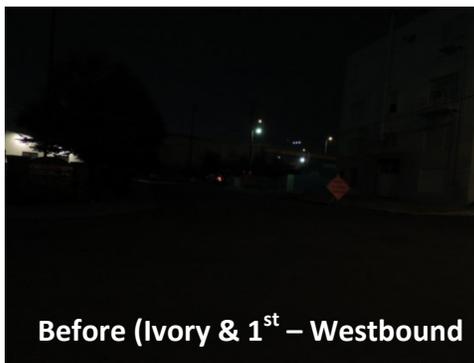
*Image 1: Cleaning from the Corridor, April 23, 2016*

A summary of measurements from the event are provided below:

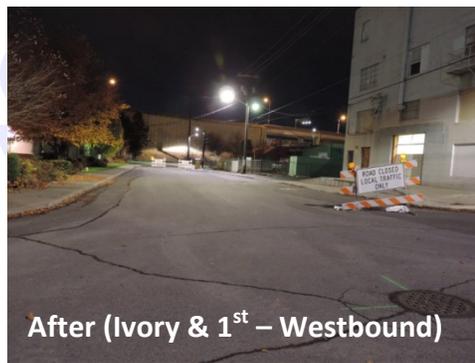
- 500+ volunteers
  - Over 35 partnership agencies and volunteer groups
  - 7 home rehabilitation projects by Rebuilding Together and SNAP
  - 38.26 tons of trash removed
  - 4 murals in the neighborhood
  - 2 storefronts with new signage and branding
  - 3 commercial buildings painted
  - 3 utility box mural wraps installed along Sprague Ave
  - 40 trees given away for free to residents
- Staff is continuing to work with the TIP Advisory Board on grant opportunities for commercial/residential facade improvements as well as grants for other TIP priorities such as additional open space and greening of the neighborhood, murals, and public art.

### Improve connections to the surrounding neighborhoods

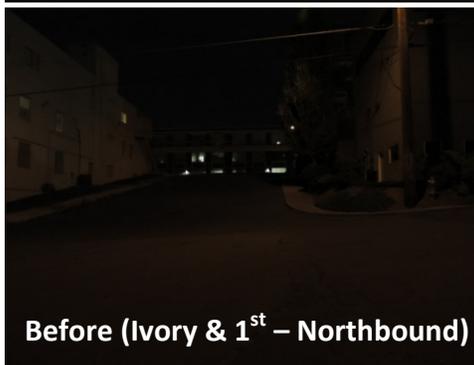
- The East Spokane Business Association (ESBA) and the Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD), Neighborhoods Matter program have worked diligently together in 2015 to ensure the residents that surround the business community are engaged in the dialogue and revitalization efforts. Members of the residential community in conjunction with the SRHD, conducted door to door surveying to better understand neighborhood concerns. Lack of alleyway lighting was identified as a top concern. Residents completed a lighting assessment to ascertain the depth of the issue and shared the results with neighborhood stakeholders, including the Spokane Police Department. This has resulted in a partnership between Neighborhoods Matter, Spokane Police Department, Avista Utilities, ESBA and the City of Spokane to install over 150 lights in alleys to improve security. Implementation of the alley lighting program began in the fall of 2015 will continue into 2018.



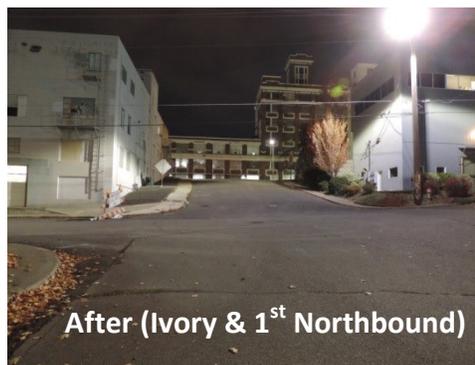
Before (Ivory & 1<sup>st</sup> – Westbound)



After (Ivory & 1<sup>st</sup> – Westbound)



Before (Ivory & 1<sup>st</sup> – Northbound)



After (Ivory & 1<sup>st</sup> Northbound)

- The construction of the Benn Burr Trail connection is underway. Once complete, the trail will connect residents in this area to the Centennial Trail and to the extended neighborhood to the south on the opposite side of I-90.

**Establish place management**

- The East Sprague leaders submitted a proposal for the creation of a Business Improvement District to City Council which was approved unanimously on April 18, 2016. This creates sustainable funding for improvements and district management.

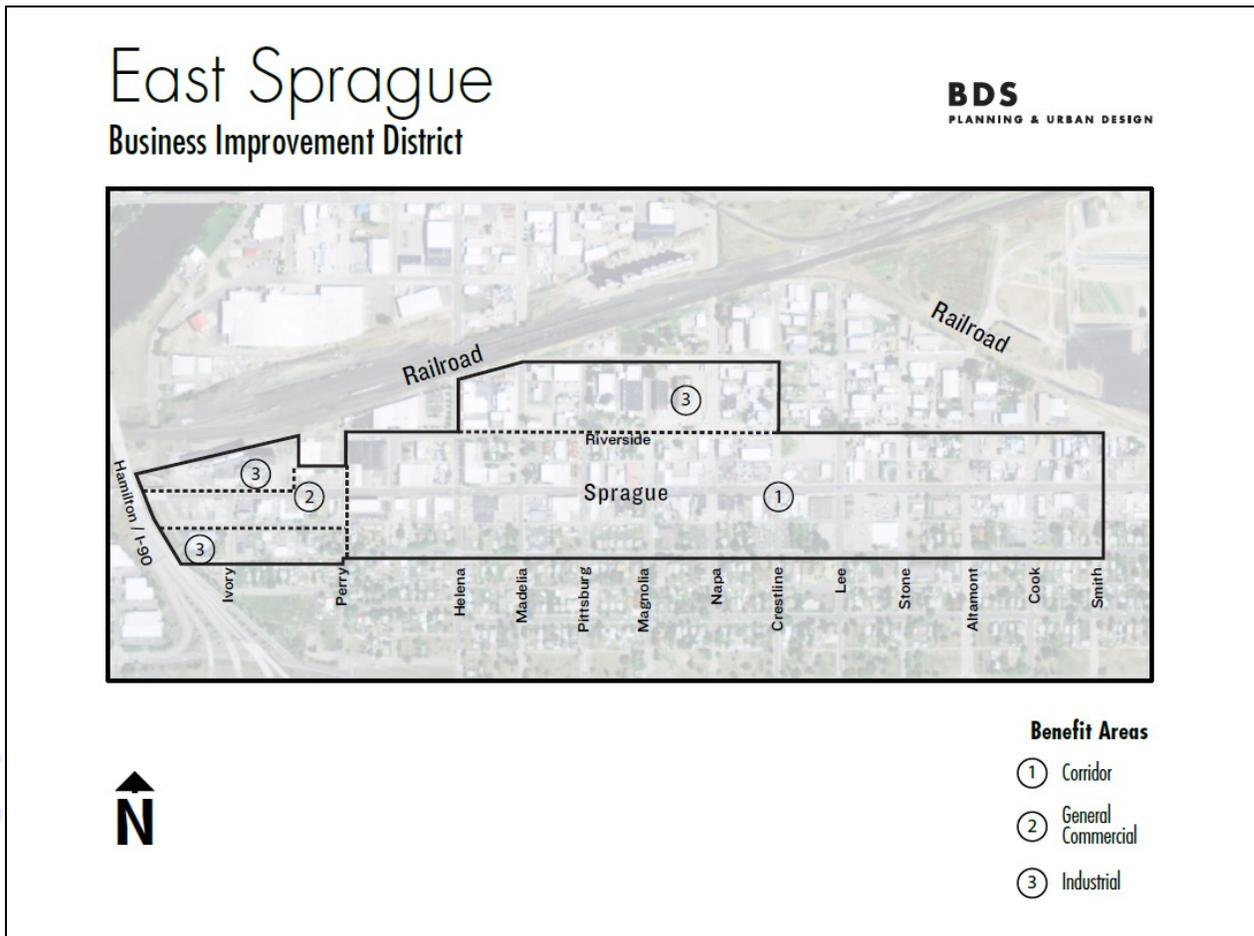


Figure 4: East Sprague BID Map Boundaries and Benefit Zones

## EAST SPRAGUE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### Assessment Formula

Estimated Revenue	% Assessment based on LSF	% Assessment based on TAV	Total Parcels
<b>\$58,592</b>	75%	25%	234

Benefit Area by Zone	Minimums	Maximums	Rate per LSF	Rate per \$1,000 TAV
Center and Corridor (Zone 1)	\$200	\$1,000	2.5 cents	60 cents
General Commercial (Zone 2)	\$100	\$500	1.3 cents	30 cents
Industrial (Zone 3)	\$50	\$250	.6 cents	15 cents



### BID Program

**Clean & Green**

- District cleanliness, litter and graffiti removal, trash collection, landscaping and weeding

**District Beautification**

- Twinkle and seasonal lighting, acquisition and maintenance of street furniture, district signage

**Branding & Marketing**

- Marketing, promotions, event assistance, website maintenance

**Safety & Security**

- Advocacy for increased patrols, crime prevention through design, exploration of security services and measures

**Administration**

- Management, contracting and procurement, operations, and reporting

**Contingency Reserve**

- Management of unanticipated events or maintenance

### City Contribution

- Payment into BID as ratepayer
- On-going maintenance & repair of district irrigation systems
- Payment of district irrigation system water
- General maintenance, repair & replacement of streetlights
- Assistance with swales and storm water infrastructure

The BID **does not** result in reduced levels of City services.

Figure 5: East Sprague BID Map Budget and Services

### Use complete streets to build value

- Complete Streets principles will be utilized in the East Sprague rebuild project slated to begin spring/summer of 2017 (construction start was moved to 2017 to avoid construction and street closures over the winter months).

### Improve Transit Service

- The East Sprague Corridor currently has the most frequent bus service in Spokane (15 minute headways). It has also been identified as part of Spokane Transit Authority's high performance network. Due to unwanted activity in the area, stakeholders have elected to postpone the installation of amenities like bus shelters until such time that the neighborhood feels that the addition of these amenities will not produce additional unwanted activity. Steps are being taken to make sure that the new road design will accommodate additional transit and pedestrian amenities.

### Align regulations on private development with public goals for the sector

#### *Parking*

- Centers and Corridors zoning in the East Sprague TIP area currently allow for significant reductions in parking. This includes the ability for commercial and housing developments to count adjacent on-street parking and bicycle parking toward the total parking requirements. In addition, change of use standards allows new uses that do not require more than five additional spaces to forgo additional parking requirements even if the prior use was non-conforming. Staff will continue to review the parking regulations as the district develops to see if any changes are needed to benefit the district.

#### *Commercial signage*

- Staff reviewed current sign codes to assess their friendliness towards small businesses and entrepreneurs. The City's current sign codes allows for awnings and marquees that contain signs to extend into the right-of-way. In addition, temporary signs are allowed in the right-of-way (sandwich boards, A-frame signs, etc.) as long as they do not impede pedestrian traffic and block views. Staff will continue to engage business owners to see if any changes are needed.

#### *Use of public space*

- Spokane allows for the usage of sidewalks for commercial activities including sidewalk cafes. The city's ordinance views sidewalk cafes as a benefit to the public and the code aims to make the process of attaining a permit simple. As the City implements the streetscape project in 2017, the added sidewalk width in the core of the district will create more opportunity for sidewalk activity for E. Sprague businesses.

#### *Encourage mixed-use developments*

- Current zoning along East Sprague allows for a mix of uses including residential on the first floor. The city may explore different options including form-based zoning in the future depending on market conditions and needs of the district.

#### **Develop a comprehensive housing strategy for the area**

- The Housing Committee has outlined several goals including the rehabilitation, redevelopment and infill of 35% (approximately 100 units) of TIP area housing units and/or vacant lots. The committee also set an aggressive goal to increase home ownership to 50% from the current 30% to create a healthier, more stable residential mix of owner and renter occupied housing units. Another goal is to maintain the same percentage of affordable units into the future to address the negative consequences of gentrification. The housing committee also identified a gap in housing funding sources as issues. Current resources effectively act to further concentrate poverty in this area and do not address the need for a better mix of incomes and household types. Staff and stakeholders are looking for sources of funds and strategies to attract a wide range of income earners and household types in order to reverse this trend of concentrated poverty while planning for long term affordability in the area.
- By the end of the 2016 construction season the area is slated to have achieved approximately 30% of area's long-term housing goal as 36 new units of affordable workforce housing are proposed for construction and local non-profit – Rebuilding Together – rehabilitated 6 area homes during the Cleaning from the Corridor event on April 23, 2016.

#### **Resolve outstanding issues to stabilize the residential neighborhoods**

- District leadership and staff will continue engagement with Washington DOT to work toward resolution regarding the construction of US 395 (North Spokane Corridor) and impact on the neighborhood.

**CITY OF SPOKANE**