

GRANT APPLICATION

Date: 3-24-08

Organization: City of Spokane, Office of the Mayor

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Project Title and brief description:

Planning for Climate Change and Energy Security: The City of Spokane has embarked on a planning process to identify mitigation and adaptation strategies that will guide city government in responding to the impacts of climate change and rising energy prices on city operations, services, programs and policies. The scope of this project is limited to what city government can and should do. Spokane’s effort to address both climate and energy issues in one planning process is unique among local governments.¹ Additional funds from New Priorities Foundation will enable the City to contract for related messaging and coalition building assistance, as well as environmental economic analysis.

Geographic area served by project: City of Spokane

Number of people served by project: 200,000

Anticipated project period from/to: February '08 to February '09

Total project cost: \$100,000

Amount being requested and date needed: \$20,000², needed by April, 2008

¹ Energy Bulletin press release dated 2-14-08, entitled “World first: U.S. city fights climate change and global oil depletion together,” <http://www.energybulletin.net/40316.html>

² 4-7-08: FYI, grant was approved for \$20,000, though this should have read \$25,000, consistent with the text of the application and proposed budget total...

Please list sources and amounts of firm funding for this project to date and other funding sources and amount applied to for this project:

The Washington State Dept. of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) has awarded a one-year grant for this project to the City of Spokane in the amount of \$75,000. In addition, the City has committed to CTED that it will contribute at least \$50,000 in-kind to this project in the form of high-level staff resources.

**1. Purpose
What will this project accomplish?**

This project will create a strategic action plan for how City government should adjust its operations, services, programs and policies in response to climate change and global oil depletion. The declining availability of oil impacts most of the City's core responsibilities by increasing the cost of asphalt for road maintenance and vehicle fuel for garbage, fire and police services. This dual focus on both climate and energy will ensure that oil replacement options are not supported if they would accelerate climate change. Likewise, strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change will need to rely on energy sources other than oil.

These strategies will allow the City to lead by example, so city government is not asking anything of others that they are not willing to do themselves. Likewise, this planning process allows the city to adjust and develop programs and policies that support the community's efforts to address these same trends. It creates an opportunity for the City to be at the table to listen and respond in ways that support the community's desire for a more environmentally sustainable future.

A very important goal of this project is to build the community awareness, collaboration and political will that are necessary to ensure successful adoption and implementation of this plan.

**2. Need
Why is this project important to your community?**

While there are many uncertainties regarding the exact impacts of global oil depletion and climate change on the City of Spokane, it is urgent to start now to develop projections and a decision framework that takes these trends into account. Time is of the essence, as global oil reserves may have already peaked and climate change may be irreversible if we don't take strong action over the next ten years. The costs of

delay will be enormous, in terms of the mitigation and adaptation measures required as well as the opportunities lost. The future quality of life in Spokane depends on the city government taking speedy and significant action now. A plan for that action will help to ensure that measures taken will be both appropriate and effective.

However, local governments will need to finance these fast-paced, far-reaching changes just as their revenues are declining as part of a national recession. That recession may be more long-lasting and serious than many realize due to the correlation between oil prices and GDP. Robert Hirsh's³ latest report found that GDP falls 1% for every 1% increase in oil prices, and the rate of oil price increases is likely to accelerate over the coming years. If some government services must be cut back or redesigned, those choices will be guided by the priorities of taxpayers who are watching their own resources dwindle away. Without significant public dialogue to build awareness and appreciation for the issues of climate change and oil depletion, taxpayers may not be willing to pay for the changes needed to ensure the future viability of the entire community.

3. Approach **How do you plan to implement this project?**

Several resources have been published to date to guide local governments in addressing energy and climate issues. King County partnered with ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group to publish a guidebook for local governments called *Preparing for Climate Change*. However, Spokane is testing a brand new model by basing its strategic planning process on a very recent publication from the Post Carbon Institute, called *Post Carbon Cities: Planning for Energy and Climate Uncertainty, A Guidebook on Peak Oil and Global Warming for Local Governments*. This book goes beyond King County's work by addressing climate change and energy security together in one strategic plan.

The strategic plan will be crafted by a **Task Force** composed of leaders and experts in the community. Applications for the Task Force were evaluated by a **Selection Committee**, and members were chosen to represent a broad range of sectors, such as higher education, a state agency, environmental

action groups, architecture/engineering/construction, public transit, and energy. The Task Force will be publicly appointed by **Mayor Mary Verner** at a televised **City Council** meeting on April 7. Throughout the year, the Task Force will update those elected officials on their progress through high-profile televised public events designed to inform the community. The Task Force is staffed by the City's **Sustainability Coordinator**, Susanne Croft.

The Task Force will be supported by **topic work groups** focused on subjects such as transportation, land use and buildings, energy, water, greenhouse gas emissions⁴, and the local economy. **City staff** with expertise in these areas will support the work groups and contribute institutional knowledge. Throughout the year, the City's cross-departmental **Green Team** will review and assess the work in progress in order to ensure that final recommendations can be realistically translated into actions by each of the departments.

In addition, the Task Force will meet at least three times during the year with a **Sounding Board**, composed of "power brokers" who can influence change in the community. This group will include representatives from City Council, neighborhoods and businesses. They will provide feedback to the Task Force on barriers and opportunities. They will use their networks to keep the community posted on the progress and nature of the Task Force's work. They will also help to shape and disseminate a politically neutral message to promote the goals of the Task Force.

The strategic planning process will start with an assessment of the risks and vulnerabilities that climate change and rising energy prices pose for the City of Spokane government. Current initiatives will be assessed to identify which are likely to address those risks and vulnerabilities, and then strategies will be developed to address the remaining issues. Findings will be sorted into short-term and long-term priorities, and recommendations will consider the resources and political will available to support each item. In addition, incentives will identified and developed that would help encourage the community to tackle these challenges.

³ Robert Hirsh is generally considered the leading expert on global oil supply trends. His Spring '05 report to the Dept. of Energy can be found at http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Oil_Peaking_NETL.pdf.

⁴ The City of Spokane signed on to the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2007. Pursuant to the commitments made in that document, a greenhouse gas inventory is now nearly complete and Environmental Programs staff will focus on greenhouse gas mitigation planning during 2008.

During the course of the year, the City's Sustainability Coordinator and the Environmental Programs Manager will rely on their **Outreach Partners** to conduct opportunities for the community to engage in related discussions in a variety of settings. City staff and Task Force members will be present during these events in order to glean ideas for how best to incorporate the community's priorities into the final strategic plan.

In addition, **speakers and analysts** with expertise in energy and climate change will be brought in periodically throughout the year to supplement the knowledge of the Task Force and work group members. Plans are underway to recruit two experts to present at the initial Task Force retreat: Phil Mote with the U. of WA's Climate Impacts Group, and Tom Karier, E. WA representative on the NW Power and Conservation Council. Later speakers will include King County Executive Ron Sims' Deputy Chief of Staff, Jim Lopez, as well as Michael Mucha, Director of Public Works for the City of Olympia. Both are excellent examples of environmental leadership from within local government. Olympia has been addressing energy and climate issues in their policies since the early 1990s. Ron Sims grew up in Spokane, and is leading the nation on innovative and proactive local government efforts to address climate change. In addition, King County staff is already working with WSU staff to develop creative solutions, so this connection to Mr. Sims' efforts will be maintained through our relationships with local WSU faculty involved in that ongoing partnership.

In addition to bringing in key speakers, a **Resource Library** will be created for use by the Task Force, work groups, elected officials and community members. It will contain copies of important books, reports, and policy documents from other cities as well as videos regarding global oil depletion and climate change. Finally, a **website** is under construction that will provide transparent access to the process as it unfolds as well as links to related resources, information, and a blog for providing feedback.

4. Evaluation **How will the success of this project be measured?**

Short-term evaluation will monitor:

- # of collaborative outreach opportunities
- # of people who attend the outreach events
- # of people who access the website and Resource Library

- Survey of all participants at the end of the process, asking if and how their views and level of awareness have changed over the course of the year

Over the long-term, data will be monitored by the City of Spokane and the Spokane Community Indicators Initiative, www.communityindicators.ewu.edu, regarding trends of relevant indicators such as:

- air quality, including greenhouse gas emissions
- high performance green building standards
- options for and use of “green” incentives
- jobs related to clean energy and sustainable business practices
- energy efficiency and use of “green” energy alternatives
- water quality and quantity
- alternative transportation
- urban forest cover
- smart growth
- waste reduction
- regional collaboration, and
- civic engagement.

5. Support
What kind of support is there for this project?

Financial:

The Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) has awarded a one-year \$75,000 grant to the City of Spokane for this strategic planning process.

Human Resources:

City has committed to CTED that it will contribute at least \$50,000 worth of high-level staff resources to this project. This in-kind contribution from the City was not required under the CTED grant, but rather is a measure of the extent to which the City supports this project. This City staff time will include the resources already committed to inventorying and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions as well as the City’s cross-departmental Green Team and staff support for the topic work groups. Finally, a

significant measure of support can be seen in the fact that the lead city staff person on this project was recently appointed by Mayor Verner to serve as the City's first Sustainability Coordinator. Ms. Croft reports directly to the Mayor on this project and all other matters related to sustainability, which is one of the Mayor's key decision-making principles.

6. Coordination

Name 3-4 groups in your community with whom you're collaborating. Phone numbers/email are helpful if available:

An **Outreach Partners** group has been established to collaborate on public engagement around energy security and climate change in Spokane. Members include:

- Susanne Croft, Sustainability Coordinator, Office of the Mayor, City of Spokane, (509) 625-6967, scroft@spokanecity.org
- Lloyd Brewer, Environmental Programs Manager, Public Works Division, City of Spokane, (509) 625-6968, lbrewer@spokanecity.org
- Mike Peterson, Executive Director of the Lands Council, and founding member of the new Northwest Climate Change Center, (509) 838-4912, mpetersen@landscouncil.org
- Kitty Klitzke, staff to the Lands Council (and also to Futurewise), (509) 838-1965, Kitty@futurewise.org
- Ron Reed, owner of PacifiCAD, and founding member of the new Northwest Climate Change Center, (509) 326-7789, reed@pacificad.com
- Melissa Ahern, economist with WSU/Spokane and director of the new Northwest Climate Change Center, (509) 358-7982, ahernm@wsu.edu, and
- Erin Vincent, Public Policy Coordinator, Greater Spokane Incorporated (previously, the Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Spokane Economic Development Council, now merged into one organization), (509) 363-6821, evincent@greaterspokane.org

Lessons learned during the City's comprehensive planning process suggest that requests for public input may be less often perceived as biased if invited by neutral third-party conveners. The Outreach Partners will host, staff and orchestrate opportunities for public dialogue around climate and energy issues.

The City staff and Task Force members will attend those events in order to listen and later incorporate the ideas and feedback into the strategic planning process.

In addition, all efforts will be made to engage the various **City of Spokane boards and commissions** in the strategic planning process, including the Plan Commission, Economic Forecasting Council, and Community Development Advisory Board. In addition, members of the Task Force include representatives from **area universities** and the Spokane branch of the **state Dept. of Ecology**. The Task Force is chaired by the VP of Sustainable Energy Solutions with **Avista**, the power utility in Spokane, and Avista has also assigned staff to each of the topic work groups. Finally, local radio station **KYRS** has already indicated strong support by inviting guests to discuss this project during two of their regular programs, Tipping Points and Earth Matters Now.

7. Our funds
Specifically, how will our grant be used?

(1) *Climate Solutions*: contract for assistance with messaging and outreach (**\$10,000**)

Although the strategic action plan is the final product due to CTED under the state grant, the most important outcome from this project must be increased community awareness and support for addressing oil depletion and climate change at the local government level. Without that, elected officials may feel they lack sufficient constituent support to accept or implement the strategic plan. But more importantly, the City of Spokane government cannot turn these tides alone. The Spokane region's ability to successfully navigate the impacts of oil depletion and climate change depends on neighboring jurisdictions, businesses and residents each doing their part as well.

Careful messaging is required in order to bring on board both the doubters and the uninitiated. Practical solutions and opportunities for engagement can help these issues seem less overwhelming and more possible to tackle.

Climate Solutions is a leader in building coalitions around practical solutions and common ground. Nearly half of the funds requested from New Priorities Foundation will be used to contract with Climate Solutions for a range of assistance regarding:

- marketing and message development
- outreach to businesses, unions, and the faith community

- estimating Spokane's carbon footprint and other information as needed as the process unfolds and questions arise

Specifically, it would be mutually productive to pair Climate Solutions' work around *Carbon-Free Prosperity 2025* with the Sounding Board we're forming to support and advise our Task Force this year. Both groups share the common purpose of using influential stakeholders to convey key messages. Climate Solutions should have a seat on our Sounding Board. Their attendance at Sounding Board meetings here will both inform the work of the Sounding Board and supplement their own research regarding messages and stakeholders to target. Likewise, Climate Solutions' research process in crafting *Carbon-Free Prosperity 2025* should include Spokane's business opinion leaders by collaborating with Greater Spokane Incorporated's Clean Tech group and other opportunities to engage businesses that arise as part of our Outreach Partners strategy.

In addition, the City of Spokane would like to draw on Climate Solutions' expertise in messaging regarding a range of other current and potential "green" initiatives that are not specifically driven by this year's strategic planning process. Topics might include trial use of alternative liquid fuels, and regional transportation options such as the North Spokane Corridor and a potential light rail system.

Also, the City of Spokane would benefit from access to Climate Solutions' insights gained through their *Harvesting Clean Energy* program. The City is finding it challenging to evaluate the complexities of bioenergy strategies, and Climate Solutions' guidance could ensure that the sustainability strategic plan recommends strategies that optimize carbon reductions and environmental benefits while also supporting economic development.

In addition, under their separate funding from New Priorities Foundation, Climate Solutions may be helpful in our 2008 mitigation planning process to address greenhouse gas reductions, helping us to estimate our energy or carbon footprint and providing access to other successful mitigation models.

(2) *Environmental Economist*: Contract for review and advice (**\$15,000**)

The remainder of the funds requested from New Priorities Foundation will be used to contract with an environmental economist for assistance with evaluation of strategies to save energy and prepare for climate change. Two people have been potentially identified for this service, and further research through

the E3 Network (<http://www.e3network.org/>, Economics for Equity and the Environment) is needed to identify the best fit:

- Sarah Kruse, Ph.D., Senior Economist with Ecotrust in Portland
- Patrick Balducci, Senior Economist, and Mike Scott, Staff Scientist (and IPCC member) with PNNL (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) at Battelle in Richland, WA

8. Outcome of application

If you do not receive funding from New Priorities Foundation how will this affect the project?

City staff will supply the Task Force and working groups with relevant information to the best of their ability, relying only on local experts for insight and guidance. However, policy development is only as effective as the extent to which it is supported by political will and community desires. The marketing and outreach funded under this proposal will go a long way toward ensuring that the investment in both the CTED and NPF grants will pay off over the long term. In addition, efforts to address energy and climate uncertainty ultimately relate to fiscal considerations. Expertise in environmental economics does not appear to be currently available in the Spokane area, so benefit/cost assessments are likely to consider only traditional economic concerns without also including environmental and social factors.

9. Future Funding

Do you have a fundraising plan that includes diversifying from what funding you may receive from New Priorities? Please describe your funding plan both people power and other approaches.

A portion of the strategic plan will identify potential sources of future funding to implement the strategic plan. One potential source is a Dept. of Energy grant for solar power installations and related projects. Once the endorsed strategic plan is in place, we will be well positioned to successfully apply for that grant.

However, the bottom line is that this strategic plan will have huge budgetary implications for all City of Spokane departments. Just as they are now required to budget enough to maintain various of levels of service for police, fire, parks, etc., this plan will likely establish a timeline for priority spending on programs to mitigate and adapt to peak oil and climate change. Some of those departments rely on the City's general fund for their budgets (such as Police, Fire, Planning and Parks) and others (such as Public

Works, which includes water, wastewater, sewer, and solid waste) are enterprise funds that generate their own fees and revenue. Overall, though, the City's revenue position depends on the public's ability and willingness to pay, so these grants will build the community understanding and support for any future reallocation of services, or tax or rate increases that may be needed in order to implement new measures.

10. Challenges

What are some of the organizational challenges you face and how are you addressing them?

Organizational challenges which might have existed under previous administrations are melting away in the light of Mayor Verner's strong support for environmentally sustainable programs and policies. In order to prevent some of the departments from feeling excluded or disaffected, engagement opportunities have been designed to position city staff for oversight and input throughout the process. These include assigning a staff person to lead each of the topic work groups, and using the Green Team to ensure that each of the strategic plan's recommendations can realistically be translated into action at the department level. Our Chief Financial Officer is knowledgeable and sympathetic to issues related to climate change and energy security. The majority of our City Council members are supportive as well, and efforts have been made to strategically include the resisters in the Selection Committee that chose the Task Force as well as the Sounding Board that will provide pragmatic coaching to the Task Force throughout the year.

11. Mission

In what ways do you feel your project reflects the mission of New Priorities Foundation?

This collaborative process is lead by community volunteers serving on a Task Force, various topic work groups, and a Sounding Board. It is focused entirely on the development of policy to address peak oil and climate change, and on building the community support necessary to implement that policy. While this process is not specifically citizen-initiated, it fulfills the desire of many environmental activists in the community who have long wished the City of Spokane would take a lead role in environmental protection.

NPF GRANT BUDGET:

Contracted Entity	Contribution	Amount
<i>Climate Solutions</i>	messaging and outreach	\$10,000
<i>Environmental Economist</i>	review and advice	\$15,000
	TOTAL REQUEST:	\$25,000