



Chapter 13

Local Governance and Citizenship

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13.1 INTRODUCTION

Leadership, governance, and citizenship is a broad topic that explores the type of leadership, public participation, communication, accessibility, civic duty, and social responsibility needed for a healthy community. A prime opportunity for residents to practice citizenship is comprehensive planning, an activity that finds people's shared interests to build consensus on the community's future. Comprehensive planning presents one of the greatest challenges of citizenship, as people are asked to identify a future that is better for society as a whole rather than necessarily better for them as an individual. The achievement of this ideal results from a joint effort from elected leaders and active citizens. Spokane has already witnessed the tremendous impacts citizens can play in the realm of local government. The goals and policies that are included in this chapter serve as the basis for how leadership, governance, and citizenship will continue to be encouraged and perpetuated in Spokane.



13.2 VISION AND VALUES

Spokane volunteers involved in the planning process identified important themes in relation to Spokane's current and future growth. A series of visions and values was crafted for each element of the Comprehensive Plan that describes specific performance objectives. From the Visions and Values document, adopted in 1996 by the City Council, the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies were generated.

Leadership, governance, and citizenship involves the role of government and type of leadership, participation, communication, accessibility, civic duty, and social responsibility.

Vision

"Spokane will be an informed community that is visionary, respectful, tolerant, and inclusive. Spokane's leadership will be open, empowering, and responsible to planning for future generations within the city and greater community."

Values

"The things that are important to Spokane's future include:

- Respecting the needs of the city and surrounding community;
- Ensuring high quality of life for future generations;
- Encouraging the strong, visionary, decisive, and dedicated leadership of elected officials;
- Encouraging leadership that listens and responds to people;
- Ensuring a government that is responsive to the financial limitations of the community and controls spending appropriately; and
- Guaranteeing that cost and benefits are distributed equitably among those receiving city services and amenities."



13.3 GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals and policies provide specificity for planning and decision-making. Overall, they indicate desired directions, accomplishments, or aims in relation to the growth and development of Spokane.

LGC 1 DECISION PROCESS

Goal: Make substantive planning decisions through an open public process in which the outcome of that process is expressed in the decision of elected officials.

Policies

LGC 1.1 City Council Direction

Begin each planning activity with formal Spokane City Council direction and a commitment to the process's outcome.

Discussion: City Council members, on behalf of their constituents, must assume ownership of the planning activity and assure its success. The first step is confirmation of the contract between the government and the governed, making sure the entire community is aware of this commitment. All participants need to know what is expected of the planning activity and what, if anything, are its limits.

LGC 1.2 Resource Allocation

Commit sufficient resources to planning activities in order to ensure that those activities engage the public and produce sound results.

LGC 1.3 Citizen Participation

Employ a variety of techniques and venues to ensure a broad representation of the citizenry in planning activities.

LGC 1.4 Documentation Trail

Incorporate a documentation trail into the public record of each planning activity, tracing the public input to its ultimate expression in the final decision.

LGC 2 CITIZEN-DIRECTED DECISIONS

Goal: Encourage citizens to become engaged in public process opportunities.

Policies

LGC 2.1 Leadership Training

Pursue and support a variety of public and private leadership training programs for the general public, elected officials and city staff.



Discussion: Community leadership training programs should focus on leadership in which individuals are informed about the community, instilled with a commitment to hold the community's trust, and given the skills to help build a healthier place.

LGC 2.2 Civics Education Throughout Life

Encourage the development of responsible citizenship and a knowledge of civics.

Discussion: Individual citizens participating in community planning activities bear a substantial responsibility for the success of these activities. It requires their exercise of initiative, discipline, thought, and communication. Increasing civic awareness through activities such as courses, lectures, webinars, and a strong public participation program can foster a more engaged citizenry.

LGC 2.3 Broad Community Representation

Strengthen the connection between city residents and city government by maintaining geographic diversity, cultural variety, and a wide range of community philosophies on boards and commissions.

LGC 2.4 Boards and Commissions

Recognize the credibility and value of City of Spokane boards and commissions by emphasizing the value of recommendations that are forwarded to decision-making bodies.

LGC 3 PLANNING THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

Goal: Utilize the neighborhood councils and the Community Assembly as a way for the public to participate in planning activities and bring proposals through the City Plan Commission to the City Council.

Policies

LGC 3.1 Forum for Citizens

Use neighborhood councils as one of many forums for citizens to bring issues and/or problems to the City of Spokane for debate and to express their preferences for resolution.



LGC 3.2 Roles, Relationships, and Responsibilities

Maintain the role, relationship, and responsibility of the neighborhood councils relative to City of Spokane activities as expressed in the City of Spokane Charter.

LGC 3.3 Collaboration and Problem Solving

Create opportunities that foster successful collaboration among the neighborhoods.

Discussion: It is important to establish structure and ground rules for public discussion of planning issues and other topics. Neighborhoods must collaborate in pursuit of the common good and avoid the pursuit of a particular interest to the detriment of other neighborhoods or the city at large.

LGC 4 CITIZEN AND GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

Goal: Maintain open two-way communication between the city and its citizens through a variety of avenues.

Policies

LGC 4.1 Dissemination of Public Information

Use city cable television, websites, email, and other current technologies for dissemination of information on city and neighborhood activities.

LGC 4.2 Respect for Service Customers

Treat all citizens with respect in order to reinforce public trust.

Discussion: Since citizens are the customers of city services, city employees who have contact with the public must be periodically trained in customer service techniques. One of the primary ways to increase trust is by officials and staff demonstrating respect for public opinion, valuing the involvement of all citizens in governmental decision processes, and treating all citizens as equals.



LGC 5 YOUTH CITIZENSHIP

Goal: Value youth citizenship as the foundation of the community's future and ensure that young citizens are informed about the community, invited into community-building processes, and given the opportunity to contribute their insights and diversity to the community dialogue.

Policies

LGC 5.1 Youth Participation

Support and promote participation strategies that provide opportunities for young people to engage in decision-making.

LGC 5.2 Young People as Citizens

Share community resources, including public space and facilities, with young citizens.

LGC 5.3 Strategic Networking

Create effective advocacy in the interests of young people by building and maintaining alliances with a broad range of human resources, community interests, local government and the private sector.

LGC 6 RESPONSIVE CITY GOVERNMENT

Goal: Increase public confidence in the city's responsiveness to the pursuit of community values through the day-to-day administration of land use and development codes.

Policies

LGC 6.1 Enforcement of Land Use and Development Codes

Utilize a violation-driven code enforcement system rather than a complaint-driven system to achieve compliance with land use and development codes.

Discussion: One of the fundamental principles of effective governance is to ensure responsiveness to the needs of citizens. Through the planning process, citizens express their desired quality of life and the features of the physical, social, and economic environments that characterize that quality of life. Land use and development codes are governmental tools to achieve those features. When violations of these codes occur, quality of life is damaged.

