



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

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## **1.1 PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **What is Comprehensive Planning**

Planning is a part of everyone's life. We make plans for our careers, vacations, families, and housing. Planning is how we increase the likelihood that these things will occur in ways we desire. Without plans, we face never-ending uncertainty about future events. Consequently, we end up reacting to one situation after another.

For similar reasons, communities make plans. In large urban areas where the landscape is highly complex and constantly changing, community plans shape the future in desirable ways. The city is a place where people have many varied needs, a place where citizens live, work, shop, and play. It is, therefore, a place where material goods, police and fire protection, sewers, water, transportation, recreation, and many other services must be provided.

Comprehensive Plan is the name given to identify the community's long-range plan for growth. It is comprehensive because it provides guidance for all aspects of the city's growth and development over a long period, typically twenty-years – an entire generation. The plan is a set of goals, policies, maps, illustrations, and implementation strategies that state how the city should grow physically, socially, and economically.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the overall scheme of city development – the major land uses, transportation systems, parks, recreation, and open spaces, and centers of shopping and employment. This plan establishes the framework for all other planning activities and documents. By law, decision-makers and managers in city government must follow the direction of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **The City of Spokane's Comprehensive Plan**

When the state enacted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990, it changed the purposes of comprehensive plans prepared under the GMA rules. Requirements to plan for housing and private utilities were added to the existing mandates to address land use, transportation, and capital facilities. In 2003, an additional requirement was added to include planning for shorelines. Chapter 14, Shorelines, was added in 2010. The GMA authorizes the inclusion of additional plan topics of specific local interest; the city chose to include economic development, social health, and five other planning subjects in its plan.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the following direction to city-elected officials and staff:

- Locations where growth should occur.
- Quantities and types of housing to shelter existing and future population.



- Transportation, public improvements, and public services that are desired.
- Ways to help create a healthy economic environment.
- Actions to protect the natural environment.
- Development patterns to provide cost-effective delivery of public services.
- Timing and conditions for annexation.

GMA includes provisions to ensure that the city follows these Comprehensive Plan directives. First, the city must regulate land use and development consistent with the plan; the zoning code, subdivision code, environmental ordinances, and building code must follow the plan's intent. Second, the city must make capital budget decisions and capital project investments in conformance with the plan. These two GMA rules give the 2001 Comprehensive Plan a much higher level of importance in guiding the city's growth and development than previous editions of the plan.



## 1.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

Over the decades, Spokane has been shaped by its notable beginning. Capturing the attention of fur traders, miners, missionaries and those with the “westward-ho” spirit, Spokane soon found its place on the map. Prior to 1800, Spokane was a Native American encampment located near the falls of the Spokane River.

It was not long, however, before James N. Glover, the “Father of Spokane,” recognized the beauty and potential of the unscathed Spokane area. He acquired land rights from the first settlers who had arrived in 1871 and eventually established a store where he and his wife worked and resided. Glover grew exceedingly involved in the young town and was elected mayor in 1883.

In 1881, a short time before Glover assumed office, the town was incorporated as “Spokan Falls;” an 1883 amendment changed the spelling to “Spokane Falls.” A few years later in 1891, “Spokane” became the official city name when “Falls” was dropped. The city limits at that time extended north to Garland Avenue, south to 29th Avenue, east to Regal Street and west to “H” Street, to encompass a total of 20 square miles.

In the midst of name changes and growth, Spokane suffered its share of tragic events. In August of 1889, a great fire destroyed large portions of the city with losses totaling more than \$6 million. The need to rebuild the city served as the ideal opportunity to replace the old wood buildings with those made of stone and brick. Noted for their architectural and civic status, these buildings are still treasured by Spokane’s citizens.

In 1911, Spokane citizens approved a one million dollar park bond, which was used to implement the city’s first plan-- a park plan created by the world-famous landscape design firm, Olmsted Brothers. Implementation of the Olmsted plan increased Spokane’s park size from 173 acres to 1,934 acres and firmly established Spokane’s park system as one of the community’s enduring assets.

Spokane grew rapidly in its early years, from a population of a mere 350 in 1880 to over 100,000 in 1910. To ensure that Spokane’s beauty would be protected during the rapid growth period, the “City Beautiful” committee was formed as part of a nationwide planning movement. The committee devoted itself to making Spokane a desirable place to live by enhancing its natural and built environment, both of which were highly prized by Spokane’s early settlers who proudly used these assets to “boost” their young community and attract growing numbers of people to it. One of the results of Spokane’s City Beautiful movement was the creation of the Park Board in 1907.



After 1910, the city's growth slowed and even declined between 1960 and 1990. Fifty years following the mighty fire, the threat and formidable presence of war in the 1940s knocked at Spokane's door and made it a center for wartime activity. Over the next thirty years, Spokane continued to develop both commercially and industrially. A considerable number of housing developments further shaped Spokane's neighborhoods, gradually spreading into the unincorporated area of Spokane County where most of the new development began to take place.

In 1974, Spokane hosted EXPO '74, the World's Fair. An immediate success, the fair drew huge crowds throughout the summer. The intrigued crowds thronged through the EXPO site, which had only recently been cleared of the railroad lines that had once crowded the river front site. Today, the Great Northern Depot tower remains as a feature of the park and serves as a reminder of the integral role the railroad played in shaping Spokane.



### Growth of the City

When the city was incorporated as "Spokan Falls" in 1881, it covered an area roughly the same size as the present Central Business District. Spokane's population in 1900 was over 36,000, nearly double that of a decade earlier. There were 300 business and industrial enterprises, 108 saloons, 56 churches, 2,500 telephones, and 42 miles of street railways. By 1920, the city's population had grown to over 104,000. Between 1920 and 1990, population grew

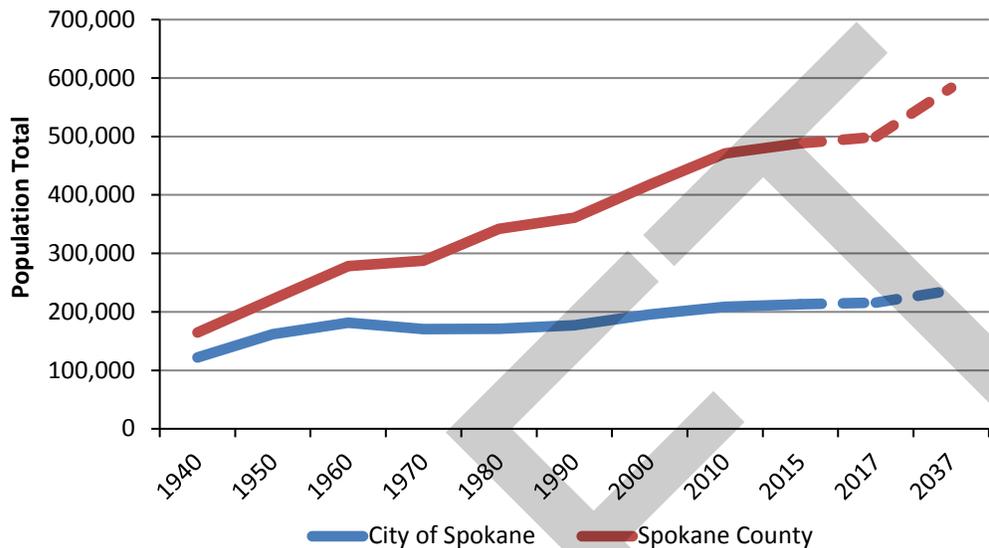
at a much slower rate than earlier years. The population was 171,300 in 1980 and 177,165 in 1990, a 3 percent increase over this ten-year period. During the years between 1990 and 1995, the city's population growth was more rapid, increasing to 188,800, an expansion of more than 1 percent per year. Since 1995, the population has remained relatively stable, decreasing to an estimated 188,300 in 1998. The Census reported the City of Spokane's population for the year 2010 at 208,916 and the Washington State Office of Financial Management has forecast the population for the year 2017 to be 215,839. The recent population numbers show an increase of 4,184 people over the five year period from 2010 to 2015.

### Population

The growth alternatives presented in the draft comprehensive plan are based on projected growth for Spokane County for the next twenty years as decided by elected officials from all jurisdictions in the county.



Figure 1 – Population Growth in the City and County of Spokane



### Geological History

Spokane has been patterned over time by a succession of geological episodes. More than 16 million years ago, vast lava flows forged the area, creating a great bedrock plain that extended in multiple directions. During the ice age approximately 12,000 years ago, lobes of large glaciers traveled from the north, barricaded a large river basin in western Montana, and formed a gigantic lake near modern-day Missoula. The lake was 7,600 square kilometers in area and approximately 600 meters deep.

The glaciers eventually began to retreat, which caused the ice dam to fracture, spilling huge walls of water 150 meters in height through Spokane and the surrounding region. Such events occurred more than a dozen times during the ice age, carving out deep canyons and leaving small remnants of the original plain. The receding flood waters left mass deposits of sand and gravel in the bottom of canyons. These flat areas made ideal locations for settlement, and formed a large ground water aquifer. The aquifer is now identified as the Spokane Valley - Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer and serves as Spokane’s water supply.

The aquifer carries between 1,325,000 and 2,460,000 cubic meters of water each day and provides domestic water supply to most of the Spokane urbanized area. Additionally, the aquifer exchanges significant amounts of water with the Spokane River. Most of the urbanized area is located in the Spokane River valley, enclosed north and south by steep hillsides. Prevailing winds and frequent winter temperature inversions tend to impound stagnant air and accumulated airborne pollutants near the ground’s surface. Spokane is frequently in jeopardy of violating this country’s strict air quality standards, a situation that has severe consequences for our

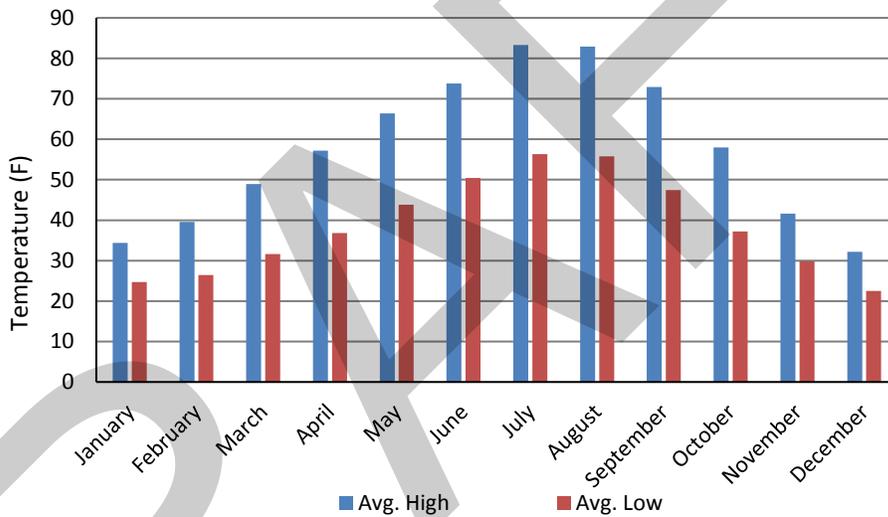


municipality and its citizens. Automobile travel remains a significant producer of airborne pollutants, which attests to the comprehensive plan’s devotion toward exploring other means of transportation and ways in which to reduce automobile usage.

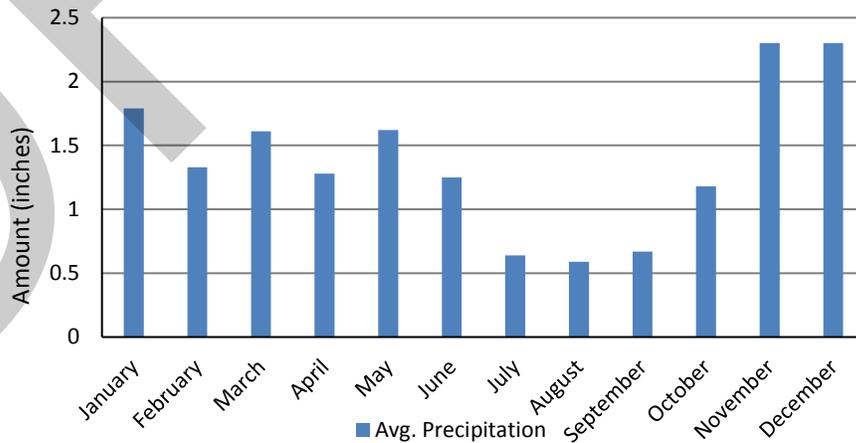
**Climate and Region**

Located 18 miles west of the Idaho border and 110 miles south of the Canadian border, Spokane enjoys each of the four seasons. Spokane typically averages 16.25 inches of precipitation each year. Additionally, the area receives approximately 45 inches of snow and ice annually. The winds remain calm at an average of 8 mph.

*Figure 2 – Average Monthly Temperatures for Spokane*



*Figure 3 – Average Monthly Precipitation for Spokane*



### 1.3 STATE REQUIREMENTS AND REGIONAL PLANNING

The Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1990 by the State Legislature in response to rapid population growth in the Puget Sound region on the western side of the state. A few years later, Spokane County also experienced unprecedented growth and was required to become part of growth management. The GMA goals are not listed in order of priority and are used exclusively for the purpose of guiding the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations. The following fourteen GMA goals are what the City of Spokane must achieve, and are consistent with the community's vision for its future.

- **Urban Growth.** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- **Reduce Sprawl.** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development.
- **Transportation.** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- **Housing.** Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- **Economic Development.** Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
- **Property Rights.** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- **Permits.** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
- **Natural Resource Industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries.



Encourage the conservation of productive forest and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

- **Open Space and Recreation.** Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
- **Environment.** Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
- **Citizen Participation and Coordination.** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure the coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
- **Public Facilities and Services.** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
- **Historic Preservation.** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.
- **Manage Shorelines Wisely.** Protect, preserve, and enhance the Spokane River and Latah Creek, which are designated as shorelines of statewide significance.

### Countywide Planning Policies

The Growth Management Act (GMA) calls for coordinated planning efforts among jurisdictions within a county planning under GMA. In response to that requirement, the Spokane County Steering Committee of Elected Officials developed and adopted the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) in December of 1994. Volume V, Appendix A includes the full text of the CWPPs. The CWPPs address nine subject areas and provide a framework for subsequent development and adoption of comprehensive plans by all thirteen jurisdictions within Spokane County. The policies address the following topics:

- The designation of urban growth areas (UGAs).
- Joint planning within urban growth areas.
- Promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services.
- Parks and open spaces.



- Transportation.
- Siting of capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature.
- Affordable housing.
- Economic development.
- Fiscal impacts.

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## 1.4 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND ADOPTION

# Spokane *Shared Directions For Tomorrow* Horizons

### Introduction

Spokane Horizons was the name of the City of Spokane's citizen participation process to develop the city's 2001 Comprehensive Plan. It involved all segments of the community in shaping the city's future. Started in the spring of 1995, the Spokane Horizons process was developed to fulfill the city's commitment to active, effective citizen participation as well as the Growth Management Act's (GMA) mandate for early and continuous citizen participation.

From the beginning of its GMA planning, the city made a commitment to provide early and frequent opportunities for the citizens of Spokane to be involved in making decisions that affect the community. Through the Spokane Horizons process, the community achieved consensus and charted a new course for Spokane's future. These aspirations are expressed in the following goals for this program:

### Spokane Horizons Goals

- To stimulate broad citizen involvement in shaping the future of the community.
- To forge a new coalition of community-wide interests to broaden the investment within the community for planning Spokane's future.
- To build affective relationships among government, the community and neighborhoods, business and their constituents to empower citizens and provide a broader perspective on Spokane's future.
- To understand the public's expectations for growth management planning, including the content and products of the process.

### Plan Adoption

By City Charter, the City Plan Commission has the responsibility to make planning recommendations to the City Council for consideration for adoption. The Plan Commission has the duty to conduct the citizen planning processes that produce planning proposals, to review the results of these processes, and to formulate recommendations to the City Council based on this public involvement.



Adoption by the City Council is the formal step that is necessary to make the Comprehensive Plan an official city document. Under the rules of the GMA, the City Council's action to adopt the plan must be based on the "early and continuous citizen participation" required by the GMA. This provision adds assurance that the plan represents the community's consensus about the city's growth and how that growth will promote citizens' quality of life interests.

The Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic product of the community's continually evolving needs and desires about its future. The plan is prepared by involved citizens, recommended by the City Plan Commission, and adopted by the City Council. By law, it can be revised no more than once a year. At some point in time, however, changes in planning laws or community needs may require the preparation of an entirely new plan.

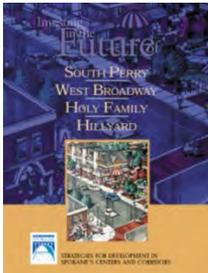
### **Citywide Vision**

*Spokane will be a city of people living and working together where diverse interests, including neighborhoods, business, education, and government, build upon the community's past accomplishments and heritage to ensure an exceptional sense of community, a healthy environment, and a high quality of life.*



## 1.5 OVERVIEW OF PLANNING EFFORTS

In addition to annual amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and other long range planning efforts to ensure that adequate capital facilities are available in the future, the city has participated in additional planning efforts. The city has played both a lead and partnering role with many different groups and their planning efforts for the betterment of the community. Several of these efforts have been initiated and conducted by private groups with interests in certain specific areas of the city and surrounding areas. Examples of a few of these efforts include:



### Pilot Centers and Corridors

**Pilot Centers and Corridors:** Four Centers and Corridors from the city's 2001 Comprehensive Plan were chosen as pilot projects to help develop and test the process of conducting specific plans for targeted areas of the city. The South Perry, West Broadway, Holy Family and Hillyard Center and Corridor areas were the first to be closely examined after the passage of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. Stakeholder groups, facilitated by city staff, developed visions and strategies for future revitalization projects to ensure that these areas continue to be economic vibrant areas where future growth will continue to be focused.

### Neighborhood Planning

Following the pilot Centers and Corridors processes, several other targeted planning efforts were conducted. The city facilitated stakeholder groups to plan for other Center and Corridors at the Grand District Center, Maxwell and Elm Employment Center, and Logan Neighborhood Center. Following those processes, several more neighborhoods have engaged in limited planning for their neighborhoods. These planning efforts continue.

### Strategic Plans

The city would like to acknowledge several planning efforts that took place just prior to and after adoption of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. Acknowledgment means only that the city recognizes these efforts. The Davenport District, Great Spokane River Gorge, and U-District plans contain a significant body of work detailing existing conditions, opportunities, and an outline for many actions designed to enhance these areas of the City. As visionary documents, they will help guide growth and development in these areas in the future. The City has not committed resources for action or project implementation of these plans, and the plans at this time are not intended for adoption as official policy of the City of Spokane. No legislative action has been taken to adopt changes to the Spokane Municipal Code, the Official Zoning Map, or the text or maps of the Comprehensive Plan related to these planning efforts. Implementation of these plans may require amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in the future.





### Davenport District Strategic Action Plan

This effort was started in late 2001. The Downtown Spokane Partnership spearheaded a Strategic Action Plan for the district following the momentum begun by the Downtown Plan. During this time the "Davenport District" was selected as the name for the area surrounding the Davenport Hotel from Stevens Street on the east to Madison Street on the west. This plan presents a ten-year vision and action plan to guide the development and evolution of the Davenport District. The plan lays out an agenda for a series of immediate and long-term action items to enable the District to realize its full potential as an exciting district filled with arts, cultural, entertainment and living opportunities. The Strategic Plan is intended to be a flexible development tool and a working document that will change and adapt as the Davenport District evolves.

### The Great Spokane River Gorge Strategic Master Plan:

A non-profit group "Friends of the Falls", aided by an award of technical assistance from the National Parks Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program, spearheaded the development of a strategic master plan for an area that has been



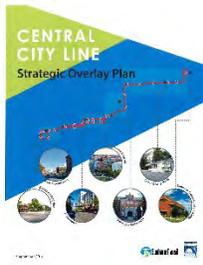
named the Great Spokane River Gorge or "Great Gorge Park." The area generally follows the Spokane River Gorge west of Riverfront Park and includes parts of several neighborhoods. Some of the groups that worked with Friends of the Falls in the process include Spokane Parks Department, Spokane Tribe Culture Office, Avista Corporation, Summit Properties (now Kendall Yards), West Central Neighborhood, Peaceful Valley Neighborhood, Downtown Spokane Partnership, Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture, and the Friends of the Centennial Trail.

### U-District Strategic Master Plan

Starting in 2003 and continuing through 2004, the city participated in a community effort to develop a strategic master plan around the idea of a University District. As stated in the U-District plan "The University District is a bold vision and plan to attract a critical mass of top students, staff and faculty, cutting-edge researchers, and creative entrepreneurs – all of which are the catalysts for increased commercialization of technology, growth in our health care industry, and overall economic prosperity for the region. It builds upon and incorporates existing plans, activities and assets — leveraging them into a strong economic engine that lays the foundation for Spokane's growth in the next century. It is time to forge Spokane's new destiny." Since the completion of the master plan numerous site and topic specific plans have been developed to further guide decision making and investment in the U-District.



These efforts include a market analysis, housing study, and investment strategy. Copies of these documents can be found on the University District's website.



### Central City Line Strategic Overlay Planning

The Central City Line (CCL) is a proposal by the Spokane Transit Authority for a six-mile Bus Rapid Transit route connecting Browne's Addition to Spokane Community College by way of Downtown Spokane and the University District. The concept of the CCL has been in design by community partners for nearly 15 years. As part of ongoing planning for the CCL, the City of Spokane and Spokane Transit Authority are developing a Strategic Overlay Plan to identify transit-supported economic development opportunities and land use policy changes. The plan will examine a range of potential policy changes aimed at increasing ridership, maximizing economic opportunity, and helping to catalyze transit-supported development around the CCL. The process will give stakeholders and the public an opportunity to share their priorities and weigh in on these options. The plan will include recommendations for STA and City of Spokane actions to support CCL implementation and help increase the project's competitiveness for federal funding. The Strategic Overlay Plan process began in the summer of 2015, and is expected to be completed by summer 2016. The plan will include a review of existing plans and policies in the corridor, and will contain land use and policy recommendations (including economic development opportunities, parking and affordable housing) for key areas along the corridor.

### West Plains Transportation Subarea Plan

The purpose of the West Plains Draft Transportation Subarea Plan was to coordinate the orderly provision of adequate transportation facilities to facilitate the anticipated and desired development in the area. The need for coordinated capital facility planning was identified shortly after annexations in the area by the Cities of Spokane and Airway Heights in 2012.

The West Plains has been the subject of a number of reports and studies over time. During the course of review of these studies and reports, meetings with stakeholders, and the Technical Advisory Committee for the Subarea Plan, it became evident that transportation presented the biggest opportunity for coordination and improvement, and with a focused vision for transportation, the communities could align their water and sewer improvements.

The process for developing the plan involved an intensive and rigorous public process. Over the course of more than a year, the City of Spokane used stakeholder interviews, public workshops, and Technical Advisory Committee meetings to develop and refine the Plan.

To meet the outcomes and recommendations, the plan provided a number of recommended transportation improvements cost estimates.



## **1.6 AMENDMENTS**

The 2001 Comprehensive Plan was the result of a change in planning law when Washington adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990. The GMA also requires the city to review and, if needed, update the Comprehensive Plan at certain time intervals.

### **Previous Amendments and Periodic Updates**

The Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2006 to meet the changing needs of the community and to fulfill GMA requirements for comprehensive plan updates. The second update occurred in 2017, again to reflect changing community values and to comply with updated state law. The 2006 and 2017 updates, in addition to annual amendments to the plan, ensure that the Plan is consistent with changes to State and Federal laws and the desires of the community. The end of 2006 was the first of the State-required review periods. The city completed the second update in 2017, as required by the State. The Comprehensive Plan will likely experience many years of annual revisions before another entirely new plan is necessary.

### **New Amendments**

The City of Spokane conducts an annual process to consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The GMA specifies that amendments to a comprehensive plan cannot be made more frequently than once per year (with some exceptions). The purpose for this is two-fold: it gives the plan stability over time, avoiding spontaneous changes in response to development pressures, and it groups all proposed amendments into a common process for consideration, providing the opportunity to examine their collective effects on the plan. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan follow a prescribed process in the city's municipal code.

